



## Feature Stories

### Introducing New Websites for Division and Schools

The new web face is more than just a simple visual makeover. The redesign goes deeper, and:

- Replaces outdated web technology with current functions expected by web visitors
- Delivers news and information in a more concise, consistent fashion
- Provides easier-to-read format including “quick links” to the most popular content
- Allows web content to be responsive so easily navigated on any mobile device, such as a tablet or cell phone
- Meets federal ADA compliance making information accessible to individuals with disabilities
- Provides alternate language options for families with English Language Learners
- Offers a robust Search tool to locate keyword content
- Delivers emergency messages to all school websites simultaneously
- Offers freshly picked SPS videos to all school sites at the same time and places them as part of front-page news
- Adds links to division and school social media accounts, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Includes creation of a first-time division-wide mobile app to launch in May, which pulls info directly from the division and school sites as they are updated
  - Allows users to select which school(s) to follow
  - Connects to automated notification system to send announcements by phone, email, text, and now by mobile app

The division and school websites were last updated seven years ago in 2011. Suffolk Public Schools is expanding its relationship with School Messenger, which has provided the division’s parent notification system since 2012. School Messenger will now be hosting and providing support for the new websites, mobile app and notification system.

### Student Mental Wellness Outreach Expanding ...

Suffolk Public Schools is expanding the same student mental wellness outreach offered at high schools to include all 8th grade students in middle schools. The division is actively bolstering its student mental wellness curriculum and building a stronger safety net for Suffolk teens by engaging parents and caring adults in a new, division-wide initiative. Partnering with The Sarah Michelle Peterson Foundation, Suffolk Public Schools is starting conversations around a video created by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to educate staff, teens and the community about teen depression. These discussions are the latest phase of an initiative the school division is undertaking to enhance support for students’ behavioral and mental well-being.

Mental well-being is an issue across the country, Virginia, and Suffolk as headlines increasingly link teen mental wellness to tragic events. Since 2006, teen suicide rates in the U.S. have been steadily increasing. Nationally, nearly 1 in 5 teens has reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, and depression is the single greatest risk factor for suicide. As hard as it is to say, nearly every city in Hampton Roads has suffered the loss of a teen by suicide in recent years. Suffolk Public Schools recognize that many more students are struggling.

**"More than Sad: Teen Depression"** is a video designed to help students recognize the signs of depression in themselves or others, to challenge the stigma surrounding depression, and learn how to ask for help. All Suffolk 8th-graders will see the video in their geography class. A trained mental health facilitator along with school guidance counselors will then lead a discussion about depression. A companion version of the video and adult discussion will be shown to middle school teachers and support staff, and to parents and the community before the student discussion at each school. Adults will learn about warning signs, what to say, and how to guide teens to help.

**Anyone who works with teens such as coaches, community sports directors, youth pastors, activity directors, and scout leaders is invited and encouraged to attend any of the parent and community discussions.**

Schedule of Upcoming Parent & Community Presentations:

- Wednesday, April 11 at 6 p.m. - John F. Kennedy Middle School
- Wednesday, April 18 at 6 p.m. - John Yeates Middle School
- Wednesday, April 25 at 6 p.m. - King's Fork Middle School
- Wednesday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m. - Forest Glen Middle School

NOTE: This parent/community presentation is an adult discussion covering the information students will receive in their classroom. It is not intended for young audiences as sensitive content is discussed. For more information, please contact Cheri Hinshelwood, communications specialist, at (757) 925-6752.

## **Celebrating the Arts in SPS: *The Stars Come Out: A Night at the Movies***

**Tickets Selling Out Fast for 4th Annual SEF Gala to be held Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

Here's your opportunity to support the music, theater and visual arts programs in Suffolk Public Schools by attending the Suffolk Education Foundation's fourth annual Gala in Celebration of the Arts!

Buy your Gala tickets now for a dinner and a fabulous night of entertainment by our students.

The fourth annual Celebration of the Arts will welcome you on **Friday, April 27**, from **6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** at the Hilton Garden Inn Riverfront (100 East Constance Road.) Semi-formal attire is encouraged, as well as dressing as your favorite movie character.

Proceeds will directly benefit the fine arts programs in Suffolk Public Schools. Last year, close to \$8,000 was returned directly to each art, chorus, band and orchestra program that participated.

The evening will feature live entertainment performed by Suffolk Public Schools' middle school and high school student musicians and singers. Here's the line-up:

- King's Fork High School Orchestra
- King's Fork Middle School Chorus
- Starlight Strings
- Lakeland High School Chorus
- Nansemond River High School Jazz Band
- King's Fork High School Chorus
- Forest Glen Middle & Lakeland High combined Orchestra
- John F. Kennedy Middle School Orchestra
- John F. Kennedy Middle School Chorus
- John Yeates Middle School Jazz Band
- John Yeates Middle School Chorus

Music will include such hits as "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz*, "Pure Imagination" from *Willie Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, and "Seasons of Love" from *Rent*, as well as feature songs from *The Godfather*, *Pitch Perfect 2*, and *Shrek*.

The "Night at the Movies" theme continues beyond music to showcase the visual arts with a display of 50 original works created by elementary and secondary student artists. Art teachers will also be donate their own work to be raffled and raise money for the arts programs.

Tickets are \$35 a person. A table for 10 is \$300. For [online ticket purchases](http://www.suffolkeeducationfoundation.org/events/), visit [www.suffolkeeducationfoundation.org/events/](http://www.suffolkeeducationfoundation.org/events/)

## Video Feature

**Superintendent's Two-Minute Drill for March 30<sup>th</sup> ...** Join us as Dr. Deran Whitney congratulates the Teachers of the Year for Suffolk Public Schools and shares information about three SPS programs that are being honored by Virginia School Board Association. Find out about our new website that will launch during Spring Break and get the details on how you can help support the arts in SPS while having a fun night with the Suffolk Education Foundation.

- Don't miss this episode of the [2-Minute Drill!](https://goo.gl/qup8tt) (<https://goo.gl/qup8tt>)

## Guiding Lights

**Congratulations to four Suffolk Public Schools employees** being honored by the Pilot Club of Suffolk. The organization recognizes several groups and individuals for their contributions to the community each year.

- **Sherry Milteer**, a special education teacher at Hillpoint Elementary School, has been named the club's 2018 Outstanding Teacher of Children with Disabilities.
- **Joann Toomer**, a special education paraprofessional at Nansemond River High School, was selected as the 2018 Outstanding Teacher Assistant of Children with Disabilities.
- **Alphonso Boone**, who transports special needs children at Oakland Elementary School, has been named the 2018 Outstanding Bus Driver of Children with Disabilities.
- **Bessie Jones**, a bus aide for students at Kilby Shores Elementary School, has been named the 2018 Outstanding Bus Aide of Children with Disabilities.

## News

**The Suffolk School Board will meet on Thursday, April 12 in the auditorium at [King's Fork High School](#).**

... 6 p.m. — Recognition of King's Fork High School honor graduates

... 7 p.m. — Public Hearing on Strategic Plan, followed by monthly agenda

The [agenda and board material](#) should be available the week of the meeting online at <http://pesb.spsk12.net/> For more information, contact Cynthia Chavis, Clerk of the School Board, at 925-6752.

The Strategic Plan update provided to the Board in the March 15 meeting includes the draft plan, timeline and some of the feedback received to date. In the December 2017 School Board Meeting, the Suffolk Public Schools Board of Education adopted new goals for the 2018-2023 school year. The new goals are 1) Ensure all students demonstrate academic growth and acquire skills to become productive citizens; 2) Ensure all students learn in a supportive, safe and nurturing environment; 3) Maintain efficient, effective and accountable management of operations and resources; 4) Attract, develop and retain high quality and diverse staff, and 5) Strengthen family engagement and community investment. The staff has developed a draft Strategic Plan to accomplish the Board's goals. The draft plan is being posted on the website for public review and comment. A hearing will be held at the School Board's next meeting on **Thursday, April 12**, beginning at 7 p.m. The public is invited to provide public comment on the plan at that time.

**Early Start Pre-Screening Applications Now Available ...** The Early Start program is for children who turn 4 years old by September 30, 2018 and who need an extra year to prepare for success in kindergarten. Children must be Suffolk residents. Prescreening applications are available on the Suffolk Public Schools website and in each elementary school. Screenings for both child and parent will take place in June. This screening will allow school officials to select children according to their needs. Appointment cards will be mailed to the home address. Eligibility criteria includes but not limited to these factors: Family income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (or below 350% for students with special needs or disabilities), family homelessness, parents/guardians lack high school diploma, and/or language and development assessment of child. Because Early Start classes are not located in each elementary school, school

placement will be determined based on Early Start zoning. Transportation is provided. For questions regarding this program, contact Tomika Doleman at (757) 925-6760.

**Need money for college?** The school division's Scholarship Hub is an online, local resource for high school seniors searching for scholarships. This central site can be searched by criteria, such as career, college major, GPA, and extracurricular activities. You can access [Scholarship Hub](http://www.spsk12.net/community/scholarship-hub/) at [www.spsk12.net/community/scholarship-hub/](http://www.spsk12.net/community/scholarship-hub/) High school guidance counselors will continue to distribute scholarships including those linked to specific colleges, athletic opportunities and other focused awards, not listed on the Hub. **Share Your Scholarship** – If your community group has a scholarship suitable for Scholarship Hub, please send information by email to [bethannebradshaw@spsk12.net](mailto:bethannebradshaw@spsk12.net). For more information, call the School Administrative Offices at (757) 925-6752.

## **Mark Your Calendars**

**The Suffolk Sister Cities Showcase Awards Ceremony**, will be held on **Tuesday, April 10**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts. The showcase encourages youth from around Suffolk to express the mission of Sister Cities International through original artwork and literature. This year's theme was The Art of Diplomacy. The Suffolk Sister Cities art and writing contest is open to middle and high school students. For more information, contact Director of Elementary Leadership, Pamela Connor at (757) 925-6750.

**Elephant's Fork Elementary School PTA** will meet on **Tuesday, April 10** at 6 p.m. This will be a Reading and Social Studies night. For more information, contact the school at (757) 923-5250.

**Oakland Elementary School PTA** will meet on **Tuesday, April 10** at 6 p.m. For more information, contact the school at (757) 923-5248.

**The fourth- and fifth-graders of Nansemond Parkway Elementary School will be performing** "Broadway at 3012" on **Thursday, April 12 at 6:30 p.m.** Students will be performing Broadway and Hollywood musical numbers they have been practicing during their resource time. Performing acts include songs from Matilda, Annie, Newsies, and Hamilton as well as the Hollywood hit The Greatest Showman. Students will also be performing their interpretation of the Blue Man Group. For more information, contact the school at 923-4169.

**Booker T. Washington Elementary School PTA** will meet **Tuesday, April 17** at 6 p.m. For more information, contact the school at 934-6226.

**Creekside Elementary School PTA** will meet on **Tuesday, April 17** at 6 p.m. The third-graders will be performing for attendees. For more information, contact the school at 923-4251.

**Nansemond Parkway Elementary School** will host a Math and Science Extravaganza Night on **Tuesday, April 17** at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact the school at 923-4167.

**Northern Shores Elementary School PTA** will meet on **Tuesday, April 17** at 6 p.m. The kindergarten students will be performing. For more information, contact the school at 923-4169.

**Pioneer Elementary School PTA** will meet on **Tuesday, April 17** at 6 p.m. Kindergarten through second grade students will be performing for attendees. For more information, contact the school at 925-5782.

**Kilby Shores Elementary School PTA** will meet on **Thursday, April 19** at 6 p.m. The kindergarten students will be performing a play for attendees. For more information, contact the school at 934-6214.

**Nansemond River High School Proudly Presents The Lion King!** ... Nansemond River High School is proud to present its Annual Spring Musical, THE LION KING. This inspirational, family oriented, and music-filled production showcases the much-loved Broadway version of the classic Disney film. Audiences' favorite songs, such as "Hakuna Matata," "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," and "Circle of Life" are all featured by the amazing talents at Nansemond River High School, bringing them to life for Suffolk and Hampton Roads crowds. Directed by Dr. Joleen Neighbours, THE LION KING is a new addition, sure to be a favorite, in the repertoire of productions at Nansemond River. Performances will be held **Thursday**

through Saturday, April 19-21, and Thursday through Saturday, April 26-28 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$5 for students ages 4 and up. There are also special student matinees on April 20, 26, and 27 at 10:45 a.m.; call Dr. Neighbours directly at the school for information and reservations about school matinees (757-923-4101).

Hillpoint Elementary School PTA will meet Tuesday, April 24 at 5:30 p.m. This meeting will be combined with Hillpoint's SOL Comic-Con Review Night. For more information, contact the school at 923-5252.

Hillpoint Elementary School PTA will host a Spring Fling Bazaar on Saturday, May 5 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Spaces are available for rent for businesses and individuals. Costs are \$25 for businesses which includes one half of a bus slot on the blacktop. Costs for individuals is \$10 and includes a 12 x 12 space in the grass bordering the bus ramp. For more information, contact the PTA at [HillpointElemPTA@gmail.com](mailto:HillpointElemPTA@gmail.com).

## Hands-On Learning



Second-graders at Pioneer Elementary School recently practiced their science skills using plastic eggs. Students filled their eggs halfway with water. They then added two Alka Seltzer tablets and put the lid back on their eggs, stepped back and watched the action. Most eggs fizzed and popped the lids off. A few fizzed but did not pop. After returning to the room, the students reviewed what happened in their experiment and inferred that the amount of water may have affected whether or not the lids popped, as well as whether the lids were completely closed or not. If they were slightly opened, the gas may have escaped keeping the lid from popping off like the others. For more information, contact the school at 925-5782.

## Shining Stars

Congratulations to Lakeland High School students Tatiyahna Blakely and Autumn Branch on their recent recognition at the 2018 Elie Wiesel Visual Arts Competition, sponsored by the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater. Senior Tatiyahna Blakely, who placed second in last year's competition, received first place honors in the 2018 competition with her piece, *Shattered Past, Shattered Minds*. Autumn Branch's mixed media piece *Grave of Uncertain Decisions*, was chosen in a tie for third place. For more information, contact the school at 925-5790.



Blakeley's Artwork



Branch's Artwork

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