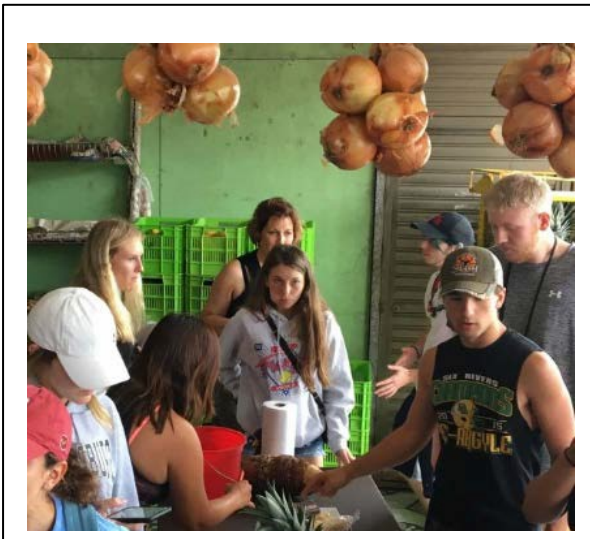




Educationally Speaking...

Vol 4.1 Summer-Fall 2018



Students, Parents, & Staff Travel to Costa Rica

We had a student write up a summary of the latest school trip, which was to Costa Rica, this past summer, from July 8-16th, 2018. This newsletter entry is by sophomore Jaden Goninen of Blanchardville. The trip was sponsored by Mr. Jacob Roberts, life sciences teacher.

This summer, I left the country for the first time to visit an unbelievable place. I remember back in middle school when the trip was announced and all I could think was how amazing the trip sounded and I just knew I couldn't pass up this trip of a lifetime. I went home and begged my mom to trust that I would be okay in another country without her for nine days straight. It took some convincing, but she finally said that I could go. Fast forward to July of 2018 and the day was finally here. I was so excited, but also so nervous that I'd be away from family for nine days. We took a bus to Chicago, flew to Charlotte, North Carolina, and finally flew to San Jose, Costa Rica.



I remember stepping outside of the airport in San Jose and all of the nervousness I had completely went away. I was in awe of what I was seeing. The city was amazing. San Jose is a very hectic place, but it was so cool seeing all of their stores and how everyone walked around with umbrellas and ponchos because no one knew when it would rain next. We met our tour director, Gustavo. Gustavo was the coolest person I think I've ever met. We also met kids from two other schools. After San Jose, we went to Tortuguero. Tortuguero was such a great experience. We stayed in the middle of the rainforest. There were monkeys, crabs, and iguanas all over our hotel resort. We also got to visit the ocean and visit the village of Tortuguero. The way that Costa Ricans live is significantly different than how we live here. They are always happy and always smiling.

Above, several of the participants in the Costa Rica Trip, led by Science Teacher, Jacob Roberts sampled a grocery store's fresh fruit in Guanacaste, near the country's capital of San Juan, (top) and pure chocolate from a cocoa plantation in the "Lakes Region" of western Costa Rica (bottom).

After Tortuguero, we went to Sarapiquí, La Fortuna, and Guanacaste. We participated in a lot of cool activities. Activities such as whitewater rafting, ziplining and hiking. We visited a pineapple farm, and went on a chocolate tour as well. My favorite activity was whitewater rafting because it is so action-packed and exciting. It was such an amazing experience to go through with some of my closest friends. Also, it was great to meet people from different states and a different country. The whole attitude and culture in Costa Rica is just unbelievable. I am so lucky to have been given the opportunity to go on such an amazing trip.

Conversations about School

Jill Underly, District Administrator

Now that a new school year has started, there are things parents and community members can do that keep themselves engaged in a student's learning progress. Involvement in public education doesn't have to mean that you volunteer in the classroom only. We continually seek volunteers who want to assist in coaching, or volunteers are needed on the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) at both levels. We have numerous local business leaders that stay connected to our school by employing high school students or volunteering to interview students on our mock interview day, or participate in our "reality store" with the Argyle School District. If any of these things interest you, please reach out to our building principals with your ideas or how you can participate.

Here are some other ideas for those who are busy but have a child, grandchild, or neighbor attending our schools:

"Let me see what you brought home today." Look at completed school work, or art work, or ask the child to practice their musical instrument for you. You could comment on their math test or their social studies project. Often times they are making interesting things in art or in science class. Ask them what they brought home today rather than asking them, "What did you do today?"

"Show me what you have for homework." It's your child's job to do their homework, but you can play a role too. We've been limiting the amount of homework students in elementary school have and instead we have been reinforcing time at home to read for at least 20 minutes. With the Chromebooks now in 5th grade, and middle and high school, students can practice math and writing at home and not necessarily have internet connections. If your child says that they've already completed their homework, ask to glance over it to make sure it's completed.

"Describe a book you enjoyed today." This can go for any of us, I suppose. Engage your child on a book they've read recently. Maybe you've read it too. This gives you an idea also of what your young one prefers to read and can open up ideas for later birthday or holiday gifts! Encourage their reading and listening skills by reading aloud to your child and letting them read to you.

"Tell me what you learned that you'd like to learn more about." I think this is my favorite question of all of them because when you ask this of your child, their interests can be so varied, and sometimes pique a conversation that is related to one of your interests as well. This is a good opportunity to explore those interests and perhaps look around your house or farm, or take field trips to the park to explore these interests further.

Job Opportunities

*We need substitute teachers and athletic officials!
Please see later articles for more information...*

Planning Begins for High School NYC Band & Choir Trip

As an incentive for all the musical talent that Band and Choir students contribute throughout their middle and high school careers to different events, the high school band and choir will travel to New York City over Spring Break for a three-day trip. Information has gone home via Skyward and with the students. Students begin fundraising in middle school band so that they can offset the cost of this trip. Parents are allowed to participate in the three-day trip also. Sites include: 9/11 Memorial and Museum, the Statue of Liberty Tour, NBC Studios, 30 Rock Observation Deck, Central Park, a Broadway Show, and a musical theater workshop. The band and choir will be flying to New York City from Dane County Airport. The trip will be over March 27th through March 29th and the students will be staying outside of the city in neighboring New Jersey for two nights.

PLANNING BEGINS FOR THE HS SOCIAL STUDIES TRIP TO ROME & ATHENS!

In keeping with our every 2 year trend, High School Social Studies teacher, Ms. Kristin Rolland, is planning an overseas educational adventure to ancient history sites in Rome and Athens, occurring sometime in early summer, 2020. Two years before the trip commences is sufficient planning time for families and for students who would like to fundraise for the trip or take on extra income opportunities through seasonal employment. Included in this tour will be ancient sites like the Coliseum, the Roman Forum, the Acropolis, and a "night ferry" from Italy to Greece. The tour includes most meals and all transportation and lodging. Parents and community members interested in traveling with this tour are encouraged to contact Ms. Rolland (krolland@pecatonica.k12.wi.us).

New Staff for 2018-19 School Year

Samantha Swanborg – MS Social Studies

Emily Roska – K-6 Music Teacher Molly

Brantingham – High School English Kayla

Ostby – 4th grade

Sara Hendrickson – MS/HS Special Education

Kyle Baldeshwiler, MS/HS Band & Choir Dakota

Stuckey, English 9, Ancient & World History

Elizabeth Ihm – MS/HS Special Education Aide

Ashley Bredeson – Elementary After-School Aide &

Food Services Aide

Sara Latimer – Elementary Principal

WELCOME EVERYONE!

Classroom and Facility Updates

Again, a thank you to the community for approving our operational referendum in April 2017 that allows for us to include maintenance updates in our annual budget. In the past two summers we have updated the high school roof, art and agriculture classrooms, concession stand, and windows, while also getting new lockers, flooring, and siding at the elementary school. These projects are important to maintaining our buildings and keeping them viable for another 50 years.



(Above) – the art room paint storage and sink area.



(Above) – A panorama of the Agriculture classroom cabinets, desks, and new tabletops for student workspaces.

Are you a Military Veteran or maybe you know someone who is AND you live in our school district? We are updating our list as we know we are missing many who have moved back in, or have never been a part of our recognition ceremony before. Please contact Marsha Shilling at mshilling@pecatonica.k12.wi.us to get added to our invitation list.

Our Veterans Day programs will be at both the Hollandale and Blanchardville Buildings, on Monday, November 12th. More details to come.

New Staff Feature: Samantha Swanborg (Middle School Social Studies)

WELCOME to PECATONICA!

“I attended Hononegah High School in Rockton, IL and Augustana College in Rock Island, IL where I majored in Secondary Education with a focus on History. In my spare time, I love to read (I’m open to anything), knit and crochet, and walk my dog, Matilda. During my college experience, I decided that I wanted to teach middle school because middle schoolers are a fun group of kids that were more easily accepting of the more ‘zany’ approach to teaching. The best thing about middle school is that the kids are always open to trying something new in the classroom.”



Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

In July, the school administration team attended the Solution Tree PLC conference in Madison. Over the course of three days they were educated in ways that teachers and administrators can work together to ensure that all kids learn at high levels. The first step, and the focus on PLCs this school year is asking the question, “What is it that we want all kids to know?” As a result, our staff are working “vertically” and aligning our curriculum K-12 and looking for the essential standards that all students will expect to have mastered before graduating from Pecatonica High School. In these conversations we’ve had discussions about citizenship, relationships, health and wellness, as well as the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics. It has been a rewarding endeavor so far.

The Pecatonica Area School District does not discriminate against anyone: student, employee, community member, or employment candidate on the basis of race, gender, socio-economic status, marital status, religion, or disability. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer and for any complaints on this matter, please contact the School District Administrator.

A Note from the District Administrator's Desk

I feel awful that this is our first newsletter of the school year and September is already over. It was a busy summer and it was a busy 2017-18 academic year. We accomplished a lot academically, athletically, socially, and communally. I think the word that came to mind most of all was “partnerships.” We partner with so many individuals and businesses in both villages, as well as in all four counties that we serve. We couldn't do what we do without our partners – whether it's the PTA (Parent-Teacher-Association – which you should join!), or the CFSW's Blanchardville-Hollandale Area Fund, businesses like Circle M, RBS, the Pec Valley Leader, Woodford, Farmer's Savings (which both coordinate the food baskets and Giving Tree in December), New Hope Lutheran which has facilitated our food pantry in the elementary school, and many other individuals who help along the way, especially our talented staff members (Thanks, Gayle Gronski for an awesome summer program!).

This past spring the school board initiated two different things (very different things) that will secure and grow the school district for many years to come. The first is that they took the first step in expanding our early childhood program to allow new four-year olds to join our elementary preschool program. This should allow more children access to different programs, both social and developmental, and attract families to our communities and school district. This was also in response to the perennial issue that we do or did lose many preschool age children through open enrollment. The second, was the Board agreed that we needed to conduct a facilities study to look at the future of our buildings, how they are used, building safety, how the buildings are needed and enjoyed by the community and our children, and what we could do to secure and maintain our investment in our buildings for many years to come. After our students and our staff, our buildings are the third most valuable asset we have after all.

I think we all feel that these changes are good changes to ensure Pecatonica thrives. However, none of this progress could be possible without the support of you. At Pecatonica, our greatest partners are you, the community. Thank you for supporting our school district and especially the kids who walk in and out of our doors on a daily basis. The public school is a cornerstone of our democracy, and it's the foundation for our community's economy, volunteerism, citizenship, and pride. We had an excellent school year with many different accomplishments. We hope you followed along on Facebook with the field trips, career days, and individual accolades. To be honest, without the community and its support, none of this would be possible. – Dr. Jill Underly

Department of Public Instruction Licensing CHANGE for Substitute Teachers...

This past year, PI-34, the rules that govern teacher licensing, oversaw the greatest changes in a generation. There are many more rules now about how someone becomes a licensed teacher, including different screening assessments, but then a final assessment called the EdTPA (Education Teacher Preparation Assessment) that was developed by Stanford University professors, and is described by many as a “Mini National Board Certification” process. The pass rate for EdTPA on the first try is about 72% nationally.

Life Licenses – as you likely heard, all teachers are issued “Life Licenses” from this point forward – having graduated in May 2018, or having been working with an active teaching license. New teachers need to complete three years of successful teaching experience under a provisional license, and then their license will become a life license without a renewal component. If they leave teaching for more than 2 consecutive years, the teacher will have to take credits to “refresh” and renew that life license. School districts are now responsible for teacher professional development, when in the past, they were not the entity responsible for professional development in order to keep a teaching license and a teacher “current.”

New Substitute Teacher regulations – also effective July 1, anyone who would like to become a short-term substitute (1 day at a time, and not a consecutive long-term substitute for the same class/teacher), now needs an associate degree. The previous rule indicated that substitute teachers needed to have a four-year degree. The new rule indicates that the individual needs a 2 year degree, then they can apply for the license through DPI without the district's signature. DPI runs the background check. The district would then certify that the substitute completed a training course.

Athletic Officials Needed

Like substitute teachers, we need individuals who enjoy working with children, enjoy being physically active, and love athletics to consider becoming athletic officials. We have a shortage of athletic officials due to demanding personal schedules, but also the changing nature of high school athletics. Many of our current officials are nearing retirement age, and many prefer working in the suburbs around Madison and prefer not to travel to rural areas, particularly in the winter months. We'd appreciate your consideration for this worthy cause. It pays well and is a nice side job. In particular we are looking for officials for wrestling and football. If interested, please go to www.wiaawi.org/officials to view rules meeting dates and exam dates.

Recognition

The month of October recognizes different groups of school district personnel for their efforts and partnerships that make our school community the wonderful place it is.

October 7-12 is Wisconsin School Board Recognition Week. Thank you to our board members who contributed countless hours and expertise to our school district operations. Michelle Schwery, President; Ron Linder, Vice President; Dave McSherry, Treasurer; Jill Gaskell, Clerk; Roy Ruegsegger, Rick Rolfsmeyer, and Marissa Theorin, Members.

October 15-19 is National School Lunch Week. Every day our food service employees work to ensure that all students have a healthy and delicious school lunch: Sara Hanson, Director; Michelle McNett and Nancy Meyer, Head Cooks; Laura Anderson, Cindy Mani, and Carol Helmeid, assistants.



Pecatonica's Parent-Teacher-Association is looking for more parents!

We've got teachers, and we've got an "association" – but we need more parents just like you to help make the difference.

PTA is a lot of fun and really doesn't take up that much time out of your busy schedules! PTA does a lot of great stuff for our schools. Listed below are our meeting/event schedule.

- Monday, October 8 meeting @ 4pm
- Monday, January 14 meeting @4pm
- Monday, February 11 meeting@4pm
- Wednesday, February 20 Family Dance night (no school Thursday and Friday)
- Monday, March 4 meeting @4pm March 21 or 22 Kids Creation Convention (Science/Art/Writing fair)
- Friday, June 7 End of year picnic and meeting

Contact esteele@pecatonica.k12.wi.us if interested! We're also seeking middle and high school parents.



Monroe Clinic's P.A.R.T.Y. Program Field Trip

A sophomore health student attempts to figure out a puzzle while wearing "Drunk Buster Goggles" (purchased through a Blanchardville-Hollandale Area Fund Grand last year) that simulate different levels of intoxication and demonstrates impaired judgment and reflexes. This activity, in Mrs. Steele's sophomore health class, is an extension of the P.A.R.T.Y. program that takes place at Monroe High School and sponsored by the Monroe Clinic.

The greatest incidence of trauma injury and death occurs between the ages of 15 and 24. One way to help reverse this trend is to educate youth on how decisions they make today can affect everyone around them for many years. Students learn about the dangers of alcohol consumption and the consequences of poor decision-making – while being empowered to make informed, safe choices.

Attending the P.A.R.T.Y Program and using the Drunk Buster Goggles in health class has definitely changed my perspective on drunk, drugged and distracted driving. Watching the program and using the goggles has also made me more aware of everything around me. Not only just driving, but everywhere else around me too. M.B., Pec Sophomore.

Attending the P.A.R.T.Y Program and using the Drunk Buster goggles in health class, affected my view on drinking and drugs. Now I know how serious it is to drive while intoxicated or drugged and to make good choices for yourself. Seeing real situations and people having the rest of their lives change in seconds make me more aware of the dangers of toxins. Using alcohol and drugs is not worth all the risks of putting yourself and others in danger. L.B., Pec Sophomore.

The P.A.R.T.Y Program and using the Drunk Buster Goggles has made a large impact on me and the way I view drinking and drugs. It's been extremely beneficial to me because it has allowed me to experience and go through the motions of being drunk or drugged without experiencing the consequences that would come with it. We all saw how your life can be the best it's ever been and all get changed in a matter of a couple quick seconds. Almost all of the speakers gave stories that hit me in a way I would've never expected. I'm glad that our school still takes the time to go to this event because there was so much to take in. J.C., Pec Sophomore.





These smiling fifth grade students attended the "Wild and Scenic" Film Festival, which was an environmental film festival sponsored by numerous national organizations (however locally by Trinity Episcopal Church in Mineral Point) at the Mineral Point Opera house. The film festival shows short films geared toward youth ages 9-12 on topics such as biodiversity, energy, food systems, and protection and restoration of wild lands and wild waters.



On September 25, the fourth and fifth graders attended Lafayette County's Department of Health's "Rural Safety Day" which is run in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources. All types of topics are covered and discussed at this event, including safety while riding and being around UTVs and ATVs. ATV riding is one of the fastest growing hobbies in our area and is home to numerous ATV trails. Of the statewide fatalities for ATVs, 100% of the riders did not have seatbelts fastened. Other topics covered included grain safety (Rescue Demonstration), electrical safety, and pet/farm animal safety.

NEED TO KNOW

Academic Calendar Dates:

October 10 – Early Release

October 16 – 4K to 5th grade

Parent-Teacher conferences.

October 26 – Professional Day –

No Students

October 27 – No School

October 30 – Middle and High

School Parent-Teacher

Conferences.

November 14 – Early Release

November 21-22-23 – No School –

Thanksgiving Break –

Happy Thanksgiving!

December 12 – Early Release

December 14 – Elementary

Holiday Concert

December 24 – January 1st –

Winter Holiday Break

January 2nd – School Resumes



We encourage you to join the PTA, the Pecatonica Booster Club, and explore other ways to be involved, such as collecting and sorting Box Tops on volunteer days.

The 6th graders enjoyed a day at **Bloomfield Farm for Iowa County Youth Conservation Day** on Tuesday, September 25th. They learned about prairie conservation, food chains, animals, and soil. Different agencies like the DNR, Fish and Wildlife Service, and UW-Extension spoke to our students.



Congratulations to Pecatonica Area School District students and staff --- recognized for a second year by the US News and World Report “Best High Schools” in Wisconsin.

2018: Bronze Award Winner!



One of the newer traditions this year at the Pecatonica High School Homecoming Parade was the addition of class floats for current students. With smaller classes, and many students either in band, on cars, or marching with other organizations, the floats have diminished in the past 10 years. It was nice to see student floats join the alumni floats this year.



Senior Samantha Holmstrom, Blanchardville, sits atop a convertible during the Homecoming Parade on September 22nd and a member of the 2018-19 Homecoming Court. Sami is a senior volleyball player. This year she was again selected for the FFA National Band for flute. The band is directed by Spencer A. White. Additionally, Sami will be in Indianapolis for the convention along with other senior members of the Pecatonica High School FFA and their advisor Melissa Leonard Flannery late October.

New Partnership with Lamers Transportation

The school district signed a new 3 year contract with Lamers Transportation in March 2018. The contract keeps most things in place that the school district enjoyed previously with the prior vendor. In addition, Pecatonica students are enjoying brand new “2018” model school buses also equipped with video monitoring for additional student and driver safety. For any additional questions about our transportation services, contact Barbara Putz.



*Educationally Speaking is a Publication
of the Pecatonica Area School District*

New Preschool Option for School District Resident Children at the Elementary

RESERVE YOUR PLACE NOW!

At the May Board meeting, the school board voted to allow resident children who turn four years old after September 1 (and miss the 4K cut-off by birth-date) to enroll in our preschool program at the elementary school. Any child who lives in the school district and turns 4 years old between September 2 and April 30 can enroll once they turn 4 years old. The preschool program is a school-based program at the elementary school building in Hollandale. Preschoolers ride the school bus, are eligible for school lunch, have access to developmental services such as physical, speech and occupational therapy, and are eligible to stay during the extended day program. This program is not the same as 4K, but runs concurrently with our 4K program. Call the elementary school to reserve your space! 967-2372

Are YOU Registered to Vote?

November elections are around the corner. There are state, federal, and local races to consider for US Senate, Governor, and State Assembly and State Senate in some cases. It's an important election, as many budget items in our state will be up for discussion – transportation and education, among other things in the 2019 year. Take time to register or verify your registration. You can register on site at your polling place with a state issued identification card. For more information: <https://myvote.wi.gov> (to locate registration and polling and whether you are registered).

Food Pantry Information

The Blanchardville Food Pantry is open the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00am-11:00am. New Hope Lutheran Church, 305 Madison Street, Blanchardville WI. Clients are allowed to visit monthly. you have any questions or need more information call (608) 967-2349.