



THE PATRIOT

October 2017

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Thank you to all of our parents for your patience as we worked through a few issues related to our management system, School Insight.

Due to a system update, that went on longer than expected, our teachers had been previously unable to enter grades. The update is now complete and all teachers have access. Parents/Guardians should expect to see grades beginning to be entered online.

On the topic of School Insight and grades, report cards for the end of first trimester (November 10) will be accessible via the parent portal. I will have more information on how to access this report as we near the end of first term.



Math can be Exciting!

Our math team is thrilled to welcome Mike Byster to our school on Friday, Nov. 3 from 1:30 - 3:00p. Mr. Byster is from the Chicagoland area and has made a name for himself touring schools and being on television for his extraordinary math skills. He will demonstrate to

our student body that math can be exciting, fun, and achievable for all!

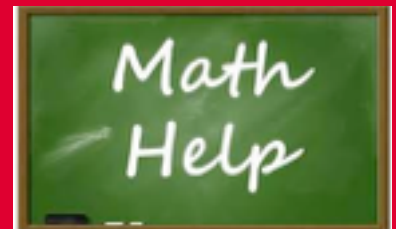
All parents will be welcome to this assembly. In the next week, expect your child to come home with more information and an RSVP form so we know how many people we need to accommodate for.



6TH GRADE DARE: Our 6th grade students begin their DARE education with Officer Kevin Apostol from the Palos Heights PD on Oct. 12. They will meet every other week throughout the year during the students' PE classes.



SHEPARD BAND PERFORMS: We are excited to welcome the Shepard High School band to IJHS on Oct. 19 for a performance. The band will put on a thirty minute performance for our Patriots.



MATH LAB: IJHS is happy to bring back Math Lab for the 2017-2018 school year. Math Lab is open for all students on Thursdays from 3:00 - 3:45p. It is an opportunity to work on math homework or receive extra math help from certified staff.

Assessing Learner Characteristics

Since last year, our teachers have assessed our students on certain behavioral traits in class; referred to as learner characteristics on report cards and grade book entries. They are homework, respectful citizen, cooperative learner, and self-directed learner.

The purpose of reporting on behavioral traits separately is to report how students are communicating, collaborating, and participating, to name a few. These characteristics are not based on any end of grade level standard, but rather on observations made in class. Is the student prepared

and organized for class? How often? Does the student actively participate in class activities? Is the student respectful of peers and teachers? Does the student demonstrate inappropriate behaviors in class?

Independence teachers have discussed with students and demonstrated examples of what these traits look like in class. They have also explained what the expectations are; that students actively participate, come to class organized and prepared to engage in the lesson, and demonstrate respect for their peers. This is the expectation every day.

As a staff we discussed last year that the expectation is to report on these standards at least every three weeks. These grades are based on observations made over that time period. Scores displayed on student report cards illustrate the same weighted average as do academic standards (40% for most current grade, 30%, 15%, and 15%). It is likely that student behavior rises and dips from class to class or over a period of time. However, if any of our parents have concerns regarding their child's behavior, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

Gifted Seminar

Over the past two weeks, four of our staff, Heather Meskimen, Kristin Szydelko, Jessica Gabriel, and Nicole Woods, attended a four day Gifted Seminar. Our own Gaye Greenwald was also present as she is preparing to take over as facilitator of this seminar for the South Cook ISC.

I first want to publicly thank them for attending as I know it is never easy to be gone from your classroom for that length of time; especially at the start of the school year.

This program provided teachers an opportunity to deepen their understanding of how to teach and reach advanced learners by providing support to address the diverse needs in the classroom. Our staff in attendance discussed relevant topics on the subject

and learned various strategies to employ.

While the topic of the seminar was for Gifted education, the strategies shared can be applied to all students. Some of these strategies our staff were familiar with, while others were new to them. Either way, staff is encouraged to have conversations with each other to see how they may be implemented in all of our classrooms.

Why the push for this? Student motivation has a large impact on student learning and achievement and research has shown that a teacher's teaching methods and strategies were the most important factors affecting student motivation (Mehmet, Mehmet, & Ercan, 2017). The implementation of strategies that better adapt the lesson to the students, provides students the

opportunity to complete tasks that are challenging, yet attainable at their particular level. If students believe they can achieve a desired task, they are more motivated to accomplish it.

By this point, I am sure we have all heard or read about how the one-size-fits-all education system no longer has a place in our educational institutions. However, some things are easier said than done. The goal is to consistently move the needle forward and proper training and support is key.

Appreciation is owed to our staff for their hard work (they had assignments to complete) and time in attending the four day seminar!

College & Career Readiness in the Spotlight

CAREER FAIR

In our ongoing efforts to prepare our students for future success, we are introducing a Career Fair to Independence this February. At the end of last year, this idea was first shared with staff. It has now become a reality - save the date for Friday, February 23, 2018!

One of the groups of students that was met with regularly last year, introduced this concept. Their comments included how an opportunity to meet with professionals from various fields could better inform current and future students in their course selection in high school and college. This opportunity could also guide students as to what clubs, activities, or service they could become involved in.

What is February 23rd going to look like?



The day itself will be a full school day as scheduled, however, an abbreviated bell schedule will be created so that students see all classes in the morning. After lunch, students will be assigned to four rotations

(presentations) based on their responses to a ranking of available speakers. Each presentation will last 25 minutes and presentations will be held in individual classrooms. We will do our best to match students to those professions they wish, but some students may see presentations they had not expected. At approximately 2:30, students will be directed back to their 10th period class to complete a reflection activity/survey that will be provided. After each individual presentation, students will have an exit slip to quickly jot down ideas/information learned from that speaker. Presenters will be asked to arrive by noon, where refreshments and a light lunch will be provided for them in the commons.

I ask that any of our parents/guardians pass along the letter/application form to anybody they know who may also be

interested in participating in our Career Fair. We are asking that all applications be submitted to our main office or through my email

(kkirk@palos128.org) by Friday, November 17.

All applicants will be notified by January 26th. We are saying applicants in the case that we have more people than we have

space for and to ensure that

we have a wide variety of professions represented.

This information is purposefully being sent out early to make sure that we have enough

UPCOMING EVENTS

10/7: Band Pumpkin Patch
9:00 - 2:00

10/14: D.218 Placement testing for 8th graders @ Shepard HS

10/23 - 10/27: Red Ribbon Week (Spirit Week)

10/27: PFA Booingo @ IJHS 6:00 - 8:00p

11/3: Mike Byster School Presentation on Learning Math 1:30 - 2:45

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.

- Albert Einstein

time to gather presenters. As we draw nearer to the date, the final schedule, room placements, etc. will be sent out to all staff.

Thank you in advance for your support.

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