



# Educationally Speaking...

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## Introducing...

By Jill Underly, PhD, Superintendent

Welcome to the new 2015-2016 school year! This year's class will be the 44<sup>th</sup> graduating class from Pecatonica High School. So much history has been accomplished in these past 44 years. We look forward to making many more memories and traditions going forward. My, how time flies!

We have a new feel in the building with new administrators at both the elementary and high school. We also have a new website that we are adding information to every day. Our logo and Viking "mascot" if you noticed, also received a facelift. I'm happy to say that I feel good energy in both of our buildings. There is a lot of work ahead to ensure that all of our children are 21<sup>st</sup> Century College and Career Ready. I'm confident that our staff is up to the task. Never before have the stakes been higher to ensure that all children are technologically literate, as most of our standardized state and national tests are now online. Never before has the demand for careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) been higher. In all cases, I do firmly believe that PEC is up to this challenge and will not only meet the bar, but raise it, too, in the process. We are careful to balance these demands with our district's values of educating creative, competitive, and culturally competent scholars in the process.

I invite you to come to any one of our many activities in the fine arts or athletics and observe the products of wonderful communities and strong families. Our villages have so much to be proud of in our children. I look forward to seeing you and meeting you.

## Italy 2016 Spotlight

Global Educational experiences such as international travel provide students with unique opportunities not found on any other "field trip" or experience. For example, one big benefit of traveling to another country is that it sharpens your awareness: you gather firsthand information about the world – you see different landscapes, hear different languages, and talk to those who live in these countries. All of this provides a level of mindfulness that is often tough to forget. These experiences give you a sense of place and purpose and help you establish a lifetime of purpose and priorities.

## Elementary News

### Playground Map Painted by AT&T Pioneers

On August 20<sup>th</sup> about a dozen volunteers from the AT&T Pioneers painted a 20-foot by 30-foot mural of the United States on the Pecatonica Elementary playground as part of a volunteer community service project.

The project allows teachers to use the playground to teach geography through creative play. The new playground is ready for students as they head back to school this fall.

Already students are excited about the map and have developed recess games around it. The school is grateful for the map and for the work of the volunteers!



A few seats remain on the trip and anyone in the Pecatonica Area School District can enroll. We encourage students to, obviously, as the trip is geared toward them. However, older siblings, parents, grandparents, and neighbors are all encouraged to enroll. We'll visit Florence, Rome, the Vatican, and there is an optional visit to the Island of Capri. The cost of the trip includes round-trip flights, all hotels, breakfast and dinner, transportation, Italian speaking tour guide, and admission to all attractions.

Visit [eftours.com](http://eftours.com), and enter in the group number: 1671600RT

We depart in mid-June 2016!

## Program Spotlight: Extended Day Programming for Elementary Children

I am very excited to announce some changes to our programming options for families in the 2015-16 school year. **Beginning this year, our 4K program moves to an all-day model.** 4K students attend full-day school on Tuesday-Thursday or Wednesday-Friday. On days where there is no 4K for your child or no school (Monday), **our school district offers a pre-school option at our Elementary School for the same hours.** This service is paid for by parents, if they opt to use it. The bus picks up children as normal and brings them to the Elementary School for preschool or 4K. At the end of the day, that same bus brings them home.

**We are also offering extended-day schooling or after school child-care for students in grades 4K-5.** This service allows students to stay after school and participate in homework help, arts and crafts, outdoor activities, and physical education activities until 6:00pm. For families that reside nearer to Blanchardville, we had hoped to provide a bus so parents can shorten their commute to picking up their children. There was not enough interest at this time. If interest is there, we will revisit this option.



Blanchardville Hollandale Community Fund collected and donated school supplies! Thank you for your kindness and generosity! Pictured, from left: Jeanne Lisser, Peggy Hendrickson, and Kyle Walsh, Elementary School Principal and Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

## Choosing Pec:

**With so many choices in the area, what sets the Pecatonica Area School District Apart?**

Jill Underly, PhD, Superintendent

Families have many choices now as to where they want to send their children for schooling. It used to be simple: public school or private school. Public school was always in the school district boundaries within which you lived. That all changed years ago, and like many things within American Culture, people wanted choice. Perhaps local people were happy with their schools, but legislators felt that they should have the choice to attend another public school in the area if they were unhappy with their resident school district. What would I say to a family that was unsure about whether or not they wanted their children to attend Pecatonica Schools? What sets Pecatonica schools apart from other schools in the area? Do you have half a day to hear me out? A week? I could go on and on, so be warned:

**Academics:** We offer every AP class and students are challenged daily with the depth of content offered in each of our classes. Most of our students take 4 years of mathematics and science, which is above the state requirement of 3 years in high school.

**Athletics:** Our teams are small but mighty! Routinely our athletes do well in both team and individual statistics, but due to our small size students learn the fundamentals of teamwork and cooperation.

**Staff:** We only hire high-quality staff and many have multiple degrees in education or a discipline such as math or English.

**Culture:** Our kids are known as “good kids” throughout the region and state; they accept everyone and new kids are immediately brought into the fold.

**Families:** In addition to having wonderful families, the school district offers the option for extended day programming for children in the elementary school.

Bragging about our students and our school district will be a regular feature of my conversations with the school community. It’s a conversation that I will never tire of having.

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# FFA Accomplishments

By Melissa Leonard-Flannery, Advisor

## The Summer FFA Season started with State FFA Convention in June.

Connor Huffman received 2nd place in "Forage Proficiency,"

Molly Hendrickson received her State FFA Degree.

The Land Judging team (Trevor Gilson – state winning individual, Jacob Tollakson, Caleb Carr) was honored for winning the State Contest.

## Local county fair exhibitors and winners:

### Lafayette Co. Fair

Jacob Tollakson - Poultry - Best in Show Honors (twice);

Dylan McGowan - exhibited two heifers in the dairy show;

Trevor Gilson received reserve champion dairy steer and exhibited a market barrow;

Austin Wojtunski exhibited a beef heifer winning his class

### Green Co. Fair

Samantha Holmstrom – Goats - received Best in Show Honors

## State Fair exhibits:

Sydney Love and Molly Hendrickson exhibited dairy;

Ninah McKeon attended as the Blanchardville Dairy Queen;

Jacob Tollakson - Poultry - open and junior show and received Best in Show Honors both weeks;

Samantha Holmstrom – Goats - Reserve Champion Junior Doe;

Skylar Garthwaite exhibited market barrows.

Aside from the many fair projects kids have been hard at work on their Proficiency projects. Caleb Carr works for Pecatonica Valley Farms producing and selling eggs and meat products, which are sold in the Madison area and at farmers markets. Connor Huffman works for Peak Dairy Consulting on their forage research plots. Connor spent his summer collecting samples, planting, preparing seed treatments and preparing for their field days.

Stay tuned for results from the Iowa County Fair as we will have many students exhibiting in Dairy and Swine: Griffin Gordon and Skylar Garthwaite will be showing their market barrows. Kelsey Chrostowski, Hayden Schmit, Mandi Griffiths, Molly Hendrickson and Sydney Love will be showing heifers and cows. Additionally, Val Carr has been working hard all summer with her beef heifer and Mandi Griffiths will have many chickens in the show.



(Above) Jacob Tollakson displays his many awards from the county and state fairs, as well as the State FFA Convention. Jacob may be the only person to have received best in show honors at all events.

(Top/Above) Connor Huffman checks on his forage research plots, while Trevor Gilson displays his Reserve Champion Dairy Steer. Congratulations to all of the Pecatonica Area School District students in their FFA Achievements from this summer.

# Introducing New Staff

By Jill Underly, PhD, Superintendent

We've had a couple of retirements at the end of the 2015 school year and a few resignations. We're fortunate to welcome very qualified new staff to our school district!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** Ms. Ellie Gifford returns to Pecatonica Elementary, this time as a teacher. Ellie is a recent graduate from Edgewood College and a Pecatonica Area School District alumna.

**Library Media/Technology:** Mrs. Elaine Becker moved from an educational/aide to professional staff and will be working in this role vacated by the retirement of Irene Middlemas.

**High School Life Sciences:** Welcome Mr. Jacob Roberts back to the area. Mr. Roberts teaches Biology, Zoology, Anatomy and Physiology, and AP Biology. He is a native of the Mineral Point area.

**High School Mathematics:** We have two new mathematics teachers at the high school! Mr. Grant Hambrick is a veteran mathematics teacher teaching Algebra I and II, and College Math; Mr. Doug Pibal is a veteran mathematics teacher teaching Geometry, Algebra, pre-Calculus, and AP Calculus.

**High School Physical Sciences:** Mrs. Mary Barr moved from math to physical sciences, and as she said, to her "first love." She was a long-time science teacher in Argyle before teaching math at Pecatonica two years ago.

**We are very proud of all of our staff, and are grateful for all that they do for children in our community!**

## Job Opportunities:

We are currently hiring substitute teachers for both the elementary and high school, and bus drivers. If you are interested, please inquire with the district office. Interested in driving a bus? First Student will provide paid training and will pay for your CDL license.

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# Fundraising 101: things you can do and not even realize you're helping the school!

Fundraising through corporate programs is a great way for our schools to supplement their activity funds. These funds pay for special projects such as guest speakers, supplies for field days or special events, and school wide activities such as a "Children's Opera".



For many programs it is as easy as cutting out a "Boxtop" or soup can label. For the Target program, a cardholder would have to register their card online to donate to either Pecatonica Elementary School or Pecatonica High School. For those in the community, give your labels to a child in your neighborhood or to a relative to send to school. Periodically we run contests between the grades to round up all of the labels before a large submission.

In November, 2014, Pecatonica Elementary received a \$5000 check from Boxtops for their submissions in the 2013-14 school year. That money comes in handy for service projects, supplies, and other needs that come up during the school year.