

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Dec. 6-13, 2013

Hamilton Intermediate Celebrates Earning Second Consecutive School of Honor Award from ODE - Last week, I mentioned that our students and team at Hamilton Intermediate School earned the School of Honor designation from ODE for the second straight year. There were only two public elementary-level schools in the entire state to be selected in back-to-back years.

Last year, state superintendent of public instruction Dr. Richard A. Ross launched the statewide Schools of Honor recognition program at Hamilton Intermediate School, and those students, teachers and administrators can celebrate their successes again this year.

This state recognition is the most recent of many that our students, faculty and staff have earned based on their academic performance during the 2012-13 school year. We have so much to be proud of throughout our district and enjoy celebrating our successes, but make no mistake; we are focused on continuing our mission of "Improving Achievement through Total Accountability and High Expectations."

Again, congratulations to Hamilton Intermediate School on being named an Ohio School of Honor.

To Close, Delay, or Early Dismiss...What's The Process? - Our district staff understands that our decision to open or close schools in inclement weather has a big effect on families. We also understand that our students are better served – academically and socially – by being in school. But, as always, our top priority is the safety and health of our students and employees.

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?

We make the decision to delay or close our schools in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors including, but not limited to:

- Current road conditions
- Current accumulations of snow and/or ice
- Current temperature & wind chill
- Local weather forecasts
- Conditions of buildings and parking lots
- What neighboring school districts are doing

WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

Prior to making a final decision on whether to open or close school, our District Superintendent may consult with our Assistant Superintendent, Director of Maintenance & Transportation, and employees that reside in our school district.

HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

We make every effort to communicate accurate and timely notification of school closings, delays through the use of our district wide call system, [our website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#), and by contacting local TV and radio stations:

TV Stations

WBNS – 10 TV
WCMH – NBC 4
WSYX – ABC 6
WTTE – FOX 28

Radio Stations (Partial List)

WTVN – 610AM
WNCI – 97.9 FM
WCOL – 92.3 FM
WSNY – 94.7 FM

WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

Every attempt is made to make a decision by 6:00 a.m. or earlier. We are aware that making a decision the night before is better for everyone involved, but we have to make certain that conditions warrant the need for a delay or closing. Due to that fact, we may not be able to make the decision until the actual morning of the day in question.

Once a decision has been made, our Superintendent notifies the district's Director of Public Relations and gives the direction to alert parents and students, employees, local news media, and update our web and social media sites.

WHAT DETERMINES A TWO-HOUR DELAY?

At times, by living in Central Ohio, we are exposed to extreme weather conditions that include large quantities of snow, extreme wind chills, or extended days of temperatures below freezing. That being said, our district could be on a two-hour delay for several different reasons; the most common is due to winter weather.

Depending on the amount of snow, ice, sleet, or forecast/registered wind chill*, our district could activate a two-hour delay. This allows us to further evaluate the impact of the weather to determine if we need to close the district or continue operating on a two-hour delay schedule. A two-hour delay provides us with an opportunity to keep our students who ride buses or walk to school out of the elements when they are at their harshest.

A two-hour delay also gives us time to check our buses and make certain they will start and that all systems are working because extreme cold temperatures can impact our transportation fleet in different ways.

** Our Superintendent begins looking closely at forecasts that include wind chill warnings that could surpass -10 degrees as a baseline for initiating a two-hour delay. This isn't to say that a wind chill of -10 degrees automatically delays the start of school.*

NEVER PRESUME THAT WE ARE GOING TO BE DELAYED OR CLOSED

Our district will ALWAYS notify students, parents, and employees when a delay or closing has been initiated by using the phone and media vehicles previously mentioned.

Unless you hear something from our district, always presume that school is in session and our district is operating on a regular schedule.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WINTER WEATHER MOVES IN DURING THE SCHOOL DAY?

If weather moves into the area during the school day, and our district is prompted to dismiss students early in order for them to make it home as safely as possible, the following dismissal schedule is most frequently utilized. Again, this dismissal schedule could be changed at the discretion of our district Superintendent.

Example Dismissal Schedule – (Could be altered by Superintendent)

- HTHS students that drive will be released 75 minutes early from school.
- HTHS and Hamilton Middle School Bus Riders will be released 60 minutes early.
- Hamilton Intermediate School Bus Riders will be released 15 minutes early.
- Hamilton Elementary School Bus Riders will be released on time.

This schedule allows our student drivers to clear the roads prior to our buses hauling students. The gaps between release times are made so buses can take their time

transporting students putting a priority on the safety of our students, and it also helps with traffic flow related to parents picking their children up at different buildings.

We hope this information helps you understand how we come to these decisions and that you know that our goal is to keep students and employees safe during winter weather conditions.

Senate Recesses for Holidays - On Wednesday, December 4, the Ohio Senate wrapped up a week earlier than anticipated and is now in recess through the holidays. The House was in session this week, along with several committee meetings before recessing for the holiday break.

House Education Committee

- HB 113 is legislation that would allow school districts to excuse students who participate in a school-sponsored athletic club from high school physical education. The legislation was voted out of committee and now awaits action by the full House.
- HB 181 is legislation that seeks to prohibit submitting a student's personal identifiable information to the federal government without the direct authorization of the local school board. The committee passed the bill out of committee on Wednesday.
- HB 193 is legislation that would revise high school diploma requirements, including state-administered assessments. The committee delayed consideration of 20 or more possible amendments until a later hearing.
- HB 334 is legislation seeking to allow a school district to adopt a policy to expel a student based on actions or information that may endanger the health and safety of other students or school employees. The committee heard from several opponents of the legislation on both Monday and Wednesday, who cited concerns over a disproportionate use of expulsions for minority and disadvantaged students. The committee did not take any action on the bill.

Senate Education Committee

- SB 229 seeks to modify some requirements under the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System to allow school districts more flexibility. Some of these modifications include changing the student academic growth factor from 50% to 35% of a teacher's performance evaluation, but allowing an additional 15% to be used should a school choose to do so. The bill also allows more flexibility in the number of evaluations to be required based on a teacher's rating. Following some technical amendments, the bill was voted out of committee. On Wednesday, December 4, the bill was passed unanimously by the full Senate and now heads to the House for committee hearings and consideration.
- SB 239 is legislation that is similar to HB 334, and would allow a school district to adopt a policy to expel a student based on a potential threat or action that may present a danger to students and staff.
- SB 167 is legislation that would modify zero-tolerance policies and require a school board to adopt a policy that allows many factors to be considered prior to the suspension or expulsion of a student.

UPDATE: House Bill 193 will Delay Online Assessments - Earlier this week, the Ohio House Education Committee adopted 27 amendments to House Bill (HB) 193, legislation that makes changes to Ohio's graduation requirements. The bill was then passed by the

committee in a bipartisan manner. Some of the changes include:

- delaying online assessments until the 2015-16 school year;
- delaying the phase-out of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) so students entering ninth grade after July 1, 2015, will be subject to the new graduation requirements; and
- establishing a “safe harbor” provision regarding sanctions for schools and districts for the 2014-15 school year.

HB 193 will go to the full House for a vote after they return from their holiday recess.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Health and Safety - Hamilton Schools have been awarded the School Security Grant Program’s security entrance system grant. Districts can receive up to \$5,000 per building for a security entrance system consisting of security cameras, intercoms and remote access equipment.

Mr. Morrison prepared our grants for submission and was notified on Wednesday that our high school, middle school, intermediate school, elementary school and alternative academy have all been approved for reimbursement for the new security systems that were installed this summer.

New security cameras and access controls were installed in each building this summer. These controls give building staff the ability to monitor and confirm all visitors to our schools. This grant will cover costs associated with these security additions.

- The total grant amount awarded to Hamilton Local Schools is approximately \$35,000.

Maintenance - Thanks again to our maintenance staff, lead by Scott Ayers, and our building custodians for addressing the harsh winter weather earlier this week. Even with the additional snowfall, our buildings were ready for business, with access roads, sidewalks and parking areas clear and safe.

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

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

HTHS Band To NYC - Members of the Hamilton Township High School Band packed their bags and set a course to the Big Apple on Sunday for a three-day exploration of the largest city in the United States. From Sunday to Wednesday, students walked the crowded streets from Rockefeller Plaza to observe a live broadcast of the Today Show to observing historical sites such as St. Patrick’s Cathedral and Carnegie Hall. Students enjoyed the dazzling performance by The Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall to Times Square. From Lower Manhattan at Battery Park, students admired the Statue of Liberty. At the 9/11 Memorial, students observed the two waterfalls, which represented the fallen towers. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was one of the favorite places for the entire group to observe. Despite the sleepless bus ride, frigid temperatures, long walks, and culture shock, the students’ attitudes remained positive and attentive. Students truly felt that their experience was one that will last them a lifetime.

HTHS Hosts 4th Annual College Fair - As part of our HS Postsecondary Action

Planning to: ***Help more students pursue postsecondary education through local college access programs, financial aid advising, scholarship and grant availability advising, career guidance, and other services,*** on Thursday evening, Hamilton Township High School held their 4th Annual College Fair. This outstanding event brought more than 25 colleges, universities, military representatives, and post secondary career opportunity representatives to the school to discuss all opportunities that are available to our students and their parents post high school. Free food was given out to the first 300 people who attended this worthwhile College Fair and Digital Dollars was awarded to seniors who received signatures from at least 10 college reps. Mr. Miller sends a special “Thank You” to Mr. Sweet, HS AP/ACT/SAT coordinator and technology instructor for taking the lead on coordinating this special event, along with the HS guidance team Mrs. Steele, Ms. White, & Ms. Stevens for their efforts assisting and contributing and HS Cooks, Mrs. Adkins and Mrs. Tufts for preparing and providing food for the first 300 in attendance.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Gift of Music - The Hamilton Middle School vocal and instrumental music departments are thrilled to have received a Korg SP-280 digital piano from The VH1 Save The Music Foundation and Do Something.org. This generous donation will help Mr. Frazier and Ms. Chute to implement various teaching strategies in the choir and band classes at the Middle School. The students and staff in the music department are very appreciative to VH1 for another grant, as they have already received a grant of instruments worth \$30,000 at the Intermediate and Middle Schools to assist students who have financial difficulty renting an instrument.

Celebrated at the MS - For the Month of November, the following Middle School family members were recognized and honored. 7th Grade language Arts teacher Krissy Knorr was nominated by Colleen Bennett as the teacher of the Month. 7th Grade student Bethany Robinson was nominated by Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Vincent, and Ebony Newby-Brown, CC Aide, was nominated by the building administration for the Support Staff Member of the Month.

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Randy Erckert Student Of The Month - *“I would like to nominate Randy Erckert for December's Student of the Month. Randy comes to 6th grade everyday with a smile on his face. He is always pleasant and happy to be at school. He has said more than one time that, "I love being at school!" Randy always works hard in class even when the work is difficult. He never quits and always appreciates the help given when he needs it. When walking down the hall he can never pass you without giving you a fist bump along the way. He is constantly volunteering in class or willing to help someone in need.*

Outside of class Randy is also setting a great example for community service. Randy is part of a club that volunteers at Children's Hospital. He works in an area that brings games/toys to those in the hospital or just talks to kids who are there. He says he likes getting smiles out of them so that's why he does it.

Congratulations Randy for being a wonderful example of a Respectful Ranger!” - H.I.S. Staff Member

Samantha Long Teacher Of The Month - *“I would like to nominate Samantha Long as Hamilton Intermediate's Star Teacher for the month of December. Samantha is actively involved in the Hamilton Local School District in which she teaches fifth grade science*

and math intervention and coaches both softball and basketball. She is also always willing to collaborate with other teachers to discuss student strengths and weaknesses in math to help make math intervention a success.

She is hard working and goes above and beyond to prepare engaging science lessons for her students. She puts an emphasis on science vocabulary and incorporates science songs and hands-on projects into her lessons, which make learning fun and exciting for her students.

Samantha sets high expectations for her students. She holds a science lab twice a week during her lunch break. This lab allows students who struggled on their Short Cycle Assessment to get extra help and practice in science in order to prepare for the next round of SCAs in hopes of improving their scores. Samantha truly cares about her students and takes the extra time to help them succeed.”- H.I.S. Staff Member

Kim Watkins Support Staff Of The Month - *“I would like to nominate Kim Watkins as support staff member of the month. Kim goes above and beyond her duties as an aide to ensure students are held to high expectations for both behavior and achievement. She goes out of her way to ask staff members if they need her help in and out of the classroom. Kim has built great rapport with students and colleagues over the years.*

Kim is a pleasure to work with and an asset to the Intermediate building. Both staff and students are lucky to work with her.” - H.I.S. Staff Member

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Park Rangers Visit HES - This week a park ranger and a naturalist from Three Creeks Metro Parks came to visit Kindergarten. With winter around the corner, it is a great time to learn about hibernation and migration. The park ranger and naturalist talked about how different animals survive the winter weather by staying active, hibernating, or migrating. They also read the story Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson and showed the students how animals stay warm with a variety of animal furs. It was very engaging and the students loved it!

The Arctic Express Visits HES - The students of Hamilton Elementary hopped aboard an "Arctic Express" presentation during their late arrival on Wednesday, December 11th. Conductor David Hennig took them on a magical train ride around the world where they learned about a variety of winter holiday celebrations. Using magic tricks, stories, and music, the students were introduced to how people of different cultures celebrate winter. His story also encouraged students to continue learning throughout their holiday breaks by visiting the public library and by choosing something new to study. This program was a wonderful connection to our character education theme this school year -- "Building Ranger Superheroes" as it taught the students about diversity and acceptance of others.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Winter Fest 2013! - This was an amazing event for the families of the Elementary School and Preschool. Parents and students enjoyed a night of shopping, wrapping gifts, and a visit from Santa! Congratulations to our Santa Gift Bag raffle winner Lauren Kinzie! Thanks to the Elementary PTO and Preschool Boosters for hosting this event!

Writing Leads to Reading - Each week in Mrs. Davisson's classroom, students are involved in many math and literacy centers. This week students began using the writing

center where they practiced copying their names as well as copying shapes, numbers, letters and some beginning sight words such as red and zero. The students were excited to use this center and showed excitement as they became successful at a writing task.

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

November Student of the Month - Brooke Mullis

The Hamilton Alternative Academy named Brooke Mullis for Student of the Month of November. During the month of November, Brooke has met all the attendance and work requirements and displays a positive attitude towards her peers and teachers.

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

End of Semester – Friday, December 20 is the end of the second quarter and first semester. Report cards will be issued January 10, 2014.

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Hamilton Township Wrestling Classic Set for this Saturday, December 14, 2013 - Hamilton Township High School will host the annual Hamilton Township Classic on Saturday morning. The tournament is a staple for each year's wrestling season. The Athletic Department and Wrestling Head Coach Joseph Kikume, his staff, and athletes will play host to 16 teams from throughout the state. Wrestling is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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