

The Bridge



Volume 5, Issue 7

April, 2014



Important Dates

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| April 4 | End 3rd Nine-Weeks Grading Period |
| April 8 | Co. Administrators Mtg. BOE @ 9 a.m. |
| April 11 | Report Cards for 3rd 9-Weeks Distributed |
| April 15 | BOE Reconvenes Mtg. of March 24th |
| April 15 | Board of Education Meets: BOE @ 6 p.m. |
| April 18 | ISE Day: No School Students (Tutoring) |
| April 21 to 25 | Spring Break — Out of Calendar Days |
| April 28 | Board of Education Meets: BOE @ 6 p.m. |
| April 29 | Philippi Main Street Art Stroll—Code Blue |
| May 7— June 12 | WESTEST II Window for Barbour County |
| May 12 | Board of Education Meets: BOE @ 6 p.m. |
| May 13 | Election Day— No School |
| May 26 | Memorial Day— No School |
| May 27 | Board of Education Meets: BOE @ 6 p.m. |

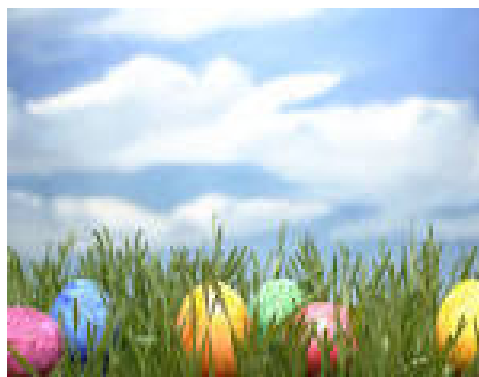
Hi Folks,

I would like to say with extreme confidence that winter is finally over, but... Anyway, my wife's tulips are starting to come up and maybe by Easter they will be in full bloom.

Speaking of Easter, I do hope that all of us can and will take time to reflect on what that special Sunday meant and still means. Make it a point to take time, too, for yourself, and enjoy the Easter break with family and friends.

March gave us a chance for us to enjoy our students' successes in events such as Math Field Day, the Young Writers Contest and the All-County Music Concert. It matters not to me if they won or lost, what really mattered was that they were not afraid to try — in doing so they were, and are, all winners! I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the hard work of our teachers in preparing the kids for those events, along with the parents and family members who supported their children no matter the outcomes.

Nothing is more rewarding than Mom's apple pie, hot dogs and baseball! Well, now that warmer weather is finally arriving, so is the national pastime, along with all of our other spring sports. Here is another great chance for you to take time to enjoy our student as they compete in the athletic arenas. I can personally tell you, they really notice and appreciate seeing you at their games.



As always, if you are in the neighborhood, please stop by.

Respectfully,

2014 All-County Concert Showcases Student Vocal/Instrumental Talent



A capacity crowd of parents, relatives and music lovers of all ages filled the gymnasium at Philip Barbour High School on the evening of March 28 to enjoy the talents of student-musicians from around the school system at the 2014 All-County Concert. The annual spring event showcases the efforts of county music teachers and their students in a series of samplers across different genres.

The program opened with a ten-minute pre-concert performance by the ever-popular Philip Barbour High School drum line. Following opening remarks by Eric Ruf, Board of Education vice-president, and Dr. Joe Super, superintendent of schools, the PB band performed the national anthem. This was followed by a two-part performance of "I Am but a Small Voice" and "Always Friends" by the combined middle and high school choir, which was led by guest conductor, Lewis R. Hall, and accompanied by retired music instructor, Judy Hodgkinson.

Next, the audience enjoyed individual performances by the Kasson Middle ("All the King's Men"), Belington Middle ("Shawnee Creek Legend") and Philippi Middle ("Northpointe Fantasy") school bands. The "Pride of Barbour County," the PBHS band followed with a haunting rendition of "Fantasy on a Japanese Folk Song."

The all-county elementary choir, comprised of voices from all six elementary schools, then sang "Just One Candle" and "Way Out in Left Field." The evening concluded with all students joining in on the always stirring "God Bless America."

"Friends of George Byrer Field" Group Kicks Off Facility Improvement Campaign

A group of local citizens, parents and educators have joined forces to seek creative ways to fund much-needed renovations and upgrades to the outdoor athletic facilities at Philip Barbour High School. Already two dozen strong, the group will be known as the "Friends of George Byrer Field" and have committed themselves to the goal of providing the youth of Barbour County with a sports complex that will fully meet their needs and be a source of community pride for many decades.



Spearheaded by PBHS principal, Mark Lamb, the project opened with a public forum on March 20 that focused on the plans for the new facilities and the projected costs. Aaron Klotz of the Pro Grass turf company (above right with PB boys' soccer coach, Ron Jones) discussed the different types of turf fields and shared experiences with other school systems who have undertaken such a "grass roots" campaign.

An organizational meeting took place at the high school on April 3 to make plans for the approval of a special board of education account, assignment of duties, creation of a webpage and social media contacts, and collection of alumni contact information. The headquarters for the new group will be the PRO office adjacent to the commons area at PBHS. For more information or to join in this worthy effort, interested personnel or citizens may contact Mark Lamb at Philip Barbour High School (304-457-1360).



Do Your Best on the Test!

Tips and Techniques

When students ask why it is so important to give good effort on the WESTEST II (or any other standardized instrument), here are some reasons, tips 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:

- *On the WESTEST, consider using the available technology tools. For example, you can use either the on-screen calculator or the handheld version if you choose.*

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.*
- *Read all passages in their entirety before attempting to find the answers to any related questions.*
- *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.*
- *Use the highlighter tool to mark 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 —

➤ **April Open Enrollment Reminder:** The month of April is reserved as the PEIA Open Enrollment period for Benefit Plan Year 2015. During this period, employees may go to the “Manage My Benefits” tab at www.wvpeia.com to review individual plans and make changes to their health insurance and other benefits. Those who are satisfied with their plans and do not wish to make changes need not do anything. Also of note is the announcement that PEIA is not requiring employees to update their tobacco statuses this year. Questions on the open enrollment period may be directed to Amanda Huff, Benefits/Payroll Coordinator at the board of education office (304-457-3030 ext.136).

➤ **State Benefits Fairs are Scheduled:** For those who seek more detailed or personalized information about their insurance or benefits, PEIA has scheduled a series of six Benefit Fairs for the Plan Year 2015 across West Virginia. The sessions will take place between April 8–16. The nearest location for local personnel is at the Morgantown Ramada Inn on Wednesday, April 9, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

“Thin Clients” Arrive at County Schools

Barbour County’s technology team has ventured into new territory this year with the decision to purchase “thin client” computer systems at many schools. A thin client is a desktop terminal that can be used the same way as a regular desktop. However, normal features such as applications, sensitive data and memory are stored in a data center linked to server in a lab wiring closet. This server provides all computing power and internet access for up to 30 units. Eleven such servers have been installed.

The benefits of the thin client model are twofold: 1) the units are 2/3 the cost of regular computers, and 2) for installations or maintenance, county TSS personnel need only to touch the eleven servers, which can also be updated from a remote location.

Aspiring Administrators Receive Training and Advice from WV Attorney



More than a dozen current and aspiring Barbour County school administrators gathered in the LGI room at Philip Barbour High School on March 10 to participate in a presentation and discussion about the many legal issues that they may encounter in today’s world of education. The two-hour program was coordinated by attorney, Kenneth L. Hopper (above), and focused on the management of legal issues, depositions and evidence.

While acknowledging that administrative decisions sometimes depend upon unique circumstances and become “judgment calls,” there was a firm consensus that, in most cases, certain strategies should be followed, not only by principals and other administrators, but by educators in general.

Among them were: 1) adhere strictly to all established laws, policies and procedures; 2) stick to the facts of the case, avoiding any opinions or personal thoughts on the matter; and 3) streamline the information provided, limiting it to basic and essential data, often providing only “yes or no” answers unless further details are requested.

The legal workshop was the latest in a series of seminars provided by Barbour County Schools for aspiring administrators. For more information, contact Dr. Joe Super, Superintendent of Schools.