

Tiger Paws Newsletter
Principal's Message

5/22/19

Where art thou, School Year 2018-2019?! You breezed by in a most speedy and robust way, leaving just a few paltry days in your wake. I miss you already, 18-19!

In our staff meeting this week, when we determined that there were only nine school days left, the effect on the assembled was palpable. I didn't see reveling; I saw concern that this year has come to what seems like an abrupt halt. We're clinging to the last days and memorable events that will, for some students, make for a stellar ending to the year and, for seniors, will mark the end of their SPHS career.

As we look back at a few of the many accomplishments this year brought, we see Rio Hondo League athletic championships for Boys Water Polo, Boys and Girls Cross Country, Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Track, and Boys Volleyball. In fact, we still have two of our Cross Country athletes, junior TH Wei (triple jump), and junior Lucas Tailin (pole vault), headed to Clovis this weekend for the State prelims and, we hope, finals!

Our Varsity Virtual Business team, iKomo, dazzled in NYC as they won first place the Virtual Enterprise International Business Plan competition. Since that time, they have been guests at Intel in the Silicon Valley, were booked for a speaking engagement by HSBC's national executive board in June, and are entertaining offers for their virtual business to become a reality. SkillsUSA, a club that introduces students to many facets of post-secondary opportunities in industry, made a strong showing at the regional and State levels and is sending nine competitors to the National Finals in Kentucky in June. The SkillsUSA advisor, teacher Sandra Matson-Fennell, was recognized by the SPHS staff as our Teacher of the Year, was selected as our District Teacher of the Year, and will continue to the Los Angeles County level for recognition.

Our school continued actions that strengthened our commitment to physical, emotional and mental health and wellness. The staff learned more about fostering emotional intelligence, signs that students are in need of emotional support, and ways to approach homework, tests, and projects that we hope will help students balance their academic and extracurricular endeavors.

This very week, we have sixty seniors with five teachers at the week-long Yosemite Institute. They are hiking, climbing, roughing it, and bonding as they discover nature's bounties and challenge their own boundaries.

Many thanks go out to our PTSA and Booster organizations and their presidents, Laura Morales and Ann VerKuilen, respectively, for contributing so much to SPHS. I know that I have said this before, but it is a delight to meet and work with volunteers whose every decision is based upon how best to serve our student population and support the goals of the school.

As summer approaches, please remember that any changes to students' fall schedules must be made by June 5. As my recent email explained, we caution against course selections based upon teacher assignments, as those assignments are still in flux and can change over the summer. Many students will use the summer months for summer school, internships, and community service. We hope that our students and their families will also use the summer for

some essential downtime and exploring their local, national, or international surroundings or colleges of interest. There is also summer reading, [The Hate U Give](#) by Angie Thomas, with personal copies of the books provided to each eighth through eleventh grader.

As we look ahead to our next school year, you will see a revised cell phone policy that allows for use during passing periods (brunch, lunch, and before seventh period), along with a rationale for the change. Next year, finals exam schedules will begin an hour later to help students be ready and rested. We are currently updating our Dress Code Policy, and if our process of including multi-constituency committees in its development needs to carry over into the coming year, we will distribute it when the process concludes. "Conflict calendars" are being created for our classrooms so students can indicate major assignments from different classes so overlap may be avoided. The Mental Health Committee is creating binders for each teacher that will include activities, approaches, intervention flowcharts and resources, and more. We are introducing two new Engineering classes to meet the interests and needs of our students.

We are very excited about our plans to sponsor a District-wide opportunity for parents/guardians to hear directly from a speaker from Stanford's Challenge Success initiative. SPHS will be entering our third year of participation, and we have very specific goals for increasing healthful, balanced lives as students' travel their roads to academic and interpersonal success. Please keep an eye out for announcements about a date for this event, our opportunity to share our enthusiasm and some very important information with families. In the fall, we will also be welcoming partners from the Anti-Defamation League who will lead staff and an initial group of fifty student volunteer leaders in how to create an atmosphere where all voices are recognized, heard, and honored.

You will be receiving a letter soon with dates for residency verification and registration for both parents/guardians and students. That emailed letter will signal that the new year looms brightly on the horizon. For now, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to our seniors who have worked so hard and contributed so very much both locally and globally, proving again the SPHS Mission: "South Pasadena High School students are grown locally to make a positive impact globally, deep into the 21st Century." We also welcome our incoming ninth graders so they, too, can begin their journey toward making a positive impact.

As always (and for most of the summer), I can be reached at janderson@spusd.net. Have a wonderful summer!