January Cougar News

From the Principal's Desk

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed a restful winter break filled with joy and quality time with loved ones. We are excited to see our hallways buzzing with energy again as we welcome our students back for the start of the 2026 calendar year. While the turning of the calendar often brings a sense of "newness," our mission remains steadfast: academic focus and a positive school environment. We look forward to partnering with our community to have a great start to the year!

Attendance Updates

We know at times absences are unavoidable. **Parents may now send in up to FIVE (5) excuse notes per semester;** however, we encourage you to make contact with the school for every absence and let us know if there is anything we can do to support your student in attending school daily.

SAVE THE DATE

January

- 1/5-1/6: Professional Development
- 1/7: Students return to school
- 1/19: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
- 1/30: 100th Day of School
- Basketball Schedule: see Additional Info below

February

- 2/1: Counselor Appreciation
- 2/4: Math and Literacy Night
- 2/5: Sports/Club Pictures
- 2/13: Mardi Gras Parade - Mardi Gras OR Valentines Dress Up
- 2.16-2/20: Mardi Gras Holiday

New Staff Announcements & Schedule Changes

This semester continues with familiar faces and a few staffing updates we'd like to share with you. We are pleased to welcome several new members to our school community, including Ms. Cynthia Cleland, who will be joining us as our 6th grade ELA teacher, Ms. Sherry Giacone, our new 7th grade science teacher, and Ms. Jailyn Toussaint, an alumna of Champ Cooper, who will be our new 8th grade mathematics teacher. We are confident they will be wonderful additions to our team and bring valuable experience and energy to our school.

We also want to share a few staffing changes. Ms. Paula Mcilrath (Coach Mac) will be transitioning back into the role of our 7th grade mathematics teacher, and she will continue assisting students in Math 180 as well. Coach Mac graciously offered to complete this year with our 7th grade students because she has taught the grade level several years and is very familiar with the content; however, she will continue to be a presence with the 8th grade students as she will be supporting and mentoring Ms. Toussaint. Mr. Rowdy Starkey will now be supporting students in talented theater and will be sharing his talent with our students and other schools as well. We are grateful for the flexibility and dedication of our staff as we continue working together to best serve our students.

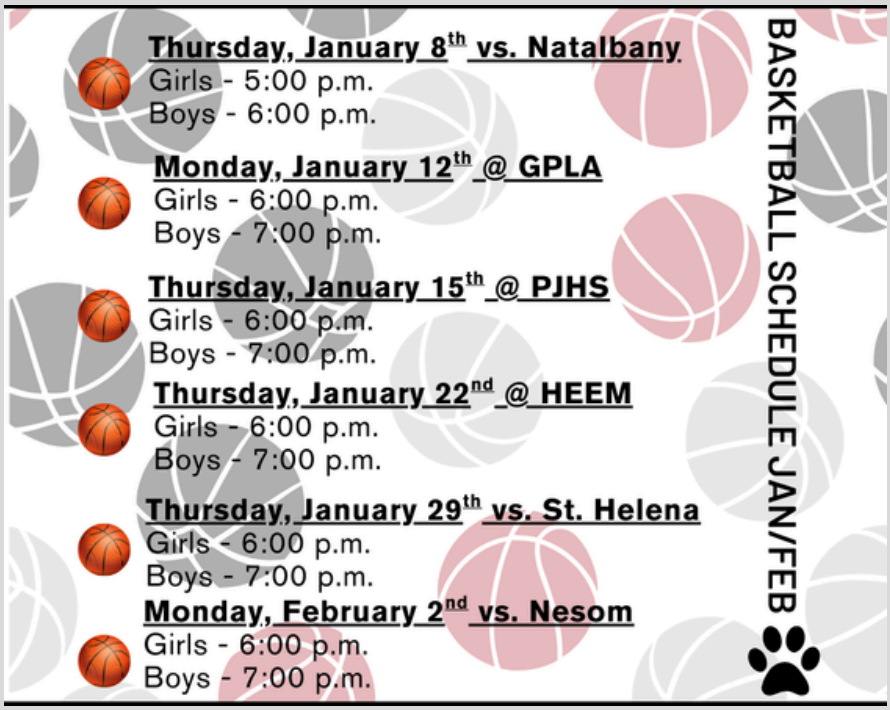
Along with staffing updates, student schedules (in grade levels 5th-8th) may be updated to better facilitate learning based on teacher input. If a schedule change is suggested, you will be notified prior to any move - please know that if a schedule change is suggested, it is in the best interest of your child's academic and social needs.

As always, our focus remains on creating a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment where every student feels welcomed and valued. We appreciate your continued partnership and look forward to working closely with you throughout the year.

Thank you for being an important part of our school community. We are excited for the year ahead and can't wait to see all that our students will accomplish.

Additional Important Info

Dress Up Guidelines:

- Students may dress as if they are 100 years smarter on 1/30. This may include clothing or accessories that represent 100 (shirts/hats with 100 puffs, a 100 design, etc.)
- Students may also dress like they are 100 years old. Outfits must be school appropriate - skirts should be within 3 inches of the knee or have leggings/stockings underneath.

Please visit our official school Facebook Page and Webpage for additional information throughout the year.