

HAWK HERALD

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 5

THE NEWSPAPER FOR ALL PRAIRIE CENTRALIANS

APRIL-MAY, 2019

FORWARD,

PAULA CRANE, SUPERINTENDENT

Another school year will come to a close before we know it, and since there will not be another *Hawk Herald* before this, there are a few tips to consider for summer.

First, be aware that we will have a new online registration system. We will have it up and running as soon as possible, and please bear with us as any new software program usually has “bugs” to work out. It’s possible that you will have to re-enter some of the information that was auto-filled for you in our current program. Please consider registering your child early in case there are issues we need to work out. Also, early registration helps school staff better plan for your child’s arrival in the fall.

According to recent studies, children lose 2-months of reading skills and 2.6 months of math skills over summer vacation. For children who struggle in these areas or who have learning difficulties, this number is generally higher. In the fall, approximately 6 weeks is spent re-learning old material to make up for summer learning loss. For our young students, many teachers send home fun work or suggestions so that you can continue to grow your child’s skills over the summer. There are many websites that have free games and lessons for children if you prefer electronic work. Working with your child over the summer, or having your older students read and practice these skills periodically will help them continue to grow, and make their transition to the next grade level much easier.

Finally, we encourage you to keep your children active over the summer. Physical activity helps children not only with their physical health, but with their mental and emotional health, which are both very important to the overall well-being of your child.



We wish you and your child a safe, healthy, and happy summer, and look forward to seeing everyone back in the fall!

Safety Remains a Priority for Prairie Central Schools

In order to increase safety for our students, the Prairie Central Board of Education has agreed to open bids for a new daytime visitor entrance and office renovation project at PCHS. The new entrance would be used for visitors during school hours, and would be the sole point of entry into the building. Currently, daytime visitors are “buzzed in” through secure doors on the west side of the building leading directly into the cafeteria. Visitors must then make their way through the cafeteria and up into a hallway before finding their way to the office for check-in. School personnel are unable to supervise visitors between these two check points.

The new entrance would be on the south side of the building, currently labeled entrance “X”. Visitors would enter into a secure area, and then be “buzzed in” once contact with office personnel is established. In order for the visitor to enter into the remainder of the building, office personnel must allow them access into the main office through a secure door, where they can then enter into other areas of the building.

Plans are still being finalized for the project, which also includes bringing the entire administrative staff to the main office. Currently, the dean of students and athletic director have separate offices on the north side of the building. The plan is to have these two administrators along with the principal, secretaries, guidance counselors, and school nurse in one centralized location. The goal is to begin the project June 6th and have the new offices occupied by August 5th. We look forward to the completion of this added security measure for our students.



Please mark your calendars, as our April School Improvement Day has been moved from Wednesday, April 3rd to Tuesday, April 9th due to scheduling issues. Students will attend a full day on April 3rd, and will enjoy a two-hour early release on Tuesday, April 9th.

The *Hawk Herald* is published bimonthly, August through May by Prairie Central CUSD #8, 605 N. 7th, Fairbury, Illinois 61739, and is assembled by the Unit Office staff. Administration Paula Crane, Superintendent; Brad Allen, High School Principal; James DeMay, Junior High Principal; Keri Jancsek, Upper Elementary Principal; Codi Conway, PC Elementary Principal; Shannon McGuckin, Primary-East Principal; Daniel Groce, Primary-West Principal; Rose Smith, Special Education Director; and Tonya Dieken, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Board of Education Mark Slagel, President; Tim McGreal, Vice-President; Ann Steidinger, Secretary; Ted Bachtold, Brian Plenert, Corey Steffen, and John Wilken



What's Happening in Curriculum and Instruction

Submitted by Tonya Dieken, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology



Full STEAM Ahead! Prairie Central Junior High

Prairie Central Junior High hosted Mr. Adam Dontz of the Greater Livingston County Economic Development Council (GLCEDC) as he stopped by the building to talk with some of the students about their coursework. Projects were featured from the beginning prototypes to final products with conversations focused on what they learned from mistakes and how they determined when and where to make modifications. The Prairie Central School District received a \$107,000 STE(A)M Grant from the Livingston County Board and GLCEDC. STEAM is an acronym for Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math. The goal in STEAM education is to take skills out of isolation and make learning connections between the listed content areas and beyond. The junior high students are making the connections in their learning and moving their projects beyond the individual classroom walls. Students shared knowledge pertaining to energy conduction and shared how the labs they perform in the science classroom tie into the circuitry work they are doing in their Industrial Technology classrooms and the role technology plays in assisting project development. During the visit, students shared skills related to engineering and medical technical fields. One student used the newly purchased microscopes that are equipped with video and still camera capabilities. While observing a Lego-bot in a classroom, Mr. Dontz was asked if he could share his role in the program to which he shared it is a goal of GLCEDC Grant to help students be prepared for the jobs in our county that may not exist at this time and to help schools as they develop career pathways upon high school graduation whether it is college, tech schools, or straight to work, all workers are needed for many positions throughout Livingston County.



JUNIOR HIGH HAPPENINGS!

Submitted by Angie Kratochvil and Scott Saffer

CARES Clowns performed at the PC elementary schools on March 21. Twenty-eight junior high students memorized and performed skits and songs that encourage the younger students in our district to make positive choices. While some of those still include saying no to smoking and drinking and staying away from strangers, some new ideas were added this year too. One skit is specifically devoted to the dangers of juuling. Another one focuses on ways to manage stress at school, while yet another shares the dangers of spending too much time on electronics. There's also a skit about kind things to say to be a bucket-filler in others' lives. The clowns finish their show with their own version of the Baby Shark song.



The PCJH science department received a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for \$250 to take a group of 7th grade students fossil hunting. 20 students from the 7th grade will visit Mazonia-Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Area in Wilmington to look for 240 million year-old fossilized jellyfish, ferns, and maybe even find a Tully monster!

Seventh grade students also recently dissected cow and deer eyes to directly observe how the nervous system works, and to learn more about anatomy. They won't forget the experience soon-and now know a lot more about how vision works. Thanks to Chenoa Locker and Steiding-er Meats for their donation of eyeballs to the project!

Prairie Central Receives Grant Money for New Buses

Prairie Central CUSD has received word that it will receive \$200,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be used toward the purchase of more efficient and environmentally friendly buses. The District applied for the grant this fall, with hopes of replacing a portion of its extremely aged fleet. With the help of the grant, Prairie Central will be replacing 10 of its buses, with newer, more reliable buses that have increased safety features.



As part of the agreement of the grant, the ten buses that will be replaced, which have been driven an average of approximately 235,000 miles, will have to be permanently disabled. To do so, the buses will be driven to their "final resting place", where they will have a 3 inch hole drilled completely through their engine block, and the chassis rail cut in half; a sad end to buses that have served our students well for many, many years!

Very soon, you will see our new buses running regular routes throughout the district. These buses, 2020 IC/CE buses will have added safety features, such as additional "STOP" arms in the rear of the bus to avoid illegal passing, as well as a collision avoidance system which detects an imminent crash and slows/stops the bus quickly. Half of the new buses will also contain integrated child seats for our very young friends who are by law required to ride in a car seat (currently, removable car seats are used). The new car seats will fold up into the seat when our older students will be riding in the space, making the buses very versatile for our student population. We look forward to beginning routes with these buses in early April. Watch for them coming soon!

Bus Drivers/Subs

Wanted:

Prairie Central CUSD #8 is seeking route-drivers as well as substitutes to transport students to and from school and/or extra-curricular events. Bus drivers must possess a CDL with airbrake certification, love kids, have a "clean bill of health" as determined by a doctor, value safety, and be able to block out noise! Mild hearing loss is helpful (kidding!), and patience is a must. Most afternoon routes are finished before 4:30 PM, and begin no earlier than 2:45 PM. Morning routes begin no earlier than 6:30 AM and end no later than 8:15 AM. There is some flexibility in time, as school dismissals and start times are scattered, as are bus route times. School bus driving is a calling. If it's calling you, please call Pam Weeks, Director of Transportation at (815) 692-3484.



PARCC Testing is now the Illinois Assessment of Readiness

Illinois has made a lot of improvements to the state assessment for grades 3-8. Thanks to the active partnership of Illinois educators, the new "Illinois Assessment of Readiness" (IAR) will be given this year, in lieu of the PARCC test. The IAR is shorter, returns results more quickly and measures not just what students know, but also what they can do with what they know, as well as their growth over time. As part of the testing, our high school students will continue with the SAT at 11th grade, as well as the PSAT testing for our younger high school students.

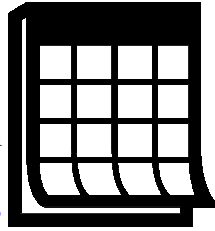


Why should your child participate in the testing? The IAR helps prepare students for success after high school by measuring both mastery of the Illinois Learning Standards and College and Career Ready benchmarks. The test is designed to show how well students are learning and growing compared to their peers statewide. Also, it provides a balanced picture of student performance when we use it in conjunction with our own assessments, classroom grades, and other measures such as attendance. The information that we garner from these as a whole help us to change how we teach and continue to improve to meet the needs of our students. It is truly valuable information for improvement of instruction.

Also, each school's participation rate on state assessments impacts its rate of proficiency and its annual designation by the state. ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) requires states to calculate proficiency by dividing the number of students who met or exceeded standards by either the number of students who tested or 95% of the number of students who should have tested, whichever is greater. Those students who do not test simply hurt our scores and don't allow us an accurate picture of the success of our students. For the sake of our students and our endeavor of continuous improvement, we thank you for encouraging your child to do his or her best on the test!

2019-20 School Calendar Set

The school calendar for the 2019-20 school year has been approved, and looks a great deal like this year's calendar. One notable exception is the start of the year for students, which will be on a Wednesday (August 21st) instead of a Monday. Most other holidays are set similarly to this year including a two-week winter break and a one-week spring break. With no "snow days", students' last day of school will be May 27th (of course, this could be as late as June 3rd with an eventful winter). To view the calendar, go to the Prairie Central website at www.prairiecentral.org and click on "Official School Calendar 2019-20" on the left-hand side of the page.



Reminders for your calendar....

*The last day of student attendance for the 2018-19 school year will be Monday, June 3rd. Students will be re-

leased TWO hours early that day. Have a GREAT summer!

*Graduation will take place in the Prairie Central High School gymnasium on Friday, May 24th beginning at 7:00 PM.



"Breakfast on the Go" to begin at Prairie Central High School

Prairie Central High School is excited to announce its new breakfast initiative, "Breakfast on the Go". This initiative aims to fuel students with healthy breakfast options to prepare them for their school day. Starting Monday, April 15th, students can grab quick breakfast options near the High School office on their way to class. This could include items such as cereal, granola, milk, fruit, and more.

Prairie Central Food Service Director Joni Besgrove applied for and received funding for "Breakfast on the Go" through *No Kid Hungry's* "Breakfast After the Bell" grant. The focus of the grant is to increase participation in school breakfast through new equipment, materials, and promotion. Currently, 1 in 6 children in the US face hunger and many others skip breakfast for a number of reasons, but grades and attendance have both been shown to increase when breakfast is served at school. In Illinois, over 90,000 students can rely on getting breakfast at school in the morning thanks to the "Breakfast After the Bell" initiatives. For more on these statistics and information about the benefits of school breakfast, visit www.nokidhungry.org/

This news release is brought to you by the Prairie Central School District Wellness Committee, whose vision is to foster an environment with opportunities for all students and staff to engage in healthy eating and physical activity behaviors to promote the health and well-being of the school community. If you're interested in learning more about the Wellness Committee, or want to know how you can get involved, contact Superintendent Paula Crane, at pcrane@prairiecentral.org.

PCHS Breakfast Schedule:

7:30-8:00 AM- Breakfast served in the cafeteria

7:15-8:15 AM- "Breakfast on the Go" carts available in the hallway by the office.



Prairie Central High School offers "Straight to Work" Opportunity

Prairie Central High School, in conjunction with Livingston Workforce Services is proud to offer a "Straight to Work" pilot program to our current seniors who are planning on entering the workforce directly after graduation.

On April 17th, selected senior class members will participate in a county tour of employers that have openings available to them upon graduation. The morning will begin with a tour of Caterpillar in Pontiac and move to local employers within our district boundaries that are eager to meet young potential employees. Our goal is to share with our graduates as many of the opportunities our communities have for immediate employment as possible in the small amount of time we have. In the afternoon, there will be a workshop that provides application and resume writing skills along with mock

interviews to assist in building confidence for the authentic interview processes that students will experience when pursuing a job. Local business people have volunteered to assist with this portion of the day.

Livingston Workforce Services provides resources and tools to help individuals access scholarships and employment. Services are available to job seekers, employers, or individuals seeking job training opportunities, and are offered at no cost to eligible individuals. Funding is provided by the Grundy, Livingston, Kankakee Workforce Board.

If you are interested in helping out with this opportunity for Prairie Central students by conducting mock interviews, reviewing or helping with resume writing, or by featuring your business in the future, please email Principal Brad Allen at ballen@prairiecentral.org.



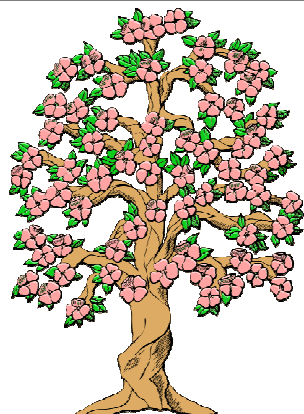
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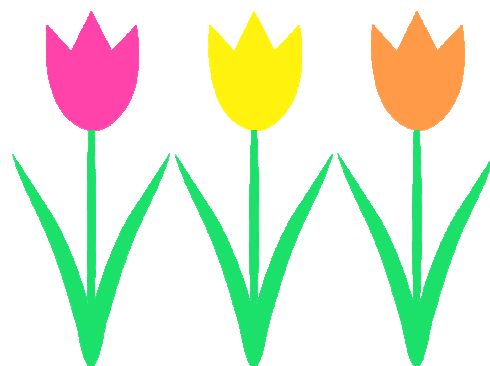
Topics in this edition:

- *School Safety*
- *Full STEAM Ahead*
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- *IAR Testing*
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Readers can visit http://illinoisvision2020.org/wp-content/files/Vision_2020_Executive_Summary.pdf
and/or <http://illinoisvision2020.org/> to learn more about Vision 20/20 and how to participate.



DATES TO REMEMBER. . .



Two-Hour Early Release, School Improvement.....April 9, 2019
One-Hour Early Release.....April 18, 2019
No School, Easter Break.....April 19, 2019
No School, Easter Break.....April 22, 2019
Two-Hour Early Release, School Improvement.....May 1, 2019
High School Graduation.....May 24, 2019
No School, Memorial Day.....May 27, 2019
Last Day of Student Attendance, Two-Hour Early Release.....June 3, 2019

