



**JAMES LICK
HIGH SCHOOL**
A NEW TECH
SCHOOL

The Comet Optimist

2019-2020 Monthly Newsletter - Volume 1



PILLAR OF THE MONTH

While we continue to promote, teach, learn, and assess all four pillars of our school, each month we will give special attention to one of the pillars as a way of exploring how that particular pillar relates to all that we do, both in and out of the classroom.

For the month of September our pillar of the month will be Growth Mindset, as we look forward to a year of growth and learning.

GROWTH MINDSET



PRINCIPAL'S LENS

As I complete my first full month as your principal, I am so delighted with each aspect about the school that I learn about and become familiar with. Each day I am inspired by this amazing community!

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AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

The month of August has been as busy, exciting, and a little crazy as one would expect. Still, we have seen lots of positive developments this month.

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SEPTEMBER PREVIEW

September sees us kick into full speed ahead and brings with it our first opportunities to reflect on student learning and school initiatives.

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JL COMETS

CAST A GLOW!!!

I've been having some fun with word play recently, so I thought it would be nice to see if I could incorporate our school pillars into an acronym that captures some of our identity and my observations this month. Since the four pillars were very challenging in creating an acronym ("AC-GC" was the best I could do), I took the liberty of adding some other meaningful values to give me more letters to work with. Here is what I came up with:

Collaboration – Our teachers, staff, and admin team have really come together to start the year off positively and relatively smoothly. Beyond that, I have witnessed impressive collaboration in each of the committees that met this month (which I highlight in the next story).

Agency – Many of our teachers, staff, and admin have come to me to express their feedback and suggestions for making our school better. We have also seen great participation in a few surveys that have been sent out to give everyone a voice in our decision-making processes. I am truly inspired by everyone's agency!

Scholarship – Even though this is not one of our pillars, I have seen students and teachers demonstrating high academic standards and best practices from educational research. As we relaunch our instructional rounds, I can't wait to see more!

Thinking – While also not a JL pillar, "Knowledge and Thinking" is one of the New Tech outcomes from which we get our pillars, and it is obvious to me that our school promotes critical thinking both in and out of the classrooms.

Growth mindset – It is so awesome that you all have identified this as a pillar. I feel that as long as we continue to model a growth mindset with the school and each other, the students and school will continue to improve. It is an especially meaningful pillar as we adapt to changes in our staff and assess our current practices and processes.

Life-long learning – Again, not one of our pillars, but just as I see every member of this community as educators, I also see us all as learners. We are demonstrating an eagerness to develop collectively and individually. It's wonderful!

Oral communication – While our pillar of communication covers both oral and written, the New Tech outcomes separate them. Following that model gave me more letters to complete my acronym ;), while also letting me highlight how important each kind is. I think our oral communication has proven to be our best way to build or restore relationships.

Written communication – Meanwhile, our written communication has kept us connected, especially when we are not available to talk in person. With both forms, I will continue to encourage and model openness and transparency.



Thank you all for indulging me as I use a simple word play to express my admiration. You all CAST a GLOW!



AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

OFF TO THE RACES!!!

A MONTH OF TRANSITIONS & BEGINNINGS

From the first week before school started to the third week of school, we have already come a long way this month. Here are some of the highlights for August:

1. **Comets Culture Advocates** – Prior to the school year starting, we formed a special team that will focus on school climate & culture, social-emotional learning, and restorative practices for our school. The CCA already led it's first PD session on "Creating a Positive Climate & Culture During the First Week of School". Those who attended offered very positive feedback and have encouraged the CCA to continue its meaningful work. More to come!
2. **All Staff In-service** – On August 12, we kicked off the school year by reflecting on our personal stories and what made us go into education. It was our first school-wide activity this year in developing a positive climate and building relationships. We also shared some important housekeeping information.
3. **A/B Days PD** – Beginning with the STARS team and ending with CANVAS, we spent the whole first week developing our teaching staff on four topics. In addition to STARS and Canvas, we had presentations from CCA and our SPED department. I have seen and heard many teachers referring back to these sessions.
4. **18.4, PD, ITL, and SSC** – This month we also conducted our first meetings for each of our participatory governance committees. Some highlights include: 18.4 voting to suspend the Connections class and assess it; PD committee reviewing PD plans for the year and recommending the survey about the PBL workshop; ITL reporting on department meeting discussions, reflecting on the WASC results, and reviewing a tool for instructional rounds and classroom walkthroughs; and SSC reviewing the SPSA goals. Each committee also established essential agreements to be used for each meeting. Overall each team seems off to a great start!
5. **STARS & DREAM Teams** – Under the leadership of our two amazing AP's, both sides of the house worked hard to make the school year get off to a great start. Whether it was balancing the schedule or using de-escalation and restorative practices, both teams worked very hard to meet the needs of the students. Great jobs everyone!
6. **Rally, Athletic Parent Night, & BTSN** – We also saw a few events presented to our students and parents. The Rally was the culmination of a week of activities that gave our students a fresh dose of spirit. Our Athletic Parent Night oriented families about our Fall sports, and our Back to School Night gave a small number of parents information about the classes. With each event, we will be looking for ways to improve, so that even more will benefit and enjoy.
7. **Department & Grade Levels** – Our two collaboration sessions that had us break out into our smaller groups resulted in a lot of great work and communication. While some groups have identified a project or goal for the year, others have offered great feedback, reflection, and suggestions for the greater good. We will continue to review and follow these developments.

SEPTEMBER PREVIEW

A MONTH OF REFLECTION & PLANNING

This next month is full of events, meetings, next steps, and reflections that will give us many opportunities to build upon the momentum from last month. There are some activities that will be ongoing throughout the month (and year), while others are specific to important dates to mark our calendars.

ONGOING

- 1. Instructional Rounds & Walkthroughs** – Starting in September, I would like to encourage all staff to visit classrooms to see your colleagues and students in action. We have developed a tool in Google Forms that provides the observer with practices to look for in several categories with lists of examples. The observer can simply check off all that they are able to observe in the visit and submit it for the teacher to use for reflection. It is important to note that both the instructional rounds and the admin walkthroughs will use the tool for offering feedback only. They will not be connected in any way to formal evaluations, and instead should only be seen as instructional tools for both the observer and the observee. On behalf of all observers, I would like to thank you in advance for welcoming us into your classrooms!
- 2. Pillar Promotion** – As always, please continue to look for ways to guide students to demonstrate our four pillars: Agency, Collaboration, Communication, and Growth Mindset. Every staff member plays an important role in modeling, teaching, and learning these pillars.

IMPORTANT DATES

September				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

- Mon, 9/9 – All Staff Meeting:** In addition to updates, this meeting will focus on the Williams Act Visit and the procedures for the Fire and Earthquake Drill
- Wed, 9/11 – Williams Act Visit:** Auditors will visit our campus to see if we are in compliance with the Williams Act.
- Sat, 9/14 – Saturday Academy:** Go Ghali and crew!
- Mon, 9/16 – Department Meetings**
- Tues, 9/17 – Fire and Earthquake Drills**
- Wed, 9/18 – Safety Committee & PD Committee Meetings**
- Fri, 9/20 – End of Marking Period 1:** Our first real opportunity to help students reflect on their achievements and develop ways to support their improvement.
- Mon, 9/23 – Grade Level Meetings**
- Tues, 9/24* – School Site Council (SSC) Meeting**
- Wed, 9/25* – Grades Due for MP1**
- Thurs, 9/26 – Instructional Team Leadership (ITL) Meeting**

* The CCA members will attend a two day training session at the district office from 9/24-9/25. We are grateful to those that support this effort by substituting for their colleagues.

OCTOBER BREAK STARTS 9/28!!!

