From the desk of Superintendent Chris Williams

Holiday Light Parade

Our students had a great time at the Holiday Light Parade this past weekend! Thank you to all the parents, staff, and students for their work in making these beautiful floats! And congratulations to Liberty High School who received a first place ribbon for their participation in the parade.

Be sure to head out to the Vine Street Showcase this Saturday as many of our students will be performing!

Give this Holiday Season

Many of our sites are participating in various drives during this holiday season. If you can’t make it out to the particular site, you are always welcome to leave your items at the district office. Deadline for all donations is December 19th.

The Arts Academy at Bauer Speck Student Council is collecting new or unused socks in their Fuzzy Sock Drive. The socks will be donated to senior citizens and those in need in our community.

Our Support Services Department is collecting items for the Clean & Confident program to help provide toiletries to homeless youth. Items such as soap, shower gel, deodorant, lotion, shampoo/conditioner, tooth brushes, tooth paste, skincare products, or hair products and accessories will gladly be accepted. Donations can be dropped off at the district office or Support Services Facility.

The district office is collecting new and unwrapped toys for the annual Toys for Tots drive. Please consider donating!
Students Skype with Olympian

Students at Flamson Middle School spoke with Olympian Erin Hamlin this week via Skype. Erin is currently training in Canada and will be representing the USA in February in the luge. Ms. Kloeppel's PE class was selected to be part of a program called Classroom Champions. During these past few weeks, students have been completing assignments and learning about topics such as goal setting and perseverance. The students were given the opportunity to ask Erin questions about her training, how she got into the sport, and what her goals are. They also asked her personal questions about her favorite music and if she had any pets. They will get to talk to her again before she competes. They will definitely be rooting her on in February when the Olympics take place in South Korea!

Hour of Code

Students throughout PRJUSD participated this past week in Hour of Code activities in honor of Computer Science Week. Volunteers from Amazon in San Luis Obispo led our 4th grade students through kinesthetic activities that introduced coding principles including looping and functions. Computer science engineers are expected to be in high demand, and getting students hooked early is key to developing pathways that lead toward this STEM career. Eruptions of glee could be heard through the room when students coded pathways that led to success! Pictured here are students from Georgia Brown Elementary, Pat Butler Elementary, and Kermit King Elementary.

Students Participate in Charrette

Students at The Arts Academy at Bauer Speck participated in a charrette with staff members and architects to discuss plans for Measure M updates to their campus. A charrette is “a meeting in which all stakeholders in a project attempt to resolve conflicts and map solutions.” The students presented their drawings of what they wanted as an ideal place to learn and play and really enjoyed working on the future campus design!
Paso Robles High School hosts County Chess Tournament

This past weekend, the Paso Robles High School Chess Club hosted the “Fall Fiesta” Chess Tournament. Over 60 boys and girls of all ages from schools around San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County played five rounds of chess competing for trophies. There was an "unrated" competition for students in grades K - 3, an unrated section for students in grades K -8, and a United States Chess Federation (USCF) "rated' competition for high school students and younger highly skilled players. Special thanks to the Engstrom Family for assisting the PRHS Chess Club to host this successful event.

For competition results and more information about chess clubs and upcoming competitions in our area and beyond, please visit the SLOCHESS.COM website. The website is also full of chess skill-building resources for youth.

Pictured are PRHS students Benjamin Stainbrook (Chess Club President), Cole Engstrom (Chess Club Treasurer), and Brian Kraugh (Chess Club Secretary). Also pictured are members of the Winifred Pifer Elementary Chess Club who participated in their first tournament and placed 4th. Congratulations!

Flamson and Butler Mix it up

Flamson Middle School’s leadership class and Pat Butler’s Student Council hosted the Butler students in Mix It Up at Lunch Day to promote identifying, questioning, and crossing social boundaries. Students ate lunch picnic style with students from other social groups, learned about each other, and shared compliments with one another.

Mix It Up at Lunch Day was also a great opportunity for students to show their RISE behavior expectations. Students showed respect for others while meeting new people, practiced safety by staying seated while they ate, and showed integrity by picking up all their trash. Way to go, Bears and Cougars!

Liberty Flag Football Team Wins

Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Maas took a team of sixteen Liberty High School students to play in the first-ever interschool flag football tournament for alternative education in our area. Four local alternative education schools gathered in Santa Maria for this tournament which focused not only on the sport, but sportsmanship as well. Congratulations to Liberty High for going undefeated and winning the tournament!
Staff News
Kim Gaspar, Program Coordinator for ASES, received recognition as a Hands on Hero, presented by the First 5 of San Luis Obispo and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education. Hands on Heroes is a special recognition of dedicated individuals who believe in and support the Children’s Bill of Rights, an achievable vision that our children grow up with healthy minds, bodies and spirits that enable them to maximize their potential. Congratulations, Kim!

Butler Students Stick Together
This week, Pat Butler Elementary students got their first look at their "StickTogether" creation. Students worked on individual sheets and then worked as a team to put them all together in the library. It was a surprise for the students as they had no idea what the 12 - 8½'' x 11'' sticker pages were going to look like. Approximately 100 students worked very hard to make this beautiful mosaic picture. Great job!

STEAM
In STEAM this week, students engineered a reindeer that would slide the fastest down a zipline using the engineering design process to plan, create, test, and then modify their designs. The students shared their individual blueprints with their team and then came up with one plan. They also discussed structure and function and worked to overcome the force of friction. One team lowered their time of 28 seconds to just 2.3 seconds by improving their design to reduce the amount of friction. Pictured are students in Mrs. Mayer’s and Mrs. Winfield’s classes at Pat Butler Elementary and Mrs. Farrell’s class at Winifred Pifer Elementary.
Students, staff, and parents from The Arts Academy at Bauer Speck celebrated their Kids Art Smart projects with a reception at Studios on the Park. Drama students are working on producing a short musical and presenting readers’ theater before the winter break.

Mrs. Carminati’s Kermit King Elementary art students are evaluating their clay projects and completing a directed draw.

Orchestra 1 violin students have learned both the B flat and E flat scales this week.

It is December and that means it is time to study the music of the Nutcracker Ballet! All grade levels are doing a variety of activities, including learning the plot and main characters, identifying and describing pieces, following the form of songs using listening maps, and performing a rhythm stick routine to the Russian dance. 4th graders at each site are learning Jingle Bells on recorders, which introduces a 5th note and a higher skill level. Mrs. Goldbach’s kindergarten class at Virginia Peterson Elementary is shown learning Nutcracker songs through movement.

In drama news, Lewis Middle School will be hosting their 2nd annual Winter Showcase this Friday at 6:30 PM. Students will perform scenes, monologues, and pantomimes. And this is the last weekend to catch the PRHS production of Peter and the Starcatcher. Tickets are available at www.prhsdrama.com.
Liberty Earns Award for Blood Drive

Last Friday, Liberty High School students and staff, district staff, and community members participated in the second quarterly blood drive for United Blood Services. On behalf of the school, Fred Kloepper received a trophy from United Blood Services for the second year in a row for contributing the largest number of blood donations for a school of its size in our area. Way to go, Sharks!

ASES

ASES students at The Arts Academy at Bauer Speck garden weekly with Gloria from One Cool Earth. Gloria is a PRJUSD alumni who enjoys spending time with the students in the garden. Students also work hard on their homework during the ASES academic hour.

Virginia Peterson Elementary ASES students keep active after school with an all-student kickball game. Students also learned to take photos with a camera during art.

Winifred Pifer Elementary ASES students work on ST Math weekly in the computer lab as well as other Math and English Language Arts games.

Digital Photography Featured

At Lewis Middle School, Mr. Grace’s classes just completed their digital photography unit, the results of which have been like no other year! These are some of the best projects which were voted on by classmates to be on display in the prestigious “Illuminated Marquee.”

Mr. Grace’s classes would also like to thank the district office for the honor of being able to post some of their digital photos in their foyer.
AVID Tutorial

AVID students in Mrs. Seidel’s class at Lewis Middle School are using their inquiry, collaboration, and note-taking skills in tutorial each week. Each student presents the group with a “point of confusion.” The tutors, along with other group members, help them work through the process toward understanding.

Bearcat Athletics Update

PRHS Girls’ Basketball is 4-0 to start the season! Congratulations to Kim Buchanan and Sydney Meneses for being selected to the Atascadero Basketball Tournament all-tournament team.

Girls’ soccer defeated Morro Bay HS 6-0 this week. Ryann Coffey and Atiana Stratman both scored 2 goals. Jordan Bullard had 1 goal and 2 assists and Marissa Ezzell also scored 1 goal (her 3rd goal in 3 games).

In girls’ water polo, the Bearcats had their first home game of the season against the Santa Ynez Pirates. It was a close back and forth game with 6 ties throughout. With three second remaining, the Bearcats scored off of a redirect by Aubrey Pasky from Tatiana Smeltzer and the Bearcats won the game 9-8. Smeltzer was the leading scorer with 5 goals and Pasky had 2. Halle Nash and Mackenzie Raymond had one a piece. Finley Burns had 6 saves on the night. The Bearcats, now 4-3, play their first league game at San Luis Obispo on Tuesday.

Community News

Winter REC Guide is coming in the water bills so be on the lookout! There will be some winter break classes planned for parents who work and need something for their children to do during the two-week break. For more info, please visit: http://www.prcity.com/government/departments/recreation/index.asp. And don’t forget to see Santa on December 14th at Centennial Park or at Oak Park Soccer Field on December 18th!

Free Junior Tennis Clinic

Boys & Girls
Grades 4th through 8th
December 16th
Noon – 2 pm
Games will be played and prizes given!
One Cool Earth Corner

Winifred Pifer Elementary School’s Family Cooking Night is taking place Tuesday, December 12th from 5 – 8 PM in the school cafeteria. Students and parents may sign up any time before the event! Either contact the front office or Danica Smith (contact information below).

What is a Family Cooking Night you may ask? Here is a story of impact written by One Cool Earth member Julia Paige:

“Childhood obesity rates have tripled since 1980, American toddlers are more likely to eat french fries than green vegetables on any given day, and it is estimated that 20% of all American meals are eaten in a car.

With dire facts such as this, what can be done to make change in a positive direction for the health of our kids and our meals? One Cool Earth has decided to act by hosting Family Cooking Nights: a free event where families are invited to join us as we guide them through a recipe and facilitate family mealtime with real plates and real time to talk to one another. Our goal of the Family Cooking Nights is to demonstrate that cooking and eating together can be fun, easy, and affordable. It also benefits children in numerous ways. Exposure to scratch cooking helps kids develop a mature taste for fresh ingredients and consider the portions and nutrition of what they are eating. Cooking also creates the necessary space and time for families to feel connected to one another by engaging in conversation (sans phones), collaborating around a task, and sharing the fruits of their labors together.

With each recipe we made, we are seeing the benefits of creating a space to cook and share food as a family. One surprised parent told me at our last Family Cooking Night at San Benito Elementary school “I have never seen my son go near an onion, but he ate two [black bean and sweet potato empanadas] and said he loved them!” At another event, we were told by family that they cherished the time they were able to spend together cooking and the taste of food made from scratch, because their current housing circumstances did not allow for home cooked meals. For us, stories such as these demonstrate that every child deserves not only a place to grow, but also to cook. It will create a generation of healthier, more informed eaters and strengthen familial bonds along the way.”

If you are interested in volunteering in any way, please contact Danica Smith, our FoodCorps AmeriCorps Member at danicas@onecoolearth.org for further opportunities and information. And remember to check out One Cool Earth on Facebook to see when they’ll be hosting community garden workdays at your school: www.facebook.com/onecoolearth or www.onecoolearth.org. From planting to painting signs, there is an activity for everyone :)