

MHPS WEEKLY UPDATE

MOUNTAIN HOME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. MYERS

Superintendent Update: April 17, 2015

Quote for the week: “The self-explorer, whether he wants to or not, becomes the explorer of everything else.”—Elias Canetti

Technology is ever changing and often those engaged in working feverishly to keep us up to speed are so “in the moment” they are not able to enjoy the accomplishments. Here are just a few of the accomplishments of our tech department over the last few years. It has been quite the journey and our folks are continuing to support us as we face the challenge of keeping up with technology changes. The truth is that technology changes so much and so often, I am not sure anyone is ever completely caught up. Take a look at the list of accomplishments. I am proud of Keith Alman, Chris Francis, Wes Oldham, Ray Dewey and Randy Pangle and the work of this department.

- Updated and reconfigured switching infrastructure, primarily at MHHS, MHJH and NWH
- Started new licensing agreement with Microsoft to insure appropriate licensing for all computers without purchasing individual licenses for operating systems and office.
- installed pervasive wireless system with necessary infrastructure upgrades
- increased available bandwidth 2x while working with the state for at least 10x within the next year
- aided in 3 EAST implementations
- installed necessary upgrades for a successful PARCC testing implementation
- purchased iPads to make a device available to every teacher in the district and used AppleTV and Reflector to allow each teacher to mirror their device on a projector
- transitioned to ESchool Plus, TAC and HAC
- Began the process of designing and implementing a completely new and updated web site
- wrote and implemented a BYOD policy to allow maximum usage of personal wireless devices by students
- offered a wide variety of PD sessions with Tech Tuesdays

Email
Print

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APRIL 17, 2015



Special dates of interest:

- * Regular Board Meeting May 21– 6:00pm
- * Memorial Day– No school– May 25th
- * Last Day of School June 3rd

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Take a look at typical support tech job description and you'll find a list of fairly standard skills and responsibilities: Installs, tests, and maintains PC and network hardware and software systems; establishes and maintains a parts inventory for personal computers; produces support documentation. . . and so on. But being a successful support tech requires more than the ability to perform a diagnostic test or image a workstation. It requires the appropriate attitude and aptitude. And while skills and knowledge can be taught, attitude and aptitude cannot -- they have to be selected for when the tech is hired. The following is a list of traits that support the attitude/aptitude side of the equation.

1: Respect for all users, team members, and superiors (even when it's not reciprocated)

Showing respect is an acknowledgement of another person's value and knowledge, an essential quality of a support tech. If the users don't believe that the support tech takes their problems seriously, they'll be less willing to communicate and they'll lose confidence in the tech, their equipment, and the IT department as a whole. It's particularly important that the support tech has sufficient composure to remain respectful even when on the receiving end of verbal abuse from an angry, stressed, and frustrated user. Although the user's problem may seem trivial from the tech's perspective, all that really counts is the user's perception of the problem, and that's what the tech needs to address.

2: Self-discipline

Being self-disciplined affects several aspects of the support tech's job, such as setting and adherence to a schedule, reliably meeting deadlines, delivering resolutions to the end users on or before the promised date/time, and sticking with a task until it's complete. Self-discipline goes hand-in-hand with respecting users; by making deadlines a priority, the support tech is demonstrating respect for the user's time. Self-disciplined support techs are more reliable, dependable, punctual, and able to handle more responsibility than their less-disciplined counterparts.

3: The ability to effectively prioritize tasks

If support techs are given any degree of control over scheduling their time, they must be able to prioritize their tasks. Effective prioritizing requires the support tech to have detailed knowledge of each employee's role in the organization, a thorough understanding of the nature of the business, and a firm grasp of the business priorities. The rank and/or job function of the employee requesting assistance should usually figure as a major factor in prioritizing assignments. Assuming the environment is conducive to their doing so, support techs should do everything within their power to learn the business so they can gain the knowledge necessary for effective prioritizing.

4: Dedication and commitment to problem resolution

The tech must be committed to seeing the problem through to resolution, which occurs only when the user is satisfied that the problem has been resolved and the solution is permanent and conforms to company policy. Consider the following example: A user reports that he can't run a recently installed application. As a step in diagnosing the cause of the problem, the tech elevates the user from restricted to full administrative access to his machine. The user can now run the application, but the work order is not complete, as company policy requires the user to have restricted access. The user is under tremendous pressure to ship an urgent order, so the tech decides to allow him to finish processing the order with administrative privilege. If

the tech is not committed to complete problem resolution, it would be easy to simply close the work order and move on, violating the company security policy. Support techs must be both willing and capable of following all the steps in a procedure even in a crisis situation, pursuing loose ends when necessary.

5: A detail-oriented working style

Paying attention to the details is essential for the successful completion of a work order. Although resolving a problem to the satisfaction of the user is necessary, it's not a sufficient condition for a work order to be considered complete. For instance, in the previous example, the tech still needs to determine the cause of the problem, fix it, document it, and restore the user to his usual status. The longer the tech takes to do this, the more problems could arise. Paying attention to the details helps ensure a consistent, secure, and reliable computing environment.

6: The ability and willingness to communicate

In many organizations, the support tech is the most visible member of the IT department, in daily contact with the end users. In this role as representative of the IT function and as intermediary between IT and end user, effective communication is critical. The support tech basically has to serve as a liaison, translating between Tech-ese and Human. The tech must learn to listen to users, acknowledge the reality of their problems, translate their descriptions into technical terms, fix the problems, and explain the solutions in terms the users can understand.

7: The willingness to share knowledge with team members, superiors, and users

One specific aspect of the support tech's communications skills is a willingness to share knowledge. Some employees attempt to attain job security through the possession of unique knowledge; this is misguided, as most employers are aware of the vulnerability this creates and will seek to rid themselves of such employees. The willingness to share knowledge is an essential part of being a team member. Most support techs work under great pressure, with little time for research or training, so they often depend upon other team members for the advancement of their knowledge.

In addition to sharing knowledge with peers, techs should be willing to educate their users. Training users to make effective use of their applications and peripherals and teaching them to accurately report computer problems will help reduce user downtime and speed problem resolution.

8: A humble attitude about knowledge limitations

Techs should recognize that they'll never know everything about an issue. The key is to know where to look for information and resources and to be willing to ask for help when they need it. They must be prepared to read manuals and take correction from others. It takes a certain humility to crack open a manual, go to a colleague for a solution, or press F1.

9: The ability to learn from experience and from informal/formal instruction

After years of school and technical training, it's all too easy for techs to relax their drive to learn, assuming that now that they're employed in their chosen profession, they have all the knowledge needed to perform the job function. This may be true in certain environments, but if the tech ever wants to change positions and/or companies, he or she will soon find that the knowledge is outdated and of limited use. Rapid change is an inherent characteristic of IT, and those who want to remain productive within the industry must actively seek out every opportunity to further their knowledge, whether through formal training by attending classes or simply by reading, participating in forums, and asking questions of co-workers.

10: The ability to think logically and creatively

Techs should be able to apply a consistent, logical methodology to the resolution of computer problems. This means that even when confronted with new situations, the tech will stand a good chance of being able to resolve the problem, or at least isolate the problem area. To back up their logical thinking, techs also must be able to make creative leaps in reasoning when the application of logic fails to produce a satisfactory resolution.

11: The ability to apply knowledge to new situations

This ability goes along with being a logical, creative thinker to form the essential nature of an outstanding troubleshooter. Some techs I've worked with are excellent at following prescribed procedures in familiar situations but are completely stymied when confronted with an alien situation. Being able to adapt specific knowledge to new situations is extremely important; in most environments, it would be impossible to train the techs in every possible scenario. The very nature of troubleshooting requires the ability to transfer knowledge.

12: A demonstrated independent interest in technology

I am almost hesitant to include this as an essential attribute of a support tech, as I once walked out of a job interview when I was told they were seeking a candidate who "lived, breathed, slept, walked, and talked technology." In my experience, this type of person often makes a lousy support tech due to a lack of interpersonal skills.

Having said this, I still maintain that if the tech has no independent interest in technology and just regards it as a job, it will be an ongoing battle to keep the tech up to date with the latest developments or to elicit any form of enthusiasm or excitement for the work. Having a tech who is engaged and excited about new technology becomes particularly important during a rollout, where the tech is uniquely positioned to influence users' attitudes toward the changes in their environment. Rollouts can cause considerable stress to users who are now required to learn a new product to perform their job function. Having a tech who is excited and engaged with the new product will encourage and reassure the users.

News for the week:

We had a wonderful board meeting last evening. We were led in the pledge by our Navy Cadet Corps. This program has grown and the students are very impressive. Thanks to instructor Troy Peel for helping us grow this program.

We heard from Mr. Pat Ballard concerning gaining the support of MHPS to host alumni groups during the Red, White and Blue Festival. Of course, we are happy to do that.

Our library media specialists shared some of their favorite books and gave the gift of a book to each board member and the superintendent. They were fun and it was also wonderful to have them share some exciting news about the revamping of our website. As we open the next school year, be looking for an



exciting and more easily accessible site. Also Ms. Jane Knowles is retiring from our district. She has been a great employee with a huge heart for children. Devona Pendergrass was

acknowledged for receiving the *Pat McDougal Outstanding Individual Achievement Award*. Thank you Library Media Specialists!

Hackler Intermediate School was awarded \$250 and a beautiful plaque for being recognized as *Arkansas Green Schools Challenge Silver Award winner*. Congratulations to Barbara Penrose, the students and entire staff at Hackler Intermediate School.



Lonnie

Mountain Home Kindergarten

April 17, 2015



Kindergarten students watch as Mrs. Crecelius shows how to make elephant toothpaste by combining ingredients together



Mountain Home High School

Bomber Theatre

presents

The Wind in the Willows

By Kenneth Grahame

Adapted by Douglas Post

Dunbar Auditorium

April 18th at 7:00 PM

April 19th at 2:30 PM

Adults \$8 Students \$6

At the Door

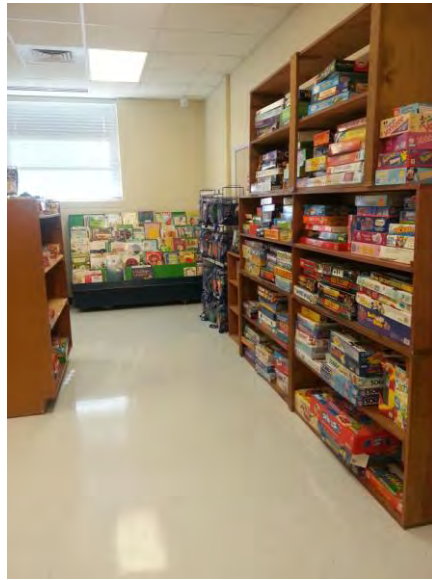
NELSON-WILKS-HERRON ELEMENTARY

Thank You!



Mandy Pender RN, Trauma Program Manager at Baxter Regional Medical Center, donated around 100 bicycle helmets for Nelson-Wilks-Herron Elementary's I Can Club Day this past March. Thanks to Baxter Regional Medical Center, we even have enough helmets for next year's Club Day! (Pictured with Mandy Pender is Suzanne Mullens, a long-term sub/representative from Nelson-Wilks-Herron Elementary.)

Parent Center at NWH



Come check out our newly relocated Parent Center! It is now located in A-5. Mrs. Savannah, our Parent Center Coordinator, can help you locate the appropriate resources and activities for your child. Items can be checked out and taken home for a 2 week time period.

Popping Up Popcorn for Good Behavior



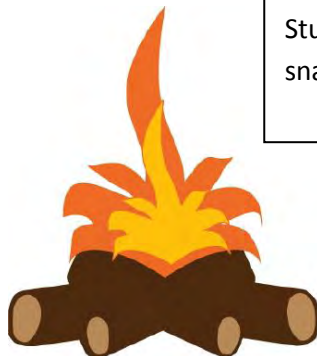
Mrs. Persons treated 1st and 2nd grade students, who had good behavior for 3rd quarter, to a movie and popcorn on Friday, April 10th. Thank you Suzanne Mullens, Shenna Estes and Karla Meek for helping with this student reward activity.

3rd Quarter Perfect Attendance Students “Camp Out” with Mrs. Cotter



Mrs. Cotter went on a camping trip with 1st and 2nd grade student, who had perfect attendance for 3rd quarter, on Friday, April 10th.

Students enjoyed reading time and snacks during the camp out!



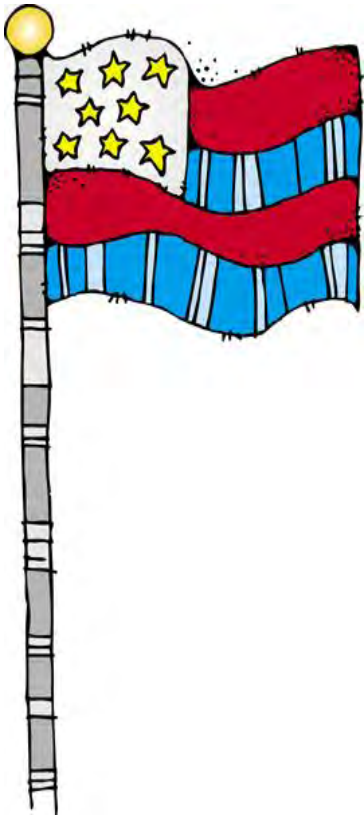
Miss Goings' Class Project

Miss Goings' first grade class just finished their "American Contributors" unit. In this unit, students learned how to read biographies and write to inform. Students read lots of biographies together in class and in their reading groups. Students also chose biographies to read on their own from the library.

To conclude the unit, students each chose one famous American to research and write about. Students compiled their writings to make a class book. At home, students could extend the unit by making a "Biography Bottle" with the help of their family. Students shared their "Biography Bottles" with their classmates.

Twelve families chose to make the optional "Biography Bottle" at home. Way to go, students! 😊 Thanks parents for your help, support and involvement in your child's education. 😊

Pictured below are the "Biography Bottles." The "Biography Bottles" and class book are on display by the NWH office.



Mountain Home Junior High

Remembering *Aladdin*, 2015





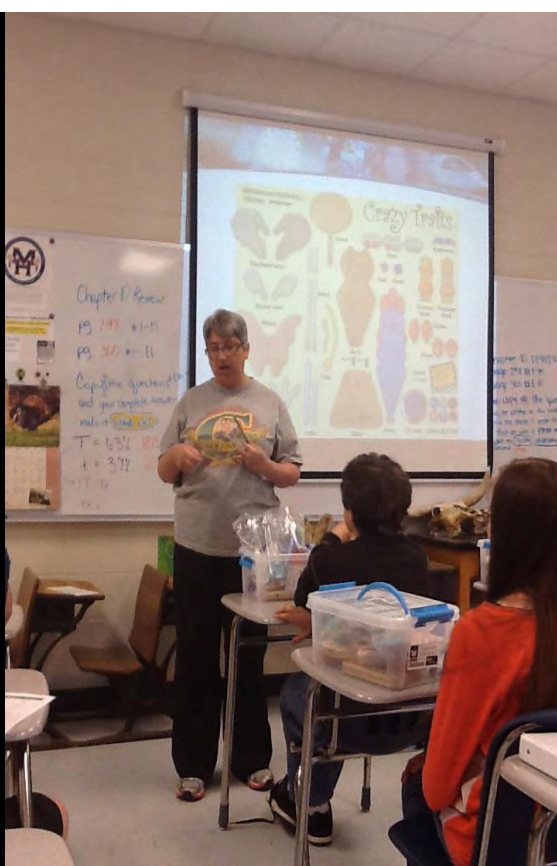






Mrs. Beaver's and Mrs. Dement's students learn about genetics by creating crazy trait babies.





Hackler Intermediate School Newsletter

965 West Road, Mtn. Home, AR 72653 ~ Phone 425-1288 / Fax 425-1290

Principal: Sondra Monger

Mrs. Cassy Barnhill, Assistant Principal
Mr. Kevin Roach, Assistant Principal



Mrs. Kristyn Goodwin - Counselor
Ms. Mary Beth Wyatt - Counselor

Around our School

April 16, 2015

- ◆ Spring pictures will be taken on April 21, 2015. Look for order forms in red folders.
- ◆ Teacher appreciation is May 4 through May 8.
- ◆ NO school on May 1, 2015, due to Teacher In-Service.
- ◆ DARE graduation is May 19, 2015.
- ◆ NO school on May 25, 2015, to celebrate Memorial Day.
- ◆ LAST day of school is TUESDAY, June 3, 2015, and students will receive report cards.
- ◆ Progress report will go home April 30, 2015.

Teacher Appreciation Week May 4-8

Dear Parent, Grandparent or Guardian,

It is that time of the year when we get the opportunity to thank the teachers and staff for all they have done for the 2014-2015 school year. We will be collecting money to purchase food and door prizes for a luncheon during teacher appreciation week. In order to budget for the luncheon, we need to have funds we can spend on items for this event. Please indicate below if you would like to donate. The money needs to be sent to the office by Tuesday, April 28, 2015, in an envelope marked teacher appreciation. If you have any questions, call or text Cheryl Wilber at 870-405-3011. Checks may be made out to Cheryl Wilber.

Thank you in advance,

PIE co-coordinator for Hackler School,

Cheryl Wilber



Yes \$ _____

McHackler Night at McDonalds

Let the Mountain Home McDonald's take care of dinner on Monday, April 20th. A portion of the sales from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm will go to Hackler teachers who participate in this awesome night to use in their classroom. Also, with a little added competition, the teacher will earn points for the most support from students and their families dining in, going through drive thru, or purchasing cookie coupons. The top three teachers with the most points will win a chrome book to use in their classroom. So spread the word!

THANK YOU

Laura Newth & Mountain Home McDonald's



Community Opportunities



- ◆ Ozark Football Association Free Football/Cheer Camp, May 30, 2015. Leading the camp will be former Pittsburg Stealer Steve Conley, former Razorback, Muskie Harris, semi pro players and area high school coaches. For more information call 870-321-1677 or email ozarkfootballassociation.com.
- ◆ Register for Summer Celebration at First Baptist Church. The summer camp runs from June 8 through August 7. This camp is for students who have completed Kindergarten through sixth grade. For more information call the Christian Life Center 870-425-5421.



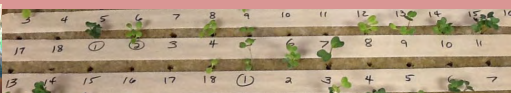
Hackler Intermediate School



Arkansas Green School Challenge

Hackler Intermediate
Mountain Home, Arkansas

The Challenge



Sustainability is our Ultimate Goal



Project Summary Hackler Green School Challenge

The intent of our “Green” challenge was sustainability of existing projects while diversifying and developing new innovative way to grow green”er”! When looking at a baseline of what is needed and how we could diversify, we developed many ideas. Hackler Intermediate School was built in 2010. We are fortunate to have a new beautiful building that already has many energy saving controls implemented. Our classrooms have motion sensor lighting that turns lights off if no motion is detected after a certain period of time. We have motion sensory water fountains, sinks, and toilets! Our thermostats are computer controlled after hours to reduce energy costs but still allow teachers an emergency override when we need to work after hours.

Part of the down side was we had very few trees to shade us and our building. The school looked cold and rather stark. In five short years we have completely changed the landscape with many, many student driven projects. It is the sustainability of those projects, combined with the aspiration for implanting new ideas, that make us notable.

At the beginning of this challenge, all “green” projects were identified and rated in need of their attention. Which projects need annual attention and funding to sustain them was the question. Looking at our “MAPPED” plan and goals of our sustainability is organized through volunteers to recycle our paper, cans, and ink cartridges.

The decision to focus on diversity came from funds donated by the “In His Arms Foundation”. We are planting a small apple orchard in April. Funds are in place for the native trees to be purchased. We have studied apples in many different views, economically, nutritionally, and sustainability.

Students looked at ways to keep our pollinators from the butterfly, vegetable, and rain gardens here. Apple trees were our answer. They will provide yet another job for our pollinators, waste for our compost to nourish the gardens, nutrition for our students, and beauty to our building!

Finally, while working on sustaining all “green” projects already in motion; we are getting ready to do our orchard planting the last day of April. Teams of volunteers are being organized to “adopt” our trees over the summer to keep them from dehydration!

Post project awareness shows our sustainability is working on our existing programs and projects. Our orchard is on target and we are confident it will be a wonderful addition. Trying to calculate the resources saved is a challenge in itself. We have earned approximately \$825.00 on recycling and another \$325.00 on t-shirt sales. These monies will go toward saving resources for all existing projects.

Our new project is already funded and will help provide afternoon snacks for students in approximately one to two years.

We estimate the impact to be over two to three thousand people. We have over 900 students and 85 faculty members. Every student has at least one guardian and siblings. If we just look at what we save from our landfills we have made a HUGE difference—but what about our pollinators and gardening? How many gardens have started from our lessons? How many families will save money and increase their nutrition, thus saving on medical bills? Sometimes “impact” is hard to measure immediately, however in time it will be evident in our projects. As for this year we have sustained all past projects and we are moving forward to our new “Apple Orchard” in the next month!

