

# Educationally Speaking...

Vol 2.1 Fall 2016

### A Brand New School Year

By Jill K. Underly, PhD, District Administrator

My family likes to poke fun at me because I love the start of the new school year. I've been experiencing the first day of school for awhile now and each year it still gets me: I love shopping for school supplies. I still like getting new gym shoes. I love taking the crayons out of the box and finding something to color with them. My daughter will shriek for me to put her crayons back! How dare I spoil them before she has had a chance to color something of her own?

The beginning of a new school year brings a lot of optimism and promises. A "new year" brings the promise of a fresh start or a fresh slate when it comes to grades at the high school; a time where everyone's record is tied at 0-0. It brings the promise of new friendships at the elementary school when new friends move into our community, and at the middle school, perhaps it's the change of a new locker and meeting someone new for the first time because you can see them eye-to-eye (literally).

For teachers, the new school year is an exciting time as well. I know you'll see that echoed by your students or your neighbor-students when they come home from school talking about the first day: the new goals, the hope that this is going to be the best year yet, and the high expectations for all students.

New beginnings, fresh starts, a tied-ball game – they bring out the best in all of us. Join me in welcoming all of our students and staff back for a brand new school year. I have a strong feeling that it's going to be a good one!



Registration for the 2016-17 School Year is done in person at the school buildings in Hollandale (4K through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade) and Blanchardville (6-12), although you can register any of your children at either building. The last week of August before school starts the building is staffed from 8am until 4pm by the secretary to take in paperwork. If you would like to come another time, please call the buildings to schedule a time to meet and get a tour!

### **Open House Information for Each Building:**

**Elementary**: August 30<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:30pm. We'll be taking family portraits this night too! Come dressed for this if you wish! **MS/High School**: August 29<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:30pm. Get your paper schedule and check out your locker combination and meet new staff!



# **Camp Pecatonica Summer 2016**

In the picture above, the children attending Camp Pecatonica's inaugural camp had a blast while on a field trip to Circle M's working farm in Blanchardville. They were able to feed animals, haul water and grain, and pick vegetables. They were treated to healthy snacks throughout the year by a camp sponsor, Kriss Marion, the proprietress of Circle M Farm.

Overall, camp was a success. A lot of hard work was put into the planning process and implementation by staff members Sheila Hendrickson and Angie Jorenby, as well as the dozen or so high school students employed by the camp as counselors throughout the summer. We did run into various challenges such as having to change the site mid-summer and suffering through the unusually hot weather or extra-rainy weather. One thing was certain, the community rallied around Camp "P" as it is now affectionately called, by opening up their services and their talents to the campers. A huge "thank you" to the Blanchardville Women's Club, New Hope Lutheran Church and the Church Council, the Village of Blanchardville, and the Village's parks and recreation department and library for all the support. We know that next year's Camp will be bigger and better and we look forward to continued partnerships with the community to keep this experience enjoyable and affordable for all local families, but most importantly educational and fun for the children attending.

# Pecatonica Viking Fall Homecoming 2016

The Homecoming Weekend of September 16-17-18 promises to be one that is:

- a). Action-packed,
- b). Memorable,
- c). Too many choices of things to do and see,
- d). A great time to meet up with family and friends; or
- e). all the above. (Hint: the answer is "e.")



**Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup> –** Hollandale Homecoming. The celebrated/featured class is the Class of 1966!

**Friday, September 16**<sup>th</sup> – Pep Rally at approximately 7:30pm and celebration of the Fall Sports: Volleyball, Cross-Country, and Football. Fireworks (sponsored by the School District) at dusk in McKellar Park.

**Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>** – Parade at 11:30am and Varsity Football game vs. the Cassville Comets at 2:00pm; Alumni Banquet at 6:00pm, and Homecoming Dance at 8:00pm.

**Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>** – Recover from Homecoming Festivities and attend the Cheese Days Parade in Monroe and see our Band perform!

# **Summer Projects Completed**

New wireless switches and wiring for the MS/HS Building and District's internet and network: The new wiring will increase the number of access points in the building, guaranteeing that anyone who wants to connect can without someone else losing their connection. It will replace our administrative controls and also establish a guest network so that others can join without using up additional bandwidth.

**New sound-system in the HS Gym and a new Scoreboard** (thanks to generous donations from the Booster Club and Community Sponsors).

### Elementary playground culvert and fencing repaired

Security upgrade for various exterior doors in the HS Building primarily.

**Elementary bathroom sinks** in primary/library hall bathrooms lowered and countertops replaced.

**Painting** throughout – including the MS/HS Kitchen, Elementary Office, and various classrooms in each building.

## Referendum Update -

Mark your calendars for April 4, 2017 Spring Election

At both the June and July 2016 Regular Board of Education meetings, the Pecatonica Area School District school board discussed the need to ask the district taxpayers to approve a recurring operational referendum in April 2017. Over the next few months the School Board will determine the amount that the district will need to request in order to maintain current operations (instructional programs, personnel, and maintenance) as well as put together a list of items for a maintenance projects to be completed in the next few years.

"There are several things, when it comes to finances, that has set Pecatonica apart from other school districts, both in the immediate area, and in the Madison area," noted District Administrator, Dr. Jill Underly, "and that is that Pec only asks for money when they need it, and they ask for as much as they need." Due to recent, but small, enrollment increases, Pecatonica's School Board did not have to ask for a referendum in the 2015-16 school year for the upcoming school year, even though that was the final year of the last operational referendum. "We were able to balance our budget in the 2016-17 school year without referendum money," stated Dr. Underly. Going forward, the District will need to ask tax payers for the 2017-18 school year and beyond to provide money to cover operational expenses for current programs and potentially some larger maintenance projects like roofing repairs. "Our buildings are in great shape for their age and we need to maintain them to protect that investment for generations ahead," said Underly. While the district has about the same amount of revenue year-to-year, inflationary costs in utilities, personnel, and transportation add to operational deficits in future years.

In the next few months area residents can expect to hear more about the operational referendum request and what that will entail. If you would like to be involved in the planning, we encourage you to attend information meetings. More information, as well as meeting dates and times, will be posted on the school district website.

### Phone Numbers to Know:

<u>Elementary Building</u> (Information and Attendance): (608) 967-2372 or (608) 523-4283

Middle School/High School (Information and Attendance): (608) 523-4285 or (608) 967-2123 District Office: (608) 523-4248

### School Board Meeting Dates/Times:

School Board meetings are held generally on the third Monday of the month at 7pm in the High School library. Agendas and other important information is found on the district's website.

The Annual Meeting for the 2016-17 school year will be held at 7:00pm on October 24<sup>th</sup> in the High School Library.

Job Opportunities Bus Drivers Substitute Teachers Support Staff Subs (Food Service, Custodial, Aides)



# Ciao from Italy!

During the 10 days from June 25 through July 4, eight Pecatonica students, parents, and employees traveled to Italy and experienced the Grand [educational] Tour. The action-packed tour included visits to Venice, Florence, Rome, Pompeii, and the Isle of Capri. Many smaller stops, but not less-memorable, experiences were peppered in-between. The entire trip was tremendous, particularly the educational experiences featuring small-town life, historical and religious-history experiences, and yes, the cultural experiences such as food and gondola rides! [Pictured to the right at the Vatican are Stephen Lynch, Lauren Becker, and Kevin Demler]. Thank you to the community and our many neighbors and friends who helped make this trip possible by patronizing our "Italian Food" stands at the Ryan Park music nights, the Blanchardville Bazaar, and the Hollandale Happenings by purchasing coffee and alumni attire. We'll certainly never forget this trip and the generosity of those who supported us these past two years.

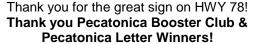
So here's what's next: The Pecatonica Viking Global Travelers would like to visit Costa Rica next in late spring 2018. They will ask the school board in August to approve the trip and then the fund-raising can begin. This trip will be a group trip coordinated by three departments: the school administration, the Spanish Department, and the Life Sciences/Biology Department. Costa Rica is rich in Spanish and Central-American culture, wildlife conservation, and environmental conservation and agriculture. If you are interested in also attending this trip, know that the pace and experiences are geared toward students ages 14-18, but adults have an equally educational and enjoyable time. Please watch our website for more information, trip approval, and deadlines to sign up and discounts for early enrollment.



# A clip of one of our new scoreboards! Thank you sponsors!

The previous HS gymnasium boards are to be installed at the elementary gymnasium. If anyone is interested in purchasing the previous elementary scoreboard, contact the school district office.







The Pecatonica Area School District does not discriminate against anyone: student, employee, community member, or employment candidate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer and for any complaints on this matter, please contact the School District Administrator.

### **Employee Updates and Changes**

Jennah Schliem, elementary special education aide, is the new Volleyball Co-Head Coach with Brad Tisch. Coach Schliem is a Pecatonica graduate, while Coach Tisch has five children in the school district. Cher Schliem will be the JV coach, while Bette and Britt Miller will be Middle School Volleyball coaches. Jason Klocek is the new Cross Country Coach and lives in the district.

**Joe Carmody** is the new high school physics, chemistry, and earth/space sciences teacher. He is a graduate of Beloit College with a BS in Physics. He will also be assisting the Pec-Argyle Football program.

**Danielle Syse** is one of our two new 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Mrs. Syse is in the one-year position, and is the spouse of Pecatonica graduate Kendall Syse.

**Amy Burian**, fills the other 5<sup>th</sup> grade position. Ms. Burian is an Illinois native and attended Southern Illinois University. She most recently held long-term teaching positions in the Verona School District.

Amy Flannery is our new middle school language arts teacher. She is also completing her reading specialist license. Most recently Mrs. Flannery taught in the Mineral Point School District and she has experience with coaching sports, sponsoring clubs, and the professional development model we are implementing at Pecatonica. She is a Cuba City native and her husband is a Pec alum.

**Heidi McSherry** is the new elementary and early childhood special education teacher. She most currently worked in the Belleville School District. Her daughter attends Pec and her husband is a Pec alum.

**Andrew Jonas** is the new middle school – high school band director and choir instructor. He is a recent UW-Platteville graduate, where he was the band's drum major. He brings lots of personal and professional experience with musical theater, drama club, and band and choir. **Mr. Meuth** will teach at the elementary school.

**Lori Brokopp** is our new MS/HS Guidance Counselor. She was the health and PE teacher in the Monticello School District. She attended UW-Platteville for her undergraduate degree and Concordia University for her graduate degree in school counseling.

### Since last we chatted .... Farewell to:

**Mrs. Mary Sutter**, who retired after 30 years of teaching at Pec, most recently with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and with many ties to the Veteran's Day Program, the Upham Woods experience, and Elementary Student Council.

**Mrs. Lili Cary**, elementary special education teacher, who retired after 15 years at Pecatonica Elementary School and over 25 years as a public school teacher.

### Pre-School & After School Program 2016-17

This past year was a big success in both the numbers of students we had attending the preschool program and the After-School Program at Pecatonica Elementary and the positive feedback received from parents and staff about both programs. Please recall that the preschool program is separate from the 4K program. The 4K program is provided for with school funding, while the preschool program is paid with parent/guardian funds through tuition charges.

### A few changes to be aware of as we head into the next year:

- Parents are asked to provide the snack portion, in addition to lunch for their child, for the preschool program to cover program expenses. The daily rate is now \$25.00/day.
- ❖ There is no increase in the after school care rate (\$5.00/child per afternoon).
- We request that families for the preschool program to "reserve" their spots with the elementary office so that we can effectively plan staffing for the preschool and the after school program. If you don't cancel your student's space at least a day before, you will be charged for a no-show.
- We will have enrollment limits on the number of children who can attend. If you need a "drop-in" time slot, please call ahead to ensure we can accommodate your request.

The 4K and after school care schedules have changed to accommodate the early release on Wednesdays. If you believe your child will be attending either preschool or after school on Wednesdays, it is best to reserve that spot soon. After school care will be available Monday through Friday from 3:00pm until 6:00pm; however on Wednesday, the programming will start as soon as early dismissal at 1:45pm. There is an extra \$2.00 charge per child on Wednesdays.



### Pecatonica Employees clean up HWY F

The stretch of HWY F (lowa County) from Mound Street to SR 39 (by the Bowling Alley) is cared for semi-annually by the Pecatonica Area School District employees. A date in the fall and a second date in the spring brought out about 10 employees each time to walk the shoulders of the highway and pick up plastic bottles, cans, and litter. Next time you see us out there, slow down and send us a wave! A **big** "shout out" to the elementary teachers and aides, middle school teachers and district employees that help out each time.

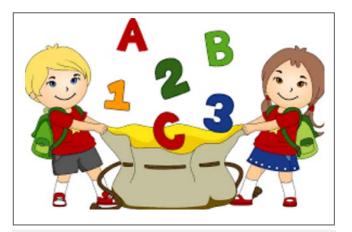
# Candidate Forum

# Todd Novak and Jeff Wright

Wed., Sept 21, 2016 7 PM Pecatonica High School Blanchardville

Education and school funding will be the topic of the questions. If time allows, there will be questions from the audience.

Organized by the Pecatonica PTA



### Financial Donations for the New Scoreboard

\$5000 to \$1000: Pecatonica Booster Club, RBS Activewear, Woodford State Bank, Marty Chandler Family Memorial, Pecatonica Wrestling Club

\$500 to \$100: Hollandale Grocery (Thronson Family), B-Ville Co-Op, TDS, and J&R Underground

Thank you all!

# Spotlight on... Computer Science Curriculum at Pecatonica Middle School and High School

Computer science knowledge and practice is identified as a "21<sup>st</sup> century skill." The field of computer science is the fastest growing field for employment, and individuals who know how to "code" or program computers or create software, are placed into good-paying jobs 100% of the time. That said, finding individuals to teach computer science, or computer programming, and not simply keyboarding or desktop publishing, is a tough thing to do as many of those who have these skills don't immediately find themselves teaching high school.

Enter Pecatonica High School teachers Mr. Doug Pibal, and Ms. Mandi Peterson. Mr. Pibal teaches AP Calculus, Pre-Calculus, and now computer programming and advanced placement computer sciences. He has a master's degree in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences and a graduate certificate in Geographic Information Systems, or GIS for short. Ms. Peterson, a veteran teacher at Pecatonica has a Master's of Business Administration and a business education license. She teaches computer programming and software applications. What do they have in common? Both are licensed computer science teachers, and to be sure, are in elite company, as there are less than 50 teachers certified in the State of Wisconsin who know can teach computer programming and Advanced Placement Computer Sciences. collaboration and their motivation, as well as their appreciation for the computer sciences, has allowed Pecatonica to be one of the handful of school districts in the Madison-area that offers programming and other computer science courses.

# The Computer Science Department sequence and courses for 2016-17 and beyond:

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Grades Kindergarten through 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Keyboarding and Computer Applications							
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Keyboarding							
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Desktop Publishing and Computer Applications							
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Exploring Computer Sciences 1 (Mandatory)							
9 <sup>th</sup> through 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Exploring Computer Sciences 1							
	Exploring Computer Sciences 2 (includes robotics)							
	Computer Programming (Python language)							
	AP Computer Science (Java language) can be taken for mathematics credit, an a 3, 4, or 5 on the AP test counts for college credit as an elective natural science or a computer science credit.							

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# Fall Sports and Activities: Please Check the District Webpage for Dates, Times, Events, and Details

We'd like for you to check our website and view the District Calendar found online for contests, events, and the times and locations for various events. If there is a question about a camp, a postponement, or an activity change or cancelation, we do post this information online as soon as we have it. If your family is currently enrolled in the school district, and possibly affected by an event change, you will get a Skylert message to your phone, cell phone, and/or email account. Make sure this information is up-to-date each school year.

### Web Payments with Credit Card

The School District accepts payments with cash or check in either school building. Be sure to request a receipt if one is not provided to you. However, you can also pay online for most anything, including school or sport apparel, lunch accounts, after-school care, and preschool. We hope that you find this service to be a convenient alternative to paying in cash or check. The information can be found on our website.

We appreciate your support with the purchases of our promotional items! Current authorized vendors that have our updated logo on file include RBS, Think It Then Ink It, and Lands End.

We also have items for sale at the school. Look for us at various events or during

Homecoming to make purchases.

# Inclement Weather or Unexpected Delays and Release Notifications

Families of actively enrolled students can stay in communication through our "Sky-alert" system in Skyward. Confirm your telephone and email addresses are current. Sky-alert will send texts, emails, and/or call your home phone if there is a school cancelation or major change in schedule. Otherwise, to be aware of cancelations and delays, our status will be listed on WKOW's, WMTV, and WISC Channel 3000's or Channel 3's website under School Closings and on local radio stations.

# Your Excellent Adventure: Get Ready for a New School Year at Pecatonica Middle and High School

Students and staff have a great year carved out for them as we embark on our 46<sup>th</sup> year as the Pecatonica Area School District. Some highlights to look forward to as the learning environment improves for all students:

### Early Release Wednesdays, Twice a Month

About twice a month, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, the school district will release students early (in both buildings) so that teachers and staff can participate in other types of learning and school improvement to benefit all students. In general:

- Staff meets to discuss academic needs of students who need additional support, whether it is for support for learning or ways to extend learning opportunities.
- Teachers and administrators discuss curriculum standards, skills, content, and assessment to ensure that our curriculum is relevant, innovative, and meeting the needs of all students.
- Develop or review policies and processes, and plan for events such as school safety, Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS), educator effectiveness and teacher observation, advisory period, statewide, federal, and local assessments.

### **Implementation of New Statewide Initiatives**

We're looking forward to the Academic and Career Planning Initiative (ACP) brought about by the renewal of PI-26, Wisconsin's "Education for Employment Law." In our school district and others in the state, Academic and Career Planning, or ACP, is a student-driven, adult-supported process in which students create and cultivate their own unique and information-based visions for post secondary success, obtained through self-exploration, career exploration, and the development of career management and planning skills. Students will use "Career Cruiser" software and a variety of other applications and activities to start discovering their career interests, passions, and course options from elementary school through high school.

# Senior Summary: Class of 2016

This fall as our K-12 students are getting ready to go back to school for another year, our senior class of 2016 is already transitioning to their next phase in life. As I stated in the graduation ceremony: commencement brings a time of mixed emotions. We close a door behind us, but we open a new one in front of us. Our students graduated from Pecatonica High School prepared for that next phase in their life. We wish them success and all the good things their bright futures are bound to bring them.

Class of 2016 Size: 30

Percentage going to a 2 year or 4 year college: 93%

Throughout the course of their high school career, how many were involved in student life at Pecatonica: 94% of students were involved in athletics, while 100% were involved in activities over the course of their high school career.

# **Attendance Tips**

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Being in school everyday means your child won't miss out on learning. Try to schedule appointments and family trips outside of school hours. If your child asks to stay home "just because," remind him or her of what they'll miss, such as their reading group, or PE class. Explain that they can be absent only if they are sick or if there's a family emergency.

Did you know? Children who regularly eat meals with their families tend to do better in school and avoid risky behavior. Eating dinner together is great, but other meals count too. If you work at night, maybe you could make time for a family breakfast. Or on a weekend, try a picnic lunch. We have so many great parks in our area, or you can picnic at your home or farm.

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up!" Mark Twain

**BOOST** (Building Opportunities and Occupations for Students Together) – the distance education consortium between Pecatonica, Highland, Mineral Point, Kickapoo and Riverdale enters its third year. We believe that students should have the same opportunities for field trips, advanced placement courses, and electives, regardless of their zip code. Boost allows this through technological collaboration.

For example, the partnership between the five schools allows all of our students to take classes taught by a teacher at another school in the consortium, not leave the village, and be back in time for their next class. Further, we use the equipment for collaborative meetings with the teachers in those schools, CESA, DPI, and UW-Madison.

This year, Pecatonica is offering AP Psychology and Computer Programming to BOOST partner schools, and our students are taking music appreciation and a literature elective through Mineral Point and Kickapoo.

Additionally, adult learners in the community are encouraged to inquire with Southwest Tech and other campuses that offer distance education classes to see whether they can use our equipment in the evenings rather than travel to campus.

If this situation applies to you, contact the department of the course you are taking and have them work with our school district to get this set up.



Pecatonica Area School District 704 Cross Street Blanchardville, WI 53516

Return Service Requested

www.pecatonica.k12.wi.us

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# Summer Science Camp

UW Madison and the Morgridge Center for Public Service sponsored a summer science camp for rural Wisconsin students at the UW Madison campus in the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery. Six Pecatonica High School sophomores and juniors were invited to attend by their life sciences instructor, Mr. Jacob Roberts. Dr. Jill Underly applied for the program on Pecatonica's behalf, and to everyone's delight, our school was selected to attend with five other schools throughout the State.

Attending the camp were Eliza Sullivan, Lauren Becker, Rachel Brokish, Liam Knutson, Dea Vatter, and Alexis Polkinghorn.

Our students attended the week of July 15. They stayed in the dorms, on campus, and worked alongside Institute scientists, professors, researchers, and graduate students. They attended research seminars, and then worked in the labs on state-of-the-art equipment. They performed labs and experiments on stemcells, and according to Rachel and Lauren, who presented to the Board at the July Meeting: "It was a mind-blowing experience" to think that "this stuff is saving lives!"

Can we do it again? The School District is grateful to the sponsorship of the Morgridge's and the Morgridge Center for Public Service and the UW-Madison Institute for Discovery, and will continue to apply for opportunities like this for its students.



# FFA News and Recognition:

Connor Huffman, Class of 2016, received his state
degree at FFA Convention in Madison. The state
degree is the highest degree given at the state level.
Proficiency awards were: Forage Production section 4
winner, Agri-science Research Plant Systems section
4 winner and State winner! And one more, the State
Star in Agri-science 1st runner up!