

# PANDAMONIUM!

**John J. Pershing Middle School  
3838 Bluebonnet St.  
Houston, TX 77025**

**September 2011**

## 6TH GRADE NEWS Cluster 6-1

Welcome back to a brand new year 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

Cluster 6-1 welcomes two new teachers. They are not new to teaching, but new to Pershing. Ms. Davison comes to us from Woodson Middle School and Mr. Malkowsky from Oak Forest Elementary ( 5<sup>th</sup> grade ). We are excited to have them become a part of our team.

ELA is a little different this year. We are working on a new

curriculum called Springboard. This curriculum prepares our students to step into the Pre AP mode in high school and college. Don't forget to have your novels ready each ELA period.

Students are working on revising and editing Personal Narrative rough drafts. They have learned how to use editing marks correctly and will move on to peer editing and writing their final drafts. AR deadline is September 28<sup>th</sup>!

Math classes are also involved with the new

Springboard curriculum using real world situations while collaborating with their peers. Currently the main focus is on Greatest Common Factors, Least Common Multiples and Prime Factorization. Students need to come to class on time and ready to work.

World Cultures classes are learning and reviewing geography and map skills. The

first region of study will be North Africa. Students need to write in their Agendas on a daily basis and parents need to sign them once a week. Clubs are starting soon and everyone is starting to remember their schedules and routines. Stay organized and focused, Pandas!

Your teachers, Ms. Goodson, Ms. Frankovich, Ms. Davison, Ms. O'Connor, Mr. Ford and Mr. Malkowsky

## Cluster 6-2

### Auction News!!!!

Dear Cluster 6-2 Parents,

Students will have a chance to receive panda bucks throughout the year for academic achievements and good citizenship. Our goal is to have one auction each semester, so that the students can spend the bucks that they have earned. The teachers have compiled a list of prizes that we think the students would value and want to purchase, but we need your help to make sure that our selection

is plentiful. Below we have included a list of items that we already have and items that we would like. This is our way of rewarding students for being caught in the A.C.T. (Attitude, Commitment, Teamwork) and to encourage them throughout the year.

Sincerely,

The Cluster 6-2 Teachers

- **HOMEWORK PASS**
- **RESERVED SEATING (ELA TEACHERS)**

- **PIZZA LUNCH WITH TEACHERS**
- **\$5 or \$10 GIFT CARDS**
- **POPULAR MOVIE POSTERS**
- **LOCKER DECORATIONS**
- **PERSHING P.E. OR CLUB SHIRTS**
- **LUNCH WITH THE PRINCIPAL**
- **THEME BASKET (INDIVIDUALLY PACKED ITEMS)**
- **GAME TIME**

- **MOVIE PARTY WITH FOUR FRIENDS**
- **AUTOGRAPHED PICTURE OF STUDENT WITH CLUSTER TEACHERS**
- **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**
- **ANY OTHER AGE APPROPRIATE ITEMS**

**Our first auction will be held in our auditorium on December 2, 2011. Thanks for your continued support.**

## Cluster 6-3

Cluster 6-3 is coming out of the gate strong this school year. With an abundance of rigor, relevance, and positive relationships in the classroom, it's hard to believe we're already this far in the school year.

Students are learning about the physical properties of matter in science class. They are currently working on hands-on measurement labs, which include measuring the volume, mass, and weight of objects.

In World Cultures we have been working with map skills and

have begun to work on culture characteristics. We will soon be comparing families from all around the world and seeing what types of homes they live in, what kind of possessions they own and what a typical meal is for them.

Mister Darden's class is currently working on the springboard curriculum. Studying skills such as Author's purpose, audience, and organizational text structures, Mr. Darden's students are learning how to become published authors in the classroom.

Mrs. Ford-Castille's class has been diligently working on becoming published authors. Their published Personal Narrative is due Friday, September 16. Students are also busy reading their AR books to meet the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Please encourage your child to read 30 minutes or more each night. Also, please make sure your child has all of the supplies needed for class. If they lose their agenda, they need to replace it ASAP in order to keep up with assignments. Please check

GradeSpeed regularly to see any changes made to grades. Also, check my website for updates. <https://sites.google.com/site/mrsfordcastillesclassroom/>

Ms. Pipes and Ms. Hart's math students are excited to be working with the new Spring Board math program. SpringBoard is a highly engaging, student-centered instructional program that will provide a path for attaining the knowledge and skills required for success in Advanced Placement courses later in high school.

## Cluster 6-4

Welcome to Cluster 6-4 -  
Where you are always welcome  
through our door.  
Here, our standards and  
expectations are high,  
But together the teachers and  
students can fly!  
Our students think outside the  
box,  
They are leaders that will learn  
to rock!  
Welcome again to Cluster 6-4 -  
We can't lose  
'Cause we're on the move.  
We have Panda Pride,  
So if you are not on board, step  
to the side!

## CLUSTER 7-1

The teachers of 7-1 would like to give a big shout out to our students. We are excited to have a great group of students and are looking forward to an excellent year ahead. Mr. Taft has reported that all the rational numbers are accounted for and even the most irrational number can be tamed numerically. Just a short distance south from Mr. Taft's room, Mrs. Faulk is mapping out the great state of Texas. Verbs are flying freely during Mrs. Tinker's classes, but a sentence without a subject doesn't fly at all. Finally with all the organic compounds going in and out of Mr. Buis' classroom students are finding out there is much more to cells than just their phones.

## CLUSTER 7-2

Cluster 7-2 kicked off our cluster clubs the first week of September. Students are enjoying learning new dances across the world, playing games of all kinds, sharing their mutual love of the Twilight series, traveling back in time to the 50's and 60's, and watching old TV shows! We teachers had nothing but positive feedback from the first day and we hope our students enthusiastically enjoy these fun clubs throughout the semester!

### Texas History

In Texas History, students are wrapping up their travels through the four Texas

regions and the geography of the land! In mid-September we will begin our unit on the Native Americans of Texas and the impact Spanish exploration had on these cultural groups. Look for students to express their creative talents through various project outlets in and out of the classroom!

### Science

We've had a great start to our year in the 213 Science Lab!!! We're getting into full swing now, and this is the time for students to make time to visit Ms. Harper's tutorials on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, at 8:00am. Upcoming units include Cells, Cell Theory, and Genetics. This material is NOT fully covered in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade science textbook, so it is very important that your students attend class and get the information they need to make this a successful semester.

### English

We are discussing choices students make. Students just completed researching their names and completed their crest designs. The crest designs are exhibited outside and inside room 212. The students did an excellent job and are heading towards writing a personal narrative. Tutorials are Mondays 3:50 - 4:30 and Wednesdays 8am - 8:30 am.

### Mathematics

We have learned how to add, subtract, multiply and divide integers. Scientific notation, squares and square roots, order of operations and operations with fractions are our next units of study. Please remember your homework daily. Ms. Olindes' tutorials are Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 8 a.m. Please drop by for assistance with homework or for make up work.

## CLUSTER 7-3

We are the Texans, and we are on a winning streak (at least at this moment!). Our students should be settling into school routines here and at home. It is very helpful for parents to check binders and agendas at least once a week.

Our cluster has begun our tutorials and clubs. Tutorials include study hall for students with no missing work; missing work make up time for those who need it; writing instruction and

math for students who need extra practice.

Our Club Day is Thursday and our students got to choose from: gardening, fantasy football, recycling/environment, fashion design, college football pick'em, and explore your world with geography, and gleek (based on the TV program, *Glee*).

### Science, Ms. Rendon

Right now we are working on the levels of organization and cell theory. We are about to being cell structure.

### Math, Ms. Ruddy

In Math, students are beginning the year with The Real Number system. They will examine the relationships between different types of rational numbers and discuss how they are used in everyday life. By the end of the unit, students will be able to add, subtract, multiple and divide fractions, decimals and integers as well as convert rational numbers.

### Texas History, Mr. Coursey

In Texas history, we are studying the four regions of Texas.

In elective gardening class, we picked black-eyed peas and peppers in the school garden. We cooked the peas and ate them with rice. We planted green onions. On the patio, we dug up a dead tree and posts so the gardening class can plant a replacement tree.

### English, Mrs. Cook

We are well into our first unit in SpringBoard! Students are preparing to write a personal narrative and have been reading models of personal narratives. We've been adding words to our vocabulary notebook, like "anthropologist" and tone. Our theme for the year is "Choice" and our Unit 1 topic is "The Choices We Make." It's been a great time to discuss the concept of choice and consequences.

Reading is imperative! Students are reading at school and at home and keeping track of their reading on a reading log that is turned in weekly (for a grade). Some of my top readers, so far, are: over 100 pages in one week—Vishva Mistry, Anas Kashif, Deja Hickson, Maya White, Kennedy Landry, Kayla Crawford, Annie Tao, Tran Pham, Amni Hijazi, Stone Yepp, Katelyn Brye; over 200

pages in one week—Allencia Sibley, Angy Hernandez, Destiny Hamilton; over 300 pages in one week—Fredye Winbush, Jaleah Hawkins, Jennifer Lang; over 400 pages in one week—Ostara Amerman, Angela Vantreese; over 700 pages in one week—Sophie Fang. Wow!

## CLUSTER 7-4

7-4 teachers are proud of our students and ask that all families in our cluster keep in touch with us via email or phone, continue to look at your children's agendas, follow GradeSpeed, and check out our websites online.

This six weeks in math we will be focusing on fractions and integer operations. Also, there is now student/parent access to the springboard materials online! To gain access, please visit [springboard.collegeboard.com](http://springboard.collegeboard.com) and use the school code 200927. Don't forget to follow our class on twitter @JJP\_MissLewis for updates in real time.

Texas History is currently working on Texas borders and geography. Ms. Jones says the excitement continues to overflow! We also want to recognize her for the beautiful video honoring America's proud handling of 9/11.

English and reading is off to a strong start as we begin the SpringBoard program. Our students recognize the incredible importance of both writing and reading this year and they are working hard to learn and practice skills that will prove successful.

Science with Ms. Chili, is blazing through the first topic of our studies: the cell. We have learned about organic compounds, the Cell Theory, important cytology scientists, and now are making our way through plant and animal organelle and their functions. We've got an immense amount of brain power, microscopes to utilize, and billions of specimens study. What else do we need?!

# 8TH GRADE NEWS

## Cluster 8-1

Cluster 8-1 would like to welcome the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to a brand new school year. Cluster 8-1 consists of: Mrs. Thomas-Math, Ms. McGowen-ELA, Mrs. Sandoval-History, Mr. Scott-Science, Ms. Shields-Speech, Coach Hollas-PE and Mrs. Broadhead-Drama.

SpringBoard is a new curriculum being used in the math and ELA classes. It has a very rigorous approach to content-which tie to College Board and Advanced Placement classes. Students are being asked to be critical/analytical thinkers in preparation for the

new state-mandated test called STAAR. The STAAR test is taken in all four content areas.

Identification cards were handed out during homeroom. All students should now be wearing their id's around their necks. Paper towels, tissue and hand sanitizer is still needed by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teachers. Cluster 8-2 is holding a coat/blankets drive for charity., so please feel free to contribute gently used or new coats/blankets to Mrs. Shufelt in cluster 8-2.

## Cluster 8-3

### Here's What's Happening in Cluster 8-3

The school year may have just started, but the students of Cluster 8-3 have been engaging in fun projects and learning new and exciting information! Students in Ms. Oliphant's classes have been busy creating Bohr models for atoms. These are student-made models of what an atom might look like if visible to the human eye. The students in the picture are creating these models using pipe cleaners and beads to show protons, neutrons, and electrons. They also created an index card which describes their particular atom.

Mr. Burrell's U.S. History classes have been at work feeding the school-wide timeline project. Each of his students has selected one personal and important life event to place on the large timeline down in the skylight

hallway. This has shown students the relevance and importance of history in the lives of Pershing students. His students have also been discovering and using primary sources to discuss events surrounding the 13 colonies. They are also using the OPTIC system to analyze pictures of colonial life.

Math students in Ms. Meldrum's class have embraced the new Springboard curriculum. Though this is a new and different type of math instruction, Ms. Meldrum's students are enjoying thinking in new ways and working together to find solutions. She is impressed with the ambition of her students, and she looks forward to working with them every day.

Stop by any of the classes in Cluster 8-3 to see amazing discoveries and activities in action!

## Cluster 8-2

The students of Cluster 8-2 have started school on a positive note and are already talking about the upcoming 8th grade events. We have started Wednesday tutorials and they have all started their new clubs on Thursdays.

This year Cluster 8-2 will be doing two community service projects. The students have started their first service project, a coat and blanket drive and they hope to garner school wide support. All coats and blankets will be donated to the shelters around the Houston area with some going to those people that have lost their

homes due to the wildfires in our area. Be the homeroom that donates the most! Coats and blankets can be dropped in rooms 236 & 238 through September 30, 2011.

## Cluster 8-4

In Ms. Bigelow's math class the emphasis has been on working with SpringBoard, the new math curriculum. Activities have included titles such as Laws and Order, That's A Lot of Cats, Driving for Points and The Bear Goes On. This change in curriculum should address the higher level of thinking skills that will be required to be successful on the new state STAAR test.

Ms. Smith's classes have gotten the school year off to a terrific start with diving head first into our new SpringBoard curriculum! Students have been engaged in learning the new concepts and elements needed to master the objectives! Many of the activities done in class have been student led and student motivated. It's

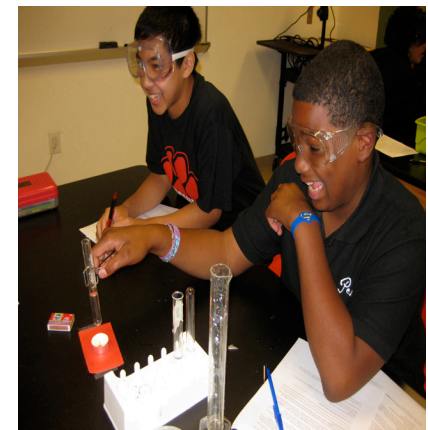
great to see students actually taking ownership in what they are learning!!

In history, students have learned about the first colonies in America. They have many different theories about Roanoke "The Lost Colony" since no one know what happened to the people it was fun to think of the wild stories. To honor the memory of 9/11 the students made a card with their memories and put them on the time line in the Skylight Hallway.

And in science all the students participated in a safety lab, after learning how to be safe in the laboratory they started their chemistry unit. Chemistry labs are in our near future. So if you hear a bang or smell something unusual check Mrs. Broz' room.



Students in Mrs. Vaclavik's class take part in a learning activity during U.S history.



Mrs. Broz' class has fun with a hands-on science experiment.

# SAVE THE DATE!

**Spaghetti Supper & Fine Arts Showcase**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20TH, 2011**

Pershing will host its annual Spaghetti Supper & Fine Arts Showcase on Thursday, October 20th, in the school cafeteria from 6-8pm. Come enjoy a Demeri's catered dinner and fantastic entertainment featuring Pershing's Fine Arts students.

If you would like to help out with this fun event by volunteering to make a dessert, helping with decorations, or working as a server or ticket-taker, we'd love your help. Want to win an iPad2, we will be selling raffle tickets at lunch and the night of the event. Please contact Ann Radtke at [aradtke2@comcast.net](mailto:aradtke2@comcast.net) or Ilene Flora at [mmmilene3@hotmail.com](mailto:mmmilene3@hotmail.com).

## "WE DID IT!"



Pershing teachers (left to right) Ms. Ruddy, Ms. Chilivetis, Ms. Brants, Ms. Meldrum, and Ms. Jones represented the school in the Bellaire Fun Run on September 17.