



PENN · HARRIS · MADISON
— SCHOOL CORPORATION —

**Thirty-fifth Annual
Employee Recognition
Dinner**

May 20, 2026

Partners in Excellence



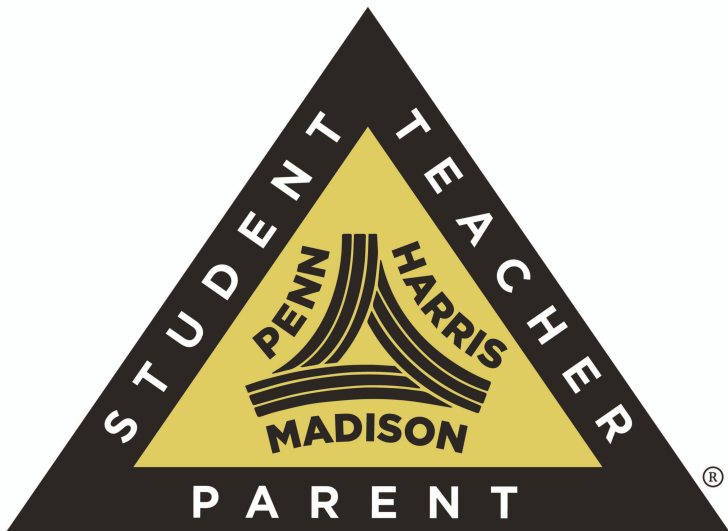
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P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner

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Program

Master of Ceremonies

Bob Thompson, Director of Human Resources

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Heather Short, Superintendent

Invocation

Lorraine White, Principal

Dinner

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Josie Engdahl

Meadow's Edge Elementary School

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Kelley Watts

Penn High School

Employee of the Year

Carly Taylor

Northpoint Elementary School

Award to Teachers and Employee of the Year

Jennifer Turnblom, Executive Director

Penn-Harris-Madison Education Foundation

Years of Service Award Presentations

PHMTA Representatives

Retirement Recognition Awards

Dr. Heather Short, Superintendent

Chris Riley, President, Board of School Trustees

Service Awards

40 Year Service Award

Betsy Fernsler - Bittersweet
Debra Krueger - Horizon

Amy Rice - Penn

35 Year Service Award

Laurie Bednarek - Penn
Charles Sowders - Discovery

Lynn Stratford- Penn
Michele Taylor - Elm Road

30 Year Service Award

Megan Barrett - Penn
Lisa Bottorff - Penn
Timothy Braunsdorf - Discovery
Sheilia Buzalski - Transportation
Shari Cerney - Meadow's Edge
Brenda Chaffee - Penn
Jennifer Cobb - Discovery
Michael Coffee - Penn
Kimberly Conley - Northpoint
Charity Grimes-Ford - Northpoint
Matthew Hapke - Technology
Carl Holt - Penn
Julie Huxford - Penn
Nancy Ladson - Schmucker
Shelley Lebidzinski - Prairie Vista
Michelle Mahnesmith - Northpoint
Bruce Martin - Transportation
Shonda Masterson - Bittersweet
Jennifer McMillen - Discovery

Julie Meiszberg - Mary Frank
Leslie Metcalf - Bittersweet
Kent Mikel - Discovery
John Mott - Penn
Krista Noonan - Walt Disney
Kimberly Pawlowski - Northpoint
Lesley Perry - Transportation
Mary Petersen- Penn
Erin Randolph - Discovery
Matthew Reininga - Schmucker
Kimberly Silveus - Prairie Vista
Julie Sloan - Grissom
Heather Trant Short - ESC
Wynne Trowbridge - Moran
Cynthia Verduin- Transportation
Daniel Vogelgesang - Penn
Elizabeth Wagoner - Transportation
Tammi Youngquist - Bittersweet

25 Year Service Award

Laura Bevis - Ex Education
Matthew Bodnar - Bittersweet
Stephanie Dorbin Black - Bittersweet
Kathleen Dressel - Moran
Kelly Fairbotham - Elsie Rogers
Amy Gallo - Prairie Vista
Brian Griman - Penn
Laura Kalil - Northpoint
Mitzie King-Thornton - Pennway
Trisha Leddy - Bittersweet
Angie Lupa - Northpoint

Donna Maggart - ESC
Sandra Merrill - Walt Disney
Jodi Montel-McGann - Northpoint
Lori Pettine - Penn
Angelia Ridenour - Walt Disney
Laurie Ruoff - Discovery
Donna Schau - Discovery
Marline Schindewolf - Northpoint
Rita Szweda - Horizon
Pamela Walters - Grissom
Jeremy Weishaupt - Fieldhouse

Service Awards-continued

20 Year Service Award

Marica Abrams - Penn	Brenda Howey - Prairie Vista
Russell Barnes - Maintenance	Delicia Huckleberry - Penn
Jean Chaszar - Transportation	Jeanne Kincses - Transportation
Jennifer Dunderman - Penn	Richard Murphy - Prairie Vista
Mary Hatch - Northpoint	Lisa Russell - Moran
Andrea Hoover - Schmucker	Jennifer Wolfe - Penn

15 Year Service Award

Nicholas Berry - Transportation	Catherine Neely - Moran
Jon Carroll - Penn	Andrew Nemeth - Penn
Amber Davis - Walt Disney	Andre Price II - Technology
Kellie DeMeyer - Transportation	Karen Rallo - Penn
Julie Demske - Schmucker	Ali Renz - Elm Road
Stacy Eck - Penn	Peter Riodran - Penn
Camille Harvey - Discovery	Brittany Rollins - Prairie Vista
Kriss High - Schmucker	Alise Schaefer - ESC
Scotty Holderman - Maintenance	Ranson Sharkey - Transportation
Shawna Janski - Transportation	Fatija Skopo - Penn
Julie Lis - Grissom	Laura Smith - Meadow's Edge
Elizabeth Marshall - Grissom	John Vandygriff - Penn
Rhonda Mellen - Bittersweet	Stephanie Wesolowski - Meadow's Edge
Nichol Mondy - Northpoint	

10 Year Service Award

Katherine Bella - Northpoint	Charles Miller - Pennway
Kyle Berres - Penn	Alison Minegar - Elsie Rogers
Kelley Bretz - Discovery	Amy Newcomb - Transportation
Erica Briones - Horizon	Nancy Penter - Transportation
Ronald Calvert - Transportation	Tiffany Perry - Schmucker
Matthew Cates - Penn	Tara Pieters - Penn
Jodi Cramer Berry - Elsie Rogers	Vijay Potti - Penn
Jon Farmer - Transportation	Katie Powell - Technology
Robert Gingrich - Grissom	Lori Ryan - Transportation
Aaron Griesser - Penn	Madalyn Schmidt - Grissom
Stephen Hahaj - Transportation	Trudy Smolenak - Transportation
FonChetta Harris - Transportation	Keith Stork - Penn
Kami Hartstein - Horizon	Karen Tagliaferri - Penn
Christina Johnson - Grissom	Juliana Turner - Discovery
Abigail Kaiser - Ex Education	Steven Washington - Technology
Richard Lester - Technology	Evan White - Penn
Dennis Lis - Transportation	Cynthia Williams - ESC
Ming Liu - Penn	Mary Wyatt - Penn

Elementary Teacher of the Year
Josie Engdahl
4th Grade Teacher
Meadow's Edge Elementary School

Now in her sixth year of teaching, including three years at P-H-M, Josie Engdahl is an educator whose instruction prioritizes student engagement through both rigor and creativity. Her classroom reflects a belief that students learn best when they see purpose in their work and have opportunities to actively construct understanding.

One of the best examples of her approach is her “tiny house” project. What starts as a math lesson quickly turns into a cross-curricular learning experience. Students apply their understanding of area and perimeter as they design scaled floor plans and build models, while also incorporating writing, collaboration, and problem-solving throughout the process. It’s hands-on, engaging, and challenging. Most importantly, it helps her students build confidence as they see what they’re capable of accomplishing.

“This unit reflects my core beliefs about teaching and learning,” Josie said. “Students learn best when they have voice and agency, and when tasks are rich enough to welcome many approaches. Creativity is not extra; it’s what drives persistence and precision.”

In her first year with P-H-M, she applied for and was selected for the prestigious Indiana Educator Fellowship for Creative Teachers, a program of the Indiana Arts Commission and the IDOE. She was one of just 20 educators statewide chosen to participate in the program, which supports creativity-centered innovation in the classroom. Through a partnership with the South Bend Museum of Art, Josie designed lessons that integrated visual arts into science instruction, allowing students to explore concepts like erosion and fossilization through hands-on work with clay, giving them a tangible way to understand scientific processes and engage more deeply with the content.

Josie is a proud P-H-M graduate, having attended Prairie Vista Elementary School, Schmucker Middle School, and Penn High School, where she was a member of the Class of 2016.

As a member of Meadow’s Edge’s TLT and through other leadership opportunities, Josie is someone her fellow teachers trust and turn to. Whether supporting new initiatives or helping refine instructional practices, she plays an important role in building a strong, connected school culture where everyone feels supported and heard.

Those who work alongside Josie know her as someone who brings positivity, thoughtfulness, and a genuine care for others into everything she does. She’s the kind of teacher who helps students build confidence, not just academically, but in how they see themselves as learners.

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Kelley Watts Spanish Teacher Penn High School

Throughout Señora Watts' career, she has demonstrated a deep commitment to student learning, leadership, and building meaningful connections both inside and outside the classroom.

During her 22 years at Penn, Kelley has made a lasting impact that goes well beyond her classroom. She has built strong connections with students through her involvement in school life, including her years leading Kingsmen Against Cancer. She also helped get Penn's boys volleyball program off the ground and now serves as co-head coach alongside her husband, Mark. As the program grows, she continues to give students another way to be involved and feel connected.

As an instructional coach and leader in the P-H-M Teachers Association, Kelley works with others to share ideas, support one another, and keep the focus on what's best for students. She's someone her fellow teachers can turn to for support, guidance, and encouragement.

Kelley has helped create opportunities for students across the district to experience language and culture. She played a role in developing summer programs like Learn a Foreign Language for elementary students and the World Languages Academy for middle school students, helping introduce younger students to new experiences early on.

She also brings real-world experiences into her classroom. For several years, Kelley has welcomed visiting students from Ecuador to Penn for a day, giving them a chance to experience an American high school while allowing her own students to connect with native Spanish speakers.

As fellow teacher and Kelley's nominator for Secondary Teacher of the Year Eric Bowers shared, "Kelley has a unique ability to connect with students not only in the classroom, but coaching as well. She reaches a wide range of students and creates meaningful relationships that extend beyond the school day."

Kelley's impact is felt at Penn and across the district. She makes a difference in the way she shows up every day for her students, her fellow teachers, and the Penn community.

Employee of the Year

Carly Taylor Secretary/Treasurer Northpoint Elementary School

Carly Taylor is an essential part of Northpoint Elementary School, serving as both the operational backbone and a welcoming presence for students, staff, and families. Known affectionately as the “heart and brains” of the building, she approaches her work with professionalism, care, and an unwavering commitment to others.

Carly’s impact extends far beyond the front office. She coordinates substitute coverage, manages purchasing during high-demand times such as testing season, and supports staff in countless ways, often before they even have to ask. Her ability to anticipate needs and respond with efficiency and calm helps ensure the school runs smoothly each and every day.

Northpoint teachers and staff describe Carly as a steady and dependable presence who can be counted on in any situation. She supports more than a dozen afterschool programs, managing schedules, communication, and logistics to ensure students and families have access to meaningful opportunities beyond the classroom. Her attention to detail allows teachers and staff to focus on what matters most: student learning.

“Carly is the first warm smile families see when they walk through our doors and the calm, steady presence our staff depends on every day,” said Principal Lorraine White. “She anticipates needs before they arise, solves problems with professionalism, and treats every student, parent, and colleague with genuine kindness and respect.”

Carly has also played a key role in advancing important school initiatives. She helped support Northpoint in earning its STEM certification by assisting with scheduling, purchasing, and organizing materials for the STEM lab. In addition, she has been instrumental in coordinating the school’s growing involvement in LEGO competitions.

Her impact reaches well beyond her building. Through her work managing school finances and operations, Carly collaborates closely with the district’s Business Department and is a trusted resource for colleagues across multiple schools. She frequently serves as a resource for fellow secretaries and treasurers across the district.

Carly’s leadership is equally evident in the culture she helps create. This year, she introduced a staff “shout out” initiative, encouraging employees to recognize one another through handwritten notes and celebrate the positive contributions happening throughout the building. It is just one example of how she fosters connection and appreciation among her colleagues.

Just as important as her behind-the-scenes work is the way Carly connects with people. She greets each person with kindness, creating a welcoming environment for all. Her genuine care and positive spirit help set the tone for the entire school community.

Honored Retirees

Jacqueline Anderson
Teacher

Kelly Lyvers
Food Service

Matthew Russell
Teacher

Noel Bauwens
Bus Operator

Judy Marosz
Secretary

Amy Scoles
Teacher

Denise Birong
Educational Assistant

Sharon Michele
Bus Operator

Tracy Smith
Teacher

Dennis Bontrager
Teacher

Karen Miller
Elem. IIEP Coordinator

Laurie Stanton
Bus Operator

Kathleen Dance
Teacher

Sharon Miller
Custodian

Wendy Stevens
Educational Assistant

Marsha Davis
Educational Assistant

Patricia Mills
Office Aide

Lola Sult
Food Service

Kathy Dougherty
Educational Assistant

Robert Mulligan
Custodian

Rita Szweda
Secretary

Laura Epperson
Custodian

Maureen Munger
Deputy Treasurer

Keely Twibell
Principal

Paula Fadden
Learning Lab Coordinator

Janet Noonan
Educational Assistant

David VanOoteghem
Teacher

Amy Fadorsen
Principal

Debbie Parisi
Teacher

Susan Verduin
Bus Operator

Debra Hensley
Custodian

Stacey Proctor
Educational Assistant

Bonnie Wolfgang
Teacher

Donna Hipsher
Teacher

Jeanne Rehlander
Teacher

Pennie Wood
Educational Assistant

Sandy Hunter
Counselor

Peggy Reisdorf
Teacher

Phyllis Woodlee
Teacher Aide

Thomas Keeley
Chief Operating Officer

Terry Richards
Educational Assistant

Amy Zimmer
Teacher

Robert Kowalinski
Technology Aide

Susan Roberts
Teacher

Karin Logan
Elem. Academ. Interv.

Kevin Runyan
Psychologist

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?

**Dennis Bontrager
Teacher
37 Years of Service**

After 37 years at P-H-M a favorite memory would have to be the sense of community built over time with my colleagues. Working alongside the same teachers year after year created bonds rooted in trust, shared challenges, and mutual respect. What I valued most was the support we felt helping one another through changes over the years, while still celebrating both small and big successes together. We came together with young families or even just starting marriages/families, watched each other's kids and families grow, which made that support even more meaningful. The consistency of working together all through the years allowed us to truly understand each other and our students, turning a workplace into a second family I will always cherish.

Building those relationships with your students. To me it is the most important thing you can do to become an effective teacher. When students feel seen, respected, and valued, they're more willing to engage, take risks, and grow. When they trust you as an adult it creates a safe space for learning. Strong relationships don't require grand gestures—just consistency, being present for them, and genuine interest. Try to find out at least one thing about each student you can use as a conversation starter and talk about their interests. At the end of the day students most likely won't remember each lesson, but they won't forget how you made them feel.

The adventure is yet to be determined as the plan is to lay low the first year and see what may come my way. No big plans except for some light travel, hanging out with family and especially my grandkids. My wife recently retired as well and we look forward to exploring breakfast places around Michiana and enjoying our free time.

**Kathy Dance
Teacher
38 Years of Service**

I have seen many changes over the years since starting my teaching career in 1988. I started with chalkboards, paper report cards, and filmstrip projectors. I am ending with smartboards, digital gradebooks, and videos at my fingertips. One thing that has not changed is the joy in watching a student's excitement when they understand something new, hearing the gasp when you read a great book together, or

witnessing the kindness of a classmate after building that class community. The best part of my job has always been about building trust, encouraging effort, celebrating growth, and reminding each child that they are capable of more than they think. I am so grateful to the colleagues who became lifelong friends and the families who trusted me with their children each year.

As I step into retirement I do so with a full heart and tremendous pride. I plan to spend a lot of time enjoying my family and my three beautiful grandchildren (two more on the way by the end of the summer!). Thank you for allowing me to spend 38 incredible years doing what I love the most—helping children learn, grow, and believe in themselves.

**Amy Fadorsen
Principal
33 Years of Service**

After thirty-three rewarding years at P-H-M, my favorite memories are rooted in the relationships built with students and colleagues. One that immediately comes to mind was my surprise 50th birthday gift from my third grade teachers, when all the kids ran a lap around our school with me after they each handed me a rose, creating a memory I will never forget. It was such a joyful and humbling experience that truly reflected the kindness and spirit of my staff. I have deeply valued the sense of community I felt both as a teacher at Bittersweet and as an administrator at Horizon—supporting one another through life’s challenges and celebrating successes together, while growing both professionally and personally.

To my fellow colleagues, my advice is to remember why you started—stay focused on the impact you have every single day, even when it may not feel visible. Be patient with yourself and your students, and don’t underestimate the influence you have in shaping young lives, as you are often the best part of a student’s day. Take time to support one another, because a strong team makes all the difference in this profession and helps sustain you through the years. Most importantly, try to retire when you are at your peak and still feel the joy from the work you do.

As I move into retirement, I look forward to new adventures that include spending more time with family, traveling to new places, and exploring interests I’ve set aside, while always carrying with me the meaningful relationships and experiences from my time at P-H-M. I am deeply grateful for the journey.

**Karen Miller
Educational Assistant
26 Years of Service**

I have worked for P-H-M for over 26 years—as an EA at Walt Disney for about 20 years and as an IIEP Coordinator for around 6 years. There is no way I can narrow all these years down to one favorite memory, I have so many! This includes the extraordinary kids and the amazing co-workers.

My advice to anyone working with children is to enjoy and challenge them. NEVER limit a child because you think they cannot do something. Boredom invites behavior issues.

I hope to be spending a lot of time with my grandsons and traveling. Maybe take the piano up again.

Stacey Proctor
Educational Assistant
4 Years of Service

I loved my time at Northpoint Elementary as an EA. The team I worked with was amazing, led by Renee George and Lorraine White. Being part of 10-12 EA's each school year was fun and celebrating birthdays and daily joys and maybe some unusual moments that come with our job.

Feeling the LOVE of the kids and helping them and seeing them grow in confidence through the years was very rewarding. I was able to visit last week for a few minutes and introduce them to my 6-month-old granddaughter.

Retirement for me is not waking to an alarm, eating whenever I want (not at 10:30 am lunch time, lol) leisurely going to antique stores and having a "more relaxed vibe." Also, hanging out with our new grand baby, who I realize will be "school age" in the blink of an eye.

Peggy Reisdorf
Teacher
34 Years of Service

My favorite part of working for P-H-M has truly been spending my entire career at Prairie Vista. It's more than just a workplace to me—it has been a home. Over the years, I've been blessed to teach alongside so many incredible educators and to build friendships that have grown into something much deeper than colleagues. These are the people who have laughed with me, supported me, and stood by me through both the joyful moments and the more difficult ones. I will always be grateful for the sense of family we've created.

My advice to my colleagues would be to lean on one another. When you build strong, positive relationships with each other, it not only makes the work easier—it makes each day more enjoyable. Support one another, have each other's backs, and lead with kindness in all that you do.

As I begin this new chapter of retirement, my husband and I are looking forward to an exciting move to southern Indiana. We're especially eager to be closer to our new grandbaby arriving in August—(and, of course, his parents too!).

David VanOoteghem, Jr.
Teacher
33 Years of Service

My favorite memory will be teaching at Moran while my own children attended school there. I got to teach Ryan, my son, in FI and I was Kyle's High ability Math teacher when he was in 4th Grade. What a blessing to be able to work and be close to my children at the same time.

The best advice ever given to me was from Tom Szumski while I was at Disney: Be truthful in everything you do as a teacher. I pass this advice along to others. My personal advice is this: When you have all of the information, there is no situation you cannot control. Take the time to learn and collect information which will strengthen your teaching and your classroom management skills.

The next great adventure for Traci and I will be to go to Germany to celebrate Oktoberfest properly. We have never had a Fall vacation and I believe it is time that we take a holiday.

