District
Administrators Continue Calibration of NEE Expectations

This past Thursday, the leadership team meeting focused on viewing and scoring a video lesson using the scoring guides for NEE (Network of Educator Effectiveness) standards 1.1, 1.2, and 5.3b. The administrators then calibrated the feedback conference with the educator. This continuing, worthwhile discussion, beginning with the observation and continuing through the feedback conference with the teacher, allows consistency in the NEE process in all buildings across the district. This work will continue to be a focus throughout the year with administrators. These conversations, while time consuming, are vitally important to the overall success of NEE and increased student achievement from K-12 in the district. As one administrator shared, “We are building habits through NEE.” These habits are based on research-based instructional practices, which will lead to deeper student learning. We are fortunate to have a leadership team that is dedicated to providing effective feedback, as well as supporting teachers in this district.

Dr. Paul Canaan, Dr. Janis Yokley, and others not pictured, listen and reflect as Mrs. Sandra Haight shares her thoughts and input regarding the scoring of educators using NEE at a recent meeting.

Primary School

PS staff and students are celebrating and learning throughout October with National Custodians’ Day, National School Lunch Week, Fire Prevention Week, Curriculum Night, field trips, fall parties, and Red Ribbon Week! Our new character education word for the month is RESPECT. Counselor Shari Doutt is including an emphasis on both kindness and respect in her lessons on digital citizenship. Teachers are meeting with Denise Robinson, our curriculum facilitator, and me about math curriculum and lesson plans. We are having great discussions about our NEE indicators: use of academic language, levels of cognitive engagement, and teacher/student relationships. At staff meetings and during professional development time this month, teachers will develop their units of instruction as part of our evaluation system and watch videos to practice scoring indicators themselves.
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Last week, we learned that the ES is one of the schools being featured in the September/October issue of Principal Magazine. Students, Reagan and Kennedy Donovan are on the cover of the magazine and PHES can be seen in several photos sprinkled throughout the publication. The Elementary School is highlighted on pages 14-15 in the article entitled, “The New Era of Family Engagement” in which family art nights and PIE Nights are discussed. We are extremely proud of this accomplishment and are appreciative of the support we have received from the community and school district. They plan to continue implementing art-infused education and have launched a new building wide theme this year, *Cultivating Creativity through the GREAT OUTDOORS*.

Our Outdoor Garden has undergone even more transformations. Birdfeeder poles have been installed and soon students will decide how they want to construct their classroom birdfeeders. This will provide another layer of observation, journaling and discovery to the Outdoor Lab. All of the planters in the garden are being utilized by classrooms and Garden Club. Some contain transplanted flowers, other classes have decided to grow vegetables and others are planting bulbs that will bloom this spring.

All classrooms have begun the research process in which students will generate and answer questions using primary and secondary resources. Fourth grade has started a “natural disaster” research project in conjunction with their Unit 1 Wonders Reading Series. They launched the project by inviting guests to speak with students about natural disasters that have occurred in Missouri. Students took notes during the presentations and then had the opportunity to ask questions. Guests included a speaker from City Hall, the National Weather Service, Operation BBQ Relief, a Joplin Tornado survivor and the Missouri Disaster Response System.

**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

Congratulations to this week’s Students of the Week! They are: Cheyenne Maasen, James Hays, Gracie Layton, Nathan Swilley, Tyler Parton and Josephine Gomez. They were recognized by their teachers for exhibiting outstanding character traits and deeds!
In each homeroom, students nominate one peer for Student of the Month. It is quite an honor to have one's peers recognize important character traits and qualities about them such as being kind and respectful as well as being responsible and persevering. The following students have been nominated for the month of October: Calli Bloom, Jolyn Blake, Cooper Divine, Peyton Brunell, Korbin Thaller, Nathan Swilley, Liam McCall, Sarah Wilhoit, Kylie Lloyd, Lexi Danner, Adriana Kalousek, Walker Aldrige and Dylan Dimarco. We congratulate each of them!

PHIS held our TrackMaker Assembly on September 29th. School Board members, John Edenburn, Lori Redwine, Phil Kassel and David Hertzog present 183 awards to 125 5th and 6th graders for scoring Advanced on last year’s MAP assessment. This is an outstanding accomplishment and we congratulate these students and their parents!

In our last edition, Spoontember food drive information was shared. Students collected 116 canned goods for our local food pantry! What a great act of kindness and giving. We thank Mrs. Greve for organizing this drive and to all the students that gave.
8th grade science students are learning about the structure and function of cells. In our classes, we are conducting a long-term lab (2 to 3 weeks) using a chicken egg as a model of a cell. After dissolving the shell of the egg with vinegar, the egg's membrane is the outer-most layer of the egg and responds like a cell membrane when placed in different liquids. Students are taking precise measurements of their egg (cell) every other day and placing them into different liquids to observe how the cell membrane functions to allow certain solutions to enter and leave a cell.

Throughout the project students are applying the scientific method to their lab investigation. Students have identified the independent and dependent variables and put them into a formula to create a hypothesis: If I place a cell in a liquid that contains an 80% concentration of water or greater, then the cell will increase in size because of osmosis. They are using precise measurements to collect quantitative data and writing observations to collect qualitative data. Students will apply their observations and results by writing a conclusion. Finally, to reinforce their learning, and communicate their results to others, students will be creating an Explain Everything presentation on iPads.

Students in the Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences Classes (FACS) have started the year off with a great start. The students so far have experienced goal setting and kitchen safety. Over the next few weeks, we will be working in the FACS module lab, filled with hands-on learning activities. In the FACS lab, students of all learning styles and academic ability are able to experience academic success on their way to becoming viable community citizens. Students have the opportunity to work in stations with other students in the areas of food science, clothing care, confident consumer, interior design, entrepreneurship, baking and measurement, microwave cooking, and breakfast nutrition. Students will be rotating through the various module stations over the next few weeks.

**High School**

Pleasant Hill High School is preparing to host the Academic Letter Assembly. This will be the twenty-ninth annual ceremony to recognize our students that excel in the classroom. To be eligible for an academic letter, students must maintain a 3.5 GPA while enrolled in a minimum of six graded classes. This event is one of the highlights of the school year as we welcome back a distinguished alumnus to address the students. This year Mrs. Rebecca Murray will speak to the students about the value of setting goals, hard
work, and determination. We will recognize 192 students on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 for their outstanding achievement in the classroom.

**TECHNOLOGY**

PBL - Project Based Learning is the intersection of technology integration, the research process and the application of concepts learned in class. Math teachers for grades Five through Twelve recently participated in a two day workshop where they spent time developing a project based unit to use in their classrooms. These lessons are designed to help students understand how math applies to real life through inquiry and research. Along with understanding how to calculate math problems, students are able to use math skills to design products to solve problems. Students are highly motivated to apply math in Project Based Learning because of the high degree of choice in the design and development of the end products generated through their work.

**Special Services**

**Primary School**

*Self-Contained Classroom*

Students have been working hard reviewing skills and expanding their knowledge base throughout first quarter. We have been learning to engage multiple senses in order to help new information become more concrete. The multi-sensory approach promotes multiple pathways for receiving messages and retaining new information. Each person has a preferred modality or strength when receiving information: Auditory, Visual, Kinesthetic, and Tactile.

This approach is used almost daily in our classroom. Not only does it give the students multiple pathways to take in information, but it engages them in more than 1 way. We use this approach to work on sight words, high frequency words, new vocabulary, letters, and letter sounds. With younger students, I also use this approach to learn spelling their name.

This shows students “sky writing”. They spell each word with their arm, while saying the letters out loud. Then, they “check” their work and repeat the word. This is done 3 times for each word.
The students now “sand (texture) write”. The same process is repeated. They spell each word, while saying the letters out loud. Then, they “check” their work and repeat the word. This is also done 3 times.

The last step for this process is writing each word. Like before, the students can choose the color of pencil or marker. They repeat each letter as they write it, and “check” their work while repeating the word. This is also repeated 3 times.

I have really found that this process benefits my students. They are retaining/recognizing their sight words better than before. The students are also engaged so much more during this process.

**English Language Learner Department-Frankie Lees**

The English Language Learner department has been very busy working with students in all buildings. Pictured are students at the primary level working on journal writing. Students are working on sound/letter correspondence as well as proper sentence structure. These students are also working on building stamina. Building stamina for reading and writing activities is a big part of becoming an engaged learner.
ELL students at the Middle School work on a geography activity to determine the relationship between population, climate, and geographic location.

Middle School
Marylee Myler

Story Elements - Point-of-View

Objective: The student will be able to identify and explain point-of-view.

Why: While reading for enjoyment, the student will be able to identify the point-of-view used to write the story which will reveal the narrator’s knowledge and insight of the characters.

During this project, students worked in groups of 2 or 3 to create three storyboards, aka comic strips. Each storyboard depicted one type of point-of-view we have been studying: first person, third-person limited, and third-person omniscient. The students chose one setting, plot, and conflict in which they manipulated their writing style of the story to demonstrate their knowledge of each type of point-
of-view. Through this project, the students were able to demonstrate a true understanding of point-of-view while being given personal choice and creative liberties.

High School

CO Teaching classroom Alg. 1 B. Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Kemerling. Students are beginning to learn finding slope and equations of lines from graphs and graphing using slope intercept form. Instead of doing the normal paper/pencil worksheets I had the students do a Performance Based Assignment that I recently learned about during the last Math PD.

Day 1: The students were not told much information. They were given chromebooks and told that they needed to find the prices of a medium pizza from a local pizza business with different amounts of pizzas. They then used a graph to show this information. Once they had the graph and the price of the med. pizzas with different amounts of pizza, they were asked leading questions to come up with an equation written in y intercept form.

Day two and Three: Students used their knowledge from day 1 to graph and write formulas for the price of small and large pizzas with different amounts of toppings. The students were able to use their information to find the slope and equations of lines on graphs. They also used their skills to collect data and compare prices of different pizza businesses. They were also given prompts to find out how many pizzas they could buy from different places if they were given a set $ amount or a set number of people they needed to feed.

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

Highlights:

1. Senior Night will be held at the football game this week vs Excelsior Springs! We will also be collecting donations for the food pantry in our “Fill the Truck” promotion. Bring four non-perishable food items to the gate and receive ½ off your admission.

2. Softball: The Chicks will travel to Warrensburg on Wednesday where they will begin their District Tournament vs. Warrensburg High School; 3pm at the UCM Jennies softball field. If they win game one, they will play Clinton in game two at 7pm in the semi-final. The championship is scheduled for Thursday at 6pm.

3. Cross Country: The Roosters and Chicks have been working hard the past few weeks participating in meets at Missouri Southern State University and Grain Valley. They will compete in Excelsior Springs on Tuesday this week and Warrensburg next week (Oct. 15th). The MRVC Conference meet is being held in Richmond on October 21st!
4. Volleyball: The Chicks season is barreling down the tracks! The team had recent wins vs. Oak Grove and Odessa. They were the champions of the Warrensburg tournament a week ago. Their district tournament will be held in Harrisonville on October 20th & 22nd.

5. Boys Soccer: The Roosters are improving every week! They notched their first conference win vs. Excelsior Springs two weeks back and travel this Tuesday to Oak Grove to take on the Panthers. They will travel to Harrisonville on Thursday and then to Green Ridge on Friday. District play for the Roosters begins on October 22nd at Eklund field.

6. Girls Golf: The Chicks golf team had success in improving each week under the tutelage of coach Bloom. Congratulations are in order for Madison Roach for getting through the district tournament and competing Monday at the sectional tournament in Marshall.

7. Pride of the Hill: The band had an outstanding performance in their competition this past weekend in Blue Springs! They will travel to Lee’s Summit North High School for competition October 10th. Wish them luck!

8. Choir: Our choral kids will be at district choir on Saturday October 10th.

9. Check out the Sonic Locker Room Show on Wednesday afternoons at 4:20pm on 1030 KCWJ The Light. You can also hear the shows archived on www.soniclockerroom.com Last week’s show had Asst. Softball coach Christy Reeves and some of the Chick’s seniors. It is archived there now. Just click on the Rooter’s logo once at the website.

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Facilities

Introducing the district’s new food service director for Southwest Food Service, Chelsea Leonard. Ms. Leonard has been married to her husband Ryan for 6 years and has two daughters, Laila – 5 and Payton – 1. She attended high school in Nixa, Missouri and college at Missouri Southern State University, studying dental hygiene. Chelsea has worked in food service for the past 12 years in Joplin and Kansas City, Kansas spending time at Twin Hills Country Club and Johnny Carino’s Italian Restaurant. Her first day in the district is Monday October 5.