30 May 2025

COOP SCOOP

A PSCS NEWSLETTER

pioneersprings.org

DOING THE HARD THING, BY RACHEL LARKIN





IMPORTANT DATES & ITEMS TO NOTE

- 16 June: Board meeting, 6pm
- Summer Camp information
- Academic & Events Calendar
- Board meeting minutes

Rachel Larkin is the founding teacher of the PreOneers program. In her nearly decade of service at PSCS, she has made a profound impact on her students and colleagues. Rachel is moving to Connecticut this summer. We will miss her creativity, her dedication to excellence, and, most importantly, her belief that every child can learn. Here are some of the words that she shared at Thursday's PreOneers Graduation:

When Ms. Becky, our director, approached me about creating a preschool, our goal was to create a place that instilled a love of learning so that our children could grow to be real citizens of the world. Pretty straightforward, right? As it turns out, a lot goes into that.

Being away from home, being one child of many, all new environments, growing pains, waiting turns, community ownership and responsibility, social and emotional hurdles, accepting help, and even things we as adults don't think of– how to use a different bathroom, how to handle all of the little 'what if's'. Actually, it turns out that starting preschool is similar to the things we adults tackle every day, too.

So, it turns out, the job is never done. But, it's in the rare, quiet moments, when there's nothing pressing to do, that we can sit back and say, "this is why we do it." We can say "Remember when…look at them now! Look how much they've grown!"

"We can do hard things!"

And then we say things like "whoever gets them in kindergarten will be lucky. They've grown so much. I wish we could keep them."

But we can't, we aren't supposed to. That's OUR hard thing, and our best reward. To be able to watch your child let go of your hands and carefully walk away from us and onto the next adventure. So, when your kindergarten teacher [or your sixth grade teacher, or your high school teacher, or your college professor, or your first boss] asks you, "How did you do that?" Remember to say, "I am a Pioneer."

From reading with your child

To attending conferences

To volunteering in the classroom

... and at school-wide events

To your monetary donations

... and outfitting our classrooms with supplies

From reviewing math homework

To waking up early to get to school on time

From pep-talks

... and holding high expectations

To packing yummy lunches

... and washing muddy clothes

From words of affirmation to teachers

To sharing your honest feedback

Thank you for everything you have done this year to make our learning community amazing!!

Pioneer Springs Community School

LEARN ABOUT OUR SUMMER CAMPS AND REGISTER TODAY





Summer camp registration is now open! Sign-up today to ensure that you have a spot!! From Camp PreOneer for rising Kindergarteners and First Graders to cooking and building camps, as well as camps exploring our National Parks, Milan, Tokyo and more! Our summer offerings are sure to excite wonder for students in preK through Sixth Grade.

****New theatre camps available now!****



Click here for more information and to register.

REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR BOOTS HOME, OR DONATE THEM

Has your student outgrown their mud boots? Consider donating your boots to our annual WINGS mud boot sale. Making your donation is simple--just leave your boots at school. All boots still on campus on Friday, June 6 will be collected and sold in our August Mud Boot Sale, with proceeds going to WINGS.

If you'd like to use your mud boots another year, remember to take them home before the end of school!

Thank you for supporting WINGS!



THANK YOU FOR SHOWING UP FOR OUR COMMUNITY, PIONEER PROCTORS!



State testing provides vital data for the Pioneer Springs community to examine the effectiveness of our academics. This year we have had an enthusiastic and dedicated crew of parents, grandparents, and community members volunteer to help testing run smoothly by proctoring.
Thanks to our amazing group of proctors, we are able to ensure that students have calm, focused testing environments, while also keeping more staff members in classrooms.

Thank you, proctors, for supporting our students and staff!

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD THROUGH CAPSTONE GRADUATION PROJECT

All Pioneer Springs Community School students complete the North Carolina Graduation Project in order to earn their high school diploma. The North Carolina Graduation Project is designed to give students an opportunity to engage in real-world interdisciplinary research related to their specific area of academic interest and future career pathway. The Capstone Graduation Projects includes a research project, off-campus Work Based Learning, and a culminating experience.

Ariella Treese, class of 2025, plans to become a nurse. Her research project focused on burnout among nurses. During her Work Based Learning experience, Ariella shadowed a NICU nurse, and saw first-hand how intellectually and emotionally demanding nursing can be. This led Arielle to decide to host a refueling station for nurses.

CARING FOR THE HEALTHCARE WORKERS WHO CARE FOR US, BY ARIELLA TREESE, PSCS CLASS OF 2025



Healthcare workers face long hours, emotional stress, and physical exhaustion, often with little time to rest or recharge. Burnout is at an all-time high, especially among nurses, who carry heavy patient loads and immense emotional responsibility. So, with all this information, I decided to hold a "Refueling Station" as my tangible project for my Capstone Project. To make this happen, I held a snack drive at my church and got in contact with a nurse at Levine Children's Hospital. I heard back from the nurse I was in contact with a day after I set it up in their break room. All of the nurses were very thankful for all the snacks and water that were donated. All that being said, let's care for those who care for us and our loved ones.

Pioneer Springs Community School Awarded EcoSchools U.S. Green Flag Award for Exceptional Achievement in Educating for Sustainability

Honor indicates commitment to education for sustainability and youth leadership for environmental change at the school and within the local community

Charlotte, NC, May 20, 2025-Pioneer Springs Community School was recognized with the prestigious Green Flag Award by the National Wildlife Federation's EcoSchools U.S. program for exceptional achievement in educating for sustainability and driving positive environmental change in the school and local community, the Eco-Schools highest honor.

Since 2009, over 6,000 schools in all 50 states have participated in the EcoSchools U.S. program, which is based on the commitment and work of student-driven teams dedicated to issues such as waste reduction, climate change, and biodiversity using action cards and other educational resources to develop environmental action plans for their school.

"The National Wildlife Federation and EcoSchools U.S. are proud of the example set by Pioneer Springs Community School in Charlotte, NC," said Jennifer Hammonds, Director of K-12 Education Programs. "This award demonstrates not only a commitment to sustainability and environmental literacy for students and faculty but an appreciation that the best, most effective education transcends the classroom and offers a place-based, project-based approach to learning". To receive the Green Flag award, Pioneer Springs Community School's students and faculty committed to a number of sustainability actions leading to enough points to earn a Green Flag award. This included engaging the local community, forming an action team, creating an action plan, collecting data, taking solution-based actions, and measuring impact. These steps led to garden development, waste reduction, sustainability art projects, habitat restoration and many more initiatives all designed to provide opportunities for youth leadership, raise environmental awareness, connect students to the natural world, and drive positive environmental change.

National Wildlife Federation was named the stateside host for the international Eco-Schools program in 2008. The International Eco-Schools program (https://www.ecoschools.global) is a network of over 48,000 K-12 schools in 79 countries through Foundation of Environmental Education (FEE) member organizations and in 22 countries through international schools, started in 1994 by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) with support from the European Commission. It was named by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) as a model initiative for Education for Sustainable Development in 2003, and in 2022-23 became a supporting member of the UNESCO-led Greening Education partnership – helping to prepare every learner to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to tackle climate change and promote sustainable development. Eco-Schools as well is a partner in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration which runs from 2021 to 2030, and calls for the protection and revival of ecosystems worldwide.

Learn more about EcoSchools U.S., nwf.org/eco-schools-us. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

National Wildlife Federation works in collaboration with communities to provide K-12 education that is responsive to and supports student leadership and equitable solutions to collectively build a more ecologically and socially just world.