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SUPERINTENDENT NOTES

Happy New Year Engineer Family! I hope you were able to spend time with family and friends during the Holidays. Christmas is a special time of the year and my hope is that everyone was able to celebrate the true meaning of the Season.

I want to welcome everyone back to school for the Spring Semester. Winter weather will soon give way to spring and before we know it, it will be time for summer vacation. During the next few months I hope everyone will strive to be the best administrator, teacher, staff member, student, parent, and community member you possibly can be. Together we can make our community a wonderful place to live and work. Go Engineers!

ADULT EDUCATION

The next official GED test date in Estill County is January 18, 2020. Contact Estill County Adult Education Skills U for more information at 606-723-7323.

Save \$60.00, earn your GED, and enroll in college. Anyone who completes their financial aid and a college admissions application with our college counselor may be eligible for free GED test vouchers worth \$60.00.

Kentucky Skills U is offering FREE GED® tests!

- Prepare for and pass the GED Ready® Test for FREE. SAVE \$24.00!
- Schedule and take your FREE GED® test Save \$120.00!!
- Receive your diploma packet within a week of passing the test.

Please contact Mary Fields, Adult Education Skills U at 606-723-7323 mary.fields@estill.kyschools.us.

AREA TECHNOLOGY CENTER AND FACILITY CONSTRUCTION

I am pleased to report to you that we received final approvals for construction of the Estill County Area Technology Center and Estill County Transportation Center this week. Construction has started on both projects and we are thankful for the patience of the community in this endeavor. School Construction is very different from construction in the private sector because there are a lot of checks and balances involved when we are dealing with local and state tax dollars.

The Estill County Transportation Center should be completed in 9 months and is scheduled to be completed by October of 2020. The Estill County Area Technology Center has a 16 month construction schedule, with final completion slated for August of 2021. (See artist renderings of the buildings below.) Total construction cost for both facilities is approximately \$18,000,000.

During the fall, the Board entered into an agreement with Multivista, a company that documents the construction process through a series of photo shoots. Within the next few days we will have access available to the general public through our web site. This will enable everyone to have direct access to track the progress on both projects.

Finally, plans will begin this spring for the final high school renovation which includes upgrades to our athletic facilities. We are thankful to our community for your support of the "Recallable Nickel". Due to your generous support, our students will have first class school facilities and our community should be proud of this accomplishment.



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COMMUNITY EDUCATION

10 New Year's Resolutions for Parents & Families:

1. Say "Yes" More. Try saying "yes" more to spending quality time with your family and doing things together.
2. Say "No" More. When it comes to I want, I need, everyone has it, learn how to say "no."
3. Worry Less. Keeping kids safe should be a priority, but don't let your worries about everything you see on the news drive your life. The overwhelming odds are with you. Instead, find ways to make your kids world safer and let them actively explore whats around them.
4. Listen More; Talk at Less. Ask "What do you think? What are you feeling? Tell me about it. What would you do?" Ask those open-ended questions.
5. Negotiate Less; Explain More. Our kids deserve to know the thinking behind our decisions and expectations, but should not be equal partners at the bargaining table. You are the parent!
6. Read a Little More. Its not only a good way to spend time together, but reading to your child, with your child, and in front of your child will also help them grow as readers. Grab your books, magazines, newspapers, notes, and visit your public library or contact your child's teacher for additional reading material.
7. Write a Little More. Get in the habit of writing notes of encouragement, love, recognition, responsibility, and daily appreciation of life.
8. Expect a Little More. In the new year, expect more from your children, like good behavior, responsibility, manners, kindness, and all of the goodness that lies within your kids.
9. Expect a Little Less. Be okay with a little less constant scheduling and enrichment filled days. Sometimes life is CRAZY! Slow down, you move too fast. Children need a lot of slow to grow. Create a daily schedule for your kids, as well as yourself, that is more balanced and realistic.
10. Connect More. Take steps to maintain friendships, and stay connected with family, the community, those less fortunate, and the natural world.

Happy New Year to you and your family!



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COUNSELING SERVICES

January is time of renewal for many. New year, new ideas, new resolutions. Sometimes, these goals can get overwhelming. It is important that we take time for ourselves too. But for most, Self-Care is luxury not a priority. We have all heard the analogy that we all need "a full cup" before we can pour out to others. Attached is a Self-Care wheel, by Olga Phoenix, explaining ideas for self-care that can improve your mental as well as physical health. Please remember as the new year begins to take some time for yourself, so you can help others.



YOU WOULDN'T LET THIS
HAPPEN TO YOUR PHONE.
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO
YOU EITHER.

SELF CARE IS A PRIORITY,
NOT A LUXURY.



EMPLOYEE NEWS

Open Enrollment is over for another year. We seemed to have trouble and have had to file several grievances. It is now January and too late to file grievances. A reminder that if you enrolled or terminated dental insurance with Health Resources, that change should have been reflected on your December pay stub. Also, if you terminated EyeMed, it too changed in December. These two (2) companies are paid this month for next month's coverage. All other premium changes will take place this month. Hoping we all have a Blessed New Year!

FINANCE

Should I Change My W-4??

Reviewing your tax withholding probably didn't make your list of New Year's resolutions, but it should. With new tax legislation enacted in 2019, some individual taxpayers may be surprised when they file their 2020 tax returns. Recent changes affect taxpayers who itemize mortgage and medical and dental expenses. It's a good idea to discuss your personal tax situation when you are having your 2019 income taxes prepared. Your tax preparer can help you decide if you are having too much or too little withheld and fill out your W-4. Everyone will be different depending on several factors like other income, marital status, family size, and



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deductions. You can change your withholding anytime during the year by completing a new W-4. This form can be obtained at your tax preparer's office, the IRS website, or request one from the finance office. With some planning and a little preparation, you can avoid unnecessary surprises when you file your taxes. Please contact your tax preparer for more information on completing your W-4.

The IRS' online *Withholding Calculator* has been updated and changed to the *Tax Withholding Estimator* (www.irs.gov/W4App). The IRS encourages employees to use this estimator in January to perform a "paycheck checkup" and make withholding changes for 2020, if needed. To effectively use the estimator, it is helpful to have a copy of your most recent pay stub and tax return.

Kentucky income tax withholding has also changed. Everyone is taxed at a flat 5%, with an allowance for a standard deduction. The only reason that you would need to fill out a K-4, is if you are exempt from paying any state tax.

FOOD SERVICE

Happy New Year from the Food Service staff! All schools breakfast/lunch menus are posted on the board website at estill.k12.ky.us. Just a reminder with the potential of inclement weather, menus are subject to change. We strive to serve nutritious meals that meet the USDA guidelines. If you ever have any questions, please feel free call Belinda Puckett or you can also call and talk to you school's cafeteria manager.

HEALTH SERVICES

Welcome back! Hoping everyone had a wonderful and restful holiday break! As we look ahead into the winter months some common health issues to be watchful for are the flu and the stomach virus. As the colder weather creates more together time indoors, it also allows easier sharing of viruses and bacteria. As always, proper handwashing and keeping things clean are great ways to protect yourself and ones around you. Remember the flu vaccine is a proven and safe way to protect yourself and is available at your pediatrician, doctor's office, clinics and pharmacies.

As mentioned, the stomach virus is commonly seen during this time of year, below are some tips on how to manage and recover from this virus.

- Help your child rehydrate. Talk to your doctor if you have questions about how to best do this. One option is to use an oral rehydration solution, available at pharmacies without a prescription. Don't give your child plain water – in children with gastroenteritis, water isn't absorbed well and won't adequately replace lost electrolytes. Avoid giving your child apple juice for rehydration – it can make diarrhea worse.
- Get your child back to a normal diet slowly. Gradually introduce bland, easy-to-digest foods, such as toast, rice, bananas and potatoes.
- Avoid certain foods. Don't give your child dairy products or sugary foods, such as ice cream, sodas and candy. These can make diarrhea worse.



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- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest. The illness and dehydration may have made your child weak and tired.
- Avoid giving your child over-the-counter anti-diarrheal medications, unless advised by your doctor. They can make it harder for your child's body to eliminate the virus

Always contact your child's doctor with any concerns, but we are glad to be able to assist or participate in the health needs of our students! Feel free to contact anyone in the Estill County Schools Health Service team!!

MAINTENANCE

We have been busy in our maintenance department since our last newsletter. We completed the installation of the batting cage at high school. Over the holiday break we managed to refinish the high school gymnasium floor, overseen window contractors with window installation at South Irvine Pre-K center gym/cafeteria, connected new ovens that were changed out over the holiday break at South Irvine as well and are currently working with the roof installation contractor at central office. We also have been able to do some preventive maintenance on our machinery while it has been idle with staff and students enjoying the time off. With what we consider half time in our school year we are now looking ahead at some work needing done at the new property the district has purchased with installation of gates and fencing in areas of access when the weather cooperates. We took the opportunity to replace all the maintenance building shop and office area lights with LED replacements that we recycled from the old bus garage bay area that will save us money in the future with electrical bills. We have now successfully converted all the middle school, South Irvine gymnasium lights as well as many other areas as we can change out to LED lights which provide much better lighting, as well as energy conservation. Maintenance department never really slows down as with the 6 buildings and campuses we have there is always something to repair, upgrade or maintain. We have a great crew that are always willing to step up and do whatever is asked or needed. If you see them be sure to give them a little thanks.

PUPIL PERSONNEL

Happy New Year!! Heading into the new year, I think it is crucial we have better communication between parents and schools concerning attendance. First, let's define roles. Parents/guardians are responsible for getting students to school on time, daily.

Parents/guardians/students are also responsible for turning in all notes for excuses within 30 days of the absence. All the school's responsibilities are reactive to the above-mentioned parental duties. We call when a student is absent, we send letters when a student becomes truant (3 or more unexcused events). Family resource center directors, attendance clerks, and teachers all try to contact absent students. We make home visits often. Remember, we are doing this out of concern not harassment! Attendance is a lifelong lesson. Employers are not very excited about an employee that comes to

Winners: Abigail Watkins and Joe Richardson



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work 90% of the time! This lesson begins with school attendance. Good and bad attendance are habit forming. We understand emergencies occur and those absences are warranted but we are only in school 177 days yearly. In our district policy, it states that we will grant 10 doctor excuses and will grant 6 parental notes. If a student takes all those, we are already at 91% attendance. Learning is contingent upon being introduced to new topics and most learning compounds on previous learning. This is why attendance is SO important! Our student's futures depend on the efforts of both parents/guardians and school personnel. Let's work together and communicate better for increased expectations and attendance among our students.

Parent notes are important this time of year. Parent notes need to be saved for emergencies such as funerals, sickness not requiring doctor visit, family emergencies, etc. A student can receive up to 6 parent notes over the course of a year. All parent notes are lost if a student becomes truant (3 or more unexcused events) in a trimester/semester. There are a large number of students who have lost parent notes for the remainder of this year. If this is the case, a medical note will be needed for further absences. Remember, per district policy, all notes must be turned in within 30 days of the date of the absence. Questions? Contact Dickie Arthur, DPP Estill County schools (606-723-2181)

Perfect attendance at West Irvine Intermediate School can earn you a chance to win a new bicycle. These two happy winners were awarded new bicycles on Friday, Nov. 22 by Greg Horn, Master of O. D. Henderson Masonic Lodge. The bicycles were donated by lodge member Donald R. Horn and community partners Francie and Richard Snowden.

The next two bicycles will be drawn for on Valentine's Day Friday, Feb. 14th. To be eligible for the drawing, students need to have perfect attendance from Dec. 2 through Feb. 14.



SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY



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We have a new district SRO!! We are proud to announce we have contracted with the Estill County sheriff's department and have deputy sheriff Josh Rison on the job as SRO. Officer Rison will be on the job until a permanent SRO is secured. We are very excited about this new partnership and thank Chris Flynn, Sheriff for working with us to ensure our kids are educated in a safe school environment.

The Estill County High and Middle schools both participated in the safe school audit performed by the Kentucky Center for School safety. These audits examine the entire school and look for areas of concern and improvement. Both schools received good marks and will continue to make school safety a priority in the future. These reports are public record when finalized and can be viewed in the Director of Pupil Personnel office at the board of education. West Irvine, Estill Springs and South Irvine will be reviewed over the next two years as well.



TEACHING & LEARNING

Each year Estill County Schools follow a systematic, on-going process for improvement. As a part of this process, improvement teams reflect on current realities and student performance. Teams determine priorities and write objectives to meet local and state goals. This plan can be seen as a road map for improvement. After the plan is determined, it is monitored by a 30-60-90 Day monitoring instrument to ensure implementation is occurring.

You can find all plans and monitoring documents on the district webpage under quick links, Comprehensive Plans & Monitoring. You can also find them by clicking this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qd5q-p1iJuGXd3sU9lhtSuovLjnwo_Yt9-E5B88r8tc/edit

TECHNOLOGY

- The technology department has been dealing with an issue where certain WIFI calling features for AT&T & T-Mobile not working. We have worked with our network vendor (Extreme) and with KDE and have been successful in resolving the problem.
- The technology department will be implementing stronger password requirements in the coming months to comply with a new KDE mandate. After much discussion, minimum requirements are "official" and are:
 - Minimum Password Length - 15 characters minimum (use an easy to remember passphrase)



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- 2 Factor Authentication will be allowed, which will result in an 8 character password, however, the user must use their phone or a security key to utilize.
- Complexity - Set to false. (Complexity can be enabled if desired. Contact the KETS Service for any change requests)
- Password Expirations - Every 180 days or less; immediately after suspected data breach or compromised account
- Lockout Threshold - 10 attempts or fewer
- Lockout Duration - 10 minutes or more
- Password History Count - Previous 12 passwords

TRANSPORTATION

Now that we are entering colder weather months, please make sure your child is dressed for the elements when heading to the bus stop. Bus schedules should continue on schedule; however, be prepared for changes inclement weather may bring. When bad weather conditions delay or cancel school, we will have information on the four major Lexington television stations as well as on ECBOE websites and social media. Winter months bring about uncertainties in regard to weather conditions that can affect our ability to run bus routes. In the event of inclement weather, we check on road conditions as well as work with local agencies to help determine whether or not to cancel classes. There may be times when a determination is made to have limited bus transportation, a 2-hour delay, or cancelled classes. Notification is made to local media, regional television stations, and school media outlets.

One of our school buses in the Irvine-Ravenna Kiwanis Club annual Christmas parade!



ESTILL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

We started off the second half of the school year with a great attendance day at ECHS with over 95% attendance. As we work toward preparing our students for college and career readiness, attendance at school is very important, so we are thankful for our students, their families, and the bus drivers who all play a role in getting our students to school safely each day.



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Basketball season is in full swing at ECHS, and we have a lot of home games coming up, so we'd love to invite everyone in the community to come out and support our Engineers and Lady Engineers. Notably, we have our home district doubleheaders with Powell County on January 17th, Owsley County on January 21st, and Lee County on January 24th. Each of those doubleheaders will start at 6:00 with girls and boys games. Please make sure to follow us on our Facebook page as well as on Twitter (@ECHSEngineers) for updates on important events happening at school and updates on student sports and activities. We have a FAFSA Workshop on January 22nd scheduled at ECHS from 1-6; please check our Facebook page for more information on that from Ms. Rader.

On a personal note from Mr. Yost: "I am thankful that the SBDM Council at ECHS has given me the opportunity to continue as principal of the school. I am blessed to work with the teachers, staff, students and their families, and the entire Estill County community. Thank you to everyone for the congratulations, and I look forward to continuing the work we've started this year to create the best education possible for our students."

ESTILL COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

We feel very blessed and honored to be able to have an impact on the lives of our students on a daily basis. On November 7th, we had a Safety Audit of our building and safety procedures. From that audit we found out that 100% of our staff and students feel safe in our building. The safety team had very positive comments and findings to share with us. We strive each and every day to make our school safe and inviting for everyone and will continue to do everything we can for our students. Please be looking for a survey after Christmas break to let us know what type of informational meetings you would like to see happening at our school! We are excited to have our students back and get focused on instruction and student learning.

WEST IRVINE INTERMEDIATE

Bringing learning to life through Project Lead the Way!! Forces and interactions are at work all around us. Students used pushes and pulls, resistance forces, gravity, and friction to solve a problem that affected the life of a tiger!

Students explored, discussed, designed, sketched, and built both simple and compound machines that demonstrated how forces could be used to solve a problem. Students used the skills and knowledge gained in the PLTW module to solve an open-ended, real-world problem - to save the tiger!

West Irvine also welcomed community members for an Arts & Career Fair. We are fortunate to have the support of many Estill County community members and businesses. Students rotated to learn about a variety of arts and careers. In the pictures you can see we had everything from goat farmers to Kentucky State Policemen.





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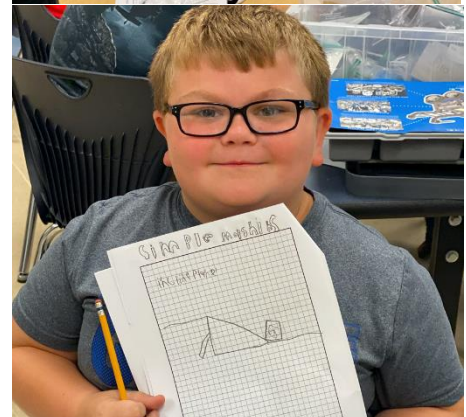
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Pulley



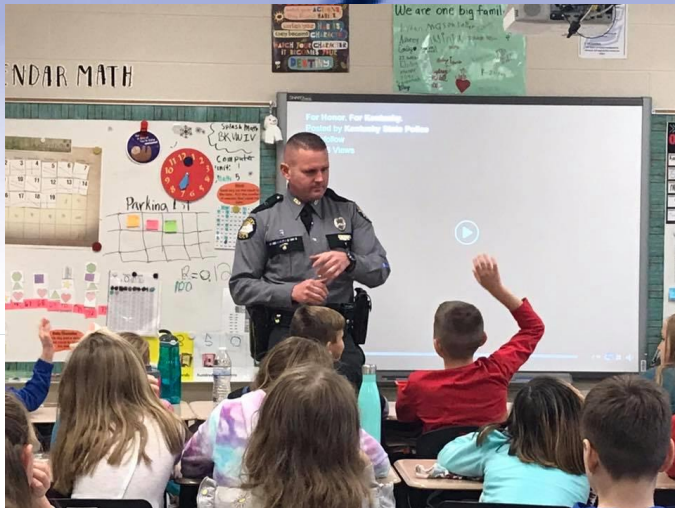
Inclined plane





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ESTILL SPRINGS ELEMENTARY

"Every student can learn...just not on the same day or in the same way." This quote speaks volumes about meeting the INDIVIDUAL needs of students. We are busy at Estill Springs identifying the individual needs (academically, emotionally, socially, etc.) of each and every student. We have seen radical growth in all the before-mentioned areas as well!

Our Winter Benchmarks are almost complete and we are celebrating areas of growth and identifying areas that we can improve upon. Our Staff spent time during our Staff Work Day answering the Data Wise Questions and creating 'Next Steps' as we embark on the second half of the school year.

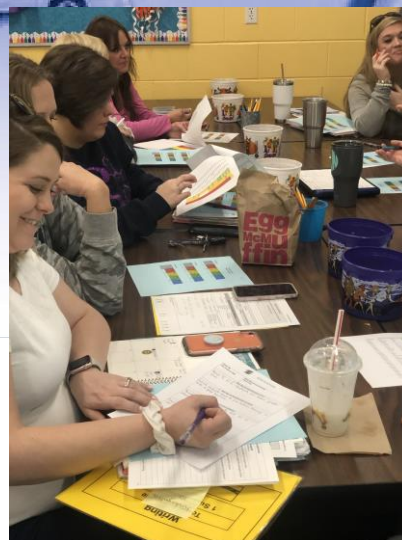
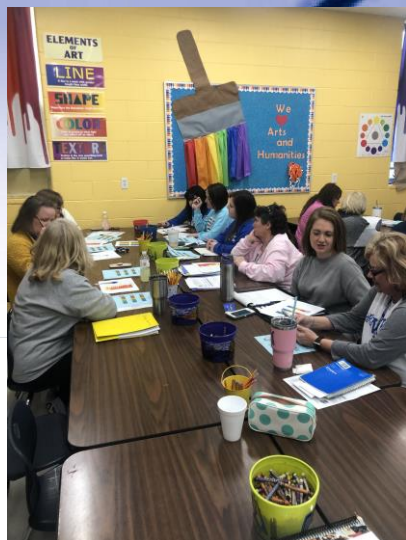
We are excited to see where the end of the year takes us!





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SOUTH IRVINE ELC

We are having a wonderful year at South Irvine! Our students are working hard on their letter recognition, number recognition, and their writing. South Irvine had a Family Learning Night in November. Students and their families completed weather experiments, created crafts, had a snack, and won some door prizes. We even had a visit from Santa before he got busy with the holidays. The highlight of the evening was that 123 new coats were given to children 5 and under all across the county. All this was made possible by a grant from the Madison Estill County Early Childhood Council (MECECC) and our school Family Resource Coordinators.

SUCCESS ACADEMY

The High School students continue to make up credits in Edgenuity and we have one student who participates in Vocational School as well. The Middle School students continue with the 5-subject schedule in addition to the reading plus program to improve comprehension skills. Thanks to all the teachers, staff and agencies that help service and provide for our students in the Success Academy. Thanks to the kitchen and custodial staff who take care of us every day!