



Pioneer Springs' Annual Fundraising Campaign is going green! In past years we've sent home fundraising packets, including envelopes and flyers, to collect donations. To save paper, and to make turning-in funds easier for families, our fundraising is going digital. [Click here to donate.](#) If you'd prefer to donate by check or cash, please stop by the office. Thank you for supporting Pioneer Springs!

IMPORTANT DATES & ITEMS TO NOTE

- 15 Sept-13 Oct: [Annual Campaign](#)
- 1 Oct: Kids in Nature at Reedy Creek Park, [click here](#)
- 4 Oct: Volunteer Training, 9am & 6pm, [click here](#)
- 5 Oct: 5th grade field trip to McDowell Nature Centre
- 9 Oct: Blood Drive, [click here](#)
- 13 Oct: Reach for the Trees, [click here](#)

Ensuring each student's unique learning needs are met, a note from Kelley Hood, Academic Coordinator

My name is Kelley Hood, and this year, I have the honor of serving as the Academic Coordinator which includes coordinating the efforts of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) at Pioneer Springs Community School. I've been with our school since it became a charter in 2014, taking on various roles such as K-4th Lead Teacher, Academic Dean, MTSS Coordinator, and now, Academic Coordinator. In this capacity, I work to make a global impact by collaborating with teachers to support the individual needs of their students.



MTSS is at the heart of our mission. It entails implementing research-based teaching strategies for students to maximize their success with grade-level learning, known as [Tier 1](#) learning through our core curriculum. Some students also need supplemental instruction ([Tier 2](#)), or intensive support ([Tier 3](#)) within the classroom. Every student is part of an MTSS, but each one has unique needs for success. My objective is to discern those needs through data analysis and provide teachers with the most appropriate support to ensure that each student grows to their full potential.

As an Academic Coordinator, I can assist teachers with core curriculum and classroom practices. This role enables me to better identify our most at-risk students and those who require accelerated instruction beyond their grade level. Together with our dedicated team, we strive to create a nurturing environment where all students can thrive academically, behaviorally, and socially/ emotionally.

Help Wanted...support our school and teachers

Substitute Teachers are essential to making things run smoothly when teachers need to be out. If you or someone you know is interested in more information on serving in this paid role, please contact Glenda Cheek at glendac@pioneersprings.org. Trainings will be at 9:30 am on October 12 and 19. [Sign-up here.](#)

Reach for the Trees Celebration Strategist, Do you bring fun everywhere you go?

Join us to make Reach for the Trees spirited and exciting by choosing music, planning decorations, and brainstorming ideas to add to the fun!

Meet on Monday, October 2 at 2.

Folklore and Fair Tale Festival Spellcasters, Are you good at adding sparkle to events? Join the Folklore and Fairy Tale Festival committee and help make the festival magical. Meet on Wednesday, October 4 at 10.

Yoga Eye Pillow Sewing Bee Sewers, Do you love to sew, or would you like to learn how to sew? Our middle school students are in need of eye pillows for yoga. Bring your own machine-or borrow one from PSCS-and help make the pillows. Meet on Friday, October 6 at 9.

Reach for the Trees Volunteers, Would you like to help out Reach for the Trees together the week of the event, or help on the day of the event? [Sign-up here.](#)



Benchmark data and progress reports, oh my! How to understand and talk to your students about their academic progress

Last week elementary and middle school teachers sent home iReady Benchmark data. High school teachers will email progress reports at the end of this week. Benchmark data and progress reports offer snapshots into your student's academic performance, including insights into material that your student is mastering, concepts where they need extra support, and areas where they are ready to be challenged. We share this information with families because we believe it is important for you to understand how your student is progressing academically, and to give you information that you can use at home to support your student's academic growth.

If your student is in elementary or middle school, you can read the iReady family report to gain a deeper understanding of how your student is progressing in math and reading. This letter explains how to interpret the iReady data. Additionally, iReady offers individualized online pathways that students can follow to shore-up skills they have not yet mastered, and to be challenged in areas where they are working above grade level. Your student's teacher(s) would be happy to help you understand your student's progress, and to make suggestions about additional resources to help your student grow academically at home. If you still need login credentials to see the iReady report, reach out to your student's teacher.

In high school, students are developing their independence, and are becoming more accountable for their learning. You can support your high school student as s/he becomes an independent learner by discussing progress reports as a family. Start the conversation positively by highlighting areas of strength and growth. Then, frame your conversation by discussing your student's long-term goals. What do they hope to do after high school? What steps are necessary to get there? Is the current academic achievement aligned with these goals? If so, what are the next steps? If not, what are the next steps? Encourage your student to ask teachers for more support, or more challenging work so that your student can meet their full potential.

Finally, be encouraging—learning comes from being challenged, which can be intimidating and frustrating. When students are striving, they need to know that the adults in their life see how hard that they are working, and to be reminded that their hard-work will pay-off, even when it takes time. Students who are not working to their full potential need to be reminded of their potential, and often require specific, actionable feedback to help them grow. That feedback, however, needs to come in manageable chunks. Set goals that students can achieve in a short period of time, and gradually make the goals more challenging. Setting a series of manageable goals will get bigger results than a single, overly ambitious goal.

Senior Secrets from the Salamander Scrolls by Ms. Lynn Curley



All Seniors were asked last week to set up an account at [CFNC.org](https://www.cfnc.org). Why so urgently? College Applications submitted through a [CFNC.org](https://www.cfnc.org) student are *free* at many North Carolina public school from **October 16-20**. Don't miss out!

October 5: Scholarship Fair!

Juniors and Seniors: **October 13** is the first day to register for CPC classes.

See Ms. Lynn if you haven't already.

Feedback

Summer 2024 Study Abroad Opportunity



Hello high school families! Ms. Mel (our 7th and 8th grade ELA teacher) is taking a group of high school students to London and Rome for a 10 day adventure! The tentative trip dates are **June 12-22, 2024**. If you are interested in learning more about this amazing educational opportunity, join us on October 5 at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

Get more information and RSVP for the meeting [here.](#)

8th graders build garden bed for environmental literacy class



On Monday Mel Pemberton's Environmental Literacy students built a garden bed in the open area between the Middle School Hives and the High School. The garden bed was purchased thanks to fundraising efforts last school year, specifically a grant from the NC Youth Outdoor Commission, awarded to Sandy Dixon, our school's naturalist. At Pioneer Springs, we fundraise by applying for grants, partnering with local businesses and corporations, and by asking families to make contributions. Our fundraising goal is \$150,000 this school year, and is an important part of bridging the gap between state funding and the actual costs of education at Pioneer Springs.

The 7th and 8th grade classes will be using this garden bed as a part of the curriculum for Environmental Literacy. This will, of course, give the students the opportunity to learn how to tend to a garden and grow plants. The plants we grow will serve as food for our middle school class pet- our pet rabbits Humphrey, Willow, and Peanut are very excited about this! The students will also incorporate their content area skills in a variety of ways, from calculating the area of the garden bed and spacing, to studying the life cycles of plants and determining how much water the plants need to grow, all while working on their research skills.

Your contributions to our fundraising efforts make vital projects such as classroom gardens possible. Please help us support our unique, hands-on approach to education by participating in our Annual Campaign. [Learn more about how you can help here.](#)

The Davis General Store, a piece of history next door to Pioneer Springs

By Anna Petty, High School Green Humanities Community in Action Student

The Davis General Store is a beloved location not just for the students and staff of Pioneer Springs, but for many in North Carolina and beyond. This store is rich with history from the day it was founded and through every decade that followed.

The business began in 1890 with brothers Charles Spencer and Silas Winslow Davis. The Davis brothers selected this location for their store because it could easily receive shipments of goods from the nearby railroad, which connected it to stores in other states. This made the location ideal for profit, and allowed it to last to the present day. Later on, more railways were built that connected the Davis store to more locations. Built in 1908, the store originally sold farming tools.

It has been full of a wide array of products from canned fruits and vegetables to rakes and shovels ever since. The store is still owned by descendants of the Davis family, who maintain its well preserved state. This store is a snapshot into the history of our state and our city, and will hopefully remain open into the future. Pay the Davis General store a visit, and share the treasures that you discover on social media. Be sure to tag #pioneersprings and #davisgeneralstore.



Classroom Happenings



Kindergarten adopted the willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) in front of Davis. They will be studying this tree during their environmental literacy time to understand how it changes through the seasons.



Ms. Sherry's Kindergarteners discovered a wollybug.



Students found a friend while taking a nature walk!



High school Chemistry students investigated the physical characteristics of the "Big 6 Plastics", which are types of synthetic polymers (the 6 main recycling numbers). Using three solutions of different compositions differing densities, they found the density of those plastics.



In their Physical Science course, high school students used a simple tool—a cup of water tied to a string—to study centripetal force. Students spun the cup attached to the string and used timing and the formula for the circumference of a circle to calculate velocity as well as the total centripetal force exerted on the water at the bottom of the cup. They then compared which experimental condition had a greater impact: a change in the length of the string, or the mass of the water in the cup. We'd love to invite you to recreate this experiment at home. What do you notice and wonder? Share your discoveries on your social media and tag us! #pioneersprings