STUDENT LEADER

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Planning the Perfect Homecoming

Over the past few weeks, our Virginia schools have worked tirelessly to put on their Homecomings and make them even better than the ones before. Whether you're looking to improve your party planning or increase your school spirit, here are a few tips and ideas!

VSCA member schools work tirelessly to put together Homecoming spirit weeks that involve students and show off their school spirit.

The Theme

Get creative! Everyone's heard of Under the Sea, Around the World, and Hollywood. Use your school and town to give the week a unique flare. Consider incorporating your mascot or colors into the name, and it will certainly be a night to remember.

The Week

If you aren't already, have themed days leading up to the game and dance! Make sure to keep the themes different and exciting, but not so specific that people will have trouble coming up with an outfit. Be sure to utilize both social media and hard- paper promotion of the days, so that everyone feels included.

The Pep Rally

Inside or outside, there's no reason it can't be great. That being said, there are a few principles to include—competition, organization, variety, and sound. Nothing gets people more motivated than friendly competition, especially between grade levels. Play some games, each one with players from each class, and have an overall winner at the end of the day. Make sure you have a timeline written out of all the events, and have people in charge of each one. Do a dry run the day before with all the participants, and everything should run smoothly. Everyone can enjoy

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Creative Class Competitions for Spirit Week

By Lyn Fiscus, South Lakes HS

If the goals of your Homecoming spirit week include building class unity and engaging as many students as possible in spirit activities, class competitions should be a part of your spirit week activities. The following ideas can be conducted as noontime events, incorporated into a pep rally, or held just before or after school.

■ **Wrap Your Rival.** Choose teams of four people from each class. One member of each team will represent the rival school. Give the other three team members rolls of crepe streamer in your school colors. Their task is to completely wrap the rival school team member from head to toe in your school's colors. The first team to finish wins.

■ **Inner Tube Relay Race.** Select eight people to represent each class and line them up in pairs at a designated starting point. Give them inflated inner tubes that each pair must put one leg into to run the relay, like a three-legged race. Each pair runs down to a designated

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Homecoming at Courtland High School

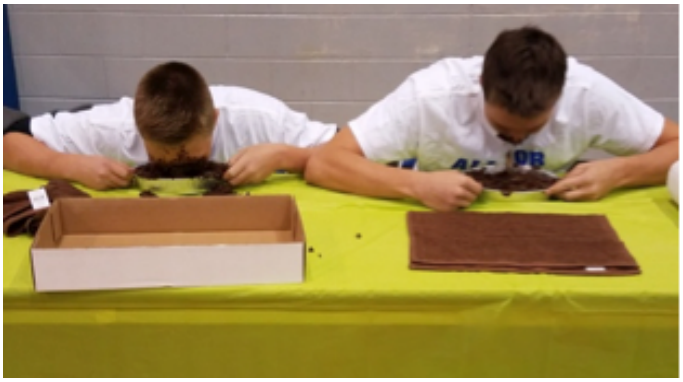
By Rachel Gallahan, Region 3 Representative

Courtland High School has decided to take our SCA voting electronic. Students this year used their cell phones or computers to cast their vote. It was a relief to all homeroom teachers that they would not be required to pass out, collect, and tally the homeroom results. SCA students didn't have to run around the school collecting ballots or tallying all the final results. It was awesome. The computer captured voters' email address and they could only vote once. Voting was open for 24 hours and then was closed.

We enjoyed the ease of using the electronic Google forms, but we felt that some students didn't even bother to check their email to find out about voting. We put messages over the loudspeaker and advertised voting on social media and most students still opted not to vote. With almost 1,200 students in our school it was sad that only 265 voted for homecoming King and Queen. Since it is our first year doing the voting this way we were prepared to have some paper balloting but we found that it was not necessary. Students that wanted to vote received the email and accessed the Google form.

Our Homecoming Pep Rally went off without a hitch! During the pep rally we had a parade of banners made by each grade level and several clubs. They did a great job of incorporating the theme. We also had several Minute to Win It games, including junk in your trunk, cheese ball face, eat or be eaten, and mummy wrap. These were especially fun to watch. Junk in the trunk was won by the sophomores by crab walking. Cheese ball face was won by the seniors and we included the two cheese balls he ate. Eat or be eaten was a "dirt" mixture of chocolate pudding, chocolate graham crackers, sour gummy worms, and of course the hidden plastic snake. The boys had a great time digging around in the "dirt" to find the hidden snake. We used rolls of streamers for the mummy wrap and whoever looked the most like a mummy when they ran out of the roll won. We gave out points for first, second, and third. The Sophomores won overall. Then we had our Head Varsity Football coach come out and get us pumped up for the big game with our chant "COUGARS EAT RAW MEAT!" Each grade level gets a word to yell out when he points to them. It was a great time and everyone enjoyed it.

Our Homecoming dance was held on October 14 with a theme of "The Secret Garden." We used Signup Genius to get the SCA representatives involved in all aspects of homecoming. They brought in flowers, cookies, plates, cups, tissue paper, ping pong balls, and tissue boxes. We had so much participation with decorations and set up that it went together quickly and kept our costs down. We enjoyed dancing under the twinkle lights with cookies and lemonade for refreshments. Students danced until the very last minute of the night and left with a souvenir key to the Secret Garden. We were quite surprised at the turn out since two other local schools also had homecoming the same night.



Busy Start to the Year at Prince George HS

By Courtney West, PGHS

The beginning of the school year at Prince George High School is always eventful, and this year is no different! To get a head start, the Student Government at PGHS meets during the summer months to begin planning homecoming and spirit days. Our advisor organized a Remind account to help get information out during the summer. The senior, junior, and sophomore classes also established separate group chats to make communication easier.

In September we attended an installation ceremony in which all the members were officially inducted into the PGHS SGA. Our advisor, Ms. Edmundson, inducted the executive board which consists of SGA President Courtney West, SGA Vice President April Drevitch, SGA Secretary Katie Helm, SGA Public Relations Officer Sam Preece, and Sophomore Representative Ashley Thacker.

There was a big crowd for our homecoming football game against Hopewell High School. During halftime, the homecoming court candidates were announced as they were escorted down the track. The winners for King, Queen, Prince, Princess, Duke, and Duchess were announced and they were awarded with crowns and sashes.

We have much more planned for this year such as service projects and fundraisers. We also will be planning our Region 1 Workshop, which will be on November 18, 2017 from 10–2.

Ways to Increase Participation

Try some of these activities to encourage more students to participate in Homecoming spirit week activities.

- **Spirit Drawing.** Award a raffle ticket to students every time they participate in a Homecoming activity or dress up for a spirit day. Conduct a drawing at the end of the week for prizes. An alternative would be to conduct a daily spirit drawing for prizes by randomly drawing a student's name during announcements. If the student is dressed up for the spirit theme, he or she wins a prize. Solicit local businesses for prizes like movie tickets, dinner out, bowling games, gift cards, and so forth.
- **Teacher Dares.** Advertise that if a certain percentage of students dresses up for a spirit day a popular teacher or the principal will perform a predetermined dare, such as doing a dance, singing a song, shaving their head, etc.
- **Spirit Days Fashion Tweets.** Put social media to work by Tweeting photos of members of your organization modeling examples of clothing for each of the spirit day themes. Demonstrate different levels of dress, from a low-key approach to the theme to an all-out effort. As an alternative, create a short video with students modeling the examples and use your in-school TV channel to show it or upload it to YouTube and spread it around.

Save the Dates!

VSCA State Convention

March 16–18, 2018

Founders Inn, Virginia Beach

Join student leaders from around the state at our annual convention as we

Grow a Generation to Lead the Nation

Creative Class Competitions (continued from page 1)

point, keeping the inner tube on their joined legs, and back to the start to tag the next pair. Continue until all pairs have run the race.

■ **Silent Cheer.** Instead of seeing which class can yell the loudest, have each class do a silent cheer in which they try to look like they are the loudest, most spirited class. Judges determine the winner.

■ **Back-to-back Water Balloon Toss**. Tie two people from each class back to back around their waists. Give each team a tub or trash bag filled with 15 water balloons. On the start signal, the team reaches down to the water balloons and one team member grabs one. They stand up and the person with the balloon tosses it over his/her head for the partner to catch. The team that catches the most tosses is the winner. This event can be modified for an indoor event by using Koosh balls or tennis balls.

■ **Locker Decorations.** Instead of hall decorations, where each class gets a hall or wall to decorate with the Homecoming theme, bring it down to an individual level and invite all students to decorate their locker to correspond to the theme. Judge lockers on creativity, adherence to the theme, originality, and spirit and give the individual with the best locker a prize as well as points for his or her class.

■ **Scavenger Hunt.** During an assembly or at lunch, conduct a scavenger hunt for things like three people from the same grade with the same first name, someone with a real tattoo, a boy and a girl with shoelaces tied together, four people with the same last digit in their phone number, someone with mis-matched socks, and so on. Be creative with the items and strive to include items that will draw on various sub-groups in the school to include different people. The class that comes up with the first one of the items called for gets the points for that round, and the class with the most points at the end wins. Create different lists of items for each lunch shift if you are doing this at lunch.

Working together on the common goal of winning an event helps pull a class together, develops class pride and unity, and is a great way to involve a large number of people.

Grassfield SCA Revives Homecoming Dance

Grassfield Grizzlies pride themselves on tradition. One of the most celebrated and memorable traditions is Homecoming Week. Homecoming is the highlight of first semester and includes a full week of fun and excitement, complete with unique spirit days, a powderpuff football game between Junior and Senior girls, a school wide pep rally and an awesome carnival-like atmosphere on game day with tailgating and parades.

There was only one thing that always drew questions from parents and students, "Why don't we have a Homecoming Dance?" The Grassfield PTSA had attempted a dance in a prior year that didn't yield a good turnout and no group or club seemed willing to step up and take on the project again.

That was until this October when Grassfield SCA planned and executed a fantastic night for the Grizzlies! The SCA spent many months brainstorming on how to keep costs low for all students, from encouraging inexpensive dress suggestions, to proposing group dates, making sure to address and remove as many barriers to a successful event as possible. SCA members spent many hours selling tickets during lunches, creating handmade decorations, making or personally donating cookies and refreshments, and then working the actual event while classmates danced the night away.

The SCA was rewarded with almost 900 students in attendance and raving positive reviews from all. Needless to say, the event will continue on in future years now that the Grassfield SCA has proven that there is a demand and in showing their willingness to take on the work necessary to have a successful Homecoming Dance!

Fierce Competition for Vikings Homecoming

Woodbridge Senior High School's Homecoming week was October 23–28 and—per the tradition—was a fierce competition between grade levels.

It was kicked off the Friday before with the second annnual Mr. Woodbridge Men's Pageant, put on by the choir department, in which three males from each grade are judged on evening wear, dancing, talent, and questions from the judges. Each grade gets points for their ranking in attendance, and their rank in the results of the pageant.

Starting on Monday, students brought in change for charity for Penny Wars. Again, the grades get points according to how much money they raise compared to the other classes. Monday also marked the first spirit day; each day has a different theme: Musical Monday (singers, musicals, etc.), Turn Up Tuesday (Ball Up for freshmen (jerseys), Grow Up for sophomores (occupations), Pack Up for juniors (tourists), and Wake Up for seniors (pajamas, or the WSHS tradition of makeshift bedsheet togas)), Workout Wednesday (activewear, jerseys, leg warmers), Throwback Thursday (pick a decade!), and Class Color Friday (freshmen are white, sophomores are green, juniors are gold, seniors are black.) First period teachers tally the number of dressed up students of each grade, and then report the numbers to our leadership class to keep track of. The grade with the most participation at the end of the week gets first place, then second, and so on.

Friday was our pep rally, in which classes go head to head competing in activities such as a scooter race, tug of war, relay, and blindfolded musical chairs. A group of judges comprised of WSHS staff judged each grade on their parade banner, rock (each is painted to represent this year's theme, Nightmare on Old Bridge), and male pep squad performance. Results were tallied and the winning class was announced, just as everyone filed out of school to get ready for the parade and Homecoming game.

The week culminated with our Homecoming Dance on Saturday evening from 7:30–10:30pm, put on by our leadership class with SPOOKY decorations. Overall, the week was a success and a great representation of Viking spirit.

Perfect Homecoming (cont'd from p. 1)

homecoming, not just the football players, band, cheerleaders, and SCA. Ask for volunteers for each game to promote inclusivity. Lastly, make sure your sound system is in check, and ask someone to be in charge who has experience. Nothing ruins a fun time like problems with music or garbled sound.

The Dance

Don't think of the dance as just a dance. Think of it as another SCA event! This is an opportunity to fundraise, get donations for charities, and promote morale. Consider having a makeshift photo booth—have some of your artists create a backdrop that works with the theme and set up a tripod for $1 a photo. Or, sell light snacks and refreshments in the lobby. If you have a Key Club or are looking to do some philanthropy, ask that attendees bring a canned good as part of their entry fee, then bring everything to your local shelter.

Whatever your school, location, or supplies, you can always have an amazing Homecoming that leaves people wanting more. Check in with nearby schools for other ideas, or keep up to date with the other Homecomings across Virginia by following @VSCAtweets on Twitter or @virginia_sca on Instagram!