

## **Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Jan. 6-13, 2012**

### **Gates Foundation Releases Report Regarding Teacher Observations -**

A study released by the Gates Foundation found that teachers who embodied the teaching skills outlined in certain popular teaching frameworks tended to help their students learn more. The study suggested that observations of teaching practice hold promise for being integrated into teacher-evaluation systems, if observers are carefully trained to ensure consistent application of the frameworks over multiple observations.

The five frameworks studied were: 1) Framework for Teaching; 2) Classroom Assessment Scoring System; 3) Protocol for Language Arts Teaching Observations; 4) Mathematical Quality of Instruction; and 5) UTeach Teacher Observation Protocol.

### **Popular Frameworks Found to Identify Effective Teachers – EdWeek**

Teachers who embodied the teaching skills outlined in certain popular teaching frameworks tended to help their students learn more, concludes a new study released by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

### **Gathering Feedback for Teaching: Combining High-Quality Observations with Student Surveys and Achievement Gains – Gates Foundation**

This report tests five different approaches to classroom observations. Each observation instrument is designed to do two things: (1) focus an observer's attention on specific aspects of teaching practice and (2) establish common evidentiary standards for each level of practice. Ideally, an observation instrument should create a common vocabulary for pursuing a shared vision of effective instruction.

**Appropriations Bill** - On December 23, 2011, President Obama signed into law an omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 2055) providing funding for the U.S. Department of Education. Overall, after a 0.189% across-the-board rescission, the bill appropriates \$68.1 billion in discretionary spending for the agency's programs, a decrease of \$233 million from Fiscal Year 2011. Specifically, the bill includes:

- \$14.5 billion for Title I grants to local education agencies, a \$74 million increase;
- \$11.6 billion for special education state grants, a \$112 million increase;

- \$2.47 billion to help states improve the quality of their teachers and leaders;
- \$160 million for the Striving Readers (PK-12) literacy program; and
- \$22.8 billion in discretionary funding for Pell Grants for low- and middle-income college undergraduates, which will support maintaining the maximum grant at \$5,550.

Among other key programs, the bill includes \$549 million for a new round of Race to the Top (see below); \$149 million for the Investing in Innovation Fund; \$60 million for the Promise Neighborhood initiative, which is double its FY 2011 funding level; and \$534 million for the School Improvement Grant program. [Get more information here.](#)

**Superintendent's Cabinet Book Study** - On Tuesday, January 10 during the Superintendent's Cabinet Meeting the district administrators discussed their 2011-2012 Book Study of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John C. Maxwell. Each month two administrators present the key idea or ideas from their assigned readings that have particular meaning to them in their leadership role. This month our Middle School Principal, Jeff Endres, presented Chapter 10: The Law of Connection and our Coordinator of Preschool, Jan Strahm, presented Chapter 11: The Law of the Inner Circle.

## **OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

**Building Operations** - Hamilton Local Schools have adopted the Alert Now phone notification system to inform all district parents of closings, cancellations, unexcused absences, and any other emergency alert information concerning our district buildings or property. To utilize the Alert Now notification system, we import a call list generated from each student's primary contact phone number. At any time, if your child's primary contact number is changed please make certain their building secretary is made aware of the new contact number. Once the district's Superintendent has made the announcement, our Alert Now notification system will contact you within minutes.

If school is canceled or delayed for two (2) hours due to inclement weather the following local television and radio stations will carry the announcement:

TV Stations:

WCMH - NBC 4   WSYX - ABC 6   WBNS - 10 TV   WTTE - Fox 28

Radio Stations:

WTVN - 610 AM WCOL - 92.3 FM WNCI - 97.9 FM WCKX -107.5 FM

You can also visit [our district website](#) for school closing, delay, or emergency information.

**Administrative Meetings** - Mr. Morrison met with our assistant principals on Thursday to discuss:

- January's Board Agenda
- Book Study (The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership by John C.

Maxwell)

- Attendance Concerns
- Alternative Academy
- Truancy Procedures
- Sick Leave Abuse

We have regular monthly AP meetings that cover many of the same topics discussed in our monthly admin meetings, but also cover the specific issues the assistant principals deal with on a daily basis. It is a great opportunity to network, share ideas and work through issues as a team.

**Transportation** - Our transportation department will continue to look for local drivers to join our team. If interested, please contact Mrs. Barbara Haughn at 491-8044 ext. 1238.

**Construction** - Mr. Morrison met with representatives of Kleingers & Associates to finalize drawings for a new bus compound. This project will be completed in stages, with the initial stage starting in June 2012.

**Civil Rights** - Mr. Morrison has submitted the first series of data for the 2012 Civil Rights Survey. Our participation in the 2009-2010 data collection helped to create an important repository of data to ensure equal opportunity for all students and to promote educational excellence.

**Health and Safety** - Mr. Morrison visited the Gahanna Jefferson Public School District on Tuesday to review the ALICE program used by Gahanna West Middle School. The ALICE Program is designed to give students and staff, who may find themselves in a potentially life threatening situation, some mental and physical tools that could play a vital role in their survival.

Mr. Morrison will observe an ALICE evacuation drill this spring.

## **OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **District Weather & Emergency Alerts Available In Multiple Places -**

Our district is prepared to communicate to all students and families as the need arises. We will utilize our phone notification system, district website, district Twitter account, district Facebook group, and traditional local media (TV/Radio) outlets to let you know about school district closings, delays, or other emergencies throughout the school year.

This means you have four direct communication lines that connect you to our school district and about a dozen traditional (in-direct) lines of communication through local TV and radio stations. They are indirect because once we call in our information; it is up to them to share it with you and that could take several minutes.

We would advise you to make certain your current primary contact phone number is up-to-date with your child's school so our phone notification system can reach you. Also bookmark our website in your favorite web browser. Finally, follow us [on Twitter \(@HamiltonLocalSD\)](#) and join our Hamilton Local Schools Facebook group.

## **HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mid-Terms and Short Cycle Assessments** - Students and teachers spent the beginning of the week reviewing and finalizing lessons in preparation of end of the semester mid-terms. Exams began on Wednesday, January 11th and were wrapped up on January 18th. Students are expected to have 100% attendance for the exams but for extenuating circumstances, make-up times were made available each of the three days following the exam schedule.

Exams are a vital part of our students' education and measurement to determine what the student has obtained and where additional instructional support is needed. The fourth Short Cycle Assessment (SCA) acts as the mid-term semester test and grade. The teachers and administrators of Hamilton Township High School are committed to designing, reviewing, and revising assessments that provide the clearest possible picture of the students' understanding.

A well-designed assessment allows students to demonstrate their understanding of the teachers' direct instruction. As the Ohio Department of Education Revised Academic Content Standards/Model Curricula guide teachers' planning and instruction, the assessments at HTHS reflect how successfully that instruction is received.

Short Cycle Assessments are skills-based, yet it may be more helpful to think of them as performance-based. SCAs require students to perform the skills outlined in the Academic Content Standards and may primarily focus on the power indicators identified by the department. SCAs are given at the middle and end of each grading period. Social Studies and Science SCAs will include specific content. However, Social Studies and Science standards include as much performance as Language Arts and Mathematics standards. The key critical thinking power words of the indicators must be favored over mere memorization of facts. SCAs are common assessments.

**HTHS 2011 Year-in-Review** - Due to the Work Ethic, Commitment to Excellence, and the Dedication to Academics put forth by the students and staff, HTHS had quite the year and would like to share our successes. Only several of the many are listed below: Our hope and goal is to keep this trend going and to continue this celebration of meeting high expectations.

- **Ohio Department of Education "Excellent" Rating for the 2nd consecutive year.**
- **HTHS Improves in 12 of 12 State Indicators with an overall 42 positive percentage points on the Local Report card.**
- **Designated Superintendent Heffner's "2011 School of Promise"**
- **Named 2011 Ohio Lottery's "School of the Year"**
- **Ohio Lottery's Teacher of the Month - Phil Borkow**
- **Ohio Lottery's Teacher of the Month - Mike Morbitzer**
- **Ohio Lottery's Teacher of the Month - Bob Lanthorn**
- **Ohio Lottery's Teacher of the Month - LeeAnn Shepfer**
- **LifeTrak Services Senior Survey Results indicate Excellent Results preparing HTHS Students for College Readiness.**
- **Susan G. Komen Foundation - HTHS Reaches \$100,000 - Winning 5th consecutive year TEAM Challenge - Komen Columbus Volunteer of the Year and Komen National Promise of One Award - Carole Morbitzer**
- **HTHS history/government teacher, Mr. Lanthorn is semi-finalist for the Kids Voting National Educator of the Year.**
- **HTHS 2nd Annual College Fair & Financial Aid Night - 34 Colleges Attend including the entire Armed Forces - Parents and Students break Attendance mark set last year.**
- **Digital Dollars Program Reinforces Positive Behavior and Strong Performance in High School**
- **Students Appear On *Good Day Columbus* To Promote Race For The Cure Survivor Ceremony Dance.**

## HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Trash to Treasures** - Each year Americans throw away 2.8 million tons of magazines. (Cited from the EPA Solid Waste Authority 2007) To help with this problem, Mrs. Lutz's Hamilton Middle School students recycled old magazines into beautiful works of art! Each student had to use a minimum of 90 magazine pages. Some students used as many as 150 pages! The pages were then folded, taped and connected. The final process was to roll the papers into a large spiral and gently lift them to form a bowl shape. To create a "polished" look and to create a lasting bowl all the bowls were sealed with Mod-Podge. The final results were breathtaking! Many of the students took their bowls home for holiday presents.

## HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

**January's Teacher Of The Month: Kristen Holowicki** - *"I wanted to nominate Kristen Holowicki for staff member of the month. Kristen always has a smile each morning when she greets the staff and students. She displays a positive attitude at school and her students respect this. She takes time out of her day to work with students on the Hamilton Intermediate Post, which is the student newspaper. She does a great job overseeing this project and the students really enjoy spending the time writing articles. Also, this month she has taken charge with the December for the Dogs Charity. She has helped organize the things needed and taken charge. She goes above and beyond!!"* - Intermediate School Teacher

**January's Student Of The Month: Sierra Edgers** - *"Sierra is kind, helpful, and shows the signs of a true leader in so many ways. We all agree she is a great girl with a potential to be very successful throughout her school career, later on in college, and then in the business world. We feel she can do anything she puts her mind to with grace and dignity. It will be fun to see what the future brings for her, and what she will do with her life. We know she is headed for great things!"* - Intermediate Staff Member

*"Sierra is in my homeroom this year and I could not be happier! She comes in everyday with a smile and follows directions. She gets along with others and she is always trying to help students out when necessary. She is here everyday working hard and setting a positive example of what a sixth grader should act like for the younger students in our building to observe. Having her as a positive role model here at Hamilton Intermediate is a benefit to our school. I feel honored to have her on our team."* - Intermediate Staff Member

*"Sierra loves the outdoors and having fun with her friends when she is not at school. She is able to balance her academics and her social life well, and never disappoints the people that rely on her for help or friendship. She*

*knows how to make a person feel good when they are sad, and she is sympathetic to everyone's needs. I know all her classmates would agree with me when I say she is a true friend and leader.” - Intermediate Staff Member*

**Math Reflection** - The math department has been implementing a professional development reflection process this year with the use of computer cameras and iMovie. All six teachers have signed up for two video taping sessions, in which they tape lessons during a given class period. Each teacher individually reflects on her own lesson prior to the group meeting. In doing so, the teachers come prepared with questions and/or concerns that may assist in dialogue at the meetings. During group discussions, the department teachers collaboratively view the lesson and focus on reflecting and giving constructive feedback to one another. Reflection forms were created that focus on such things as: connections to literacy, questioning strategies, and student engagement. They hope to make appropriate gains based on the goals that they individually set before the process began in order to increase student achievement scores and progress throughout the year. To watch the video go to the [Hamilton Intermediate School website](#) and view Math Video.

**A.C.T. In 6th Grade** - Twenty 6th grade students at the Intermediate building have accepted the challenge for an exciting opportunity! They are going to participate in the Northwestern University Midwestern Academic Talent Search (NUMATS). This is for students who want to know how their abilities compare with those of their peers, parents who want to know what their children are capable of, and educators who want to help their brightest students. Taking the ACT at such a young age encourages students to really consider college and the benefits it would have for their future. We see the potential in these students and believe that their possibilities are endless. There is no time better than the present to begin thinking about college and their future careers. Furthermore, the students will be able to take the test along side our high school students at Hamilton Township High School on February 11th.

**Students Complete Their iRead Projects** - Students in the 5th and 6th grades completed their iRead projects this quarter. iRead is a teacher created initiative to monitor, assess, and encourage student independent reading. It is designed to make independent reading consistent, differentiated, and enriching. iRead is an efficient and effective program to build literacy skills and the enjoyment of reading. The iRead project ends with a fun and creative project that students make to show they have completed their novel.

## **HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**HES Welcomes Two Special Visitors** - Mrs. Forrest's third grade classroom collected names and addresses of United States Military Veterans from all over the country to write personal thank you letters to on Veteran's Day. The students asked the veterans questions about their experience in the military, as well as thanked them for their service. The third graders have been receiving responses from veterans throughout the weeks including actual pictures from the time that they were in service. Mrs. Forrest's classroom received a wonderful surprise when two veterans visited their classroom. Drake Tackett wanted to write to his postman who is also a member of the Army Reserve. Mr. Turner and another member of the Reserve Mr. Torres visited Mrs. Forrest's classroom and presented Drake with two official Army patches and a pin for being so grateful and writing them a letter to thank them for their service. The class was also able to ask questions to these brave soldiers, and thank them in person.

**Reading Buddies** - Since October, Mr. Allgood's Kindergarten class and Ms. DePascale's 2nd grade class have been meeting to practice reading aloud and reading fluency. Every Friday for about twenty minutes the 2nd grade students and Kindergarten students from each class pair up to form "Reading Buddies" and they read with one another. For the first few weeks the 2nd graders modeled what good reading looks like and sounds like by reading with voice variation and fluency. In the preceding weeks the Kindergarten students learned from their partners and they have been demonstrating these skills as well. Each student looks forward to learning and growing with their partner every week.

**HES Staff Members Compete in "Biggest Loser" Competition** - In an attempt to promote wellness amongst the staff at Hamilton Elementary, the Building Climate Committee is sponsoring a "Biggest Loser" competition. Twenty-eight staff members have signed up and will compete against each other to try to lose the largest percentage of weight before spring break. The event is not only promoting wellness but also creating a friendly competition that is increasing camaraderie amongst the staff.

## **HAMILTON PRESCHOOL**

**Board Appreciation** - Mrs. Breanna Moore's class was asked to present a special gift to board member, Pam Hallum during the January 9, 2012 board meeting. Mrs. Moore's students designed a poster entitled "You Make Us Smile" with a class picture and signatures of all her students. The Preschool staff certainly appreciates all the help and support the Board of Education has shown them the past four years and hopes it only continues. A special

thanks to Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Newsome, Miss Davis, and the artist, Mrs. Michelle Moore and last but not least the All Day Class for creating such a great piece of art.

**Videotaping in Class** - As part of Mrs. Davisson's Capstone Project requirements for completing her Master's Degree she has asked the parents of the student's in her AM class to give her permission to video their children during lessons conducted in her class. The videotapes will be distributed to Marygrove College and will be viewed by Mrs. Davisson as part of her self-evaluation and reflection regarding her teaching strategies. This is a great learning opportunity for Mrs. Davisson and her students

## **OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Ohio Department of Education Releases District Profile** Every district in Ohio is monitored by the Ohio Department of Education on a wide range of indicators. Special Education is monitored not only on test scores, but also on compliance with federal regulations.

Once again, the Hamilton Local School District performed very well in the areas of compliance. For the second year in a row, all evaluations were conducted within the 60-day time line to bring our district **100% in compliance.**

The district was also monitored on compliance of having written transition plans in place for all students age 16 and above. For the third year in a row, Hamilton Local Schools was **100% in compliance** with this indicator. Having transition plans in place requires staff to show evidence that each I.E.P. have the following:

- A.) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based on age appropriate transition assessments.
- B.) Transition services, including courses of study, which will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals.
- C.) Annual I.E.P. goals related to the student's transition services needs.
- D.) Evidence that the student was invited to the I.E.P. meeting where transition services are to be discussed.
- E.) Evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the I.E.P. Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

Our reading scores are not where we want them, and our staff will be meeting to develop an action plan for improving how we deliver the specially designed instruction to our students so that their scores can move in a more positive direction of state tests.

## DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

*Highlights from the “Hamilton Local School District Computer Network and Internet Acceptable Use Policy Agreement”* – This week we are highlighting an area concerning Access [Section 3]:

### **3. Access**

Network resources are only intended for use by authorized users. Anonymous use is not permitted, and access may not be shared or transferred. Users shall not share their passwords or otherwise allow anyone to gain unauthorized access to the Network or the Internet. A user is subject to disciplinary action under Board Policy and/or the Student Disciplinary Code for any violations of this Policy committed by someone else who, with the user’s express or implied permission, accessed the Network with the user’s password.

## DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

**Athletics to Improve Parent Communication** - Beginning with the spring of the 2012 Athletic Season, the Athletic Department will communicate with parents and the community through email. Information for parents, game highlights, spotlight on individual student athletes and event reminders will be sent to the parents of participating athletes on a daily or weekly basis. Communication will be provided to parents of individual teams as well as the parents of all athletics. Parents and community will sign up for the program at the seasonal Hamilton / OHSAA athletic parent meetings or from a link on our Athletics Website.

**Brian Ray: 182 lb. Champion** - Brian Ray brought home the 182 lb. Championship from The Kevin Cleveland Wrestling Tournament held at Dublin Scioto High School. Congratulations to Brian and the following wrestlers for making it to the podium as placers.

*Other placers were: 113 Jay Hatfield - 7th, 126 Jacob Morgan - 8th, 152 Clayton Ray - 7th, 160 Trace Koehl - 4th, 170 Alex Perez - 8th, 195 Micky Crum - 3rd, 220 Phil Tucker - 3rd, HWT Logan Carter - 6th*

**Hamilton Wrestling Classic Duals Near** - The Hamilton Wrestling Dual Meet Tournament will be held on Saturday, January 28, 2012 at Hamilton Township High School. Six teams will compete for the championship, Hamilton Township, Van Wert, Jackson, Dayton Stivers, Independence and River Valley. Please plan to attend and cheer on our wrestling team in action.

**Hamilton Track Gears up for “All Star” Meet** - It will be an exciting time for the 2012 Hamilton Township Track Program by hosting the Inaugural Central Ohio All Star Track Meet. The meet is open to any size school in Central Ohio with 26 teams currently contracted to attend which will provide a great atmosphere during the event.

***The attending teams to date are: Girls** - Hamilton Township, Amanda Clearcreek, Bishop Hartley, Columbus Academy, Columbus International, Columbus School for Girls, Dublin Jerome, Eastmoor Academy, Harvest Prep, Hilliard Darby, Independence, Lancaster, Marion-Franklin, Pickerington North, and Teays Valley; **Boys** - Hamilton Township Amanda Clearcreek, Bishop Hartley Buckeye Valley, Columbus Academy, Columbus International, Eastmoor Academy, Harvest Prep, Independence, Liberty Union, Marion-Franklin, Teays Valley and Westerville Central;*

**Hamilton Freshman & JV Basketball Teams Beat Fairfield Union** - The boys freshman and JV basketball teams improve as they beat Fairfield Union Tuesday night. The freshman team won in an exciting game, 33-32. Anthony Thompson led all scorers with 11 points. The JV team easily handled the Falcons with a 46-22 final score.

**Freshmen Girls Basketball Improving** - The freshman girls basketball team lost a heart breaker against the Division I Lancaster Golden Gales. Four of the Lady Rangers contributed to the scoring effort. Josie Kasprzack led the way with 22 points, including five - three point baskets. Anna McClain scored seven points, while Devyn Stevens had five and Ali Belcher rounded out the scoring with two points.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Get all of [this week's events](#) listed here.