

The Sky is Falling Or Are the Schools Failing?

-Superintendent Don Lawrence

You say something long enough and loud enough even the craziest ideas start to become understood as truthful comments. Such may be the case with the argument that the public schools are not up to the task. My response is “Really?” The data in most Missouri schools just doesn’t support that argument. That argument certainly does not apply in the Avenue City School.

In 2007, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) published a 38-page research paper that compared several different types of public and private schools. According to the CEP, “Taken as a whole, their findings suggest that students who attend private high schools receive neither immediate academic advantages nor longer-term advantages in attending college, finding satisfaction in the job market, or participating in civic life”.

Then why is it that the TV, radio and almost every other available media source continues to spew the arguments against public education? What drives these ideas? Someone once told me in order to find the root of most desperate arguments one must simply “Follow the Money.” Millions of dollars are being spent to fund the campaigns of legislators all over Missouri. The main financial backer wants reform. Reform not in public education but reform in the tax system that funds public education. Spend a million dollars here and there for a governor candidate or several House of Representative candidates to be elected in the upcoming elections. They in turn will pass legislation that just might lower my taxes for education by \$5 million. A ten-fold return is a good reason to make that kind of political investment. Other states pass tax vouchers, which send more taxpayer dollars to private schools. Missouri has discussed mandated A-F grades for schools. Those grades would be based largely on testing, which stigmatized high-poverty schools. Issues raising their heads in Missouri recently have included eliminating teacher tenure and adding money to private schools, through a tax credit system. Both of these issues collected signatures so that the measures could appear on the public ballot. One of the issues did appear on the ballot last year but was wisely defeated by the public. All of these measures have been supported by and received funding from the same individuals who make large campaign donations for the purpose of purchasing some key legislators’ loyalties.

There is a war going on out there. It’s a war of public opinion. When asked, the general public will give the public school system a fairly low grade. Ask that same public about their local school and the opinion of their own school is quite high. I believe that is exactly the case in our own district. The people in the Avenue City School care. They volunteer. They attend and support pancake breakfasts. They pass ballot measures with an overwhelming majority. When asked, they are there in full support. There are those who provide, give, donate, support, express appreciation and those are the things that drive your teachers. There is no greater feeling than to know that you’re not in the battle alone. Fighting for what is best in education and what is best for your child(ren) is a battle best fought from two fronts. From the school side, the teachers do their part and, if the parents do their part from home, the chances of a successful child and a successful school effort increases dramatically. Keep up the good fight parents. Remember we are in this battle together and the winner will be your child.

Retirements Announced



Mrs. Karen Vulgamott, vocal music teacher, announced early in the Spring Semester that she would be retiring at the end of the 14-15 school year. Mrs. Vulgamott has taught at Avenue City School for sixteen years. Although Mrs. Vulgamott has enjoyed working with the staff of this great school district, her biggest enjoyment has been working with the students. According to Mrs. Vulgamott, the ACES students will always hold a special place in her heart. She prides herself in making a difference in the lives of all of the students.

After 45 years in the field of education, Mrs. Susan Wagner, has decided to fully retire at the end of the 14-15 school year. Mrs. Wagner has enjoyed her nine years at Avenue City School. Avenue City has given her a great appreciation for small school districts. Mrs. Wagner has had a great ending to her career here. During her nine years at Avenue City School:



- she has had two teams qualifying and participating at the international level in The Future Problem Solving Program,
- seven teams qualifying at the state level in The Future Problem Solving Program,
- she has coached the Mathletics team and helped them bring home four first place trophies;
- organized the ACES Invention Convention;
- And developed the Egg Drop Competition.

On March 26, 2015 the Avenue City PTO will be hosting a retirement reception for these two professionals. Please join us after the Spring Program at approximately 8:00 PM in honor of Mrs. Vulgamott, Mrs. Wagner, and their many years of service to the youth in our community.

Counseling Corner

Judy Curry, Avenue City Counselor



On March 12th, seven of our Avenue City students visited Shady Lawn and LaVerna Village nursing homes to deliver handmade St. Patrick's Day cards to the residents. These cards, along with Easter/spring cards (to be made by all of our Avenue City students and delivered at the end of this month), truly brighten the lives of many elderly people who, otherwise, may not receive visitors or any special attention, often feeling forgotten and lonely. Seeing young faces and receiving our cards is a blessing to these elderly friends of Avenue City...and a lesson in compassion, bringing a blessing to our students, as well. Our Avenue City parents have been wonderful to volunteer to help me transport our students to these nursing homes, and their support and commitment are commended. We have a great school made up of great students and parents, and their efforts are appreciated more than we can know!!!

PTO News

The PTO held its second annual pancake breakfast in February. Thanks to all who attended from the community. With your support we were able to raise over \$1700!! Thank you to all who volunteered their day and helped serve, Russell & Janelle Phillips, Tim Jones, Candi Rowland, Mandy Scott, Becky Grimes, Missy Howe, Mike Rogers and Lori Schneider.

The ACES PTO is gearing up for our Spring Fling & Fun-raiser. We know this will be a fun event for all our ACES families and the whole community. There will be games for the kids in the classrooms, a spaghetti supper in the cafeteria, and a silent auction in the gym. Auction items include classroom projects, lunch with teachers, autographed framed photo of Sara Evans, autographed Chiefs football, one night stay in a suite at Stoney Creek, gardening basket, restaurant gift cards and many more items. The evening kicks off at 4:30 on March 28.

We are still taking donations for auction items. If you or someone you know is interested in donating an item, please contact Emily Campbell or Ashley Farrell. We will also have our Avenue City cookbook available for sale. The cost is \$10 each. There are over 170 recipes!!

The PTO has trash bags available for sale. White (15 gallon), yellow (39 gallon), and blue (55 gallon). Each color is \$10 a roll and they are available year round at the school. We will also have a booth at the spring flea market selling our trash bags, window clings, and cookbooks.

Students Representing ACES at Math Competition

Three teams of Avenue City Students participated in the Spring Mathletics competition At St. Paul Lutheran on Thursday, February 19. Two fifth grade teams represented the school. One of the teams consisted of Mason Christian, Ainsley Blake & Caleb Walker and the other was made up of Alex Fitzgerald, Pierce Johnson and Mitchell Steele. There were also two seventh grade teams competing. Nicolas Steele, Izzy CDebeca, Lexi Meier, Lake Campbell, and Jacob Ball.

Spring Program

Avenue City School's Spring Music Program is Thursday, March 26. Grades K-8 will be participating. Come hear Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders sing some of their favorite songs from this year. One of their favorite songs is called "Pizza". Other songs they will sing are "Can You?", "If I", "Wacky Spring Fever", and "Soap and Water". Grades 3 through 8 will be singing a Beach Themed Medley of songs. Come see and hear about some of the crazy people they see at the beach. You will see a shark, the Purple People Eater, Cleopatra, a Pharaoh, dance at a Toga Party, and much more.

Avenue City Spring Music Program
Thursday, March 26,
7:00pm
Grades K-8

COME ONE- COME ALL!!
Avenue City Flea Market and Event:
April 25, 2015 from 7:00 AM-3:00 PM

The following vendors and items will be available:

- Tupperware,
- Paynes Booth,
- Younque,
- Coulter Baked Goods,
- Lowrance Crafts /Hotwheels /garage sale,
- ABK Crafts,
- Tastefully Simple,
- Pat Schank,
- Scentsy,
- Crafts/ Airbrush Tattoos,
- Helton Booth,
- Peeks Plants etc,
- Pigtails and Inkwells,
- Avon,
- Shaky Hands Design,
- Origami Owl,
- Kathy's Krafts,
- Enchilada Lady,
- Liz Schuman Zurvita Health products,

Proceeds from this event help to fund a scholarship for students to attend the Avenue City Preschool!
If interested in a booth or in more information call Carla Archdekin at 816-261-6476.

PACES
(Persistent Attitudes Create Excellence in Students)

Training has officially started for the PACES group this year! Students in grades 3-6 have the opportunity to join this extra-curricular group for a 12 week training to run a 5K (3.1 mile) race at the end of April. This year, ACES students will participate in the 5th Annual Husky 5K run, which benefits students at the Helen Davis School.



Participants are learning about the importance of eating nutritious foods, strength training, and building endurance. Upon completion of the training, members of PACES will run the 5K with the chance to earn awards for individual age groups.

Anyone in the community who would like to run with the students as part of our ACES team is more than welcome. If you would like additional information about the event, please contact Mandy Scott or Connie Phillips at school. We are looking forward to a great turnout for this worthy cause and to allow our students to compete in an event, for most, unlike other events that they have ever been a part of.

Library News

The library is gearing up for our spring Scholastic Book Fair. The fair will be held in the library beginning Monday, March 23, through Tuesday, March 31. Open shopping will take place from 7:30-3:15 each day. The fair will also be open before the Spring Program starting at 5:30 that evening and will be open after as well. If you cannot attend the fair, but would like to shop, online access to the fair is available March 18th through April 7th.

The web address for shopping is:

<http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/homepage/avenuecityelementaryschool>

In other library news, the Rolling Hills Bookmobile stops by Avenue City on the first Thursday of every month from 1:00-2:45. This enables our students to have a large variety of materials to choose. The Bookmobile is open to the community also, so we would love to have you stop by to check out books as well. Rolling Hills bring books that are geared for adults as well as children. The only requirement is having a Rolling Hills library card. If you don't have one already, we can get you signed up when you come.

Sports Physicals for 2015-2016 School Years

Sports physicals will be provided by St. Francis Family Healthcare. If your child is participating in school sponsored athletic activities, they must have a current physical on file in the school office. MSHSAA physical forms will be sent home in May. The form must be completed, SIGNED, and returned with the \$20 fee.

Where: Avenue City School

When: May 12th 8:00am-12:00pm

Cost: \$20



Middle School Track Schedule:

Coaches: Jack Burgess and Carla Proctor

<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>
4/2/2015	North Andrew
4/7/2015	Savannah
4/11/2015	Spring Garden
4/14/2015	Savannah
4/16/2015	North Andrew
4/25/2015	Savannah
4/27/2015	St. Joseph Christian
5/1/2015	Riverside Schools
5/4/2015	North Andrew

What is R.E.A.D.?

Avenue City Elementary School has been fortunate to participate with R.E.A.D. The Reading Education Assistance Dogs program improves children's reading and communication skills by employing a powerful method: reading to a dog! However, not just any dog. R.E.A.D. dogs are registered therapy animals that volunteer with their handler as a team, going to schools, libraries, and many other settings as reading companions for children.

But Why Dogs? Learning to read is often less about intellectual limitation than about overcoming fears. Animals are ideal reading companions because they: help increase relaxation and lower blood pressure; listen attentively; do not laugh, judge, or criticize; allow children to proceed at their own pace; and are less intimidating than peers.

When a R.E.A.D. dog is listening, the environment is transformed, a child's dread is replaced by eager anticipation, and learning occurs. The handler is a skilled facilitator, shifting performance pressure off the child and providing support, while the child gets the supervised reading practice necessary to build vocabulary, increase understanding of the material, and gain fluency as a reader. Studies indicate that the results are significant. Participating kids make enormous strides in reading and communication skills while, along the way, building self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. To learn more about R.E.A.D go to: <http://www.petpartners.org/> or call Elaine Wallace at 660-254-3870.



Partnering with Mosaic Life Care for the 4th Grade Challenge



Avenue City School was able to participate in the 4th Grade Challenge. The 4th Grade Challenge is provided to area schools by Mosaic Life Care. The 4th Grade Challenge wrapped up with visits from KC Wolf and Kansas City Chiefs ambassadors. These special guests help reinforce the messages of health, exercise and nutrition taught to students during this eight-week program.

The 4th Grade Challenge teaches students about ways to combat obesity, such as proper nutrition, adequate exercise and healthy habits, such as staying smoke free. Statistics have shown that at this age, children start to develop habits (both good and bad) that they will have for the rest of their lives. Heartland Health and Mosaic Life Care believe that by influencing students in a healthy way now, we will empower them to Live Life Well in the future.

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identified the top three health needs. They were mental health services, access to health resources and education, and adult and childhood obesity. Because of this feedback on the CHNA, this semester, Heartland Health and Mosaic Life Care expanded the 4th Grade Challenge to six additional area schools including St. James, St. Francis and Cathedral schools in St. Joseph and John Glenn, Amazonia and Helena elementary schools in the Savannah School District, as well as the Avenue City School District.

Avenue City School 3rd Quarter Honor Roll

3rd Grade – A Honor Roll

Joseph Janni

3rd Grade – A/B Honor Roll

Kayla Beam

Hillary Elifrits

Lucy Froehlich

Maren Heckman

Noah Hoecker

Alexander Hutchcraft

Ethan Phillips

Caydence Stains

Aspen Sybert

Hunter Turner

Abigail Walker

Ethan Zeit

4th Grade – A/B Honor Roll

Ian Andrews

Katie Beam

Joey Sigrist

Brady Starmer

Zacharias Walker

Connor Zeit

5th Grade - A Honor Roll

Alex Fitzgerald

Corinne Stewart

5th Grade – A/B Honor Roll

Ainsley Blake

Mason Christian

Alexis Harris

Morgan Heckman

Haydn Richardson

Mitchell Steele

Jack Swan

Caleb Walker

6th Grade – A Honor Roll

Sydney DeRoin

6th Grade – A/B Honor Roll

Jozlin Bennett

Alexandra Meier

Ragan Thompson

Nathan Vanhoof

7th Grade – A Honor Roll

Jacob Ball

Kacey Duvall

Emilie Mazur

Kenna O’Riley

Cambry Roach

Nicolas Steele

7th Grade – A/B Honor Roll

Isaac Andrews

Caden Atoe

Morgan Atoe

Lake Campbell

Isabela CDeBeca

Lauren DuVall

Audrey Elifrits

Zachary Meier

Hayden Stewart

Riley Wilcoxson

8th Grade – A Honor Roll

Halei Atoe

Breanna Beahler

Kiyah Blake

Guy Gaddy

Daire Karr

Ashley Luthans

Trevor Maag

Lydia Paolillo

Grace Stites

Morgan Sylvester

Evan Vette

8th Grade A/B Honor Roll

Brenzley Salyer

Zackery Whipple

Hanzhi Ziang

How to Prepare Your Child for Preschool

Starting preschool is a big step for a child, and parents can play an essential role in preparing their little one for this new experience. Here are a few simple strategies to ensure a smooth transition.

- **Establish a Set Schedule**
- **Stick With Morning and Bedtime Routines**
- **Take Advantage of Teachable Moments**
- **Fine-Tune Fine Motor Skills**
- **Set up Daily Chores**
- **Make Time for Reading**
- **Plan a Sneak Peek of the School**
- **Look Out for Separation Anxiety**

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Here are 10 picture books about preschool that can help you and your child prepare for the first day of preschool.

[Maisy Goes to Preschool](#) by Lucy Cousins

[Llama Llama Misses Mama](#) by Anna Dewdney

[My First Day at Nursery School](#) by Becky Edwards

[What to Expect at Preschool](#) by Heidi Murkoff

[Little School](#) by Beth Norling

[The Kissing Hand](#) by Audrey Penn

[My Preschool](#) by Anne Rockwell

[I Love You All Day Long](#) by Francesca Rusackas

[Barney and Baby Bop Go to School](#) by Scholastic

[Preschool Day Hooray!](#) by Linda Leopold Strauss

- You can keep up with Aces Preschool Happenings on Instagram @aces_prek

101

Almost **FREE** Things to do with Kids this Summer

1. Play tag
2. Build with legos
3. Go apple picking
4. Go mushroom hunting
5. Tie dye clothes
6. Paint with watercolors
7. Take a bus ride
8. Visit the fire station
9. Make homemade pizza
10. Visit the animal shelter
11. Camp out under the stars
12. Have a yard sale
13. Feed the ducks
14. Visit a national park
15. Lowes workshops for kids
16. Go bird watching
17. Bike rides
18. Nature walk
19. Visit the river
20. Play date at the park
21. Michael's kids crafts
22. Make homemade popsicles
23. Draw with sidewalk chalk
24. Play dress up
25. Have a tea party
26. Make homemade bubbles
27. Roast smores
28. Visit the library
29. Slip n slide
30. Play hide and seek
31. Go to a museum
32. Scrapbook
33. Catch fireflies
34. Go to the zoo
35. Pick flowers
36. Build a blanket fort
37. Water gun fight
38. Bake cookies
39. Have a slumber party
40. Have a lemonade stand
41. Make paper airplanes
42. Go on a scavenger hunt
43. Plant a garden
44. Joke telling contest
45. Have a puppet show
46. Have a pillow fight
47. Have a movie night
48. Play cards
49. Homemade ice cream
50. Go out for ice cream
51. Fly kites
52. Ride go-carts
53. Tell ghost stories
54. Cloud watch
55. Play "I-spy"
56. Build puzzles
57. Go fishing
58. Have a magic show
59. Water balloon fight
60. Have a car wash
61. Play catch
62. Play frisbee
63. Jump rope
64. Play hopscotch
65. Decorate cupcakes
66. Volunteer
67. Go to a parade
68. Have a picnic
69. Go on a boat ride
70. Attend an outdoor concert
71. Drive-in movie
72. Make snow cones
73. Attend a car show
74. Climb trees
75. Go cherry picking
76. Go to the water park
77. Make homemade gifts
78. Make play dough
79. Make a time capsule
80. Make art with nature
81. Have a dance party
82. Tour a factory
83. Read books
84. Write poems
85. Write a pen pal
86. Play board games
87. Play "Simon says"
88. Sing songs
89. Play in the sprinklers
90. Visit a farm
91. Visit a dam
92. Go to a craft fair
93. Go to the farmers market
94. Take a family drive
95. Visit grandparents
96. Go to the county fair
97. Make an obstacle course
98. Face paint
99. Go mini golfing
100. Host a BBQ
101. Watch a fireworks show

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Board of Education Meeting Highlights

A brief description of the highlights of the board meetings from August 2014 and March 2015 is listed below. The minutes of each board meeting is posted on the school webpage.

August 12, 2014

- Approved District's Annual Goals
- Approved Election Results for Bond Levy Issue
- Approved Board Policies Posting for Thirty Days of Review
- Approved the Substitute List for the 2014-15 School Year
- Approved Substitute Teacher Pay Increase
- Approved Hiring of Part-time Technology Coordinator Position

August 28, 2014

- Set 2014-2015 Tax Rate for the District

September 11, 2014

- Discussion of Missouri Constitution Amendment 3
- Review of Program Evaluations for: 1) Facilities/Safety and 2) Community Education and 3) Transportation
- Approved Bus Routes/Mileage/Riders for the 2014-15 School Year
- Approved Posted Policies from August Board Meeting
- Approved Section 125 Flexible Benefit Plan
- Posting of New Policies for 30 Day Review
- Approved Addition to Substitute List for 2014-15

October 9, 2014

- Review of Program Evaluations for the following: 1) Student Data: Attendance, Drop-out, GPA, Assessments and Discipline
- Approved School Audit
- Approved the Policies Posted for 30 Days
- Approved the Proclamation of "Red Ribbon Week"
- Accepted Support Staff Resignation

November 13, 2014

- Review of Program Evaluations for the following: 1) Federal Programs
- Motion to Set Dates to File for the Board of Education from December 16, 2014 to January 20, 2015, Excluding Weekends and the Days of Winter Break
- Approval on Snow Bids
- Approved Agreement for Underwriting of General Obligation Bonds
- Consider Resolution Associated with Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds
- Set Date for Special Board Meeting, November 25, 2014 to open Construction Bids

November 25, 2014

- Opened Construction Bids. Bid was awarded to E.L. Crawford Construction

December 11, 2014

- Review of Program Evaluations for: 1) Special Education (IDEA and ECSE), and 2) At-Risk & RTI – Response To Intervention

January 8, 2015

- Review of Program Evaluations for: Professional Development
- Review of Preschool Tuition and Handbook for 2015-16
- Accepted Resignation of Certified Staff Member

February 12, 2015

- Review of Program Evaluations for: 1) Homeless & Migrant
- Approved Start of a Technology Club
- Posting of the 2015-16 School Calendar for Thirty Days
- Approved the Estimated Tax Rate and Assessed Valuation for 2015
- Approved Addition to Substitute List for 2014-15
- Accepted Resignation of Certified Staff Member

March 16, 2015

- Review of Program Evaluations: 1) Supplemental/Differentiated Instruction (ESOL/ESL/ELL) and 2) Curriculum Instruction Updates
- Approved 2015-16 School Calendar
- Approved Purchase of Language Arts Textbooks
- Approved Computer Items List to be Purge from the Inventory List
- Accepted 2015 Mowing Bids
- Approved Infrastructure Upgrades to the District Building
- Accepted Resignation of Certified Staff Member

The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2015 at 7 pm.

SCHOOL BOARD THANKS JIM MAAG FOR HIS SERVICE AND WELCOMES NEW MEMBER JUSTIN PALMER

The school administration and staff would like to thank Jim Maag for his twelve years of dedication and contribution to the district during his terms on the Board. Jim has served as a Board member since 2003.

Board members contribute hundreds of hours each year leading their districts. Whether crafting policies, hiring top-notch administrators, listening to staff and student concerns, or recognizing outstanding programs; board members always keep their eyes on the prize of student achievement. Jim served this district well. Please thank him for his dedication the next time you see him.

Joining the Board in April will be Justin Palmer as a first year member. Justin is married to Brooke. They will have one child at the school next year. Welcome Justin and thank you for your service to the district.

Starting his third term will be Travis Elifrits. Travis has two children at ACES. An election was not necessary on April 7th since only two candidates filed for the two seats that were opened this year.

Apply Now for Available Positions with Avenue City School District

We are looking for highly qualified, innovative, and motivated teachers. These professionals must be able to cooperatively work with others as part of a team, must understand developmental learning levels of all ages, and be willing to work on professional development skills to stay updated on current and effective teaching standards and protocols. The teacher must be aware and be able to teach content-core standards, maintain the high quality standards of the district, and be an independent and futuristic thinker.

Avenue City School is currently growing in number of students, high academically performing school, a Missouri Gold Star School, has been accredited with Distinction in Performance since 1999, and often appears on the Missouri Top 10 School List. Avenue City offers competitive salaries, excellent location, small student/teacher ratio, and a positive learning environment.

These positions will be removed when the successful candidate has been identified. Avenue City School District is an equal opportunity employer.

- **Elementary Classroom Teacher:** full time for the 2015-2016 school year.
- **Elementary Music Teaching:** part-time position for the 2015-2016 school year.
- **Teacher of Gifted Instruction:** part-time position for the 2015-2016 school year.

Applications available at phone: 816-662-2305; email: bgrimes@avenuecityschool.org; or
www.avenuecityschool.org

Please send completed packet including application, letter of interest, resume and transcript to:
Avenue City School
c/o Principal Rebecca Grimes
18069 Highway 169
Cosby, MO 64436