

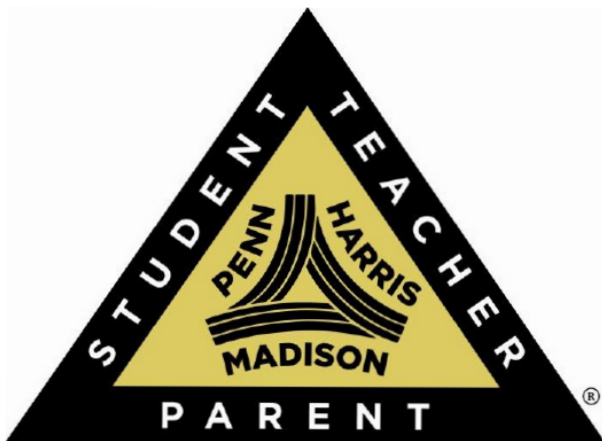


**Thirty-fourth Annual
Employee Recognition Dinner**

May 21, 2025



**Thanks to our friends at Everwise Credit Union
for sponsoring the
P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner**



The Triangle of Success
connecting students,
teachers, and parents.

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Steward, Teamsters Union Local #364

Program

Master of Ceremonies

Bob Thompson, Director of Human Resources

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Jerry Thacker, Superintendent

Invocation

Lorraine White, Principal

Dinner

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Rose Montgomery
Prairie Vista Elementary School

Secondary Teacher of the Year

L.A. High
Schmucker Middle School

Employee of the Year

Whitney Hall
Penn High School

Award to Teachers and Employee of the Year

Jennifer Turnblom McClain, Executive Director
Penn-Harris-Madison Education Foundation

Year Service Award Presentations

PHMTA Representatives

Retirement Recognition Awards

Dr. Jerry Thacker, Superintendent
Chris Riley, President, Board of School Trustees

Dr. Thacker Retirement Tribute

Chris Riley, President, Board of School Trustees

♦ *Thank you to Everwise Credit Union for sponsoring the P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner.*

♦ *Thanks to the Penn High School Kaleidoscope Jazz Combo students.*

Service Awards

45 Year Service Award

Gregory Dikos - Penn

40 Year Service Award

Annette Wisler - Madison

35 Year Service Award

Christy Cook - Elm Road
Jennifer Crist - Penn
David Manspeaker - Penn
David Metcalf - Discovery
Melinda O'Malley - Penn

Julie Ohlson - Penn
Wendy Schuster - Schmucker
Dr. Keely Twibell - Prairie Vista
Phyllis Woodlee - Northpoint

30 Year Service Award

Mark Burns, Jr. - Schmucker
Michelle Crawford - Discovery
Elizabeth Dix - Penn
Melissa Grover - Schmucker
Roger Hansel - Prairie Vista
Mary Hollinger - Horizon
Andrew Horein - Bittersweet
Erin Horvath - Mary Frank

Kristina Hursh - Discovery
Kevin McMillen - Discovery
Therese Mellor - Elm Road
Roseann Morehouse - Northpoint
Regina Mow - Transportation
Tamara Portolese - Elm Road
Murray Weaver - Discovery
Jon West - Horizon

25 Year Service Award

Jennifer Dakins - Penn
Wendy Hayes - Penn
Karen Miller - Penn

Rachelle Morris - Penn
Cheryl Nellis - Elsie Rogers
Scott Vandygriff - Discovery

20 Year Service Award

Lisa Dallich - Prairie Vista
Judy Donati - Penn
Melissa Laidig - Penn
Robin Maden - Penn

Jennifer Payne - Northpoint
Dr. Jennifer Sears - Grissom
Corinne Stogdill - Exceptional Education
Jenna Tomaszewski - ESC

15 Year Service Award

Angela Allen - Exceptional Education
Paula Ellsworth - Transportation
Renee George - Northpoint
Lori Jaworski - Meadow's Edge

Alicia Sullivan - Penn
Jennifer Tebell - Discovery
Marisa VanDeventer - Transportation

Service Awards-continued

10 Year Service Award

Christine Anderson - Transportation
Jamie Atkinson - Discovery
William Babcock, Jr. - Discovery
Bonnie Berg - Penn
Jordan Binion - Walt Disney
Tammy Braunsdorf - Elm Road
Sarah Budd - Meadow's Edge
Drew Casselman - Technology
Sara Cavanaugh - Northpoint
Danielle Chester - Transportation
Laura Chrisman - Penn
Laura Cichoracki - Bittersweet
Sarah Claeyes - Meadow's Edge
Sandra Cogdill - Transportation
Emily Cole - Grissom
Krista Coletti - Horizon
April Donze - Mary Frank
Nicole Freeman - Elm Road
Rachael Givens - Meadow's Edge
Shannon Harrington - Exceptional
Education
Andrea Herron - Transportation
Caitlyn Hicks - Horizon
Duane Holte II - Transportation
Andrew Hunsberger - Prairie Vista
Emilie Hunsberger - Walt Disney
Gianna Keim - Discovery

Michael Manis - Exceptional Education
Katrina Marks - Horizon
Krystle Mauro - Elsie Rogers
Antonio Meribela - Transportation
Sharon Michele- Transportation
Nikkia Moore - Discovery
Velvet Moore - Penn
Anne Napoli - Penn
Michelle Neal - Walt Disney
Matthew Neese - Penn
Christine Newman - Walt Disney
Brian Nicholls - Penn
Jennifer Pfarrer - Mary Frank
Lucha Ramey - ESC
Courtney Sidwell - Elm Road
Steven Sinish - Penn
Ashley Smith - ESC
Julie Smith - Transportation
Thomas Stanton, III - Walt Disney
Jarzelle Strong - Transportation
Shannon Tadevich - Transportation
Ashley VanDuyn - Horizon
Andrew Warner - Penn
Angela Yarrell - Penn
Dustin Zachary - Penn
Jill Zook - Prairie Vista

Elementary Teacher of the Year

**Rose Montgomery
1st Grade Teacher
Prairie Vista Elementary School**

With 31 years of service to P-H-M, Prairie Vista's Rose Montgomery has built a career grounded in compassion, relationships, and unwavering dedication to every child who walks through her door.

"To me, these children become part of my family the day they enter my classroom," Rose says. "And that connection doesn't end when the school year does."

That belief shapes every part of her teaching. Even before the school year begins, Rose contacts families—especially when she knows a child may face academic or emotional challenges. "It helps build a relationship before day one, so that students feel safe and supported from the start."

Throughout the year, Rose stays closely connected with families—calling not just to address concerns, but to celebrate growth. "I want parents to hear how passionate I am about their child's success," she explains. "Even the most reluctant student becomes part of my extended family by the end of the year."

Her colleagues see that same heart. "Rose is the kind of teacher who stays up late thinking of new ways to support her students," said Hayley McTigue. "Her creativity and compassion set her apart."

Rose sees teaching as far more than delivering standards. "Yes, we teach reading and math," she says, "but we also play basketball at recess, wipe tears, listen to stories, and give encouragement."

She is a fierce advocate for students with special needs, working closely with families to develop plans that support each child's academic, behavioral, and emotional success.

For Rose, the true legacy of teaching is emotional impact. "In 40 years, students won't remember the lesson you worked hardest on," she reflects. "They'll remember how you made them feel."

And thanks to Rose, they'll feel loved, believed in, and forever part of her classroom family.

Secondary Teacher of the Year

L.A. High 8th Grade Math Teacher Schmucker Middle School

Now in his 14th year teaching middle school math in P-H-M—first at Grissom and now at Schmucker—L.A. High has impacted generations of students with his steady commitment to academic excellence and student growth.

One of those students, now a colleague, is Schmucker school counselor Allie Marks, nominated him for Secondary Teacher of the Year. “Math was never my strength,” she shared. “But Mr. High created a classroom where I felt safe to make mistakes and keep trying. Now, as his colleague, I see him doing the same for today’s students—advocating for re-teaching strategies, supportive grading, and meaningful interventions.”

L.A. was previously recognized in fall 2024 with a P-H-M Teacher Impact Award for achieving the highest student growth in 8th-grade math, as measured by ILEARN assessments. But his influence goes well beyond the numbers.

Known for his compassion and servant leadership, L.A. has championed fundraising efforts for Riley Hospital for Children—first as a participant, and now as lead organizer at both Grissom and Schmucker. His creative efforts, from trivia nights and pie-a-teacher contests to biking 150 miles to Indianapolis, have raised nearly \$60,000.

For L.A., student success means more than scores or metrics. “Success in education isn’t just about grades. It’s measured by the lasting, unquantifiable impact we have on those around us.”

Allie agrees. “Mr. High is the kind of teacher who reaches the students who believe they can’t learn. I’m proud to have been his student—and even prouder to now be his colleague.”

Employee of the Year

Whitney Hall Educational Assistant Penn High School

Since 2020, Whitney Hall has been a transformative presence in Penn High School's Exceptional Education Academy. With compassion, initiative, and an unshakable belief in her students' potential, she has made a profound impact. Her patient work with one primarily non-verbal student led to a remarkable breakthrough—the discovery that he could solve algebraic equations—revealing abilities that had previously gone unrecognized.

Colleagues describe Whitney as someone who jumps in without hesitation, no matter the challenge. During an adaptive PE session, she didn't think twice before diving into the pool to swim alongside students—demonstrating the kind of presence, care, and engagement that defines her every day.

Whether supporting students with IEPs, assisting classroom instruction, or mentoring fellow Educational Assistants, Whitney consistently goes above and beyond. She ensures that every learner receives individualized, compassionate support while also helping to strengthen the broader educational team.

Whitney also plays a key leadership role in shaping a positive culture at Penn. She co-founded the SITA Crew, a team of Educational Assistants who organize morale-boosting activities and staff recognition efforts—building connection and community within the Exceptional Education program.

In addition, she serves as coach of Penn's Unified Cornhole Team, which brings general education and exceptional education students together through inclusive, team-based competition. Under her guidance, the program has grown in participation and spirit, promoting equity and engagement for all.

Whitney Hall is more than an outstanding Educational Assistant—she is a trusted mentor, a creative leader, and a tireless advocate for students. Her work reflects the very best of P-H-M's values and continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of students and staff alike.

Honored Retirees

Debra Anthony
Bus Operator

Maureen Hemmerling
Educational Assistant

Judy Sheyko
Office Aide

Lisa Baldrige
Teacher

William Kryder
Bus Operator

Katherine Shreiner
Teacher

Jan Basker
Teacher Aide

Dana Latham
Teacher

Retha Stork
Teacher

Steven Beery
Mechanic

Kelly Lyvers
Satellite Leader

Kendra Suddarth
Teacher

Louise Black
Teacher

Bonnie Manningham
Teacher

Dr. Jerry Thacker
Superintendent

Norma Bloomer
Custodian

Wayne Maxwell
Maintenance

Shelli Treely
Teacher

Tara Bogaert
Educational Assistant

Victor Michalos
Custodian

Nancy Trippel
Media Aide

Kathy Butterworth
Custodian

Thomas Miller
Teacher

Ruben Vasquez
Custodian

Terri Byers
Route Specialist

Ruth Neff
Satellite Leader

Kristin Watson
Teacher

Kathryn Campoli
Teacher

Christine Nisley
Teacher

Teresa Weaver
Occupational Therapist

Steven Carroll
Bus Operator

Glenn Northern
Teacher

Ginger Whedon
Teacher Aide

Jennifer Denniston
Bus Operator

Peggy Orosz
Teacher

Gloria Youngs
Technology Aide

Greg Dikos
Teacher

Christina Palmer
Educational Assistant

Pat Zakrocki
Bus Operator

Betsy Faulkenburg
Custodian

Elisabeth Pawlik
Teacher

Retirees

Questions

What is your favorite memory or what did you like most about working at P-H-M?

What words of advice would you give to your fellow colleagues?

What new adventure awaits for you in retirement?

**Jennifer Denniston
Bus Operator
35 Years of Service**

When Prairie Vista opened, a teacher started Earth Crusaders for 4th and 5th graders. They went to camps once a month Friday through Sunday in Indiana or Michigan. Memorial Day weekend they went to Wisconsin Dells or Mammoth Caves. I drove the bus and spent the weekends there becoming a leader. We hiked, canoed, tobogganed, played games, and learned about nature and so much more. What great memories!

Some kids who misbehave just want attention. Try to get to know them and what they like. Talk to them. Be safe.

Spending winters in Florida and traveling with my husband.

**Maureen Hemmerling
Educational Assistant
16 Years of Service**

I loved that every day was a learning opportunity for me, from classroom experiences to learning about each student and what their needs and personalities were. I liked that most verbal students did not hold anything back with their opinions about anything. The non-verbal students also had no trouble getting their thoughts and feelings heard in their own way. I will miss their smiles and their laughs.

I always thought that my job was a little different every day. It was never boring. It was challenging at times, but I felt I learned from those challenging times. Sometimes, it was just a matter of changing my mindset that made the difference.

My colleagues really don't need any advice because they do a phenomenal job. I count on them for help and advice as much as they count on me. Flexibility is very important in this job.

I want to do a little travelling with my husband when we both retire. I want to watch my grandkids, who live out of town, play sports. I want to go visit my sisters. Eventually, we want to move down by Indianapolis where our sons live.

Judy Sheyko
Office Aide
25 Years of Service

What I enjoyed most about my job, working in the office at Meadow's Edge, was the connections that I made with so many families over the years.

Try to remember as the school's first face or voice on the phone, to be as patient and understanding as you would want someone else to be with you. Some days that will be easier than others to do.

We hope to travel more to see our son, grandchildren, and other family members that live out of state.

Retha Stork
Teacher
11 Years of Service

My love for teaching started at an early age. I enjoyed spending time with my mom in her elementary classroom; she was definitely my inspiration to get into education. I began teaching in 1981 in Springfield, Ohio then moved to Anderson, Indiana where I taught for many years. I finished my teaching career with Penn-Harris-Madison Schools. I was hired in 2012 as an ESL instructor at Meadows Edge. I was excited when Dr. Keely Twibell gave me the opportunity to teach first graders at Prairie Vista in 2014, where I have taught for the past 11 years. My 26 years as an educator has been extremely fulfilling!

Teaching definitely requires a passion for students. Some of my most cherished memories are when students become curious and engage in learning. It is so rewarding when I see the excitement in a student's eyes about a new discovery or when they get excited about understanding the skill being taught; they finally "get it." I love seeing them grow in their knowledge and in their confidence as a person.

I am so thankful for my amazing colleagues and for the wonderful staff at Prairie Vista. I am especially grateful for my 1st grade team. In these past 11 years, we have diligently worked together to achieve the best educational goals for our students. My team has also been a strong emotional support for me during some of the hardest times of my life. I love my Prairie Vista family!

I am looking forward to enjoying time with my friends and family in the next chapter of my life. My husband and I have three beautiful married children and six fabulous grandchildren, ranging in age from 6 months to 14 years. I am excited to be more involved in all of their lives!

Kendra Suddarth
Teacher
26 Years of Service

As I reflect back on my years at P-H-M, the one thing that I loved the most was the feeling of "family" that I had. Whether I was at Bittersweet or Northpoint, my

colleagues were my friends; they were the ones I felt comfortable talking about family issues with, and the first people to jump in and give a lending hand no matter what the problem was. We backed each other in the classroom with ideas and resources as well as outside of school. They were the missing pieces that I needed in my life.

The words of advice that I would give to my colleagues, especially new teachers, is to set boundaries. I, myself, had a difficult time following my own advice until just about the end of my teaching career. I would remind them that teaching is your job and that is where you place your heart, but family must come first. If you don't put your family first, you miss the precious opportunities of "memories" with your own family and those are things that you can never get back.

During my retirement, I plan to spend more time with my family here in Indiana and my daughter and her husband in Colorado. Since my husband and I are retiring and I plan on spending more time with my only granddaughter there. I will miss my friends dearly, but I will never be too far away for a lunch date or a boat ride. Goodbye P-H-M!

**Shelli Treely
Teacher
39 Years of Service**

I have about 39 favorite memories of P-H-M! Every school I've taught at brings to mind special memories. Cultural Night at Walt Disney, Dr. Sloan's "Rhymes and Shrimp," sledding at Elm Road, Dr. Hahn's ice cream bar at summer school, the All School Breakfast at Elsie Rogers, the Sleepover and Owl Prowl at Meadow's Edge, Back to School Night at Madison, March Madness at Moran, reconnecting with colleagues at Prairie Vista, and watching my students participate in athletics at Grissom all bring smiles to my face. Notice I did not say administering IREAD or ILEARN. Make sure your students and their parents know they are so much more than a test score.

Invest in relationships that impact your livelihood. Work as a team with your colleagues—this job is impossible to attempt by yourself. Listen as your students share their interests beyond school. Don't ever shy away from speaking with parents - the GBU - the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. While it's hard to have difficult conversations about poor behavior or low academics with parents, the joyful phone calls home about the successes their child has made far outweighs all the tough conversations. And lastly, get to know those who make decisions about public education. Know your senators and representatives and make sure they know you. Legislators are more likely to listen if they know you. Public education is at the mercy of our elected officials. Make sure they know what you value and how they can help. We're better together. Be persistent.

Oh, come on, anyone who knows me knows I will #takethetrip! I'll be snagging my grandchildren and exploring everything the world has to offer.

Kristin Watson
Teacher
33 Years of Service

I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to be a part of the P-H-M community of students, teachers and administrators over the past 30 plus years. Retirement plans include spending my time with family and friends, as well as more involvement in community and church activities.

Dr. Jerry Thacker
Superintendent
19 Years of Service

Over the past 19 years, I have had the privilege not only of serving as your superintendent, but also getting to know so many of you. Our dedicated teachers, staff, students, and families make Penn-Harris-Madison not only an exceptional school district, but a wonderful community. I am especially proud of the outstanding culture of excellence that we have created.

The tireless work of our teachers and administrators has led to extraordinary milestones for our students. We raised our graduation rate from 79% to an impressive 98%, placed P-H-M in the top 4% of the state academically, and helped our students earn more than \$200 million in scholarships. These achievements are a testament to the strength of our world-class school system and the power of the P-H-M Triangle of Success—the vital connection between teachers, students, and parents that has propelled us to new heights.

With our leadership and support of the Board of School Trustees, our commitment to safety has earned P-H-M national recognition, ranking us sixth in the nation for school safety. Through sound financial stewardship, we overcame a \$3 million deficit, built a strong and sustainable financial model, and maintained one of the lowest tax rates in the region—all while ensuring our students and staff had the resources they needed to thrive.

One of the greatest joys of my career has been attending school events and witnessing our students shine—whether excelling in academics, performing in fine arts, or competing in athletics. Our students' talent and dedication are extraordinary.

We have been very fortunate to celebrate remarkable individual and collective achievements. One of our students earned the only perfect score in the world on the AP Calculus exam, and our Kingsmen alumni, including Olympic gold medalists in women's wrestling and volleyball, have made history on the world stage.

The P-H-M Education Foundation, the Forum, and our business partners have been fantastic collaborators helping to shape a culture of excellence in the district that will continue to transform lives for generations to come.

I will carry with me the countless memories of our shared successes and the friendships that have made this journey so meaningful. The future of P-H-M is bright, and I am proud and honored to call you colleagues and friends.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence!

