

The Bridge



Locust Creek Bridge in Winter

Volume 8, Issue 5

January, 2017



Important Dates

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| Jan. 9 | Board Of Education Meets; 6 p.m.; BOE |
| Jan. 11 | Semester Report Cards Are Distributed |
| Jan. 16 | Martin Luther King Holiday—No School |
| Jan. 17 | Math Field Day: PBHS 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. |
| Jan. 23 | Board Of Education Meets; 6 p.m.; BOE |
| Feb. 3 | PK and K Registration; 9 a.m.—2 p.m.; PBHS |
| Feb. 11 | Winterfest Dance at PB; 7:00 to 11:00 pm |
| Feb. 13 | Board Of Education Meets; 6 p.m.; BOE |
| Feb. 13 | 2017 School Calendar Hearings: BOE, 6 p.m. |
| Feb. 24 | Faculty Senates Meet: 2-hour delay—students |
| Feb. 27 | Board Of Education Meets; 6 p.m.; BOE |
| Feb. 27 | 2017 School Calendar Hearings: BOE, 6 p.m. |
| Feb. 28 | Key Club Blood Drive at PBHS; all school day |
| March 7 | Young Writers Program at PBHS; 6:30 p.m. |

Greetings Everyone,

We're getting this issue out to you a little later than usual due to some unforeseen circumstances. As I was getting ready for church, a week ago Sunday, I experienced a back problem that kept me from being able to come to work all of last week. I can tell you that I'm not a good patient, and I'm sure my wife wanted me to get better and get back to work as soon as I could. Plus, I missed being in the office and out in the schools.

While off last week, I couldn't help but think about how many of my co-workers in Barbour County Schools, in similar situations, wouldn't have enough sick days to cover a week-long absence and how their pay would then be docked for missing days. I know how many people live paycheck to paycheck and how an unexpected illness or injury can set them back financially.

When legislation was passed to remove the benefit of allowing school employees to accrue unused days and use them for insurance or additional years of service for retirement, it took away a major incentive to protect the days and not use them. Therefore, we have a lot more school employees here and across the state who are using most or all of their allotted days in the year they are issued and not carrying any over to the next year. During the 2015-16 school year, Barbour County Schools spent \$817,379.83 on substitute personnel.

No one can predict when an accident, injury, or significant illness is going to strike. Carelessly using all of your sick days on a yearly basis is like playing Russian roulette with your financial future. I was lucky to only miss a week of work. A friend of mine in Hancock County went for a routine checkup in early November and was sent to a hospital in Pittsburgh for open heart surgery. He is finally going back to work this week. Fortunately, he has accrued over 200 days and was able to get through this tough time in his life without any financial concerns.

Besides the financial considerations, when thinking about using all of our sick leave days on a yearly basis, we really need to think about the impact our absences have on our students. There should be no comparison to the quality of care and instruction that our full-time personnel can provide our students as compared to substitute personnel. This is certainly not an indictment of our substitute staff., since most do a wonderful job. However, our full-time faculty and staff understand our students' strengths and weaknesses, know their families and are familiar with any learning or physical disabilities they may have. They are also experts in their subject matter, know their jobs and tend to be much more efficient than any substitute could be.

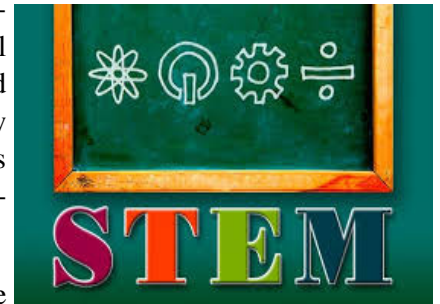
My sentiment on this issue is not meant to call out or demean any faculty or staff members within Barbour County Schools. I just want to encourage everyone to be judicious, for their own sakes and their students, when using their allotted leave.

Thanks,

Philip Barbour High School Selected for State Innovation Grant \$160,000 Award to Provide Equipment, Software, Extended Learning

The West Virginia Board of Education approved Innovation in Education designations to seven schools during its December meeting. Philip Barbour High School's proposal was selected for funding in the amount of approximately \$160,000 over three years. Applications were received from 43 elementary, middle, high school and career technical education centers. "We received several outstanding applications requesting an Innovation in Education designation," said West Virginia Department of Education Chief Academic Officer and review committee member, Clayton Burch. "The seven schools receiving designations have proposed inventive ideas that encompass the goals of the Innovation in Education Act." The 2016-17 designations mark the first funded under Policy 3236.

The selected schools are approved to redesign delivery of instruction, operate under greater flexibility and enhance student engagement to increase educational achievement as they demonstrate innovation in education. Barbour County Schools' proposal for PBHS focuses on the STEM areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The project goal is to use blended learning to improve student proficiency in the core curricular areas and better prepare them for the fast-changing, technical world of the 21st century. Funding will provide for staff-recommended supplemental software platforms, implementation of Khan Academy accounts, 120 student mini-notebooks, three (3) charging carts, professional development and after-school programming costs.



Kindergarten & Pre-K Registration Is Set for February 3rd at PBHS

Barbour County Schools will enroll students for its 2017-18 kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs on Friday, February 3, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the auxiliary gymnasium at Philip Barbour High School. A make-up date of February 17 has been established, if needed, at the same time and location. Enrollment packets will be provided at registration, but they can also be picked up from either Philippi Head Start, 183 Chestnut Street, Philippi, or Barbour County Schools, 45 School Street, Philippi. They can also be printed from the Barbour County Schools website prior to February 3, 2017.

Children who are currently attending a PK program will not need to register. Parents are reminded that state code mandates that children must attend a state-approved kindergarten program prior to entering first grade. Children who will be five years old before September 1, 2017 are eligible for enrollment in kindergarten for 2017-2018. All four-year olds are eligible for PK enrollment during the same session.

Kasson School Receives Lowe's Grant to Purchase New Gym Doors

Kasson School principal, Dr. Teresa Marsh, left, and school representative, Misty Bolton, display a \$5000 check received through the Lowe's Education Grant program. The funding will be used to purchase three sets of much-needed new exterior doors for the KEMS gymnasium.



ECCAT Policy Update for Aides Revealed

Barbour County school aides should be aware that a waiver of Policy 5202 has been approved by the West Virginia Board of Education that allows candidates not currently employed as Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teachers (ECCAT) to be eligible to take ECCAT eLearning courses and apply for permanent credentials once all additional policy requirements are met.

To complete ECCAT course assignments, there is a requirement that all participants be in a pre-k or kindergarten classroom for a minimum of four (4) hours per week for each of the 15 weeks that the ECCAT course is in session. It should be noted that this obligation is the responsibility of the applicant and that the employing county is not required to provide paid time off to complete the requirement.

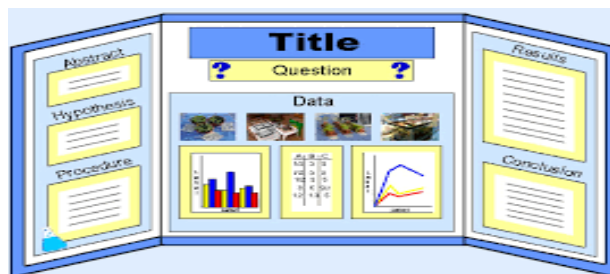
While this waiver will allow a wider pool of individuals to begin the coursework necessary to achieve the full ECCAT credential, it is not intended to impact the means by which counties fill ECCAT positions or consider ECCAT seniority.

For more information on this policy waiver, local aides may contact David Neff at the county office; Rhonda Fisher at the WVDE Department of Early Learning (rffisher@k12.wv.us); or Christina Haymaker at the WVDE Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure (chaymaker@k12.wv.us).



2016-17 Elementary Science Fair Winners Are Announced

The 2016-2017 All-County Elementary Science Fair for grades 3-5 was held at Philip Barbour High School on December 8th. The five judges included ABU Professor and Barbour County Board of Education Member, Adam Starks; Director of Student Services, Michael Ferguson; and instructors from the Science Department at PBHS. Participating students were from Junior & Kasson Elementary Schools.



At the conclusion of the student presentations in the auditorium, several merit awards were presented to individual participants, as well as the top three placements based upon the judges' scores. The following students received overall fair awards:

- ◆ Best Oral Presentation: Lilly Simmons, JES;
- ◆ Best Visual Display: Caleb Collins, JES;
- ◆ Best Data Presentation: Haiden Hollen, JES;
- ◆ Best Use of Technology: Jacob Gray, KES;
- ◆ Judges' Favorite: Lilly Simmons, JES;
- ◆ Best Solution of a Real World Problem: Ryan McDaniel, KES;
- ◆ Best Use of Scientific Method: Jacob Long, KES;
- ◆ Best Research: Ryan McDaniel, KEMS;
- ◆ Most Unique Project: Gracey Nicholson, JES;
- ◆ Most Creative Display: Gracey Nicholson, JES;
- ◆ Best Photographic Display: Abbigayle Holsberry, KES;
- ◆ Best Interaction with Judges: John Pritt, JES.

Grade level winners included: **Grade 3:** 1st place: Haiden Hollen, JES; 2nd place: Kacey Cutright, KES; 3rd place: Caleb Collins, JES. **Grade 4:** 1st place: Nathan Bennett, JES; 2nd place: Lilly Simmons, JES; 3rd place: Gracey Nicholson, JES. **Grade 5:** 1st place: Ryan McDaniel, KES; 2nd place: Abbigayle Holsberry, KES; 3rd place: Grant Schola, KES. All county elementary schools are invited to participate in the 2017-18 Elementary Science Fair, which has been tentatively scheduled for December of 2017.

— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Retention Policy Reminders:** County educators who are seriously considering the retention of any student who is experiencing academic difficulty should be alert to the provisions of county policy 7400. A final written retention notice must be received by parents by February 1st of each year. Prior to sending this notice, staff members must have conducted a Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting for those potential first-time retainees in grades K-5, and have developed and implemented a resulting plan of support. Final letters will be sent by schools by May 25. For more information, teachers are encouraged to review policy 7400 or contact their building administrators.

➤ **Retirement Notice:** The Finance Office has issued a final reminder that the date for classroom teachers to submit early written notification of their intent to retire in order to receive the \$500 bonus authorized by WV Code 18A-2-2(g) is **March 1**. If another teacher is hired to fill the position prior to the start of the following school year, the retiring classroom teacher is disqualified from continuing his/her employment at that position.

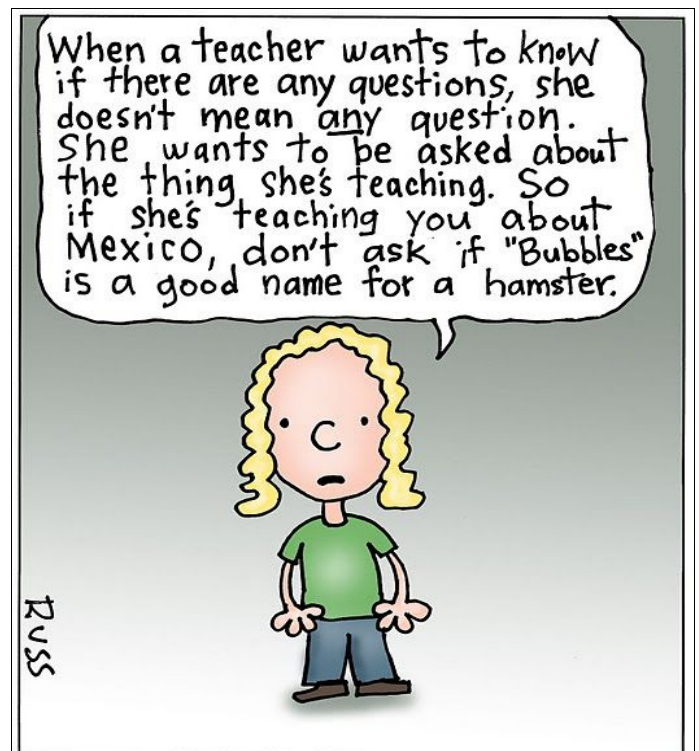
Additionally, although not required in code, Barbour County Schools is also offering a \$250 early notification bonus to service personnel who notify the board by March 1 of their intentions to retire at the end of the school year. For more information about the early notification process or for the necessary form, interested staff may contact the Finance Office at 457-3030 (ext. 136).

➤ **Mileage Reimbursement Rate Change:** Staff members who submit travel forms for reimbursement should note that the rate for Barbour County Schools became 53.5 cents per mile on January 1. This amount is linked to the federal mileage reimbursement rate and is adjusted periodically. The travel reimbursement forms for school employees will soon be updated on the BCS website.

➤ **Retirement Plan Information Is Now Available:** The Finance Office recently distributed the annual 403(b) Plan information to all employees. The 403(b) Plan is a valuable retirement savings option available through the Barbour County Board of Education, and the notice provides a brief explanation of the provisions, policies and rules that govern the 403(b) Plan. If you have not received your copy of the flyer, please see your principal or administrator. Questions about the plan can be directed to the Payroll Office at 457-3030.



"So I finally learn my ABCs, and then – BAM! – lowercase!"



When a teacher wants to know if there are any questions, she doesn't mean any question. She wants to be asked about the thing she's teaching. So if she's teaching you about Mexico, don't ask if "Bubbles" is a good name for a hamster.

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