

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2020

EC Express

Perquimans County Schools
Exceptional Children's Department

New HGS Staff Members Awarded Mini-Grants

The EC team at HGS would like to welcome two new staff members this year: Ashley Winslow (transfer from PCS) and Becky Benton (new staff member joining us from Currituck County Schools). Ashley and Becky didn't waste any time looking for ways to help our students grow. In September they applied and received a KHD Mini-Grant through the Perquimans County Schools Foundation. The grant will be used to help fund Number Worlds Resources for EC students and teachers. Number Worlds is an evidence based program backed with research and supported by the North Carolina State Improvement Project for Math. The goal of this project is to close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and all students. The students would participate in the program daily (Tuesday-Friday) during face to face instruction. Thanks Becky and Ashley for jumping right in and making a difference!



Knights of Columbus Make Generous Donation



On Wednesday, November 4, representatives of the Knights of Columbus visited the Board of Education to present a check for \$900 to Mrs. Kanika Griffin, Chief Academic Officer of Student Services. This generous donation was earmarked for the Exceptional Children's Department.

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic fraternal organization which supports and spearheads several charitable causes. They are ardent supporters of people with intellectual disabilities and the Special Olympics in addition to meeting many community needs.

On behalf of Perquimans County's Exceptional Children's Department, thank you!

Outstanding News From PCMS

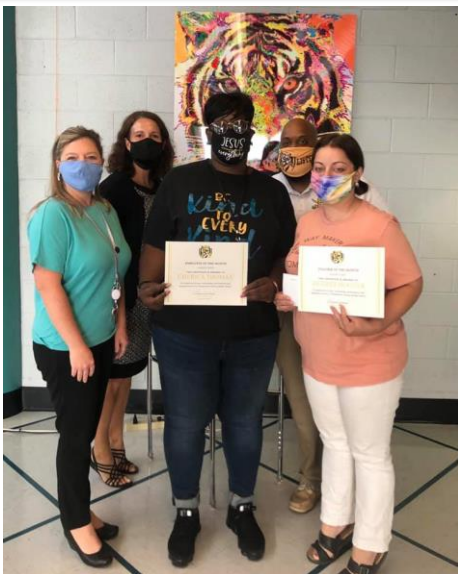
Kira Johnston was selected as 2020-2021 PCMS Teacher of the Year by her peers. She serves as IEP Chairperson at Perquimans County Middle School. She is an active member of the districtwide Autism Problem Solving team as well as the LEA Self-Assessment team. She is such an asset to the PQ EC Department. Congratulations, Mrs. Johnston!

We would like to welcome Mrs. Shante White to the 6th Grade EC team at PCMS. We are glad you are part of our team!



Congratulations to Desiree Hooper and Cherica Thomas for being named Perquimans County Middle School's September Employees of the Month. They are passionate about their roles as teacher and assistant in PCMS's self-contained classroom.

Happenings In Mrs. Hooper's Room



Mrs. Hooper's class has been very busy this school year. Her students participated in a hands on science project called "Students vs. Gravity". Students made safety boxes for eggs and these boxes were dropped from a 9 foot ladder to test the efficacy of their box designs.

Her class honed their daily living skills by making their own pizzas in October.

Shelby White, sheriff of Perquimans County, came out to Mrs. Hooper's class for a visit.

November will bring a turkey disguise activity to teach inferencing and a Thanksgiving feast.

Exciting things are happening at PCMS.



Mrs. Rountree Wins Bright Ideas Grant For STAR Curriculum

Mrs. Rountree's "Teaching with STAR's" will provide direct and functional opportunities for students with special needs to learn academic content. Particularly, students with autism require their learning to be individually tailored. The STAR program provides a high fidelity research-based curriculum, which increases their odds of academic achievement. The STAR curriculum is a research-validated comprehensive curriculum that includes detailed lesson plans, teaching materials, and data systems. It also includes a curriculum-based assessment for teaching in the six curricular areas of receptive language, expressive language, spontaneous language, functional routines, academics, and play & social skills. The strategies used in The STAR Program are effective with students with autism at the preschool and elementary levels. This curriculum provides clear student objectives, and effective student progress monitoring that translates into data-based decision making.



EC Teams Across Perquimans Take Part in Professional Development

Exceptional Children's teams at each school in the district are participating in self-paced professional development this year. In 2019, North Carolina rolled out the Every Child Accountability & Tracking System (ECATS). In addition to information on all students enrolled in North Carolina schools, ECATS houses all forms for students who are in the Exceptional Children's program. Trainings were provided across the state for staff members transitioning to this new record keeping system at time of implementation.

NCEES offers extensive training modules for each form in ECATS. The policies and procedures behind each form are also touched upon in these modules. Each school adopted this training as a Professional Learning Community priority. This is serving as a great refresher for members who have been in this field for years and establishing a strong foundation for those who are just beginning their careers.



**Special
Olympics**

Committee Holds Fundraiser

The Perquimans County Special Olympics committee recently held a fundraiser to benefit our student athletes. Under the direction of the committee chairperson, Ms. Chiquita Sutton, Krispy Kreme doughnuts made their way into the homes and hearts of many fans in our county. With PCHS leading the pack, over 200 boxes were sold. Shout out to Ms. Quinlan who sold \$300 worth of items. Special gratitude to Chief Academic Officer, Mrs. Kanika Griffin who suggested this fundraiser and believed in its potential for success even in the midst of the pandemic. Many thanks to those who sold doughnuts or purchased them.



Spotlight On Angela Speck

The week of November 9th was National School Psychology Week. We are fortunate to contract with Angela Speck for our evaluation needs. We asked her to share about herself.

Growing up, I just knew I was going to be a veterinarian. I toured Cornell University's veterinary program as a high school student and began my undergrad career as a Biology major at Penn State. Part way into my first semester, I realized I was horrible at math and I hated all of my science classes. Luckily, I was taking an Intro to Psychology class and fell in love! I quickly changed my major to Psychology. Apparently, I'm indecisive because I decided to add on a marketing minor and took several business classes. I even did a marketing internship for a semester at a Plastics Engineering company! It was not awesome and I dove back into Psychology. I ended up graduating with a BS in psychology and dual minors in biology and marketing and no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up.

I stumbled upon a School Psychology graduate program and applied. I had no idea what a School Psychologist did.

12 years later, being a school psychologist is a huge part of who I am. I took a brief hiatus from the field to try something new, providing in-home therapy to young kids who had experienced trauma. This was challenging and rewarding, and I am so grateful for the opportunity because it made me a better person. It is incredibly humbling work and made me realize how truly important relationships are. But I missed the schools and I missed being a School Psychologist. So here I am!

The best part of my job is working with the students. I love connecting with them, making them feel good about themselves, and helping them find hope and encouragement, regardless of their situation. I also, oddly enough, love writing reports. It's where I get to synthesize everything I've learned and hopefully share information and ideas to help teachers and parents truly support the student. My goal is for each evaluation to give practical information to support growth and to offer hope. I truly believe that every child can learn and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are successful.

I have a phrase on a sticky note in my planner. I honestly have no idea where it came from, but it has stuck with me and I reflect on it often: Your student is someone's child. I work with a lot of kids and I don't have the opportunity to build lasting relationships with them. But I strive to make every student that I work with feel seen, heard, and understood. I want them to know that I'm rooting for them.

On December 2, 1975, Gerald Ford signed into law PL94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act or EAHCA). This opened doors for Free Appropriate Public Education for all children. The law has evolved first to IDEA in 1990 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and then to IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) in 2004. Under this act, protections were put in place for the most vulnerable in our society and their families. – Free Appropriate Public Education, the right to the least restrictive environment, the right for parent participation in the development of the student's educational program, procedural safeguards and more. Be proud to be a part of this field.

Other Happenings

Happy Birthday

11/29 - Talesha Etheridge - PCS
12/6 - Bonita Williams - PCMS
12/15 - Sera Turner - PCHS
12/17 - Darlene Gray - HGS

Winter Break

12/18 - Early Release
12/19 - 1/3 - Holiday Break
1/4/2021 - Optional Workday
1/5/2021 - Required Workday

