



The Polaris Guide



Polaris Expeditionary Learning School
November 2018

K-12 **K-5** **6-12**

11/2

HS- Last Day to Drop a Class
with a "W"

11/7*

High School SART
Presentation to Parents
6:00PM

11/9*

Vision and Hearing Screening

11/11*

Polaris K-12 Social
Intersect Brewing
3:00 – 5:00

11/12

K-12 Teacher Collaboration
Day
No school for students

11/13*

Parent Action Crew Mtg
Purple Cup Café
7:00PM

11/16*

Secondary Dance #2
Coralition Fundraiser
5:30 – 7:30PM

11/21 – 11/23

THANKSGIVING BREAK
NO SCHOOL

11/26

Elem. PTO meeting
6:30 PM
Avogadro's Number

11/27*

School Accountability
Committee
3:30 – 5:00
Library

* More information within

Dear Polaris Community,

Because I was out of town this past weekend visiting my daughter in Syracuse, NY. I was not able to attend our elementary Fun Night for the first time since we became a K-12 school, nor was I able to attend the last weekend of the Lost Souls Lair event either. However, as expected, I heard great things about both events.

In order to successfully plan, deliver, and wrap up each of these events it truly requires a Crew mentality. We had many students and parents volunteering their precious time to do things like coordinate game rooms, run cash boxes, scare Halloween patrons, and provide food for all, and without this support we would have not been able to provide the rest of the Polaris community with a quality experience. So, to all of those displaying traits that could fall under the EL Design Principle of *Service and Compassion* I'd like to thank you for your generosity.

Perhaps it is fitting that these events have wrapped up as our Thanksgiving break approaches, for reflecting back on these can certainly make one appreciate what our community can accomplish when many hands are involved in the work. And as we get closer to Thanksgiving I am certain that there will be additional experiences, interactions, or gestures that we can equally be thankful for. I challenge us all to look for those opportunities to feel or express gratitude, and in doing so perhaps we can provide our children a safe space to reside in while they continue to learn a grow.

Sincerely,
Joe Gawronski

SECTION 1: K-12 News/Info

School of Choice: Informed Decisions

As the winter months approach so does the School of Choice deadline. This year's deadline is January 18th for both elementary and secondary families.

As a member of the Polaris community you do not have to take any action if you wish to remain at Polaris. However, there are several families each year that are trying to decide to remain at Polaris or venture elsewhere. This decision is understandable since there are many quality schools to choose from within PSD.

So, for those at the fifth or eighth grade levels, if you're wondering if continuing at Polaris is your best option, please feel free to schedule an appointment with Joe and/or Starr and we'd be more than willing to discuss the pros and cons of remaining in our program or enrolling elsewhere. But in the meantime, we'd like to share some information via this newsletter as well.

Every two to three years, we like to share an article written by Tony Wagner of Harvard's School of Education. He has close ties to the Expeditionary Learning organization and we believe that this article speaks to our philosophy quite well, while it simultaneously highlights some differences between his/our philosophy of *rigor*, and how it may compare to an AP or IB program. Again, any option of school will be a solid choice within PSD, and each will have its share of pros and cons. Please, to better inform yourselves if you are wondering what direction to go with your child's education, take the time to read the *Redefining Rigor* that's been attached within the newsletter email.

One of the biggest questions we get when it comes to choosing Polaris for their secondary schooling experience is "how does Polaris prepare kids for education after high school?" Starr and I can provide some anecdotal examples of how our students are doing at the post-secondary level if you are able to schedule a meeting with one of us. Many of these anecdotal pieces of data refer to the advocacy skills our students employ as they venture out into the world after graduation.

However, as you can imagine, it is difficult to identify how they are doing academically since they are at schools all over the US and accessing such data is nearly impossible. But recently we were provided some data that give us a sense of how our current Polaris students are doing in their college classes while in high school. Please read the **College Now Overview** attachment within the newsletter email to see how our Polaris students are performing at the college level while they are in high school. Here are just a few highlights from the overview:

- 60 Polaris students completed 572 college credits last year
- This saved the families in our community over \$127K in total
- 97% of our students taking college courses at college campuses (Campus Select Program) passed with a "C" or better.

That's just a peek, be sure to check out the entire report that's been attached.

Again, we want families to have the most accurate information we have so that you can make the best decisions possible, so don't hesitate to reach out if you are in this position of deciding on enrollment prior to the School of Choice deadline.

Vision and Hearing Screening is Coming Soon

The Polaris Vision and Hearing screening is Friday, November 9th. All K-5 students, as well as 7th and 9th grade students will be screened. If applicable, please remind your student to wear their glasses to school. If you have any concerns regarding your students' vision and hearing, please contact the Polaris health office before 11/9/18 at 970-488-8268.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Vision and Hearing screening, please access the sign-up link below. Remember you must be registered as a PSD volunteer (<https://www.psdschools.org/community/volunteers>) to sign up.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0f44aac28a3fe3-hearing>

Polaris Facebook

If you have an interest to keep up with the many exciting things going on during any given day/week here at Polaris we'd encourage you to "like" us on [Facebook](#).

Feel free to "share" with friends once you're there and perusing through all the engaging photos.

PSD Student Connections Survey

In response to a community value of ensuring students feel connected to their school community, the PSD Board of Education integrated this important outcome into the district's goals in 2014. Connections are the result of feeling understood, cared about, supported, and valued. Feeling connected to others helps us to be motivated toward a positive future and make the most of our educational experiences. PSD wants to ensure that we are doing everything we can to connect with students and help students to connect with one another, their interests, and their future plans. One step PSD has taken to ensure we meet this important outcome is to provide students with an opportunity to tell us about their feeling of connectedness and their related school experiences.

PSD is currently providing a Student Connections Survey for all students in grades 4 through 12.

The survey is voluntary. Each school has the flexibility to schedule students to take the survey between October 22nd and November 16th, so actual dates can vary slightly across schools. It takes students approximately 15 to 30 minutes to complete this survey.

We are delivering this online survey during the school day using PSD student email accounts. Responses may be combined with other information that the district has gathered to support students. Collecting data in this way will allow PSD to identify important patterns and use the information to improve our service to all students. Individual students' responses will not be singled out in any reports. Although, if a student were to indicate that somebody is in danger, district staff are obligated to respond.

Attendance Calls

If your child is absent, please call the attendance line at 488-8261. In doing so, we can keep our live lines open for any emergency calls we may need to field at any given moment.

With regards to attendance we have included in this month's newsletter an attachment reminding families of the guidelines PSD uses to determine if they should keep their child home on any given day.

Raise funds for Polaris the easy way!

BoxTops for Education: Thanks for keeping those BoxTops coming! Last year we earned just under \$500 by submitting these. Let's see if we can beat that total this year. All BoxTop proceeds benefit the entire K-12 student community.

King Soopers Grocery Cards This is another really easy, no fuss fundraiser for the school! If you shop at King Soopers, please consider purchasing a Polaris grocery card from Danise in the front office. Each card costs \$5 and is also loaded with \$5. You can reload your card at any KS register. The card can be used to pay for all items in the store (except gift cards) as well as at all KS gas stations. Every time our school has \$5,000 or more, we get 5% back!

Morning Fresh Milk Caps Thanks for your continuing support with this super easy fundraiser! All milk caps can be turned in any time - just send them in with your kids and they'll know where to drop them off. For every 1,000 caps the school earns \$50.

CREATIVE ENDEAVORS ART SHOW

*@ The Foothills Mall - Fort Collins
Featuring K-12 Polaris Art & NUMEROUS other
PSD Schools*

LIST OF FEATURED ARTISTS COMING SOON

Show Dates 11/7/18 - 1/18/19

open during regular mall hours

Reception - Friday 11/16/18 - 5:00-7:00 pm

Interact at Intersect

Come hang out with us at Intersect, the most family-friendly brewery in Fort Collins. The wonderful team at Intersect is generously donating us \$1 from each beer purchased between **3 and 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 11, at Intersect Brewing, 2160 W. Drake Road.**

SECTION 2: Elementary News/Info

Fun Night TY from the PTO

Thank you to everyone who came out for Fun Night, and especially to our great volunteers. Congratulations to our chili contest and bake-off winners, and thanks to everyone who contributed delicious food for the event.

If you have any suggestions for future Fun Nights, please send them to PTO4polaris@gmail.com.

One change we have already made for next year is switching from a wig walk to a more school-appropriate book walk, so please start collecting and donating books for kids of all ages (and you don't need to buy up discount wigs after Halloween).

Save this March Date!

If you were looking for the bigger silent auction at Fun Night, save the date and book a babysitter for **Polari-Palooza on Saturday, March 9, at Wolverine Farm.** Your PTO is putting together a fun evening of socializing and fundraising, with good food and drinks, live music and auctions. Please help us put together a great event. Let us know if you know of musicians or caterers who would be interested in working with us. We are also starting to collect silent auction items if you are connected with a local business that would like to help us while also getting some valuable publicity. Email us at PTO4polaris@gmail.com.

Your PTO funds

It may seem like the PTO is regularly asking you for money, but we also regularly give money back to Polaris. So far this year, the PTO has funded:

- Ipads for each elementary classroom
- 50 percent of the cost for the grade 4/5 Eco-Week trip
- Classroom books
- New playground toys
- Running club supplies
- Fun Night materials and supplies

We couldn't do these without your continued support, so again, thank you!

Upcoming PTO Meetings

Please join us for our next meeting at Avogadro's Number on Monday, November 26th at 6:30p.m. Questions about these meetings or PTO? Want to participate but aren't able to attend the meetings? Please contact PTO President (and second-grade parent) Celeste Propst-celestewarf@gmail.com or 970-231-7562.

Winter Weather Recess Policy

We have recently updated our "Weather Policy" for Polaris elementary students. Please review the details below:

- Outdoor recess occurs when the "feels-like" temperature is 10 degrees or above according to the Weather Channel app for Fort Collins
- Indoor recess occurs when the "feels-like" temperature is below 10 degrees, or during inclement weather such as heavy rain or lightning.

Please support your students and our policy by ensuring that they are properly prepared for the weather each day. Unless the circumstances are extreme, we will require all students to go outside for outdoor recess regardless of their level of preparation.

SECONDARY NEWS continues on next page

SECTION 3: Secondary News/Info

Next PAC Meeting

Tuesday, November 13th from 7-8 pm at the Purple Cup Café 1119 W Drake Rd. Suite C-30.

Please show your gratitude to the Purple Cup for their support of Polaris PAC by coming early and grabbing a delicious warm drink or bakery treat! We hope to see you there.

PAC President Gives Thanks All!

I cannot let OCTOBER leave without expressing PAC's sincere gratitude to the Segelhorst Family for their generosity. The Lost Souls Lair Haunt took over their farm, their home, for well over an entire six weeks while many Polaris students and community members built what was an incredible experience! Tom, Leslie, Parker, Amy, and Donovan really have shown us all what it means to be Crew, not passengers. There were so many people who took part in Lost Souls Lair, from the folks who donated food, and helped with concessions, our hardworking builders and set designers, to our incredible student actors... And of course, I won't forget to mention the team closest to my heart the Junior Makeup Artists and the Moms who helped! Every single hand that helped in some way, you are so appreciated. I could never list everyone by name, but what an incredibly talented group of people we have around us.

If you helped, if you came and had a wonderful time, or were scared out of your wits – please show your appreciation by coming to the clean-up on Saturday morning, info in the Newsletter.

The majority of the proceeds from the Haunt will go directly to Polaris to help with supporting adventure trips and teachers needs. If you weren't able to take part this year, start thinking about what you will be able to do to help next year!

Sincerely,
Robin Gaston

Polaris' SART Team Community Night for HS Parents

High school students and their parents are invited to join the Polaris Sexual Assault Resource Team (SART) at Polaris 6:00pm on November 7th for their SART Community Night. The event will have a number of activities and presentations not included in regular SART presentations. Topics covered will include Colorado's teen sexting laws, consent tips, self defense, and more. Pizza will be provided. Students and parents can sign up to attend at <https://tinyurl.com/POLSARTNIGHT>.

Middle School Tutoring!

Middle school study hall is on Mondays after school from 3:20-4:30 in Brenda's room (134). This is a great opportunity for your student to finish work, complete revisions, ask questions, and/or get extra help.

Please contact Brenda for more information, with questions, or to let her know to expect your student. bcisnero@psdschools.org

Lost Souls Lair Clan...Thanks Again!

