

PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS staff news weekly

Volume II — No. 9 — October 21st, 2009

Three-Tier Bell Schedule Update

This is National School Bus Safety Week

At the front of National School Bus Safety Week, Peoria Public Schools' Transportation Director Mike Sullivan reported to the Board of Education Monday night fewer buses are on the road this year and more students are being transported. With the implementation of a three-tier bell schedule this year, the district has become more efficient by transporting more students (nearly 10,000 total) with fewer buses and employees. The increase in ridership is mostly due to the closure of some schools.

Sullivan says along with increased efficiency, which he estimates will save the district one million dollars, he has not seen any major problems develop out of the new

three-tier schedule.

"There wasn't really anything out of the ordinary that I would say was directly correlated to the three-tier bell schedule, it was just normal challenges that we have every year," Sullivan told board members.

A Safe Way to Transport

Despite any challenges or annoyances that may develop for parents or staff members who have bus riders, the National Association for Pupil Transportation reports there is no safer way to transport a child than in a school bus. According to its website, fatal crashes involving school bus occupants are

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Health Insurance Open Enrollment Planned

In just two weeks, open enrollment begins for staff members to enter into health, flex, dental, vision and supplemental life insurance policies through the district. Several open enrollment events are planned throughout the district and additional steps are being taken to help remove unnecessary costs from stacking up for the district.

New this year, all employees will be required to sign a form stating they received an insurance packet. A date and time stamp will also be issued when the packet is turned in.

Whether you currently have a health insurance plan through the district or not, all employees needing insurance for the upcoming year are asked to participate in one event. Assistance will be provided to help enrollees fill out paperwork and provide needed information. Below is the list of open enrollment insurance meetings for all district employees for the 2010 plan year.

Please note that staff members who belong to the custodial, maintenance or administrative groups will need to attend a later meeting. Insurance for those groups are still out to bid and plans will not be finalized by the scheduled meetings listed below. Please contact Payroll prior to making plans to attend an open

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Vaccine Clinics

Humana and United Healthcare have yet to receive a supply of seasonal flu vaccines or H1N1 vaccines. Therefore, no vaccine clinics are planned.

Health plan participants may use network providers for seasonal flu or H1N1 vaccines. By requesting only a flu shot (not to see a doctor or provider), no co-pay is needed.

The Peoria City/County Health Department has tentatively planned H1N1 vaccine clinics at several local schools. These initial clinics, pending supplies, are restricted for pregnant women, household contacts of infants under 6 months of age, children and young adults 6 months of age through 24 years of age, and residents age 25-64 with chronic health conditions.

Clinics being held by the health department at District 150 schools include:

- Tues., Nov 3, 4-7pm, Woodruff
- Tues., Nov 10, 4-7pm, Woodrow Wilson

For more information, visit
<http://www.peoriacounty.org/pchcd>

Redefining Teaching & Learning

DIBELS Alerts Teachers to Reading Problems, Teachers in All Primary Schools Now Have Additional Tools

Teachers, reading coaches, intervention specialists and reading support staff in seven primary schools - Charter Oak, Hines, Kellar, Northmoor Edison, Roosevelt, Valeska Hinton and Whittier - have begun professional development training with the 95% Group, adding to the seven schools that began this training last year. The company's program is built on the belief that 95% of all students, when given instructional support can read at or above grade level by third grade.

At an August launching session, consultants explained the philosophy that drives the 95% Group and began their work in all 14 schools in September. District Reading Coordinator, Kathy Burke, says she hopes that after two years of guidance by the 95% Group, teachers will be comfortable enough with the instructional strategies they learn, to continue using the concepts on their own.

"This is really a preventative model," Burke told Board of Education members on Monday night. "We're trying to catch students while they are young because - we know about the Matthew Effect when they get to the end of first grade, if they are not readers, the rich get richer and poor get poorer - there is about an *88% chance that they'll never get caught up. That gap just keeps widening."

At the workshop on Tuesday, a staff member from Roosevelt likened this reading intervention to exploratory surgery. This type of resource, she said, is allowing teachers to identify a specific problem a student is having with reading, then use specific instructional techniques to treat the problem. Over the last few years, teachers have learned to use DIBELS data to identify reading problems. Now they have a diagnostic assessment in the PASI and PSI that will give teachers more information.

"It's like the guessing is gone," says Eymarde Lawler, special education teacher at

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3-Tier, continued from front page
rare events, even though school buses serve daily in every community. Every school day, some 475,000 yellow school buses transport more than 25 million children to and from schools and school-related activities. In comparison, the Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences estimates that every year more than 800 school-aged children are killed as occupants in other motor vehicles or as pedestrians or bicyclists during “normal school transport hours.”

PPS Transportation Department

- Nearly 10,000 students on 253 different routes are bused each day by Peoria Public Schools
- 107 buses are used daily, approximately 20 fewer than last year due to the new three-tier bell schedule
- The Transportation Department employs 130 bus drivers and 83 monitors
- Bus fire drills are held once each year for all students and are conducted at each school
- On average, 25 buses are used each day just for activities and athletics

DIBELS, continued from front page
Roosevelt. “There have been times over the years when I’ve thought ‘I hope I am helping this child in the right way.’ But with the tools that we have now, I no longer have to wonder, the answer is right in front of me.”

Burke says many teachers throughout the district have shown the same reception to this new resource. This is the third year teachers throughout the district have used DIBELS data. By combining the data from DIBELS, in addition to training by the 95% Group, Burke says teachers are now able to take the DIBELS data, group students and make more informed instructional decisions. The preventative approach for learning to read so that students can read to learn in their later years is also building on the Comprehensive System of Student Support’s Tier I.

“We hope to have 90-95% of students reading at or above grade level before they reach third grade,” Burke says. “We have been getting students’ baseline data for three years now and can use that information to track their progress.

Including the seven schools that began their training last year with the 95% Group, all kindergarten through third grade staff have

Open Enrollment, continued from front page
enrollment meeting.

- 11-04-09 - Kellar Primary Gym 3:30-5:30 PM
- 11-05-09 - Peoria H.S. Auditorium 3:30-5:30 PM
- 11-07-09 (Sat.) - Admin. Building 9:00-11:00 AM
- 11-09-09 - Woodruff H.S. Auditorium 3:30-5:30 PM
- 11-10-09 - Blaine Sumner Gym 4:30-5:30 PM
- 11-12-09 - Hines Primary Gym 3:30-5:30 PM
- 11-18-09 - Manual H.S. Auditorium 3:30-5:30 PM
- 11-19-09 - Richwoods H.S. Auditorium 3:30-5:30 PM
- 11-23-09 - Lincoln M.S. Gym 3:30-5:30 pm

Forms may be dropped off in the DLC Board Room on November 6, 11, 13, 16, 17, 20 and 24. The Board Room will be open for collection from 6:30 - 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. each day.

November 25th, the Board Room will be open from 8:00 a.m - Noon and on November 30th from 6:30 - 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

November 30th is the last day to drop off forms!

been introduced and invited to participate in the workshops. While Burke expects schools that began the training last year to sustain the program with the skills they have learned, she says fourth grade teachers may be added into the mix, due to the popularity of the program and the requests that she has received.

**Research indicates that if children do not become successful readers by the end of third grade, it is very difficult for them to catch up with their peers in later years. The probability that a child who is a poor reader at the end of first grade will remain a poor reader at the end of fourth grade is 88% (Juel 1988). This alarming figure is emphasized in the extensive work of Barr and Parret (1995), who stress that all children need to learn to read successfully before the end of third grade. The role of the classroom teacher is a critical factor in ensuring the success of struggling readers. (Dorn, French, and Jones, 1998.)*

Try This! Assistive Technology Ideas

Type or copy & paste a long article into Microsoft Word. Click on Tools>Auto Summarize. It will shorten your article down to a more manageable size. Great for kids who have trouble reading long passages!

Know the Basics... First Aid Tips

Even a small scratch, cut, puncture wound or burn can become infected. And unless properly cared for, cleansed or protected, it can cause blood poisoning or introduction of dangerous organisms into the bloodstream.



TIP...

- Whatever you use as a dressing to stop the bleeding, it must remain in place until treated by a professional. If more dressing is required to absorb the blood, place it on top of the original dressing.

Co-Teaching: Adapting and Modifying the Curriculum

Some students with disabilities need accommodations or modifications to their educational program in order to participate in the general curriculum and to be successful in school. An accommodation allows a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response and/or presentation. This does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures. A modification is an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure. Examples of modifications include completing work on part of a standard or a student completing an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable than the standard assignment.

Guidelines for Adapting Curriculum

1. Focus on what the student CAN do.
2. Accommodations can be used with any student; modifications should be documented on a student’s IEP.
3. Attempt to accommodate BEFORE you modify.
4. Accommodate and modify before changing the activity.
5. Use the least intrusive support first.
6. Use age-appropriate goals, materials, and activities when planning how to adapt.
7. Not all students learn the same thing, in the same way, at the same time-AND THAT IS OK.

For other research supported practices for grades K-8, check out: The Access Center @ <http://www.k8accesscenter.org>