

The Swanson Anchor

September 2014



From the Principal's Desk

Welcome back Admirals! I hope that your summer was filled with memorable adventures as well as time for rest and relaxation. My husband (Andrew, director of bands at Robinson Secondary School), son (Ian, an 8th grader at Robinson) and I drove across the country (7,600 miles in all) to see this great land of ours. We had a great time and I came back excited about the new school year.

The start of a new school year is always filled with anticipation of new adventures and recognition that change is inevitable. Change defines the middle school years and at Swanson, we strive to support our students and families during this time of transition. One example of this change is that we are fortunate to welcome back a Life Skills program at Swanson. Additionally, as our student population tops 1,000, we are fortunate to expand our staffing. New positions include an additional Science and Math teacher. We are pleased to welcome the following new staff members, as well:

Loren Beecher – Schooners Math Teacher
Molly Beyer – HILT Teacher
Sharon Bizar – Sea Hawks Special Education Teacher
Justin Brosnahan – Clippers Science Teacher
Nicole Curran – Spanish Teacher
Laura Goodwyn – Counselor
Rachael Herr – Voyagers English Teacher
Linda Kelleher – Schooners Reading Teacher

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From the PTA

Welcome to Swanson's 2014–15 school year! We are excited to welcome back our returning families and looking forward to welcoming our new students and their families. We have a lot of great new things planned for this year and hope that all of you will get involved in some way. Studies show that students whose parents are engaged in their schools perform better, so I'd like to encourage everyone to find even some small way to participate.

If your student is new to Swanson, like your kids, you may be holding back to get a lay of the land, to see what interests your children will develop and to get involved once they find their niche. While you will definitely want to get involved in the activities your child discovers, the PTA in the meantime offers an easy, straightforward way to learn more about what is going on at school and to meet other parents, faculty and

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September 2014

September

- 4 School Board Meeting
7:30 pm
- 10 Swanson Activities Fair - Small
Gym
3:30 pm
- 18 Back to School Night
7:30 pm

PTA Board

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Rana Luthra – Director of Counseling Services
Melissa Meck – Voyagers Special Education Teacher
Tammy Metz – Librarian
Jillian Nemeth – Health and Physical Education Teacher
Susan Pacifico – HILT & 8th grade Math Teacher
Leigh Rauseo – French Teacher
Chrissy Reardon – 0.5 Counselor & 0.5 Minority Achievement Coordinator
JuanPablo Fernandez Quinteros – Lunch Attendant
Sulma Saenz – Custodian
Christine Stokes-Beverley – Captains Special Education Teacher
Shayla Swanson – 8th grade Instructional Assistant
Victoria Watts – Health and Physical Education Teacher

Please visit our school often and stay involved in all aspects of your child's education. We are here to work with you. Please join us for the first PTA meeting (Tuesday, September 9 at 7:00 pm in the library) and at Back to School Night on Thursday, September 18 at 7:00 pm.

Communication is essential for success. We have a well-established network including voicemail, email, Parent & Student Vue (online grade and student information portals), report cards, progress reports and backpack mail. This newsletter, *The Swanson Anchor*, is also an excellent way to stay connected with events at Swanson. The Swanson website, <http://www.apsva.us/swanson>, includes up-to-date information regarding events, activities and homework assignments. We encourage you to use these

resources to stay informed of your child's progress during the coming year.

Our mission is to engage and educate today's students, empowering them to contribute to tomorrow's world. The Swanson Statement illustrates our motto, "Service-Spirit-Scholarship":

We are Swanson Admirals.

*We are Scholarship, striving to think deeply
and open our minds.*

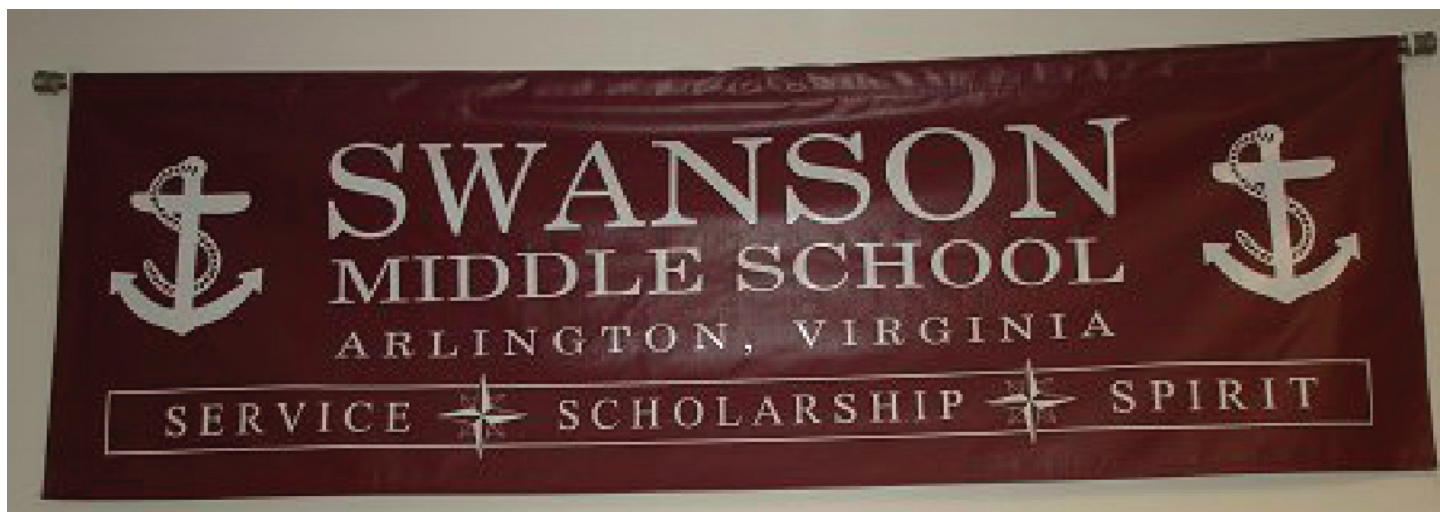
*We are Service, connecting to one another,
our community, and the world.*

*We are Spirit, celebrating our successes, ourselves,
and our school.*

We are Swanson Admirals.

Students and staff affirm the tenets of this statement daily. We have a long tradition of academic excellence and high standards. We are proud of all of our accomplishments in academics, the arts, sports and service. There is a place for everyone here and we invite you to join us as we build on these successes. Welcome aboard and have a great year!

– Bridget Loft, Principal



From the PTA *(Continued from page 1)*

staff at Swanson. As our kids transition from the hand-holding environment of elementary school to the more independent teen years, knowing what is happening at school is even more important.

We will hold our monthly PTA meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Swanson library, beginning September 9. We typically invite a featured speaker or focus on a specific topic in addition to normal PTA business discussions. Stop in to see what is going on. Everyone is always welcome!

We are doing new things like creating a Welcome Committee to help new kids and families acclimate to our school, offering the “Challenge Racism” conversations for parents and community members (sponsored by the PTA this year), continuing to support our teachers’ innovative activities through the PTA Grants program, supporting athletics and enrichment and adding more spirit gear. We need volunteers to make all of this a reality, so please reach out to let us know what you can do!

Thanks a lot!

—Tish Jenkins, Swanson PTA President, 2014–15

We Are Swanson Admirals!

Welcome to Swanson! We’re looking forward to an exciting year. We look to embody our Swanson Statement in all we do.

We Are Scholarship~ striving to think deeply and open our minds...

The best way for students to succeed right off the bat in their classes is to develop and maintain good study habits. Encourage your children to use their Swanson agenda on a regular basis. This tool is designed to allow students to record assignments, upcoming quizzes and tests, as well as to inform them (and you!) of important dates and events at Swanson. It is an ideal tool for you to help your child learn to keep track of his or her academic responsibilities.

We Are Service~ connecting to one another, our community, and to the world...

There are many opportunities for Swanson students to give back to their communities. Keep an ear tuned for information about our STAR sponsored activities, as well as other annual service projects.



We Are Spirit~ celebrating our successes, ourselves, and our school...

The Code of Conduct in the student/parent handbook articulates the following expectations of your student. They should:

- Be prompt, prepared and participate actively in their classes
- Respect themselves, their peers and all adults in the building
- Use appropriate language
- Dress for respect and for success
- Practice academic and social integrity
- Be respectful of school materials and appropriate use of school equipment
- Work cooperatively with their peers and Swanson staff members in an effective and efficient manner

Please note that students are responsible for any electronic device(s) brought to school (including Smartphones, Tablets, and reading devices). Swanson is not responsible for devices damaged, lost or stolen. Please reference pages 21–24 in the Swanson Student/Parent handbook for the entire APS Acceptable Use Policy.

Thank you in advance for supporting your child as this new school year begins. Together, we can make our Swanson Statement a daily reality.

— Shannan Ellis, Reneé Harber & Scott McKeown,
Assistant Principals



Dress Code Tips

As summer weather lingers into fall, September is a good time to review appropriate dress for school. While most Swanson students dress and behave in a respectful manner, it is important to remember that any clothing considered inappropriate or disruptive is not allowed. This includes hats, halter tops and short crop tops and any clothing that suggests or advertises alcohol, smoking, drugs, inappropriate behavior, language or innuendoes.

The following is a list of guidelines to clarify the rules for parents and students:

- Avoid clothing, including shorts and skirts, that is too tight, revealing or too baggy, exposing undergarments.
- Skirts and shorts **should be longer** than where students' fingertips fall to their thighs when standing.
- While ladies may wear leggings under their shorts, note that the shorts should still be longer than where students' fingertips fall to their thighs when standing.
- Avoid tops that expose too much skin.
- Gentlemen's boxer shorts or undergarments should not be visible.
- Bra or spaghetti straps should not be exposed.
- Midriffs should not be exposed at any time while standing or sitting.
- Hats or bandanas are not to be worn inside the school building.

Teachers and administrators will have the final determination on what is deemed appropriate school dress. Students may be asked to change into their PE uniform or request parents to bring an additional change of clothing to school. In addition, backpacks are to be stored in lockers and not carried from class to class. Thanks for your support!

—Shannan Ellis, Reneé Harber, and Scott McKeown,
Assistant Principals

[Note to readers: The following Math articles should have appeared in the June Anchor but were left out due to a computer glitch.]

Continental Math League Contest Results

The final Continental Math League contest was held in March. Students did very well on the contest, with 33 scoring a perfect score of six. In the team competition, both the Swanson 6th and 8th graders won first place regionally and Swanson's Hanna Xu was one of only nine 7th graders nationwide who had a perfect score for the entire series of contests. Congratulations!

At the completion of the series of five contests, the following students scored a combined score of 23 or higher (out of a maximum score of 30):

Combined score of 23:

6th graders – **Duncan Griffiths** and **Zach Luzius**

7th graders – **Jesse Bloome**, **Isabella Frymoyer**, **Ferris Linde** and **Matthew McKnight**

8th graders – **Ryan Edelstein**, **Nathaniel Klein** and **Jack Lacey**

Combined score of 24:

6th graders – **Sam Bender-Prouty**, **Michael Curran**, **Graham Lazorchak** and **Helyn Walther**

7th graders – **Samantha O'Brien** and **Ellie Shaker**

8th grader – **Johnston French** and **Sam Goodkind**

Combined score of 25:

6th graders – **Robert Crofts** and **Suruchi Sen**

7th graders – **Jasmine Mondshine** and **Cate Whitehouse**

8th grader – **Kyle Gerner**

Combined score of 26:

7th graders – **Claire Cofield**, **Calder Lowenthal** and **Philip Suskin**

8th grader – **Ben McCracken**

Combined score of 27:

6th grader – **Christina Sheckler**

7th grader – **Tom Dickson**

8th grader – **Sarkis Ter Martirosyan**

Combined score of 28:

6th grader – **Brendan Rindfusz**

8th grader – **Kyle Gerner**

Combined score of 29:
8th grader – **Derek Martin**

Perfect Score of 30:
7th grader – **Hanna Xu**

—*Laura Partridge, Math Coach*

Virginia Math League Contest Results

Students in all three grades competed in the Virginia Math League contests earlier this year. This contest is similar to the Continental Math League contest in that each grade has a unique contest that is 30 minutes long and requires the students to use problem-solving skills. However, it is also quite different since students can use a calculator and there are 35 questions, not just six. Many students are not used to feeling time pressures on tests and contests, so they had to be careful and use their time wisely. Achieving a 50% on this contest is a very good score!

The following students were in the top groups for their grade level on the contest:

6th Grade: Sam Bender-Prouty – 27; Claire Williams – 26; Graham Lazorchak, Zach Luzius, Benjamin Nelson, Brendan Rindfusz and Aidan Witeck – 24; Charles Ciccoretta, Robert Crotts, Max Nagle, Ben Porter, Albert Velikonja and Helyn Walther - 23

7th Grade: Hanna Xu – 29; Kate Cobey – 28; Claire Cofield – 27; Erika Christensen, Gabi Fowler, Max Horan-Tankersley, Matthew McKnight, Samantha O'Brien – 26; Natalie Chin, Tom Dickson, Lindsay Grose, Ellie Hill and Sophie Lent - 25

8th Grade: Ben McCracken – 33; Sarkis Ter Martirosyan – 31; Jack Lacey – 29; Ryan Edelstein and Johnston French – 28; Thomas Callen, Kiran Devine, Kyle Gerner, Derek Martin and Lily Wieland – 27.

A special thanks to Math teacher Nicole Cunningham for taking care of many of the contest logistics!

—*Laura Partridge, Math Coach*

End of Year Math Wrap-Up

Math Month Activities

To celebrate April as math month at Swanson, students participated in a variety of activities. The most popular was the weekly “ken ken” challenges. We had hundreds of Swanson students participate! All students who did at least one of the weekly challenges received a colorful smiley pencil eraser. Additionally, students who submitted complete and accurate math puzzles were entered into a random drawing and had a chance to win ken ken puzzle books and various math supplies. Lunch games of math dice were also held and students had a chance to compete against each other and win prizes. Each math dice participant received a dice eraser. All the prizes were courtesy of a PTA grant.

MathCounts

The MathCounts club is open to any student interested in math problem solving. The major MathCounts news since the last Anchor article was that Swanson earned Gold Level MathCounts Club status! The requirement was for the team to create their own math problems using given math vocabulary words and a real life situation that could be photographed in the school. The club rose to the challenge and submitted a Power Point presentation complete with pictures, problems and worked out solutions. There were fewer than 200 school clubs that earned that designation, including only seven schools in Virginia. Great job, Swanson!

STEM Night

Swanson held a STEM night in the middle of May for parents and students. The first part of the evening included an awards ceremony for students who were recognized for their commitment to science, technology, and/or mathematics. The latter part of the event, which was open to the entire Swanson community, included interactive STEM games and activities, STEM organization displays, and student demonstrations.

—*Laura Partridge, Math Coach*