PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary School students are starting our second quarter with enthusiasm. They consider themselves authors and illustrators. Students enjoyed informative visits and coloring books from our Pleasant Hill Fire Department, health screenings with the help of students from Cass County Career Center, and numerous “pumpkin” activities. Preschoolers and kindergarteners went on field trips to pumpkin farms. Students that read 100 books ate lunch with Mrs. Haight at the end of first quarter, with participants from 3 kindergarteners to over 30 second graders. PS staff is continuing to enhance understanding of research-based and brain-friendly instructional strategies through professional development and collaboration. We celebrated at our PD day with Yan-Koloba, the character/team building game, and trying out our new DrumFit program, which has been a huge hit with students in Mrs. Anderson’s PE classes.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Spotlight on Ms. Breslin’s Fourth Grade Class
Students in this fourth grade classroom are refining their attempts at Breakout Boxes. Working in teams of 6, the students completed problems and puzzles based on skill previously mastered in class. Once the group had worked collaboratively to crack the secret code they tried the code on one of the locked boxes to get their next task. Students were highly motivated to stay focused and try to beat the clock because there is only so much time! Congrats to the teams that were successful in breaking all four codes and opening the various types of locks. When finished, the students reflected on their experience. They noted what worked well for their team and how they could improve next time.

STUDENTS AT PHES COMPLETE THE HARVEST READING CHALLENGE
Over 100 students completed the challenge of reading 100 pages during the school reading challenge. These students celebrated with sweet treats last Thursday.
A total of 165 TrackMaker Awards were presented to 5th and 6th grade students on October 19, 2016, for earning Advanced on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). School Board members, Mr. Ross and Mrs. Hocker, presented the awards in red carpet style!

Congratulations to all these students and their families!
Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Week! They were recognized by teachers for demonstrating outstanding character traits and doing good deeds! They are: Quinn Collins, Brayden Klotz, Kristen Vestal, Ryan Murray, Delanee Gilsdorf, and Jude Hoffman!

The PHIS Fall Concert was held October 20, 2016. This concert consisted of performances from the 6th Grade Singers, Peeps, Experiencing Music Classes including Guitar Ensembles, and the 6th grade Select Choir. What a great night filled with talent. Congratulations to Mrs. Chandler, the IS music director, and all the students!

As a building, we are focusing on Responsibility as the second quarter character trait. During a morning motivator assembly, students engaged in a mini lesson—listening to poems about responsibility in order to activate prior knowledge and to make connections. They then had time to discuss ideas with their shoulder partner about what they think Responsibility “looks like” and “sounds like”. Their ideas were then generated into posters that hang around the school.
**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

*Left:* The Sons and Daughters of Liberty are a secret society enlisted by Mrs. Campbell to help simulate the beginning of the Revolutionary War. *Right:* Student-led conferences were held in the gym on Monday, October 24.

Pleasant Hill Middle School held student-led conferences on Monday. Over 200 students attended the evening with their parents to discuss student achievement and set future goals. The art room was also visited by a steady stream of parents and students. Students could show their parents their art portfolios with this quarter's work. The book fair is also drawing students and parents into the library this week to support literacy and reading. Students in science will begin the Project Lead the Way curriculum in second quarter where they will be applying science and technology. Fall sports have concluded while basketball begins this week with wrestling beginning next week.

*Left:* Students in the library enjoy the refurbished adirondack chairs that Mr. Hart has completed. *Center:* Mr. Berry's drama class make short videos with iPads at the entrance to the middle school. *Right:* Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Martin prepare the choir before their first public performance.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

Champions of Character

With the new school year underway, the Counseling Center is trying to recognize students and staff who demonstrate outstanding character in the high school. This year we will be implementing our “Student of the Month” recognition and tying it into character traits. One boy and girl from each grade level (and one overall staff member) will be selected by the faculty/staff monthly and honored for exhibiting that particular trait.

During September, our character trait was **Cooperation**—*Working together toward a common goal.* The following students were selected as a champion of character for exhibiting this trait: Freshmen- Kolton Kincaid, Meghan May, Sophomores- Dawson Ferdig, Cyndey Metzger, Juniors- Geno Lalumia, Savannah Demeyer, Seniors- Noah Kenyon, & Ellie Yoder. Mrs. Hardin was selected as the Staff Champion of Character for Cooperation. Each
champion of character received a gift card sponsored by Pleasant Hill Sonic. Jamie Lynn, Managing partner at Sonic was present to present the recipients with their gift card.

**The character trait for October is: Tolerance - Embracing differences and treating others the way you want to be treated.** If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact Tammy Vogler at the high school: tvogler@pleasanthillschools.com


White House Decision Center Welcome Pleasant Hill Students
This year’s trip to the White House Decision Center was on October 19, though our preparations began a little over a week ahead of time. 41 juniors enrolled in Dual Credit Government completed pre-modules where they learned the many roles played by the President of the United States, researched the role of his closest advisors, and studied the situation in Korea prior the invasion of South Korea from the North. They also studied and practiced using a complex decision-making model and analyzed numerous historical primary documents.

On the day of the trip the students were ushered into a model White House West Wing where former PHHS teacher Joanne Finley conducted a briefing on the invasion of south Korea. Students then assumed roles such as Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Omar Bradley, and even President Truman himself. Working with their staff they spent the morning reading formerly classified documents and forming opinions as to options President Truman should consider to deal with the crisis. After a quick press briefing, the “President Trumans” met with their individual cabinets to hammer out the American response. President Truman then announced the US course of action in a statement to the press where our students played the role of the press corps and required the President to defend and justify the decision he reached.

Throughout the day our students came to realize that the President often doesn't face easy choices and that often even the best option brings serious consequences.

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**SPECIAL SERVICES**

I CAN statement: As a team, I can design and engineer a container that will carry at least 3 apples.

In Ms. Kay & Ms. Lewis’ classroom, students were challenged with a STEM project to work together in a team to construct a container that would be sturdy enough to hold at least 3 apples. To begin this challenge, students were shown what materials they would be
allowed to use. Then they brainstormed ideas for a design with their teammates. Once they had discussed what they wanted to do, they then drew up a design. After their design was complete, they then began to build their containers. To test the sturdiness and durability of the containers, students were required to walk 10 steps with the container that was holding the 3 apples. Students were not allowed to hold the bottom, but instead had to grip the container with handles that they made. If the challenge was completed with 3 apples, another one would be added. The winning team carried 8 apples in their container. The students thoroughly enjoyed this STEM challenge!

Pleasant Hill High School- Mrs. Juliette’s Earth and Space Science Class

Standards:

Missouri Learning Standard: 5.2.ES.A Describe how the energy of an earthquake travels as seismic waves and provides evidence for the layers of the geosphere.

MAP-A (DLM) Alternative Standard: EE.ESS-2.2 Explain how catastrophic events (tornadoes, earthquakes, floods) can quickly change the surface of the earth.

In our Earth and Space Science class, we have been studying earthquakes and how they can alter our landscape. After completing several readings, research, and activities in class, students became aware of ways they can improve their own homes. Discoveries were made about how earthquakes can affect people around the world. After becoming earthquake experts, students were given a task to test their knowledge.
The class was given the challenge of designing a three story building that could withstand a mild earthquake simulation. Students were split into two different groups. They were allowed to use the following materials to create their structures: marshmallows, cardboard & toothpicks. When groups completed their structure, they were tested in our earthquake simulation pan (made using gelatin). Structures had to withstand the earthquake for at least 20 seconds. If structures were unsuccessful the first time, students were able to go back to the drawing board and make changes in order accomplish the task. This assignment encouraged students to apply what they learned during instruction and to think outside the box to accomplish a task.

PLEASANT HILL ACTIVITIES… “IT’S A GREAT DAY TO BE A ROOSTER/CHICK!”

Highlights:

1. Chicks Volleyball: The Volleyball team had a great week. Pleasant Hill HS hosted the Class 3 District 13 tournament this past week. The Chicks had no trouble defeating Warrensburg and O’Hara to win the district championship! They travelled to St. Pius X on Saturday for sectional and quarterfinal play. They defeated St. Joe Lafayette in the sectional match and then St. Pius X handily in the quarterfinal match earning a spot in the final four at Cape Girardeau October 28th and 29th! The Chicks are scheduled to play at about 3pm each afternoon. [https://goo.gl/O38u4C](https://goo.gl/O38u4C)

2. Cross Country: The cross country team had an excellent day at the MRVC Cross Country meet last Wednesday afternoon. Both the boys and the girls came away with 2nd place finishes at the meet! They Roosters and Chicks will run Saturday at Districts in Warrensburg.

3. The Pride of the Hill: The Pride had an outstanding couple of weeks! They won their class in the Blue Springs South KC Championship allowing them to perform in the finals the evening of Oct. 15th for the first time. They travelled to Odessa this past weekend where they won their class once again!

4. Choral Music: Five Pleasant Hill students made the All-State Choir this year! Jana Osborne, Fiona Bolte Bradhurst, Clara Plasse, Lauren Larkins and Colleen Wouters
5. A special thank you to all the people who helped with our home football games this year. The booster club was outstanding in providing awesome concessions. The press box crew and the chain gang were nails as always. The custodial staff in getting our facilities ready each week. The Pride of the Hill for providing half-time entertainment. The administrative staff as always pulled through to help with crowd control. And finally, our Rooster coaching staff and players for putting on a great show each week for our student body/parents and patrons.

6. The fall athletic season has been a great success in 2016. Thank you to all the coaches and players for putting in the hours of hard work and dedication in representing Pleasant Hill with pride, professionalism and class!

DISTRICT
Pleasant Hill R-III Board Approves Benchmark Assessment Agreement

Throughout first quarter the District Curriculum Facilitators, Principals, and Dr. Gallagher have been reviewing benchmark assessment products by participating in several webinars and virtual meetings with assessment vendors. At the October Board of Education meeting a recommendation was made to approve an agreement with Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA). The committee is looking forward to introducing DnA to all district staff, providing training to teachers, and rolling out the implementation of DnA later this year. The benefits to students and student learning through additional data will be positive addition in the buildings across the district.

History of Need for an Assessment Product:
Three years ago the district utilized Discovery Education Assessment in grades K - 8 for the areas of mathematics and reading as a benchmark assessment. Teachers were able to track student growth across the school year, rather than waiting on the State mandated assessment which happens each spring.

The district did not renew the product for grades 3 - 8 beginning with the 2014-15 school year, because DESE notified districts they would have a benchmark assessment tool available for free for districts to utilize that school year. However, the State was unable to provide the product when planned and did not have the assessment tool ready during that school year, but it was available last year for the 2015-16 school year. Last school year students in grades 3 - 8 utilized the DESE tool. Teachers found the benchmark assessment took entirely too much instructional time to take and students were frustrated with the process. The benchmarking done previously could be completed in a more reasonable timeframe in comparison. The decision was made to not utilize the DESE tool any longer for grades 3 - 8 and Discovery Education Assessment is no longer available for those grade levels, and it will not be available in future years for grades K-2. These factors led to the need for a benchmark assessment product.

Product Criteria to Meet the Needs of the District:
One of the most important pieces the committee looked at in the product options was the ease of use for teachers, as well as the type of reports teachers are able to run in the system. Most of the systems provided pre-made tests, aligned to standards, rather than requiring teachers to create the assessments. The Facilitators and the rest of the committee all prefer the pre-made assessments so there is a definite alignment to standards. The price was also an important part of the decision. The committee was tasked with finding an assessment product that fits within current and future budgets, while at the same time offering the most features for the price. Illuminate’s product, Data and Assessment (DnA), was the product which best met the criteria.

Timeline for Purchasing a Benchmark Assessment Product:
The committee wanted a benchmark assessment product in place as soon as possible. With the October approval an eight week transition of transferring data and information with the vendor has begun. During this transition time, training will be available for teams of teachers from each building. This timeline should also allow mid-year testing, with time for instructional decisions prior to the spring benchmark and state mandated testing.

The timeline for implementation is as follows: Year 1 will include training and implementation in grades 3 - 12 for Illuminate DnA. This is due to the fact the Primary School is still able to utilize Discovery Education Assessment this year, but the product is not available after this spring. Beginning in Fall 2017, the District will be utilizing DnA in all grade levels K-12 allowing for alignment, consistency, and the ability to track growth across all grade levels for students.

An Overview of DnA features include:

Dashboard - personalized for every user to easily access various assessments, reports, and class rosters
Assessments - assessment suite including: benchmark/interim, summative, formative, probes, progress monitoring, universal screeners, and more; reporting by user, site, district, and all significant sub-groups; aligned to state standards; online testing with technology enhanced items and locked browser capabilities.

Activate Instruction - direct links from student assessments to standards-based curriculum resources for remediation or enrichment, direct links from teacher reports to standards-based curriculum resources for tier 2 and tier 3 RtI instruction

Pre-Built Reports - student, teacher, site/district level reporting with disaggregation by special education, socio-economically disadvantaged, and other significant subgroups; state accountability, college and career readiness, early literacy, social emotional learning, and English language learners

Custom Reporting - point and click report building, business intelligence (BI) tool for advanced reporting, PDF Overlays for custom form letters and labels, complex equations, charts, logic, with graphing capability

Student Groups - students can be added to programs to progress monitor growth over time; create groups by individual students, custom reports, grade level, or program

OnTrack Early Warning System - identify at-risk for academic/social emotional indicators for strategic and proactive interventions

Student and Parent Portals - can provide real-time data to parents on assessment scores; online assessments via secure login for students; learning link for remediation and enrichment based on student strengths and areas of growth

Data Security - adheres to industry wide security standards; hosted in a secure environment with data redundancy at no added cost

Import and Export - import of demographic, state and local assessments; field level imports and exports into XML, CSV, DBF, and char-delimited formats; imports from Access database; custom exports to 3rd-party vendors

User Support - email/phone support for ALL users, help documentation, support and training videos

Item Banks - over 65,000 professionally written standards-based questions, over 38,000 items designed specifically for today’s college and career readiness standards; year-long series of pre-built interim formative assessments; pre-built end-of-year practice assessments; classroom check-point assessments; dual language immersion support; English language development benchmarks; performance tasks; technology-enhanced items; new items added monthly; science and social science items.

Other features are also available. The District Curriculum Facilitators and administrators are enthusiastic to begin the implementation process and help others throughout the implementation process. DnA will be an important part in monitoring student growth and progress at a local level.

TECHNOLOGY
As a continuation of the pilot programs for Pleasant Hill R-III district, three teachers in grades K-6 are implementing Chromebooks in their classrooms. Kerri Kay, Erica Smothers, and Diane Williamson piloted Android tablets over the last several months and will now begin testing Chromebooks in those grade levels as well. The objective of the pilot is to compare and contrast the use of a variety of mobile devices to determine which device is best based on ease of use and deployment, availability of applications, and cost. These teachers will share their findings with the Technology Committee, the Technology Department and their colleagues.

FACILITIES
Safety
Pleasant Hill School District conducted armed intruder drills at two campuses on Friday, October 21, 2016. A district level administrator in conjunction with the Pleasant Hill Police Department replicated an arm intruder in the Intermediate School and Elementary School. Administration and staff went through the proper protocols during the live drill scenario. The scenario was not scripted and each participant had to react to the ever-changing conditions during the drill. The drills in both buildings were deemed successful by both police and administration and we will continue to look for ways to improve our methods to ensure the safety of our students and staff.