



Dear Parents and Guardians of Parkers Prairie High School:

Thank you so much for attending the conferences October. We experienced our best turnout in a long time and valued the time to meet with you. Don't hesitate to email, call, or stop by between now and the next conference date (Feb. 26, 2018) with any questions or concerns.

November brings us the second quarter of the year, the beginning of winter sports, and the play performance. Please see dates below on upcoming events.

Working together, the connection between home and school is stronger than ever. Our relationship with you as parents and guardians matters to us and we hope it shows. Please let us know how we can help make this the best time for your student possible.

May your Thanksgiving holiday be filled with joy,  
Principal Carey Johnson

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Flu Shot Clinic: November 1**

**Last day of Quarter 1: November 2**

**No School: November 3**

**No School (Teacher Workshop): November 6**

**Veterans Day Program: November 10 @ 9:00 a.m.**

**Fall Play performances: November 17, 18, 19**

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**STAR Test for seniors:**

If your senior has reached benchmark for STAR testing, they will no longer be required to test for STAR in the second or third testing sessions. Once seniors have reached their benchmarks for grade level proficiency, they will no longer be required to test.



## **PPHS November 2017 Newsletter**

**2 Articles of Note: by Kim Marshall: Marshall Memo 708 October 23, 2017.  
(Summaries)**

- “How Smartphones Hijack Our Minds” by Nicholas Carr in The Wall Street Journal, October 6, 2017, available to subscribers at <http://bit.ly/2ylEZsP>

What makes the smartphone so captivating? “Imagine combining a mailbox, a newspaper, a TV, a radio, a photo album, a public library, and a boisterous party attended by everyone you know, and then compressing them all into a single small, radiant object. That is what a smartphone represents to us. No wonder we can’t take our minds off it.”

But smartphones can also foster anxiety and undermine performance. “[E]ven hearing one ring or vibrate, produces a welter of distractions that makes it harder to concentrate on a difficult problem or job,” says Carr. “The division of attention impedes reasoning and performance.” One study found that when a person isn’t able to answer a ring or vibration, blood pressure spikes, the pulse quickens, and problem-solving skills decline. Researchers have found negative effects in several areas including two very important areas:

**Test performance** – In more than one study, students who were not near their cell phones and couldn’t feel them vibrate, see their notifications, or see the phone itself, were more successful than those who could. In some cases, those who could scored a full letter grade lower than their peers without access to their phones.

**Personal connection** – results from a study in England: “The mere presence of mobile phones,” said the researchers, “inhibited the development of interpersonal closeness and trust” and diminished “the extent to which individuals felt empathy and understanding for their [peers].”

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- “The Distracted Student Mind: Enhancing Its Focus and Attention” by Larry Rosen in Phi Delta Kappan, October 2017 (Vol. 99, #2, p. 8-14), [www.kappanmagazine.org](http://www.kappanmagazine.org); Rosen can be reached at [lrosen@csudh.edu](mailto:lrosen@csudh.edu).

*“Due to the constant temptation to check their smartphones, today’s students are spending less time on their schoolwork, taking longer to complete assignments, and feeling more stressed in the process,” says Larry Rosen (California State University/Dominguez Hills) in this recent Kappan article.*



## **PPHS November 2017 Newsletter**

### **Smartphones and Teens:**

- Teens are constantly multitasking, even though they know it's not efficient.
- When teens have their phones taken away, they become highly anxious.
- Phone-related anxiety is closely linked to poor academic performance and sleep deprivation.
- About 80 percent of teens say they rarely if ever sleep well, usually because they have a smartphone at their bedside.
- The average adolescent finds it difficult to study for 15 minutes at a time.
- During a 15-minute stint of studying, teens spend at least five minutes in a state of distraction.
- 80 percent of high-school teachers say technology is making students less able to sustain attention.

Rosen has these suggestions for educators and parents:

- Your brain needs an occasional "reset."
- Preteens and adolescents should spend no more than 90 minutes at a time with technology, followed by at least 10-15 minutes on an activity that calms their brain.
- Build stamina for studying without technology.
- Sleep is sacred. Nine hours is the recommended amount for high-school students, and kids should know that melatonin is naturally secreted in the hours before bedtime to produce sleepiness – unless they're peering at a blue-light device.
- Listen to familiar music, read a paper book, and ramp down mental effort.
- Cut down on the number of alerts and notifications. It may not occur to teens that they can de-activate apps that aren't of strong interest, cutting down on distracting notifications.
- Carve out tech-free zones. These might include the dinner table, restaurant meals, the car, the family den, and the bedroom.

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**What does this mean for our students?** It means balance.

Smartphones are part of our culture and are here to stay. We will work together to balance the students' access to their phones with time to decompress, think, recharge their brains, and rest properly.

*The above article summaries have been shared by permission.  
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