

THE PMSD ESL CONNECTION

A Message from Dr. Catherine Sweeney

Pocono Mountain School District Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

How to help your child learn faster

The single most effective thing a student can do at home is to read regularly. If this is done over a long period, it will benefit your child in various ways: it will obviously develop their general ability to understand what they read, but it will also increase their vocabulary and provide models of grammar and sentence structure that will help them in their own writing.

Your child can develop their listening skills at home by listening to audio cassettes and video cassettes from the library. For speaking practice your child could give a summary of the main events in the stories they have read or heard, or they could state some of the important information they have learned from non-fiction sources. Writing can be practiced if your child keeps a journal in which, for example, they record their response to the books they have read or movies or TV programs they have seen. They could also create their own fiction stories.

As for grammar and vocabulary: in my opinion these are best learned in the contexts of reading or listening. However, there are many grammar and vocabulary practice books available, and if your child has one that she enjoys using, there is no reason why they should not spend an hour or so a week on such exercises. The suggestions made above will help your child to improve her general English proficiency, and this of course will have a beneficial effect on their other school work. You may, however, wish to help them more directly with their assignments in their other subjects, such as science, history, math, etc. In this case the best thing you can do is to have at home good reference materials*, *in your own language*. Your child can consult these to increase their general understanding of the topic they are learning. It would also help very much if you could discuss with them what they have read, again in your own language.

This will deepen their background knowledge and prepare them to understand the difficult English they will hear and read in school.

The final piece of advice here is perhaps the most important: if your child does not have the desire to do extra practice at home as suggested above, then it is best to respect this. They are probably working hard enough already and may prefer to spend their free time just doing nothing, or in a sporting or musical activity. This mental and physical relaxation is the best way to prepare her for the rigors of the next school day. In fact, being involved in an after-school activity is a great way for your child to mix with native-speakers of English and practice their speaking skills!

* Reference materials include encyclopedia[†], atlases, bilingual dictionaries, and textbooks from your child's native school system.

† *The Microsoft computer encyclopedia [Encarta](#) is available in many different language editions. It is a good starting point for acquiring general background information on a huge variety of topics. The online dictionary [Wikipedia](#) is another good and growing source of information in all the world's major languages.*

DATES TO REMEMBER



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| © April 1st: beginning of 4th marking period | © May 16-27: Spring Keystones |
| © April 11th: ELA PSSAs begin | © May 18th: Act 80 Day—3-hour early dismissal |
| © April 18th: Math PSSAs begin | © May 30th: NO SCHOOL—Memorial Day |
| © April 25th: Science PSSAs begin | © June 6th: Last day of school for students (tentative) |



A Glance at ESL Around PMSD

SECONDARY NEWS

WJHS: With the 3rd marking period coming to an end, we are gearing up for the PSSAs, and looking forward to the 4th marking period beginning. We are honing our skills in order to do our best and achieve proficiency. Enjoy the sunny weather and springtime!

PMWHS: We are extremely excited as the school year winds down. Seniors are looking forward to Prom and graduation. Underclassmen have an upcoming Escape to Six Flags in May. Focus continues on us improving our English fluency and our progress will be reflected in the ACCESS scores when they are released. Congrats to all of our West Best and West Pride students!

EJHS: The students finished their Walk 4 Moons projects. We are currently reading Moby Dick. PSSA testing is coming fast - we will be doing skills practices to prepare and review for test success.

PMEHS: The East High School finished reading MacBeth. We will be starting a new novel after spring break. Students completed CDT testing and are preparing for May Keystone tests. Also, the students will be completing research papers during the 4th quarter.



ELEMENTARY NEWS

SIS: At SIS, we are anticipating the arrival of sunny, warm days! Our students have been busy with their academic subjects and also looking forward to participating in many "end of the year" school activities. Please continue to encourage your children to read daily. Twenty minutes of reading practice at home will help their skills to improve greatly. Mrs. Malinowski and Ms. Menendez wish you all a wonderful, safe spring.

CREC: Clear Run Elementary Center enjoyed another "Under the Lights" family event with a Super Bowl theme. CREC students also contributed to the Jared Box project by filling 186 boxes with small gifts for chronically ill children to enjoy.

TEC: All the students at TEC have been learning new language skills and reading nonfiction and fiction stories. The Kindergarten students have been learning about blends and writing about their favorite Dr. Seuss book. Students in first grade read a nonfiction story about Cats and then wrote facts about cats. They also learned the sound of long vowel /e/ when reading words with the vowel teams ee and ea. They also had the opportunity to listen to Dr. Seuss stories in Polish. Second grade students practiced sequencing the events of a story. We have been learning how to write an opinion paragraph with supporting reasons. The third grade students have been practicing to identify verbs and verb tenses. We also had the chance to write a creative story about St. Patrick's Day. Everyone is doing a great job. Keep up the great work, and we are looking forward to Spring.

SEC: Spring has sprung and SEC's students are blossoming with their reading and writing. Kindergarteners have been working on their reading comprehension skills. First grade has been learning about maps. They did a project where they had to illustrate, write about and present: themselves, their neighborhood, their town, their state, their country and the world. Second grade has been doing St. Patty's Day and Easter related sequencing activities. Second grade and third grade learned and wrote their own March similes and metaphors. Third grade wrote their own opinion writing on whether they are more like a lion or a lamb and they wrote a personal narrative about a friend they admire. They also wrote their own limericks. Happy Spring!

CRIS: Mrs. Gonzalez, Mrs. Garrett, and Mrs. Haggerty have been working hard with their students. The students have been busy working on spring projects and Dr. Seuss/Read Across America projects. They have been writing poems and interpreting figurative language.



Mrs. Luz Gonzalez is pictured, center.

ESL STAFF SPOTLIGHT

We continue our feature in the quarterly newsletter this school year, an interview of one of the ESL teachers around the district. Mrs. Luz I Gonzalez is featured in this issue. Mrs. Gonzalez is an ESL Program Specialist at the Clear Run Intermediate School. We were so happy she agreed to be interviewed for this issue of the newsletter! Mrs. Gonzalez is pictured with her CRIS ESL colleagues on the bottom of page 2.



1. WERE YOU NAMED AFTER ANYONE?

I was named after my mom.

2. WHERE WERE YOU BORN? I was born in Puerto Rico.

3. MARRIED? CHILDREN?

I am married and have two awesome children, Ivette and Eric.

4. DO YOU LIKE YOUR HANDWRITING?

Yes, I have always enjoyed writing.

5. PETS?

I have had birds but currently I have a dog. He is a Laso Apso that I rescued 8 years ago. He is my third child.

6. DO YOU HAVE A BEST FRIEND? WHO IS THIS PERSON, WHY ARE YOU FRIENDS?

I have been blessed to have many good friends but they always moved far away. When I moved to Pennsylvania, my New York supervisor told me to get in contact with Evelyn who was a teacher in PA. If my supervisor recommended someone to me, I knew that this person would be special in some way. I met Evelyn in Bethlehem where I got a teaching position as a Kindergarten teacher and then as a Third Grade teacher. As soon as I met her, we clicked right away. Evelyn then got a position in the PMSD as an ESL teacher. Little did I know then that I would soon follow her to PMSD as well. Evelyn called me to tell me that she needed assistance because the number of ESL students were rapidly growing. Evelyn was my mentor and with her support and guidance I was able to accomplish many great things as an ESL teacher. She not only is a great friend but also is part of my family as well.

7. IF YOU WERE ANOTHER PERSON WOULD YOU BE FRIENDS WITH YOU?

Yes, I would be friends with me for many reasons. First, I am down to earth. It does not take a lot to make me happy or please me. I like simple things. Diamonds and furs are not important to me. I value the every day things like a sunny day, laughing with my family and sharing good times. Ever since I was little, my friends valued my opinions and asked me for advice. They told me that I was their sunshine.

8. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CEREAL? WHY DO YOU LIKE IT? My favorite cereal is Cheerios as well as hot cereals like oatmeal and farina. I like them because they remind me of my mom.

9. DO YOU THINK YOU ARE STRONG? Yes.

10. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ICE CREAM?

I like pistachio, chocolate chip mint and twist (vanilla/chocolate).

11. WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE ABOUT PEOPLE? I notice the way they present themselves.

12. Which COLORS DO YOU PREFER? RED OR PINK / BLUE OR GREEN? Red and Blue

13. WHO DO YOU MISS THE MOST?

I miss my parents who are in heaven.

14. IF YOU WERE A CRAYON, WHAT COLOR WOULD YOU BE? Red or Turquoise

15. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SMELL?

Bakery aromas and my husband's cooking are my favorite smells.

16. DO YOU HAVE BROTHERS/SISTERS?

I have three brothers. I am the oldest and only girl.

17. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TV SHOW TO WATCH?

I like classic comedies and mysteries.

18. HAIR and EYE COLOR? Both are dark brown

19. DO YOU WEAR CONTACTS/GLASSES/BOTH? Glasses

20. FAVORITE FOOD? Meatloaf, spaghetti, Puerto Rican food

21. SCARY MOVIES OR HAPPY ENDINGS? Happy endings

22. FAVORITE SEASON? Spring is my favorite.

23. FAVORITE DESSERT?

Cannoli cake, chocolate mousse etc.....

24. FAVORITE SOUND? Ocean waves, waterfalls, brooks

25. ROLLING STONES OR BEATLES? OR FAVORITE BAND/MUSICIAN? Beatles/ Salsa/Latin Music

26. WHAT IS THE FARTHEST YOU HAVE BEEN FROM HOME?

Hawaii

27. DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL TALENT?

I like to dance Salsa and do crafts.

28. WHAT COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY DID YOU ATTEND?

I attended Hunter College/ESU.

29. WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE?

A teacher like my mom. She inspired me to be a teacher

30. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING?

I've taught for about 33 years in New York and Pennsylvania.

31. DO YOU ENJOY READING/WRITING? WHY OR WHY NOT?

I enjoy Reading and Writing. They help me to relax. I would like to write a children's book. Reading and Writing are very important skills that you need for everyday living and are vital for communicating with others.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION!!!

ATTENTION!

Calling all 2016-2017

Kindergarten students!

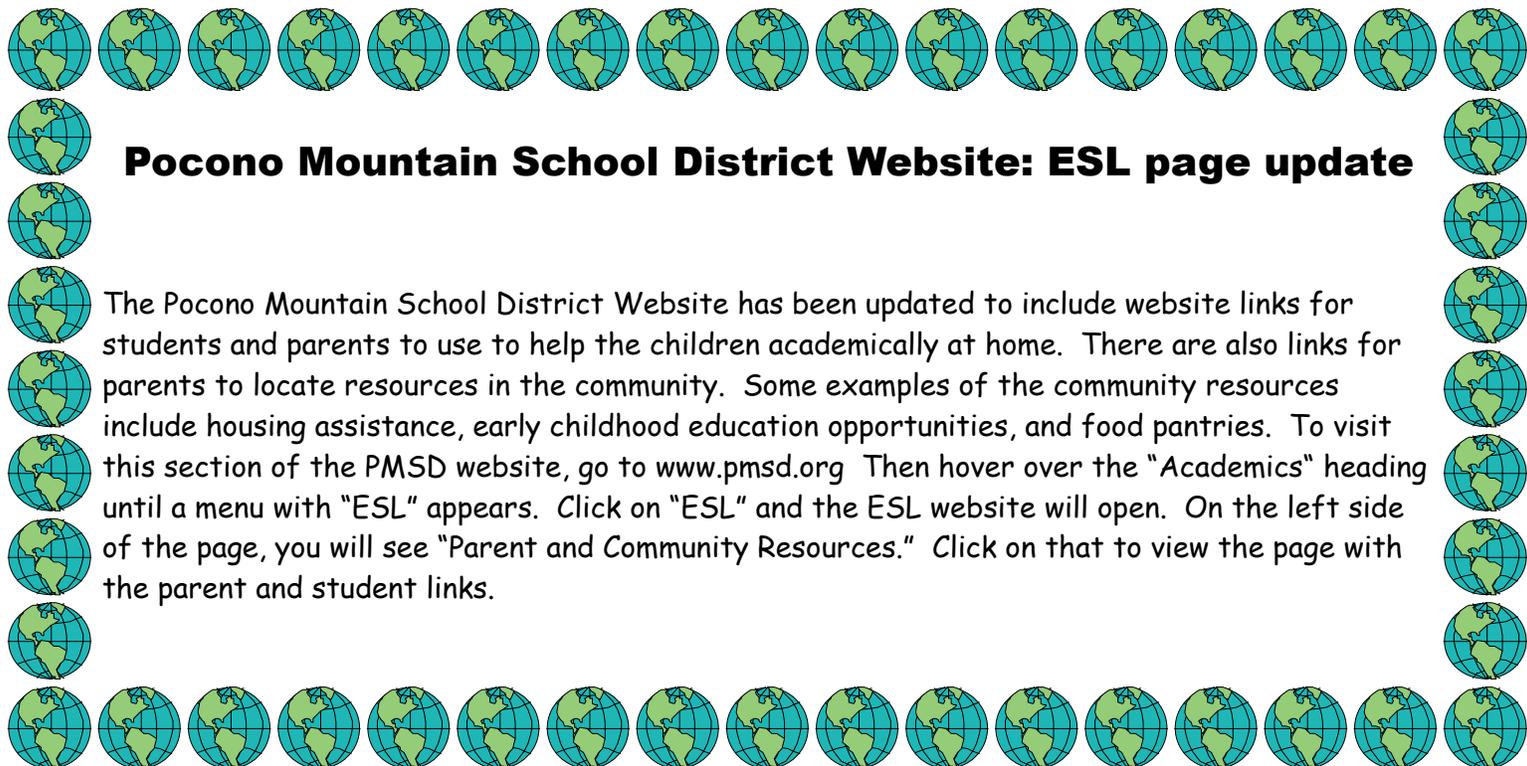
We need you to schedule your appointment to register your child!



If you have a child who meets the eligibility for the 2016-2017 school year Kindergarten class, please contact the Pocono Mountain School District Central Registration Office at 839-7121 ext. 40400 to schedule an appointment. The child must be five (5) years of age or more, on or before September 1, 2016.

After the registration process has been completed, your child will be scheduled for a Kindergarten orientation session sometime in the spring at their respective school building.

The required documents are available on-line at <http://www.pmsd.org/Page/1356>



Pocono Mountain School District Website: ESL page update

The Pocono Mountain School District Website has been updated to include website links for students and parents to use to help the children academically at home. There are also links for parents to locate resources in the community. Some examples of the community resources include housing assistance, early childhood education opportunities, and food pantries. To visit this section of the PMSD website, go to www.pmsd.org Then hover over the "Academics" heading until a menu with "ESL" appears. Click on "ESL" and the ESL website will open. On the left side of the page, you will see "Parent and Community Resources." Click on that to view the page with the parent and student links.



Adult ESL:



Adult ESL meets weekly on Thursdays at CREC from 6pm to 8pm. Classes are open and free to any PMSD parent/guardian who wishes to practice English! Contact Mrs. Mascia (mmascia@pmsd.org) for information!

Test-taking tips for your child:

With the ESL state test (WIDA ACCESS) upon us, as well as PSSAs and Keystones quickly approaching, here are some test-taking tips for parents and students to keep in mind for standardized testing.

PARENTS:

- * Make sure your children have eaten well on test days. Studies suggest that good nutrition is related to improved attention and concentration.
- * Help your children by encouraging a good night's rest before exams. Children who are tired will have difficulty focusing on their work.
- * Make the morning of test days pleasant. Stress will impair your children's ability to perform their best.
- * Remind your children to dress comfortably, perhaps in layers, so that they are able to adjust to the temperature in the room.
- * Ensure that your children make it to school on-time so that they do not miss any instructions and are allowed ample time to settle in and relax before the test begins.
- * Have students attend school regularly and be on time every day.

Sources:

http://www.keydatasys.com/common/downloads/Parent_Test_Taking_Tips.pdf,

<http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/standardized-tests/>

STUDENTS:

- * Come to school prepared, rested, and ready to learn every day.
- * Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.
- * Eat a good breakfast before the test.
- * Read/listen to the directions carefully. If something is unclear, ask for clarification.
- * Read every possible answer--the best one could be last.
- * If you get stuck on a question, mark it and move on. You can come back to it later.
- * Make sure to record the answer in the correct place on the answer sheet.
- * Only change an answer if you are sure the first one you picked was wrong. Be sure to completely erase changed answers.
- * After completion of the test, use any remaining time to check your answers.
- * Keep a good attitude. Think positively!

Home-School Connection News!!!

On March 15th, the PMSD ESL department hosted a second evening at Clear Run Elementary Center. The literacy focused event was for all PMSD ESL students and their families. The evening included an amazing performance by Urbane, the PMSD Gospel Choir, and an excellent Reader's Theater performance from students at Pocono Mountain Junior High. Between the two performances, parents were presented with literacy information from the teachers. All ESL students were offered a chance to participate in a raffle for a chance to win fun literacy prizes. They also had the opportunity to create a personalized art activity. In addition, the ESL teachers displayed student work for the parents to view.

It was a wonderful evening! Stay tuned for more information about the next Home-School Connection.



Pocono Mountain School District Mission & Vision Statement

**To prepare all students for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.*

**To create a culture of achievement, improve student performance, maintain safe schools, and promote strong character.*



Home Help Tips for Parents of ESL Students

- Establish specific routines for your child to follow.
- Practice vocabulary daily with your child using household objects.
- Read to your child daily in your native language or English.
- Practice good study habits daily. Set aside a time for your child to study on a regular basis.
- Have family meetings where your child is the leader of the discussions. Allow your child to speak in either English or the native language.
- Visit the ESL resource site at the PMSD main web page. Plentiful resources for parents to use at home are available.
- www.pmsd.org

The Pocono Mountain School District's ESL Program is a regular education program that is aligned with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's ESL standards.

A specialized, certified ESL teacher works with students in large or small groups.

A program designed to assist students with the reading, speaking, listening, and writing of the English language.

ESL is NOT a bilingual program.

