



20 Oct 2023

A PSCS NEWSLETTER

[pioneersprings.org](http://pioneersprings.org)

## A Call to Action

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) recently reported a national decline of 4 points in reading and a 9 points in math for 13 year olds in 2022-23 compared to 2019-20. Further, it cited that this was some 7 and 14 points respectively lower than a decade earlier. The NCES supplemented its assessment results with a survey about some of the habits that impact student growth, including how often students read for fun, what kind of math courses they took, and their attendance habits. This decline is consistent with North Carolina trends in reading and math in 22-23 for which performances were some 30% lower than the norm year and about which the NC Department of Public Instruction noted, "...schools [continue] to deal with student learning loss" and "...data should be reviewed in these contexts and comparisons...made with caution." Pioneer Springs' performance data for 2022-23 included a composite score of 53 which designated the school as low-performing, a label shared by 42% of CMS schools and 62 other charter schools state-wide, including Southwest Charlotte Stem, Bonnie Cone Classical Academy, Movement Charter, Veritas, TMSA Charlotte, Charlotte Lab School, Lakeside Chater, Aristotle Preparatory, Invest Collegiate and Kipp Charlotte. I'd like to say we're in good company. That is, that the performance of Pioneer Springs' students was 'normal' given the similar dynamic in more than 800 schools across our state. However, I think the real takeaway is that we cannot continue to refer to the lasting impact of COVID as a cause without recognizing we must make up for lost time through high-quality and extended engagement; we cannot fail to have anything less than a sharp and shared focus on student growth. The PSCS mission charges us to collectively serve as a community of learning. As such, academics is at the core of all we do on campus. This year, we have increased personnel and opportunities for engagement, and a full implementation of the Multi-tier System of Support (MTSS), which ensures that all students are given the appropriate academic challenge to meet their full potential. At home, it means reading frequently with your student, finding opportunities to practice math in the real world, and setting aside dedicated time for homework and iReady practice (at least twice a week). If you'd like more information about Pioneer Springs' 22-23 performance data or our plan to achieve stretch growth for students, join me on Friday, October 27th at 10am on [www.pioneerzoom.com](http://www.pioneerzoom.com).

### IMPORTANT DATES & ITEMS TO NOTE

- 25 Oct: 2nd grade field trip to Quest Nature Centre
- 25 Oct: 9am, Folklore and Fairy Tale Festival Set-Making, all are welcome, Castle
- 26 Oct: WINGS Staff Appreciation
- 26 Oct: HS Spooky SZN. photo gallery, 7-9pm
- 3 Nov: Folklore & Fairy Tale Festival
- Academic & Events Calendar

**Reminder: The train tracks are LIVE.** Please do not stop on the tracks as we often have trains passing through during carpool hours.

**Running late for carpool pick-up?** Look for your student at After School. Carpool ends promptly at 3:30 for Kindergarten through 4th grade and at 3:45 for 6th-12th grade. Students who are not picked-up by the end of Carpool are sent to After School at Davis. Families are charged \$10 for the first 15 minutes, \$35 after that. Cash or check due at pick up.

# Enhance Your Student's Math Skills with iReady Pathways and Flight Fluency



By Margaret Bonds and Kelley Hood

Math is a powerful skill, and is crucial for problem-solving as well as critical thinking. Regular math practice at home is vital for reinforcing school learning, boosting confidence, and deepening understanding. We encourage you to incorporate math into everyday activities like shopping, cooking, and games. To accelerate our student's growth in math, formal math practice needs to happen at home as well as at school. To make it easier, we are providing iReady Pathways (K-8) and iReady's Flight Fluency (2nd-5th Grade).

The Benefits of iReady Pathways and Flight Fluency:

1. Personalized Learning: These programs are designed to adapt to your student's unique needs, offering targeted practice to strengthen their math skills.

2. Independent Learning: We understand that not all parents are comfortable with math or may have had less-than-pleasant experiences with math worksheets. With iReady, your student can practice math independently, reducing likelihood of negative experiences with math. This allows your student to build confidence and develop problem-solving skills on their own.

3. Screen Time Management: We share your concerns about screen time. Rest assured, we do not encourage prolonged use of these platforms. Our goal is for each student to complete just two lessons per week on the Pathways program and 8 to 10 minutes a day, four days a week, for those with access to Flight Fluency. This ensures a balanced approach to learning that fits seamlessly into your student's daily routine.

How often should your student use these tools?

- iReady math pathways = pass two lessons per week at home
- Fluency Flight = 10 minutes per day, four days a week.

Accessing iReady Pathways and Fluency Flight :

Your student's teacher has already provided you with the necessary iReady login information. To get started, simply visit the iReady website and use the provided credentials to log in. Once logged in, your student will have access to these incredible resources for math practice.

These tools will make a significant difference in your student's math education and help them reach their maximum potential growth. Please reach out first to your teacher if you have any questions, or need assistance with getting started.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to your student's education! Together, we can ensure their academic success and a positive math learning experience.



# You're invited to the Folklore and Fairy Tale Festival



**The Folklore and Fairy Tale Festival** is Pioneer Springs' celebration of folk tales, fables, myths, fairy tales, and classical literature. Students read these archetypal stories, and create performances that explore how the characters, themes, and settings have sparked wonder in generations of readers. Then classes used what they have discovered to turn these stories into plays, art pieces, and presentations.

Please join us on Friday, November 3 to watch student performances and to join us for our campus-wide Folklore Circle Dance.

Each student wears a costumes for their class's performance, so be on the look-out for information from teachers about your student's costume. Families get into the action by wearing home-made costumes inspired by folk tales, fairy tales, and myths.

The Festival schedule, parking information, and other important details are [here](#).

To donate materials and/or volunteer for this magical event, please sign up [here](#).

We can't wait to see you there!

To learn more about our celebrations and traditions, go to <https://www.pioneersprings.org/our-traditions.html>





## A message from WINGS: attention Kindergarten and 1st grade families...



**On Thursday, October 26 the Kindergarten and 1st grade** families will celebrate teachers by hosting our first Staff Appreciation Event of the school year—we are asking parents and families of Kinder and 1st graders to volunteer their time, resources or skills to make this day a success.

The theme for October 26th will be "All the Fall Things" with morning coffee and lunchtime soup/chili for all staff members. This will take place in the Castle (admin building) kitchen area. If the weather is nice, we can use the patio behind the Castle as well.

Please [sign-up here](#) to donate and/ or volunteer.

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## Tulip Poplar, by 10th grade Green Humanities students



Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is a beautiful tree that grows throughout the Piedmont, and is an important resource for furniture making and construction. North American were so impressed by the size of the trees that they used them to build cabins! Fun fact, the railroads accessing southern Appalachia are actually built out of the tulip poplar. The nectar of this beautiful tree is also popular with hummingbirds, and it is a source of gourmet honey.

You may be wondering how do I identify such plants? Well, look at the shape of the leaves first. They are usually 2-5 inches wide and are shaped like a child's drawing of a tulip; a tulip tree flower has four petals that have yellow tips and are orange at the base. Don't be fooled by its name. Tulip poplar is not actually a part of the tulip family or poplar family, but it is a part of the magnolia family.



# Classroom Happenings



Kindergarten hand painted *Chick-Chicka-Boom-Boom* shirts for Reach for the Trees!



2nd Grade Folklore and Fairy Tale Ball rehearsal

A student shows her Salamander pride during Spirit Week!



4th grade being introduced to their high school Teacher Apprentices. Four sophomores have chosen the Teacher Apprentice concentration for their Communities in Action course. They will be mentored by Ms. G, Ms. C, and Stephanie Menendez, and will join fourth grade each Wednesday afternoon. The 4th grade students are excited about working with the Teacher Apprentices!



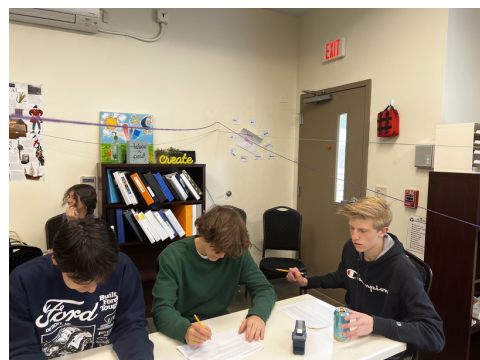
# Classroom Happenings



1st grade visited the Carolina Raptor Center where they had a blast learning about birds of prey and how to protect them.



Math 4 students are currently studying trigonometry. They took their learning outdoors by building clinometers, a tool used to measure angles. Students used the clinometers to calculate the height of campus trees and of the Davis General Store water cistern by standing a set distance away from the object being measured, finding the angle between the ground and the top of the object, and using that information to complete a formula. One student exclaimed "math really is everywhere!"



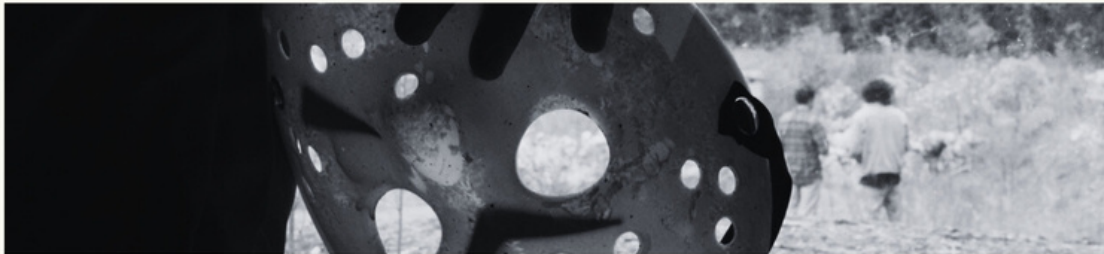
High school world history students studied the interconnectedness of our world during the 1400s, 1700s, and the present day, and examined how global trade has changed over time. Students used color-coded yarn to simulate the trade of specific products from each of the three time periods, and analyzed the webs created by the yarn. They discovered that global trade has become more complex over time.

DARE TO BE SCARED?

FROM THE  
MINDS OF  
PSCS PHOTO  
COMES A  
GALLERY  
UNLIKE  
ANY OTHER.

IT'S  
**SPOOKY SZN.**

OCTOBER 26, 2023 | FROM 7 TO 9PM



THEY'RE COMING! IT'S "SPOOKY SZN.", A PHOTO GALLERY, FEATURING THE NEWEST, MOST TERRIFYING ARTWORK FROM THE PSCS PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENTS. HELD IN THE DIMLY LIT HALLWAYS OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS, THIS FREE GALLERY IS UNLIKE ANY YOU WILL EVER SEE, BUT DUE TO THE CREEPTASTIC CONTENT, **PARENTAL GUIDANCE IS ADVISED AND THE GALLERY IS ONLY FOR AGE 13+ (THOSE UNDER 18 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT)**. THE GALLERY WILL ALSO FEATURE EERIE PERFORMANCES BY THE HS DANCE CLASS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL THERE. **IT'S BOUND TO BE A SCREAM!**