



Penns Valley Area School District News and Information Update

The Penns Valley Area School District is pleased to share information with the community. If you have a topic that you would like to see published in a future edition, please contact Mrs. Elbin at 422-2000 x 2540 or melbin@pennsvalley.org. We are also making an effort to communicate with established community groups. If you know of a group that would like to better understand our schools, please contact us.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Penns Valley Area School District is committed to continuously improving our schools and the educational opportunities given to our students. In order to meet our goals, our Professional Development Committee, made up of teachers, parents, administrators, board members, and community members, is dedicated to providing our faculty and staff with high quality professional development (PD). Our PD is centered on academics, student safety and welfare, and improving instructional methods.

Academically, we have focused on reading and writing instruction at all levels. In the elementary school, we have worked with a nationally acclaimed author and writing expert to design writing workshop models in our classrooms. We have also received PD in reading instruction and word study using a method based on Orton-Gillingham. At the secondary level, we have focused on teaching reading strategies in all content areas using our own Reading Apprenticeship trainers.

In order to provide students with a safe and positive environment, we have focused our efforts on several research based programs in addition to PD and drills on school safety. Teachers have been trained in Olweus Bully Prevention as well as School-Wide Positive Behavior Support. These programs, coupled with a presentation from the Keyes Foundation, safety drills, and upgrades to our buildings, are the foundations for providing our staff and students with an environment conducive to learning.

Finally, our PD has focused on providing our teachers with instructional strategies to engage all students. A big part of this PD has been on using technology to enhance our instruction. We have provided our faculty with training focused on using technology to differentiate instruction so that we can meet the needs of all students. Our teachers are able to put their course work online using Blackboard and their websites, providing students with opportunities outside of the classroom. These trainings

and the trainings on the new PA Teacher Evaluation System have provided our faculty, staff, and administration the opportunity to reflect upon and change teaching practices, when needed, to maximize learning for all students.

The Professional Development Committee of the Penn Valley Area School District meets monthly to discuss and plan PD for our faculty and staff. If you would like to be part of this committee or have questions regarding our PD plan, please contact Sherri Connell, Assistant Superintendent, at sconnell@pennsvalley.org or 814-422-2000.

FINANCIAL/FACILITIES

The Penns Valley Area Biomass Boiler facility has been operational since December 2011. This facility provides heat to both the Penns Valley High School and Penns Valley Elementary/Intermediate School (PVEI). These two schools are heated using different energy sources. The High School is heated with fuel oil and PVEI is heated with electricity. The benefit of the Biomass Boiler facility is that it reduces our heating costs for both buildings simultaneously, while using a carbon neutral, renewable energy source.

Although the Biomass Boiler plant can burn a variety of renewable fuels, our preference has been clean hardwood chips, as these produce the cleanest burn and the greatest BTUs per ton. On average the Biomass Boiler burns approximately 60 tons of fuel weekly during the heating season, while meeting the DEP emission standards.

During the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, the Biomass Boiler facility saved the District approximately \$300,000. With the extreme conditions this past winter, the District anticipates saving an estimated 80,000 gallons of heating oil and over 450,000 KWH of electricity. The reduction in oil use, along with decreased electricity usage at PVEI, should save over \$200,000 in 2013-14. The savings over the past three years have been repurposed and used to support our educational programming.

Empowering our students every day to reach individual success