

Pickens County Middle School

Georgia Beacon School to Watch 2007 – 2008



1802 Refuge Road
Jasper, Georgia 30143
706-253-1830 (office) 706-253-
1835 (fax)

[Pickens County Middle School.doc](#)



Dr. Chris LeMieux, Principal

Meet the Principal

Dr. LeMieux's college education background commenced with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history in 1988 from Shorter College located in Rome, Georgia. He received his Master of Education degree in 1991, Education Specialist degree in 1993, and Doctor of Education in 2000 from Georgia Southern University located in Statesboro, Georgia. His academic achievements include being named to the Dean's List for Academic Excellence at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He was also inducted in 2000 as a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa which is the nation's oldest honor society for leaders.

At the present time, Dr. LeMieux is employed as the principal at Pickens County Middle School (PCMS) in Jasper, Georgia. He has had the honor of being the principal for

PCMS for the past seven years. When he started his first year at PCMS in the 2001-2002 school year, the school was on the state's "Needs Improvement" list. One of his greatest professional joys is the fact that PCMS is no longer on the state's "Needs Improvement" list and is currently recognized as a Georgia Distinguished Title I School for making adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the past 5 consecutive years. On a personal note, Dr. LeMieux was honored in 2005 with the Harold Hammontree Leadership Award by the Pickens County Partners for Educational Excellence for his work as a middle school principal.

Prior to his principalship at PCMS, Dr. LeMieux was employed as an assistant principal at Creekland Middle School in Lawrenceville, Georgia for three years. His major responsibility was the supervision of Community B which housed approximately 600 middle school students and 30 faculty members in grades 6 through 8. Prior to Creekland, He worked part time as a summer school assistant principal (1995 and 1996) at Jenkins High School in Savannah, Georgia.

Dr. LeMieux's teaching experience included nine consecutive years at H.V. Jenkins High School and one year at Creekland Middle School. His teaching certificate is in the field of social science education and educational leadership. He has had the opportunity to teach a variety of social science topics such as World Geography, World History, U.S. History, Georgia History, Citizenship, U.S. Government, and Economics.

As a teacher, Dr. LeMieux helped with extracurricular activities such as a sponsor or coach for a high school tennis team, track, basketball, Mock Georgia General Assembly, and Junior Achievement. Other noninstructional tasks that he has accomplished as a teacher include (a) working as an elected member of a building leadership team for 1995-1997 school years, (b) chairing the School and Community for the 10 year accreditation (SACS) study, (c) serving as an elected school representative to the system-wide teacher meetings with the superintendent's office, (d) writing a monthly newsletter to inform the faculty and staff at Jenkins High School of the local school board policy and actions in the 1994-1996 school year, and (e) serving as the principal's appointed chairperson of the accreditation (SACS) steering committee in the 1990-1991 school year.

Currently, Dr. LeMieux is an active member and vice-president of the Rotary Club of Jasper which serves the Pickens County community as a service organization. He is also very involved at his church as a religious education teacher and member of the Men's Club. Dr. LeMieux is very proud of his marriage to his wife, Renee, and of his three daughters, Olivia, Alexandria, and Marissa. His hobbies include reading, basketball, baseball, softball, tennis, golf, swimming, and spending time with his family and friends. Dr. LeMieux hopes to one day return to teaching full time at some point in his career. There is nothing more satisfying to him than to be able to help young people learn important skills that will open doors for them as they become young adults in our community.

During Dr. LeMieux's tenure at Pickens County Middle School, the students, faculty members, parents, and the school have won numerous awards and received the following recognitions:

- Awarded a three-year (2002 -2005) \$15,000 school-wide discipline grant (Effective Behavior and Instructional Support) from the Georgia State Department of Education and Georgia State University
- GA Title I Distinguished School – 2004 to 2007 (4 consecutive years)
- 6th grade Georgia Mathematics League Region Champion – 2004
- Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl North Georgia Region and State Champions – 2004
- Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl North Georgia Region Champion and State Runners-ups – 2005
- Received The Center for Collaborative Education and the Georgia State Improvement Grant 's two-year (2005 – 2007) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) grant to implement staff development to improve coteaching classes and special education instruction
- Spring 2006 Berry College Math Contest Champions for 6th graders
- Pickens County's "Highest Yearly School Attendance" Award for two consecutive school years (2005 - 2006 and 2006 - 2007)
- Parent and Community Involvement 2007 Gold Award of Excellence
- First Lego League Robotics Team North Region Champion – 2007
- 3rd Place in First Lego League Robotics Team State Championship – 2007
- Fall 2007 Berry College Math Contest Champions for 6th graders
- Georgia Beacon School To Watch Award 2007- 2008

Dr. LeMieux is a committed middle level educator who has been a past member or participated at conferences hosted by the National Middle School Association (NMSA), Georgia Middle School Association (GMSA), Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL), Georgia Association of Middle School Principals (GAMSP), and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Additionally, he is a past 2000 member of Omicron Delta Kappa – a national honorary society for leaders. The National Band Association awarded Dr. LeMieux the Band Booster Award in 2003. In 2005, Dr. LeMieux was awarded the Harold E. Hammontree Leadership Award by the Partners for Educational Excellence.

In addition to his school and professional education affiliations, Dr. LeMieux is highly involved in church activities at Our Lady of Mountain Catholic Church in Jasper, Georgia. He is currently a religious education teacher for 6th graders and has taught religious education for grades 6 - 9 for the past several years. He started a children's ministry for three to six year-olds at his church during mass. Dr. LeMieux has also served on the parish council for his church for three years.

Tips for School Leaders

John Dewey, perhaps one of America's most famous educational philosophers, once stated that the "ideal school" reflects the positive characteristics or attributes of the society that it serves. AS an educator, I try my best each year to have Pickens County Middle School reflect the goodness of Pickens County and serve the needs of the community.

In any "ideal school," there should be balance among several key items. I believe that every successful school is built upon five specific research-based cornerstones. Effective schools research such as Robert Marzano's What Works in Schools (2003) and Max Thompson's Learning-Focused Schools have outlined their research on successful schools and instruction. During my graduate research in the 1990s, I established my educational philosophy based on the five cornerstones of a successful school. I was pleasantly surprised to see that my five cornerstones aligned with most of Marzano's 2003 work. I modified some of my cornerstones slightly to align with Marzano's research. The five successful school cornerstones are:

- Focused Curriculum
- Student Motivation and Interest
- School Safety and Discipline
- Community Outreach and Parent Involvement
- Faculty Morale and Professional Collaboration

Focused Curriculum

In order for students to perform well on high stake tests, a focused curriculum has to be implemented and monitored each year. Well-designed curriculum maps and pacing guides are critical tools in maintaining appropriate curriculum focus. At the middle school level for Georgia, the focused curriculum includes the following:

- **Georgia Performance Standards (Quality Core Curriculum for Connection classes)**
- **Essential Questions Curriculum**
- **Middle School Writing Standards Rubrics and Practice Tests**

To help reinforce the state curriculum, school leaders can use computer assisted instruction programs such as SuccessMaker Math and Reading, Study Island Science and Social Studies, and Accelerated Reader to help monitor the pacing and mastery of the curriculum.

Student Motivation and Interest

To promote better student motivation and interest in school, the school leader must spearhead the effort to establish a prosocial and schoolwide program for student motivation. A school leader has the primary responsibility in coordinating school

resources to establish daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly incentives for good behavior and motivation. The research is very clear that student motivation and interest lead to academic achievement and better student attendance.

At Pickens County Middle School, the following items are examples of how the school attempts to use prosocial measures to promote student motivation and interest.

- EBIS Dragon Scales Character Education Incentive (daily)
- Principal's Students of the Week Program
- Good Behavior and Attendance Monthly Drawings, Quarterly "Big Ticket Items" and Field Days
- Student and Faculty Reading Challenge
- CRCT Social for Effort and Attendance
- Festival of Arts (literary fair and student recognition)
- Renaissance Academic Celebrations (quarterly academic awards assemblies)
- Honors Day
- Young Authors' Tea (special event to celebrate accomplished student writing)
- Teacher-oriented celebrations
- Extracurricular Activities (i.e., sports teams, clubs, art, band)

School Safety and Discipline

The most important responsibility of the school leader is to create the safest possible learning environment. Pickens County Middle School is fortunate to have a campus police officer who works closely with the principal to evaluate the school emergency preparedness plan. Monthly safety drills are implemented and evaluated by the faculty and staff. The Effective Behavior and Instruction Support (EBIS) team examines school discipline data on a monthly basis to ascertain if any school improvement action is needed.

Pickens County Middle School has a school-wide discipline plan entitled the **Be a Dragon** plan. The **Be a Dragon** plan encourages students to be respectful, responsible, and safe. Throughout the school, students are taught how to be respectful, responsible, and safe in different educational settings such as the gym, cafeteria, restrooms, etc. Students are rewarded with Dragon Scales that they can use to buy rewards at the Dragon Scale Store once a week. "Be a Dragon" plan signs are posted throughout the school to remind students of appropriate behavior. Students may elect to submit their Dragon Scales to monthly and quarterly drawings for "big ticket" items. Students are also eligible to participate in Good Behavior and Attendance Day each quarter if they demonstrate great behavior and attendance each marking period.

Community Outreach and Parent Involvement

The major responsibilities of the principal is to

- Provide a safe and positive learning environment that allows for effective communication between the teachers, parents, and students.

- Expect teachers to regularly provide appropriate assignments that will be meaningful and reinforce classroom instruction.
- Lead an effort to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction that enables students to meet state performance standards.

The school leader is also responsible for creating an effective outreach program that promotes the school as a community center. Adult education, especially programs designed to assist parents, are critical components to the community outreach program. Parents, school staff, and students share the responsibility for improved student achievement. The school leader will develop jointly with parents, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents and the school staff will build a partnership to help students achieve the state's high standards. Effective communication with parents and the community is accomplished by the following means:

- Monthly updated school website (Parent Help Desk button included)
- School activity phone line (updated weekly)
- Quarterly principal newsletters (*Dragon Lair*)
- Schoolwide parent voicemail used throughout the year for important announcements
- Quarterly report card folders (must be signed by the parents when they receive the contents and returned back to the school)
- Weekly updated school marquee board
- Parent/Student handbook (updated annually)
- Code of Conduct handbook (published by the school board and updated annually for students and parents)
- Annual Title I Meeting
- Public announcements at sporting event and band concerts

Faculty Morale and Professional Collaboration

Roland Barth, a modern Harvard educational philosopher stated the “quality of a school is directly related to the quality of the adult relationships that exist within the building.” Therefore, a school leader has to constantly feel the pulse of his staff to determine where they stand as a cohesive and productive unit. Extensive teacher and staff empowerment can be a tough to manage by a school leader, but the rewards and accomplishments can be tremendous. The following teacher and staff empowerment activities currently exist at Pickens County Middle School:

- School Improvement Leadership Team (meets monthly)
- School Advisory Council (meets monthly)
- Faculty Advisory Council (meets monthly)
- Effective Behavior and Instructional Support Team (EBIS) (meets bi-monthly)
- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Executive Committee (meets monthly)
- Grade-level and curriculum chairs
- All coaches and club sponsors

- Lead teachers for special education, gifted education, Georgia Assessment on Performance of School Standards (GAPSS), and Georgia Lighthouse Schools To Watch
- Monday morning leadership team
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Get-a-way Weekend for Teacher Attendance
- Crystal Apple Teacher Award (monthly)
- Teacher of the Year Recognition (yearly)
- Pay Day Social (duty free lunch for all teachers each month)



About The School

High Academic Achievement

Pickens County Middle School (PCMS) has demonstrated tremendous academic improvement over the past five years. In the first school year (2002-2003) that the Georgia Department of Education posted Academic Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) data, only 77 percent of the PCMS student body met or exceeded the standards for CRCT Reading/Language Arts sections. The 2006-2007 CRCT Reading/Language Arts results indicated that 92.9 percent of PCMS students met or exceeded standards (16 point gain). Likewise, PCMS students demonstrated significant gains in the area of mathematics. In 2002-2003, only 65 percent of the PCMS student body met or exceeded standards on the CRCT math section. However, over 83 percent of the PCMS student body met or exceeded standards on the 2007 CRCT math section (18 point gain).

PCMS teachers are highly motivated to insure academic success for their students. Based on the Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch Criteria – School Assessment survey given to the Pickens County Middle School (PCMS) teaching faculty during the 2006-07 school year, the four greatest attributes identified by the staff as reaching over 90 percent levels

of exemplary and high implementation in the area of high academic achievement are listed below:

- (a) Instructional strategies include a variety of challenging and engaging activities.
- (b) The strategies are clearly related to the concepts and skills being taught.
- (c) Students have multiple opportunities to succeed academically and extra help is available in more than one form.
- (d) Students can explain the purpose of their work and have opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

The PCMS faculty is required to submit weekly electronic lesson plans to the principal, assistant principal, gifted education lead teacher, and the special education lead teacher (coteachers, only). These plans must include the state standards to be addressed and the type of differentiation of instruction to be implemented. PCMS teachers are trained to challenge students by differentiating their lessons to meet the varying needs of their students. Consequently, students are individually evaluated and challenged by computer-assisted technology instruction such as SuccessMaker and Study Island. In addition to identifying on lesson plans the state standard being taught, teachers also list daily objectives in the classroom so that students themselves can see and understand the state standards.

Professional learning initiatives that promote student achievement are strongly encouraged by the school administration. Several professional learning initiatives such as the Effective Behavior and Instructional Support Team (EBIS), SuccessMaker Math and Language Arts, the Accelerated Reader Program, Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Study Island for Science and Social Studies, Smart Music, Saxon Math, and Direct Instruction Reading are currently being implemented at PCMS. When analysis on the school's academic data and school improvement plan indicate an area of need, the teaching faculty and the school administration form content-specific study teams and travel to high performing schools to examine and evaluate their instructional strategies. Over the past five years, math, reading, science, and language arts study teams have been sent out to high performing schools to identify school improvement strategies that could be effective at PCMS.

Students who struggle academically are encouraged to attend the PCMS After School Tutoring program. Certified teachers tutor students twice a week in areas where students need assistance. Free tutoring, bus transportation, and snacks are provided to the student in the school tutoring program. In addition to the tutoring, PCMS offers a math and language arts connection class to students during the school day for extra help and to preview new material.

Each year the entire PCMS student body is encouraged to participate in a school-wide literary fair entitled the Festival of Arts. Students are asked to read three books from an author of their choice. The students then assemble a triboard or an electronic presentation that demonstrates their critique of the author's work. The student work is placed throughout the school's hallways and computer labs for public viewing for approximately one week. Student work is judged by various members of the community. These community members include parents, volunteers, mentors, business owners, bankers,

educators from other schools, central office staff, and elected politicians. The principal and the school superintendent each choose winners for special recognition and awards.

Another student activity in which students demonstrate their learning is the First Lego League Robotics program. Students involved in this club meet for several weeks to research, coordinate, and build a robot that will be entered in a regional and state competition. At these competitions, students are asked to orally present and explain their research to adult judges for evaluation. The PCMS robotics team has been fortunate to qualify for the past three years for the state competition at Georgia Tech.

A third student performance activity is the annual Authors' Tea conducted in May of each school year by the PCMS media center and language arts department. Students are recognized at this special banquet for outstanding written literary work that occurred during the school year. Students are asked to present a sample of their literary work at the Author's Tea for public enjoyment.

Pickens County Middle School also has a Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl team. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders participate. In 2004 the PCMS team placed first at the state level. For the next year (2005), the team placed first in the northern region and second in state.

Finally, PCMS takes great pride in its current Title I Distinguished School status as a result for making adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the fifth consecutive year. Less than twenty percent of all Georgia public middle schools can claim five consecutive years of AYP. For the past three years PCMS has outperformed the state in most academic areas including the eighth grade writing test. In the May 2007 school leadership improvement team and school advisory council (SAC) joint meeting, some of the most recent academic accomplishments were identified by team members:

- 2007 Spring Berry College Math Contest (6th grade team champions)
- Past state and region champions for the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl
- 2007 7th Grade Georgia Mathematics League (third place in region)
- Past history of Sassafras student winners (local writing competition)
- 2007 Lions Club state writing competition winners (1st and 2nd place)
- PCMS Author's Tea (annual school recognition for exemplary writing)
- First Lego League (state qualifiers at Georgia Tech for the past three years)
- Title I Distinguished School status for three or more consecutive AYPs

Commitment to Young Adolescents

The five greatest attributes identified by the staff as reaching over 90 percent levels of exemplary and high implementation in the area of commitment to young adolescents are listed below:

- (a) The school provides age-appropriate co-curricular activities including sports, clubs, and performing arts.

- (b) The school adapts curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling to meet its students' diverse and changing needs. Program development is on-going.
- (c) Teachers collaborate in making decisions about rigorous curriculum and effective instructional methods.
- (d) All students have equal access to valued knowledge and activities.
- (e) Groupings do not promote segregation by race, sex, or gender.
- (f) Reward systems value diversity, service, and good citizenship.

PCMS has an abundance of activities with which students can become involved with during the school year. Sport activities such as football, cross-country, cheerleading, softball, basketball, wrestling, soccer, golf, and tennis exist at PCMS for the students. Many clubs are offered to the students during the morning and afternoon hours. These clubs are listed in the Student Code of Conduct book and include Youth Action Council or YouthAct, Leo Club, Art Club, FFA, Yearbook staff, Dragon News Network of DNN (student news team), Dragon Ledger (student newspaper), Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl, Math Dragons (math competition teams), First Lego League Robotics Team, Chess Club, Drama Club, and Dance team. These clubs constantly change each year to meet the different interests of the students.

A school improvement leadership team meets on a monthly basis along with the school advisory council throughout the year to evaluate the current school improvement plan (SIP). This leadership team also led the school's effort in developing next year's school improvement plan at the end of the current school year. Curriculum chairs in the areas of reading, language arts, math, social studies, and science meet with their respective teachers to evaluate and make changes to the SIP to meet the needs of their curriculum areas. A faculty advisory council (FAC) made up of a representative from each grade level, special education, and connections areas advise the school administration of any faculty concerns. The Effective Behavior and Instruction Support (EBIS) team made up of a representative from each grade level, special education, and connections also advises the school administration of any school concerns regarding the school-wide discipline plan.

Students do have equal access to knowledge and activities at PCMS, and every effort is made to avoid any discrimination. Students are grouped by their ability in their academic classes for math and reading only. Students are heterogeneously grouped in their science, social studies, and connection classes. Both types of grouping are based on the latest effective schools research with regard to academic grouping that promotes the best student achievement and behavior. Unless outlined in an individualized educational plan (IEP), all students are taught their respective grade-level state standards. All students are eligible for school-wide Good Behavior and Attendance Field Days, Renaissance Academics Celebrations (for academics, attendance, and good behavior), Honors Day, Dragon Scales for EBIS rewards store, and Dragon Bucks for the PTO Dragon Store, which are all student rewards at PCMS for good student behavior, attendance, and academics. Eligible students are also encouraged to attend field trips to Jekyll Island in seventh grade and Washington, D.C. in eighth grade.

A Shared Vision

PCMS has a mission statement as well as priority belief statements that were created by the PCMS faculty and approved by the school advisory council. The school's mission and belief statement coupled with its dynamic school improvement plan constitute the school's and community's shared vision. The seven greatest attributes identified by the staff as reaching over 90 percent levels of exemplary and high implementation in the area of a shared vision are listed below:

- (a) A shared vision of the school guides every facet of the school.
- (b) The school's administration and faculty are organized to develop and implement plans designed to improve students' learning.
- (c) Shared and sustained leadership preserves the institutional memory and purpose of the school
- (d) The vision of the school is reviewed and revised on a continuous basis.
- (e) School personnel collect, analyze, and use data to identify areas of improvement.
- (f) The school utilizes test scores and other evaluation data to identify areas of improvement.
- (g) Out-of-school stakeholders have opportunities to engage in dialogue about school policies, curriculum, and related matters.

The school improvement leadership team and School Advisory Council (SAC) are active leadership groups at PCMS that meet on a regular basis to analyze student academic, discipline, and attendance data. These two groups, along with curriculum chairs, the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC), the Effective Behavior and Instruction (EBIS) team, and the Youth Action Council (YouthAct) make recommendations to the school administration for school improvement. The school administration also receives additional feedback on the overall climate of the school from yearly surveys completed by the students, parents, and teachers. All survey information is reviewed by the school administration, school advisory council, the school improvement leadership team, and teaching faculty.

Positive School Climate

PCMS faculty and staff realize the importance of a positive school climate, and the school takes great pride in its efforts to foster a positive school climate. The three greatest attributes identified by the staff as reaching over 90 percent levels of exemplary and high implementation in the area of a positive school climate are listed below:

- (a) The school values knowledge from the diverse cultures represented in the school, our nation, and the world.
- (b) The school welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families.
- (c) The school has a well-designed discipline plan for student management which includes appropriate, incremental measures and alternatives. Rules are fair and clear, and the suspension rate is low and decreasing.

PCMS is fortunate to have an active Parent and Teacher Organization (PTO) as well as an effective parent involvement policy that currently records and publicizes parent involvement hours each year. This past 2006-07 school year, PCMS was awarded the Gold Award by the county parent involvement coordinator for accruing the second most parent involvement hours in the school system. PCMS beat out three local elementary schools, the other middle school, and the sole high school for this special recognition. Parents of PCMS students are encouraged by the school administration and PTO to donate their time, treasury, and talent to the school. Most PCMS parents dedicate their time and talent to sports and band booster clubs, academic clubs such as the First Lego League Robotics team, and PTO sponsored events such as school dances, the PTO Dragon Store, and the Annual 5K and 1 mile Dragon Dash. At the beginning of the school year, parents and students are required to sign the parent compact located in the student/parent handbook which outlines the responsibilities of the student, parents, teachers, and principal. This compact helps to create an initial focus on productive learning for the major stakeholders.

For the past five years, PCMS has operated a discipline research team known as the Effective Behavior and Instruction (EBIS) team to create and supervise the existing progressive school-wide discipline plan. The EBIS team was originally created and funded by a state grant awarded to PCMS in 2002. The EBIS grant required PCMS to undergo extensive training for two years in the area of developing a proactive school-wide discipline plan. The EBIS team has representation from the school administration, grade levels, special education, and connection teachers. The EBIS team meets on a regular basis to review school discipline data, and the team develops better strategies to improve the school's discipline plan entitled *Be a Dragon*. Throughout the school facility, there are discipline matrices for different learning environments that remind students and teachers of the high expectations for a positive school climate. Even though each area of the school has different expectations for student behavior, all of the *Be a Dragon* matrices have the common theme of teaching students to be respectful, responsible, and safe. The PCMS faculty instructs students on the behavioral expectations at the beginning of the school year and reminds them of these expectations during the course of the school year. Every nine weeks students are given the opportunity to receive special rewards for their positive behaviors. One of the student rewards includes dragon scales which are slips of decorated paper that a student receives from PCMS staff members for good citizenship. Students use their dragon scales to buy different types of treats at the EBIS Dragon Scale Store each week. Additionally, the EBIS team rewards teachers with quarterly movie passes for their efforts in passing out dragon scales to students.

Family and Community Partnerships

The school's mission statement states that the Pickens County Middle School community is responsible for inspiring productive and responsible student learners and citizens. This mission statement purposely combines both the PCMS and the local community that it serves as being jointly responsible for the achievement of the PCMS students. In the area of family and community partnerships, the three greatest attributes identified by the staff

as reaching over 90 percent levels of exemplary and high implementation are listed below:

- (a) The school develops alliances with families to enhance and support the well-being of their children.
- (b) The school takes the initiative to involve families as partners in their children's education, keeping them informed, involving them in their children's learning, and assuring their participation in relevant decisions. A school council involves both parent and business representatives.
- (c) The school involves and informs families and community members in setting goals for students and supporting them for improving student achievement. Teachers communicate with families in ways other than report cards.

Every year, PCMS has Open House and Orientation days prior to the first day of school. These parent information sessions allow students and parents an opportunity to meet the school administration and teachers. Sixth grade parents and students new to PCMS have a special orientation session during Open House to provide parents with pertinent information regarding school procedures and policy. At this meeting, parents are made aware of different school communication tools such as PhoneMaster for attendance, the PCMS website, ParentConnect, quarterly report card folders that contain the principal's newsletter, the PTO parent information letter, phone calls, requests for parent/teacher conferences, marquee board, school calendar board, and the weekly school information telephone line.

For the past three years, the school has hosted a Annual Title I Family Night to provide parents with important information regarding the school's effort to best educate their child. This special night has included free meals and fun activities for the entire family. For instance, PCMS conducted a Carnival Night this past year that allowed parents and students to participate in a fun event that was free and engaging.

PCMS has been fortunate to have a full-time family advocate to work with economically disadvantaged students and their families. The family advocate has helped to create a warm and inviting school environment for families that in the past normally shied away from the school for fear of negative reprisals.

Two parents are elected to serve a two year term on the School Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC works closely with the school administration to help the school improve in different areas of need. The SAC has the power to make recommendations to the school superintendent and the school board. In the past, recommendations regarding the school calendar have always been sent to the central office and the school board for consideration. Along with the SAC, the school administration maintains an open door policy with all parents, students, and teachers. Parents are encouraged to express their concerns and ideas to the school administration for consideration.

In conclusion, PCMS has greatly benefited from a unique combination of a benevolent community, supportive parents, focused curriculum, highly qualified teaching faculty, and a motivated student body. The academic results at PCMS over the past five years since the 2001-2002 school year have been remarkable. It is the desire of the PCMS faculty and staff to become a part of the esteemed Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch

Program (GLSTWP) and to be allowed to network with the existing GLSTWP schools. The PCMS faculty and staff are excited about the opportunity to engage in a focused dialogue with other high achieving faculties and to learn from their exemplary instructional strategies and school improvement endeavors. Likewise, the PCMS faculty and staff are eager to share their successful school improvement strategies and accomplishments.