



March 2024

PPOS Newsletter

Monthly School News & Family Information



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Important Dates

Director Candidates interviews on site: March 18
PPOS School Board Meeting: March 20
Spring Break: March 23-April 2

Do We Know The Mountains We See?

Avalanches, mines, volcanoes: this is a San Juan Mountain Range story.

The narrators of this story are fourth-graders. Alongside their advisors Laura Hamilton and Kelle Bruno, these students got curious about the mountains that surround them.

"We look at these mountains every day and I wondered how many students and families know how they were formed, what they're called, and how big the range is," Mrs. Hamilton said.

Through their project, students researched the human uses, recreational opportunities, hazards, species, and geological histories of this range. On Friday, March 1 they shared this knowledge with a group of 40 adults and their peers. The space filled with mountain models, maps, papers, experiments, artwork, skits and oral presentations. Every student was represented and presented. **Continued on page 2.**



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"The San Juan Mountains were formed by and are still left over by volcanoes," Esperanza said. "It was interesting that during the formation of these mountains, diamonds and gold were made."

Other students were surprised to learn that these mountains were once active volcanoes.

"What really surprised me was that we're home to the biggest volcano in the world - La Garita. It erupted 23 million years ago," William added.

Geological discussions led the class into the history of mining, where advisors saw a change in the students' interest. From science to social studies standards, students switched their focus.

"A lot of energy went into concepts surrounding human connection," Mrs. Hamilton said. "The students wanted to know more about what past Coloradans and miners went through. There was curiosity about inequality; how the mining companies treated and employed their workers."

Darla jumped in, saying, "Mining can kill you. There is gas and dust particles that can stop you from breathing and you start coughing and can die."

Cambria continued the story.

"I learned that the way mining companies worked was that the people would be paid and the company would get the money back when the miners spent their money at a store that the company owned," Cambria said.

Students also studied the importance of relationships in regards to safety in the San Juans, referencing the need for friends when recreating in the backcountry.

"You need to have friends because an avalanche could bury you," Maleko said. "With friends you could be saved."

Sedona added her knowledge around avalanche education.

"There is a higher risk of avalanche if there are three layers to the snow: a large, clumpy layer, a smaller clumpy layer, and then a powdery top layer," she said.

This science project built upon the students' previous project, when they studied Colorado history. Together, students built a picture of the land that surrounds them: what they call home.



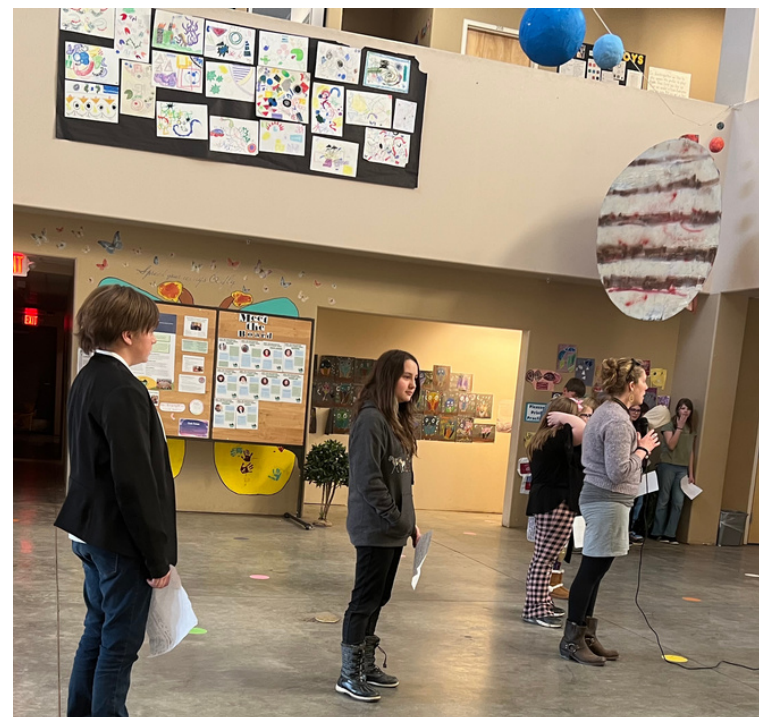


PPOS School Board member Bill Hudson is working on a **music show as a fundraiser for PPOS** that will be **April 27** at the Pagosa Center for the Arts. He is looking for **volunteers** - please get in touch with him if you're interested in helping: bhudson@ppos.co

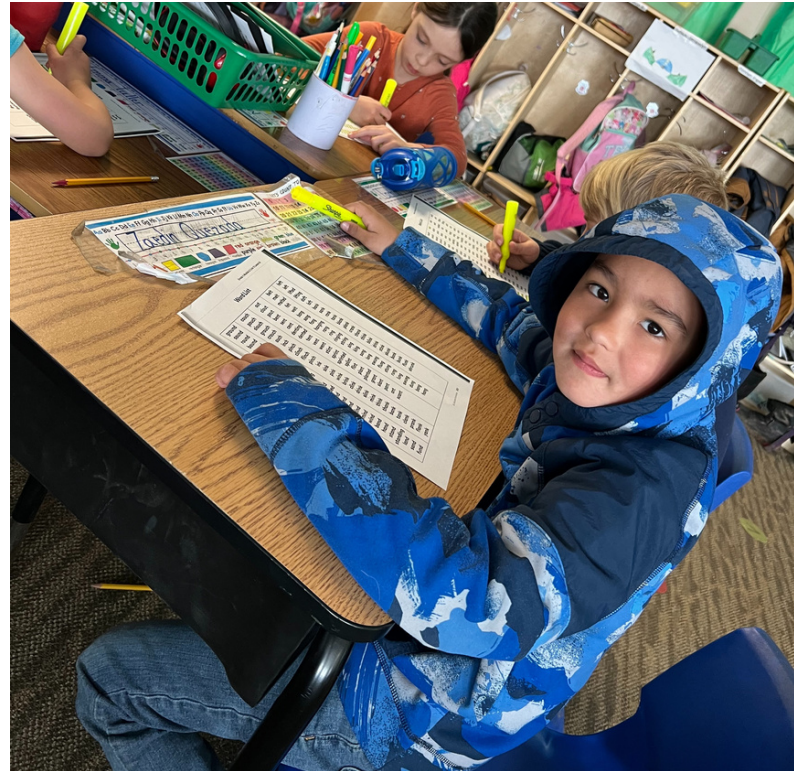
Open Enrollment for the 2024-25 school year has ended and please continue to encourage families to enroll! The only difference now is that enrollment will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. New families are also encouraged to sign up for a Shadow Day if they are interested in checking out the day-to-day experiences here at PPOS.

On Feb. 29, Advisors Rue Graham and Kelle Bruno hosted a Community Space Night for PPOS families. This event included a presentation by the San Juan Star Gazers Club, celestial poetry read and created by first-graders, a solar system model created by 5/6 students, and oral presentations on all the planets. Families learned the details of the 1960s Space Race, saw a demonstration explaining the distance between the moon and the Earth, explored art and writing about the sun, moon and stars, and heard fun facts about the 12 planets in our solar system. A scale model is still available for viewing in the school's atrium.

Director Hire Update: The final three candidates for next year's director position have been announced and will participate in a series of interview panels on March 18, along with teaching a lesson in a classroom that day. In addition to our assistant director Emily Murphy, we have Brian Clyne of Brownsville, Texas and Brianna Kaiser of Denver who are interviewing that day. Thank you to our students, staff, families and school board members who have been involved in this important process.



From the Restorative Practices Student Board: Projects continue for the RPSB with prototyping and work on the Peace Feet Initiative and teaching with a fourth-grade group, an RP mural on the upstairs hallway wall, teacher assisting in specials classes, and check-ins with students looking to chat. In addition, the board this month will be participating in interviewing the candidates for the new school director: students have created questions for the candidates, and Elliot, Jonah, Gary and Vivian will be representing the RPSB by interviewing all three director candidates on March 18. The RPSB feedback on candidates will go to the PPOS school board, which will vote on next year's director during the March school board meeting, March 20.



Reminders about attendance: As we get closer to the end of the school year, parents need to make a conscious effort to ensure their students are making it to school every day. Soon we will be coming up on our end of the year state tests and it is important to everyone that the kids are as prepared as possible. They can only do their best if they are at school daily for their instruction time. Losing any of that time with their teachers can be detrimental to their progress in class and on the tests.

We have been seeing an increase in absences lately, due partly to illness as different bugs are going around town. We completely understand these absences happen, as the illnesses tend to make several rounds around the school in such a small town. However, even these absences can negatively impact the student's ability to learn and can put them behind their peers. Please make the effort to get your kids to school on time whenever their health allows.

If you need any clarification on the school's or district's policies when it comes to attendance, please reach out to me at lhayduke@ppos.co and I will be happy to do all I can to answer any questions!



The kindergartners had a visit from Brandon, a Student Resource Officer, who talked about his job and shared that he loves hugs.

More News

The 2/3 grade Snow Bunnies class has begun a study of pollinators. As a part of their project, students have visited the Growing Spaces Grow Dome with Mrs. Bruno. The students released ladybugs and tasted veggie treats.

