

PANTHER PROFILES

SPOTLIGHTS ON THE STUDENTS AND
TEACHERS OF PELHAM CITY SCHOOLS

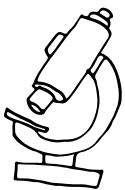




At Pelham City Schools our mission to inspire, empower, and achieve is embraced by students of all ages, teachers of all subjects, and staff of all areas of expertise. It may be put into action in different ways for a fifth-grade student compared to a senior; just as it's different for a high school biomedical sciences teacher and a first-grade elementary school teacher. Yet, our focus is unified and constant. It's what we strive for each day. It's how we frame our thoughts and shape our plans as we cultivate the well-being and personal success of our students. We are innovative, rigorous, and engaging. We are committed to achievement. We are invested in our students. We are a community of learners. This is The Pelham Way.

Read on to learn more about how our students and teachers live our mission each and every day.

Inspire. Empower. Achieve.



LUCAS MCDONALD

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES ACADEMY TEACHER

PELHAM HIGH SCHOOL

As one of the lead teachers in the Biomedical Sciences Academy at Pelham High School, Mr. McDonald fosters a learning environment that promotes creativity, critical thinking skills, and the importance of effective communication and collaboration within a team. Through the Project Lead the Way Biomedical Science classes, students engage in compelling, hands-on activities and work together to find solutions to problems. McDonald says, "Our students are able to complete and explore lessons in our biomedical lab with equipment that many kids don't see until they enter into college. We work through different labs and models, and then we use that information and apply it to real-world situations." Several seniors who've taken biomedical classes since ninth-grade are now experiencing much of what they've learned during weekly clinical shadowing opportunities at Shelby Baptist Medical Center.



Mr. McDonald says one of his favorite things about Pelham is the people within our community. "I've taught in other districts and also worked outside of teaching as a college basketball coach for part of my career. This is actually my second time being a part of Pelham High School, and what drew me here originally, and pulled me back, are the people that I work with and the people of this community. I have so many wonderful memories that involve the students I've taught, the athletes I've coached, and the co-workers that I've had the opportunity to work with here at Pelham High School."

Mr. McDonald also spends time each day at the middle school introducing students to the biomedical sciences academy, and he's an assistant basketball coach at PHS. When he's not in the classroom or on the basketball court, he enjoys spending time outdoors and being a father to his two sons.

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BRIANNA STANLEY
 FIFTH-GRADE STUDENT
 PELHAM RIDGE ELEMENTARY



"My teacher has helped us learn how to make wise choices, function as a team, and do things at the right time."

On a recent day in Brianna's fifth-grade class, Mr. Mains encouraged students to discuss what the life of Colonial Americans would have been like. With her pencil poised Brianna thoughtfully joined the conversation and took notes about the discussion. It's clear Brianna loves school and learning new things. She especially enjoys using technology and often uses the Chromebook assigned to her when studying different subjects throughout the day.

Beyond traditional subjects, Brianna and her classmates are learning important leadership and life skills that empower them to be successful at school and extracurricular endeavors. "My teacher has helped us learn how to make wise choices, function as a team, and do things at the right time," says Brianna. Mr. Mains has also taught students some sign language gestures to help them to stay focused. She goes on to say that Mr. Mains is preparing her and her classmates for middle school by teaching them how to be organized. One of Brianna's favorite accomplishments is making good grades. Her parents and teachers encourage her to do her best, and she continues to work hard toward her goals.

Brianna uses her focus and determination outside of school in her study of ballet. She's taken ballet classes since the first grade, and she's appeared in the Alabama Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker* for the last three years. Brianna says she loves performing on stage, and ballet gives her an outlet for her energy. She currently enjoys taking classes at the Birmingham Academy of Dance and is preparing for her spring recital.



APRIL WALLACE
 LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST
 PELHAM PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

The media center at Pelham Park Middle School is a favorite spot for students. Among the modern decor and multiple seating areas, Mrs. Wallace can always be found smiling between the bookshelves helping students find books or chatting about their recent reads. She's passionate about instilling a love of reading in her students and especially loves when she can reach a reluctant reader.

Mrs. Wallace aims to help students feel at ease and comfortable in the library space. Hanging out in the library before school or having a quick conversation between classes are things that connect her with the students. "It's a great feeling when a student makes a special trip to the library to share something going on in their life," says Mrs. Wallace.

"Whether I'm teaching a lesson on digital citizenship or intellectual freedom or finding the perfect book for a student - I want to be someone who can be a trusted mentor."

And, while she feels so lucky to have the opportunity to work with all of the school's students in the library (not just one grade or one subject area), she's also especially appreciative of her co-workers. She says, "We have so many teachers who are open to new ideas and new ways to co-teach and collaborate. That makes all the difference in the world when teaching our students."

Mrs. Wallace is a Pelham resident, and she enjoys teaching in the community where she lives. One of her favorite things about Pelham is having so many students from different cultures and backgrounds. "I feel like we are all learning and growing from our interactions with one another," she says.

During the summer, Mrs. Wallace works with Dynamic Education Adventures, an organization that provides science programming to public libraries and summer camps. She also enjoys baking, road trips, hanging out with her kids, and reading (of course!).



ALEX WILKINS
SENIOR
PELHAM HIGH SCHOOL

*"The staff at Pelham
really feels like a
family to me."*



Alex Wilkins exemplifies the expression "perseverance pays off." With diligence and determination, she has put in endless hours of studying, training, and planning to accomplish her goals, all while giving back to others.

Alex is a member of the school's Student Government Association, and she spends time each month tutoring her peers in Calculus. She's also a multiple time All-State athlete and has achieved many accolades as a member of the PHS Track & Field and Cross Country teams. Alex says one of the most enjoyable things about extracurricular participation is the relationships she's made. "My coaches and teammates are some of my closest friends and the most influential people in my life," she says.

Alex is currently ranked in the top-three of her graduating class at Pelham High School. She set out to earn scholarships to pay for her college education in full, and her dreams became a reality when she was named to the elite list of National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalists and committed to the University of South Alabama to run track and study Pre Med.

Alex says she owes much of her success to the staff at Pelham. "Teachers like Ms. Busby, Mrs. Burnett, and Mrs. Creel provide encouraging but competitive atmospheres that inspire me to work hard and push myself." She says she has enjoyed her time at PHS due to the encouraging atmosphere. "The staff at Pelham really feels like a family to me," Alex says. "Every corner I turn in the hallways, there is a teacher or an administrator or a coach smiling or saying good morning or asking how my last track meet was. School at PHS doesn't feel like work, it feels like home."

JADA WINSTON
EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENT
PELHAM PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

"My teachers help by ensuring I have the right things in place to help me be successful."



Eighth-grade Pelham Park Middle School student Jada Winston says her teachers and coaches believe in her, which helps encourage her to do a good job. "My teachers help by ensuring I have the right things in place to help me be successful. They are always there when I need help, and it is great to have good support from my teachers," Jada says. "Ms. Holloway and Ms. Wesley have especially helped me, and I am glad to have them at PPMS."

Jada is cheer co-captain, a member of the tennis team and the Future Business Leaders of America, and she serves as the National Junior Honor Society secretary and a PPMS Ambassador. "I have really enjoyed serving as a leader this year as one of the cheer co-captains," Jada says. "I have learned so much this year, and I'm glad that my fellow cheerleaders and coach trusted me to be a leader. This experience will definitely help me in the future." Jada's leadership opportunities and school involvement have given her a deeper appreciation of the school culture. She says, "Pelham Park is like a big family! We appreciate different views, and that's important to me."

One goal Jada has this school year is to make the honor roll every semester and to be curious about learning new things. "My biggest accomplishment is being able to stay on the honor roll throughout my middle school career," Jada says. "I have a lot on my plate, but I take my education seriously, and my grades reflect my focus. It is not easy, but I am pretty proud of that, and so are my parents."

JERI FELICIANO

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER PELHAM OAKS ELEMENTARY



After teaching Spanish in high school for 11 years, Mrs. Feliciano was drawn to pursue her Master's degree in English as a Second Language. In her classroom at Pelham Oaks, she's all smiles as she chatters and cheers on students whose native language is something other than English. "I love to see my students actively participating in our classroom activities. If you visited my classroom, you would see teachers and students working together in a nurturing, interactive environment where students feel comfortable enough to take risks with their learning," says Feliciano.

Mrs. Feliciano sees her students every day, by grade level. She focuses on communication skills and strategies that will enable them to more fully participate in the learning experience in their regular classroom. With consistent instruction and support, her students build their confidence in usage of the English language. "I love that moment when their eyes light up and they realize that they CAN do a particular task or understand a particular topic," she says. And when her students have reached their goals for language proficiency and are performing at grade level, they don't come to her classroom daily, but she continues to monitor how they are doing in their classroom. "I have a special place in my heart for all of my students. I am proud of their success, and I celebrate their achievements. I will always have an open door to offer support for them," she says.

In her free time, Mrs. Feliciano enjoys reading, travel, movies, shopping, and game nights with her family.

"If you visited my classroom, you would see teachers and students working together in a nurturing, interactive environment."



LUCAS KALBA

FIFTH-GRADE STUDENT PELHAM OAKS ELEMENTARY



Fifth-grader Lucas Kalba set goals to get good grades, hang out with current and new friends, and be happy this school year. "My teachers help me reach these goals by setting an example of acceptance," Lucas says.

In his classroom, Lucas diligently works on his academic goals and uses his classroom Chromebook in his daily routine. "He meets with an occupational therapist (OT) due to the limitations he experiences from Cerebral Palsy," Lucas' mom, Daniela DeLuca says. The practice of keyboarding is beneficial to Lucas when he's working toward his goals with his OT and classroom teachers. "The Chromebooks have made a huge difference in Lucas' life and I imagine in all the other students' lives," says Mrs. DeLuca. Since he struggles with the use of his left hand, things are not always easy for Lucas, but he prevails and does what his teachers encourage him to do. "I have seen Lucas grow in his language arts goals to read, write, and comprehend on grade level," DeLuca says.

Lucas is a Library Aide and participates in Cub Scouts and the school's Lighthouse Team. He also enjoys helping out with social activities and the chance to meet people and talk to students and adults. He says, "I enjoy many things about Pelham Oaks, mainly the teachers and students." Through his involvement, Lucas has been given opportunities that have helped him develop confidence when speaking in front of students, teachers, and adult community members. "I'm encouraged to work with others, and I'm so grateful for these opportunities," Lucas says.



"I'm encouraged to work with others, and I'm so grateful for these opportunities."



AHNA FRYE

FIRST-GRADE TEACHER

PELHAM RIDGE ELEMENTARY

Mrs. Frye's first-grade classroom at Pelham Ridge Elementary is a happy, fun place to learn. The walls are filled with bright, primary colors and the perimeter of the classroom features a variety of comfortable places to work and read, including a futon couch and beanbag. In addition to building a strong foundation for reading, writing, and math, Mrs. Frye spends time each day helping her students develop essential life skills. "We talk about respect, responsibility, and getting along with others. Being a good friend and showing others respect even when we may not agree with them is one of the most important things we could learn," says Frye.



Mrs. Frye aims to end each day with her students knowing that they are loved and they have an adult cheering for them. She enjoys the diverse population in Pelham and getting to work with a variety of students. She says, "Good teachers know their students on a personal level. They know their interests and their backgrounds, as well as where they are academically." Mrs. Frye says that going through the rigorous National Board Certification (NBCT) process has inspired her to invest even more in her students and teach lessons that impact the whole child.



"Good teachers know their students on a personal level. They know their interests and their background, as well as where they are academically."

Mrs. Frye spends her time away from the classroom working on her family farm, Alleluia Acres. She and her husband raise hogs, dairy goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, and rabbits. While her students and her farm animals are her first love, Mrs. Frye also appreciates the support of the Pelham community. "I have taught in a couple of different districts and have never felt as supported by the community, school board, and parents as I do here," says Frye.



OUR COMMITMENTS

Our strategic plan is guided by nine commitments which are directly aligned to our budget. We believe that every student deserves to attend a school system that is striving to achieve excellence in the areas of School Safety, Great Educators, Curriculum, Technology, Staffing, Extracurricular, Facilities, Planning, and Community Support.



**PELHAM OAKS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
2200 Highway 33
Pelham, AL 35124
205.624.3703

**PELHAM PARK
MIDDLE SCHOOL**
2016 Pelham Park Boulevard
Pelham, AL 35124
205.624.3702

**PELHAM RIDGE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
251 Applegate Parkway
Pelham, AL 35124
205.624.3704

PELHAM HIGH SCHOOL
2500 Panther Circle
Pelham, AL 35124
205.624.3701

BOARD OF EDUCATION
3113 Cummings Street
Pelham, AL 35124
205.624.3700

 **OUR ANNUAL BUDGET**
\$41,249,538

PELHAM CITY SCHOOLS IS RANKED 7TH
IN THE STATE IN LOCAL REVENUE PER CHILD.

Named by Niche.com as one of the Top 20 School Districts in the State and a Top 20 district for Best Teachers in the State.

OUR STUDENTS & STAFF

3,293 STUDENTS

PELHAM HIGH SCHOOL	1,017
PELHAM PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL	760
PELHAM OAKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	651
PELHAM RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	865

383 TEACHERS & SUPPORT PERSONNEL