2025-2026 Report to Parents

Pleasant Knoll Middle School

School Achievements

915 Pleasant Knoll Middle School students are focused on academics but understand the importance of giving back to the community and helping others. The PKMS community raised a PKMS record breaking $6701 during the annual Polar Plunge fundraiser to support Special Olympics and our very own Club Unify! Last year, we became an official Unified School which allowed our club to keep half of the money we raised! Club Unify has become an integral part of our school community that brings so much inclusion and joy to our school culture. We also had a PKMS staff team represented in the district dodge ball tournament to benefit the Polar Plunge fundraiser. PKMS had a hard fought semi-final appearance for the second year in a row! Our annual Hoops for Hearts fundraiser provided a fun day of basketball for our students and raised $850 for the Owino Heart Foundation.

We also kicked off our second annual SOAR (Support, Optimism, Act with Kindness, Resilience) Week at PKMS! This included therapy dog visits, staff zumba, yoga at blacktop, and a motivational speaker. We also encouraged extra acts of kindness throughout the week! It was a great success and we are already looking forward to next year!

Academics

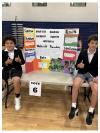
Our PKMS students were very active in academic extra-curriculars this year. We are thrilled to share that Pleasant Knoll Middle School was awarded the Palmetto Gold honor of excellence. Below are some highlights from the year:

PALMETTO
GOLD & SILVER
AWARDS

Science Fair

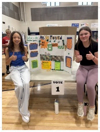
We are proud to share the success of our school's first ever Science Fair, which showcased the curiosity, creativity, and hard work of our participating students! This year, we had 33 projects total, presented by 50 student participants, 33 of which were seventh graders, and 17 eighth graders. Students were able to explore science in a variety of ways across three categories. In our Experiment projects (14 total), students developed testable questions and conducted full investigations to collect and analyze data. Our Engineering projects (6 total) challenged students to identify real-world problems and design creative prototypes to address them. In the Research/Model category (13 total), students dove into complex scientific topics, conducting in-depth research and building models to demonstrate their understanding.

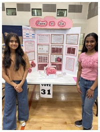
We are incredibly proud of all of our students for their dedication and enthusiasm. The opening night of the Science Fair was a tremendous success, and it was wonderful to see so many families come out to support, celebrate, and engage with our students. Watching students confidently explain their thinking, answer questions, and share their learning with visitors was truly a highlight of the event. Thank you to our families and community members for your continued support in making opportunities like this possible!

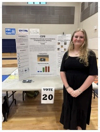


HOW CAN ENGINEERS BUILD CLEAN ENERGY
VOTE
15

DOT-BOT
VOTE
17







Spelling Bee

6th grader, Soham Saha, won the FMSD Spelling Bee and moved onto the Regional Spelling Bee at Bank of America Stadium! He represented both PKMS and FMSD very well and we are so proud of him!

Academic Challenge

The PKMS Academic Challenge team placed second in the regular season and third at the Olde English Consortium (OEC) Large Middle School Regional Tournament. We are so proud of their hard work, dedication and teamwork.

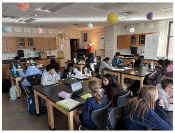
Beta Club

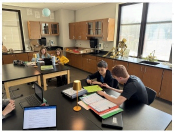
Several 8th graders participated in the South Carolina Junior Beta Club Convention in categories including academic areas, visual arts, performing arts, and quiz bowl. Aleena Kagaj placed second in Oniste painting, Jiya Patel placed third in performing arts (flute), and Varin Shah, Miles Moran, Atharv Sharma and Austin Joehinth qualified for the national quiz bowl tournament. The convention was held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and students did a great job representing the Knighthawks. The state convention was held January 21st-23rd.

Beta Club members have participated in several service projects this year including donations to Fort Mill Care Center, Isaiah 117 House, Nothing Pink, and Defend the Fatherless. Several volunteers also volunteered at the Isaiah 117 Dodgeball tournament, PKES social events, and helped a local Eagle Scout build a nature trail.

Knighthawk Knowledge Hour

This year, we piloted a new tutoring program called Knighthawk Knowledge Hour to help our 6th grade students with the transition to middle school. 8th Grade WEB and Beta Club leaders worked 1-on-1 with 6th grade students on Tuesdays after school to help them stay organized, study for upcoming assessments, and catch up on any missing work. This program was beneficial for all students involved, and we are planning to continue this program next year!





Feria Language Competition

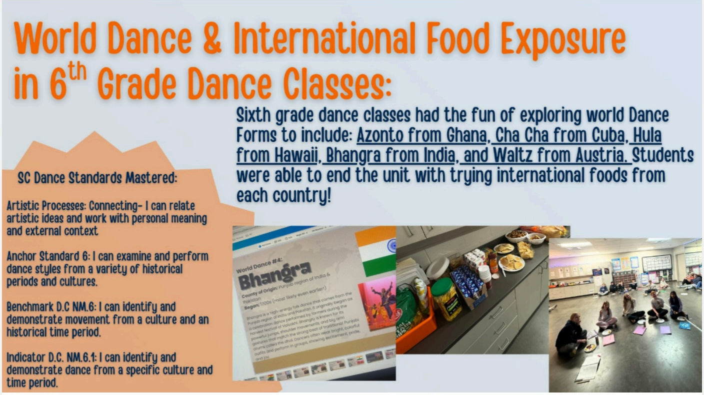
Sixteen 7th and 8th grade Spanish students participated in Winthrop's Feria Language Competition on March 6th. They competed in speaking, writing, reading, and Spanish spelling bee. All PKMS participants earned top honors including *Notable* (notable), *Bueno* (good), and *Sobresaliente* (outstanding).

Mock Trial

The PKMS Mock Trial team took in the SC Bar Association Middle School Mock Trial Competition for the fourth year in a row. The team competed at the Regional in Lexington, SC in November 2025. Middle school teams from across the state competed in a two-day competition. PKMS was among the 8 that qualified for the state competition. In December, the team travelled to Lexington again and earned third place (the last time the team earned third was 2018). Beyond learning about the law and the court system, students practiced public speaking, research, and persuasive writing along with teamwork, collaboration, and project management. According to one team member: Mock trial has truly changed my life. In 6th grade, I signed up without even knowing what Mock trial was all about. Everybody on team was so welcoming and accepting. Over the three years I have been part of the team, I have learned real life skills like debate, reasoning, writing and communication skills. I will forever be grateful for the memories I have made while being on the team and all the friends I have kept.

Related Arts Spotlight: Dance

Pleasant Knoll Middle School is in its second year of offering dance as a Related Arts class with Ms. Alexander, and the program has truly taken off, engaging students through a wide variety of dance styles and experiences.



World Dance & International Food Exposure in 6th Grade Dance Classes:

Sixth grade dance classes had the fun of exploring world Dance Forms to include: Azonto from Ghana, Cha Cha from Cuba, Hula from Hawaii, Bhangra from India, and Waltz from Austria. Students were able to end the unit with trying international foods from each country!

SC Dance Standards Mastered:

Artistic Processes: Connecting- I can relate artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

Anchor Standard 6: I can examine and perform dance styles from a variety of historical periods and cultures.

Benchmark D.C NM.6: I can identify and demonstrate movement from a culture and an historical time period.

Indicator D.C. NM.6.1: I can identify and demonstrate dance from a specific culture and time period.

STEAM Night

STEAM Night was a huge hit! Students designed and showcased creative survival-themed games connected to our *One School One Book*, *Alone*, bringing their learning to life in fun and engaging ways. Our dance and chorus students added to the evening with cultural performances, and families enjoyed a variety of hands-on STEAM activities together. It was a fantastic, family-filled night, and we're already looking forward to making it even better next year!

Athletics

We are so proud of the hard work and dedication our student-athletes showed this year. We had over 300 students participate across 15 sports! We also had nearly 20 two-sport athletes, 10 three-sport athletes, and even one four-sport athlete!

We saw some great playoff runs, especially this spring. Our 8th grade girls basketball team battled all the way to the championship and finished 2nd in the conference, while our 7th grade girls finished 3rd. Our boys track team brought home a conference championship, and the girls finished

3rd. Both our boys and girls soccer teams are headed to the championship this Thursday! We also had several of our middle school athletes competing at the high school level this year.

This was also the second year of our girls flag football team, and they put in a ton of work all season, earning their spot in a tough playoff matchup.

Club Unify had a great year as well, representing us at both the BTMS Unified Middle School Games and the NFHS Unified District Games with strong performances.

High School Athletes!

State Championship Qualifying Dance Team!

The Pleasant Knoll Middle School Dance Team, the Hawkettes, have had an amazing season. Their season began with placing 3rd Place in Pom, and 2nd Place in Hip-Hop at the Fort Mill High Invitational. Their season ended by qualifying for the SC Dance Association Dance Team Championships, earning their place alongside some of the best dance teams in the state!

FMDT INVITATIONAL 2025
SECOND PLACE
MIDDLE SCHOOL HIP HOP
FMDT INVITATIONAL 2025
THIRD PLACE
MIDDLE SCHOOL POM

Visual & Performing Arts

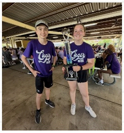
This year, our performing arts department produced Disney's Beauty and the Beast. The talent our students showcased was amazing and they worked so hard to offer 4 productions of the show over a 3 day period.

The chorus program has experienced tremendous growth this year, with 78 students in Honors Chorus, 58 in Advanced Chorus, and an additional 100 students participating in 7th and 8th grade General Chorus. Our Honors Chorus performed at all home football games, and both the Honors and Advanced Choruses were featured at several important events, including Fall Family Night, the 9/11 Assembly, the Black History Month Assembly, and STEAM Night. They also represented our school at Carowinds Music in the Parks, where they earned an Excellent rating and placed first and second in the middle school mixed choir category. In addition, both ensembles participated in the FMSD Choral Arts Day at FMHS. We are especially proud of the nine students who successfully auditioned for the ACDA State Honor Choir and performed alongside more than 200 students from across the state. We continue to be incredibly impressed by our students’ dedication and talent.

Our band program touched 300 students and also had a busy year! They hosted a winter and spring concert for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade programs, drawing record number crowds at PKMS. Below are some highlights of the band program’s success this year:

- Our 6th Grade Band will perform at the Carowinds Festival of Music for the first time in school history this year!
- Our 7th Grade Band will perform at the Rock Hill Festival of Music and compete with other local middle school bands, and then go celebrate at the Dollywood Theme Park in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee!
- Our 8th Grade Band earned a Superior Rating at SCBDA Concert Performance Assessment, and will perform at Walt Disney World
- 27 PKMS Band Students earned a seat in SCBDA Region Band and SCBDA All State
- 104 Students will perform in the SCBDA Solo and Ensemble Festival, a record number for PKMS

BUILT FOR BAND



Clubs

Pleasant Knoll Middle School promotes inclusion, relationships, and passions through our club program. We offer over 40 clubs almost every Friday for students to be apart of something they are interested in here on our school campus. Some of our clubs include Trout in the Classroom, YoYo, Soccer, Bracelet Making, Board Games, and Harry Potter. Below are a few highlights!

Club Unify:

This was our first full year of Club Unify, and the impact has been incredible! With around 30 students involved, they helped spread a culture of inclusion and joy throughout the entire school. They took pride in celebrating our staff and volunteers and organized an outstanding Polar Plunge fundraiser, along with our much-anticipated Winter Wednesdays that quickly became a weekly highlight. This group is just getting started, and we can't wait to see the even greater impact and even more smiles they bring next year!

Beta Club:

Several 8th graders participated in the South Carolina Junior Beta Club Convention in categories including academic areas, visual arts, performing arts, and quiz bowl. Aleena Kagaj placed second in Oniste painting, Jiya Patel placed third in performing arts (flute), and Varin Shah, Miles Moran, Atharv Sharma and Austin Joehinth qualified for the national quiz bowl tournament. The convention was held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and students did a great job representing the Knighthawks. The state convention was held January 21st-23rd.

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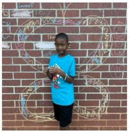
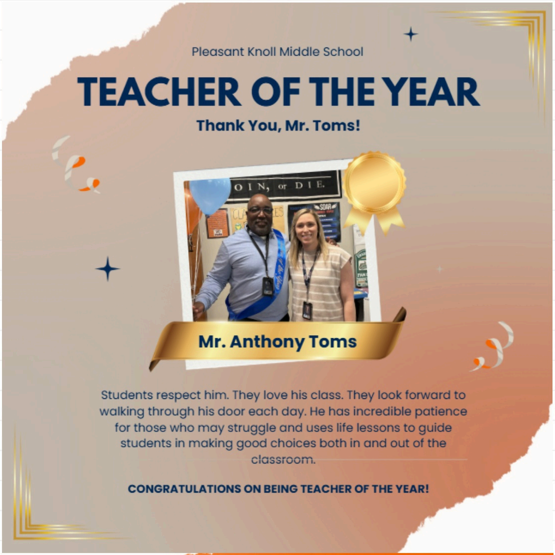
Positive Peers/Kindness Club:

New to PKMS this year and led by Ms. Beether! It was created with the goal of building a more positive school community for both students and staff. Throughout the year, we have worked on a variety of meaningful projects, including creating a "Giving Tree" filled with positive affirmations, collecting donations for the Humane Society, decorating doors for our special education classrooms, writing thank-you cards to cafeteria staff, decorating the sidewalks with uplifting messages, and making Halloween cards for students in our self-contained programs. This group has made such an impact through small acts of kindness, and I'm excited to see what they choose to take on next as they continue to make our school a more welcoming place.



2025-2026 Teacher and Support Staff of the Year

Pleasant Knoll Middle School proudly recognizes Mr. Anthony Toms as the Pleasant Knoll Middle School Teacher of the Year and Mrs. Jennifer DeCenzo as the Pleasant Knoll Middle School Support Staff of the Year.



Pleasant Knoll Middle School

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Thank You, Mr. Toms!

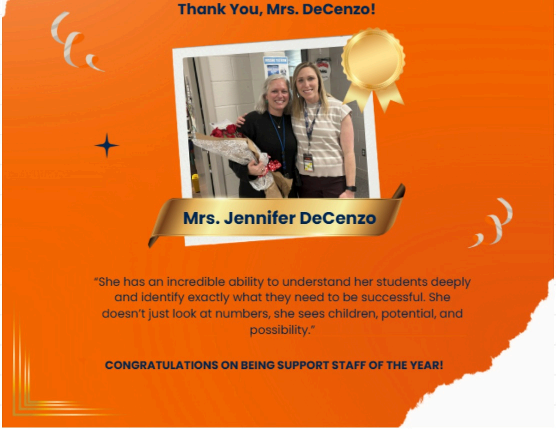
Mr. Anthony Toms

Students respect him. They love his class. They look forward to walking through his door each day. He has incredible patience for those who may struggle and uses life lessons to guide students in making good choices both in and out of the classroom.

CONGRATULATIONS ON BEING TEACHER OF THE YEAR!

Pleasant Knoll Middle School

SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR



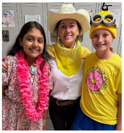
Thank You, Mrs. DeCenzo!

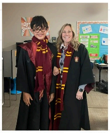
Mrs. Jennifer DeCenzo

"She has an incredible ability to understand her students deeply and identify exactly what they need to be successful. She doesn't just look at numbers, she sees children, potential, and possibility."

CONGRATULATIONS ON BEING SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR!

Spirit Weeks





About the Pleasant Knoll Middle School School Improvement Council

The PKMS SIC is a group of educational stakeholders including administrators, teachers, parents, and community members who work together to promote well rounded and successful middle school students. The SIC helps to facilitate meaningful involvement with both parent and community representatives. The SIC meets monthly to discuss ways to support academics, athletics, and school events. We also review policies and and set annual goals to meet specific targeted needs within our school community.

The 2025–2026 PKMS SIC focused on strengthening parent involvement, gathering meaningful input, and improving overall perception. Throughout the year, the committee worked to turn ideas into action—launching "Borland's Bridge" to create a direct line of communication with Dr. Borland, conducting targeted admin walkthroughs to address opportunity gaps, and collaborating with other schools across the district and state to share and learn from best practices. Each month, SIC parent representatives provided feedback, asked thoughtful questions, and helped guide our work as the year progressed.

Our Vision Statement

As a community of learners at Pleasant Knoll Middle School, we strive to create a safe environment focused on high achievement through a rigorous curriculum and student/teacher engagement.

We work to instill a sense of community and positive citizenship while encouraging our students to SOAR in STEAM initiatives and college/career readiness.

Purpose of the Report

This report is issued by the Pleasant Knoll Middle School, School Improvement Council in accordance with South Carolina law to share information on the school's progress in meeting various goals and objectives, the work of the SIC, and other accomplishments during the school year.

For more information regarding the Pleasant Knoll Middle School SIC please contact Dr. Ellen Borland at borlande@fortmillschools.org

Contact us at...
2320 Pleasant Rd.
Fort Mill, SC 29708
https://pkms.fortmillschools.org/
(803) 835-3721

Ellen Borland
Ellen is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters