

The Bridge



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Important Dates

April 5	Third Nine-Weeks Report Cards Issued
April 5	Young Writers Program at PBHS Auditorium, 7 pm
April 8	All-County Music Program; PB Gymnasium, 7:00 p.m.
April 11	Board of Education Meets at BOE Office; 6:00 p.m.
April 13	ISE Day (Tutoring) No School for Students
April 22	Out of Calendar Day: Spring Break
April 25	Out of Calendar Day: Spring Break
April 25	Board of Education Meets at BOE Office; 6:00 p.m.
May 9	Board of Education Meets at BOE Office; 6:00 p.m.
May 12	Annual Student Art Show at A-B College
May 16-20	WESTEST 2 Testing for Students in Grades 3-11
May 23	Board of Education Meets at BOE Office; 6:00 p.m.
May 23-27	WESTEST 2 Makeup Testing Window
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday: No School
June 1	End of 4th Nine-Weeks and Second Semester

Dear Colleagues,

With the coming of spring, many thoughts turn to warm weather, green grass, beautiful flowers, and plans for summer vacation. Or, if you are like me, my thoughts turn to trout fishing, turkey season, and how in the world am I going to get all of this stuff done before the end of school? While these are all great things to think about, I would like to turn your attention in a little different direction.

Historically, April in school systems across the country have been when the worst school disasters in our nation's history have occurred. Please be vigilant to the warning signs that a student may be planning a violent act. Seventy-five (75%) percent of the time an attacker informed others of any plan, so listen to what kids are saying. Other warning signs include: easy weapon access, the student has been subjected to bullying, suicidal gestures, or a sudden change in personality.

I would like to also encourage schools to begin WESTEST 2 preparations in earnest. Be sure that your school has developed an incentive plan to encourage students to be present for the test and to encourage them to give their best effort. Teachers may use Acuity to develop questions and lessons similar to what students will experience on the WESTEST. Familiarizing students with the format of the test will prevent students from experiencing problems when test time arrives. Now, would also be a good time to alert and remind parents not to schedule appointments for children during the week of the test.

The Calendar Committee is composed of the Professional and Service Staff Development Councils. This committee recently developed three (3) calendar proposals for the employees to vote upon. Thank you for providing your input during this process. We expect to release the results during the week of April 11.

Good luck to Philip Barbour High School and Mt. Vernon Elementary as they deal with the return of OEPA to their schools. I have a good feeling that both schools are well prepared and will do very well when OEPA sees the good things that the folks in those schools have worked hard to implement.

As mentioned in last month's column, pay raises did make it through the legislature and the bill was signed by the Governor. Next year, professionals can expect to see around \$1,448 additional and approximately \$500 for service. These figures may vary based on your situation.

As the weather improves, I hope all of you are able to get out and catch a few trout, dig a few ramps, plant some flowers, or just sit in the sunshine and relax. Thanks for all you do for the children of Barbour County!

Interim Superintendent

PBHS Conceptual Math Class Focuses On “Keeping It Real”



Students in Tonya Ferguson’s Conceptual Math class experienced a high interest Problem Based Learning exercise recently when Dave Whittaker (second from right, front) from All-American Autos in Elkins spoke to students about the process of financing, purchasing and maintaining a vehicle.

County Administrators Attend State Leadership Training

Three Barbour County administrators were among more than 60 statewide who recently completed training at the Third Annual West Virginia Superintendents and Principals Leadership Academy in late-March. Acting superintendent, Jeff Kittle; Philip Barbour High School Principal, Lisa Heinbaugh; and Kasson Elementary/Middle School Principal, Michelle Barb, represented the local school system.

Sponsored by Globaloria, the hands-on event was designed to hone the essentials of game design and deepen insight into students’ and teachers’ experiences within the Globaloria network. Michelle Barb received a runner-up award in the middle school division and was awarded Adobe Flash software and a flip video camera for use at her school.



Recent “Bath Salt” Abuse Cases Generate Area Concerns

A spike in reported cases of “bath salt” or synthetic cocaine and methamphetamine overdoses in West Virginia have caught the attention of state lawmakers. The products have been available in Europe since 2007 and have swept across the USA, finally making an alarming impact in the Mountain State and most notably, north central West Virginia counties.

This most recent drug trend involves products sold over the counter by names such as Pure Ivory, Cloud 9 and Vanilla Sky at prices beginning at about \$25.



Officials point out that these are not the traditional bath salts that are available in bath shops or pharmacies, but novelty synthetic cocaine products that contain chemicals from the same family as meth and MDMA to mimic a “high.”

The items can come packaged in baggies or as vials of powder available at novelty shop counters. The bath salts are cocaine-like stimulants that were created to get around laws for wide distribution. Side effects can include: insomnia, hallucinations, delirium, increased heart rate and blood pressure, heart attack, seizures, brain swelling and stroke, and even suicide attempts.

Though now banned in several states, it can still be purchased in and shipped to West Virginia. The state legislature passed a bill on March 12 making the products illegal, and it is expected that the law will become effective in mid-April.

School personnel are asked to be alert to this issue as they work with youngsters who are often adventurous and naïve. For more information on this topic, feel free to contact Michelle Enz, RN, substitute Barbour County School Nurse.



Do Your Best on the Test! Tips and Techniques

When students ask why it is so important to give a good effort on the WESTEST II (or any other standardized instrument), here are some reasons and/or discussion starters...

- *It is generally good practice to always give your best effort on anything you do. It becomes ingrained and a part of your character, and others will notice.*
- *While it is true that the WESTEST results will not affect your classroom grades, report card or promotion status, these scores become part of your official school records and, as such, will be available to future schools and employers.*
- *In addition to the importance of your individual scores, the overall grade level and school scores will be used to compare our school with other schools around the county, state and nation. We want to show how sharp our students are! The results will also be used by the school staff to improve the curriculum as it analyzes strengths and weaknesses.*

Note: The teacher's attitude toward the testing process is critical because students are by nature intuitive. Also, be aware of the fine line between preparation and over-preparation. There exists a point of diminishing returns where students may become overwhelmed by the whole process and begin tuning out.

Before the Test:

- *Get a full night of rest before each of the testing dates so that you are fresh and alert the following mornings. Test sessions are usually limited to the morning hours to avoid fatigue and burnout.*
- *Eat a good breakfast either at school or at home to provide fuel for the day's activities.*
- *Dress comfortably so that you are not distracted by clothing too warm, not warm enough, too tight, etc.*
- *When feeling nervous before the test, close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths; spend a few moments completely relaxing your mind as necessary.*
- *Do not try to study for the WESTEST. Think of it as a non-threatening opportunity to show what you've learned over the past several years.*

General Test-Taking Tips:

- *As the test begins, quickly scan all questions in the section. This will help you see what the test covers and how many questions you will need to answer.*

- *The WESTEST is untimed. Don't agonize over any one question. Work at a comfortable pace, marking any items that you need to return to, and use available time at the end of each section to review your answers.*

- *Answer all questions. All multiple-choice items are weighted equally. You are not penalized for incorrect responses. Your score will be determined by the number of answers that are correct. Do not leave any answers blank.*

- *All tests have some hard questions. Don't skip them. It's much better to take a good guess. Use the process of elimination to reduce the number of choices and then make your best guess.*

- *Read all directions through twice. Never begin to answer questions before reading all directions.*

- *Mark the multiple-choice answers by filling in the circle completely with a dark pencil mark. If a mistake is made, erase it thoroughly and then fill in the new answer circle.*

- *Stop at the STOP sign or the end of the test section or when time is up. If time remains, use it to go back and work on any questions that were skipped or marked for review. Make sure that an answer has been bubbled for every item. You may then begin a quiet activity at your desk (e.g. reading a book, working a puzzle, etc.) until the rest of the class is finished.*

- *Look for key words that tell what kind of computation is needed in mathematics sections; for example, less than, greatest, between, nearest, least and so on.*

- *Use the provided scratch paper for mathematics calculations or notations.*

- *Try out all answer choices until finding one that is correct. Sometimes the correct answer is not given. Then follow the directions for marking the none of the above choice. Similarly, sometimes the first three answers are all correct. Then mark all of the above as your choice.*

- *Watch carefully for negative words in directions, such as NOT or OPPOSITE. These words tell exactly which answer to look for. Such key words often appear in bold or italic type or all capital letters.*



— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Retirement Planning Seminars Planned:** The Consolidated Public Retirement Board (CPRB) will sponsor its annual regional Retirement Planning Seminars for West Virginia members during May of 2011. Registration is not necessary and the programs are open to all members and their beneficiaries. For further information about dates and locations, contact the Finance Office or visit www.wvretirement.com and click the 2011 PERS Retirement Planning Seminars link under NEWS.

➤ **Mileage Rate Adjustment:** The Finance Office has announced that the state mileage reimbursement rate for privately owned vehicles has increased to 42.5 cents per mile. This rate, which is observed by Barbour County Schools for its employees, will be in effect until further notice or the next review in July, 2011.

➤ **Become a Wellness Partner:** The Barbour County Schools Wellness Committee met on March 31 at the Career and Technical Education Center and is interested in hearing ideas from or receiving assistance from school personnel. The group, which is comprised of student and staff representatives from each school, meets quarterly to discuss health and wellness issues, such as the PEIA Challenge, the annual Wellness Score Improvement program. To become a member or for more information, contact Ronda Jones at the Board Office.

★ **Colt Roundballers Have Stellar Season:** The Philip Barbour basketball program completed an outstanding season when the Colts qualified for the 2011 AA State Tournament.. PB captured both sectional and regional crowns before bowing to eventual state champion, Oak Hill, at the Charleston Civic Center on March 17. Under the direction of head coach, Marcus Johnson and assistants, Danny Wagner and Jonathan Carpenter, the varsity, JV and freshman teams combined for a 47-13 record on the year. Players who represented PBHS at Charleston included: Isaiah Simon, Tyler Rogers, Cody Lindsay, Sam Crickenberger, Trevor Zachavish, Trevor Mouser, Andy Green, J.W. Hawkins, Zach Summerfield, Dustin Price, Tyler Schiefelbein and Antonio Dalton.

Buster the Talking School Bus Keeps Teaching Safety



Barbour County Schools' own "Buster the Talking School Bus" has been busy once again this school year traveling to area elementary schools, singing songs, playing games and teaching kids about how to be safe school bus passengers. Buster stresses items such as getting on and off the bus safely, stop arms and danger zones. The friendly, animated vehicle has been joined by members of the county's transportation staff at Kasson, Junior and Belington Elementary Schools so far. He'll be at the Special Olympics at A-B College on April 12 and plans a visit to Philippi Elementary School on the walking trail when weather permits. He's even been invited to Lewis County at the end of the year. For more information about Buster or to arrange a program, contact transportation supervisor, Carl Bolton.

GED Barbour GED Program Receives High Marks

The Barbour County GED program received excellent feedback following a state technical review visit recently, with eleven commendations issued in the final report. Working closely with the district's Adult Education Program, the service has seen more than 120 state GED diplomas earned by local residents over the past four years. The 2011 GED graduation program is scheduled for late-June.

