

Wavelengths

POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT • VOLUME 20 NO. 3

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TideLines

Junior earns Widener University High School Leadership Award

PAHS junior Kira Nelson won the Widener University High School Leadership Award January 17. Mrs. Mary Beth Conville, 11th grade guidance counselor, and Mrs. Tiffany Reedy, principal, nominated Nelson for the award, which recognizes high school students in the area who encourage leadership and influence constructive change. The award is presented by the president of Widener University, James T. Harris III.

Additionally, Nelson received an invitation to attend an awards event March 20 at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia and a leadership experience during the fall. All of the student winners will meet on the campus for leadership training at that time. If Nelson decides to attend Widener, she will be granted a scholarship of \$20,000 over her four years at the university.

"I'm definitely excited for the award. It was an honor to be chosen," Nelson said. "Widener is in the list of schools I might attend, so it's a possibility. I'm just happy that I got the scholarship and the award."

School evaluation focuses on PVAAS

By: Adalie Zanis
PAHS Senior

Under Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the Pennsylvania State Department of Education expected its schools' students to perform with 100 percent proficiency on state standardized assessment tests by 2014.

When Pennsylvania's schools switched from assessing themselves using AYP to School Performance Profile (SPP), they changed the way they view student performance. AYP focused on achievement – whether or not the school had a high enough percentage of students scoring "proficient" on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests.

"When I used to meet with the kids, I used to say, 'You need to be proficient. Proficient doesn't mean you're great at it; it just means you can do it,'" Mrs. Tiffany Reedy, high school principal, said. "Now, the speech has to be changed to, 'We want you to do the best that you can because we are also getting credit for the growth or we're getting impacted negatively if [students] don't grow.'"

Growth is the new focus under the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS), which is used to calculate part of a school's SPP score.



PHOTO BY COREY SCHUSTER

PRACTICE — Sophomore Amanda Brennan uses a workbook in her Keystone math class. Classes like these helped students prepare for the Keystone tests, which are a major factor in determining whether or not a school has shown enough progress in the past year. "We have a workbook, and we do problems that are similar to [what's] on the test," Brennan said.

In the past, PVAAS was used primarily to measure the progress of struggling students in Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) groups. Now, it's used for everybody.

"AYP was more based on whether or not kids were proficient. What we were concerned with in the past was that everybody hit that proficiency line," Mrs. Stephanie Ziegmont, curriculum coordinator, said. "And in all honesty, there are students who will never be proficient, and that's okay. They just can't. PVAAS is now giving them the opportunity to show what they've learned – to show that growth."

Growth data are calculated by taking the average previous performance of a group of students on a test

and comparing it to the average performance of that same group of students on their most recent test. For example, to determine the growth of fifth graders that took the PSSA math test, PVAAS compares that class' average score to the average score of their PSSA math test in grades three through four.

In Pennsylvania, grades three through eight take PSSAs while grades nine through twelve take Keystone exams. PVAAS data can use PSSA scores to predict Keystone scores even across subjects. An eighth grader's PSSA math score, for example, could be used to estimate his freshman year Keystone biology score.

If students meet their expected scores, then

they have shown a year's worth of growth and maintained their status as being overall below basic, basic, proficient or advanced. They may also show more or less growth than expected. Even if a group of students is advanced as a whole, they can continue to show improvement within that category.

"Because we're being rated on growth, we have to make sure that every student grows – whether they're already advanced or whether they're below basic. We have to show growth for everybody," Mrs. Ziegmont said.

Under AYP, the school district was evaluated as a whole. Now, each school building within the district is evaluated individually. Schools receive PVAAS data

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7 John S. Clarke distributes fire alarms

PAHS performers play and sing their way up the scales

By: Alex Disabella
PAHS Junior

There are two rules that PAHS band members have ingrained in their brains since their days in middle school. One: sit on the edge of your chair. Two: feet flat on the floor. Mr. Michael Ryan, middle school band director, made this the mantra for band during every extended homeroom, and it has stuck with the musicians throughout their endeavors in county and district bands and chorus.

“Mr. Ryan has really made me progress in my musical career. If it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have the commitment to my instrument that I have today,” sophomore Sara Leibel said. “[Mr. Ryan’s rules] taught me good posture and good habits while playing my trumpet.”

March 6-8, the 2014 Schuylkill County Honor Band Festival was held at North Schuylkill High School with guest conductor Dr. M. Gregory Martin from West Chester University. Members of the festival participated

in re-auditions and an all-day practice to perfect the songs, which were *Fanfare of Wakukusa Hill*, *Dreamcircus*, *A Longford Legend*, *Symphonic Prelude: Black is the Color*, *British Eighth March* and *Khan*.

“[I think] the music is really good this year,” sophomore Michael DeColli said.

Twenty-seven students earned spots in the festival. Freshmen Abbey Kostyal, clarinet; Colin Williams, saxophone; Emma Stinnett, French horn; and Jacob Turnitza, tuba, earned spots in County Band for the first time as high school students.

“Making County Band for the first time felt amazing,” Turnitza said. “I really didn’t think that I would make it, but I did and I’m hoping that I eventually make it to District Band.”

Sophomores included Rebekah McClelland, Ashley Smith, Katrina Whalen and Taylor Young on clarinet; Leibel, trumpet; Lucy Murray on French horn; DeColli and Christopher Pekarik on trombone; Paige Fellows, tuba, and Cody Gemmell, percussion.

“It feels great to be a part of County Band for the first time,” DeColli said.

The juniors included Alex Disabella, oboe; Rachel Salata, clarinet; Michaela Zanis, tenor saxophone; Michael Logothetides, baritone saxophone; Jacob Shoener, trumpet; Allyssa Kovich, French horn; Autumn Minnich, trombone; Justin Denchy, percussion; and Sarah Williams, mallets.

“I love music,” Zanis said. “The band is like my second family, and it is an honor to represent them for the third time in the County Band.”

Playing for the last time together with other musicians in the county, the seniors included Ryan Senawaitis and Austin Womer on saxophone; Benjamin Blake, trombone; and Angelo Disabella, baritone.

“It feels really good to be in County Band for the fourth time. I have really liked all of the guest conductors,” Blake said. “I have made many new friends and it’s great getting to see them at the festival. The music is usually good and [they] are good pieces to play.”

Gemmell also made District Orchestra, being one of only two PAHS representatives. At re-auditions, he received principal part for percussion. He will now move on to Region Orchestra.

“It feels really great to have made District Orchestra with my first district audition,” Gemmell said. “It feels even better to have made regions because I wasn’t really expecting to move on, and I worked really hard on the music and it paid off.”

In County Band, Gemmell will play the timpani. For District Band, he will play the timpani, cymbals, break



PHOTO BY COREY SCHUSTER

HARMONIZE — Singers from every school in the county sing together February 22 in County Chorus with songs varying from the opener *Let the River Run to Ave Maria*. The concert was conducted by Mr. William W. Snelling. “It’s always nice to perform with other students throughout the county,” junior Jacob Shoener said. “I always enjoy making new friends from other schools. The festival was a blast, and I’m really glad that I had the experience to participate.”

drum, xylophone, snare drum and bells.

Shoener landed spots in both District Band and Orchestra. He was the only representative from PAHS to make District Band and received principal part for trumpet in orchestra.

“It’s very exciting [to have made District Orchestra,]” Shoener said. “It’s an awesome opportunity for both Cody and [me]. It’s such a large event.”

Shoener will join Gemmell and move on to Region Band in the spring.

“I’m just fortunate and lucky enough to have done this well. It’s a lot of hard work and dedication,” Shoener said. “You have to hope that everything goes well. It’s an honor to represent the school.”

Shoener was also a member of County Chorus, which was held February 22 at 2 p.m. at Nativity BVM High School. Other members from PAHS included sophomores Julia Rismiller and Leibel singing soprano and Whalen singing alto.

The junior members were Shoener and Cyle Hinson singing tenor;

Kovich singing alto; and Megan Berdanier and Bethany Hollenbush singing soprano.

The senior members included Angelo Disabella singing bass; Carrollynn Schwent, Kayla Kasmari, Victoria Moyer and Katelyn Shappell singing alto; Hannah Hench and Cassidy Munley singing soprano; and Rachel Wenner singing alto.

“It feels pretty awesome to be doing this again,” Moyer said. “I love meeting a bunch of new people. Music is one thing that I enjoy doing, and singing is a part of that.”

Shoener was the only member to make District Chorus, which was held January 9-11 at Daniel Boone High School. He moved on to Region Chorus February 13-14 and will now move on to All State Chorus.

“It was a really interesting experience because I’ve never been around 200 people that could really sing; it was a blessing,” Shoener said.

Members of both County Band and Chorus will perform in the spring, participating in three days of practice and ending with Saturday concerts for the public.



PHOTO BY COREY SCHUSTER

PRACTICE — Junior Michael Logothetides and freshman Colin Williams play last minute scales in preparation for County Band auditions November 21. Every year, the auditions are held at PAHS, and this will be Logothetides’ third year playing in the festival on baritone saxophone. “I am really looking forward to County Band, and the music for this year is really fun to play,” Logothetides said. “It should be a good concert this year.”



Dr. Jeffrey S. Zwiebel

Dear Members of the Community,

As I write this letter, there are only 24 days left until spring arrives. With roughly three and a half weeks left of winter, we can begin to reflect back on what a winter it has been. From a period beginning before the Christmas break, right through the month of February, it was common to receive a Skylert message from me, sometimes several times a week. As I attended many different school functions and was out and about in our community during this time period, it was not uncommon for people to ask me, "Can I expect a wake-up call from you tomorrow?" While we can begin to laugh a bit about the "Morning Message from the Superintendent," it is important to note how critical the School Messenger alert system has become to our daily operations. We are thankful that the district can provide such a service to our students, staff and parents.

Although we have lost precious time due to the winter weather, our work has continued behind the scenes, by both students and staff. Some of our winter sports teams are continuing their seasons in playoffs, while spring sports

teams anxiously await the disappearance of the snow. The Drama Club is busily preparing their spring musical, "Oliver!" which will debut at the end of March and the concert band members are beginning to fine-tune their spring concert selections to present in their May concert.

Our faculty is hard at work making up for lost instructional time in preparing the students for the upcoming spring PSSA exams and Keystone exams. The administrative team is busily preparing the budget for next school year to ensure that we can deliver a world-class education to the students, while being worthy stewards of your tax dollars. The winter weather may cause us to pause occasionally, but our mission to strive for excellence for our students never ceases.

With hope for a warm, green-filled springtime for us all, I remain

Jeffrey S. Zwiebel, Ed.D.
Superintendent

PSSA and Keystone scores influence school evaluations

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annually. The data are used to evaluate the school, its teachers and its students.

Schools use the data to determine which students are reaching the proficient level and which are closest to becoming proficient so that they may focus on those students and the subjects with which they struggle. PVAAS helps determine which students need intervention and which subjects need strengthening.

"What PVAAS does is that it makes it even more specific that it predicts within a percentile . . . so we know who we need to focus on," Mrs. Reedy said. "Economics teaches you that there are limited resources and unlimited needs. It would be nice if we could have a private tutor here for everyone who isn't passing, but

that's just not the way it works."

For teachers, PVAAS is one part of their evaluation under the Educator Effectiveness System (EES). For teachers instructing students in subjects that are part of standardized testing (math, reading, science and writing for PSSAs and biology, literature and algebra I for Keystones), 15 percent of their evaluation will be affected by their students' scores by the 2015-2016 school year.

For all teachers, including those who instruct courses that are not tested on Keystones or PSSAs (art, music and history to name a few) as well as school administration, evaluation is 15 percent based on the overall success of the building's students on standardized testing. This way, all faculty members

are held responsible for improvement.

This school year, 85 percent of a teacher's evaluation is based on observation, which is done by school administrators. By next school year, observation will make up 50 percent of teacher evaluations.

Teachers are also responsible for self evaluations and peer evaluations, meaning that they set goals for themselves and determine whether they met them or not.

PVAAS data won't be part of EES until the 2015-2016 school year because teachers need a three-year score average. That average is starting to be collected from this year's tests.

"It's basically just a bigger way of evaluating teachers. It encompasses more pieces," Mrs. Ziegmont said. "It's

making all of the teachers accountable for just about everything with the students."

Other factors that influence a school's overall SPP evaluation include graduation rate, promotion rate and attendance rate. Schools receive extra credit in the form of points that add to their overall score. They get these for students who score advanced on their standardized tests or on the Industry Standards-Based assessments for Vo-Tech students. Students who score 3 or higher on their AP exams also earn their schools extra credit.

The culmination of a school's evaluation determines whether or not the state needs to label the school as either a focus or priority school. Schools in the bottom 10 percent of the state are put on such plans.

A student's individual score report is sent home to him annually. Anyone can look at the school's SPP report at paschoolperformance.org. In addition to viewing data for schools in the Pottsville Area School District, one can see data for any school in Pennsylvania.

"It's neat to see how all these pieces fit together because basically when you're looking at the PVAAS data or you're looking at the student objectives or you're looking at the Keystone tests, it's all in order to make sure that students are achieving what they're supposed to achieve," Mrs. Ziegmont said. "We need to make sure that when you leave here in twelfth grade, you're ready for college, you're ready for the workforce, you're ready for real life."

Teacher gathers students to save endangered tigers

By: Kelsey Hranchock
PAHS Senior

Eighty percent of the deforestation of the rainforest in Sumatra has been caused by the harvest of palm oil, the most common vegetable oil found in food, shampoo and cleaning products. Mr. Adrian Portland, PAHS science teacher, gathered his biology students to save the rainforest and its tigers through the Albert M. Greenfield Unless Contest.

"The Unless Project is a program the Philadelphia Zoo started two years ago, and it's a contest to help the Sumatran tigers. It deals with how certain companies get and use their palm oil," Mr. Portland said.

Mr. Portland became involved with the project when the zoo e-mailed

him asking if he was interested in helping. When he said yes, a representative Skyped with him to offer more information. The project tries to get students in kindergarten through 12th grade involved.

"The basic premise of the contest is to try to find ways to get the message out that there are better environmental ways to harvest palm oil," Mr. Portland said.

Every year the Unless Contest chooses an animal species to help. This year, the Sumatran tiger was chosen because the harvest of palm oil has caused the tigers to lose their homes in the rainforest.

Mr. Portland spread the word of his involvement with the project by announcing it in his biology, genetics and AP Biology classes and in the Ecology Club. He

was able to gather 40 interested students. The group is still deciding what to do for their contest project that is due at the end of March.

"I got involved through Ecology Club and AP Biology," senior Thomas Campion said. "This program is pretty interesting, and I'm looking forward to seeing the effects our efforts have on these tigers."

The students will visit the zoo in April. Though the Philadelphia Zoo doesn't have Sumatran tigers, it does have other species of tiger and big cats that the students will be able to see.

The zoo provides every school that enters the contest free admission. According to the zoo's website, last year the contest reached over 500,000 people with the



PHOTO BY COREY SCHUSTER

INSTRUCT — Mr. Adrian Portland, PAHS science teacher, shows his class how palm oil is harvested. This year, he joined the Philadelphia Zoo's Unless Contest to find environmentally friendly ways to harvest oil. "I announced [the contest] in my classes and Ecology Club. I explained the program and what it was. I probably have around 40 students that have showed interest," Mr. Portland said.

campaign.

"I thought it was a cool opportunity to show students how conservation takes place," Mr. Portland said. "I think we often have a misconception,

'Oh there's this animal we're going to save it,' but it's not always as easy as it appears. It's nice to try to get some students involved and to spread the word to other people in the community."

Elementary center celebrates 100th day of learning

By: Brittany Blackman
PAHS Junior

February 4, John S. Clarke Elementary Center reached a milestone that many students anticipate with excitement. Despite numerous closings and delays, the 100th day of school finally arrived, leaving only 80 days left in the school year.

Many classrooms, especially first grade and kindergarten, were fully adorned with decorations sporting "100" all over them. Mrs. Anne Murray's kindergarten classroom had a huge cut-out of 100 outside the doorway. The youngsters crawled in through the zeros. In Mrs. Elaine McDonald's first grade class, children made necklaces using 100 Froot Loops. Members

of Mrs. McDonald's class also had to make the number 100 using nine pretzel sticks and eight marshmallows.

"I like the 100th day because I like making 100s out of food," first grader Gavin Woodward said.

The students also colored 100th day badges.

"I like the 100th day because we have a fun time, and we make crafts and don't have to do a lot of work," first grader Kailey Olenick said.

Mrs. Regina Freiler's first grade class also took part in the festivities. Her students colored glasses that were in the shape of 100. They were instructed to write in 100 boxes with numbers from 1 to 100, and whoever got the farthest in a minute won. It ended up not being a

competition; the kids just saw how far they could get for fun.

Outside of her classroom, there were little plastic bags holding various small items. Mrs. Freiler had the pupils bring in 100 tiny items. For example, a child may have brought 100 pennies.

In Mrs. Joanne Mercuri's first grade class, the students all took part in a collection where they put 100 items in a paper bag. Outside of the bag were a set of clues the student had to read out loud to classmates to give them a hint as to what is in the bag. After the hints were given, other members of the class guessed what items were in the bag. Mrs. Mercuri also had an ice cream party for her class.



PHOTO BY BRITTANY SULLIVAN

FOCUS — Students in Mrs. Regina Freiler's first grade class work in teams to complete an activity to celebrate the 100th day. "I like doing fun things with my friends and making crafts," first grader Kennedy Preti said.

"I love celebrating the fact that they are 100 days smarter than they were when they first came into my class," Mrs. Mercuri said.

The 100th day is mostly revered by the elementary children as

opposed to older students because it is a grand accomplishment for them to be able to count up to 100. Now, Pottsville Area School District will undertake the next 80 days that will dwindle into summer.

Lengel enhances learning by integrating subjects

By: Adalie Zanis
and Brittany Blackman

PAHS Senior and Junior

Bonnie and Clyde. Bill and Hillary Clinton. Bert and Ernie. To Mrs. Paula Jones' literature students, each of these famous duos represents a decade in the 20th century.

Mrs. Jones, Lengel literature teacher, assigned partners for a project on the decades by giving each student a name and having them find the other half of their pairs. Literature classes worked with Mr. Edward Terefencko, social studies teacher, to write research papers on their assigned decades. This helped them develop a better understanding of history as well as the context of the novels they read.

Projects like this are just a segment of the partnership going on at D.H.H. Lengel Middle School between the various academic departments and the library. Besides literature and social studies, subjects such as science are also being integrated with library research.

"Our students need to have the ability and the knowledge on how to do proper research, not just Google or Wikipedia," Mrs. Jones said. "They are challenged by doing the databases because it's a higher level of reading and comprehension. Making them do the citations is challenging, but it's required and it's something that will help them in the future. I think this is the best year so far with the students stepping up and meeting the expectations."

Mrs. Michelle Chelius, Lengel librarian, initially designed the projects so that students did a science research project one month, a social studies one the next and so on. Due to time constraints, teachers now come to her as needed for library time for projects. In addition, seventh and eighth graders have library science class once a week.

"I'm in the library whenever I can get in it," Mrs. Lisa Holobetz, literature teacher, said. "If it's open, I'm there just

because I can teach there or [the students] can use the computers and they can use the reference materials there. It's really never empty."

Projects include one-to-two-page papers, PowerPoints and poster board presentations. Mr. Theodore Catranis, science teacher, combined English, library and science by assigning a project in which students had to present on an inventor as well as an experiment that person conducted.

"I would prefer that all of my teaching be cross-curricular," Mr. Catranis said. "Imagine classes that are not limited by one period or one teacher. Students and the teachers could start working on a topic or lab. Students would move into computer research, persuasive writing, art projects, health topics and other related branching ideas all focused back towards a certain theme."

Mr. Catranis is adamant about cross-curricular activities. He says sticking to one subject without integration limits humans' ability to solve problems in life. He also thinks it limits the fun.

Mr. Catranis and Mrs. Holobetz agree to use extended periods to make sure their projects coincide. The teachers of the subjects that are part of the project grade their respective subject's work.

"The more we can interlace multiple topics and angles of an idea, the more likely we will be to achieve our own personal goal," Mr. Catranis said. "Don't look at things the same way as other people or you will only see what other people have already seen."

Mrs. Holobetz's literature classes also wrote a paper on a person of their choice



PHOTO BY ADALIE ZANIS

INSPECT — In the library at D.H.H. Lengel Middle School, Mrs. Michelle Chelius, librarian, assists eighth grader Maecada Herring with a paper she is doing on Michelle Obama for literature class. This project is one example of the increased research that students, especially eighth graders, are doing in the library to help prepare them for high school. "It's giving the students, I hope, more real-life experience with research," Mrs. Chelius said.

who has made a contribution to society.

"Because of research papers [in the high school], this is just kind of giving us an idea of what it's going to be like up there," eighth grader Maecada Herring said. "I picked Michelle Obama. She contributed a lot to society between school lunches and fixing obesity in our country, so I figured she was a good person."

While teachers help students with their respective subjects, Mrs. Chelius helps them in the library with research and MLA citations, using resources like Noodletools and online databases.

"As the district invests in more databases . . . we're going more and more electronic or digital with our nonfiction because it's easier to keep it up to date," Mrs. Chelius said. "With the introduction of newer databases each year, we want to make sure the students are utilizing them and not just going on search engines and writing down whatever they find . . . they need

to know how to properly cite it."

The goal of the projects is to prepare students for high school and to be able to have research experience in any subject.

Last year's eighth graders wrote advice to this year's eighth graders on what they should know about doing a research project.

"It was very eye-opening for me and the students . . . Each year I work hard to take what I learned from the previous year. I think I'm getting more teachers in here working with me, and I think that each year they are definitely better prepared and more familiar with the tools," Mrs. Chelius said. "I think they're getting better and better all the time; however, I think there's always room for improvement. There are definitely things I'd like to see done with the program. I have goals for the next year and the year after that. I don't feel like it's something I'm ever going to be finished."



PHOTO BY ADALIE ZANIS

COMPOSE — To construct their reports for Mrs. Lisa Holobetz's literature class and practice writing research papers, eighth graders work in the library under the guidance of Mrs. Holobetz and Mrs. Michelle Chelius, librarian. For this project, students had to write a research paper about someone who has made a contribution to society. "These people can be from the 1600s all the way up to certain times," eighth grader Joshua Zelinsky said.

Lengel students expand musical knowledge

By: Paige Fellows
PAHS Sophomore

This school year, the Pottsville Music Endowment contributed a new addition to D.H.H. Lengel Middle School music classes. In early December, the Endowment supplied the middle school's music department with 30 brand new soprano ukuleles.

Ms. Kate Zimmerman, middle school music teacher, first worked with ukuleles while student teaching.

"I got the chance to teach ukuleles when I was student teaching in the Warwick School District," Ms. Zimmerman said. "Ukuleles are a great beginner string instrument because they are easy to hold and fairly easy to learn. Kids can be successful very

quickly."

Her mother, Mrs. Catherine Zimmerman, attended several music conferences and noticed more schools using ukuleles in their music classes.

"I thought it would be a neat way to introduce guitar-type experiences to the students," Mrs. Zimmerman said.

This year, the music department put expenses toward the repairing and upgrading of the Yamaha keyboards used by students in music classes. Unable to purchase the ukuleles, Mrs. Zimmerman reached out to the Pottsville Music Endowment.

The Endowment is a non-profit organization that provides a better musical experience for children of the Pottsville Area School District. The

committee then agreed to use money from their fund to purchase the ukuleles for the middle school students.

The committee purchased the ukuleles from Loser's Music Store in Lebanon, and each instrument was priced at approximately \$50. Every student in grades five through eight uses the instruments.

"[The ukuleles] are fun to play and everyone can learn how," eighth grader Kiersten Conville said. "They bring so much joy to my friends and [me]."

So far, music classes have learned how to tune the ukuleles and how to play several chords. Each instrument's chords are color coded so the students easily know where to place their fingers.



STRUM — Ms. Kate Zimmerman, music teacher, instructs students in Mrs. Debra Laureti's fifth grade class. The students learned where to place their fingers correctly on the ukuleles as well as how to play many chords. "The students are almost instantly successful because of this," Ms. Zimmerman said.

In the near future, students will learn how to sing and play melodies such as "Twist and Shout" by the Beatles, "Tutti Frutti" by Little Richard, "You Are My Sunshine" and "This Land is Your Land."

"The kids are enjoying these instruments," Mrs. Zimmerman said. "It's a great way to partner up and help each other. My goal is to just have our students experience music in a variety of ways."

High school tutors mentor elementary students

By: Patrick Keating
PAHS Junior

The thing I like about it is they help me. They get to help me with my homework and stuff I don't get done," second grader Gabrielle Ney said.

Students like Ney in kindergarten through fourth grade get help after school from high school tutors through the peer tutoring program.

"I think they can be somewhat of a role model. Say, 'Hey, look, it is important to do work and study,'" Mrs. Mikki McGinty, head guidance counselor, said. "It might also give support to kids if they have no one at home."

Tutors take turns going to the elementary school five days a week after high school dismissal at 2:30. Tutors must be in

high school and have at least a C average in all subjects. Before starting to help the students, they go through an orientation.

Each tutor is assigned to meet with one or several children on certain days. They sit down with the students, who are waiting to be dismissed at 3:30. They go over their homework with them and aid them with any subjects in which they struggle. This gives them an opportunity to get their homework started or completed before they go home.

The peer tutoring program also gives the tutors a chance to get to know their younger counterparts better. Some of the elementary students make a better connection through the older teens and can receive out-of-classroom aid on certain subjects

like math and reading that they have trouble comprehending on their own.

"I'm hoping to help the students enough so they understand. I think it is easier for a kid to talk to another kid because it is easier for a kid to relate to another person's academic problems," sophomore Brandon Daubert said.

The tutors can also be a role model for the children by showing them that some things are difficult, but seeking help is alright.

"It is a new face. When they see someone like a big brother they are more excited to learn. The students can be more relatable than teachers sometimes . . . I hope they get a sense of pride and see they serve as role models, even at a young age. It is important



PHOTO BY COREY SCHUSTER

TUTOR — Junior Kira Nelson, a peer tutor from the high school, helps fourth grader Damere Jackson with his homework. "I hope to be an elementary school teacher, so peer tutoring gives me an idea of what it's going to be like in the future. I think I help the kids because I'm a new face coming to teach them instead of their regular teacher," Nelson said.

for them to realize they can make a difference," McGinty said.

If the students are having a difficult time, their teacher arranges to have a tutor meet with them to help. Ms.

Kristyn Case, first grade teacher, is in charge of coordinating the tutoring program at the elementary school, along with Mrs. McGinty, who organizes the tutors from the high school.

Elementary students write to Red Horse Unit

By: Seanna McCabe
PAHS Senior

The John S. Clarke Elementary Center has a new process of assigning library buddies, where fourth graders are assigned a first grade "buddy" with whom they read their library books.

"[The library buddies] read our library books [to us], and sometimes, their teacher reads stories to our class," first grader Luke Schane said.

The students take turns visiting each other's classrooms on library day. This system was put in place two years ago and has been a part of the curriculum ever since.

During one of their meetings, Mrs. Karen Bertsch and Mrs. Tracey Fidler's fourth grade class helped their first grade counterparts, Mrs.

Regina Freiler's students, write letters to soldiers.

"I taught [my first grade library buddy] what freedom means and to never give up," fourth grader Gavin Griffiths said.

Mrs. Freiler had previously had her class write letters to a civilian working alongside the military, Brad Holland, who is a friend of the family. Mr. Holland replied to each of the students with an individual letter addressed to each one.

"I think it's important for the students to understand how important the work of our soldiers is. This is a way for them to be connected to our service people," Mrs. Freiler said.

The entirety of the fourth grade wrote their own letters to members of the Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy

Operational Repair Squadron Engineers (Red Horse Unit), but they were short by a few letters. Mrs. Freiler's students filled that shortage. Students paired up with their library buddies and got to work writing their letters and designing the outside with a picture for their soldier.

The Family Readiness Group (FRG), a group of spouses who help each other while their significant others are deployed, came up with the idea to write letters to the troops. Ms. Jennifer Stock, fourth grade teacher, received an e-mail from her father, a member of the Red Horse Unit for 30 years, asking if her students would write to the unit.

"I decided to ask permission to make these letters because I know



PHOTO BY SHEA POLLEY

ASSIST — Fourth grader Olivia Moore helps her first grade library buddy write a letter to a soldier in the Red Horse Unit. The soldiers are currently stationed at the Indiantown Gap. "[My library buddy and I are] writing [our letter] to the Red Horse Unit in the war, and we are thanking them for protecting our country," fourth grader Olivia Moore said.

what it is like to have a family member deployed," Ms. Stock said.

These letters were later placed in goody bags containing a military-style folded flag and pens, writing paper, stamps,

snacks and gum from the Fort Indiantown Gap, the army base where the unit is located. The letters will be given to the airmen in a going away packet that is given to all airmen who are deploying.

Third grade teacher starts fire prevention program

By: Alex Disabella
PAHS Junior

It just started with an e-mail," Ms. Molly Kleeman, third grade teacher, said.

Ms. Kleeman instituted a fire safety program in the John S. Clarke Elementary Center after a fire took one of the school's own students last May 12, Mother's Day weekend. Joy Brown perished along with other members of her family in a fire that destroyed her home.

Upon hearing of the death of Brown, Ms. Kleeman organized a fire prevention program within the elementary center.

"After [the fire], I got the idea when it came out that there were no

working smoke alarms [in Brown's home]," Ms. Kleeman said. "[I started] wondering how many kids in [JSC] have no working smoke alarms."

After the article that briefly detailed the fire appeared in the Republican & Herald, Ms. Kleeman sent out her first e-mail, which was to Kidde, the world's largest manufacturer of fire safety products.

"I had asked Dr. [Jared] Gerace [JSC principal] if it would be okay if I contact[ed] Kidde for donations of smoke detectors," Ms. Kleeman said. "I talked to one of the guys in Yorkville, Kurt Shelhamer, about my idea, and he pretty much had the same idea."

Kidde responded by

donating 300 ten-year smoke detectors to the elementary center and the city of Pottsville.

"They sent 300 of them in their boxes, and we tried to think of the best way the kids that needed them could get them," Ms. Kleeman said.

Ms. Kleeman, along with Dr. Gerace and Mr. Richard Boris, JSC assistant principal, developed a survey that they sent home to all students asking if they had a working smoke detector. If they didn't, the school would provide one. The fire department installed all smoke detectors for free for all of those who received one from the school.

"We sat and went through every classroom's surveys

and came up with a list of students who needed [smoke detectors]," Ms. Kleeman said.

Stemming from the smoke alarm work Ms. Kleeman had done, the elementary center held an assembly for third and fourth graders May 28 highlighting fire safety. Representatives from Kidde, detectives from Chicago, Senator David G. Argall of District 29, former Mayor John D. W. Riley and Mr. Mark Atkinson, public safety councilman, attended the assembly.

The assembly then led to Pottsville's "Safety Night Out" held June 17. This event hosted firefighters from many different departments, police, finger printing, the sheriff's department,

Schuylkill Haven EMS, Lehigh Valley Hospital MedEvac and Lifeline.

"They had the smoke house where the kids learned how to get out of a smoky room, Ms. Kleeman said. "Dr. Gerace was in there for hours."

All of the events that occurred in May of last year tied together in fighting for fire safety.

"I put [a picture of Joy up] so we don't forget because as you're going through the process of teaching and teaching and teaching, you don't always take the time to remember," Ms. Kleeman said. "I didn't know what this was going to turn into, [but] I know the rest of the staff, not just me, [never] wanted to see this happen again."

POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Pottsville, PA 17901

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MARCH 2014

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PASD Calendar

March

3 - 6 — Kindergarten registration, Academic Center 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
3 - 9 — National Foreign Language Week
8 — SAT at Pottsville
17 - 4/4 — PSSA Math and Reading tests for 3rd through 8th grades
20 — 5th and 6th grade choirs Tribute to Music in Our Schools at Lengel auditorium 7 p.m.
21 — Third Marking Period ends (Tentative)
28 — Report Card Distribution (Tentative)
28 - 29 — PAHS Drama

Club Spring Musical

7:30 p.m.

30 — PAHS Drama

Club Spring Musical

3 p.m.

31 - 4/11 — PSSA

Writing Tests for 5th and

8th grades

April

6 — Deadline to register for the 5/3 SAT at Pottsville

10 — JSC fourth grade zoo trip

12 — ACT test

18 — Spring Recess - all schools closed

24 — PAHS Small

Ensembles Concert

7:30 p.m.

28 - 30 — Kindergarten Screening

30 — Mid-Point fourth marking period

PASD Phone Numbers

JSC Elementary

Center: 621-2947

DHHL Middle School:

621-2924

PAHS: 621-2962

Academic Center:

621-2900

Wavelengths

- Ms. Bridget Freiler
Adviser
- Adalie Zanis
PAHS Senior
- Kelsey Hranchock
PAHS Senior