



PERRY ★ LECOMPTON

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 343

October - April 2014/15 Newsletter

Newsletter #2

What's That in the Sky?

by Denis Yoder, Superintendent

If the Kaw could fly (and maybe it does!), it would be soaring as we kick-off a successful new school year in Perry-Lecompton Schools! If you could travel through our classrooms, you would witness students and teachers excited about teaching and learning. You would see outstanding teaching and up-to-date technology in use throughout our schools supporting our students.

If you have a child in our schools, you probably have heard about positive changes in our breakfasts and lunches this year. OPAA, the school district's new food management company, has invigorated our lunchrooms with new and inviting menus and a return to scratch cooking. Parents are encouraged and welcome to come have a lunch date with their children while enjoying the new, and we think improved, lunch offerings.

Research tells us that students who participate in extracurricular activities perform better in the classroom and have better attendance. The middle school has over 70% of their students involved in extracurricular activities this year while over half of our high school students participate in extracurriculars. Perry-Lecompton students are taking advantage of rich opportunities to participate in team sport activities that help both in the classroom and assist in their preparation for life after school.

The ACT is a college readiness test taken by high school students across the country each year that plan to attend college. ACT results from PLHS this year provide clear and strong evidence of our students' outstanding academic achievement. The PLHS composite score in the English, Math, Reading and Science sections of the test was 23.5, above the state average of 22.0 and well above the national average of 21.0. Both the students who took the ACT and our teaching staff are to be commended for their outstanding efforts.

Our district is in the process of developing promotional materials to encourage new families to come to our school district. We want to share our good news with families who may be considering a move to USD 343 Perry-Lecompton. Our district is poised to take advantage of the proposed residential development near Lawrence located in the Perry-Lecompton School District.

Good things are happening in our schools and school district as the 2014-15 year begins. You can help make it an even better year by being involved in your child's school activities, attending Parent-Teacher Conferences, going to a sporting event or coming to musical performance. I promise that you'll see and hear good things happening and just maybe on a clear day, you'll see the Kaw soaring high in the sky above the Kansas River valley!



**Board of Education
Special Meeting Summary**

The USD 343 Board of Education special meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 28, 2014.

- Superintendent Denis Yoder reviewed the proposed 2014-2015 budget with board members. The consensus of the board was to approve the preliminary budget for publication in the newspaper. The budget hearing meeting will be held on August 11, 2014 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the District Office.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

**Board of Education
Meeting Summary**

The USD 343 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 11, 2014.

A consent agenda was approved, which included minutes and various financial matters.

Nonaction items on the agenda included the following:

- The board discussed various options with an investor group regarding the potential sale of district-owned property south of the high school.
- The Student Data Privacy draft policy IDEA was given to the board to preview prior to anticipated action at the September board meeting.

Board action included:

- A budget hearing was held to review the proposed USD #343 2014-15 budget. Board approval was given for the budget as presented.
- The following employment contract recommendations were approved by the board.
 - Susie Hackathorn as the Kaw Camp Family Liaison
 - Rachel Hamm, Marci Henderson, Susie Whitaker and Sue Nanninga as Kaw Camp Teachers
 - Gloria Dye as the Kaw Camp Program Evaluator
 - Rebecca Killen at Kaw Camp Site Director
 - Jordan Allen as Freshman Girls Basketball Coach
 - Larry Hatfield as Assistant High School Soccer Coach
- The following resignations were approved by the board.
 - Barbara Wilson as Kitchen Manager
 - Cindy Schwindt as a van driver
- The board approved the following grant to the district.
 - CCLC grant award of \$54,943
- Board approval was given to donate food items in the food service inventory to the Topeka Rescue Mission not purchased by OPAA and which no longer meet nutritional guidelines.
- The board approved the USD #343 Emergency Operations Plan as presented by Judy Chamberlain.
- Board approval was given to accept a solar energy array grant award from Westar with a value of \$50,118. The solar energy array will be located south of the PLHS greenhouse.
- Adult meal prices for 2014-15 were set at \$3.65 and at \$1.85 for an adult breakfast.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

**Board of Education
Special Meeting Summary**

The USD 343 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 28, 2014.

- The board went into executive session to discuss non-elected personnel.
- The board took action to suspend Theresa Beatty from her duties as Athletics Director and Transportation Director without pay for a period of 29 contract days, effective Sept. 2, 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

**Board of Education
Meeting Summary**

The USD 343 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, September 8, 2014.

A consent agenda was approved, which included minutes and various financial matters.

Nonaction items on the agenda included the following:

- Building principals presented the board with 2014-15 back-to-school reports.
- There was discussion regarding the potential sale of district property south of the high school with no action taken.
- The Lecompton ball field was discussed regarding supervision of the field during non-school related events. It was reported the Douglas County Sheriff's Department will more closely monitor the field during non-school tournaments if given advance notice. There was no action taken.

Board action included:

- The following employment contracts/recommendations were approved by the board:
 - Christian Brown as the PLMS 8th B boys basketball coach
 - Alayna Powell as an assistant cross country coach
 - Racheal Ferguson as an assistant tennis coach
 - Justin Smith as the PLHS scholars bowl coach
 - Johnnie Shereman as a bus driver and custodian at LES
 - Isse Bergstrom as a van driver
 - Abbey Hurd as a van driver
 - Marge Tobin as Kitchen Manager
- The board rescinded Beth Hupe's offer of employment.
- The board approved the resignation of Felisha Hershell as a custodian at LES effective September 12.
- The board approved the sale of a kiln removed from PLMS and the sale of 210 student desks no longer needed.
- A gift to the district valued at \$100 in vegetable seed from Tarwater's in Topeka was approved by the board.
- The 2013-14 USD #343 audit as prepared by Jarred, Gilmore & Phillips, CPA, was approved by the board.
- The board rescinded approval of the PLHS International Club trip to Italy in May and June of 2016.
- The board took action to approve a motion for the school district to no longer sponsor international club trips.
- The Student Privacy Policy IDAE was given board approval.
- 2014-15 Classified and Transportation Handbooks were approved.
- The board approved a motion to build an addition onto the baseball storage building to provide room for a new baseball/softball concessions area.
- The school board approved a school lunch visitation schedule for the 2014-15 school year including October 14 at LES, December 16 at PLMS, February 17 at PES and April 14 at PLHS.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



Perry & Lecompton Elementary Schools

Connie Thornton, Principal



Welcome to the 2014-15 school year. As I was writing this I began reflecting on the number of years I have been involved in education – I'm beginning my 30th year! It is true time flies when you are having fun! Over those 30 years I have been employed by six school districts in the state of Kansas in a variety of positions: secretary, paraprofessional, special education teacher, elementary teacher and principal. Needless to say I have also experienced a variety of educational programs and initiatives over the years. What this tells me is that the education system continues to change and evolve to meet the needs of our children. I believe this is especially true in the area of technology. For example, I was trying to explain to my grandchildren about the phones I used as a child. Their comprehension of 'how things used to be' was limited. This event made me start to wonder about all the things that would be changing in their future. The most intriguing question for me is, "Are we appropriately preparing our students to function in the 21st century and beyond?"

21st century skills include the following topics: Information Literacy, Creativity & Innovation, Communication & Collaboration, Problem Solving, Communication and Responsible Citizenship. The basic idea is that students who will come of age in the 21st century need to be taught different skills than those learned by students in the 20th century, and that the skills they learn should reflect the specific demands that will be placed upon them in a complex, competitive, knowledge based, information age, technology driven economy and society.

This topic is a high priority for teachers and they are diligently working to incorporate these skills into their classroom. I am encouraged by their efforts to learn and grow in their profession by attending workshops, participating in college courses and reading books that will help them prepare their students for the 21st Century.

Perry Lecompton Elementary Schools welcomes the following new staff for the 14-15 school year: Erin Broadbent, Counselor; Chris Self, LES Special Education Teacher and Barbara Sue Branson, student teacher from the University of Kansas.



The PLES PTO had their first meeting of the school year and is in the process of planning many events. Officers for the current school year are: President: Adrienne Meyer, Vice President: Sarah Spreer, Secretary: Megan Baranski, Treasurer: Wendy George. All meetings will be held on Mondays at the PES library @ 6:30 pm. Please refer to the district web calendar for specific dates. The meeting minutes are posted on the elementary web page.

Elementary Site Council Members are: Ryan Rush, Jarae Essman, Ruth Ellis, Matt Sawyer, Stephanie Confer and Amy Meyer.

We welcome your involvement and appreciate all the volunteer support which continues to make our schools successful. To keep informed utilize the district web site at www.usd343.net

Please contact me with questions or concerns. Thank you for your support!

Connie Thornton

PLES Principal



News from Perry-Lecompton Middle School

Josh Woodward, Principal

Message from the Principal Office

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all students, parents and staff for a great start to the 2014-2015 school year. Ensuring a good school year is definitely dependent on everyone working together as a team and our staff is thrilled with the support that our parents have given us through the first few weeks of school.

Occasionally, I read an article or come across a video that I enjoy and believe that parents might enjoy as well. I've included a couple of videos and an article below. I hope you enjoy them.

Educational Research out of Stanford University

Stanford University Professor Carol Dweck has completed extensive research on what's called Growth Mindset. Dr. Dweck contends that the ability to learn is not determined by ability but rather effort, instruction and dedication. Her research indicates that students who enjoy challenges, also expect to expend effort on class work and as a result, improve over the long haul. They view failure as an opportunity to grow and learn. For more information on Dr. Dweck's research, please use the following link. There are three short videos.

<http://www.mindsetworks.com/webnav/dr-dweck-interviews.aspx>

Angela Lee Duckworth left a high-flying job in consulting to take a job teaching math to seventh graders in a New York public school. As a result, she quickly learned that the real predictor of success wasn't IQ but rather "grit". In her video, she too mentions Growth Mindset. If interested, you may watch her video at the following link. http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit

What Makes A Nightmare Sports Parent -- And What Makes A Great One?

I found the following article very interesting and wanted to share. It definitely brought back memories of my youth. Growing up, I frequently remember hearing the words.... "I love watching you play"... from my parents and it definitely meant a lot to me. I can tell you that I'm thankful to see such supportive parents for our PLMS kids. Hope you enjoy the article! <http://www.thepostgame.com/blog/more-family-fun/201202/what-makes-nightmare-sports-parent>

Student-Teachers Train at PLMS

PLMS welcomes two student-teachers this fall. Sam Swoyer from Washburn University is working with Mr. Heide's 7th grade English Language Arts class and Claire Kwan from the University of Southern California "online" program, is student-teaching with Mrs. Vierling's 8th grade Math class.

Mrs. Kwan grew up in New Freedom, Pennsylvania, which is located about half way between Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland. She and her husband arrived in Kansas last February and have grown to love Northeast Kansas. Before completing her teaching degree, Mrs. Kwan worked as an acoustical consultant for a small company where she advised architects and engineers who were designing or renovating buildings for the performing arts. In addition to this job, she began tutoring in the evenings and realized that she enjoyed her part-time job more than her full-time job. Mrs. Kwan commented that teaching is really hard work but also very rewarding and never boring. She says that PLMS has a great atmosphere for learning, because the staff and students are so supportive of each other and believes it will be very hard to leave after Thanksgiving.

Mr. Swoyer is originally from Winchester, Kansas where he attended and graduated from Jefferson County North High School. His time at Perry-Lecompton will be split between Mr. Heide's 7th grade class and Mr. Dunnaway's high school English class.

Mr. Swoyer commented that he is truly enjoying his time at PLMS and especially loves seeing students learn something new as a result of classroom instruction. The students and staff have been extremely welcoming and PLMS has by far been the best place that he has done any of his professional placements. His future aspiration include finding a job at a rural school in Kansas and continuing his education with dreams of completing a doctorate program so that he can teach at the university level.

PLMS welcomes Mr. Swoyer and Mrs. Kwan to the PLMS family and wish them the best with their future endeavors.

That's all from PLMS. As always, stop by, email or call if you have any questions, concerns or celebrations!

PLMS Principal



Perry-Lecompton High School

J.B. Elliott, Principal



How to Help Your Student

During one of my many evenings supervising extracurricular activities, I pondered the thought of “what would help our students succeed more during high school”. If you conduct an internet search on ensuring student success, you will find a long list of useful web links, most of which seem to be great advice. In my mind, I can’t help but believe the more a parent knows about what is going on in their student’s school, the more the parent can help guide their student in the right direction. With that, I would like to list a few items that will help parents become more “connected” with our school.

1. Visit the district and school website as much as possible. You will find links to informative articles that are updated approximately every three days, links to each building in our district, a useful parent section that includes links that will allow parents to check student grades via PowerSchool, links to calendars listing all school events, a link to the student handbook, PLHS Course Handbook, and a link to lunch and breakfast menus.
www.usd343.net
2. Read the school newsletter. The PLHS newsletter is sent out through our School Messenger email system and we also list the newsletter on our website. Here is the direct link to the newsletter section on the website:
<http://bit.ly/1yiye5t>
3. Know the names and email addresses of your student’s teachers. Don’t hesitate to email teachers or staff members with a question. As a rule, the email addresses of staff members follow the pattern of first initial, last name, and @usd343.org. For example: jelliott@usd343.org. Or, you can visit the PLHS staff webpage:
<http://bit.ly/1o6udY4>
4. Follow PLHS on Twitter. If you use this social media, please add us to your follow list. We are @PLHSKAWS. As often as we can, we send out tweets of athletic scores, links to school related articles, and pictures of various student activities.
5. We also have many useful school videos for parents listed on our YouTube channel. Be sure to take a look when you have time. Simply go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/PLHSKaws>. You can view videos from our account or subscribe to our channel.

Hopefully, this list of tips is helpful and will assist you in staying connected with PLHS. If you have questions about any of this information or other items, please do not hesitate to contact me at the PLHS office!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.B. Elliott". The signature is written in a cursive style.

PLHS Principal

Great news – EF Tours introduces its low price guarantee – No more departure fees, no more enrollment fees, no more price increases! Whatever program fees are in place when you sign up – that is your guaranteed price – it will not increase!!!

Sign up now for the Grand Tour of Italy!!
Perry Lecompton International Tours
www.eftours.com/1457696BP



Perry Lecompton International Tours and Mrs. Whitaker would like to invite you to join us on a 12 day Italian adventure. Join us as we experience the beautiful countryside and ancient history of Italy!

Bella Italia – The Grand Tour of Italy – includes Rome, Venice, Milan, Assisi, Pompeii, Florence, and so much more – we will visit the Vatican City and have the option to view the Tower of Piza and the Isle of Capri!!!

This is a jam-packed trip that is filled lots of “ooohh – awww” moments! A trip, that promises to be an amazing experience, one that will be cherished for a lifetime.

This trip is open to students of USD 343, family members of students, and community members. The program cost of the 12 day trip is approximately \$3800.00. The program cost does not include insurance, departure fees, and optional excursions.

Remember that your trip costs include: International round trip airfare, hotel, continental breakfast and complete supper, a full time tour director, in country transportation, entrance into many castles and museums, several day guides and walking tours.

Travelers will depart in late May 2016. You can sign up for the trip at www.eftours.com/1173900

Please contact [Susie Whitaker](mailto:swhit0907@aol.com) at swhit0907@aol.com or 785-550-0267 if you want more information about joining us on the wonderful journey.

This is not a PLHS or USD 343 function – this trip is hosted by Susie Whitaker.

School Safety Update

Each school district in Kansas needs to have an up-to-date Emergency Operations Plan to direct actions in the event of a crisis. Our current plan was developed with assistance from Greenbush Educational Service Center and meets important standards of practice. It will be updated annually, on the same schedule as other documents such as Parent Handbooks, to reflect the changing recommendations of school safety professionals.

All staff participated in safety training at LES on August 8. In the morning, new resources purchased last summer were explained and handed out. In the afternoon, a team of trainers led by Detective Dean Ohman (Douglas County Sheriff's Office) and Captain Mark Witt (KU Security) brought us a short PowerPoint presentation to establish the context needed for the "live" hostile intruder simulation which followed. The day closed with a time for small groups to process the experience.

One facet of safety is finding alternate locations for a whole student body in case we need to evacuate a school for any reason. We are fortunate to have a close-knit community with excellent space in certain buildings which can be used if necessary on very short notice. Making sure that families and students know where to go in that case is one of our priorities for the first semester.

Another facet of safety is a school culture of “see something, say something” in which all students and staff members are alert to unusual or worrisome events and report them to teachers or administrators. Our leaders are in close contact with social service agencies and first responders who can investigate reports and provide help to troubled persons.

The Kansas School Safety Hotline (1-877-626-8203) is a toll free number available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to give all patrons a way to report possible impending school violence anonymously. The calls are answered by trained staff at the KS Highway Patrol office in Salina. After the information has been collected, local law enforcement agencies and/or superintendent of schools will be notified so that they can take further action to resolve the situation.

Together, we can make sure that every day at school is safe and productive!

USD #343 Board of Education News

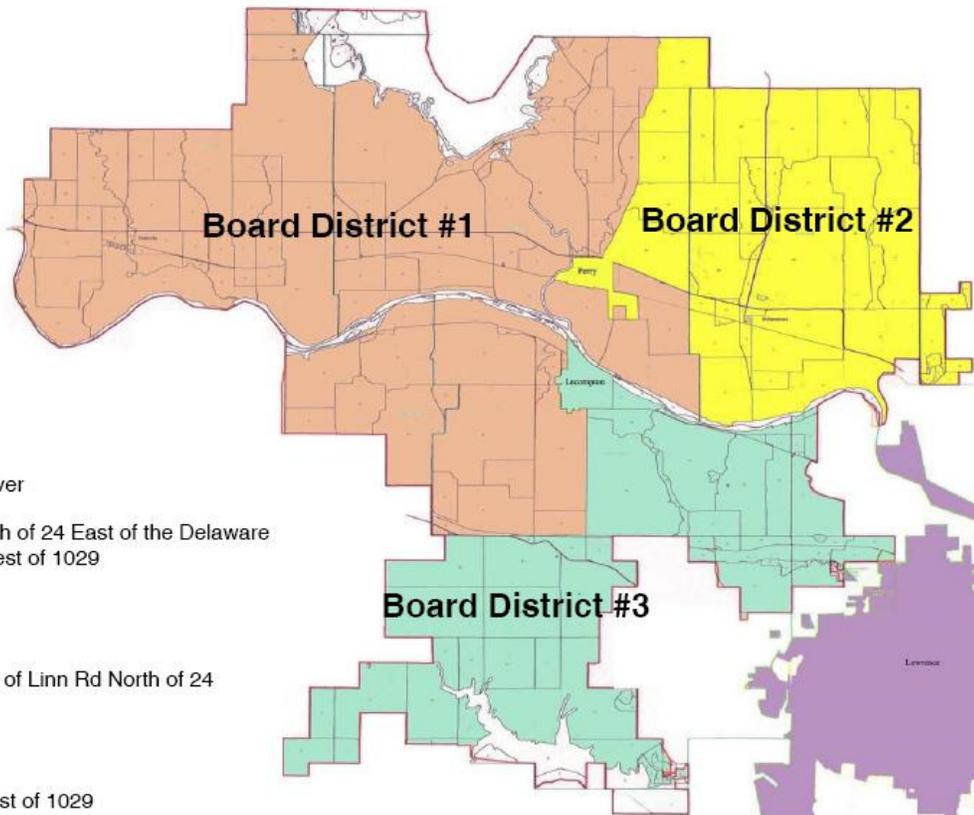
The USD #343 Board of Education will have four positions up for election in 2015. The school board is comprised of seven members with two members coming from each of the three board districts, plus an at-large member. Below are the positions that will be available and the members currently serving in those positions.

Travis Daniels	District At-Large Position
Matt Erickson	Board Member District #1
Tim Blosser	Board Member District #2
Jenny Morgison	Board Member District #3

All candidates must reside in the Board Member District they represent. The at-large candidate must reside in the school district. Filing deadline at the County Courthouse in Oskaloosa is noon on January 27, 2015. If needed, a Primary Election will be held on March 3, 2015 with the General Election held on April 7, 2015. The newly elected board members will begin their four-year term of service on July 1, 2015.

Contact the District Office at 785-597-5138 for any questions you may have regarding school board membership.

USD #343 Board Districts



Member District 1
West of the Delaware River
West of Linn Road
Kentucky Township South of 24 East of the Delaware
Lecompton Township West of 1029
Big Springs Township

Member District 2
City of Perry
Kentucky Township East of Linn Rd North of 24
Rural Township

Member District 3
City of Lecompton
Lecompton Township East of 1029
Kanwaka Township
North Wakarusa Township

USD 343 District Newsletter Publication & Deadline Information



The USD 343 District Newsletter is published three times a year. Issues will be sent out the last week in September, March, and July. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the month the newsletter is published. Whenever possible, please submit articles electronically by e-mail to: ahale@usd343.org or to Perry Elementary School, Attn: Autumn Hale, PO Box 168, Perry KS 66073

USD #343 Mission Statement

The purpose of USD 343 is to provide all students the equal opportunity for improvement at the highest level of their ability in a positive and safe environment.

Adopted by the USD 343 Board of Education on December 10, 2001

USD #343 District Beliefs

- Our focus is on being a **UNIFIED** school district.
- Our schools must be centers of **OPPORTUNITY**.
- Mastery of **READING** and **MATH** is fundamental to a quality education.
- **PRIDE IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY** is an important element in a quality school experience.
- The success of our schools is accomplished through the willingness of all stakeholders to accept **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY**.
- For students to learn effectively they must have a school environment that demands **RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL**.
- The **EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY** is essential for the success of our schools.
- **GOOD CITIZENSHIP** and **RESPECT FOR COUNTRY** by staff and students are important cornerstones of our educational system.
- The **FAMILY** is a key to a child's success at school.

Adopted by the USD 343 Board of Education on October 8, 2001

Note: *District Beliefs* are listed in random order

Unified School District 343
PO Box 729
Perry, Kansas 66073