

PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS staff news weekly

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Peoria Welcomes First Charter School

A Math, Science and Technology Academy Charter School is coming to Peoria for the 2010/2011 school year and will be the first of its kind in downstate Illinois. The Peoria Public Schools Board of Education granted the charter at its January 11th regular meeting. District Administration and the Peoria Charter School Initiative will now begin negotiations on a contract that could be presented as soon as the January 25th regular Board of Education meeting.

The MSTA will be housed at the former Loucks-Edison Jr. Academy building. Thomas Jefferson Primary students and staff have used the Loucks building since last school year following a fire that severely damaged their own building in November 2008. They are expected to return to their home building at the end of the current school year.

“The Administration recognizes that our support staff has a great deal of work to do this summer with the closing of a high school and the moving of three other schools,” Interim Super-

intendent Norm Durlinger told board members in his recommendation. “We do feel, however, that we have the capacity to also have a charter school start after July 1, 2010.

The MSTA will begin the 2010/2011 school year with grades five through seven and add a grade of 75 students over the next five years until it becomes a 5th through 12th grade school with an expected enrollment of 600 students. Concept Schools, the same management company that runs the daily operations of Chicago Math and Science Academy will be at the helm of Peoria’s newest school. It will be the company’s second school in Illinois, but they also manage schools in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Representatives from the company say they will run the charter school to prepare its students for college with a goal of 100% college acceptance, a statistic they have met at the Chicago MSA.

Peoria’s MSTA will be open to all students in Peoria. Representatives from the Charter School

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Budgeting Structure for PMSTA Charter School

The operating cost per student in Peoria Public Schools is estimated at \$9,092 per student for next school year. In the same year, PPS expects to fund each charter school student at 75% of that rate. Each following year, the rate is expected to be 85% of the increasing operating costs. Estimates of General State Aid (GSA) payments to the district show each PPS student is funded through GSA at approximately \$3,237 the first year. Estimates show a decline for two years, followed by an incline the last two years. When multiplied by the number of students attending PMSTA and subtracted by the operating cost, approximately \$805,000 of cash outlay will be needed the first year. Using altered GSA and operating cost estimates, along with increased enrollments for the following years, below is the net cash outlay and a possible reduction in staff at PPS to balance charter school costs.

YEAR 1: \$805,857	No reductions	YEAR 2: \$1,459,602	-29 Staff Possible
YEAR 3: \$404,338	-8 Staff Possible	YEAR 4: \$254,585	-5 Staff Possible
YEAR 5: \$373,557	-7 Staff Possible		

Classes Team Up With College Coaches for Lessons

Thomas Jefferson and Von Steuben 5th graders on Monday met up with their ICC Men’s Basketball teammates for exercises that produced statistics they will take back to the classroom. This is the second year for the math partnership, which ends each February with an invitation to an ICC game.

Pictured right, BU Soccer Coach Jim Derose speaks to Peoria Alternative H.S. students during orientation. Coach Derose encouraged students in many ways, including a discussion of the difficult lives of many of his soccer players, who are from third world countries.



Redefining Teaching & Learning

A Framework for Collaboration

For each holiday get-together, food can be king! Probably like many families, mine usually makes plans for who is bringing what. At Thanksgiving, my grandma makes the best homemade noodles, my aunt is known for her pasta salad and anything mom makes is always great, especially dessert! However, I can’t imagine if one tried to make the other’s dish. More so, I can’t imagine if there were no plan, and I showed up to helping after helping of the same lame dish (which I won’t say any of my family members would ever create!). While it may decrease the need for that post-holiday diet, I don’t think our traditional home cooked meal would likely meet my expectations. However, by working together and with a small amount of planning, each person in my family contributes to a delicious meal that leaves my mouth watering for days or weeks.

As a student or even a teacher, it is hard to fathom reaching or having a student reach a milestone in education only to find out your expectations haven’t been met. The student may have been overfed their helping of dessert, but is malnourished when it comes to the main helping. The problem might be as big as a lack of time to teach a content area or maybe it is just a difference of opinion on what is important.

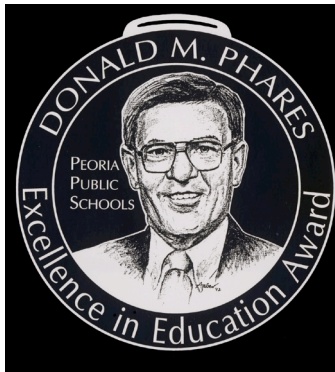
A new tool now exists to help staff members work through those problems with all stakeholders. The Professional Learning Framework is a snapshot description and reflection tool to determine how we are operating as a Professional Learning Community. The PLF tool facilitates problem-solving with the overarching philosophy of supporting a clear, consistent, cohesive focus on student learning informed by data through collaboration. The tool is “home-made” and was created by a group of District Achievement Team (DAT) members, with feedback gathered from teacher groups, throughout last school year. DAT members and others began introducing the framework last semester

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Initiative and from Concept Schools say they will work together to notify and encourage all students in the community to fill out an application, which contains basic demographic information. If less than 75 students apply for a grade level, all students who apply will be admitted. If more than 75 students apply per grade level, prior to a deadline, all students will be entered into a lottery and 75 names will be chosen for each grade.

Peoria Charter School Initiative is currently working to appoint a larger Board of Directors, and following a contract agreement with the



Do you know an outstanding educator? Have you worked along-side an amazing co-worker? Are you inspired by what a fellow teacher is doing with his or her students?

Phares Award Nomination packets are now being accepted. You can print one off from www.psd150.org. Just click on the "employee" link!

Your W-2 is on its way!

The Payroll Department began sending out W-2 forms on Monday. School staff members should have received their forms on Tuesday. If you do not receive a W-2 Form by the end of the week, please call the Payroll Department at 672-6749.

Try This! Assistive Technology Ideas

Adding visuals to your presentation or lesson is easy with Print Screen. Hold down the [fn] button (function) located in the lower left hand corner of the keyboard. Then push the [prt sc] button on the top right hand side. This will copy your screen to the clipboard. Next, paste your picture into Microsoft Word, or an image editing program.

Peoria Public Schools Board of Education, will begin a local, national and possibly international search for staff members.

While the PMSTA is the first of its kind in Central Illinois, other charter schools with different focuses do exist in downstate Illinois. According to the Illinois Network of Charter Schools website, Springfield, Decatur, Rockford,

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throughout the district, but hope it really gets put to use the last half of this school year and throughout next year.

"It is meant to help us collaborate meaningfully," says Dr. Trish Guinee. "It doesn't matter what subject area you teach, role you serve at your school or what problem you are facing."

The framework allows the process to dig deeper than just meeting expectations. It ties in with the Comprehensive System of Student Support. When groups like the Math Vertical Team meet, Guinee says they will try to use the framework to first determine if problem "x" is really a problem by using facts and data.

"When someone suggests an issue that needs to be addressed, we will first determine what data we have or can get to determine if it is really a problem or a perception," says Guinee. "We then can use one or several of the six intertwined key elements to determine how to work

Beardstown and McLean County each have at least one Charter School. Peoria first began looking at a Math, Science and Technology Charter School more than three years ago because of the city's large, unique medical community and several other businesses that could help contribute resources and benefit from well-educated students in those fields.

through that problem and assure we are making progress."

A grid for teamwork, communication, data collection structure, data sources and users, professional development and culture make up the framework. A problem may use parts or all of one or several of the grids, depending on which elements pertain to the problem.

"Each element has a set of indicators that describe beginning, developing and proficient levels," the framework outline states. "Additionally, each element has a list of potential artifacts that concretely demonstrate implementation of the indicators. The indicators can be used as a self-assessment rubric. On a regular basis, teams should identify and support with artifacts their current level on the indicators, then use the rubric as a guide to describe the next steps thereby promoting self-sustaining, generative change."

To learn more about the framework or to get copies of the grids, visit teaching.psd150.org.

Follow-Up: Now We're Clickin'

Last week, Staff News Weekly told you about the return of the Teacher Academy and some of its new features. This week, we want to share more about one of those additions.

In a continual effort to become more efficient for staff, the district now has an online professional development registration system. The online system, purchased through professional development grant dollars, allows for the listing of meetings, workshops and academy classes. Each event listed has an opening description including the type of credit available (contract rate, CPDUs, academy credit, etc.). Clicking on the title of the particular event listing will open a new window with more information. At the bottom of the description is a registration link. When selected, the registration link will open a form to set up the teacher's account. Just follow the directions on the screen to complete the one-time registration process.

The first time in, registrants will be asked some general questions about

building assignment, teaching assignment, years of experience, etc. The purpose of this questionnaire includes auditor information, but also for the system to have data that can match registrants with the events that are most desired. Automatic messages will be generated to enhance verification of registrants. Events will be added weekly, so check back often for new opportunities!

The Teaching and Learning Department and involved committees are still working on set up, so please let us know if you experience any problems by reporting them to susan.grzanich@psd150.org. To access the online system, go to www.psd150.org, click on departments, then on Teaching and Learning, then on either the opening page or on the Applications and Resources page, click on professional development registrations. This will take you to a new webpage with event listings. Browse and register to take advantage of these great opportunities!