



Plumas Lake Elementary School District Community Newsletter

October 12, 2016

Project Learning and Innovation Grants Major Focus for PLESD

PLESD has made bringing technology into our students hands and into our classrooms a major focus over the last two and a half years. This focus started to bring about tremendous changes in our classrooms including engaging students and becoming more focused on students being in charge of their learning and creating products.

This has brought us to our next focus which is to have students be critical thinkers, communicators, collaborators, and be creative. To this end, 30 teachers chose to take part in a three day Project Based Learning (PBL) is “a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge.”

This year, many of you will see your students take part in a PBL project. You will be invited to the culminating event where your students will present their projects, what they learned, and reflections.

We are so excited about the possibilities that these project bring. We do not believe that all instruction should be in the PBL model but our goal is to have every child participate in a PBL project each year starting in 2018-19. We will be training even more teachers next summer.

Also, this year PLESD budgeted \$25,000 in one time money for Teacher Innovation Grants. Teachers or teams of teachers had to apply for the grant and were judged using a rubric. In the end, three projects were funded. The three project were titled “Rush to Gold” a gold rush project, “Challenge, Create, and Collaborate” a Chromebook and iPad project, and “Dream Big” a design project.

PLESD Thanks Craig Bommarito Welcomes Laurence Day

PLESD wants to thank Craig Bommarito for his wonderful service to the students of Plumas Lake as a School Board Member. Craig joined the Board in February 2008 during some of the most difficult times in our District. He was the Board President for two years including during the Great Recession and helped lead the District through over a million dollars of cuts. Then helped lead the District as we began to rebuild our culture into one of excellence.

Craig has always advocated for raising the bar for students, ensuring that PLESD focuses on being great, ensuring communication with the community, that there was involvement from all stakeholders, that the District was fiscally sound and understanding of our fiscal responsibility to our community.

Craig has stayed on the Board even after his son left Riverside, graduated from Wheatland High School, and is attending college.

PLESD thanks Craig for donating his time and energy to our students. We also want to thank his wife Heather and son Isaiah for sacrificing their time with Craig.

Laurence Day will be joining the Board in December taking Craig’s position. Laurence and his wife Kelly have 2 boys who attend Rio Del Oro and a four month old daughter. Laurence has lived here for 10 years and you may know him as the Plumas Lake Handyman. He ran for the Board because he wanted to be more involved with the community. He was involved this year with Yuba County on river access issues and it felt good to be a part of the solution. We thought what better way to get involved than to help with our schools.

Questions about Measure D Plumas Lake Elementary School District Bond

Several questions about the Bond Measure D that will be on the November Ballot have been circulating in the community. We wanted to answer some of the questions to better inform our community.

Why did the Board decide to put forth the bond for a middle school at this time?

1. There is a real possibility that there will need to be a 4th school in the next 4-7 years. Last year we grew 80 students and our schools can hold another 250-400 students depending on several factors including class sizes and classes being offered.
2. It is a 3 year process to design, get State approvals, and build a new school.
3. New schools are paid by a combination of builder fees, State Bond money (Proposition 51), and local bond money (Measure D). Proposition 51 a State bond measure is on the ballot for this November.
4. PLESD believes a new middle school in the middle of the community along with a community park, and a future high school would be so helpful to the community. <http://www.plusd.org/Facilities--Growth/index.html>

Why isn't Plumas Lake building a high school?

Plumas Lake Elementary School District is only a K-8 school district. The funding and building of a high school here in Plumas Lake rest with Wheatland High School District. For the last 8 years Dr. Vic Ramos (superintendent of WHSD) and I have worked closely together on many issues and to ensure that our students transition well. Together we purchased 100 acres of land for a high school, middle school and community park. Wheatland High School District absolutely has plans to build a Plumas Lake High School but they must wait until they have enough Plumas Lake and Wheatland students to make that work financially.

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Superintendent's Message

What an amazing time we are in for PLESD! We are growing in both the number of students that are attending our schools, and the number of houses that are being built. More importantly we are growing academically as a school District.

The Board and Administration listened to all of the input from our stakeholders and focused on adding programs.

1. Core classes grades 4-8 **class sizes are at a maximum of 28 students.** Grades TK-3 classes will be 24:1.
2. We added a **science teacher and social studies teacher** at the middle school to help keep class sizes low as we continue to grow.
3. We added a **music teacher** and an **art teacher** at the elementary sites. Each elementary site now also has a full-time **PE teacher.** The additional staff will allow us to increase the enrichment opportunities for our TK-5 students. The music and art teachers will alternate between the two sites. Students will receive at least 90 minutes a week of these enrichments.
4. We continue to offer our middle school students electives including Spanish, STEM, Art, Band, and Sports Training . This year we have two classes of 8th graders who are taking Spanish 1 that will count as High School Credits.

I am so proud of our teachers, administrators and staff members. They have worked exceptionally hard to create an amazing atmosphere of learning. As I walk through classrooms, I am so proud of the learning that is taking place!

Follow me on Twitter [@PlumasLakeSupt](#) and on our Facebook page [Plumas Lake Elementary School District](#).

Jeff Roberts Ed.D. Superintendent

Measure D (continued)

If growth slows down again will the bonds be issued?

The District will only issue the bonds if and when the money is needed. The last 7 years the District has made it a top priority to save taxpayers as much money as possible. We have refinanced all of our debt from building the previous three schools and are saving millions of dollars by lowering interest rates and keeping the length of the loans the same. PLESD also completed a solar project that will save the District over \$60,000 a year for the next 17 years and then even more after.

Facilities are an important priority to our District. We understand that well kept and maintained schools will increase the home values in the community. To this end, the District has made significant contributions to pay for routine and deferred maintenance.

Will any money go to administrative salaries?

No.

More Questions?

The Board Meeting on October 20 at Riverside Meadows will start promptly at 6:00 pm, the first agenda item will be to answer any questions.

District Office: 743-4428	Rio Del Oro: 749-0690
Cobblestone: 634-9723	Riverside: 743-1271

Student Attendance- We Need Your Help

Reason 1: Student attendance is closely linked to student academic success.

- Students with poor attendance scored **9% worse in Math** and **5% worse in Language Arts.**
- Students who missed a lot of school (20+ days) scored **25% worse in Math** and **10% worse in Language Arts.**

ATTENDANCE AFFECTS LEARNING

Reason 2: Every day a student is absent (no matter the reason) the district loses money.

Not only is regular school attendance crucial to the development and education of children, but it is directly linked to our revenue. A large portion of the revenue we receive is determined by student attendance.

What can you do to help?

- **If your child is not sick send him or her to school.** Many times students with minor complaints- stomach ache, headache, etc. should be in school.
- Plan your family vacations around the school calendar.
- If you must take a family vacation, please inform the school 1 week in advance. Then **sign and complete an Independent Study contract.** This is only available for 5 or more consecutive days of absence.
- Schedule appointments after school hours. If you must schedule an appointment during school please send your child for part of the day. Understand that any full day absence costs the district money. **Any partial day attendance we receive full funding.**

Emergency Drills

On Friday, October 14, all three school sites will be performing emergency drills with Yuba County Sheriff's deputies to better ensure everyone's safety.

Last Spring, PLESD began using an emergency communication system called Catapult. This system allows staff to communicate in real time during an emergency including being able to account for students, using GPS to locate staff members, and coordinate text and voice communication through one system. We have tested this system through drill modes multiple times at each site and have used it twice to communicate with staff during emergencies. We used this system to communicate with staff during the "Clown Threat" last week.

PLESD Leadership

School Board

David Villanueva	Derek Bratton	Frankye Doig
Craig Bommarito	Michele Perrault	

Superintendent

Jeff Roberts

Principals

Jim Walters- Rio Del Oro
Marcie Nichols- Cobblestone
Julie Rojo- Riverside