



Academic Services (AcS) Team Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

July / August 2013

Welcome to the 2013-14 School Year and Welcome Dr. Kari Monsees, Superintendent of Schools to Raymore-Peculiar

THE Ray-Pec MISSION

Preparing ***EACH*** Student for a Successful and Meaningful Life

The Ray-Pec Vision

Turning Today's Learners into Tomorrow's Leaders



The question is not, is it possible to educate all children well, but rather, ***Do we want to do it badly enough?***

Deborah Meier

What's Inside

- *Summer School Update
- *IB Candidacy Update
- *Common Core Update
- *Welcome Kristel Barr
- *News from Special Education
- *Preview Day August 12 info
- *And much more....

GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF GREAT. by KDaniel

Good is the enemy of great! Jim Collins wrote this in his ground breaking and national best selling book *Good to Great* (2001) over a decade ago. By nearly every measure Ray-Pec would be considered a good school district with good schools. We thank you for the hard work that has made our good results possible. While there are small pockets of greatness and individual great things being accomplished, an objective observation would be that we are not a great district based upon several key formative and summative measures. Our schools are good, yet not great. ***At least not yet!*** The question now be-

comes for each one of us, is being good, good enough? The temptation is there to settle in, get comfortable and be satisfied with being good. We challenge you to not settle. We challenge you to be an elite professional, engage in self-development and create schools that are truly great for students by every conceivable measure and also great in the things you can't measure. That will require each one of us to stretch ourselves and be uncomfortable some days moving forward. Our students and families need us to reach deep and turn it up a notch for the 2013-14

school year. Our students and families need us to have a growth mindset and a culture of professionalism, collaboration and putting team and school interests above self-interests. One of the keys to our journey toward greatness will continue to be differentiated adult learning that focuses on our key initiatives and processes. Our team in Academic Services is committed to keeping that a priority for 13-14 and beyond. We look forward to partnering with you! ***There are many tempting parking spots on the road to greatness; don't park.***

Schools Engage in Advanced PLC Training

Becoming a sustainable Professional Learning Community (PLC) is a journey rather than a destination. The learning that makes a PLC effective is a process over time and not a one time event. For that reason, the district Professional Development Committee (PDC) is supporting the following schools in advanced PLC training for the 13-14 school

year. RPHS, RPEMS, Bridle Ridge, Creekmoor and Shull are going through staff and team development in what will likely be a three year process. Members of the aforementioned schools are receiving training in effectively answering the four questions of a PLC, data analysis, effective collaboration and achieving a PLC culture in deed and actions

rather than just rhetoric. Over the course of the next three to five years all schools in the district will be receiving this advanced training from the PLC staff at the Regional Professional Development Center. PLCs focus on adult and student learning, results and creating a collaborative culture rather than working in isolation.



This summer, Ray-Pec High School received notification that it is now considered a candidate school for the IB Diploma Programme. What does this mean? It means that we are pursuing authorization as an IB World School so we can join with other schools across the world in sharing a commitment to high quality, engaging, international education that we believe is important for our students.

This year, teachers and administrators will be given access to the IB online curriculum center and be able to view IB publications and teacher support materials as well as participate in online forums with teachers throughout the world. In addition, faculty members will be engaged in professional development and policy development that support the IB philosophy. A consultant will be

assigned to guide the staff through these changes, as well as offer customized support and advice. At the end of the process, we will apply for full authorization. Once given authorization, we will be able to offer our first IB courses in the 2015-2016 school year.

It is an exciting endeavor that will benefit all the students and faculty members at Ray-Pec High School!

Welcome Kristel Barr to Academic Services

Mrs. Kristel Barr joined the AcS team July 1 in the role of Director of Student Services and Secondary Education. Kristel brings a vast set of experiences to the team and district. During her career she has been an alternative school teacher of English/History, A+ Coordinator and Assistant Principal. Her last eight years have been at Truman High School in the Independence School District as the lead principal. Mrs. Barr has degrees from MU, KU, UMKC and is working on her doctoral degree from Saint Louis University.

Kristel is married to Chris (19yrs.) and they have two children; Madison (15) and Austin (11) and two dogs Murphy and Joey. Some of Kristel's duties include: *secondary education leadership and oversight, secondary curriculum development, principal mentoring, alternative school programs, residency, long-term hearings, ELL program, 504 process and several other duties to be determined.* AcS and the district are pleased to have Kristel join the RP family and team.

Dr. Phil Warrick Comes to Ray-Pec August 30 *Standards-Referenced Reporting (SRR) Continues*

The district will continue its journey toward implementation of a *Standards-Referenced Reporting (SRR)* system when Dr. Phil Warrick comes to RP on Friday August 30. Dr. Warrick will work with all secondary (7-12) staff members in what will be the first of four days. The district has now taken the SRR system into grades K-6 and intends to create a reporting system K-12 that will co-exist peacefully and successfully with college entrance requirements. Advantages of SRR over the

traditional approaches to grading include:

1. Raising the standards for academic achievement of **all** students.
2. Reporting to students and parents what a student has actually learned based upon the standards being taught.
3. A more accurate reflection of a student's learning as non-academic factors, **while still important**, are reported by other means.
4. It greatly reduces inconsistencies in grading.

Missouri Learning Standards (MLS)

Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessments Implementation Continues

The district continues to move forward with curriculum revisions at the local level and implementing the Mo Board of Education approved common core state standards, dubbed Missouri Learning Standards (MLS) moving forward. The district also is gearing up for the assessments that will be required by DESE in the

spring of 2015. The district took advantage of an opportunity provided by Smarter Balanced during the 2012-13 school year as students in grades 3-8 piloted the Smarter Balanced Assessments last spring. The experience provided an early look for students, teachers and leadership at the assessments that will ultimately

replace the MAP test. It was also an opportunity to pilot on-line testing and work through the technology/infrastructure challenges with that part of the new assessments. The experience was well received by most students and staff. The focus will begin to turn to the instructional shifts that will be required with the MLS

and how to engage our students in critical thinking and level of rigor that will be required with new and higher standards. All Missouri districts are at the implementation phase of the MLS and will be taking the Smarter Balanced Assessments during the spring of the 2014-15 school year. For more info: Smarterbalanced.org

Summer School 2013 in Review

The 2013 Summer School session was a great success! A total of 140 elementary/intermediate students and 448 middle/high school students took advantage of our summer school program during the first session which ran from June 5th to July 2nd.

Our elementary summer school was directed by Kristi Mellon at Stonegate Elementary School. The emphasis for elementary summer school was mathematics and communication arts. The students' daily schedules also included physical education and a lesson in the library media center. Our data shows that participating students showed many areas of growth!

In communication arts:

*76% of 4th grade students raised their Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) reading level at least one level;

*87% of 5th grade students raised their F&P reading level by at least one level;

*55% of 2nd grade students made significant gains on their Pathway Assessment;

*Incoming 1st grade students gained an average of 4.5% on their sight word attainment.

In math:

*77% of 1st grade students showed gains in two out of three learning targets;

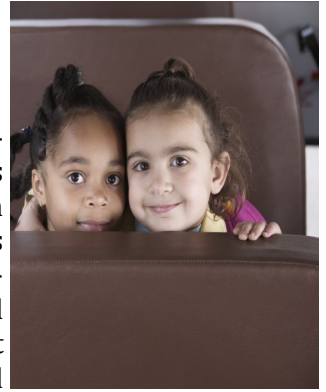
*94% of 4th grade students showed significant growth in at least two out of three learning targets; and

*89% of 5th grade students showed significant growth in at least two out of three learning targets.

James Brown was the director of Secondary Summer School. Highlights included 68 students accessing Health and 59 students accessing

9th Grade PE. Also, approximately 285 students earned PE credit through the Summer Fitness course. All of these numbers have increased when compared to last year's summer school participation.

Summer school is one way in which students can maintain and build upon the academic gains they achieved during the regular school year. We appreciate everyone who participated and/or helped with summer school program this year and look forward to continuing to grow our programming in the years to come.



“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more things that you learn, the more places you'll go.”

—Dr. Seuss



From back row, left to right: Rob Weida, Doug Becker, Macey Watermann, Don Novak, Ashley Harms, Jennika Miller, Becky Oshel, Melissa Marolt, Leah Sapp, Tara Kelley, Keri Pinney, Janell Doudrick, Allison Hamilton, Drew Ackerson, Andrea Calkins, Amy Beck, Lovie Driskill, and Karen Hurst.

Group Attends Assessment Training Institute

Teachers, a curriculum specialist, and administrators from across the district participated in a three day summer Assessment Training Institute (ATI) in Portland, OR.

Assessment experts and leading practitioners led keynotes and breakout sessions that focused on:

- Connections between classroom assessment and teacher effectiveness
- Teaching and assessing for creativity
- Subject-area instruction

and assessment

- The relationship of classroom assessment to motivation
- High-impact formative assessment practices
- The role of homework in learning

A balanced assessment process during learning improves student confidence, motivation and achievement.

National experts included Rick Stiggins, Jan Chappuis, Jim Popham, and Ken O'Connor.

Running Start Piloted at Stonegate Elementary

Over 40 incoming Kindergarteners have started their educational career by attending a new concept at Ray-Pec called Running Start.

Running Start is a 3-week session of Kindergarten that allows for students to become acclimated to a school environment and practice learning new concepts like lining up, eating lunch in the cafeteria, exploring recess, meeting new friends, and becoming familiar with routines while learning together. This is the first year for Running Start.

Top Ten Tips on Motivating Students with Special Education Needs

Some key tips to help motivate students include:

1. Create a strong family of learners in your classroom to help build the confidence and self-esteem of your students. Take time for student interaction and sharing.
2. Create an atmosphere of trust and respect in your classroom. Take the opportunity each morning to help build this atmosphere.
3. Provide numerous opportunities for each student to share their accomplishments with the class and the class to share their achievements.
4. Give students (where age appropriate) the opportunities to set their own academic goals. Psychologists say the goals we set for ourselves (as opposed to the goals others set for us) are more motivational and we are more inclined to pursue those goals.
5. Tell your students why each learning task is important. Your students will be more engaged and motivated when you provide them with specific reasons for learning something. Try and relate the learning directly to their lives.
6. Hold high but realistic expectations for your students. "Realistic" in this context means that your standards are high enough to motivate students to do their best but not so high that students will become frustrated in trying to meet those expectations.
7. Help students set achievable goals for themselves. The failure to attain realistic goals can disappoint and frustrate students. Encourage students to focus on their continued improvement, not just on their grade on one test or assignment.
8. Reward your students with praise to help build their confidence. Students are more affected by positive feedback and success.
9. Help minimize competition among students in your class. Competition produces anxiety, which can interfere with learning. Reduce students' tendencies to compare themselves to one another.
10. Maintain your enthusiasm about teaching with your class. A teacher's enthusiasm is a crucial factor in student motivation.

~Adapted from www.challengingminds.com

Teachers Participate in Mo Learning Standards /Common Core Academy

Thirty-five teachers participated in a high impact professional development opportunity by attending Common Core State Standards Summer Academy provided by the Professional Development Network of Greater Kansas City.

Participants created rigorous units of instruction aligned with SMARTER Balanced content specifications and gained a deeper understanding of formative and performance assessment strategies.

Pathways to Reading Training

Seventeen elementary teachers received Year 2 PTR training in June.

Participants had the opportunity to administer and analyze assessments, teach the PTR instructional strategies to students, practice note taking and responding to student errors. Teachers received modeling, guidance, and feedback from the PTR consultant.

Two sessions of Year 1 PTR training have been scheduled for this summer also. New teachers to the district or teachers new to the instruction of PTR received training designed to assist in understanding phonemic awareness and phonics and their relationship to the development of reading and spelling preventatively and remedially.

Ray-Pec Leadership Academy Cohort #5 Starts in September

The 2013-14 Ray-Pec Leadership Academy (RPLA) will kick off Sept. 5 when Cohort #5 launches. Eleven participants will study, learn and engage in collaborative conversations about leadership and what effective leaders consistently do. **Those participants are:** Mark Cook, Karen Green, Shawna Lopez,

Melissa Lucas, Kristi Mellon, Jennika Miller, Don Novak, Eric Sclesky, Jamin Swift, Macey Waterman and Casey White.

Dr. Kevin Daniel is the lead facilitator for the group with support from Mr. Jay Harris and Mrs. Lisa Hatfield. Several RP principals will also help by being guest speakers, sharing

leadership experiences and effective strategies that leaders deploy.

The RPLA will meet eight times during the 2013-14 school year. RPLA is re-forming after taking a pause in recent years. Several former RPLA graduates are currently in leadership positions within the district.



Weekly Twitter Chat Times

Twitter is one of the fastest ways to build your personal learning network. Below you will find **some** weekly chat times with their specific hashtags. You don't have to be a twitter expert to follow a chat and read fabulous thoughts and ideas of your peers!

Sundays:

#sunchat (Sunday Ed Chat) 8-9am
 #1stchat (1st Grade Teachers Chat) 7-8 pm
 #titletalk (Promote reading and literacy) 7-8 pm
 #21stedchat (21st Century Education Chat) 7-8 pm

Mondays:

#mathchat (Math Teacher Chat) 2:30-4 pm
 #engchat (English Teachers Chat) 6-7 pm
 #sschat (Social Studies Teachers Chat) 6-7 pm
 #pechat (Physical Ed chat) 6-7 pm
 #4thchat (4th grade Teachers chat) 7-8 pm
 #musedchat (Music Teachers chat) 6-8 pm
 #kinderchat (Early childhood/Kindergarten chat) 8-9pm

Tuesdays:

#NMCK12 (Innovative things for Teaching Chat) 5:30-6:30pm
 #edchat (education chat) 11am-12 pm and 6-7pm
 #wrldchat (world history and geography curriculum 7-8 pm)
 #pblchat (project based learning chat) 7-8pm
 #5thchat (5th grade teachers chat) 7-8pm
 #patue (pedagogy and technology) 7-8pm
 #6thchat (6th grade teachers chat) 8-9pm
 #spedchat (special education chat) 8-9 pm

Wednesdays:

#ipadchat (ipads in education chat) 12-1 pm
 #ctchat (critical thinking chat) 6-7 pm
 #edmusic (music education) 6-7pm
 #3rdchat (3rd grade teachers chat) 6-7pm
 #2ndchat (2nd grade teachers chat) 7-8 pm
 #histed (history education) 7:30-8:30
 #sbgchat (standards based grading chat) 8-9pm

Thursdays:

#langchat (foreign language chats) 7-8pm
 #mschat (middle school chat) 7-8pm
 #moedchat (Missouri Ed chat) 8-9pm
 #atpic (all things PLC) 8-9 pm

Fridays:

#connectedpd (connected Professional Development Chat) 11am-12
 #gtchat (gifted and talented chat) 6-7 pm

Saturdays:

#satchat (general education topics) 8:30-9:30 am and 9:30-10:30 am
 #rechat (rethinking education chat) 8-9 am

New Teacher Chat

Social media is a great way to connect with other teachers across the district, across the metro, across the country, and even across the world. You can find that the same questions, excitement, creativity, and anxiety are part of all new teachers experience at some point, so why not explore what

others are doing and thinking via social media? Here are just a few places to check out:

Facebook: New Teacher Chat

Twitter: #ntchat, #edchat, #elemchat, #hschat @edutopia, @ASCD

2013 Curriculum Camp

Members of the PK-8 learning team, as well as high school content representatives, attended the second annual curriculum camp June 5,6,7.

These teachers began camp with some new learning and then worked in collaborative grade level and content area teams to prioritize power standards and learning targets, update and create formative assessments, work on instructional strategies and enter information into *Build Your Own Curriculum*.

These participants were surveyed and here are few comments that were shared on the survey:

"I was extremely proud to work on this curriculum camp and felt we got a lot accomplished."

"The best part of curriculum camp was the working time. We needed to just sit together and get the work done so that we had an idea of where to go."

"There is still work to be done."



Blogs:

<http://www.edutopia.org/blogs/beat/new-teacher-support>

Websites:

<http://teachers.net/gazette/wong.html>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/teaching-strategies/new-teacher>

Pinterest, Learnist, Teacher Planet



Sixth Grade Begins Standards-Referenced Reporting in 2013-14

Sixth grade will join K-5 grade levels in reporting student progress within the Standards-Referenced reporting system.

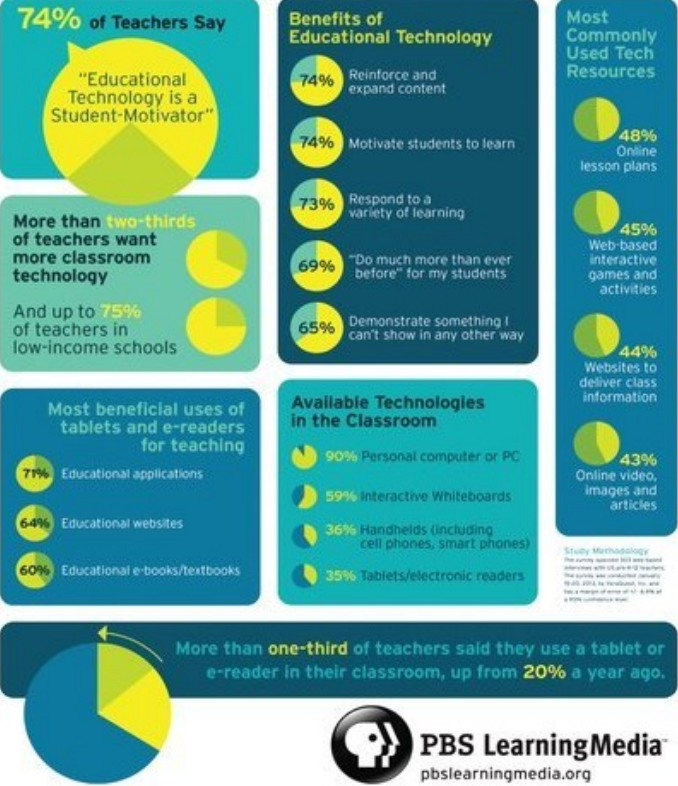
Sixth grade staff spent the 2012-13 school year learning, planning, and preparing.

The district began the transformation of grading/reporting in 2008 by creating a task

force of 35 teachers and principals to begin researching and learning about effective feedback.



TEACHERS EMBRACE DIGITAL RESOURCES TO PROPEL LEARNING



Preview Day—The First Step to a New School Year!!

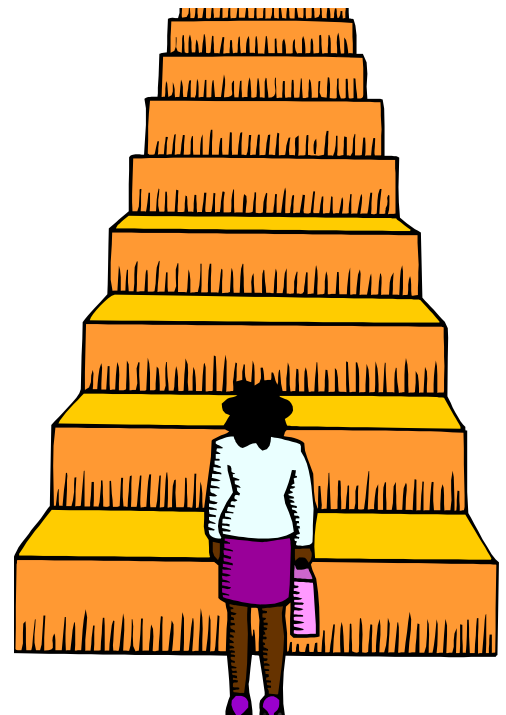
Monday, August 12

Starting at a new school is an exciting experience for both students and their parents. To ease the transition, the Ray-Pec School District will once again have preview days at Bridle Ridge Intermediate, Eagle Glen Intermediate, Ray-Pec East Middle School and Ray-Pec High School for our incoming 5th, 7th and 9th grade students.

This is a wonderful opportunity for students to meet their teachers, tour the building, practice using their lockers, review cafeteria procedures, and begin establishing relationships with other students on their team. Transportation will be provided.

Intermediate Schools: 8:40 AM - 11:10 AM (5th grade only)
Middle School: 7:35 AM—10:00 AM (7th grade only)
High School: 7:25 AM - 10:30 AM (9th grade only)

*"You don't need to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.*



As the Raymore-Peculiar District strives to meet its mission of “preparing each student for a successful and meaningful life” the supports for helping students to be successful is increasingly important. We are very pleased that we will begin the year with two full-time Behavior Interventionists (BI), Allison Scott and Carolyn Deane, and also have the expertise of Cindy Sinclair on a 550 hour contract. These three ladies will be teaming together to provide the support needed for some of our students who struggle with appropriate classroom behavior.

Many conversations were held over the summer months and a spectrum of services was developed to include professional development for staff, observations, consultation, data collecting assistance, functional behavior assessments, behavior plan development, and more. The BI’s will function across both the

general education and special education realms with many opportunities for both staff and students to benefit from their services.

Carolyn Deane, who returns to us in her second year in the district, will be housed at Eagle Glen. She will primarily serve Eagle Glen, Bridle Ridge, Stonegate, Middle School and the High School.

Allison Scott, a first-year BI and fourth year in the district, will be housed at Shull Elementary. She will primarily serve Shull, Peculiar, Timber Creek, Raymore, and Creekmoor.

Cindy Sinclair, who is returning to us in retirement, will be housed at Peculiar Elementary and will be a mentor to Carolyn and Allison as well as assisting with the services in all buildings EC – 12th grade.

All three BIs will work closely to-

gether for collaboration and support of all buildings. They will work closely with focus facilitators and BIST staff to provide support and data review, counselors and principals for intervention and behavior plans, as well as teachers and paras. They will also collaborate regularly with the contracted district autism consultant and the in-district autism consultants. Please watch for your opportunity to benefit from their expertise as they provide professional development and collaboration sessions within your building.

If you would like to schedule a time for any type of services from a BI to assist you in your work with students, please visit with your principal and they can make the appropriate contact. If the assistance needed involves a special education student, your building process coordinator can assist you.

High School BLT Reboots for Literacy by Jeanne Kuhlman

Although it seems impossible that summer is quickly coming to a close, the high school is eagerly preparing for another great school year. The need to implement effective, engaging instruction that supports the implementation of standards, Common Core, and International Baccalaureate (IB) requires that teachers’ instructional skills are continually nurtured and improved. To meet this challenge, the high school Building Leadership Team (BLT) has been busy this summer gearing up to lead our staff with a persistent focus on student achievement. Although the ideas and practices of a Profes-

sional Learning Commu-

ty (PLC) have been utilized in our district for many years, the high school BLT felt that revisiting the foundational practices of a PLC would be beneficial for continued improvement of our school. In June, the BLT participated in an off-site workshop at Union Station to “reboot” our building PLC concept and processes. The workshop was one of several that the team will be participating in throughout the school year to refine the focus and function of the leadership team as the building instructional leaders.

Currently, the BLT has been discussing

and developing processes to improve collaboration and instructional practices across all subject areas for increased student success. This year, literacy across the curriculum will be a main instructional focus. Thus, the BLT will be facilitating and monitoring the development and implementation of a building wide literacy plan.

While the literacy plan is not yet established, the team has been actively preparing to gather and share data with the entire staff to clearly demonstrate how literacy practices can impact our students’ academic success. An important aspect

of the building literacy plan will include preparing and equipping teachers with the necessary skills to support student literacy growth in all subject areas. As a result, the literacy focus will improve the skills of our students, providing them with competence and knowledge to think, read, write, and speak as truly literate citizens leading successful, meaningful lives.

