DISTRICT
On Monday, November 30, Pleasant Hill R-III curriculum facilitators met in the Board Room at Central Office to review the proposed Missouri Learning Standards and provide feedback to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The rewrite of standards happened as a result of HB1490, which was passed by the State Legislature. Each core subject area, math, English language arts, science, and social studies was revised. The district's curriculum facilitators reviewed the proposed standards, compared them to the current standards and wrote specific feedback regarding the rigor, relevance, and alignment of standards at each grade level. The window for public feedback has closed; however, the standards are still with Academic Researchers for review and feedback until February 8, 2016. The State Board of Education is scheduled to take action on the standards at their March board meeting. DESE plans to have the standards finalized and to schools by May 15, 2016. Once the standards are finalized, we will begin work in our district to align current practices to the new standards.

PRIMARY SCHOOL
The holiday spirit has filled the Primary School with fun and activities galore. Our generous families donated items for the local food pantry on two occasions, earning a donation in our name to the Angel Tree project, made by the Pleasant Hill Bank. PS staff and the PTO hosted Muffins and Mittens with Moms, and received donations of over 500 winter accessories, from gloves to coats, for area families in need. The 2nd grade performance of “Flakes”, under the direction of Ms. Aly Oparnico, was a well-attended success. Mrs. Julie Smith displayed 2nd. grade art projects at the event, and has holiday art by other grade levels posted throughout our school for students and visitors to admire. The Scholastic Book Fair is in our library this week, just in time for gift-giving, with Family Night scheduled on Tuesday. The book fair will also be open during the PTO Holiday Shop this Saturday, a shopping event enjoyed every year by students and parents alike. Kindergarten classrooms are hosting grandparents at various times this month, and decorating gingerbread houses. In addition to all this merriment, students are completing Discovery Education online assessments and demonstrating progress on second quarter skills. Teachers are working on units of instruction for NEE, and preparing for numerous classroom activities next week.
**Elementary School**

We have been very busy at the Elementary School and look forward to several great events yet to come!

- PHES students raised $6803.00 in the Jump Rope for Heart campaign. Mrs. Reeves made sure that each student received a jump rope to take home so that they can jump their way to a healthy heart.
- Our classroom spelling finalists participated in the school-wide spelling bee before Thanksgiving break. Our 7 building finalists who will be advancing to the District Spelling Bee are: Zane Shouse, Mara Shouse, Peyton Madison, Bryson Saucerman, Brooke Beck, Sarah Davis and Ashley Curry.
- Prior to Thanksgiving break we had our first school-wide Problem Based Learning Activity. Students spent a week researching, calculating and planning to take us all on a camping trip. Our campers gathered information from several satellite stations to include the Trading Post, the Mess Hall and the Travel Agency. At the end of the week, students enjoyed eating s'mores, pitching a tent, singing camp songs and reading by flashlight.
- We enjoyed the Rooster Choir Concert on Thursday, December 3rd. Our Choir students had been meeting after school once a week since the beginning of the school year to prepare for this concert. The students played instruments, sang in German and French and thoroughly entertained their audience.
- On December 9th, students are invited to participate in an Hour of Code at the ES after school until 4:45. This event is sponsored by Mr. McDavitt and Mrs. Smothers.
- Student Leadership will host Muffins with Moms at 7:30 am on December 11th.
- Our Elementary Extravaganza will be held on Tuesday, December 15th from 6:00-8:00. Our evening will begin with a musical performance by our 4th graders in the gym. Throughout the evening families can visit learning stations that will include experiments, technology, art work, prizes and so much more! **Be sure to save this date!!**
- Finally, we will send each student home with a Gingerbread friend and a journal on December 18th. We are challenging each student to WRITE as much as they can over the Winter Break by chronicling the adventures of their Gingerbread Friend from December 19th-January 4th.

**Intermediate School**

Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Week: Braidy Moore, Kotton Pinnell-Crawford, Landon Martin, Carmen Kidwell, Emma Young and Corina Brockman! They have done a great job exhibiting character traits and doing good deeds!
Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Month for December: Makyna Faust, Cody Ammerman, Emelia Proudfit, Maddie Frazier, Riley Hawkins, Cheyenne Maasen, James Mooneyham, Sofia Abney, Madison Woods, Alivia Redwine, Isabel Bakken, Brenna Markham and Morgan Lassiter. These students were nominated by their peers for exhibiting the character trait: respect and responsibility. We are so proud of them!

Fifth grade students have been participating in Project Based Learning in math. Their math objective was: I can add and subtract decimals—Why? to apply it to the real world—How? by using money. This hands-on approach to learning culminated with students making desserts to serve at their Reader’s Theater productions on November 23rd and 24th.

Sixth graders are working on a Problem Based Learning unit during Rooster Time rooted around giving back to our community. Three days a week students have been utilizing the new Nook App on our building’s Ipads to read The Angel Tree by Daphne Benedis-Grab; spending this time building their reading skills using the Seven Keys to Comprehension.

The other two days students focus on being ‘Angels’ to the community. Both teams began this by researching local service organizations and brainstorming ideas to help the Pleasant Hill community. 6A partnered with Lay Clergy’s Adopt-a-Family to help a family in need in our community. Students researched prices to develop a budget and set a fundraising goal. They are now working on a plan on how to use the resources available to reach that fundraising goal. 6B has chosen to work with Pleasant Hill Health and Rehab. Through this partnership they are able to grant many wishes for people in our community such as wrapping gifts, making Christmas cards and singing and reading stories. In addition, small groups have selected projects to make for the senior citizens.
Student groups are making photo frames, ornaments, hand lotion and lap blankets. Math concepts are being reinforced during all of these small group projects.

**Middle School**

Middle school winter activity season is well underway! Pleasant Hill Middle School choir classes are busy preparing for our upcoming winter concerts and the holiday spirit is in the air. Choir students are currently preparing for holiday performances happening in the month of December. Select Choir students sang at the Mayor’s Christmas Tree Lighting on Saturday, December 5th. Chamber and Women’s Choir students are performing at Crown Center this Wednesday, December 9th at 6:30pm, and all PHMS choirs are performing a winter concert in the High School Performing Arts Center on Monday, December 14th at 6:30pm. The winter concert will conclude with PHMS choir students singing a carol medley with all PHHS choir students. This will be a great opportunity for Pleasant Hill Choirs to build community!

In addition to preparing concert music, students are in the middle of rhythm and sight reading units. Select and Women’s choirs have been focusing on mastering syncopated rhythms with eighth rest/eighth note and dotted quarter note/eighth note combinations, as well as sight reading melodies with stepwise motion. Chamber choir students have been studying intervals of the I chord (Do/mi/sol and do/sol). Students have been engaging in ear training exercises, have been working on individual and group sight reading exercises (see example here [https://goo.gl/6wDASJ](https://goo.gl/6wDASJ)), have been analyzing concert music for these patterns, and have been composing and improvising music using these intervals. I am proud of the strides that students have made in their music reading abilities over the course of this semester.

Middle School Wrestling kicked off its season with a quad meet up at Odessa Middle School with Odessa, Excelsior Springs, and Lexington. The boys were competitive in all matches and showed that there were areas for us to improve on. We followed up our first competition with the Middle School MRVC tournament over in Oak Grove. We were able to take home three 1st place medalists, two 2nd place medalists, and seven 3rd place medalists. The rest of the season will be fast and furious for our 16 wrestlers, with six more events scheduled over the next 3 weeks.
Juniors and Seniors enrolled in Anatomy and Physiology were invited to tour the Ancillary Care operations at the University of Kansas Hospital in early November. The goal: Expose budding young pre-healthcare professionals to the endless possibilities of post graduation career paths. Fifty students were introduced to careers that support the inner workings of a top tier medical facility. While many of these healthcare services go unnoticed, they play a vital role in positive patient outcomes. Pleasant Hill students were given first hand accounts of the support that ancillary services provides to primary physicians and caregivers from technicians in the pharmacy, blood, pathology, teaching and simulations labs. Numerous staff members and University of Kansas health science students generously donated their time to answer questions and discuss post secondary education and career paths throughout the tour. This is the second year The University of Kansas Hospital and KUMED have hosted Pleasant Hill High School students for the Ancillary Care operations tour.

**TECHNOLOGY**

Many educators love using Google Apps for Education because of the ease of sharing and editing documents collaboratively with students and teachers. Our building and district offices have also found that Google Apps for Education is also useful for business productivity, communication, and planning. Along with educators being trained in Google Apps for Education, building secretaries will also be receiving training on the use of the applications in order to take advantages of the same features that are useful for the classroom. Organizing Google Drive, creating and sharing Google Docs, and Google Calendars are just a few of the training topics that will be planned for the training sessions.

**Special Services**

**Speech**

**Kathy Lacapa-Boegl**

The Speech and Language Department offers many different approaches to therapy. In addition to the traditional “pull out” treatment, we often “push in” and work with students in their classroom. This month, Mrs. Boegl went into a classroom and presented a mini “Project Based Learning” activity for the students. The students were asked, “What kinds of things would you do if you were hungry and cold?” as a way to engage their thinking about the Thanksgiving holiday. The students were eager to share their thoughts as they handled traditional Native American moccasins, clothing, baskets, blankets, and beadwork. It was a great way to boost their listening, vocabulary, thinking, and expressive language skills. The project ended with a traditional “Round Dance” as a way to express gratitude and friendship for our class.
Parents as Teachers is working cooperatively with area daycares and preschools to complete developmental screenings of children enrolled in their facilities.

Why screen?
Children grow, develop, and learn throughout their lives, starting at birth. As children rapidly grow and change through the early years, screening every year until kindergarten entry helps parents know if their child is developing within the normal range for his or her age. If the most teachable moments or stages of greatest readiness are not taken advantage of, a child may have difficulty learning a particular skill at a later time. If the screening indicates an area of concern, further evaluation for a child will be recommended.

What is developmental screening?
Screening is the process of measuring a child’s development in the areas of:

- Speech and language skills
- Motor skills
- General knowledge
- Hearing
- Vision

Screenings are administered in a fun, interactive way using the ASQ-3 and DIAL-4 Screening Instruments. Parents as Teachers has completed screenings at Puzzles & Paints Preschool and Creative Kids Preschool. They are currently screening children at Kidz Inc. and will schedule Rainbow Kingdom and A Kids Place in December and January.

**ELL**

**Frankie Lees**

Pleasant Hill School District’s English Language Learners are working on many various skills this month. Students at the primary grade have been focusing on sight words, building vocabulary and retelling a story using sequencing cards. These students also enjoyed practicing their rhyming and rap skills through Mother Goose nursery rhymes and sing alongs.

Students at the Elementary and Intermediate level are working on sentence structure and idioms while students at the Middle school are hard at work building paragraphs and learning how to discriminate fact from opinion in a piece of literature.

Students and staff are also preparing for a new online testing approach that will begin in January for our ELL students. This screening will assess progress in all four domains: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Results from the test administered in January will help guide teachers future endeavors in success for the students.

**Primary**

**Stacie Waibel**

Students have been working on increasing independence when completing any task. We have been learning about the “short O” sound. After the task was modeled, students were asked to highlight all the “short o” words in a story they had read aloud together. Once all of the students went through the book independently, the group went through to double check their work with the teacher.
Continuing their work with the “short o” sound, students thought of rhyming words as a whole. The student that shared their thought wrote the word on the chart while the rest of the students used textured paper to spell along with them.

Middle

Murder or Insane?
Teachers: Mrs. Tammy Kirchhofer, 7th and 8th grade ELA
Mrs. Marylee Myler, 7th and 8th grade Co-Teacher, ELA
Class: 8th grade ELA

Objective:
1.) The student will be able to apply post-reading skills to demonstrate comprehension of the text: analyze.
2.) Compare, contrast, and analyze connections: text to world.

Why: While reading for enjoyment, the student will be able to use details from a text to analyze character’s thoughts, motives, and actions. Those same skills will also be used to analyze personal experiences and real-world situations.

Have you ever felt guilty for something you have done? Have you been so consumed with guilt, that you confessed? In our 8th grade class, Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” was read, posing a question of murder or insanity. In groups of three or four, the students were to find three or more details from the short story to prove both verdicts for the narrator: murder and insanity. Insanity may have been proven by such details as hearing the heartbeat of the dead man and wanting to kill the old man because of his “vulture eye.” Murder may have been proven by such details as spending eight days planning the killing of the old man, cutting up the body, and hiding it under the wooden planks in the bedroom floor. Once the groups gathered and analyzed the evidence, students were regrouped based on like opinions, and group paragraphs were written stating the verdict and details from the text as proof. Through this project, the students were able to demonstrate a true understanding of finding and analyzing text details in order to apply these same skills to real-world situations.

High School

Dana Scott, High School SpEd CWC classroom setting with Mr. Wyatt.

The Students in Environmental Earth Science are using their chromebooks to do an on line rock identification lab. They have been working in class with actual rocks during the last week to learn how to id rocks using each rock’s individual characteristics.
Pleasant Hill Activities... “It’s a GREAT Day to be a Rooster/Chick!”

Highlights:


- Rooster Basketball: The Roosters have competed well the past two weeks and look forward to games coming up in the Ray-Pec Tournament Thursday (5:30), Friday and Saturday (TBA),

- Chicks Basketball: The Chicks have a triple-header Thursday night at the Coop. Games begin at 4:30pm. The Chicks picked up their first win of the young season with a win in the Raytown South Tournament last week defeating Hogan Prep!

- Speech & Debate: The speech and debate team had a strong showing this past weekend in Independence (Truman & William Chrisman). The rundown: semifinals in Oratory, Dramatic Interp and US Extem. They had two students in the finals of Congressional Debate and 4th place finishes in Regular and Champion Lincoln Douglas Debate with a combined record of 10-2! They also reached the semi-finals in prose reading.

- Choir: The Show choirs hosted a successful “Mini-Bob” a couple of weeks ago and are looking forward to their holiday performances at Crown Center December 9th and PHHS December 14th.

Last week's Sonic Locker Room Show featured Roosters Wrestling Seniors and Head coach Jeff Wyatt! www.soniclockerroom.com

Facilities

The District Safety Committee met on November 19, 2015. Topics included discussion of the upcoming staff Search and Rescue Team and First Aid Team training to take place in January. Also discussed during the meeting was State Data audits in regards to technology. An update of the Committee List for the Crisis Manual was presented to members. A review of the Active Shooter Drill performed at the Intermediate School in conjunction with the Pleasant Hill Police Department was discussed. The final topic of discussion was upcoming meeting dates.