



The Bridge

Volume 10, Issue 2

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Greetings Everyone,

This is the fourth letter that I have written for the Christmas edition of the Bridge, and I have to admit that I am anxious to move out of 2018 and into 2019. For me personally, this year has gotten off to a rough start, but I am confident that 2019 will be much better.

Christmas is a time to celebrate with family and friends, for school employees to recharge their batteries for the second half of the school year, and for everyone to celebrate and give thanks for the many blessings that we have been given. Sometimes it is hard for us to count our blessings when we experience poor health, the loss of a loved one, or must struggle through difficult times. However, it doesn't take much effort to look around and see so many people who are coping with things that are much more challenging than the problems we face.

We live in the greatest country on earth, we work in a profession that is focused on educating children and creating the leaders of tomorrow, and we have the ability to impact the lives of all of the children that we serve. I continue to be amazed at the professionalism that I see being displayed in all of our schools, on our buses, in our kitchens and in our offices on daily basis. I am proud to say that I am a member of Barbour County Schools and I hope you all feel the same way.

As we move through the last half of December and into a New Year, I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year. I hope that you get to spend some quality time with your family and friends and I look forward to seeing you all next year. Remember, many of the children that we serve will be anxious to get back to the comfort of their schools. They know when they return after the break that they will be welcomed back with a smile, cared for from the time they step on the bus in the morning until they return home each day, and they will be fed and treated with respect.

Thank you again for all that you do. Merry Christmas!

Jeff P. Wagler





Important Dates

Dec. 21	Faculty Senate: Two Hour Early Dismissal
Dec. 21	End of 2nd 9-Weeks Grading Period
Dec. 24 thru 31	Schools Are Closed for Holiday Break
Dec. 25	Christmas Holiday
Jan. 1	New Year's Holiday
Jan. 8	Report Cards are Distributed
Jan. 14	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
Jan. 21	No School: Martin Luther King Holiday
Jan. 28	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
Jan. 30	PLC Sessions: Two Hour Early Dismissal
Feb. 6	Progress Reports are Distributed
Feb. 11	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
Feb. 15	Faculty Senate: Two Hour Early Dismissal
Feb. 25	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
Mar. 8	End of 3rd 9-Weeks Grading Period
Mar. 11	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
Mar. 15	No School: Out of School Environ. Day
Mar. 20	PLC Sessions: Two Hour Early Dismissal
Mar. 25	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE

Retirement Bonus Guidelines for 2019 Are Announced

This is a 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 WVC 18A-2-2(g) is now MARCH 1.

In accordance with WVC 18A-2-5a, please note that county boards have the authority to pay, strictly from local funds, up to a \$500 bonus to professional personnel other than classroom teachers or service personnel who provide written notification of their intent to retire at the end of the school year by MARCH 1.

The term "classroom teacher" is defined in West Virginia Code 18A-1-1 as those professional educators who have a direct instructional or counseling relationship with pupils, spending the majority of their time in this capacity. This has been interpreted by superintendent interpretations of 1996 and 2006 to mean teachers in elementary and secondary programs (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade), including speech language pathologists, remedial specialists, counselors, and librarians.

"At the conclusion of the school year" has been interpreted to mean that the classroom teacher must complete his/her employment term for the current school year and not work the first day of the employment term of the following school year. Consequently, classroom teachers are eligible for the bonus if they retire anytime during the summer break, as long as it is before the first employment day of the subsequent school year. They are NOT eligible for the bonus if they must work any days as a regular employee during the subsequent school year to become eligible for retirement.

"Written notification" has been interpreted to mean that the teacher has submitted a written request to retire from employment with the school board at the end of the current school year, and the board has taken board action to accept or approve the request. Upon acceptance by the county board, the classroom teacher becomes eligible for the bonus.

Regarding "bonus amount," the \$500 bonus is for the classroom teachers who are employed full time in their positions. If a teacher is employed less than full-time, the bonus will be computed on a full-time equivalence (FTE) basis; for example, teachers employed half-time will receive a bonus of \$250.

Also, since WVC 18A-2-2(g) explicitly states that classroom teachers are to be paid \$500 for providing early notification and WVC 18A-2-5a explicitly states that county boards may pay \$500 or less to any professional employee who is not a classroom teacher or to any service personnel, it is the Department's opinion that county boards do not have the authority to increase the bonus above the amounts stated.

Questions about these guidelines or the notification process in Barbour County may be directed to either David Neff (ext. 1011) or Homer Talbott (ext. 1031) at the board of education office (304-457-3030)



Board of Education Meeting Dates Set for Winter Months

Following are the scheduled meeting dates for the Barbour County Board of Education during the upcoming winter months. All meetings will commence at 6:00 p.m. at the Board of Education office in Philippi unless public notification is made otherwise.

- **Jan. 14 — Board of Education**
- **Jan. 28— Board of Education**
- **Feb. 11 — Board of Education**
- **Feb. 25 — Board of Education**
- **March 11 — Board of Education**
- **March 25 — Board of Education**

Legislative Changes Are Enacted for Cooperating Teachers

Faculty members who are considering the supervision of student teachers should note some related policy requirements that were enacted during the last legislative session:

1. If you took the mentor training in the past offered through the CPD you are qualified to take student teachers without any additional certifications or training.
2. If you haven't completed mentor teacher training, the information below describes an online opportunity through the WVDE. This module does not qualify you to be a mentor teacher for beginning teachers. It only satisfies the requirement to supervise student teachers.
3. If you have NBPTS certification you do not need either training.

Contact either David Neff at the county office or the Department of Education with questions.

“World in 3D” Grant Helps Spur STEM Learning at Kasson School

Students and staff members at Kasson Elementary/Middle School will soon be taking a further step into 21st century STEM learning when the school's new 3D printer becomes fully operational. The new technology was acquired through a successful *Families Leading Change* mini-grant of \$2000 awarded during December.



Members and parents of the school's robotics team saw such a printer in action during a recent competition and urged their coaches to look into the possibilities of securing one for KEMS. The new printer, filament and build sheets will be supplemented in the future through support by the school and its PTO.

One of the biggest project benefits will be the ability of robotics students to produce replacement parts for the robots right on campus instead of spending precious dollars to purchase them. Younger students will enjoy printing their own 3D Christmas ornaments and other curriculum-related items. Mentoring and instruction in coding, slicing and the operation of the technology will be key ingredients in making 3D printing an integral part of STEM learning at Kasson.



Facebook Reading Game a Hit on First Snow Day at Junior School

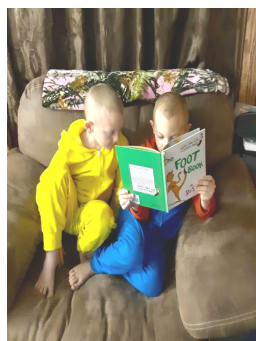


During the first snow day of the year in late-November, Junior Elementary School's principal played a new game with all students, families and staff members. Ashley Workman placed a post on the school's Facebook site, while

challenging everyone to post a picture of him or herself reading a book while they were home on the snow day. The game was open to all siblings, staff, students, student supporters, and family.

Mrs. Workman reported that they received pictures of kids reading to their pets, reading in their PJ's, reading books about Walter The Farting Dog, and even reading under the Christmas tree. Family members joined in with pictures of themselves reading texts that ranged from cook-books, to newspapers, to scary Steven King novels. Out of the 53 pictures shared, five individuals were selected during a special prize drawing for their snow day reading enthusiasm.

Parent, Jessie Ward, Teacher, Amanda Baker, Students, Rachel Wilson and Brandon Pharis, and BMS student and sister, Maddison Weese, were the lucky prize-winners. With such success in the snow day game, the staff has decided to continue the tradition each snow day throughout the year.



The JES staff is encouraging the love of reading to students with their families, as they remind students that reading keeps your brain young, builds writing skills, boosts vocabulary, and helps with math muscle memory, all while exposing the readers to exciting adventures.

Eagles Participate in Dream Tree Program at the Greenbrier



Kasson Elementary/Middle School is one of the participating schools in the 2018 Greenbrier Resort's Dream Tree Program. Those enrolled in the partnership received a gift for each child at their school. Volunteer service hours from KEMS were required in order for the school's youngsters to receive gifts. In late-November, third grade teacher, Crystal Gray, volunteered to help sort and wrap gifts for other schools and organizations, making KEMS eligible.

Kasson parents, Josh and Laura Morrison, rented a U-Haul and traveled to the resort to pick up the gifts for Kasson's students. Then, on Thursday, December 13, parents and Kasson staff members gathered to wrap the presents for the students, just in time for the Christmas break.

Equivalency Testing Dates Set at CTEC

Upcoming test dates for the WV TASC equivalency exams at the CTEC include:

- * **December 19-20**
- * **February 13-14**
- * **April 10-11**
- * **June 5-6**



— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Samsung State Finalist:** Barbour County's Teacher of the Year, Angie McDaniel, has earned a Samsung tablet for her classroom as one of five state finalists in the 2018-19 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. She now moves on to the second phase of the competition, which requires an Activity Plan with which will serve as an outline for her STEM project.

➤ **Decoders:** Kasson teacher, Rochelle Nestor, and three students were recently selected to receive scholarships to attend a weekend workshop on computer coding. Ms. Nestor, at left, is shown with Emily Payne, Alexia Ferber and Mattie Marsh. The group will make presentations to KEMS parents on December 19 and to other parent groups at KidReach sites across the county in the coming weeks.



➤ **Lost Days:** Assistant Superintendent, Jeff Kittle, has announced the procedures to be followed in the cases of instructional days that are lost to inclement weather or other causes:

- * The first five (Days 1-5) canceled instructional days, we will use Accrued Time to cover. (No days will be made up). *The cancellation of November 28 was Day 1.*
- * The second set of five (Days 6-10) canceled instructional days, we will do Snow Packs. (No days will be made up).
- * The third set of five (Days 11-15) canceled instructional days, we will use OS days. (No days will be made up).
- * All subsequent canceled instructional days (Days 16 and beyond) will be rescheduled to be made up.

The Gold Wrapping Paper



Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of the beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.