



Pleasant Hill  
Survival Guide  
2011 – 2012



# Pleasant Hill School Survival Guide

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Whether you've been through it all or are just starting out here at Pleasant Hill School (PH), you may be interested in some behind-the-scenes scoop on the various events, both PTA and not, coming up this and most every year. The general time frame for each activity/event is provided. Please see the Pleasant Hill PTA calendar for the specific date. The calendar can also be found at [www.phpta.org](http://www.phpta.org).

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	WHEN
After School Specials	Classes and activities sponsored by the PTA and taught by parent/teacher/community volunteers. These "classes" will give PH students an opportunity to try new activities in a safe environment.	Winter
Back To School Picnic	A PTA-sponsored event that is a "Welcome Back" event for all PH staff and families. Families bring their own picnic. Ice cream and desserts are provided as well as entertainment and games – all at no cost to attendees.	August
Band Concert - Beginning	Band concert put on by mostly 5 <sup>th</sup> -grade students so they can showcase their talents. All Pleasant Hill families are welcome to attend. The concert is held in the Café.	Winter & Spring
Band Concert - Intermediate	A band concert put on by mostly 6 <sup>th</sup> -grade students so they can showcase their talents. All Pleasant Hill families are welcome to attend. Concert is performed in the Café.	Winter & Spring
Birthday Book Club	The purpose of the Birthday Book Club is for parents to purchase a book in honor of their child's birthday. The books are donated to the Pleasant Hill library for all students to borrow (your child will be the first to check it out). The book will have a label inside so everyone knows who donated it!	First few weeks of school
Book Fair	A PTA-sponsored event located in the Resource Center, parents, staff, and students can purchase books and other items. Proceeds benefit the Resource Center.	Fall
Box Tops	Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Labels for Education and Tyson Project A+ are "clip and save" programs we use to earn cash and equipment for our school. Clip the appropriate label and send it into school using the "box top" form provided (typically in the Pleasant Hill Views newsletter). Visit <a href="http://www.boxtops4education">www.boxtops4education</a> , <a href="http://www.labelsforeducation">www.labelsforeducation</a> , and <a href="http://www.tyson.com/projectaplus">www.tyson.com/projectaplus</a> for qualifying products, contests, newsletters, coupons and complete program details. Watch for special contests both at school and online.	All Year
Chorus Concert	Concert put on by students in the school's chorus group to showcase their singing talents; all Pleasant Hill families are welcome. The concert is held in the Café.	Winter & Spring
Cougar Carnival	<p>A PTA-sponsored event that is a carnival in the middle of Winter! There are carnival games to play along with carnival food to eat. All items are paid for with tickets that are pre-ordered a week or two in advance. Ordering information, comes home in the PTA newsletter (Pleasant Views) about a month prior to the event. Tickets are also available to purchase at the event. Students are issued punch cards to wear around their necks to keep track of their "winnings". The cards are redeemed for prizes.</p> <p>NOTE: The event is only for Pleasant Hill families and their immediate family members. Students will not be admitted without a chaperoning adult. Parking for this event is only in the back parking lot and across the street at Birchwood (not in the front or along the sidewalk in the back).</p>	Winter
Dads & Donuts	A PTA-sponsored event where dads take their kids to school early to have donuts and juice in the café with other dads and kids. It starts about 30 to 45 minutes before school and ends when school starts. NOTE: Dads with last names beginning with A-L attend one date and dads with last names beginning with M-Z attend a separate date.	Spring

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	WHEN
Family Reading Night	A PTA-sponsored event held at school in the evening that encourages families to recognize the importance of, and fun in reading together. Families will follow a map to different stations to read together and/or be read to by different staff members. Snacks provided at the end of the evening. The Book Fair and Reflections gallery will be open for the evening as well.	Fall
Field Day – Grades 1-6	A PTA-sponsored event in which students participate in an all day event in both indoor and outdoor sports. Games are run by volunteers; and students rotate through them with their classrooms in an organized manner (it’s not like recess!).	June
Field Day - Kindergarten	This event is sponsored by the Kindergarten Teachers and the Room Moms. The students participate in outdoor games during their classroom time.	June
First Day of School (Grades 1-6)	<p>First day of school in which parents drop off their children at the designated outside doors and wave good-bye as the school year officially begins. Morning bell rings at 8:45am; school starts at 8:50am; school ends at 3:20pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades 1 &amp; 2 - Door 6 (main back door off back parking lot) or Door 10 (west of front door)</li> <li>• Grades 3 &amp; 4 - Middle back door for grades</li> <li>• Grades 5 &amp; 6 - Eastern-most back door</li> </ul>	August
First Day of School (Kindergarten)	<p>First day of school in which parents drop off their children at the designated outside doors and wave good-bye as the school year officially begins. Morning starts at 8:50am and ends at 11:20am, while afternoon starts at 12:50pm and ends at 3:20pm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten door (located on west side of building) for AM students</li> <li>• Front door (inside by office) for PM students</li> </ul>	August
Fundraiser: Run for Fun	The PTA’s main annual fundraiser is the “Run for Fun.” Held at school during the day, the children Run for Fun to raise money for various PTA events and services. Kids will receive pledge sheets, as well as prizes, snacks and drinks. Our goal is to raise \$50/child.	Fall
Halloween Parties	Students’ lunch hours are combined to allow time to go home to change into their costumes or they may change at school. Students can only wear costumes in the afternoon. After lunch, students return to their classrooms to organize for the parade around the school block (Illinois, Cedar, Pleasant Hill Blvd, Bennet and back to Illinois) Parents can gather outside to see all the costumes. Students return to classrooms for their parties, which are generally the last hour of the day. The room parents manage the party and ask for parent assistance.	On October 31 <sup>st</sup> or next closest school day.
Holiday Shop	A holiday shopping opportunity for students sponsored by the PTA. The PTA sets up an actual shop in the café from 3:20-6:30pm. Gift items range in price from \$0.50 to \$10. Students and parents are welcome.	December
Intramurals	6th graders are welcome to participate in Cross Country (Fall), 2-Ball (Winter) and Track (Spring). Most practices are held during recess at school with only a few sessions after school.	All Year
Last Day of School	Last school day when students attend school for only a couple of hours in which they spend the majority of the time in the café and gym at the year-end assembly; families sometimes gather at Birchwood park across the street from school for a picnic lunch once school lets out at 11:20am.	June

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	WHEN
Meet the Teacher Day	One-hour long window in which parents and students can meet their teachers, see their classrooms, and bring their school supplies. Bring \$1 bills and envelopes since this is one of two days when money is collected for various classroom-related items such as party money (for Halloween and Valentine’s Day), magazine subscriptions, classroom binders, totes, etc. You can also turn in other forms that are sent in the August mailer.	Day before school begins
Moms & Munchies	A PTA-sponsored event where moms take their kids to school early to have donuts and juice in the café with other moms and kids. It starts about 30 minutes before school and ends when school starts. NOTE: Moms with last names beginning with A-L attend one date and moms with last names beginning with M-Z attend a separate date.	Fall
Multi-Cultural Fest	A PTA-sponsored event where Pleasant Hill families sponsor booths where they showcase their countries/cultures through displays, food, and activities. Families sign up ahead of time to sponsor a booth. NOTE: This event takes place every other school year. A low single-price “passport” pays for food and participation in the activities.	Spring (2012)
Musical – Grades 1-6	<p>The music teacher works with each grade to create a musical program for families. Grades pair up for the programs with grades 1 &amp; 2 together, grades 3 &amp; 4 together, and grades 5 &amp; 6 together. Kindergarten has their own program with the kindergarten teachers. Performance schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daytime Performance is for the other grades and staff. Parents can also attend this program and it is easiest to video this performance. Chairs for parents are in the back of the café.</li> <li>• Evening Performance is for families. The students usually need to be there at least 15 minutes early, and so do the parents, if you want good seats.</li> </ul> <p>There’s usually a DVD available for purchase from the evening performance. The music teacher will send home specific information on the DVD.</p>	<p>Varies by grade.</p> <p>Evening shows start typically at 7:00pm.</p>
New Family Welcome	Families new to Pleasant Hill may attend this informal gathering to tour the school, talk with the principal and/or assistant principal and to learn more about Pleasant Hill activities and the PTA. Various PTA committee members are on hand to talk about PTA events to be held during the year.	August
Open House	This is a great opportunity for families to come to school in the evening to visit their child’s classroom and see their child’s work. Students and teachers work really hard to prepare for this night, and it is a very well-attended event. Classroom time is from 7-8pm.	Spring
Parent Orientation	<p>Orientation is the parents’ opportunity to hear all about what their children will be doing/learning in school this year. Orientation occurs in your child’s classroom where grades K-2 orientation timeslot is separate from grades 3-6 to make it easier for parents to visit multiple classrooms. A PTA General Membership meeting occurs between the two. (Example: You may go to your 2<sup>nd</sup> grader’s room from 6-6:45pm, then you’d go to the cafeteria for the PTA general membership meeting from 6:45-7pm, and then you’d head to your 5<sup>th</sup> grader’s classroom from 7-7:45pm.) Teachers typically have parents sign up for parent-teacher conference times (in Nov) so bring your calendars. Keep the \$1 bills in hand since this is the other time, besides on Meet the Teacher day, you can pay for classroom incidentals; if you don’t have the cash at this time, you can send it to school with your child later.</p> <p>NOTE: This event is parents/guardians <b>only</b>.</p>	<p>August</p> <p>Typically during the first full week of school.</p>

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	WHEN
<p>Parent &amp; Teacher Conferences</p>	<p>This is the parents' chance to meet with their child's teacher in their classroom for a one-on-one discussion about their child's progress (usually 10-15 minutes). Parents typically sign up for a conference time in August and the teachers send home a reminder close to the date.</p> <p>NOTE: Students should not attend the conference. If they must accompany the parent(s), they should bring quiet activities to complete in the hallway.</p>	<p>Monday &amp; Tuesday prior to the Thanksgiving Holiday</p>
<p>Picture Day</p>	<p>Each student's photo is taken individually (which is also included in the class photo) for inclusion in the yearbook (available to purchase at the end of the year) and for purchase by the student's family. Each classroom is assigned a time to come to the café to get students' pictures taken. There are designated volunteers to help students with hair and clothing issues. A picture retake day is also scheduled for any absent students or students who are not happy with their first picture.</p>	<p>Fall</p>
<p>PTA Changeover Dinner</p>	<p>This dinner provides an opportunity for PTA committee members to recognize outgoing 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents, transition information/materials to incoming members and welcome the PTA officers, both new and returning, for the coming school year. Invitations are distributed by the PTA co-presidents.</p>	<p>May</p>
<p>PTA General Membership Meetings</p>	<p>These are held in the cafeteria (café) in conjunction with another all school event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first meeting is with Parent Orientation in the fall. At this meeting, the PTA membership votes whether or not to approve the current year's budget. Copies of the proposed budget are available in the cafeteria prior to the meeting. Forms to join the PTA are part of the August Mailer. Once you've completed the form and sent it in to school, you may vote on the budget. Being a PTA member also entitles you to receive a copy of the Pleasant Hill PTA directory.</li> <li>• The second meeting is with Open House in the spring. At this meeting, the PTA membership votes on the nominees for the PTA officers.</li> </ul>	<p>Fall &amp; Spring</p>
<p>PTA Monthly Meetings</p>	<p>Monthly meetings are held in the evenings in the Teacher's Lounge to discuss various events/issues pertaining to the school, the students, or PTA itself. All PTA members are welcome to attend; however, voting is reserved for committee chairs of the PTA. Attendees are encouraged to attend without children.</p>	<p>Monthly on Tuesday evenings</p>
<p>PTA Membership &amp; PTA Committees</p>	<p>Information on joining the PTA is sent in the August Mailer, but you may join at any time. The cost is \$8.00 per family. Joining the PTA gives you the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive a directory (names, addresses &amp; phone numbers) of all PTA members</li> <li>• Vote at all general membership meetings</li> <li>• Act as a committee chair for a PTA event, serve or be a member of the PTA board. PTA Committee Chairs work with a team to coordinate &amp; manage various PTA events &amp; services. A complete listing of Committee Chairs is available in the PTA Directory, PTA Calendar and on the website. This is a great way to get connected with other parents and provide some much needed help to the school. Volunteers for the following school year are sought in the spring. Contact one of the PTA Co-Presidents if you are interested in chairing an event/service.</li> </ul>	<p>All year</p>

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	WHEN
PTA Website	The Pleasant Hill PTA-sponsored website is <a href="http://www.phpta.org">www.phpta.org</a> . It includes an upcoming events calendar and latest news, a list of PTA committees and chairpersons, printable forms, parent resources, and much more!	All Year
Rec Nights	Rec nights are held throughout January, February, and March. By grade level, students and parents (one parent per student) come together to participate in physical activities and "compete" in games in teams. The games are held in the gym and it gives children and parents some outdoor fun indoors during the dead of Winter! Gym shoes and active wear are recommended for both students and parents.	January – March
Reflections	Our national PTA sponsors this art program which offers students an opportunity to create works of art for fun and recognition. There are six different categories in which a student may express themselves: visual arts, musical composition, photography, literature, dance and film/video. Specific program rules are sent home along with the theme for the contest.	Fall
Roller Skating Party	A PTA-sponsored event where all Pleasant Hill students get together to roller skate. Students must have an adult chaperone in order to attend the event.	Winter
Room Parents	Room Parents are volunteers who work with the teacher and classroom parents to coordinate classroom parties, field trip chaperones along with AR (accelerated reader) and "centers" helpers (for grades K-2). Anytime during the year, you can email the Room Parent committee chair to request to be a room parent for one of your children's classrooms in the following year; room parent assignments are distributed the week or so before school starts.	All Year
Room Parent Tea	The Room Parent Tea is an informal meeting of room parents and teachers to discuss the plan of attack for class parties for Halloween and Valentine's Day and schedules for AR (Accelerated Reader program) and centers, if applicable. This meeting is held in the Cafeteria.	September
School Pride Day	Students show school spirit by wearing Pleasant Hill gear called "Spirit Wear" or red & white to school on the first Friday of every month. Spirit Wear will be sold at the beginning of the year with a form in the August mailer.	First Friday of each month
Special Person's Day	This used to be Grandparents Day but was changed to incorporate any special people that children want to ask to share the morning with them. Special people come to school in the morning and gather in the café to have coffee and mingle while teachers and students ready their classrooms. Special guests then go to their children's classrooms where they generally do a craft or some other project with their students. Student volunteers are in hallways to provide directions.	November
Strings Concert - Beginning	A strings concert put on by student string players (mostly 5 <sup>th</sup> graders) so they can showcase their talents. The location of the concert rotates between District 15 schools (see calendar for details).	Winter
Strings Concert - Winter	A strings concert put on by student string players (mostly 6 <sup>th</sup> -graders) so they can showcase their talents. The location of the concert rotates between District 15 schools (see calendar for details).	Winter

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
Talent Show	A PTA-sponsored show spotlighting the talents of Pleasant Hill students. Students or student groups sign up to “try out” for the show—they put together a dancing, singing, or some other kind of performing act and then present it to a panel of a few PTA members in a try-out situation. The purpose of the try-out is to ensure the act meets the timeframe allowed and the material is appropriate for a grade school environment. The actual show takes place in the café during the day for the student body and then again in the evening for families. NOTE: This event takes place every other school year.	Spring (2013)
Valentine’s Day Parties	The Valentine’s party typically takes place during the last hour of the day. The students celebrate by playing games, snacking, and exchanging cards with classmates. Teachers will let you know if a box (usually a decorated shoe box) or bag (again decorated) needs to be provided. The room parents put on the parties and ask for parent assistance.	Closest school day to February 14 <sup>th</sup>
Volunteer Luncheon	The Pleasant Hill staff sponsors this event in which parent and other volunteers who have assisted in and out of classrooms all year long are honored with a lunch in the café with student council members assisting.	May

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**TESTING:** The following is a chronological list of standardized tests taking place at Pleasant Hill. Please note that individual grades may incorporate additional testing, not identified on this list, in order to gather data, which in turn helps teachers make more informed decisions regarding student needs.

TEST	TIME-FRAME	STUDENTS	PUPROSE	DESCRIPTION
Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) – Fall Reading, Math, & Language Usage	Sep. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Sep. 25 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To establish base-line data in reading, mathematics, and language usage for the school year; to determine summer regression; to provide data used in determining eligibility for the gifted program and out-of-level (OOL) math program.	Students take one, computerized, multiple choice test in each of the areas. No more than one test is given per day, except in make-up situations. The tests are untimed, but generally take students approximately 30-45 minutes to finish.
CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)	Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> – Oct 29 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , & 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	More of a measure of intellectual ability than academic knowledge, the CogATs are one of several determining factors for eligibility into the gifted program and the out-of-level math program.	Students complete these multiple-choice, paper & pencil tests in three main areas – verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative. Each area consists of three, 10 minute tests, for a total of nine tests. Students generally take all the tests in one area per day.
MAP Winter – Reading, Math	Nov. 20 <sup>th</sup> – Dec. 18 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To monitor student performance & progress; to provide data used in determining eligibility for the gifted program & OOL math.	As in the fall, the students take one, computerized, untimed, multiple choice test in each of the test areas. Multiple tests per day may be given in make-up situations.
ACCESS – Listening Reading and Writing*	Jan. 11 <sup>th</sup> – Feb. 29 <sup>th</sup>	Bilingual Students: KDG – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To measure English acquisition and progress for bilingual students.	Students use paper & pencil to test. Some of the questions are multiple choice, while others require the student to write out responses.
ACCESS – Speaking*	Jan. 11 <sup>th</sup> – Feb. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Bilingual Students: KDG – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To measure English acquisition and progress for bilingual students.	This test is given one-on-one. Students are simply asked to respond orally to questions from the examiner.
ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test) – Reading & Math*	Mar. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Mar. 12 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To measure school and student reading and mathematical performance in accordance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) national legislation and for the state of Illinois.	Each test area consists of three subtests. The tests are a mixture of multiple choice, short response & extended response. Students have 50 minutes to complete this paper & pencil test, with two tests given per day.
ISAT – Science*	Mar. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Mar. 12 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To measure school and student science performance for the state of Illinois.	Science consists of two, paper & pencil, multiple choice tests. Tests must be completed in 50 minutes.
ISAT – Writing*	Mar. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Mar. 12 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , & 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To measure school and student writing performance for the state of Illinois.	One essay question for 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> graders, 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students must answer two (on separate test days). Students have 50 minutes to complete their essay.
IAAT (Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test)	Apr. 5 <sup>th</sup> – Apr. 9 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Commonly referred to as the “junior high math placement test”, this test, along with the quantitative section of the CogAT, & past performance on the math section of MAP tests, help determine math course placement for junior high.	Students complete four, ten-minute, multiple choice tests. Students take all four of the paper& pencil tests in one sitting.
MAP Spring – Reading, Math & Language Usage	Apr. 5 <sup>th</sup> – Apr. 30 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	To determine student growth for the year in reading, math, & language usage; to provide data used in determining eligibility for gifted program & OOL math.	As in the fall & winter, the students take one computerized, untimed, multiple choice test in each of the test areas. Multiple tests may be given in one day due to make-up situations.

\*State-mandated test