Teacher Recruitment
On Tuesday, March 31, Pleasant Hill R-III representatives traveled to the campus of the University of Missouri - Columbia to attend MOJOE 2015 (Missouri Job Opportunities in Education). During the event, district staff talked to prospective teachers and conducted brief screening interviews. The event was attended by 121 employers and over 200 students. This event allows us to promote our district and highlight the outstanding work taking place in classrooms to prepare our students for college and career, as well as meet potential new staff members.

Curriculum Work
On April 2nd during professional development, the vocal and instrumental music teachers met at Central Office to begin work on their curriculum map and pacing guide for each course they teach. During the same time, the art teachers continued their curriculum work at Central Office. Both groups of teachers accomplished much in the area of articulation K-12 to strengthen instruction across the district. It was a very productive afternoon!

Facilities
The facilities department has moved forward with the irrigation project on Skyline Field and it will complete sometime this week depending on the weather. Work on the drainage project at the Sports Complex to improve playing conditions on the baseball field has been interrupted by the weather and it is hopeful that this project will complete this week as well.

A canopy project at the Middle School front entrance has been completed. This project involved repairing the leaking canopy going up the front steps. The final phase of the retaining wall replacement on the south side of the loading dock at the downtown maintenance building is complete with the pour back of concrete on the upper portion of the wall. Final seeding of grass has been put in place.

The mowing season is upon us at this time and the crews are fighting weather to stay on top of the process. Another obstacle facing our mowing crew at this time of the year is the testing window. We try to work around each buildings schedule and this prolongs the process as we attempt to keep the campuses in good order. In addition to the mowing, renovation of the parking lot islands at the High School is in process. Weather once again will have a huge impact on the progress of this project.
“Eco-troubadour” Mr. Stan Slaughter performed for our students on Friday, combining songs and science in presentations about ecology and what we can do to preserve our environment. Mr. Slaughter’s catchy songs and other music have been filling our halls as 1st graders performed “Swamped” on March 31, and kindergarteners are preparing for their upcoming spring performance on May 5. Each grade is planning field trips: kindergarten and 2nd grade to Paradise Park, and 1st grade to the Kansas City Zoo. Teachers are preparing to give final assessments to students beginning April 20: online Discovery Education tests in reading and math, Gates-MacGinitie reading tests, and fluency checks. Staff has been using professional development time to define and assess school culture, learn about the Network for Educator Effectiveness, evaluate the Wonders basal reading series, and collaborate on writing and math instruction. Mrs. Koval, Mrs. Doutt, Mrs. Hadley, and I are happy to welcome area preschool students, teachers, and families to a tour of our school on April 15.

Last week, on April 8th, the ES welcomed Barb Reinke, the Central Regional Representative from Crayola, to our school. She spent the day with us and visited every classroom. During her visit she took close to 200 pictures and interviewed numerous staff members about their experiences with the Crayola Grant. It was a positive experience for everyone and Barb was impressed with the district and the art infused education that was evident throughout the school. We look forward to another visit later in the month and hope that the ES and the Pleasant Hill School District will be chosen as the feature article for the “Principal Magazine” publication. Special thanks to Nicole Albin who worked tirelessly to ensure that we were ready for our visit with the Crayola representatives. On April 9th we welcomed The Big Smiles Dentists to our school and they were able to meet the needs of 16 students. Also on the 9th, we hosted our PIE Night with parents in which Mrs. Zimmerschied shared information about state testing. This week we begin state testing and we will be engaged in testing from April 13th-April 30th. Teachers and students have worked diligently to prepare for this and we are hoping for positive results. Special thanks to our Technology Department for ensuring that our lab and laptops are ready to go! Recently, the ES students completed a Math Challenge. Mrs. Jessica Young’s and Mr. Brian McDavitt’s classes were crowned as Challenge Champions! This week we also welcome our MASH (Men As Student Helpers) volunteers to the building. The MASH volunteers will assist in classrooms and throughout the building as needed.
**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

“Students of the Week” are: Haylee Lewis, Gabby Lopez, David Vaughn, Prestly Lamar, Hadelynn Smith and Walker Aldrige. We congratulate these students for their outstanding character and deeds. Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Month for April: Larissa Spears, Peyton Jobe, Harley Prewitt, Cason Driver, Walker Aldridge, Jamie Hays, Mason Smith, Alaina Umscheid, Maddy Zvacek, Wyatt Lawrence, Michelle Kramer, Ashton Morris and Anna Rogers! They were selected by their peers for exhibiting the character trait, perseverance!

March Madness: During the month of March, all computer classes competed in a timed typing competition. There was a class competition and an individual competition. An average words per minute for the entire class was determined. The first week was used to rank the classes representing each grade's team into brackets and the following weeks pitted class vs. class. The winning team for each week advanced to the next round. Then the winning class representing Team A competed against the winning class representing Team B for the grade championship. The winning computer class for 5th Grade was Ms. Ludlam’s class. The winning class for 6th grade was the 6B Year Long class.

**Individual competition:**

Using the individual data from the team timed typing tests during the first 3 weeks of competition, the top 24-28 students per grade with the highest words per minute were selected. These students competed in a multiple day competition with the first day reducing the number of contestants to ten, and then again to a final four. The second day of competition again consisted of a two layer competition, with the first round determining the final two and then the winner of each grade. This year’s winners were Emma Heitman (5th Grade) and EJ Horkay (6th Grade).

Since March 24, students on 5A have been using their resources to gather as many book as possible, both hard copy and digital, and getting together twice
a week for a book club. The goal is to get lost in the genre blending novel, *The True Meaning of Smekday*, by Adam Rex. Students have been faithful to the book club as they read together, on their own, and discuss portions of the book with each other. As students analyze the author’s unique use of similes and metaphors, they are learning the importance of word choice when painting a picture with words. The hallway is showing signs of their pictures and thoughts as they visualize the events and characters, interpret the main idea and details, and sequence the events in the book. Not allowed in the group is any discussion about the movie - if they have already seen it. *The True Meaning of Smekday* is the inspiration for the movie HOME, which the group, along with parents, will be watching in the theater after finishing the book.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

This week we are spotlighting a few of our classes related to what we are currently doing at the middle level...

**Technology Applications:** Currently students are working through a Microsoft Office Simulation using their learned skills in Google Drive to create similar documents, spreadsheets, and presentations using Microsoft Office. The last project they completed was using SketchUp, a 3D modeling computer program for a wide range of drawing applications such as architectural, interior design, civil and mechanical engineering, film, and video game design. Students completed a home design utilizing their name initial, an office building, and a shopping center of their own design with required criteria.

**Home Design with Name Initial**

**Shopping Center Design**
8th Grade Math: This past week we learned how to construct, interpret, and find the line of best fit or trend line of a scatter plot. We used spaghetti to help with trend lines. Next week we will write equations to fit the scatter plot. Scatter Plots will be what they will use later to do a project called, “Barbee Bungee Jump”. In this project groups of students will work together to figure out how many rubber bands that they will need to give Barbee the closest jump down the stairwell without hitting her head. To do this they experiment, gather data, make a scatter plot, and write a linear equation to help them decide how many rubber bands to attach to Barbie’s feet. Other objectives I plan to cover are: linear or nonlinear equations, systems of equations, story graphs, and probability. In Algebra1, we will soon take a test over factoring polynomials. Next, we will be doing a short unit on scatter plots and writing equations. We are going to go over the practice test we took for the EOC. We will be going over some other practice tests as well to prepare for the EOC test coming soon. Students will be doing a unit on graphing quadratics and simplifying radical expressions, too.

Today students measured and recorded arm span and height. They made a table and a scatter plot.

They drew a “trend line” and decided if their data had a positive or negative correlation. Students had to decide what conclusion they could make using their graph.

Kirsten is using a piece of spaghetti to draw the “Line of best fit” in yesterday’s lesson.
**High School**

PHHS art students have had an exciting spring! The students have entered the national Vans Custom Culture Contest. They were challenged to create shoe designs in the areas of art, action sports (boards & bikes), music, and local flavor. The overall theme for the school was “It’s My Life.” The top four designs were selected and created on actual shoes provided by Vans. PHHS winning designs are:

- Art: Haley Lamborn
- Action Sports: Evan Jacobs
- Music: Maggie Waddle
- Local Flavor: Skyler Kirchofer

The shoes will be on display outside of Mrs. Johnston’s classroom, room 201. Best of luck to these fantastic artists in the national competition.

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**Digital Photography**

PHHS has its first digital photography class! Students began the semester by learning the technical side of photography. They can often be seen in and around the high school practicing their skills. On March 16th, 18 students had an opportunity to apply their skills in a real world scenario. They traveled to Arrowhead Stadium with a challenge of showcasing the biggest brand in town: The Kansas City Chiefs. While at Arrowhead, the students received a behind the scenes tour that included the tunnel, sidelines, penthouse, and the media room. Additionally, students viewed the amazing club level art collection. The collection currently showcases more than 30 regional artists. Students were actively engaged in discussion using visual thinking strategies (VTS). Upon their return, photography students create a presentation with their best images.
“Everyone benefits from the arts whether or not they’re participating. The arts are an economic engine; the arts are a means of building community and bringing people together. In Arrowhead Stadium, they are making a statement, which says that these two things are connected.” Harlan Brownlee, President and CEO of ArtsKC [http://www.kcchiefs.com/artcollection/]

**Student Photos: Josie Cotter (Junior)**

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**SPECIAL SERVICES**

**The Office**

The Office is busy wrapping up all evaluations and starting on the end of the year duties. We are concluding the first part of MAP-A and getting ready for the spring session. The teachers are preparing for the regular state testing as well. We have conducted two days of interviews and multiple days of recruiting at universities. We are all pleased that the candidates have been very strong this year.

We are beginning our preparation for Summer School and Extended School Year.

**ELL**

Frankie Lees, English Language Learner Educator for the Pleasant Hill School District has been selected to attend the Focus on Diversity Summer Symposium 2015. There were only 3 chosen to attend with everything being paid. This symposium will be held in late June in St. Louis, Missouri. The symposium's three day focus will be on state standards and diverse learners as well as inclusive practices for dual language learners. Presenters from Vanderbilt University, Erickson Institute Illinois Resource Center and California State University will be sharing up to date research regarding students with different assessed levels of cognitive and academic ability.

**Elementary School**
A student in Kelli Voorhees and Carey Armstrong’s class spoke to us about World Down Syndrome day, which took place March 21. The student has a younger sister who has Down Syndrome. Everyone in the class wore blue or yellow or both to recognize this day as those are the colors that show support for Down Syndrome.

Our class was introduced to her little sister and was provided with information about Down Syndrome, such as the cause, and how we can be accepting of people and families affected with down syndrome.

It was a unique educational opportunity.

Intermediate School

Ms. Love’s Self Contained Class
I will annotate the text with connections I make.

Students are using books of their choice to make connections. This student read that a new student has arrived in class and her body type is not slender in nature. The character in the book refers to her as the ‘fat blonde’. The student recalled a time when she thought like that but knew it was better not to say it out loud. She made a note in her book about her thoughts. The connection to this was so strong that she shared it with another teacher who had entered the classroom.

Middle School

In Mrs. Kirchhofer and Mrs. Myler’s 8th Grade English Language Arts, the special education students, along with regular education students, are learning to read and analyze poems while inferring the meaning of unknown words. After reading “The Railway Train” by
Emily Dickinson one time, a special education student was able to explain to the class that the subject of the poem was a train on a long journey through mountains and valleys even though a train was only mentioned in the title. Once the students understood that the poem was an extended metaphor comparing the train to a horse, another special education student was able to tell the class that a train use to be called a “metal horse” meaning an “iron horse”. Not only are these students being exposed to the regular education instruction, they are participating in and adding to the discussion in the classroom daily.

- By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grade 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**High School**

EOC testing season is upon us. We have taken our practice test for Geometry and we have had several students do very well. Many of the students are coming in for study sessions with Mr. Stahl, Mr. Reeves and Mr. Hutzell before school with hopes of being able to raise their scores to the next level. We have been practicing skills like re-reading the questions and eliminating unreasonable answers. We are very proud of the extra work our students are putting in to try to excel on the test!

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

It's springtime for Pleasant Hill Activities!

Highlights:

1. **Baseball:** The Roosters were washed out of two of their three games last week but enjoyed an 11-1 victory Friday over the Holden Eagles in the West-Central Tourney. The team is scheduled for a game Monday vs. Grain Valley and then begin play Friday in the Grandview tournament.
2. **Band and Choir:** The music programs at PHHS are thriving! All of our large ensemble musical groups received “I” ratings at state music contest this year. The kids are really bought into both programs and performing well.
3. **Boy’s Golf:** The Rooster golf team has been winning duels and placing well in tournaments at every turn this season. They placed 3rd of 19 teams at the Rab-Pec tournament and have defeated Excelsior Springs, Grain Valley, and Butler among others. They are playing very well at this time!
4. **Girl’s Soccer:** The Chicks soccer has only one loss so far on the season and is enjoying a nice run! They play rival Harrisonville on Tuesday at Memorial Stadium and they begin the Belton tournament on Thursday. Best of luck to the Chicks this week!
5. **Scholar Bowl:** The scholar bowl team will take their talents to Holden this week for district play. Expect great things out of this young team. They will be competing on April 18th.
6. Track & Field: The Roosters and Chicks have been working very hard and competing well in recent meets. The Roosters were champions of the Odessa Invite and both teams have had meet champions in many events. PHMS will host a middle school meet on Tuesday at Eklund Field!

A special thanks to all our parents and patrons who consistently provide strength and support for our programs! Help us inform you by checking in on our website… www.pleasanthillactivities.org

Technology Department

The Technology Department is finalizing preparations for two big projects this summer. Upgrades will be made to our network through new switches which will help carry data throughout our network. With more cloud computing services being utilized, such as SIS and Google, it is important to have the equipment in place to continue upgrading our broadband through MOREnet. Our phone services will also be upgraded this summer to a hosted phone service from traditional land lines. These changes are made possible, in part, by recent changes to eRate which provides funding to schools for telecommunications and internet connectivity. Forty-seven percent of the funding for the projects will come from eRate and the remaining balance will be provided by district funds.