



# COUGAR NEWS

## Combs Middle School

*School Newsletter – December 2016*



### ***J.O. Combs Angel Tree Program***

As the holidays approach, CMS would like to make you aware of a great opportunity for our students to make a difference. The J.O. Combs Unified School District is hosting a Holiday Angel Tree program.

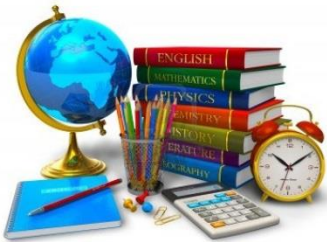
Your child, along with their CSS classmates, will have an opportunity to purchase holiday gift items for families in need. Beginning December 5<sup>th</sup> through December 15<sup>th</sup>, CSS classes will select one (or more) angel tree tag(s) for their entire class from the Christmas tree in the front office. Once the tag is selected, the students will have a chance to select items from the wish list printed on the tag. There is no obligation for students to purchase items. If they want to assist in creating greeting cards or hand-made gifts, that would allow them to participate in some way. Some additional ideas for assisting with this project include donating meal items, gift cards, or toiletries for the selected family.

Listed below are the gift giving guidelines:

- Gifts should be under \$20
- The gifts need to be unwrapped
- Students write their name and tag number (provided to them in class) somewhere on the gift

If you have any questions about this important event, please contact Mrs. Shindlecker, CMS Social Worker, at 480-882-3510 (ext. 1413). “Thank You” for your assistance!

### ***First Semester Final Exams***



First semester final exams will take place on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. On December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, school will dismiss at 1:00 pm. Breakfast and lunch will be served for students on these days. Any student who is absent for an exam will make it up when classes resume in January.

Semester final exams account for 10% of a student’s overall semester grade. The breakdown of the semester grade is 45% for first quarter, 45% for second quarter, and 10% for the final exam. In addition to the exam counting for an important part of each student’s semester grade, information from the results will be assessed by teachers to assist them in planning the learning/teaching that will take place second semester.

Please assist your child with being prepared for exams by making sure he/she gets a good night’s sleep and a nutritious breakfast for each day of finals.

### ***Winter Music Concerts***

The winter holiday music concerts will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in the middle school cafeteria. On The December 6<sup>th</sup> concert will feature Mr. Lloyd’s guitar class at 5:00 pm; the choir, intermediate band, jazz band, and advanced band will then perform at 6:00 pm. December 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Thornton’s intermediate and advanced orchestra will perform beginning at 6:00 pm. Come hear the great music students will perform!



### ***CMS Drama Event***

This Saturday, the CMS Drama Club will host two shows of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson. The shows will take place at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm in the CMS cafeteria. For this December 3<sup>rd</sup> event, tickets will cost \$3 a piece and will be sold at the door. Mr. Smith and his drama students are very excited to perform for our middle school community.

### ***Title I Meeting***

CMS will host its annual Title I meeting in the middle school cafeteria at 5:00 pm on Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. This gathering will allow for CMS Administration to share the CMS Title I Plan for the 2016-2017 school year.

### ***Honeywell Fiesta Bowl Aerospace Challenge***

Various seventh grade science students at CMS are currently preparing projects to participate in the annual Honeywell Fiesta Bowl Aerospace Challenge at the ASU Polytechnic campus, featuring Microsoft Mission Control. This wonderful opportunity for our students will take place in February.

The Aerospace Challenge was created to help middle school grade students enhance their space knowledge by creating a plan and physical model of an international lunar base. Students have been working in groups of three to five to complete the project.

This special project allows these students to improve their team-building, communication, problem solving, and critical decision-making skills. Students will endure several rounds of rigorous judging at the ASU campus by teams of professionals in the science industry.



### ***Students of the Month***

The middle school would like to recognize its recent Student of the Month recipients.

#### **Middle School “Outstanding Cougars” Program**

7<sup>th</sup> Grade – Kira Chase, Haider Goraya, and Ali Goraya

8<sup>th</sup> Grade – Lexi Schnepf and David Lee

#### **District “Character Counts” Program**

Cannon Scrogam (8<sup>th</sup> grader) received this recognition in November for the pillar of Citizenship.

#### **Kiwanis “Most Improved Student” Program**

Elizabeth Duff (pictured left) was chosen for November.



### ***Tax Credit Program***

Please remember that you have an opportunity to designate a portion of your state taxes directly to the middle school and have the funds that you donate returned to you dollar-for-dollar in the form of a tax credit.

Any taxpayer may contribute to a public school, regardless of whether the taxpayer has a child attending the school. One of the misconceptions of the tax credit is that people believe they have to make the full contribution in order to participate.

Simply put, that is not true. The middle school will graciously accept any contribution you would choose to make for our students. For more information about special opportunity for schools, refer to *Tax Credits* icon on the district web page at [www.jocombs.org](http://www.jocombs.org).

Please consider taking advantage to determine how your state taxes may be spent for our Cougar students!



### ***Athletic Director's Update***

The third quarter competitive sports programs will be girls' basketball, and cheerleading. These programs will begin when students return from winter break. All student/athletes interested in participating in these programs are required to have a physical exam, copy of their insurance card, permission slip, and emergency contact form. Remember that the forms are available online.

### ***Lockdown/Evacuation Drill***

The middle school participates in lockdown/evacuation drills twice a year. This important drill takes place to assure that students and staff are prepared should an emergency arise. If a situation were to occur while the middle school was in session, please know that preparations have been made to respond effectively. As a whole, the district has a detailed plan which has been formulated to respond to keep the members of our school community safe. This plan addresses the various emergencies that may arise such as dangerous animals, threat to the school, bus incident, fire, gas leak, hazardous materials, or unwelcomed intruders. In an emergency, steps would be taken to secure the safety of the campus.

Once local authorities determine and communicate that the campus is safe, a process occurs to account for everyone and determine whether or not classes could resume or the campus should be evacuated. During past drills, the students have done an excellent job of following the guidelines established. Their appropriate participation is another example of the steps you have taken as their parents to assist them with understanding the importance of safety on campus.



### ***Bus Transportation***

Current middle school policy requires that students have their school ID with them at all times during the school day and at school-sponsored activities. In a continued effort to improve bus safety/security and verify the accuracy of students riding the bus on their designated routes, the district transportation department requests that students have their school student ID available to show their bus driver. If a student needs a replacement school ID, please contact Ashley Gonzales at 480-882-3515.

### ***JupiterGrades***

JupiterGrades allows you to monitor your child's grades, homework, missing assignments, test scores, report cards, and attendance. The program is updated automatically, so you have access to the most current information. Students have their own password and are encouraged to monitor their own progress.

### ***District News***

"Thank You" for supporting the Bond Election and making this election year a win for our students! Once the sale of bonds commences in July, the community will start to see their bond dollars at work over the next several years with the construction of the Combs High School auditorium, new busses, updated technology, and a district transportation/service center. Follow the progress of these projects on Twitter @JOCombsUSD #CombsBond2016.



Mark your calendars for Polarfest on December 10<sup>th</sup> (11am-5pm) at Combs Middle School. Enjoy a fun filled day with carnival rides and pictures with Santa. Many Combs school organizations will be there with booths or student performances.

Don't miss out on a great community day of fun for everyone!

At the district professional development day on January 4<sup>th</sup>, community members are invited to attend the *Rejuvenation Vendor Fair* at Combs High School (12:30-1:30pm). Help set your New Year's resolutions in motion by visiting with representatives from colleges, gyms, credit unions, and health offices. While you're there, don't forget to stop by a food truck for lunch. We hope to see you there.



Combs is currently hiring for a number of positions including paraprofessionals, a high school science teacher, a middle school math teacher, and emergency substitutes. If you or someone you know is interested, please visit the *Employment* tab on the district web page at [www.jocombs.org](http://www.jocombs.org).

Combs Kidz Winter Camp is now registering. Visit the *Community Education* tab at [www.jocombs.org](http://www.jocombs.org) for more information.

### *Calendar*

#### December

- 6-7 CSS Spelling Bee
- 6, 12 Winter Music Concerts
- 16 Winter Dance (6-8 pm)
- 16-20 Semester Exams (1:00 pm dismissal)
- 21-30 Winter Break (no school)

#### January

- 2-3 Winter Break (no school)
- 4 Professional Development (no school)
- 5 Second Semester Begins

### *Important Numbers and Information*

Main Line: 480-882-3510

Attendance Line: 480-882-3510 ext.1402

Transportation: 480-987-5309

Web Address: [www.jocombs.org](http://www.jocombs.org)

Fax: 480-888-8049

Food Service: 480-882-3514

Health Office: 480-882-3513