



PERRY ★ LECOMPTON

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 343

April - July 2015 Newsletter Newsletter #3

Farming and Teaching: Our Two Most Important Professions

By Denis Yoder, Superintendent

I'm the product of farmers and educators, which in Kansas for a baby boomer probably isn't that unusual. I was fortunate to be able to spend a great deal of time with both of my grandfathers as I grew up. One was a farmer with a grade school education while the other was a teacher with a Ph. D. I learned valuable lessons from each of them. They both had a passion for their work and they believed that Kansas was a great state to live, work and raise a family. Grandfather John, a longtime college biology professor, would often tell me that our two most important professions were farming and teaching. One nourishes our bodies and the other our minds. Although those words were spoken over a half-century ago, I believe they still have merit in today's world. The latest news coming from Topeka suggests that both farmers and teachers in Kansas could be facing difficult times ahead.

I'm not sure my grandfather's words played a role in my career choices, but I was raised on a dairy farm and have been an educator for 37 years. More now than at any time during my career as an educator, I'm fearful of reductions in school funding this year and in the future. We know the state has plans to reduce funding this fiscal year in our school district, possibly as much as \$160,000. It appears the state will continue to reduce funding to our classrooms as we plan for next year through Block Grants.

Our school district will be able to absorb the budget cut this year, even though we're over half way through our budget year, by reducing district and classroom expenditures the rest of the year, reducing fund transfers at the end of the fiscal year (June 30) and possibly not pre-paying for some big ticket expenses such as property insurance at the end of the fiscal year as we have been able to do in the past. Reducing transfers and not pre-paying for services this year will only reduce our budget flexibility next year.

USD #343 anticipates making reductions in spending next year through a variety of methods including staff reductions, delayed purchases, and possibly the reduction or elimination of some programs. Staffing reductions will most often be made by not filling positions of staff that retire or resign. If I said these reductions will enhance our schools, I would be less than honest.

Please rest assured that the USD #343 board of education and district staff will continue to provide our students with quality learning experiences through these challenging times.

However, there may still be time for our legislature to make decisions that can positively affect schools next year and beyond. I would encourage you to contact your elected representatives if you have concerns about funding for our schools in the future.

The world has changed in so many ways since my formative years in central Kansas, but farmers and teachers remain as keys to the prosperity of our state. Both of my grandfathers are gone now, but I do wonder what they would think about the future of our great state in 2015.



**Board of Education
Meeting Summary**

The following is a list of actions taken by the USD 343 Board of Education at their most recent meetings:

- The First State Bank & Trust presented a donation to the Perry-Lecompton Endowment Association in the amount of \$1,802.55 as the result of the use of the Kaw Debit Card for the past year.
- The following gifts to the district were given board approval:
 - Equipment received by Kelsey Baldwin to support the P.E. program through a Just Dance Lesson Plan Pilot Program
 - Two banners with the school song on them to be hung in the PLHS gym were donated by Jenny and Kent Morgison
 - A donation of \$1,000 from Jared Swafford's summer basketball camps to support the PLHS basketball program
 - A \$2,500 Perkin's Reserve Fund Grant
 - 20 bags of mound clay to be used on the baseball field
- The following employment contracts/recommendations were approved by the board:
 - Amy Busey in Food Service
 - Tracy Wichman as a PLMS/PLHS custodian
 - Saul Heide as an ESOL teacher at PLHS
 - Caleb Denton as High School Assistant Boys Basketball Coach
 - Marci Henderson as a Certified Paraprofessional at LES
 - Beth Hupe as PLMS Counselor effective November 1, 2014
 - Dorothy Smith as a food service employee, effective December 17
 - John Mehl was approved as a 5-hour per day library paraprofessional at PLHS
 - Rachael Ferguson as an assistant high school golf coach
 - Katie Chaney was approved as an 8-hour custodian at PLHS effective 3/9/15
 - Austin Jantz was approved as a morning SPED van driver
- The following notices of intent to retire was approved by the board:
 - Judy Chamberlain as Director of Curriculum & Instruction at the conclusion of the current contract year
 - Linda Mooney, food service employee, effective December 31, 2014
 - Gretchen Byer, LES 3rd grade teacher, effective at the end of the 2014-15 contract year
 - Tonquie Bandel, food service employee, effective at the end of the school year
 - Mary Guffey, LES 4th grade teacher, effective at the end of the 2014-15 school year
- The following administrative assignments and contracts were approved:
 - JB Elliott, PLHS principal, was named as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the 2015-16 school year
 - Administrative assignments for 2015-16:
 - Connie Thornton – PLES principal
 - Josh Woodward – PLMS principal
 - Theresa Beatty – Assistant PLHS principal
 - Mike Maloun – Assistant PLMS principal
 - The board approved the extension of the contract for Superintendent Denis Yoder to June 30, 2017
- The board approved a resolution recognizing November 16-22, 2014 as American Education Week in USD #343.
- The board approved providing free Thanksgiving dinners to district staff and USD #343 senior citizens on Friday, November 21, 2014.
- Superintendent Denis Yoder shared information with the board regarding the promotional video being developed by KU Media Productions. A homecoming video was shown as an example of the work done by KU Media Productions.
- Superintendent Yoder recognized USD #343 board of education members for their service to the district. January was designated as School Board Recognition Month in Kansas.
- The board approved a resolution urging the Kansas Legislature to pass no law changing the school board election cycle and to pass no law changing the nonpartisan status of local board of education elections.
- Several students from Jared Swafford's class, Emerging Technology, were present to discuss various aspects of the class and current projects underway.
- PLHS teacher Rita Lesser and students Cheylin Ricely, Jennifer Rodriguez, Anna Miller and Kassandra Campbell discussed FCS education and shared activities they have been involved in this year.



Perry & Lecompton Elementary Schools

Connie Thornton, Principal



PLES News

It is amazing to think we are already preparing for our last two months of the 2014-15 school year. Each year seems to go by faster than the previous year. Most days my analogy is that the school year is like running a marathon at a sprint pace! When the pace begins to consume me I have found that it is important to get reconnected. I do this by walking through classrooms and observing the learning and development that is occurring. It is during these observations that I notice the 'growth' of the students and teachers and can appreciate the efforts put forth. As this year comes to a close please know that the elementary school staff is thankful for your continued support. During February approximately 96% of parents attended Parent Teacher Conferences. We appreciate your willingness to be a part of your child's educational experience.

What is Kindergarten screening? The primary focus of this event is to open and sustain communication with families and to connect families to schools early. This screening event can go a long way toward helping children and parents prepare for the start of school. Sometimes the greatest issue in terms of transitions is not the children but the parents. Kindergarten screening provides the parents with an opportunity to learn about the expectations of a school. This event provides an opportunity to perform vision and hearing tests, and informal kindergarten academic screenings. If problems are detected, children can be referred for further evaluation and assistance before school even starts. It's a time to be proactive and prepare in any way for a smooth transition into school. Children and their parents spend about 90 minutes at school. Children visit classrooms and interact with each other and teachers while parents learn about the kindergarten curriculum and skills they can practice at home with their children before school starts. Kindergarten screenings are a valuable tool in helping teachers meet and plan for the diverse needs of their students. **The Perry-Lecompton Kindergarten screening will be held on April 16th & 17th at Perry Elementary School. Please call 597-5156 to schedule a session for you and your pre-kindergartner.**

Grade Level News:

Music: We've had a great year in Music! The fourth quarter will focus on shows for three grade levels. The 2nd grade will perform on 4/15. Kindergarten and 4th grade will perform at their recognition event on 5/9 and 5/19 respectively. Keep up to date by checking our blog at www.welovemakingmusic.blogspot.com.

Kindergarten: During March students and their families have been busy making a school to home project: leprechaun traps. This is an opportunity for them to work at home as a family on a project. They then bring the project to school to share and set up a display trap to try and catch those crafty leprechauns! There will be no Kindergarten classes on 4/16 & 4/17 due to Kindergarten screening for 2015 kindergarteners.

First Grade: Their spring field trip will be to the Kansas City Zoo on May 5th. They will also take a short trip up to Lecompton Elementary to learn about their attendance center for 2nd - 4th grade.

Second Grade: On April 24th, 2nd grade will attend Jeff West's Ag Day. They will also take a trip to The Natural History Museum to learn more about rocks, which is our science topic for 4th quarter.

Third Grade: Students will be participating in two field trips. On March 27th they will be going to the Mulvane Art Museum and Ward Mead Park in Topeka and on April 24th they will be going to Berry Plastics and the Lawrence Public Library.

Fourth Grade: Students will be completing several projects for the end of the year. During the month of April they will be collaboratively working with Lane Museum personnel to identify and mark historical sites in Lecompton. The end product will be a "walking museum" for everyone to enjoy. Students explore economics by developing and marketing a product, with the final activity being the 4th Grade Store in May. Fourth graders will also visit the State Capitol in April.

PE: During the month of February the K-4 grades participated in Jump Rope for Heart and raised approximately \$5000. Thank you for your donations to this event. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades will complete a bowling unit and then put their skills to use at Royal Crest Lanes in Lawrence in April. They really appreciate getting the experience of life time sports.

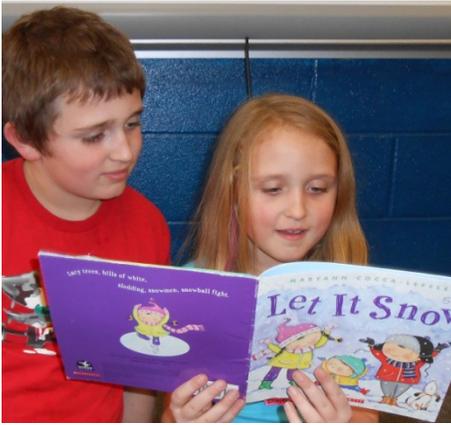
PTO: We so appreciate the financial support PTO gives our elementary children. This support allows us the opportunity to attend events throughout the school year. We believe field trips and special events are wonderful learning opportunities for our children. Help support PLES PTO by attending the school carnival on April 11th from 2-5 p.m. at LES.

Thank you for your continued support of our elementary schools – your assistance is invaluable! Wishing you a terrific summer.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Connie Thornton".

PLES Principal

Celebrate Literacy!



"There is more treasure in a book than in all the loot on Treasure Island!" Walt Disney

"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild to pick up a book and read to a child!" Dr. Seuss



News from Perry-Lecompton Middle School

Josh Woodward, Principal

PLMS Spelling Bee Champion Wins Jefferson County Spelling Bee!

Shaunna Hoover, a seventh grade student at PLMS, correctly spelled the word "flambé" to win the Jefferson County Spelling Bee. She represented our school district and all of Jefferson County schools at the Kansas State Spelling Bee in Topeka on March 7th.

The county spelling bee had twelve student contestants, two (one elementary and one middle school student) from each county school district. The words were very difficult, resulting in eight spellers falling out in the first round. That left four to battle back and forth – the competition was tough but fortunately, Shaunna had studied her lists and was prepared for the contest.

Congratulations to Shaunna for bringing home the county championship!



Choir representatives at KNEA

On February 27th, 8th grader Shane Quinlan participated in the KCDA Treble Honor Choir at the Kansas Music Educators' Convention in Wichita, KS. Shane was required to submit an audition tape in October. The final roster was chosen by a panel of judges who listened to each applicant and selected the top 200 singers. The students in the KCDA choir all sing soprano or alto and they learned five pieces to sing for the convention. Shane worked very hard to learn and memorize the music before the convention, and enjoyed spending two days in Wichita rehearsing and performing with the KCDA choir.

Congratulations to Shane for a great performance!



Band representatives at John Phillips Sousa

On January 24th, Joe Ward and Sara Haggard participated in the John Phillips Sousa State Honor Band at the annual concert on the KU campus. The concert was held at the Lied Center in Lawrence, KS. Joe, a 6th grader, plays the tuba and Sara, an 8th grader, plays the trombone. Both students spent the morning rehearsing with other members of the honor band, followed by a concert at 2:00 PM.

Congratulations to Joe and Sara!



On Wednesday, March 5th, Randy Nadler came to PLMS to share stories about his recent trip to Germany. Each summer, Nadler travels to a different region of the world to study the culture, take pictures and develop a presentation that he shares with students of all ages throughout Kansas and Missouri.



This year, Nadler shared pictures of the Brandenburg Gate, the Autobahn, the Rhine River, several castles, a small portion of the Berlin Wall that still remains and even the world's largest pretzel. Students listened to music composed by Johann Sebastian Bach ([Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor](#)) and Ludwig van Beethoven's ([Symphony No 5](#)).

Students enjoyed an assortment of pictures about different styles of German bicycles and cars. In addition, students were fascinated by a video of Randy's camper driving down the German Autobahn at 65 mpg. Since there is no speed limit on portions of the Autobahn, automobiles were flying past Randy's camper.



The assembly lasted a little more than one hour, including questions from students from each grade level. Thank you to Mr. Randy Nadler for bringing his presentation to PLMS.

PLMS Benefits from Community Support of Annual Book Fair

Perry Lecompton Middle School hosted its annual winter/spring book fair during Parent-Teacher Conferences. PLMS students and staff benefit from the continued community support of this event. This year was no exception as the team approach ensured yet another successful book fair.



Our PTO, PLMS student aides, members of the PLHS National Honor Society, and PLMS parents supported this event through time, organization and purchases. PLMS earned over \$700 in scholastic dollars to spend on teacher's classroom book requests and books for the school library. All proceeds from the book fair are utilized to purchase books for students, classrooms, library supplies and other literacy items. We appreciate all of your help and support and look forward to next year's book fair when we will introduce more new titles and authors. Thank you for helping us put good books into students' hands!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Jack Woodward".

PLMS Principal

Perry-Lecompton High School

J.B. Elliott, Principal



As you enter the PLHS commons, be sure to stop and take a look at the new touch screen panel on the west wall. The electronic panel has been added to replace the PLHS graduate panels that were once located near the north trophy case. As the old display panels had deteriorated to the point they needed to be replaced, it was decided to put those budget dollars towards the purchase of the touch screen panel. The PLHS Booster Club also donated \$1,500 to complete the purchase of the panel. Besides displaying all of the graduates of Perry-Lecompton High School, the display also has a copy of the 2014-15 yearbook available for students and patrons to view. In the near future the touch panel will also feature an “Academic Excellence” section that will feature PLHS students who have scored a 30 or above on the ACT test and those students who have earned the distinction of National Merit Scholar.



PLHS students in Mr. Swafford’s Emerging Technology class have been working hard over the past two months to create a USD #343 information app for the Apple Application Store. Once completed, the public will be able to download the app from the App Store on their Apple device, (iPhone, iPad, iPod, or Mac computer). The students have created, developed, and altered the app on their own without outside help from technical support. This process has been an outstanding learning experience for all students involved in the project. In fact, this type of “hands on” experience is one that students will be able to use as an employment skill should they choose a job in this type of career field. Once the application is ready for full deployment to the public, the school will send out the information through the School Messenger notification system.



For many PLHS seniors it is time to fully commit to plans after high school. We have found that our students have chosen various paths to continue their education in post secondary options including military, community colleges, technical college, and four year universities. Some of our students have earned the opportunity to compete in extra-curricular and athletic teams through scholarships that will help offset the cost of college tuition. This past week, five seniors signed letters of intent to area colleges. These five seniors will not be the only ones to receive scholarships, as we will see more seniors taking advantage of scholarship opportunities in the next few months.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.B. Elliott".

PLHS Principal

Early Childhood Special Education Peer Model Program

Keystone Learning Services sponsors Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classrooms in local school buildings. These preschools are designed for children 3 to 5 years of age who qualify for services in areas such as communicating, learning, hearing, vision, moving, or socializing. Currently these programs are housed in Valley Falls, Oskaloosa, and Easton. **To enhance the program, children who are developing typically have been accepted as peer models.**

Peer Model applications are currently being accepted for the 2015-2016 school year. **Names will be randomly selected** in a drawing that takes place in July. The application deadline is **May 8th, 2015**.

Peer models must reside in one of the eight school districts served by Keystone or have a parent that is employed by a hosting district. It is **preferred** that peer models be 4 years old on or before September 1. However, 3 year olds will be considered. Children must be potty trained.

Parents of peer model students are responsible for their child's transportation to and from the school. All children attending the preschool must have proof of immunizations and the child health assessment required by the state of Kansas.

Children applying for peer model positions will need to be screened at a Count Your Kid In Screening to verify that the child is not experiencing developmental delays. Children must be screened by **May 8th, 2015** to qualify for the drawing.

Please contact Lesa Brose at 785-876-2214 or at lbrose@keystonelearning.org to make a CYKI appointment or get more information concerning our peer model program.

Keystone Learning Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director, Keystone Learning Services, 500 E. Sunflower Blvd., Ozawie, KS 66070, 785-876-2214.

Revised 3/12/2015

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TRANSPORTATION NEWS:

Severe Weather:

As spring approaches, the threat of severe weather is always a concern for our staff. If severe weather occurs near the end of the school day, dismissal time could be delayed until the storm has passed. In addition, athletic contests could be postponed at a moment's notice. If your son or daughter participates in spring sports, please be aware of the latest weather forecast. In addition, please be sure that your child's school has your current phone number on file. School Messenger will be used to notify parents of cancelled athletic contests.

2015 PRHS/PLHS Alumni Association Banquet

Saturday, May 9, 2015

**Social hour 5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m.
Perry American Legion Hall
\$17.50 per person reservations will be required.**

**Check or money order payable to PRHS/PLHS Alumni Association. Mail to
P.O. Box 322, Perry, Kansas 66073. Paid reservations must be received
no later than, Friday, May 1, 2015. Please note on your check your year of
graduation.**

www.perryalumni.org



Honor Classes

PLHS class of 2010, PLHS class of 2005, PLHS class of 2000, PLHS class of 1995, PLHS class of 1990, PLHS class of 1985, PLHS class of 1980, PLHS class of 1975, PRHS class of 1970, PRHS class of 1965, PRHS class of 1960, PRHS class of 1955, PRHS class of 1950, PRHS class of 1945.

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: dwalburn@usd343.org or to Perry-Lecompton District Office, Attn: Debbie Walburn, PO Box 729, 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