

PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS staff news weekly

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Superintendent Search Committee & Agency Extend Timeline Into Next Year

The Superintendent Search Committee and Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd., the search firm helping find candidates for Peoria Public Schools' next leader, announced Monday night they plan to extend the timeline for interviews and presentation of candidates to the Board of Education.

One reason for the extension includes the recent hire of an Interim Superintendent, which the two groups say alleviates the urgency for naming a successor to Superintendent Hinton and any pressure for a candidate to leave his

or her current position prior to June 30. They also told board members they expect that allowing extra time for potential candidates to research the district and city, will produce a larger pool of candidates.

While interviews were initially expected to be completed by the end of this month, the committee and agency now expect interviews and the naming of a successor by the Board of Education to conclude in late January/early February of 2010. It is anticipated the new Superintendent will begin his or her duties on July 1, 2010.

PPS Hosts Poverty Simulations

The Illinois Community Action Association, in partnership with Title I, offered District 150 staff and local community members an opportunity to participate in a poverty simulation during the month of October. Both sessions, October 8th and 26th, were held at Valeska Hinton. About 40 staff and community members participated in this week's event. Most participants say they found the experience enlightening and felt co-workers would benefit from the simulation.

Poverty simulations are unique tools that community action agencies are able to use to educate everyone from educators, to policy makers, to local community leaders, about the day to day realities of life with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress. The Illinois Community Action Agency, located in Springfield, Illinois, makes the poverty simulation available to organizations that want to promote a greater understanding of poverty.

During a simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families from single parents trying to care for their children to senior citizens trying to maintain their self sufficiency on Social Security.

The task of each family is to provide food, shelter and other basic necessities during the simulation while interacting with various community resources staffed by low-income volunteers.

Although it uses "play" money and other props, fictional scenarios and time limits, the poverty simulation is not a game. It is a simulation tool that enables participants to view poverty from different angles in an experiential setting, while empowering volunteers by allowing them an opportunity to interact with others from their community.

The poverty simulation can be a profoundly moving experience. It moves people to think about the harsh realities of poverty and how it may affect the lives of families in our community and the children we teach.

Simulations require a minimum of 12-15 volunteers and about 40 participants.

Individual schools interested in hosting a poverty simulation for their staff and community partners may contact Sandy Burke – Peoria Public Schools' School, Family and Community Partnership Coordinator at Sandra.Burke@psd150.org.

Redefining Teaching & Learning

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

Assistive technology (AT) has been around since before the dawn of the personal computer. However, many people still have misconceptions about assistive technology and its purpose. The definition of assistive technology is "any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities." The important thing to remember is assistive technology is equipment that an individual person with a disability needs to increase or maintain functional capabilities. Examples of assistive technology range from low tech equipment, such as a pencil grip, to a very high tech augmentative and alternate communication (AAC) device, such as a Dynovox. If the person with the disability does not have the equipment, then that student will not be able to perform a certain task. Assistive technology is based on very specific needs of the student and determined by an IEP team.

The misconception seems to be that assistive technology is equipment for special education in general. If a teacher uses a Smartboard, that is not assistive technology even if it benefits individual students who may be visual learners. The Smartboard is instructional technology that is used to present material to a number of students. Classroom computers are not necessarily assistive technology because they are used by many students. Unless the equipment is used for a specific student and considered during an IEP meeting, it would be considered instructional technology, not assistive technology.

This distinction is important to make
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Parent/Teacher Conferences Planned

Parent/Teacher conferences are planned district-wide for next Thursday night and Friday morning, November 5th and 6th. Plans are individual to each school, but in most cases, teachers will host parents/guardians through the evening hours on Thursday and will be released early on Friday, following scheduled meetings with parents/guardians.

Parent-teacher conferences are another "STRIVE FOR FIVE" opportunity for parents to connect to schools and build

stronger relationships with school staff.

It may also be an opportunity for teachers to share the following:

- parent/student/teacher compacts
- grade level expectations
- parent brochures
- CityLink bus pass applications
- Strive for Five bus passes.

Information on these topics are forthcoming to your school principal or for more details, contact Sandy Burke at Sandra.Burke@psd150.org.

Know the Basics...

First Aid Tips

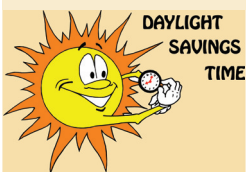
If you give first aid to others, always protect yourself from exposure to bloodborne pathogens by wearing gloves, masks, and eye protection. Do not be foolish. Get first aid when you need it, even if you just have a small cut or splinter. While it is best to leave major first-aid treatment to those who have professional training, all workers should know basic first aid.



TIP...

- In case of a broken bone, you should be able to apply a splint to immobilize the limb.

Don't Forget...



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
Daylight Savings Time (DST) ends Sunday Morning, November 1, at 2:00 a.m.

That means, for example, if you go to bed at 11:00 p.m. Saturday night, don't forget to set your clocks back to 10:00 p.m. Enjoy an extra hour of sleep this weekend!

Illinois Interactive Report Card Update

The 2009 School Report Card results for Illinois schools will be available on IIRC on October 31, 2009. These are the same results released to the public and media in Peoria at the beginning of September. The state releases this information online at the end of October each year. To view district or school results, visit <http://iirc.niu.edu/>. ISAT is scheduled for March 1-12 for 2010!

Enroll in Professional Development

Looking for New Learning Experiences? If so, check out what is going on at Peoria Public Schools!

Our comprehensive professional development calendar is located on the Teaching and Learning webpage.

Go to: www.psd150.org

Click on Departments

Click on Teaching and Learning

Click on Applications and Resources

Click on PD Calendar

(Dates are changed when calendar is updated - another tip, the front T and L homepage picture changes whenever an update is done)

Check the calendar often for updates and cancellations!

To enroll in a workshop, study the "target audience." Is this for you? If so, open your email and send correspondence to: TandLWORKSHOP@psd150.org

Some workshops have another address or contact person, check out the description of the activity for further instructions. You can email this address for questions or contact the "provider" and/or "presenter" of the activity.

Your email should include:

Subject Line: Title of Workshop

Body of Email:

-Your Full Name

-School

-Content/Grade Level

-Contact information for reminders and cancellations.

Coming soon: Teacher Academy Course Book

Insurance Open Enrollment Correction

As noted in last week's Staff News Weekly, health insurance and FLEX is still out to bid for custodial, maintenance and administrative groups only. Employees in these groups must still attend an open enrollment meeting in November to fill out packets for dental, vision and life insurance. A second meeting will be held at a

later date to enroll in medical and FLEX.

Other groups, including certified staff, clerical, transportation and security will be able to complete all steps during an open enrollment meeting in November.

A phone call to payroll is NOT NEEDED to register or attend an open enrollment meeting.

-Assistive Tech., continued from front page

at this time because of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money the district has received for assistive technology. The AT portion of the funds can only be spent on equipment that has gone through the IEP process and it has been determined that a particular student requires it to maintain a certain function.

A steering committee has been formed consisting of special education teachers, special education administrators, occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists. This committee is developing guidelines for determining individual student needs. In addition, assessments and guidelines will be used to help IEP

teams when determining assistive technology needs. Special education teachers and therapists should look for these procedures in early 2010. If you want more information or have any questions, email Tim Kennedy at timothy.kennedy@psd150.org.

Try This! Assistive Technology Ideas

Trouble seeing the mouse pointer?



Go to Start>Settings>Control Panel. Click on Mouse and then click on the Pointers tab. Change the size of the mouse pointer in the Scheme to Windows Black (Extra Large).