PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rooster Reading Time started at the PS this week! We enjoyed a “Barnyard Round-Up” for two days to practice procedures, then began working with our barnyards and coops on Wednesday. Coops are small groups of students at each grade level that receive targeted instruction in foundation skills: letters, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension. We ended the week with some fun collaboration. Shari Doutt involved staff in our building-wide kindness initiative, with a presentation based on her student lessons and a video of students defining kindness and how our staff members demonstrate kindness. Then we became task-oriented, learning to make origami hearts. Staff participated in an introductory activity for a model for peer observations, and put on their “walking shoes” to explore classrooms in teams of 3-4, in assigned areas. They wrote down ideas and questions for their own reflection, and “kudos” for the teachers whose classrooms they saw.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Last week we awarded our first High Five Character Awards to one student from each classroom. Students were selected for exhibiting responsibility, perseverance, kindness, friendship and respect. We will continue this recognition once a week for the remainder of the school year.

Teachers participated in a gallery walk last week to view scored student writing during plan time professional development. The gallery walk gave us the opportunity to view a continuum of student work from below basic to advances writing and allowed us to calibrate our expectations to ensure consistency.

On Thursday evening, September, 18th, parents were invited to have PIE (partners in education) with the principal and coffee with the counselor. Information about instruction and
curriculum were shared and parents were able to ask questions and provide feedback. The next PIE and coffee night will be in November.

On Friday, September 19th, the entire school participated in a problem based learning scenario. We launched our 2 hour project by assembling in the gym so that we could share with students the exciting news that we have the opportunity to create an outdoor science lab/garden for our school.

Students were then challenged with the task to design an outdoor lab space. Students worked cooperatively in groups to research, conduct interviews, create surveys, and crunch numbers to construct the best outdoor lab for our school. The excitement was palpable and the building was alive with learning. We will continue this project on October 3rd.

That same afternoon, teachers met with Mrs. Yokley to receive updates and information about district technology. This was followed by a session with our Library Media Specialist, Mindy Halfmann, in which she assisted every teacher as they set up a blog for their classroom. We concluded our day with a safety intruder drill and AED review. Thank you to the PH Police and Fire Department for attending.

This week we begin our last 4 weeks of the first quarter and look forward to more learning opportunities for staff and students at PHES where “Dreams are under Construction.”

**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

“Students of the Week” are: Lexi Danner, Jesse Ailshire, Hannah Joyce, Jake Glaze, Nick Watson and Jamie Hays. We congratulate these students for their outstanding character and deeds.

Students celebrated keeping their math skills sharp over the summer. Those students that completed the summer math challenge celebrated by having time in the library reading and utilizing their electronic devices. Snacks were also enjoyed by all.
Teachers in our building have been busy! They enjoyed sharing their curriculum to parents during Curriculum Night. It gave parents an opportunity to learn more about our building and ask questions. Our ELA teachers received professional development regarding 6 Trait Writing and calibrating writing. They have been busy calibrating writing using the four point scale. All of our teachers have been working hard on curriculum writing. Additionally they meet with the principal regarding data analysis which is an on-going process. Data is being used to identify students' needs and to help drive instruction.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Math news...In Algebra 1 we are learning to solve multi step story problems with variables on both sides of the equation. These are sometimes difficult at first to visualize, so we had the students first make a table and a graph which helped them to "see" the answer. After doing the table and graph, they can usually make an equation to solve the problem. (We also help them in equation writing by writing verbal models too.) Finally they put the answer to the problem in written form.

Seventh grade students both in Math and Intro Algebra are implementing the Standards for Math Practice with focus on standards 1, 5 and 6. The standards identify practices that allow success in mathematics and problem solving in general. Communication will also play an important role this year, both verbal and written. Good communication in math consists of clear purpose which includes connection of what is communicated back to the question or idea being talked about while stating what is known and what needs to be determined. When communicating about math, it is also important to contain a logical structure that summarizes at the end and links back to the question and idea. Furthermore, the use of representations with language clearly and carefully constructed, suited for the audience, demonstrating why, and finally convincing is crucial for meaning.
Intro Algebra classes are currently working on real numbers and the use of exponent rules and roots for those numbers which will expand to extreme numbers, scientific notation and operations with those types of numbers. Seventh Grade Math classes are working with proportions and how to use them with fractions, decimals and percents. Students are converting terms between fractions, decimals, and percents to find missing information within situations.

Parent involvement is important at the middle school level for mathematics. A routine which parents can involve their student is to ask “How Do You Know?” Students can practice at home explaining and defending their position on a mathematics problem or anything in general. Another is a license plate game which you can use for facts. For example find products of multiplication facts in the license plate of surrounding cars. If the license plate has a 36 in it, the response would be 36 is the product of 6 x 6. Any operation can be used with the game. One personal favorite which Mrs. Fender played with her grandparents is “mystery number”. One person thinks of a number and gives clues about that number. An example of this would be 63. The number is odd, multiple digits, 7 less than the product of 7 and 10. The other person would guess after each description until he/she arrives at the correct number.

The Exploratory Agriculture class took time last week to analyze how a country's agriculture industry affects its economic status as well as its state of living. Students created Haiku Decks to post on our blog and share out in class. After all were presented, each student selected one country that had been presented to compare with their own country. Now that we've discussed and analyzed agriculture in the world market, we are breaking down the United States to determine which agriculture products are produced in each state. The class has broken into pairs, were given five states for each pair, and access to an iPad to research agriculture products for their states. They will create a key to our US map that informs others of the ag products for their states. If possible, the students will create a QR code to also be placed on the map leading viewers to the products of that state. After we analyze the US, the class will break it down even more taking a closer look at Missouri and then Cass county/Pleasant Hill. Secondly, the students are taking turns caring for some plant cuttings and seedlings we've been starting over the last few weeks. This week the class will continue to start lettuce, kale and spinach in
soda bottles that will be used to create a hanging vertical garden in the window. They will also get the opportunity to take two more cuttings from two more houseplants to care for.

This week we also begin gearing up for our student-led parent teacher conference which will be hosted on Tuesday and Thursday, October 28 & 30 from 4-8:00 p.m. Since this is one of the first “experiences” of leading their own meeting with adults (parents and teachers), discussing grades, and goal-planning for our 7th grade students, we spend four designated days building-wide in planning and organizing student portfolios, practicing communication and goal-setting skills, and working jointly between students and all teachers to prepare for successful student-led conferences. This Friday is our first building-wide focus day to begin this process. Conferences are 4 weeks away, and we will be ready!

**HIGH SCHOOL**

On Wednesday, September 17, 2014, PHHS hosted the annual fall testing day. For the first time, all students at each grade level completed a different test aimed at providing standardized student achievement data. Ninth grade students were administered the Explore, while tenth grade students completed the PLAN. These tests are a measurement of academic progress within the ACT College and Career Readiness System of exams. Since every eleventh grade student in the State of Missouri will take the ACT test on April 28, 2015, PHHS administered a released version of the ACT to all eleventh grade students. For the second consecutive year students in the twelfth grade completed the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery). The results from each exam will be analyzed to provide the students and the school with valuable information including individual academic progress, student post-secondary options, along with information that provides feedback regarding curriculum and program quality.

**SPECIAL SERVICES**

After attending a Cass County Community Networking meeting, Miss Hamilton made connections with Karen Schalker from First Call. She provides mental health training. With collaboration with Dr. Gallagher and others on the administration team we were able to set up a training day for select staff for Youth Mental Health First Aid. Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. This course will be offered on September 30th at the Central Office. We have invited some community members to participate.
At this time, the Pleasant Hill Community Transition Team, that started due to a grant offered by the Department of Elementary Secondary Education, are working to set up some public training for Suicide Prevention. The team has arranged for QPR (Question, Persuade & Refer) a 2 hour training to be offered at the First Christian Church. QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer -- 3 simple steps that anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Each year thousands of Americans, like you, are saying "Yes" to saving the life of a friend, colleague, sibling, or neighbor. This will be from 6-8pm on September 29th.

Here is a comprehension activity Staci Waibel planned for a co-teaching classroom. The plot anchor chart was made while Miss Waibel was teaching the skill and then supplement of a second story for the students was used to provide practice of the skill. This was done in small groups. The students really enjoyed working together and did an excellent job completing the task!

TECHNOLOGY

As part of an effort to help provide well designed technology resources, a series of professional development sessions are being conducted this year at each school buildings. The sessions are being held throughout the day to help teachers locate and use the technology resources provided by the district. Resources such as Social Media Guidelines, help documents for our Student Information System, instructions on connecting to the wireless connection at each building, connection to the
district servers from home during off hours, and curriculum resources are just a few of the resources provided for teachers online. Throughout the year, additional resources will become available for teachers through the web page along with staff development sessions to help familiarize staff with the use of the resources.

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

Pleasant Hill Activities…gearing up for the winter season!

Highlights:

1. **Choir:** Mrs. Dollins took her choir to the Renaissance Festival this past weekend as the NOTEables held their annual Carnival fundraiser.
2. **Band:** The Pride of the Hill will be competing this coming weekend at Carrollton Band day. They have been working very hard on their show. Their brand new uniforms looked stellar when they were unveiled at our last home game.
3. **FB:** The Roosters hope to improve their record Friday night as they travel to Oak Grove to compete in a classic MRVC match-up. Come out and support the Roosters!
4. **VB:** The varsity volleyball team had a strong tournament this past weekend defeating the eventual champion in pool play, but dropping two very close matches to Columbia Rock Bridge in bracket play. The girls have two MRVC matches on the road this week at Grain Valley on Tuesday and at Excelsior Springs on Thursday. They wrap the week in the Warrensburg tournament on Saturday.
5. **SB:** The Chicks softball team won the gold bracket of the Liberty North Tournament defeating Liberty. They went 4-1 on the weekend finishing a strong week going 6-1 all week. They will play at home Monday and Thursday this week (Sion & Harrisonville). They are on the road Tuesday vs. Oak Grove.
6. **G Golf:** The ladies are participating in the MRVC Tournament Monday at Country Creek. They will compete at Warrensburg on Tuesday. Wish them luck!
7. **Boys Soccer** will compete at Harrisonville on Tuesday and at Excelsior Springs on Thursday. The Roosters are having a strong season. We just learned we will be hosting the district tournament the week of October 27th!

We appreciate everyone’s attendance and support for our programs. Thank you for the positive reflection within our community and at our events. As always… “It’s a great day to be a Rooster/Chick!”