



Pulaski County Public Schools

inFocus

Reach Each Child

SUMMER 2013

From the Superintendent

Pulaski County Public Schools is excited to begin the development of the 2014-2019 Comprehensive Plan. The Pulaski County School Board recently approved goals to guide the development of this plan. As we take the first step towards updating our comprehensive plan, we will be reaching out to our teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and the Pulaski County community through surveys to gain thoughts and ideas on ensuring success for our students.

Following the collection of survey information, community conversations will be scheduled with faculty, staff, parents, students, and the Pulaski County community to guide us in the next steps of this planning process. Together we will develop a comprehensive plan aimed at enhancing Pulaski County Public Schools.

Committee members will be tasked with building on the division's vision and mission, and school board goals. Additionally, committee members will work to develop the priorities and defining statements that will assist in the development of specific, measurable division goals to support the recently approved school board goals. Committee members will present recommendations to the school board and leadership team for review and to assist them in the development of a draft version of the Comprehensive Plan 2014-2019.

Additionally, an online survey will be available for all stakeholders to identify baseline information for the Comprehensive Plan 2014-2019, as well as Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation standards. This online survey will allow input from the community as a whole and provide further information in developing our comprehensive plan.

Pulaski County Public Schools understands that engaging our community and prioritizing our needs is a necessary component in preparing our students for the world ahead. Our changing society will pose great challenges to our students. We are committed to providing a sound, well-rounded education to help all students achieve and compete successfully in the global world. To accomplish this, we must properly plan for providing our students with the tools necessary to achieve their future goals. Thank you for all that you do to support Pulaski County Public Schools.

Thomas Brewster
Superintendent

“*Our changing society will pose great challenges to our students. We are committed to providing a sound, well-rounded education to help all students achieve and compete successfully in the global world.*”

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 13-24

SOL Testing

May 27

Memorial Day (No School)

May 31

Last Day of School
(2-hr early release)

PCHS Graduation - 8 p.m.

June 3-5

Teacher Workdays

August 12

Teachers Return

August 14

Convocation - NRCC - 8:30 a.m.

August 20

Orientation Day for PK, K, 6th, and 9th Grades (2-hr early release)

August 21

First Day of School
(2-hr early release)



Steering Their Peers in Making the Right “Choices”

BY NEESEY PAYNE

Making mistakes is part of growing up. No one is perfect, but some mistakes can't be as easily forgiven as others. The phrase, “I just had a few drinks,” never ends on a positive note. It's part of a mistake that begins as “innocent fun” and ends in disappointment, heartache and tragedy. Students at Pulaski County High School are taking the driver's seat in steering their peers from drinking and driving through a movie entitled “Choices”.

Over the course of four months, Sarah Matney, driver education teacher, Gregg Hawks, TV/video production teacher, and PCHS students worked diligently to bring the movie to life.

“The students played a huge role in creating their characters. While there was a framework that guided their actions, all



dialogue and character persona came from their own creative input,” said Hawks.

From the initial crash, to bloody victims and police questioning, scenes were shot that detailed the true consequences of drinking and driving with the help of the Pulaski County Sheriff's Department, Dublin Fire and Rescue, and Regional Emergency Medical Services Inc.

Matney said the student playing the role of the drunk driver expressed, “I never want

to have to go through that feeling again.”

The experience of making the movie has had a significant impact on all students involved. They have learned that one night of fun can carry a lifetime of consequences.

Since completing the project, “Choices” has premiered to leaders in the community and student body at PCHS. The public also viewed the movie at Pulaski Theatre on May 4.

Pulaski County Public Schools Adopts Paperless Meeting Technology for 2013-14

BoardDocs Increases Efficiency & Decreases Costs

Pulaski County Public Schools is leveraging the power of the Internet to radically improve the governance process while saving time, taxpayer dollars and the environment. BoardDocs, a remarkably powerful, easy-to-use solution, will enable the division to maximize the effectiveness of board meetings with increased transparency and bet-

ter communication with the public. This new eGovernance initiative will replace the old and costly method of compiling, printing, binding and distributing paper agenda packets by hand. By adopting BoardDocs, Pulaski County Public Schools will be able to distribute documents associated with board meetings more quickly and efficiently, at a dramatically reduced cost to the district.

Key Benefits of BoardDocs:

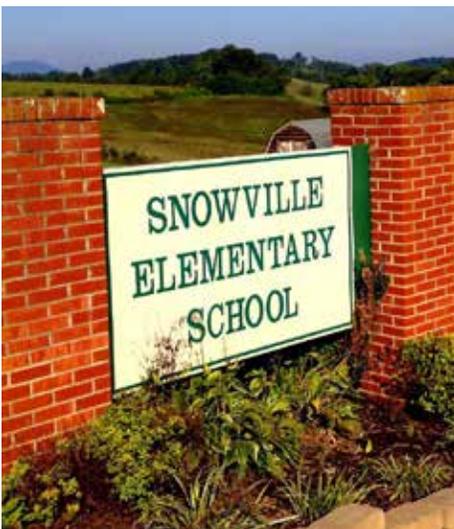
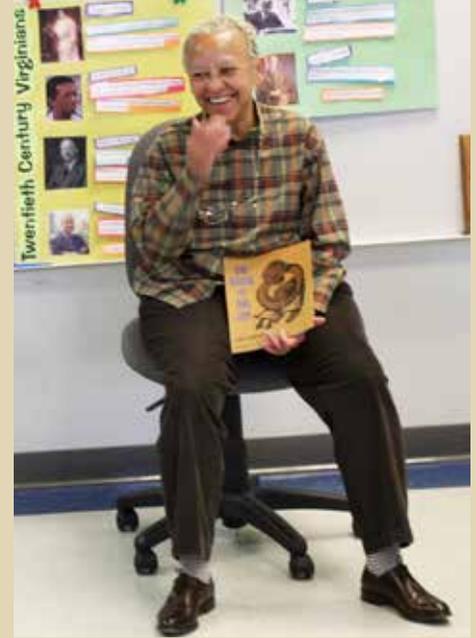
- Saves time and resources
- Provides unprecedented public access to agenda items and other board-related information
- Allows interested parties to review information prior to board meetings

- After meetings, individuals can review the agenda items and see what action was taken by the board, complete with voting results
- All documents associated with the meeting are automatically archived and can be accessed by meeting date or by using the system's comprehensive search feature
- Allows the division to provide video clips of important board presentations

Pulaski County Public Schools will also use the BoardDocs technology to publish the policies and procedures of the division online for easy viewing, which again reduces expense for the division.



For more information about BoardDocs, visit www.boarddocs.com.



Snowville Elementary School Receives Board of Education Excellence Award

Snowville Elementary School is one of fifty-one schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia to earn the Board of Education Excellence Award, the second-tier honor in the 2013 Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) awards for advanced learning and achievement. As an award recipient, Snowville has met all state and federal accountability benchmarks for at least two consecutive years and made significant progress toward goals for increased student achievement and expanded educational opportunities set by the State Board of Education.

“We are proud of Snowville Elementary School, and the school board commends the hard work of our community of parents, students, teachers and administrators,” said Pulaski County School Board Chair Michael Barbour.

World-Renowned Poet Visits Snowville Elementary Students

Each Friday, Ms. Angela Arnold’s fourth grade class participates in a poetry session. Students sip on hot chocolate while listening to and interpreting the poetry being read. Reading poetry gives the students the tools they need to become enthusiastic readers, and this experience enriches students’ lives as they discover words, sound, and rhythm in unique, creative ways.

Ms. Arnold’s class was very fortunate to have Nikki Giovanni as their guest speaker on Friday, April 5th. Giovanni is a world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. She has authored more than 30 books for children and adults, and has received countless awards and recognition, including Governor’s Awards from Virginia and Tennessee, the Langston Hughes Medal for poetry, and the Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award (of which she was the first recipient). She was also selected as Woman of the Year by *Mademoiselle*, *The Ladies Home Journal*, and *Ebony* magazines.

During her visit with the class, Giovanni read two of her published books; *The Genie in the Jar* and *Knoxville, Tennessee*. Students participated in a lively discussion about poetry and Nikki Giovanni’s life accomplishments. The students were particularly interested to learn how she became good friends with Rosa Parks.

More information about Nikki Giovanni is available at <http://nikki-giovanni.com/index.shtml>





Foreign Language Opportunities Expanding at PCPS Middle Schools

Pulaski County Public Schools will be offering foreign language courses next year at the middle schools through Virtual Virginia. A World Language course will be offered to 7th graders as a prerequisite to credit bearing high school foreign language courses that can be taken in the 7th or 8th grades. Eighth grade students are registered for Spanish I, French I, Latin I, and Chinese I.

As a program of the Virginia Department of Education, Virtual Virginia offers online Advanced Placement (AP), world language, core academic, and elective courses to students across the commonwealth and nation. Virtual Virginia is com-

mitted to providing high-quality, rigorous course content with the flexibility to meet schools' and students' varied schedules, and is designed to provide instruction that meets the individual needs of students.

Virtual learning is the new frontier in today's educational institutions. The technology of the 21st century provides a unique opportunity for educators to reach students who want the experience of online courses. Pulaski County Public Schools hope to utilize Virtual Virginia to expand curriculum opportunities for students. For additional information, please contact your student's building principal.

Stacy Jones, a teacher at Critzer Elementary School, was recognized by the Virginia Farm Bureau as Area 7 Special Olympics Volunteer of the Year for her activities within the organization, including her involvement on the local council and with annual fundraising. Ms. Jones has been volunteering for Special Olympics for the past four years as a coach, player, and global messenger for Area 9 (New River Valley) in volleyball, basketball, softball, bowling, and track and field.



School Entrance Procedures

Recently, Pulaski County Public Schools installed electronic door locks with cameras to the main entrances of all schools. These electronic locks are operational once the school day begins, and the following procedures have been established for the 2013-14 school year.

1. Adjacent to the main door is a small grey camera system with two-way communication. On the system you should locate and push the button that rings in to the office area.
2. Stand in front of the camera system and have your photo identification (e.g. driver's license) ready. Even though your child's teachers or other staff members may know you, the individual responding might not recognize you. Therefore, they may ask you to show your identification to the camera and/or ask your business at the school.
3. Once approved, the electronic lock will disengage and allow you to enter the building.
4. Please report directly to the main office for your meeting or to secure a visitor's badge if your business is elsewhere in the building.

Thank you for all of your help to make our schools safe and secure.

The Lady Cougar softball team and coaches, along with county and school board officials, recently celebrated the new dugouts at Cougar Field with a pregame ribbon cutting ceremony. Following the ceremony, the Lady Cougars defeated Christiansburg in their home opener by ten runs.



Celebrating Independence at the Nation's Capital

BY NEESEY PAYNE

PCPS students are being honored for their talents and excellence with the opportunity of a lifetime —to march down historic Constitution Avenue at the National Independence Day Parade in Washington, D.C.

Performing patriotic tunes in the parade is a prestigious honor. Only the best of the best are invited to take part in the celebration that welcomes thousands of people each year. Students from Pulaski and Dublin middle schools will join members of the Golden Cougar Marching Band —making the band 83 strong. The band was nominated by Congressman Morgan Griffith to be a part of the event.

Although a wonderful opportunity, it doesn't come without a price. Each student has the task of raising \$650 for the four-day trip, July 2-5. The Pulaski County Band Boosters have hosted numerous events such as pasta, pizza and cookie dough fundraisers to help the students reach their fundraising goals. In March, the band hosted a spaghetti dinner featuring the Old Pros Big Band Orchestra, which raised nearly \$2,000.

"It's great to have our band program honored with the nomination and to represent the state of Virginia at our nation's Capital," said Pulaski County High School Band Director Patrick Butler.

Not only will the band be marching in the parade, the trip will include many educational activities. Students will witness a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, and will also take tours of all the national monuments in D.C., as well as the Smithsonian Institute. Following the parade, the band will attend a "Capital Fourth" celebration featuring the National Symphony and will conclude with a grand fireworks display. The last day of the trip students will enjoy an afternoon of fun at Six Flags before returning home.



Pulaski County Public Schools Launches New Division Website www.PCVA.us

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Pulaski County Public Schools recently launched a newly redesigned website that complements many of the system's academic departments, schools, information resources, and services. The website, www.pcva.us, is designed to be more user-friendly, with useful links to help with site navigation.

"Our new website has many new features and tools that are helpful to parents, faculty, staff, and students, as well as others looking for information and resources," says Tim Barnes, director of information technology. "Our intent was to streamline the content on our site to highlight important information and resources."

The site features major links near the top of the page, where parents, students, and staff can find information such as news and updates, documents and resources, calendars, a staff directory, and other important division information.

"The site is also mobile-friendly, which makes it simple to access the site from smartphones and tablets. The overall redesign has made it more accessible for our tech-savvy audience," notes Thomas Brewster, superintendent. "We approached this redesign in a forward-thinking manner to not only serve our primary audiences, but to also to showcase our school system and student learning."

Other points of interest on the site include:

- Featured photographs of faculty, staff, and students
- Integration of social media, with quick and easy access to the PCPS Facebook page, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube Channel
- School calendar updates, news, and important events
- Access to important directory information

"We wanted a site that would appeal to all of our users," says Michael Barbour, chair of the Pulaski County School Board. "We have a lot of remarkable things happening in Pulaski County Public Schools, and the redesigned website gives us the opportunity to showcase what's happening in our schools."



Check It Out! →



Above: Raaj Aggarwal from Critzer Elementary, Luke Russell from Dublin Elementary, Sydney Lambert from Dublin Middle, Kierra Martin from Pulaski Middle, Ashley Welch from Pulaski Elementary, Will Cummings from Snowville Elementary, and Jaelyn Szerokman from Riverlawn Elementary.



Right: Sydney Lambert, runner-up, and Kierra Martin, 1st place



Students Taking Charge When Disaster Strikes

BY NEESEY PAYNE

When any type of emergency strikes, it's comforting to know there are people who are ready to take fast action to ensure the safety of everyone involved. As community leaders, students are taking their skills to the next level through Pulaski County Public Schools' Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.

Sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the program is funded through the school system's REMS (Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools) grant. Teen CERT is a program that trains youth to respond safely and responsibly to disasters—allowing them to protect themselves, their family and friends in an emergency. The program is for students in grades seven through 12 and is offered at Pulaski Middle School, Dublin Middle School and Pulaski County High School. Each student must undergo at least 20 hours of training to complete the program.

Pulaski Middle School's Epic Orioles recently completed their first training. With the help of Dr. Pam Frasier and Bill Burton—CERT trainers—students learned how to extinguish small fires, conduct light search and rescue, assist those who are injured, set up medical treatment areas, assist emergency responders, identify and anticipate hazards, reduce fire hazards in the home and workplace and help reduce survivor stress.

"Pulaski Middle's Orioles were very enthusiastic about the program. It was more than 20 hours of training on the students' own time. They were dedicated and serious about the training," said Theresa Reed, principal at PMS.

Not only does the program provide the tools students need to act before first responders appear on scene, it allows them to feel confident in their ability to take charge in their communities.

2013 County Spelling Bee

The 2013 County Spelling Bee was held on February 19, 2013. Pulaski County Public Schools would like to recognize all school-level spelling bee winners who competed. Kierra Martin won the bee by correctly spelling the word *forensics*. She traveled to Roanoke on March 16, 2013 to compete in the Regional Spelling Bee.



PCPS Pursues Additional Dual Enrollment Opportunities

Dr. Thomas Brewster, superintendent of Pulaski County Public Schools, and Dr. Jack Lewis, president of New River Community College, recently signed a dual enrollment agreement that created a partnership to offer students a head start on their college careers.

Successful completion of dual enrollment courses provides students with college credit before high school graduation. Currently, students can earn up to 14 college credits through dual enrollment English and biology classes. Students attending the Southwest Virginia Governor's School can earn additional dual enrollment credits beyond those offered at Pulaski County High School. The school system's goal for the 2013-2014 school year is to offer up to 32 dual enrollment college credits in the content areas of English, science, social studies, and mathematics.



Back row: Mr. Michael Myers, Pulaski County High School principal; Devin Goodman, FCCLA; Kirsten McGrady, HOSA; Brittany Mills, FFA; Katlyn Smith, FFA; Dakota Ward, FFA; Joey Edmonds, SkillsUSA

Front row: Jordan Thornton, FCCLA; Lacey Goad, HOSA; Alicia Boothe, FFA; Nikki Thompson, FFA; Breana Arnold, SkillsUSA; Stephen Earhart, SkillsUSA

Seated: Mr. Ross Matney, assistant principal and CTE director; Dr. Thomas Brewster, Pulaski County Public Schools superintendent

February is Career & Technical Education Month

Pulaski County Career and Technical Education (CTE) School celebrated Career and Technical Education Month during February. Students and special guests participated in a special proclamation signing ceremony on February 27th. This year's theme was *Career and Technical Education Works*.

"The activities planned during February illustrate the importance and relevance CTE courses offer our students," said Mr. Ross Matney, PCHS technical center administrator, "By partnering with the business community, CTE programs are investing in students' lives with the latest technology and skills that will prepare them to become successful employees, as well as future leaders."



Pulaski County Public Schools Adds New Notification System for 2013-14

To strengthen family-school partnerships, Pulaski County Public Schools is excited to introduce SchoolMessenger for 2013-14. This notification and communication service will notify families and employees through phone calls, text messages, and/or email alerts about a wide range of important topics, including:

- Emergency Broadcasts
- Student Attendance Alerts
- School Closings & Delays
- General Announcements

SchoolMessenger will help Pulaski County Public Schools communicate regularly with parents and staff 24 hours a day using multiple means of communication. SchoolMessenger replaces our current provider SchoolReach for the 2013-14 school year. Please visit <http://www.schoolmessenger.com> for additional information.

Pulaski County School Board Recognizes Long-Standing School Board Attorney

McCarthy Presented With "Golden Apple Award"

The Pulaski County School Board has honored Thomas James McCarthy, Jr. with the Golden Apple Award for his leadership and counsel as school board attorney, a position he has held for approximately thirty years. The Golden Apple Award was created to recognize individuals and organizations for their exemplary accomplishments and leadership in support of PCPS.

In addition to serving the Pulaski County School Board, Mr. McCarthy serves as county attorney for Pulaski County. He has served four terms on the New River Community College Board, having served as vice-chairman and chairman during that time. In 2005, he was elected to the Virginia School Boards Association's Council of School Attorneys.

Mr. McCarthy has also served his country as a citizen soldier in the United States Army and Army Reserve, retiring after 30 years of service as a colonel. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College. His last assignment was as JAG advisor to the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Mr. McCarty has been with Gilmer, Sadler, Ingram, Sutherland & Hutton since November 1970, and has been a partner in the firm since 1975. Pulaski County Public Schools is proud of his tenure as school board attorney, but most of all we are proud of his long-standing service to the citizens of Pulaski County.

202 North Washington Avenue
Pulaski, VA 24301
Phone: 540-994-2550
Fax: 540-994-2552
www.pcva.us

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PCHS Drama Team Performs in Capital

Students Participate in “Love the Bus” Rally

The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation (VAPT) invited Pulaski County Public School’s transportation department to participate in the 2nd annual Love the Bus Rally at the Capital on February 21, 2013. The Pulaski County High School drama team provided entertainment for the event.

