



## ***Partners in Rural Innovative Models of Education***

***An Update Newsletter***

***December 5, 2016***

***Issue #1***

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What is PRIME? PRIME stands for Partners in Rural Innovative Models of Education. PRIME is the new name for a K-16 innovative approach toward education in Geauga County initiative formerly initiated as a High School Consolidation effort led by Geauga Growth partnership and Kent State University to create a new school on the campus of KSU Geauga for Berkshire, Cardinal and Newbury school districts. Using PRIME as the identifying name for this project provides a sense of openness to all Geauga county residents.

Who is involved? Currently, there are many partners in this endeavor called PRIME. The first two critical partners include Berkshire Local School District and Kent State University Geauga. Other partners include Geauga Growth Partnership and Auburn Career Center.



The Berkshire Board of Education members from left to right: Mrs. Barbara Raikes, Mr. Jim Boyd, Mrs. Kim Brown, Mr. John Manfredi, Mr. Bryan Wadsworth.

**Left:** *Berkshire Board of Education Board Members are Mrs. Barbara Raikes, Mr. Jim Boyd, Mrs. Kim Brown, Mr. John Manfredi and Mr. Bryan Wadsworth. The Board of Education passed a motion addressed to the Administration of Kent State University supporting the PRIME initiative. Kent State University responded stating that they were happy to be included.*

PRIME has an Executive Board composed of the following individuals with their contributing roles to PRIME. Tracy Jemison of Geauga Growth Partnership is Chairperson for this group.



Next is Mr. Rich Frenchie of Geauga Growth Partnership and Advisory Board Member for Kent State University Geauga Campus. Representative John Patterson has been instrumental in leading the legislative initiative to gain funding for a new school.

*LEFT: Mr. Tracy Jemison, Executive Director of Geauga Growth Partnership.*

Dr. Nathan Ritchey, Vice President for Kent State System Integration is the communication liaison between PRIME and Kent State University Administrative Team. Berkshire Board Members, Mr. John Manfredi and Mr. Bryan Wadsworth represent the Berkshire Local School District on the Executive



Dr. Nathan Ritchey

Treasurer Beth McCaffrey provides financial information regarding the Berkshire Local School District, history of the Berkshire-Ledgemont Territory Transfer, and recommends cost savings shared services to the Executive Board. Superintendent Doug DeLong has been meeting with architects regarding the new facilities and costs of construction. Maggie Lynch, Superintendent of Auburn Career Center, with Superintendent Doug DeLong and Vice President Nate Ritchey are working together to assist with Curriculum Planning for grades K-16. Mrs. Ann Thomas, OEA, is participating in the Executive Board to help plan and provide information regarding employees and their concerns. Mrs. Jennifer Felker, Superintendent of Geauga ESC represents the educational partnerships already existing through the Geauga County Educational Service Center.

It is the intention of the Executive Board to bring in Community Representatives as PRIME continues to move into 2017.

[Past Meetings Summary and Recommended Next Steps:](#) Two meetings have been held with the Auburn and Berkshire Educational Staffs. The first on November 17, 2016 and the second on Monday, November 21, 2016. Between the two meetings, there have been 20+ individuals involved.

Introducing PRIME to the combined meetings were Tracy Jamison, Dr. Nate Ritchey, Superintendent Doug DeLong, Superintendent Maggie Lynch, Treasurer Beth McCaffrey, and Berkshire Board Members, President Kim Brown and Board Member, Barbara Raikes.

After explaining the PRIME initiative and answering questions, the focus of the meeting was to invite staff to be a part of PRIME. Their role would be to recommend ways the educational instructional process can be improved upon at all grade levels. Whether this would involve adding to the innovations already in place at the high school that include the 1:1 laptop for students, the opportunity to share courses and curriculum between KSU-Berkshire-Auburn via

the IDVL equipment already in place, share the FAB LAB equipment at Auburn, link Business Partners to Problem Based Learning initiatives, create blended learning courses, or other feasible ways to help expand curriculum, share resources and services.

Treasurer McCaffrey mentioned the KSU resource of grant writing as a local resource that could help finance the vision that the faculty could create for PRIME to go forward.

Emphasis was put on the need for professional development of staff in Problem Based Learning strategies, released time for faculty to work and create opportunities to integrate curriculum, build on big ideas that they have worked on in the past, and to bring in more businesses to have student groups complete projects and internships. A student creating ideas and solutions to real world problems in partnership with local businesses could earn college credit with design, business or earn additional credits through ODE Credit Flex program.

Next meeting: **Thursday, December 8, 2016 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.** After this advertised meeting, the meetings will move closer to the teacher schedule. This meeting will be held at the Berkshire Board of Education building.

#### Calendar of Next Steps—Completed by January 31, 2017

1. Attend meetings at individual school buildings to meet with faculty to explain PRIME and get their input and ideas.
2. Get on the agenda of PTO meetings to explain PRIME to PTO groups.
3. Identify students in each building for focus group participation. Host focus groups for students, faculty, parents, and community.
4. Decide on pilot programs at elementary, middle school and high school.