PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT A SUCCESS

On January 2, 2017 the District Professional Development Committee planned and held the PHPD17 conference. This year’s sessions were some of the best we have had to offer at this annual event. Many sessions were filled to capacity this year. The teachers who presented did an outstanding job of sharing their knowledge and success with their colleagues in the district. A wonderful aspect of this conference is staff members from all the buildings are able to share ideas, work together, and spotlight the successes for staff at all levels to see! The collegial atmosphere makes the day even more rewarding. The District PD Committee appreciates the hard work of each staff member who took time to host a presentation! Without their hard work and outstanding leadership the day could not have been successful. The DPDC looks forward to planning the conference again next year!

Primary School students are so excited about snow! Teachers are incorporating winter themes in literacy, writing, art, and math lessons. Our staff enjoyed a day of learning at the district level on January 2, and now our building professional development committee is planning a similar experience on Jan. 27, with technology break-out sessions throughout the afternoon. Teachers are meeting with me about 2nd quarter grades and students’ progress in order to schedule conferences with families as needed. Teachers have completed their NEE Units of Instruction and already started discussing ideas for improvements next year. Our PTO is trying a
new fundraiser this month, asking students to participate in their “Read-a-thon” from Jan. 4-14, with a school party based on minutes read, and additional incentives for fund raising.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Spotlight on Mrs. Halfmann and the Library**

Students in both third and fourth grade participated in Reindeer Games and used our new Breakout Boxes to break the code. By working together to solve puzzles, patterns and riddles the students could open one lock at a time. When all 5 locks were undone - the contents of the box was revealed. Students enjoyed this highly engaging activity, were challenged to use their brains and worked well as cooperative teams. They were very proud of their accomplishments.

![Images of students participating in Reindeer Games and Breakout Boxes]

**PLEASANT HILL ELEMENTARY S.T.E.A.M. NIGHT**

Families participated in stations that used the Design Process to illustrate various components of S.T.E.A.M. Everything from hydraulics, robotics, cooking, and electricity was used to learn new things and be inspired to discover even more.

![Images of students and families at STEAM Night stations]
The Fourth Graders also performed that evening. They sang songs that went with our school theme - Dreams Under Construction.

Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Month for January! Students were nominated by their peers for exhibiting outstanding character traits, in particular—kindness! What a great honor to be recognized by one’s peers! Congratulations to: Payton Moore, Abygail Widhalm, Jacob Harmon, Sarah Chaplin, Alex Dirck, Lauren Weiss, Destiny Weber, Ale Scrogham, Bri Quilter, Caleb Martin, Cody Ammerman, and Cooper Divine.

Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Week! They are: Aaron Horkay, Tyler Wise, Taylor Vaughn, Mia Meuschke, Cory German and Carly Long. They were selected by teams of teachers for exhibiting character traits and doing good deeds.

PHIS students kicked off second semester talking about the character trait, kindness. Kindness and caring was evident all first semester and especially through December as students worked hard to fundraise for the 6th grade Angel Tree Project. That same caring attitude has been seen in our students as we embark on 2017. Students generated many ideas of what kindness “looks like” and “sounds like” and are practicing these ideas in and out of classrooms. Students will also engage in lessons by the school counselor and teachers throughout the quarter. Our students have been challenged to start a chain reaction of kindness!
The new year brings a new semester and some new courses for our students. We end 2016 with some great successes. November’s Career Fair brought in over twenty professionals who were able to share insight about their fields to our students. The presenters articulated the importance of education as they progressed through their given careers. During second quarter, the science classes worked on their Project Lead the Way curriculum, which led to lemon batteries and telegraph machines being made during the school day. PLTW also inspires a new after-school club, Student Technology Association (STA). They are taking the in-class curriculum to the next level. In December, the choirs performed at Crown Center to delight evening shoppers with holiday music.

Looking forward, January marks the annual district spelling bee to find those students who can recite those complicated words. The middle school was again selected to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing in February, adding to their database about national performance in schools.

Working without the gym has been an imposition on many in the district and in the community. We are looking forward to its use again in early January. Despite its absence, the floor will return with a sharp, new look.

The wrestlers wrapped up another successful season in December. Boys’ and girls’ basketball continues through January. The middle school musical SchoolHouse Rock will begin rehearsing soon after with performances February 10 and 11.

Students in seventh-grade science classes created their own telegraph machines in a PLTW module. Ms. Pierce began the Student Technology Association (STA) after school, and students jumped right into unpacking the vex kits. PHMS had two finalists in the regional Patriot’s Pen essay contest, earning first and third!
HIGH SCHOOL
PHHS STUDENT NAMED A COCA-COLA SCHOLAR SEMIFINALIST

Evan Williams, a student at Pleasant Hill High School has been named a Semifinalist for the 2017 class of the Coca-Cola Scholars Program. With the 2016 class, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation will have provided more than 5,700 Scholars nationwide with over $66 million in scholarships. The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation received nearly 86,000 applications this year, and the Semifinalists are truly some of the most accomplished students in the country.

Evan ranks with approximately 1,900 high school seniors who are in the running for 150 college scholarships worth $20,000 each. Students are selected to advance to this next phase based on academic excellence, leadership and service demonstrated in school and community activities. The class of 2017 Coca-Cola Scholars will mark the 29th consecutive year that the Foundation has awarded scholarships.

The full list of Semifinalists from across the country can be viewed at www.coca-colascholars.org.

Peyton Snyder displays her second quilt she completed during the first semester in Studio Art emphasis in Fibers. The inspiration was from a quilt she had seen on Pinterest, therefore, designing her quilt in a similar fashion. The gradation of colors from light to dark create the landscape feeling of the background and the Dresden Plate flowers emulate a field of flowers. The quilt was a gift to her sister Brenna.

SPECIAL SERVICES
To get ready for our new season next week, the afternoon class of the Little Rooster Learning Center made snowmen. We’ve been practicing the letters in our names and found a great way to showcase what we’ve learned. We began by practicing our math skills by counting how many letters are in our name. Then each circle got one letter in our name. Next we had to build our snowman by putting the letters in the correct order. We practiced fine motor skills by drawing a face on our snowman. Last, we added a ribbon scarf. We finished up by reading Snowmen All Year by Caralyn Buehner.

Later this week, we will complete the snowmen by adding hats. We will finish this project by comparing two snowmen and discussing which is the shortest, tallest, etc. and why, before they get added to our bulletin board.
“The number of words in a child’s vocabulary is an indicator of his/her linguistic health and a factor in his/her ability to use language in varied contexts for multiple purposes.” (Richgels, 2004, p 473).

Encouraging students to play with words creates an interest in knowing more about them. This is referred to as word consciousness, which is essential to vocabulary growth. Here are a few students that were caught playing with words.

Top Left: Early Childhood students are expanding their language through play. Children learn words by playing with toys and listening to adults comment and expand on their language. For example, if a little boy says “ball", the therapist only has to add one more word to expand the child’s language (i.e., “BIG ball”). If the child says “more” the therapist says “more TOYS”. Children then have opportunities to hear more nouns, verbs, adjectives, and even other features such as prepositions (“in”, “on”, “under”) and plurals (one toy, two toys). The best part is, this can all be done while children play!

Top Right: 2nd grade students creating a “Synonym Spider Web”. Students holding the ball of yarn read their “go-word”. The first student to name a correct synonym catches the yarn. Play continues until all students have named synonyms and a large Spider-Web is created.
Bottom Left: Vocabulary 4-Square. It’s like the traditional childhood favorite, but with a twist. When you “go out”, you must perform the action in your square. Square 1: Define your vocabulary word. Square 2: Use a synonym or an antonym. Square 3: Use the word in a sentence. Square 4: Act out the word. All vocabulary words selected are taken from our Wonder’s Curriculum.

**Pleasant Hill Activities… “It’s a GREAT Day to be a Rooster/Chick!”**

Highlights:

1. **This week: IT’S TOURNAMENT WEEK!** The Roosters and Chicks host the annual Pleasant Hill Basketball Invitational this week. The Chicks will play Monday afternoon, 5:30pm vs the Grain Valley Lady Eagles. The Roosters open tournament play on Tuesday, 5:30pm with the newcomers to the tournament; Benton Cardinals. Come out and watch what proves to be a very entertaining high school basketball tournament every year. The tournament ends with the girl’s championships night on Friday and the boy’s championship night on Saturday!

2. The **Rooster wrestling** program hosts Excelsior Springs Tuesday night at the Pleasant Hill Middle School. Wrestling begins at 6pm. The Roosters had a strong weekend at Bonner Springs. They will participate in the MRVC Tournament this next weekend to be held at Wentworth College in Lexington, Mo.

3. Speech and Debate just travelled to Lexington this past weekend. The Rooster had a nice start in 2017 with a 4th place finish in DI, a 4th & 5th in radio, a 1st and 3rd place finish in extemp.! The speech and debate team will host their own tournament at PHHS on January 25th of this month. Come check it out!

**Technology**

During the month of January the technology department will be conducting an inventory audit of classroom and office technology equipment. Staff and students will see tech department staff in each building labeling equipment and entering the data into a new inventory program. The transition to a new program will help the technology department provide for more accurate reporting and monitoring of district technology resources. Accurate data is essential in planning for budgets, alignment to initiatives, and potential disaster recovery efforts. The cooperation of staff and students is appreciated as the members of the department as we work within the school classrooms and buildings to collect the needed information.

**Facilities**

Santa’s helpers were busy over the break finishing stage two of the Primary School hallway painting project. Alan Borchert can be seen painting the upstairs hall of the Primary School. The entrance hall and kindergarten loop were painted over the summer and the downstairs hall will be painted this summer completing the project.