

POPLAR BLUFF
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Early Childhood Center
Kindergarten Center
Eugene Field Elementary
Lake Road Elementary
Oak Grove Elementary
O'Neal Elementary
5th & 6th Grade Center
Junior High School
Senior High School
Technical Career Center

Mule

PRINTS

FRONT COVER:

Surrounding Superintendent Chris Hon, (from left) Michael Salamone of the 5th & 6th Grade Center, Ridge Hester of Poplar Bluff High School, Gabriel Curry of Lake Road, Maggie Dunn-Jones of the Kindergarten Center, Alejandra Perez of Lake Road, Jennie Caswell of Poplar Bluff High School and Madison Williams of Eugene Field sport graduation gowns, symbolizing our mission.

MULE PRINTS:

Cover Design by **Donna Bruce** of the Daily American Republic Composition Department

Layout by **Bridget Curnutt** of the Daily American Republic Composition Department

Content by **Tim Krakowiak**, Communications/Marketing Coordinator for Poplar Bluff Schools

CHRIS HON is finishing the third year of his tenure as superintendent of the Poplar Bluff R-I School District after serving eight years as assistant superintendent of personnel within the school system. Previously, he was principal at Poplar Bluff Junior High as well as Naylor High School. Before entering administration, Hon was a teacher and basketball coach.

Hon's wife Barbie is the A+ director and vocational resource educator at Poplar Bluff R-I. They have two children: Alexa, who has a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and is currently enrolled in Physician Assistant School at Missouri State; and a son, Austin, who is a freshman at Three Rivers College.

Hon comes from a family of educators and believes that American public education is the greatest asset in this country. He has two sisters who are teachers, and his father Roy Hon spent 40 years in education: teaching, coaching and serving as an administrator.

This school year, Chris championed the one-to-one initiative within the district, a unanimously approved measure to get a MacBook Air in the hands of every student, Junior High and up, by the 2014/15 school year.



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- 3. GRAB A GLASS OF MILK** - A cup of low-fat or fat-free milk or milk alternative (soy milk) is an easy way to drink a healthy snack.
- 4. GO FOR GREAT WHOLE GRAINS** - Offer whole-wheat breads, popcorn, and whole oat cereal that are high in fiber and low in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Limited refined-grain products such as snack bars, cakes, and sweetened cereals.
- 5. NIBBLE ON LEAN PROTEIN** - Choose lean protein foods such as low-sodium deli meats, unsalted nuts, or eggs.
- 6. KEEP AN EYE ON THE SIZE** - Snacks shouldn't replace a meal, so look for ways to help your kids understand how much is enough. Store snack-size bags in the cupboard and use them to control serving size.
- 7. FRUITS ARE QUICK AND EASY** - Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits can be easy "grab-and-go" options. Offer whole fruit and limit the amount of 100% juice served.
- 8. CONSIDER CONVENIENCE** - A single-serving container of low-fat or fat-free yogurt or individually wrapped string cheese can be enough for an after school snack.
- 9. SWAP OUT THE SUGAR** - Keep healthier foods handy so kids avoid cookies, pastries, or candies between meals. Add seltzer water to a 1/2 cup of 100% fruit juice instead of offering soda.
- 10. PREPARE HOMEMADE GOODIES** - For homemade sweets, add dried fruits like apricots or raisins and reduce the amount of sugar. Adjust recipes that include fats like butter or shortening by using unsweetened applesauce or prune puree for half the amount of fat.



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CYNTHIA BROWN is serving her fourth term on the Board of Education. Born in the Bronx, N.Y., she graduated from Fordham University, Columbia University School of Public Health and Mount Sinai School of Medicine, all in New York. She has completed residencies in obstetrics-gynecology and preventative medicine and is board certified in preventive medicine. Dr. Brown has resided in Poplar Bluff since 1991. She is a fellow of the American College of Preventative Medicine and a member of American Public Health Association and Autism Society of America. Her son Rex is a student in the Poplar Bluff R-I School District.

KENT EYLER is serving his first term on the Board of Education. He was born in Kirksville, Mo., graduated from Knox County High School, and attended Northeast Missouri State University and the University of Missouri-Columbia. Eyler has been a resident of Poplar Bluff since 1994, is employed by the city of Poplar Bluff and raises cattle on the family farm. His wife Becky is a director at Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center and they have two children: Sara and Joseph. He is a member of Elk's, a mentor for the school district and a coach for youth sports teams. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and being outdoors.



(Back row from left) President Steve Sells, Cynthia Brown, Vice President Gary Simmons and Matthew Riffle; (front row) Alana Robertson, Kent Eyler and Robert Rowland.

MATTHEW RIFFLE is serving his second term on the Board of Education. Raised in St. Louis, Mo., he is a graduate of DeSmet Jesuit High School. He earned his bachelor's in chemistry from St. Louis University and completed his doctorate there in 1982. After completing an internal medicine residency at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, he moved to Poplar Bluff with his wife Suzanne and their two children: Lindsay and Alex. Dr. Riffle is board certified in internal medicine, having served in private practice in Poplar Bluff since 1988. He enjoys spending time with his family, golfing, and coaching youth baseball and soccer.

ALANA ROBERTSON, a lifelong citizen of Poplar Bluff and 1973 graduate of PBHS, is serving her first term on the Board of Education. She earned a bachelor's in education from Southeast Missouri State University and a Master of Education from Southwest Baptist University. Alana taught first grade at O'Neal Elementary for 31 years and retired in 2010. Robertson currently serves on the Poplar Bluff Public School Foundation Board of Directors, volunteers as a mentor in the district and is a member of Alpha Delta Kappa and Butler County Retired Teachers Association. She enjoys reading, traveling, attending plays, and spending time with her friends and family.

ROBERT ROWLAND is serving his first term on the Board of Education. He was born and raised in Poplar Bluff, and is the son of Joan Rowland. He and his six siblings all graduated from Poplar Bluff Senior High School. Dr. Rowland has been a dentist in Poplar Bluff for over 10 years. He graduated from University of Missouri-Columbia and received his dental degree from Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine from Alton, Ill. He and his wife Tara have three children attending Poplar Bluff Schools: Stephen, Lauren and Nikolas.

STEVE SELLS is serving his second term on the Board of Education. He was raised in St. Louis and Dexter, Mo., and has lived in Poplar Bluff for 20 years. Sells is the owner/operator of McDonald's in Poplar Bluff, Doniphan and Van Buren. He is married to Krista, a district elementary teacher and they have four children: Courtnee, Allison, Cody and Riley Jane. They are members of First Baptist Church. He enjoys spending time with his family and friends, as well as working outside and going to the Current River in the summer.

GARY SIMMONS is serving his third term on the Board of Education. He was born and raised in Portagesville, Mo., and graduated from North Pemiscot High School in 1968. He was active in the military from 1968-71. In 1972, he married Carrie and moved to Poplar Bluff. They have three children: Daphne, Ginger and Drew; and two granddaughters. Simmons has attended Three Rivers College part time. For the past 20 years he has coached and sponsored sports through the park department. Currently, he serves as deacon and Sunday school superintendent of First Baptist Church and enjoys broadcasting Mules football games. He owns Simmons Tire and Automotive and co-owns Marble Slab Creamery.

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Hon champions digital transformation: laptops to replace textbooks

A forward-thinking decision was made during the March school board meeting that will revolutionize the way students learn at Poplar Bluff Schools.

“Absolutely yes” said board member Alana Robertson, seconding Kent Eyer’s affirmative vote to go forward with the digital transformation, which was met by unanimous approval, along with a standing ovation from teachers in attendance.

Dr. Matt Riffle later commented that the applause was his “greatest moment” in five years serving on the Board of Education.

“Our children won’t have to go to college feeling like they are less prepared than students from St. Louis and Kansas City,” Riffle said. “So often in this rural part of Missouri we find ourselves playing catch up with bigger cities, but this initiative puts us on the cusp of innovation in education.”

About 800 Junior High students will be issued a MacBook Air during the 2013/14 school year. The following year, about 1,300 high-schoolers will receive a laptop as part of the one-to-one initiative.

When questioned by board president Steve Sells about the sustainability of the technology plan, Assistant Superintendent of Business/Finance Rod Priest replied the transition may require some prioritizing, then asked: “Can we afford not to invest in our kids?”

The initiative is designed to even the playing field for students regardless of their socioeconomic background, according to school officials.

“Our digital transformation will provide a clearer view of each student’s learning and use real-time data to personalize the path for every child,” Superintendent Chris Hon explained. “We will remove barriers and provide tools to enhance student engagement while stressing challenge-based learning that will increase our students’ creativity, collaboration and initiative. This will allow Poplar Bluff Schools to reach our mission: Achieving excellence through learning: every child, every hour, every day.”

Around the time Hon assumed his leadership post during the 2010/11 school year, the long-time educator read a national study conducted by Project RED concluding that schools employing a one-to-one student-computer ratio and key implementation factors outperform other schools.

Hon initially thought it was a “pie in the sky” idea for Poplar Bluff, he admitted, until he linked up with the Mooresville Graded School District in North Carolina during the Missouri Association of School Administrators conference in March 2012. Mooresville has been dubbed a lighthouse district because of the success of its one-to-one initiative, as measured by increased graduation rates and decreased student discipline referrals.

Mooresville has similar demographics to the Poplar Bluff school system in terms of headcount and students on the free and reduced lunch program, Hon realized. “What once seemed unattainable suddenly became a possibility,” he said.

At the beginning of the school year, a pilot program was initiated through which 100 laptops were rotated throughout all the Junior High classrooms, and teachers clamored about how engaged students were. The practice run will shift to Senior High next year.

“If the goal is to produce students who are college-ready or better prepared for the workforce, I believe we have an opportunity to change this community. I really



Poplar Bluff Junior High School student Tim Powell (front, left) prepares to send a graph that he produced on his Mac to be graded by his pre-algebra teacher Shawn Pyland.

do,” said Jim Thomas, director of media services, who has been in charge of the background infrastructure upgrade, which has included increasing wireless access and bandwidth.

During a consultation here in January, Mooresville Chief Technology Officer Dr. Scott Smith noted his school had not purchased a textbook in five years, with the rare exception.

“When you buy a textbook, the information is already 18 months to two years out of date and only 60 percent is aligned to your curriculum—or GLE, as it’s referred to in Missouri,” Smith said.

Whereas students in the past relied on teachers to disseminate lessons, now information is just a mouse click away, so students need to learn to navigate, according to Patty Robertson, assistant superintendent of instruction/curriculum.

Patty Robertson is currently leading a committee that is identifying digital resources to be used to meet course objectives. There will be an instructional facilitator available at each school site for teachers to draw on, along with a technology help desk for students.

“We’re not having a book burning party or anything like that, we will simply no longer be locked into the content that a given publisher has designed,” Patty Robertson pointed out. “It will be more of a partnership, through which students are being trusted to problem solve, while teachers provide the roadmap.”

Besides technology and curriculum, the third component of the one-to-one initiative that Mooresville implemented in order to narrow the student achievement gap is cultural. In April, Junior and Senior High administrators went to a Capturing Kids’ Hearts seminar in Texas

to learn how faculty can communicate more effectively with students under this new classroom dynamic. The professional development will be offered to teachers this summer.

More informational meetings for parents will also be scheduled to answer questions about insurance policies required on the devices and special backpacks and protective cases that will be provided to students.

After attending one of the public forums in recent weeks, Three Rivers College music instructor Buddy White said that his son Thomas could not wait to take home his computer when he starts eighth grade come August.

“I believe this is revolutionary, visionary and extraordinary,” stated White, adding that he is proud of the school’s leadership. “As an educator on the college level, I know the power of technology to reach and motivate students. We can’t imagine the opportunities and advantages the digital revolution will bring to our children.”

Poplar Bluff R-I School District

1110 N. Westwood Blvd.

STUDENT

ENROLLMENT: 5,211

EMPLOYMENT:

28 Administrators,

407 Certified Staff,

270 Classified Staff,

Total Personnel: 705

BUDGET:

In excess of \$44 million

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**Poplar Bluff Early
Childhood Center**
1235 N. Main St.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT:
254

EMPLOYMENT:
17 Certified Staff,
23 Classified Staff

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
CHRIS SMITH
Physical education instructor



Police officers surprise preschoolers with presents

Law enforcement officials from the Poplar Bluff Police Department used extra “Cops with Kids” funds to purchase Christmas gifts—dolls for girls and cars for boys—which they delivered Dec. 18 to over 250 students at the Poplar Bluff Early Childhood Center.

Left, Officer Joe Ward shares a hug with Caden Jenkins before giving the boy a Christmas present.

Early Childhood Center annual Spring Carnival

The Poplar Bluff Early Childhood Center hosted its annual Spring Carnival on April 13, featuring a bounce house, book fair, silent auction, games, and other entertainment and educational opportunities designed for preschool students.

Below from top left, Jalen Campbell, 4, of the Early Childhood Center picks out a prize after winning the beanbag toss; Anden Moore, 5, approves of his cobra tattoo upon inspection; Poplar Bluff city firefighter Josh Robison talks to children about the proper etiquette when dealing with fireplaces and candles in the fire department’s safety trailer set up outside of the Early Childhood Center.

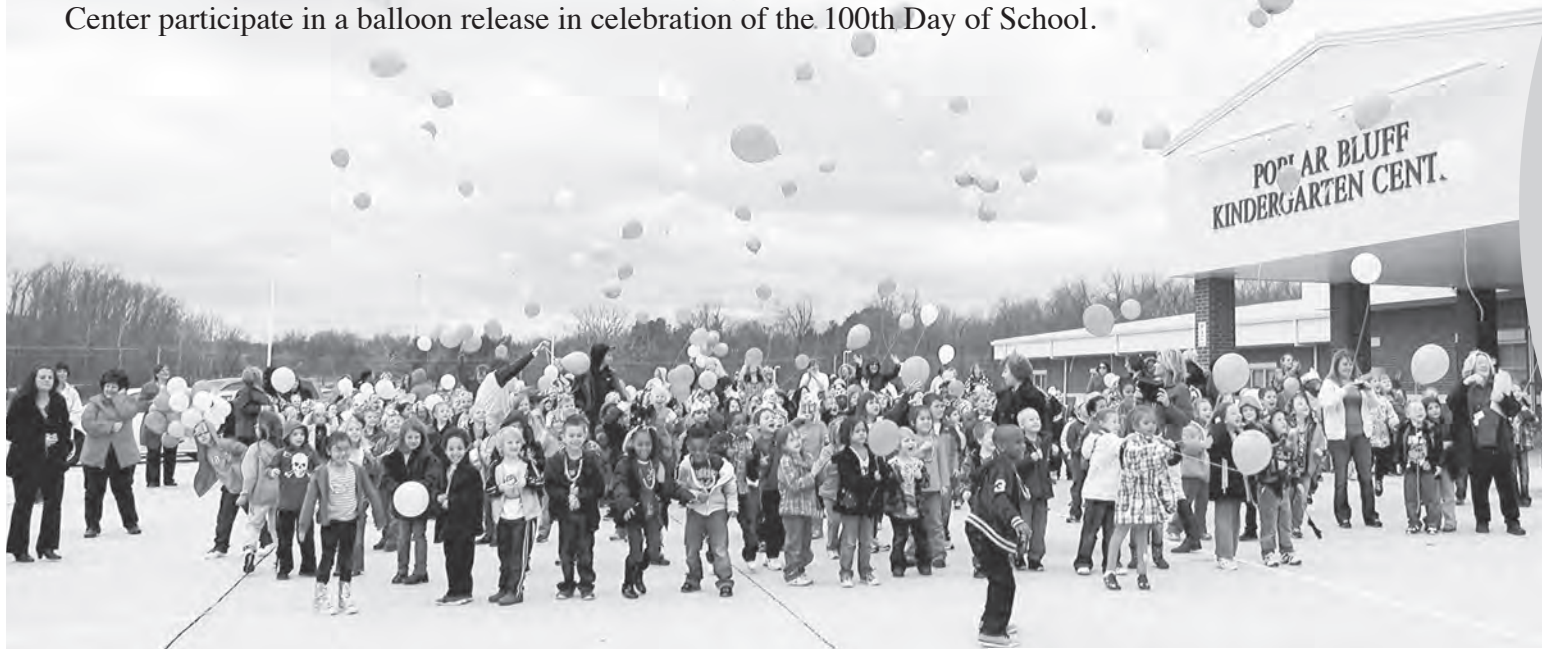
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Kindergartners celebrate 100th Day of School

Despite the 39 mph winds on Jan. 30, students of the Poplar Bluff Kindergarten Center participate in a balloon release in celebration of the 100th Day of School.



Poplar Bluff Kindergarten Center
1200 Camp Rd.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT: 399

EMPLOYMENT:
27 Certified Staff,
20 Classified Staff

DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR,
ELEM. GRADE SPAN TEACHER
OF THE YEAR & KINDERGARTEN
CENTER TEACHER OF THE YEAR
SUSIE RAHLMANN



Kindergartners bring Christmas spirit to area nursing homes

The Poplar Bluff Kindergarten Center went Christmas caroling at area nursing homes Dec. 13-14 after spending class time practicing several songs under the direction of music teacher Fawn Leucke.

Right, David McKuin of Pennie Ethridge's kindergarten class, one of six participating classes, rings a bell as he leads a group of Christmas carolers down the fourth floor hallway of the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center. Below, one of 88 students present, Abby Hager of Jeanna Kayser's kindergarten class gives the songbook she made in art class to an emotional Ollie Kenney after singing Christmas songs to residents at Westwood Hills Health & Rehabilitation Center.



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EUGENE FIELD
ELEM. TEACHER
OF THE YEAR
JULI SCHALK

**Eugene Field
Elementary**

711 Nickey St.

STUDENT

ENROLLMENT: 433

EMPLOYMENT:

34 Certified Staff,
12 Classified Staff

**Lake Road
Elementary
Teacher of the Year
Jennifer Goins**



**Lake Road
Elementary**

986 Highway AA

STUDENT

ENROLLMENT: 282

EMPLOYMENT:

22 Certified Staff,
9 Classified Staff

Elementary students celebrate 100th Day of School

In celebration of the 100th Day of School on Jan. 30, first graders of Eugene Field Elementary School dressed up as if they were 100 years old (editor's note: no offense to our centenarian readers).

Right, (From left) Cynthia Olsen, Bryden Fuemmeler, Maggy King, Connor Jones, Eunique Loyd, Christopher Vogelsang, Karli Wilkerson, Brennen White, Jakara Williams, Brianna Skaggs, Caleb Morris, Brooklyn Gambling and Madison Ballew.



Fourth graders play key role in teaching younger students math

Earlier this school year, Eugene Field Elementary School fourth grader Maraleigh Buss entered Kelli Spitze's first grade classroom and asked the teacher whether her students did their math homework.

Spitze replied that she did not assign any homework, to which Maraleigh said matter-of-factly: "Oh, I did."

"I got so tickled," Spitze recalled. "It was like one problem on a little sticky note. They were to put the hour and minute hand [on a clock] to show what time it is."

Maraleigh is among over a dozen fourth grade teaching assistants who have volunteered to give up their special class periods—art, gym, library and music—to tutor first and second grade math students who may require some extra attention, according to school officials.

Eugene Field is among the schools in the district that subscribe to 'The Leader in Me' philosophy based on Dr. Stephen R. Covey's best-selling book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," through which student leadership development is integrated into daily curriculum and activities.

While the use of teaching assistants in the classroom came prior to adopting the initiative, school officials say the practice ties in perfectly with the seven habits, one of which being to 'think win-win.'



Fourth grader Maraleigh Buss of Eugene Field Elementary School teaches a group of math students the time-telling concept of 'half past the hour' in Kelli Spitze's first grade class.

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Since October, Lake Road Elementary students have been enjoying their new playground, funded with a \$12,000 Healthier MO Communities grant from the Prevention Research Center in St. Louis, administered by the Butler County Resource Council.

New playground at Lake Road makes exercising fun

Carefully selected to help develop upper body strength in children, the Little Tikes Commercial equipment—an obstacle course featuring a rock-climbing wall, rope net, jumping pods and pull-up bars—was subsidized by \$5,500 from the Parent Teacher Organization and Poplar Bluff School District.



Lake Road scores in top 1 percent in national math competition

Lake Road Elementary School landed in sixth place out of 626 schools across the country in an online math competition.

A total of 90 Lake Road students—including the entire fourth grade as well as third graders who are members of the Boys and Girls Club of Poplar Bluff—competed in the Sumdog US National Contest during the last week of January, answering over 55,500 questions correctly.

Prior to going on to nationals, Lake Road attained second place out of nine schools in Sumdog's regional math contest. Fourth graders (from left) Harley Stimmel, Jordyn Shearrer, Hunter Stanley, Megan Love, Matthew Wiseley, William Dell and Selena Hancock each made the top 10.

O'Neal principal passing torch after nearly a quarter-century

The 2013/14 school year will mark the end of an era at O'Neal Elementary School, but school officials say the future is in capable hands.

O'Neal principal of 24 years, Lorenzo Sandlin, will be succeeded by Angie Rideout, Junior High teacher at the Graduation Center, effective upon completion of summer school.

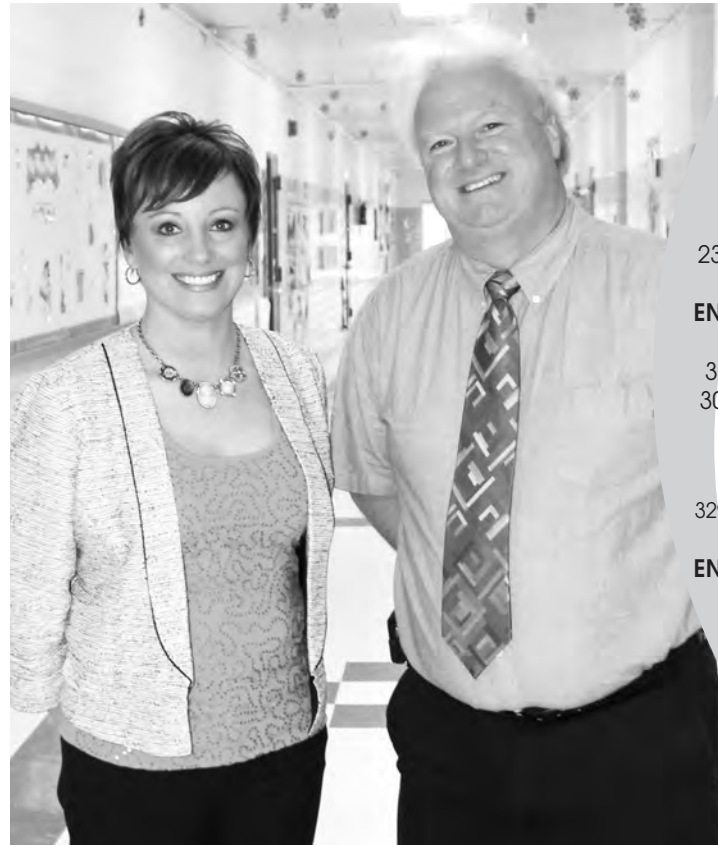
The school board unanimously approved Rideout's hiring during their monthly meeting Feb. 19, upon recommendation of a committee made up of one of the board members, school administration and five teachers from O'Neal.

Right, Angie Rideout shadows Lorenzo Sandlin, as she prepares to succeed the long-time principal at O'Neal Elementary School.

Math-A-Thon champions visit St. Jude

The 24 top fundraising students from the recent Math-A-Thon had the opportunity March 22 to visit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

Right, this year the school district raised over \$51,000 for St. Jude under the leadership of O'Neal Elementary Principal Lorenzo Sandlin (left). O'Neal was the top fundraising school, collecting over \$15,000 for the cancer research institution.



**O'Neal
Elem. School**
2300 Baugh Lane
**STUDENT
ENROLLMENT:** 476
EMPLOYMENT:
38 Certified Staff,
30 Classified Staff

O'NEAL ELEM.
TEACHER
OF THE YEAR
**WRAY
WILLIAMS**

**Oak Grove
Elem. School**
3297 Oak Grove Rd.
**STUDENT
ENROLLMENT:** 481
EMPLOYMENT:
34 Certified
Staff,
15 Classified
Staff

OAK GROVE
ELEMENTARY
TEACHER OF
THE YEAR
**JOY
BURKE**



Second graders Christopher Rudley (left) and Anthony Portelle keep pace with one another.



Sixth Annual Jingle Jog at Oak Grove Elementary

An annual tradition designed to promote physical fitness and charity, founded by Principal Jenifer Richardson, elementary students estimated how many laps they can jog in seven minutes and agreed to bring in a canned good to be donated to The Bread Shed for every lap completed during the Jingle Jog on Dec. 14 at Oak Grove.

Oak Grove Elementary students help deck the halls at Sandy Hook

Right, Oak Grove Elementary students (from left) Josh Lashley, Maikayla Willis and Brittany Pennington make paper snowflakes in Shelly Tune's fourth grade class on Dec. 19, to mail to Sandy Hook Elementary School—per request of its Parent-Teacher Association—to help deck the halls, as educators prepared to continue the school year in an older facility following the tragedy in Newtown, Conn.



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STUDENT ENROLLMENT:
807

EMPLOYMENT:
59 Certified Staff,
28 Classified Staff

MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE SPAN
TEACHER OF THE YEAR &
5TH & 6TH GRADE CENTER
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
DONNA BALLER
Speech Instructor



Teachers, Marble Slab partner on successful St. Jude fundraiser

Poplar Bluff teachers of the 5th & 6th Grade Center served \$1,250 worth of ice cream on Feb. 28, 20 percent of which went to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, making for the most successful fundraiser Marble Slab Creamery has participated in to date.

Left, teachers (from left) Melanie Schalk, Tara Longo, Suzzane Byford and Terrie Sullivan work as a team to serve ice cream to fifth grade student, Jacey Adamson.

Left below, Speech teacher Amy Collins portrays how the turtle won the race by being proactive in "The Tortoise and the Hare" parable at 'The Leader in Me' assembly Sept. 5 in the 5th & 6th Grade Center.



Young students taught to be community leaders

A culture of leadership is emerging out of Poplar Bluff Schools, but it is not the adults paving the way this time, it is the elementary and middle school students creating their own course.

At the beginning of the school year, sixth grade student Sophia Rowland decided she would organize fundraisers to benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation because she saw how the international charity helped a family member. Last year, fourth graders Collier Bristol and Nick Agular founded an art club that met twice a week at Eugene Field Elementary as an outlet to practice their academic strength.

This ripple effect of positive behavior that is beginning to take shape both in and outside of the classroom is the result of an initiative that two dedicated Poplar Bluff administrators began to implement in 2011 called 'The Leader in Me.'

"It's the most transformative thing I've seen in my tenure," said 'Leader in Me' coach Paul Pitchford during a workshop Poplar Bluff Superintendent Chris Hon participated at the Missouri School Board Association's annual conference in September at the Lake of the Ozarks. Pitchford has been in the field of education since 1985, mostly providing professional development to school officials, and he is "convinced that this is the most powerful school reform initiative ever," he continued.

Poplar Bluff unofficially joined the 19 Missouri schools in 'The Leader in Me' process in March 2011 after principals Jennifer Taylor of Eugene Field and the 5th & 6th Grade Center's Mike Owen learned during the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals conference how academic improvement was being impacted by the lessons.



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Taking one... or 100 for the cause

On March 28, Poplar Bluff 5th & 6th Grade Center Assistant Principal Angie Jackson took a whipped cream pie to the face for each student who donated \$5 to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Some students purchased multiple pies. About \$500 was raised.



Servicemen discuss goal setting with students

Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Gulley, a Poplar Bluff native, was among a group of soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division—to be deployed in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan shortly thereafter—who spoke with 5th & 6th Grade Center students on Oct. 19 about "beginning with the end in mind," the second habit being taught under 'The Leader in Me' initiative.



'Bully' star encourages students to continue to Stand for the Silent

Since Kirk Smalley got the nonprofit organization Stand for the Silent incorporated in 2011, he has visited several hundred schools and his anti-bullying movement has gone international.

After Smalley's visit in March, more students vowed to join Poplar Bluff R-I's Human Heroes chapter of SFTS, which was previously praised by Smalley as one of the most active chapters in Missouri. Twin Rivers plans to start its own chapter next school year.

Left, Stand for the Silent leader Kirk Smalley, who was featured in the critically acclaimed documentary "Bully," spoke to Poplar Bluff Junior and Senior High students along with a group from Twin Rivers on March 28, about his campaign to end bullying worldwide.

**Poplar Bluff
Junior High
School**

550 N. Westwood Blvd.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT: 805

EMPLOYMENT:

55 Certified Staff,
22 Classified Staff

JUNIOR HIGH
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
VIC CLARK
Science Instructor



PBJHS student comes in second in Scripps qualifier

Last year Jade Ray Samanta was the first runner up to Adeesh Mishra, who went on to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

A total of 23 students from nine area counties competed in Scripps qualifier, including Wyatt Murphy [left] and Seth Parnell [right] of PBJHS. Also pictured is Candace Warren, communication arts teacher.



Left middle, Seventh grader Adeesh Mishra (holding microphone) of Poplar Bluff Junior High School came in second place during the fourth annual Southeast Missouri Regional Spelling Bee on March 9 at Three Rivers College. Adeesh made it to the 32nd round, missing the word 'polemic,' ending up the first runner up to this year's winner, Jade Ray Samanta of Trinity Lutheran School.



PBJHS safe room grant jump-starts R-I facilities plan

The Poplar Bluff R-I School District has been awarded a \$132,000 federal grant, 75 percent toward the cost of designing a tornado safe room at the Junior High.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has set aside another \$1.1 million for the construction of the building, funding that will be made available after the construction documents are submitted a year from the phase one approval date of Jan. 29, according to school leaders.

The safe room is currently "penciled in" behind the Junior High campus, R-I Superintendent Chris Hon stated during the February board meeting. Due to the specifications for the facility, dictated by the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the multi-purpose room will likely serve as a cafeteria or gymnasium, similar to the safe room at O'Neal Elementary, designed with the ability to add floors on top of the structure.

There are presently four separate lunch periods offered at PBJHS, and Principal Bob Case said he is hoping the new space allows for that time to be cut in half so teachers have more flexibility with class scheduling. The current cafeteria may be converted into additional classrooms.

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Poplar Bluff Senior High School

1300 Victory Lane

STUDENT ENROLLMENT:

1,274

EMPLOYMENT:

86 Certified Staff,
33 Classified Staff

SECONDARY GRADE SPAN
TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND SENIOR
HIGH TEACHER OF THE YEAR
KAY CAMPBELL
Communication Arts Instructor



Poplar Bluff students win a string of state accolades

Poplar Bluff Schools had an especially talented student body this academic year, if the end of 2012 was any indicator, having had several teenagers from Junior and Senior High achieve statewide honors in the arts, music, sports and theater.

“Poplar Bluff is so fortunate to have the talented students we do in our school system, displaying excellence both in and outside of the classroom,” R-I Superintendent Chris Hon said. “This is just a sampling of the young people that are going to lead our community, state and even the nation in the future.”

Junior High placed in five competitions during the Missouri Junior Beta Club Convention held Nov. 30 at the Black River Coliseum, with eighth graders Tori Travers taking first in the special talent portion of the program and Katie Huskey in quilting, each qualifying to compete in nationals June 15-22 at Mobile, Ala.

Shortly thereafter, high school seniors Lauren White and Darius Sales were named to all-state, White to play English horn for the band Jan. 26 during the Missouri Music Educators Association Conference at the Lake of the Ozarks, and Sales being selected as punter for the top football team.

Meanwhile, senior Austin McWilliams and sophomore Davis Summers of PBHS Thespian Troupe No. 4379 were chosen to perform their award-winning comedy “Greater Tuna” for mainstage Jan. 11 during the Missouri State Thespian Conference in St. Louis, a first-time honor for the district.



(From left) Katie Huskey, Lauren White, Austin McWilliams, Davis Summers, Tori Travers and Darius Sales (front) have put Poplar Bluff Schools on the map, all having achieved statewide recognition for their exceptional talent.

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Left, PBHS graduate Adrienne Burfield discusses the completion of her associate degree through the College Now program with Kathy Ballard, Three Rivers College disability resource coordinator.

Student earns college degree before high school diploma

A Poplar Bluff student has managed to complete her associate degree requirements mid-school year before receiving her high school diploma, as a result of a partnership forged last school year with Three Rivers College.

During the community college commencement ceremony on May 9, Adrienne Burfield joined high school classmates Vicky Bottorff, Zachary Miller and Shalyn Ward, each of whom participated in the College Now program. Also among this initial group was Riley Greenwall and Anslee La-tourette, although their credits will only serve to lighten the load when they transfer to a university.

For high school students who meet the prerequisites, the College Now program is designed to allow them the option to knock off their 42-credit-hour general education requirement with the Poplar Bluff R-I School District and Three Rivers each covering one-third of the tuition costs, allowing parents the opportunity to save money.

Especially ambitious students can work with their high school guidance counselors and college academic advisers to enroll in additional classes around the semester in order to earn the final 20 credits toward their two-year degree.

In December, Burfield, 18, was the first PBHS student to complete the dual credit program due to the flexibility of support staff at both educational institutions, her supportive parents and having been born with a rare degenerative condition of the eyes that has given her the drive to work extra hard at such a young age, she revealed.

Burfield is in the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, having maintained a 4.0 grade point average, in spite of the retinal disease, which progressively causes her central vision to dissolve. While having to read in intervals in dim lighting to avoid eyestrain means it takes longer to study and write papers, she said the real possibility of going blind has caused her to not take the precious vision she still has for granted.



Sho-Me Band puts on memorable performance at Inauguration

About 100 Poplar Bluff High School students in the Sho-Me Marching Band—under the direction of Stephen Winters—performed during the Governor’s Inaugural Parade on Jan. 14 in Jefferson City. Although the temperature was 12 degrees, causing valves and slides on instruments to seize up, marching past the Capitol made it all worthwhile for the Sho-Me Band, which was one of only eight participating bands in Missouri.



High school cheerleader Caitlyn Coleman escorts World War II veteran Bernard Tenkhoff to his seat during the Honor Tour send-off at the high school gym.

PBHS students give WWII veterans a hero’s send-off

Just after beginning their Honor Tour journey on Oct. 19, the dozens of veterans commented how they already had a memorable experience, having received a hero’s send-off from Poplar Bluff High School.

“This’ll be in these guys’ and our memories for the rest of our lives,” said Honor Tour founder Rob Callahan of Poplar Bluff, before a packed gymnasium of hundreds of students. The assembly was held in support of 23 World War II veterans and one from the Korean War who were gearing up to see for the first time in their lives the World War II Memorial, among other historic sites in Washington, D.C.

The event marked the 11th Honor Tour, the second of which started out from the high school. The ceremony featured the JROTC (Junior Reserve Training Corps) presenting the colors, music from the Poplar Bluff Sho-Me Marching Band, a series of patriotic songs from two of Sikeston’s Replica Triplet, and speeches from Poplar Bluff Mayor Ed DeGaris as well as U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson.



Basketball Homecoming Pep Rally

Poplar Bluff High School Principal Mike Kiehne and senior class president Joseph Reid exchange whipped cream pies during the Basketball Homecoming Pep Rally on Feb. 1 in Peters Gym.

Student donates \$500 in books to high school library

When most teenagers get their hands on \$1,500, they think about spending the money on the latest electronics, clothing or entertainment, but not one Poplar Bluff Senior High student.

Sophomore Ben Soeter thinks about his high school library.

In September, Ben used \$500 of his winnings from the Charlie Classics Reading Challenge to purchase over 20 new books for the library, a place that he frequents often.

The local reading program was established in 1989 by Designing Women Foundation creator Linda Bloodworth-Thomason of Poplar Bluff, with a simple mission to encourage Junior and Senior High students to read classic literature.



Right, Poplar Bluff Senior High sophomore Ben Soeter took part of his winnings from the Charlie Classics Reading Program and purchased new books for the school library.

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Technical Career
Center**

3203 Oak Grove Rd.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT:

249 (186 secondary, 89
of whom are from PBHS;
and 63 adults)

EMPLOYMENT:

18 Certified Staff,
4 Classified Staff

TECHNICAL CAREER CENTER

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

CARMEN HOGGARD

Health Occupations Instructor



PBTCC students save district money, gain employability

For years students at the Poplar Bluff Technical Career Center have gained experience applicable in the job market working on projects right here in the school district.

The educational facilities have benefited from the handy work, while tax dollars have been saved by eliminating the need to outsource the work, according to Poplar Bluff school officials.

“It serves twofold,” explained Alan Ursery, director of buildings and grounds for Poplar Bluff Schools. “In vocational classes you learn more through hands on. It’s why [the students] are not in college—they’re getting that on-the-job training that you don’t find in the classroom.”

An awning constructed by the Welding and Fabrication class and painted by the Automotive Collision Repair section was put up in November by the school’s Maintenance Department at Eugene Field Elementary School. Over the summer, another awning was erected at the Early Childhood Center. Also in recent years, students built the awning system over the pavilions and picnic tables at the Career Center.



Above, Tyler Albright, a Twin Rivers senior enrolled in the TCC Welding and Fabrication program, practices to receive his certification through the American Welding Society.



Left, the awning system that connects the buildings at the TCC and provides a roof over the picnic tables was constructed by the Welding and Fabrication class and painted by Auto Coliseum Repair students.

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Poplar Bluff School Foundation grants \$7K for innovative projects

The Poplar Bluff Public School Foundation awarded about \$7,000 to finance two educational endeavors, each of which is designed to give students—from elementary age to adults—the 21st century skillset needed to be successful.

All 130 staff members of Eugene Field Elementary School and the 5th & 6th Grade Center will now receive consultation from FranklinCovey to move the facilities one step closer to becoming official Leader in Me schools, while the 27 Technical Career Center cosmetology students will learn how to perform more advanced facials and chemical peels.

The Foundation unanimously approved the select proposals because, board members variously affirmed during a recent special meeting, they believe in the dedication of the school officials over the projects, and that the one-time expenses will lead to self-sustainability.

The grant proposal submitted on behalf of the cosmetology program further iterates how retail skills are essential in the industry since workers have to be able to recommend specific home care products for optimal skin health “in an informative, nonaggressive way,” according to Susan Chronister, cosmetology program coordinator.



Above left, Poplar Bluff Technical Career Center Kaci Stull of Neelyville practices giving a facial massage to Brooke Baccus of Naylor in aesthetics class.

Business leaders and educators team up to teach students the art of job interviewing

Human resource professionals from various local industries conducted mock interviews with volunteers on Feb. 6 at the Poplar Bluff Technical Career Center. The twist was that the interviewees answered all the questions the wrong way so students can learn what not to do in a job interview.

Left, Steve Halter (right), president of the Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce, portrays to welding students an interview-gone-wrong with mock interviewer Matt Looney, the manager of Walmart.

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