District News

Curriculum and Assessment Work Speeds Up in District

Teachers across the district have been accomplishing great things in the area of curriculum and assessment! The following practices and events have taken place:

- Data talks to realign WIN (What I Need) intervention groups utilizing data from FASTBridge and Illuminate DnA took place at the Intermediate School.
- Intermediate School and Middle School math teachers have been modeling lessons utilizing students articulating their problem solving skill by writing in their math journals.
- High School and Middle School ELA teachers worked on winter benchmark assessments.
- Intermediate School ELA teachers worked to genrefy Wonders materials to better support the Workshop model of instruction.
- Primary School teachers are focusing on RtI (Response to Intervention) time and the use of phonics interventions for students based on needs highlighted after taking FASTBridge universal screener.
- Primary School teachers are working in FASTBridge to learn more about administering progress monitoring instruments.
- The PLTW (Project Lead The Way) teachers are working to articulate and layout the vertical alignment of modules and courses across the district, as well as outline parent STEAM events in each building.

This hard work demonstrates the dedication of Pleasant Hill teachers to offer the best instruction for students on a daily basis. This work builds the foundation of student success.

Primary School

Second grade had a fantastic time learning all about sea life at the aquarium in Kansas City! One of their favorite things was touching the gooey covering (Germ-x) of an eel. They touched starfish and other creatures in the touch tank and had stingrays swim and hover above them!

After enjoying the story, the kindergarten students used their math vocabulary to complete a measuring activity. Rather than using a ruler with inches, they used linking cubes to make an estimate and then actually measured three classroom items: a chair, a table, and a book. In order to make a sensible estimate, the students collaborated with their partners. Once each partner recorded an estimate, the partners started the actual measuring. After recording the number of blocks, the partners evaluated how they did with their first estimate.

On Halloween, Mrs. Robinson’s kindergarten class discovered what it takes to make a ghost spin. The students made predictions about the placement of the ghosts’ arms. The students discovered that they needed weight (a paper clip) and the arms bent (one forward and one backward). An unexpected discovery was that the height, from which the ghost was dropped, made it spin longer!

As Mrs. Roach’s kindergarten students were learning about the letter li and the short vowel sound, they read and enjoyed the book Inch By Inch by Leo Lionni. Before they read, they predicted what the inchworm would do, and they predicted why the book had this title. During their reading, they revised their predictions as they heard the story. They also used visualization to help them understand the story, making a movie of what they would see, hear, and feel.

Mr. Smith, a parent of a student in Mrs. Pickett’s first grade, visited the classroom and spoke about fire safety.
Critical Thinking Routines
Since Dave Holden’s visit the teachers at PHES have been practicing the Critical Thinking routines he taught and modeled. Teachers have asked students to state a claim, defend their answer, justify and evaluate the strength of their response.

Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Week! They were selected for exhibiting character traits, especially respect and responsibility.

Students participated in Mix It Up Lunch Day on Tuesday, October 31. Questions were provided on tables for discussion and each student received a tootsie pop. Many thanks to our PSC (Positive School Climate Committee) for organizing an event that encourages students share about themselves, accept others, and make new friends.

Every Monday, two PSC (Positive School Climate) students greet peers at the bus door as they arrive in the morning. Additionally, two PSC members greet students at the office door. PSC’s goal is to welcome each student and say something positive. It is a great way to start off the week and to build a positive culture where everyone feels accepted and has a sense of community.

Congratulations to the PHIS Students that received the American Citizenship Award for first quarter! These students were selected for their leadership skills, being a good role model, and exhibiting excellent citizenship and character traits. We are so proud of them!

Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Month for November! These students were nominated by their peers in their home-room/Rooster Time for exhibiting the character trait, responsibility. What a fabulous honor to be recognized by one’s peers in this manner! We are so proud of them!

Spotlight on Ms. Faitz’s 4th Grade Class
Students in Ms. Faitz's class have been learning about energy conversion through Project Lead the Way. Students created a bike and pulley system to demonstrate how energy can be converted.

Spotlight on Literacy - with Pumpkins!
PHES students were challenged to create a pumpkin “creation” that represented a piece of literature. Our students (and families) are super creative and there were many entries - making it difficult to judge.

Intermediate School

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Week of October 23-27
Week of October 30 - Nov. 3
Week of November 6-10
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Essential Question: How do you write the prime factorization of a number? In this image, the student has set up the number 200 to factor to its primes. If you look closely, he has started the factor tree by finding two factors that divide into 200 evenly without a remainder. He has several tools he is utilizing to assist him in the process. The tool he is currently utilizing is a multiplication table. He uses this to assist him in locating two more factors that divide into 20 evenly without a remainder. He will continue this process until the only factors left are all prime numbers. He then will utilize the calculator to multiple the prime numbers to check that the product results in 200.

Middle School

From left to right Positive School Climate ran a fundraiser for hurricane relief where students had to guess candy corn in a jar. Students in Mr. Moore and Mrs. Ortner’s class work on using academic language in math. The choirs performed their fall concert on October 13. Student-led conferences were again a success with over 50% of our students attending. Another 30% attended on the second night.

November holds many events at PHMS that will foster student growth and achievement. ELA and math will revisit Illuminate/Dna testing with students to see how much they have grown academically since the pretests in September. This will also provide data to those teachers to guide future instruction. Mrs. Davis will take a group of young ladies to the Society of Women Engineers conference on Friday, November 10 in Warrensburg. Also on Friday, PHMS will be hosting a Veteran’s Day Celebration inviting veterans and active duty members to an assembly that morning. Mrs. Brittany Campbell has organized the event and invited Bryenna McConnell, a Purple Heart recipient, to speak. The choirs and band will perform at the assembly as well. Winter sports have begun with MS students spreading throughout the district. The wrestlers are practicing at the HS, the boys’ basketball team is practicing at the ES, and the girls’ basketball team is practicing at the IS.

Upper left: Trackmakers were awarded to students on October 26 for scoring advanced on last spring’s MAP tests. Upper right: Here is some Halloween art from McManis’s students. Lower left: The fall dancers knew how to Wobble thanks to some of Mrs. Dowdy’s PE lessons. Lower right: PE uses the weight room to work on technique and core strength.
PHHS Teacher Awarded Honorary FFA Degree
Amanda Wingard received the Honorary American FFA Degree award at the 2017 National FFA Convention and Expo held on October 25-28, 2017 in Indianapolis, Indiana. This award is given to those teachers who have created high-quality agricultural education programs which inspire and motivate their students to strive for success.

PHHS Sophomore Learns from the Best in Medicine
Pleasant Hill High School sophomore Morgan Smith received an official Award of Excellence, certifying her completion of the National Academy of Future Medical Leaders in Boston, MA. While there, she watched live surgery and received instruction from some of the greatest minds in medicine. Morgan was also guided and mentored by prominent medical school academic leaders and inspired by young geniuses who are leading the future of medicine.

PHHS Biomedical Sciences and HOSA
October was a busy month for Biomedical science students and the PHHS chapter of HOSA (Healthcare Occupation Students of America). Biomedical students traveled to Children’s Mercy hospital to learn more about health career opportunities as well as receive coaching on educational pathways and professional conduct for interviews. Students were able to interact in small groups with professionals in clinical and research medicine, respiratory therapy, radiology, sports medicine and laboratory. Each professional offered stories of their educational and career path, professional responsibilities, inspiring stories and job duties. After the tour, Sydney Bunch stated, “It gave me comfort to know that it’s okay that I don’t know exactly what I want to do yet. It is enough to know that I want to go into healthcare and my experiences in school can help me decide what I want to do.” Chloe Bloom said, “It was really eye opening. It helped me realize there are a lot of different jobs that fit into what I am interested in.”

HOSA has expanded their membership this year welcoming new members from the freshman, sophomore, and junior, as well as first time senior members. New officers have been elected and plans are in place for enrichment, educational and service projects for the year. October’s project is safe ‘trick or treat’. HOSA members will be volunteering at the annual trick or treat trail handing out safety coloring pages, glow sticks and other reflectors to promote safety during Halloween activities.

Hi Step (High Schoolers Teaching Elementary Programs) is a club at the high school that has 36 members. This has been an active club at PHHS for over 25 years. The Hi Step members visit the third grade classes and teach lessons on character building. Not only do they teach lessons, they form friendships with the third graders. Most members still remember Hi Step members visiting their classes when they were in third grade. The Hi Step members just completed their four week program this week.

Students in Mrs. Case’s Geometry class used their trigonometry lessons to measure the height of the high school. Students used a tool called a clinometer to measure the angle of elevation to the top of the building and then applied the trigonometric functions learned in class to calculate the height. This activity gave students an opportunity to use geometry in a real life application.
Rooster Cheer: The Rooster football cheerleaders have had an outstanding season this fall. They've provided a lot of enthusiasm and have provided many smiles for our fans on game nights! I think we all would agree that the cheerleaders had a great year and we look forward to the winter groups performing just ahead!

Rooster Football: The Roosters get two district wins over Boonville and Hogan Prep to advance to the district championship this past weekend. This weekend’s game vs. Center High School was aired on Spectrum Sports. The Roosters dropped the game vs. the Yellowjackets in front of an awesome Pleasant Hill crowd. It was great to see the Rooster faithful in attendance to support our boys. Honors for the football team will be featured in the next publication and on our activities website!

Pride of the Hill: The PHHS marching band travelled to Odessa and then UCM the past two weekends. At UCM they brought home a 2nd place finish in their class and 9th overall after making finals! Mr. Twenter and Ms. Langemach are proud of the Pride of the Hill’s dedication to a rigorous practice schedule this fall and an excellent season. Now on to concert band auditions!

Cross Country: The Rooster XC team fell just a few points short in qualifying as a team for the state meet placing 3rd at districts. Landon Fatino, Jared Rottinghaus and Shawn Gallagher represented the Roosters in qualifying, while freshman Aubrey Scott earned a spot on behalf of the Chicks! Aubrey finished 33rd in her first race at state this past weekend. An awesome and nerve wracking experience for her first race. Landon Fatino finished 37th, Shawn Gallagher - 59th and Jared Rottinghaus - 109th place. Next year, take a trip out to Jefferson City to take in the meet. It is an awesome experience for the kids and a fun spectacle for the fans!

Chicks Volleyball: The Chicks did it again! They won 3rd place in the Missouri state volleyball championships for class 3. The Chicks won their first two pool play games; off to a strong start. Their position after pool play, however, slotted them into the 3rd place game. They defeated Incarnate Word Academy in two games to bring home the 3rd place hardware! They will have their season ending awards Monday evening at 6pm. Honors for the team will be publicized on the activities website and in the next publication.

High School Play: The High School Play is being performed this week! “The Greatest Christmas Pageant Ever” is being performed Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights (November 9th, 10th & 11th) this week. All shows begin at 7pm. Get your tickets now!


Scholar Bowl: The Rooster JV Scholar Bowl squad attended a competition at North Kansas City High School this past weekend! Coach Moore was very proud of the individual accomplishments as well as the team scores!

Victor Leiker: 17th overall individual (out of 108)
Bella Raysik: 21st overall individual

Our A team broke into the championship bracket, lost to St. Pius X on the last question, missing the super-playoff round, but won the 5th place game (of 24 teams) handily against Liberty.

Just in case you thought our varsity future may be in question, this JV squad appears to be among the best in the metro for any class! Final stats for the champion (Belton) were 332 points per game versus our own 323. Raytown, St. Pius, and LSN all snuck past us in tournament play and record, but we were second in points for the day. B and C squads didn't win much but were showed signs of promise as well. Not a single player was in the bottom quintile for individual performance, which is encouraging in terms of team balance and bench strength. Our ceiling is high and the floor is rising!

B earned 12th place
C earned 16th place

Primary School pictures

Students in Mrs. Pickett’s first grade used pumpkins for a measurement and place value activity in math class.