PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary School students have been busy with inside activities during these frigid days. These first graders are showing off their lessons on distinguishing between fact and opinion. Now that third quarter has started, teachers are meeting with parents about any student concerns in order to develop plans for interventions, if needed. Staff enjoyed a day of math curriculum work and classroom preparation on January 2, and has been participating in an online motivational game that will culminate with team competitions at a staff meeting on Jan. 12. Teachers have also met to review the most recent Discovery Education assessment results in both reading and math, and to reassign students as needed during RtI time. We are planning for the 100th day of school later this month.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Second semester has begun smoothly at the Elementary School. Students participated in the 100 Page Reading Challenge over winter break and collectively read 26,000 pages. Top classrooms were Mrs. Rachel Young’s third grade and Miss Melissa Kurtz’s fourth grade. Our RTI groups started this week. The focus for our intervention groups this semester is spelling and phonemic awareness. Students have been divided into 23 instructional groups in which students receive targeted instruction on sound-symbol relationships in skills ranging from short vowels sounds to unaccented final syllables. Our goal is to improve spelling, writing and reading skills.

Our ES Student Leadership has been busy over the past few weeks. They have collected items for those less fortunate including hats, mittens, underwear and canned goods. Then on December 19th when the rest of us were heading off to enjoy Winter Break, they went to the Grace Family Fellowship Church to assemble holiday food boxes in conjunction with the PH Food Pantry for families in need. We are proud of them and their understanding that it is better to give than receive. Special thanks to our sponsors, Mrs. Voorhees and Mrs. Brundage for giving of their time and providing this valuable experience.
The PHES is still buzzing with excitement from our Elementary Extravaganza that took place on December 18th. Our school was filled with hundreds of excited students and interested parents. We look forward to launching into our 2nd semester work which will feature art infusion as we embrace the Crayola Grant materials and funds. Special thanks to Mrs. Nicole Albin for her fabulous art displays and collaboration with teachers. The ES will recognize and honor accomplishments made 2nd quarter at our Celebrations Assembly on Friday, January 16th at 2:30. We will recognize perfect attendance, character, and accomplishments in art, music and PE along with academic achievements.

**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

“Students of the Week” are: Kaemyn Stidham, Jenna Avery, TJ Horkay, Emma Lapee, Kiley Faust and Ryan Volland. We congratulate these students for their outstanding character and deeds. Congratulations to the PHIS Students of the Month: AJ Tindall, Jordan Mason, Gracie Reynolds, Ryan Perisho, Jesse Matthes, Hayden Hocker, Claire Kenyan, Aislee Gonzales, Parker Phipps, Joliana Canaan, Jesse Ailshire, Addi Zurcher and Taylor Kreisel! They were selected by their peers for exhibiting the character trait, responsibility!

On January 8 at 7pm our fifth grade students participated in D.A.R.E. Graduation. Students worked hard over the course of ten weeks first semester with Officer Chris Eddleman. Students learned about the D.A.R.E. decision making model, self awareness and management, understanding others, relationship and communication skills and handling responsibilities and challenges. Students concluded the program by writing an essay. Students used their 6 Trait skills as they wrote their informative paper. We thank the Cass County Sheriff’s Department for providing this educational experience to our students. It is exciting to witness our students pledge to lead a drug-free life.

The District Spelling Bee will take place on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, at the High School PAC. The bee will start promptly at 5pm. Congratulations to the following 5th and 6th grade students who will be representing the Intermediate school (listed in no particular order). These students earned a spot to compete at the District level after becoming grade level champs earlier this school year.

**6th Grade**

Abby Teitelbaum, Riley Vaughn, Drake Beaman, Keagan Madison, Gabby Lopez
**Middle School**

Mark your calendars for the first-ever combined Pleasant Hill Middle and Intermediate School Musical Production! Join the Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, the Citizens of Whoville, and many more of your favorite Dr. Seuss characters as they entertain you in our production of Seussical, Jr.! Performances will be on March 5th, 6th and 7th, 2015 at the High School. More information to come soon...

The ELA classrooms are alive with the looks, smells, and sounds of learning. New classroom furniture was delivered over break (we now have tables and chairs instead of desks) as well as a cart of Chromebooks for our students to use. Nothing like walking into a classroom with the smell of new wood furniture and students excited about using their very own piece of technology heaven.

Our first week back, students were learning the procedures for the use of their new Chromebooks. By the end of the first week, we had them completing assignments and turning them in electronically. Each teacher has a blog/website linked on the homework document and will have current classroom assignments and information available for student use even at home. One of the great things about Google is students can get on their accounts anywhere with internet access and complete assignments.
This week seventh grade classes will begin the Greek Mythology Unit and eighth grade classes will be picking up from where we left off in *The Giver* last semester. We are excited to come up with new lessons that integrate technology into their learning. Seventh grade will be able to take a trip to Mount Olympus to visit the gods that reside there. Wonderful things are happening in the classroom, and we are all excited about the possibilities we have in front of us. What an adventure!

**HIGH SCHOOL**

Recently, Mrs. Boden and Mrs. Hardin collaborated on a “Book Tasting” event for 9th and 10th grade students.

The goal of a book tasting is for students to “taste” or sample a wide variety of books and to explore titles that they might not normally choose. Students were served light snacks throughout the session. Books were selected by Mrs. Hardin based on their past popularity and were grouped to appeal to diverse interests within each student group. Each group of four students had a choice of twelve books at each of the seven stations (total of 84 books).

Each student came to the library equipped with a tracking sheet that was divided with a place for students to write the author, title, and synopsis of each book that they sampled. The students also ranked each book to note whether or not they would actually read it later. Students sat at numbered tables based on their groups, and had five minutes at each station to explore as many of the twelve books as they wished. Students were encouraged to choose two or three books during each five minute session so that they would have time to not only read the summary on the back, but also read some of the book itself. It was during that exploration that students were able to take notes on their tracking sheet.

Most students visited five to six stations, resulting in exposure of up to 72 new books in one class period. It was the original goal for students to come away from this activity with six titles that they had explored, however students were very engaged and many of them had ten or more titles by the end of the session. Students were given time at the end of each hour to put any titles they explored on hold and were allowed to pick those up either after school or the next morning.

The student feedback from the activity was very positive. As a result, other ELA teachers plan to do Book Tastings in the library in the coming months.
**SPECIAL SERVICES**
The Office

We are continuing to complete evaluations and reevaluations. Mrs. Maxey and Mrs. Welliver are starting another round of referrals. Ms. Gassaway continues to complete tests. This year testing has switched to a digital format. She has had to learn how to administer, score and write up each test using IPads. This has been and continues to be a major undertaking.

Pam Maxey, Veronica Love, and Tammy Prewitt will be complete their In District Autism Consultant (IDAC) training this week. Annette Barnes is already an IDAC. We will continue to work with Project Access to evaluate and improve our program.

Primary School (Ms. Kay & Mrs. Harrald Co Teaching)

To build on the sense of community already established in the classroom, Kerri Kay asked to do a Super Hero Day in honor of Jacob Beemer’s birthday. Ms. Kay and the students also recorded their rendition of Happy Birthday to Jacob and that recording was sent to his family via Mrs. Harrald, so he could hear his classmates singing to him on his big day! The primary and elementary schools have collected over $1000.00 for Jacob’s family.

When we returned from break, the students in Ms. Kay’s class brainstormed and wrote and thank you letter to Mrs. Haight. They are focusing on audience and purpose in writing and preparing to do an opinion piece of writing at the end of this quarter.

Elementary School (Mrs. Pickett's & Mrs. Denish's Third grade Co Teaching)

After reading, *If The World Were A Village*, students graphed and discussed global topics such as clean water, school, and languages. Afterwards, students were given countries to research.

We are teaching reading comprehension skills through this global research project. Students are reading both fiction and nonfiction text to learn more about specific countries.
Intermediate School (Mrs. Murray & Mrs. Dyer 5th Grade Co Teaching)
In fifth grade ELA, Mrs. Dyer and Mrs. Murray are very excited about the new curriculum materials we are piloting called Wonders. So far the stories are very engaging for the students. We have had some great discussions in class. This week, we are working on “theme” which we expect to see a lot of on our testing this spring.

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Middle School: Ms. Heineck Self-Contained Classroom
We have had a lot of fun this semester learning all about the writing process. In ELA this semester, we learned about each step in the writing process. The students created an anchor chart that listed the steps and the different parts of each step. The students were then given a writing assignment after learning all about the process. They had to write all about their year in 2014. Students are now working through each step carefully to complete this assignment. The students are really enjoying this and have shown a lot of progress in their writing since the beginning of school!
Pleasant Hill Activities… “It’s a GREAT Day to be a Rooster/Chick!”

Highlights:

There are some awesome things going on with our activities this month! I encourage you to step outside your regular routine and take in a match or a game. Take in a concert or maybe see what a speech & debate meet is all about. Scholar Bowl, FCCLA, DECA, FBLA, FOR and FBLA among other clubs and activities are welcoming to all who are interested in checking them out and supporting them. They are all competitive in their own ways; they just keep score in different ways!

1. The Boys Basketball team is “sporting” a solid team this year. They’ve persevered though one of the toughest non-conference schedule through this point and are poised for a successful run through the MRVC West conference season. Check out Coach Messinger and the Roosters soon! They are seed 2nd in the 90th Annual Pleasant Hill Tournament this week. They play at 8:30pm Tuesday.

2. The Rooster Wrestling team has performed very well this winter. Coach Wyatt has led the Roosters though the Steve Leslie Invitational, the Harrisonville Holiday Tournament, and most recently the Derby, Kansas tournament, placing 3rd in the toughest tournament on the Kansas side. Be sure to follow them on their twitter page; @RoosterWrestle

3. The Chicks Basketball team is really just getting going due to a light schedule thus far. The Chicks took 3rd place in the Belton Tournament the first week of December and are in stealth mode as a sleeper pick heading into the Pleasant Hill Tournament this week. They are excited to get going in the MRVC West regular season after this week’s tournament. Coach Adamczyk has got the ladies working hard and pushing toward success on and off the court! They play at 8:30pm Monday.

4. Mr. Twenter and the band program represented PHHS with several students in District band concert this past weekend. A strong growth period is evident within this music program as it’s numbers are up! It is exciting to see so many kids in our district gravitate to a growing instrumental music program.

5. Mrs. Dollins has the choirs all set to begin and awesome competition season. Hillside will be hosting a show choir clinic of sorts at Crown Center this next weekend. Noteables will also be sponsoring the annual Battle of the Best competition in two weeks. Finally this month, the Hillside Singers will be performing at the Missouri Music Educators Association convention the last weekend in January…Jan. 29th.
6. Mr. Berry has the Speech & Debate program working in a successful direction. Numbers are increasing and their competitive ability is becoming impressive. They just took 7th as a group and earned plenty of hardware recently at the Lexington meet this past weekend. Follow this group on twitter: @roosterdebate

7. Mr. Moore is building a strong group of young competitors that make up our Scholar Bowl team, formally known as the academic team. The name change is a trend among programs across the nation. The Scholar Bowl team will be competing in MRVC meets over the next couple of months. You are sure to hear more as the competitions approach. They will be competing this Wednesday in Grain Valley.

Some exciting news!! The activities department launched a new webpage this past week. Check it out at www.pleasanthillactivities.org
Currently a work in progress as we discover what works best in communicating with our patrons, parents and community on the webpage. In the future look for contributing articles from members of our new Ambassador Club, coaches and managers. Fans even have an opportunity to contribute photos to the site. Be patient! It's not perfect...yet, but we'll get there! We hope you find it useful and enjoyable.

Have a safe winter!