



Parkside Elementary School

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April 16, 2025

Dr. Weikle and Unit 5 Board of Education,

We are excited to share Good News from Parkside Elementary with you all this evening. Parkside Elementary has hosted six afterschool clubs for students this year: Kindness Club, Craft Club, Gaming Club, Soccer Club, Basketball Club, and Pawns and Penguins (chess club). Each club has been run by staff and parents that are generous with their time and talents to invest in the development of our students.

Pawns and Penguins is a particular highlight this evening because of a recent successful tournament with Glenn Elementary's chess club. Pawns and Penguins is in its first year, with coaches Jake Fulk, PSE parent of a 2nd grader, and Andrew Childs and Kris Cannon, PSE parents of a kindergartener and a 2nd grader. Ms. Cannon is also an MTSS interventionist at Parkside. These coaches have poured their time and attention into getting Pawns and Penguins off the ground, most notably by teaching about 25 K-5 students how to play chess. Many of these students were completely new to the game—what a feat! Pawns and Penguins has been an important extracurricular opportunity for our students. Chess teaches students discipline, planning, and strategic thinking, as well as sportsmanship and camaraderie.

This past Saturday, April 12, Pawns and Penguins hosted Glenn Elementary for the very first chess tournament at Parkside Elementary. Mr. Fulk, Mr. Childs, Ms. Cannon, and the Glenn coach, Mr. Collins, worked together to pull off a seamless event. Thirty-nine Parkside and Glenn players competed in a double-elimination bracket-style tournament, with six top spots. Student skill levels were impressive during the tournament, but even better than that was the display of sportsmanship and inclusion. Students came together for a healthy and uplifting competition. When students were eliminated, the Glenn coach, Mr. Collins, would proudly announce their name and all other participants would clap and cheer, congratulating each student on their effort and abilities during the tournament. Families and special persons were able to watch the tournament and support their student through wins and losses. Each game began with a handshake and well wishes for the opponent, and each game ended with another handshake and congratulations for the winner.

Congratulations to Pawns and Penguins on a successful first year and first tournament experience. We are so proud of our Penguin players, and we are looking forward to seeing how the club will grow and develop in the future! Thank you also to the Board of Education that makes opportunities like these possible for our students.

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