COOP SCOOP

6 December 2024

A PSCS NEWSLETTER

pioneersprings.org

MINDFUL SCREEN TIME AT PIONEER SPRINGS, BY MARGARET BONDS









In light of the Digital Citizenship week at Pioneer Springs, we would like to address screen time and it's connection to education and development. At Pioneer Springs Community School, we take a thoughtful approach to technology use, ensuring it enhances learning without overexposure. Here's how we're mindful of screen time:

- Purposeful Use, Technology is used sparingly and only when it directly supports educational goals.
- Hands-On Learning, We prioritize face-to-face interactions, nature-based exploration, and hands-on activities.

Many of our teachers notice that students often repeat phrases from video games or online videos. Additionally, extended online time can affect attention spans, language development, and social engagement.

Research on screen-time shows that:

- Excessive screen time is linked to lower executive functioning, reduced academic performance, and delayed language development.
- Overuse disrupts social-emotional growth, leading to challenges including reduced emotional comprehension, sleep disturbances, and increased anxiety.
- Positive effects include the potential for educational benefits when content is age-appropriate and co-viewed with caregivers.

What Families Can Do:

- Set daily limits on screen time.
- Encourage outdoor play and creative offline activities.
- Ask your student to do a "check-in": How do they feel before screen time? How do they feel directly after when they have to stop? Have them reflect on this and if the screen time has a positive impact on how they feel.
- **Try This**: Create a "Tech-Free Dinner" policy to foster meaningful family conversations.

By working together, we can support students in developing healthy digital habits while preserving their love of learning and connection to the natural world.

IMPORTANT DATES & ITEMS TO NOTE

- 11 Dec: Blood Drive, 9am - 1pm
- 16 Dec: Board of Trustees meeting
- 19 Dec: Teacher Appreciation Event
- 19 Dec: HS Semi-Formal, 6:30pm
- 20 Dec-2 Jan: Winter Break
- High School Exam Schedule
- Academic & Events Calendar
- Who to Contact and When

CREATE A FOREST FEAST FOR OUR CAMPUS BEASTS THIS DECEMBER



Dear Families,

Next week, from **9-13 December, our school is hosting a special December Eco-Schools initiative called "A Forest Feast"**! Students will create edible ornaments to decorate trees on campus, providing a feast for the wildlife in our area.

We need your help to make this project a success! If you can donate supplies or volunteer during lunch/recess, even for a short time, we'd greatly appreciate it. Volunteers will help students at ornament-making stations set up outside each building.

Supplies Needed (drop off at carpool or Castle):

- Cranberries
- Bird seed
- Shortening (like Crisco)
- Apples and oranges

Volunteer Schedule:

- Monday: Davis, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM
- Tuesday: Croft, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
- Wednesday: Asbury, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
- Thursday: Lunch Island, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
- Friday: High School Lunch Area, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

If you can help, please email margaretannem@pioneersprings.org. Thank you for supporting this meaningful way for our students to give back to nature this holiday season!







ECOSCHOOLS UPDATE: BUILDING WINTER SHELTER FOR CAMPUS WILDLIFE, BY SANDY DIXON, PSCS NATURALIST

Hello All!

With the very cold temperatures in Charlotte this week we begin to think about the wildlife around us and how they (and those kids in shorts and no coats) will survive the freezing temperatures. Information from NC State University helps clarify how some of our campus wildlife is surviving and how we might be able to help. Several classes on campus spent some time outside this week creating brush shelters and even a hibernaculum to help. If you see one of these shelters (in the pollinator garden, by the math gardens at Croft, near Kindergarten, and in the metal garden bed in Croft parking lot) please be respectful. Brush shelters are easy to make, just gather logs, sticks and leaves. We have many small rakes in the garden shed by Davis for student use. Please just be sure to return them to the garden shed for others to use. You would be surprised by how much kids like to rake! Stay warm!

Editor's note: this would be a wonderful activity to try as a family. If your student participated in the shelter building, they could teach your family how to build a shelter for the wildlife near your home.

Elementary students built brush shelters for small mammals and birds, as well as shelters for amphibians, called hibernaculums. Small animals live in rock crevices, under leaf litter, and in brush piles during the winter to stay warm and dry. Did you know that **leaving the leaves** in your yard over winter provides vital habitat for animals?




Ms. Karen's class raked leaves to add to the brush shelter they made by collecting sticks and logs after learning about helping wildlife during cold temperatures.



Second grade built brush shelters in the pollinator garden.



Ms. Shelli's fourth grade broke up into shape groups & each group created a different geometric shaped brush shelter in the math garden area. We used information from our earlier Bioblitz to think about the critters on campus who may need shelter this winter.





Ms. Tanya's class built a hibernaculum in their garden for reptiles & amphibians to over winter.

A MESSAGE FROM WINGS: ATTENTION 3RD, 4TH AND 5TH GRADE FAMILIES...

PIONEER W.I.N.G.S

OUR HOMEGROWN PTO!

We have an exciting event coming up on Thursday, December 19th! Our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade families will be hosting the upcoming all staff teacher appreciation event. The theme for this event is Cookies and Cocoa.

We are kindly asking for **3rd, 4th and 5th grade families** to sponsor this all staff appreciation event by donating supplies, food and/or volunteering (the sign up link is below). We really appreciate your support and we are so thankful for you.

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F094DACA62FA0FF2-53375504-cookies

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COCOA COTILLION

Winter Semi Formal

Thursday, December 19th
6:30PM- 9:30PM

The Old Town Event Center
19725 Oak Street
Cornelius, NC 28031

The last day to purchase tickets will be Tuesday, December 17th
PSCS Student: $30
Non-PSCS Student: $35
To purchase tickets please visit the link below:
Tickets & Registration
Click here to volunteer!





COMMUNITY PARTNERS MAKE PSCS STRONG!

Thank you to the following businesses, including Carol Winesette, who have contributed to Pioneer Springs this year! Our business partners help make our school community strong. If you visit a business that supports Pioneer Springs, please let them know that your family is part of the PSCS school community.

LAKE NORMAN REALTY, INC.

Mercado's Dumpster Service
A Family Tradition Since 1996
A Division of Mercado's Construction Clean Up, Inc.

HAMILTON & WHITECOTTON ORTHODONTICS

big A BIG HEART FOUNDATION

We'd also like to thank the Village Store in downtown Davidson for donating spike ball sets for The Glade!

Are you a business owner who would like to partner with Pioneer Springs, or do you know a business that should partner with Pioneer Springs? Learn about the benefits of partnership and make your contribution by clicking here. Contact Heidi Magi (heidim@pioneersprings.org) if you have any questions.

SHOW YOUR SALAMANDER SPIRIT!



Are you on the hunt for Pioneer Springs spirit wear? We have you covered! You can buy gear in one of two ways:

- Stop by the office to buy Hellbender and Mudpuppy t-shirts, car magnets, stickers, and more
- **Check-out our online gear store for t-shirts, tote bags, sweatshirts, hats and sweatpants**. The online gear store is a pop-up shop created in partnership with Scarlet & Gold. Scarlet & Gold donates 10% of profits from online purchases to PSCS.

Are you interested in gear that we do not currently offer? Fill out this form, and we will see what we can do!

STUDENT SMILES



Stem learning making things move in Ms. Tracy's class.



3rd graders enjoy jumping in a pile of leaves!

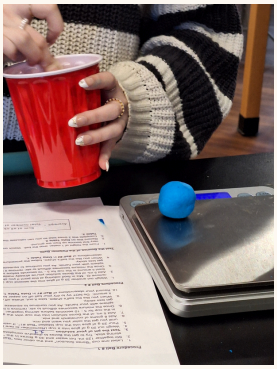


The annual turkey has visited! Presented by Ms. Megan





Ms. Whitney's class completed a lab to determine if they could outrun a dinosaur! They measured their legs and compared them to dinosaurs. They determined velociraptors, sanjuansauruses, and a deinonychuses had leg lengths similar to our students. Students ran 8 steps and measured how far each student ran. The class then compared that distance to how far the dinosaurs ran in 8 steps. They had multiple students who ran further than the dinosaurs!











Polymers are all around us both in nature and in everyday life. These large molecules are composed of repeating smaller units can be found in the starches in your French fries to the plastic lining of your soda can. Ms. Shannon's physical science students recently created their own bouncy balls using a polymer reaction between borax and glue as well as other additives. They then determined the density of their bouncy balls as well as the average bounce height to determine which recipe was the best.