

# Persell Middle School Newsletter

## October, 2008

Phil Cammarata, Principal  
Michele Weikel, Assistant Principal

### Principal's News



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It is hard to believe that our first month of school has come and gone. It has been a very smooth start to the year and the students have adjusted to school very nicely.

Our fundraiser has begun and we are hoping for a big sale this year. 90% of our profit goes to the teams to support fieldtrips, team parties, and extra supplies for the teams. The additional 10% will go into a fund to hopefully purchase one or two large screen televisions for our cafeteria. Students will be able to watch educational programs while eating their lunch.

I also wanted to encourage all parents to utilize Parent Portal this year. This is

an excellent tool to allow you to see into your child's teacher's grade book. You can see all your child's grades, missed homework assignments, e-mail the teachers, check attendance and have reports sent to you on a daily basis if you so choose. This is a wonderful tool and it helps families to stay involved in their child's academic success. To get your user name and password, you must come to the main office, show identification, to either Mrs. Bellitto or Mrs. Walter, and they will give you you're the Parent Portal user name and ID.

If you ever have questions or concerns, please call, e-mail or stop in to see us.

### Dear Parents

On October 3, 2008 at approximately 2:30 PM, we will be running our state mandated evacuation drill. During this drill, students will gather all their belongings and evacuate the building to one of our two sites. Persell's two evacuation sites are Concordia Lutheran Church on the corner of Baker Street and Cityview Avenue and New Heights United Methodist Church on the corner of Newland and Delaware Avenues. Typically the release time is about 2:50 p.m. However, please be patient if it runs slightly over this estimated time.

Dismissal sites are as follows:

#### Concordia Lutheran Church

Teams Excel and Aspire, Homerooms of Mrs. Pearson, Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Ralph

#### New Heights United Methodist

Teams Exceed, Explore, Avanti, Adeste, Endeavor and Homerooms of Mrs. Putney, Mrs. Goldberg, Mrs. Alfa and Mrs. Johnson

We will be releasing the students from both sites once we have all students accounted for. Due to traffic concerns, it is recommended that students who usually walk home do so after the drill. Bus students will be picked up at the church parking lots. If you plan to pick your child up, we ask that you adhere to the following directions:

**PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN OR DRIVE THROUGH THE PARKING LOTS. Buses will be loading in the parking lots of the churches and for our students' safety we are asking that you park along Delaware Avenue for the New Heights site and Cityview Avenue for the Concordia site.**



## A note from the Health teacher

According to the Commissioner's Regulations and Regents Policy, all secondary schools are expected to incorporate the HIV/AIDS instructional program into the required health education program. No student can be required to receive instruction concerning the methods of prevention of HIV/AIDS if the parent or legal guardian of the student wishes to exempt him/her from that portion of

HIV/AIDS instruction. To qualify for an exemption, the parent or legal guardian must file with the school principal a written request for an exemption and assure that the student will receive this instruction at home.

## Some reminders about our school fundraiser

As you know, Persell Middle School is sponsoring a fund raising drive to raise money for your child's team. Students should have brought home two brochures for this fund raiser. The teams use this money to reduce costs of fieldtrips, team activities and class parties.

Order forms were due on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Money will be due after the items are delivered. Items should be delivered by roughly October 24<sup>th</sup>. All money will be due on November 3, 2008 or as soon as it is collected.

We thank you for your cooperation and support of our students and teams.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the school.

*"You make the world a better place by making yourself a better person."  
- Scott Sorrell*

## School Picture Day

School Picture Day will be Tuesday, November 4th.

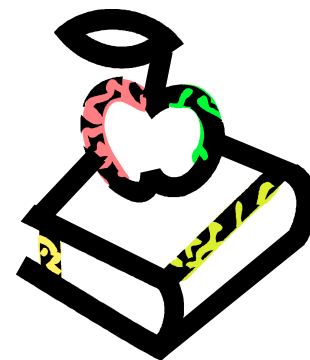
Order forms will be sent home prior to that date.

## From the School Nurse

### Medication During School Hours

At times, it may be necessary for a child to take medication during school hours. It is the school district's policy to request that medication be given before or after school whenever possible. However, if the student is to receive medication during school hours, New York State mandates (Education Law, Article 149, Nurse Practice Act) that all medication to be given in school must be accompanied by a signed statement

from a licensed prescriber that states the name of the medication, dosage, time to be given in school and the condition being treated as well as parent permission. These forms can be obtained from the health office. The licensed prescriber's statement and parental permission forms must be completed and returned to the health office before any medication can be administered. As always, please don't hesitate to call or stop by the health office.



## Parent Portal

Parents with students in grades 5 - 12 can begin utilizing their access to the PowerSchool Parent Portal to view grades and attendance. To access PowerSchool you need to have internet access and an assigned User ID and Password. Just connect to <http://www.jamestownpublicschools.org> and click on the Power School Logo to access the Power School login screen.

With Parent Portal you can assess the following information:

- Grades for current classes, as well as the assignments that make up those grades
- Attendance for the past two weeks or for the whole quarter, including a legend of attendance codes used by the school
- Teacher comments
- Reports via E-mail, which allow parents to request daily, weekly, or monthly reports to be sent via e-mail

Please stop by the main office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to pick up your student's User ID and password. Please note that you must provide identification in order to obtain this information.

**Persell Middle School**  
375 Baker Street  
Jamestown, NY 14701

**Main Office Phone:**  
(716) 483-4406

**Attendance Office:**  
(716) 483-42226

**Nurse's Office:**  
(716) 483-4225

**Guidance Office:**  
(716) 483-4243

**Homework Hotline:**  
(716) 483-4333

**Fax:**  
(716) 483-4417

*"Our lives are not determined by what happens to us but by how we react to what happens, not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events, and outcomes. It is a catalyst, a spark that creates extraordinary results."*  
- Anonymous

## Team Achieve news

Mrs. Putney and Mrs. Goldberg's ELA:

Our ELA groups have read two selections from our anthologies: "How to Think Like a Scientist" (which tied in well with our learning the Scientific Method in Science class) and "Digging Up the Past" (which ties in perfectly with giving background knowledge of colonial times in Social Studies). We've also incorporated Social Studies and non-fiction pieces in our Guided Reading time. As you have hopefully seen, the children have vocabulary and spelling words that coordinate with the selections. In most cases, a new spelling list is given about every two weeks. The children have been doing a great job studying for these tests. The week's spelling list can always be found in their ELA folder. We've also been brushing up on sentence and paragraph writing, along with our listening and speaking skills.

**ALL ELA groups:**

Soon your son or daughter will tell you about another new component to our ELA class - skills groups. This is a very individually, structured time in the ELA block. The groups are formed based on your child's performance on the Dibles test (it tests for fluency and comprehension) and on the Phonics Screener that we use. All the 5th grade teachers will be instructing this 30 minute block at the same time. We will be cross-teaming to teach specific skills to the children, depending on their own personal reading needs (ex. fluency, phonics, comprehension, or advanced reading skills). We are very excited to have this specialized instructional time with your children.

Mrs. Goldberg's Social Studies and Science:

Wow, we have been so busy planting our terrariums in science, that it is hard to believe it is October already. We've managed to do some amazing hands on science activities while still preparing for the upcoming state Social Studies exam. If you did not get an exam prep sheet at open house, please let me know.

Mrs. Putney's Math:

The students did such a wonderful job with Chapters 5 and 6 on Algebra! I was very proud of their understanding of the concepts and then the results on their test.

We are moving into Chapters 7 and 8 on Data and Statistics. The students recently conducted a poll of Persell students and staff. Their question was "If the Presidential election was today, who would you vote for?" They polled all the students at Persell and recorded their own data, as well as their class data. They will be learning how to represent their data on a bar graph. It will be interesting to see how we compare to the national polls and then the election results.

We will also take a look at national polls and learn to display that data in a line graph to show increase/decrease over time. Students will also learn to read and make predictions from other types of graphs, such as pictographs, histograms, and pie charts. This is a valuable skill not only in Math, but also as they prepare for their Social Studies exam.

**"Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going."  
- Jim Ryun**

## Team Aspire news

Team Aspire is excited to have finally settled into middle school. We have recently finished a math unit in algebra. Now we are beginning our data and statistics unit, in which we are polling the school to see whom they would like for president. After we collect our data, we will create graphs to report

our results! In science, we are building ecocolumns that include live animals such as guppies, snails, crickets, and isopods. We will study the animals' interactions with their environment. Best of all, we can finally find our way around the building! PHEW!

## Team Exceed news - Mrs. Hinman and Mrs. Pope

- **MATH** - In the month of September, the students did a great job of working on measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode, range). They also honed their graph reading skills. October will begin a unit on algebra. We will be looking at properties, expressions, variables, and learning how to apply the order of operations. As we get farther into the unit, be ready to ask your child about "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally".
- **ELA** - September was the month of Zachary Beaver - the world's fattest boy. The kids really enjoyed reading the book When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt. In our novel study, the students identified with characters through their behaviors, explored plot and setting, and

learned a bit about compassion. After reading the book, they watched the movie and learned an appreciation for the detail gaps that books can fill in.

- **SOCIAL STUDIES** - The students have already worked to review continents and oceans. After that, we did a brief study of life in the Stone Age. Our next area of study will be the Fertile Crescent, the birthplace of civilization.
- **SCIENCE** - The topic of study for the month of September was matter. Students explored both physical and chemical changes while doing some hands on experiments in the classroom.
- **NOTE** - The students rotate through units of science and social studies. Both subjects are not taught at the same time. Please take this into consideration when checking grades on Parent Portal.

We're on the Web!  
[www.jamestownpublicschools.org](http://www.jamestownpublicschools.org)

## PTA News

Persell PTA strives to support the education of our children here at Persell. We do this by sponsoring Transition Night for incoming fifth grade students; purchasing a book for each child at Persell during the school's Book Fair and by sponsoring fun activities for

the students after school, throughout the school year. Please plan to join our PTA and attend our meetings which are the third Tuesday of each month at 7:15 in the Faculty Room. Our next meeting is October 21<sup>st</sup>.