

## Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Dec. 12-18, 2014

### School Safety Bill Carries Some STRS and SERS Pension Provisions -

Lawmakers enacted several pension law changes in the final days of session, hitching them to a bill meant to let schools seek special-purpose levies for security improvements.

The Senate used one its final votes before leaving town this week to concur with the pension-related amendments to SB42 (Manning-Gardner), the safety levy bill. The House Ways and Means Committee had added the changes the week before.

According to council senior researcher Jeff Bernard's memo, changes enacted are as follows:

- Addressing joint retirements, per an agreement reached with OPERS, School Employees Retirement System (SERS) and State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) to make it easier to combine service credits into a single benefit.
- Fully lifting the mandate on offering long-term care insurance. Lawmakers gave STRS permissive authority to offer the coverage in 2012 pension reform legislation, and SB42 extends that the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F), Highway Patrol Retirement System (HPRS), SERS and OPERS. Pension system executives asked for the relief last year, telling ORSC they were unable to comply with the mandate because insurers were pulling out of the market.
- Creating an exemption to the usual forfeiture of STRS benefits upon returning to employment within two months of retirement, to allow for volunteering.

The bill is on its way to Gov. John Kasich after House passage on Wednesday and Senate concurrence with amendments on Thursday.

*Source: Hannah News Service*

### Ohio Legislative Activity

**Ohio Senate** - Last week, the Senate passed the three pieces legislation listed below. These bills are now headed to the House for concurrence.

- [House Bill \(HB\) 367](#), sponsored by Rep. Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) and Rep. Robert Sprague (R-Findlay), would require the health curriculum of each school district to include instruction in prescription opioid abuse prevention. This bill has been loaded up with several provisions in committee. It remains unknown if the House will concur on the bill.
- [HB 178](#), sponsored by Rep. Debbie Phillips (D-Albany), makes changes to the law dealing with school safety drills in public and private schools.
- [HB 290](#), sponsored by Rep. Gerald L. Stelbelton (R-Lancaster), allows for the use of school district premises by members of the public and immunity from civil liability for a school district and schools when permitting members of the public to use school premises.

## Ohio House

The House passed [SB 96](#), sponsored by Sen. Frank LaRose (R-Copley Township), which would require one-half unit of world history in the high school social studies curriculum. This bill now heads to the Senate for concurrence. The House Education committee loaded this bill up with its wish list. It remains unknown if the Senate will concur next week.

- [House Bill \(HB\) 367](#), sponsored by Rep. Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) and Rep. Robert Sprague (R-Findlay), requires the health curriculum of each school district to include instruction in prescription opioid abuse prevention. This bill also contains several other provisions relating to attendance reporting, state assessments and admission for foster students.
- [HB 178](#), sponsored by Rep. Debbie Phillips (D-Albany), makes changes to the law dealing with school safety drills in public and private schools.
- [HB 290](#), sponsored by Rep. Gerald L. Stebelton (R-Lancaster), allows for the use of school district premises by members of the public and immunity from civil liability for a school district and schools when permitting members of the public to use school premises. *Source: Ohio School Boards Association*

## News from the Ohio Department of Education

- [Ohio Receives Waiver to Eliminate Double Testing in Elementary and Middle Schools](#) - The U.S. Department of Education has approved the Ohio Department of Education's request for a waiver from "double testing" students below ninth grade who are taking high school-level courses for credits.
- [New FAQ Available on Read Aloud Accommodation for New State Tests](#) - Accessibility and accommodations on Ohio's New State Tests are different from the Ohio Achievement Assessments and the Ohio Graduation Tests.  
*Source: ESC of Central Ohio*

## OFFICE OF TEACHING & LEARNING

**Witten Says Goodbye** – Dr. Susan Witten, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, will retire December 31, after 15 years of service to the Hamilton Local School District. Dr. Witten began teaching in 1972 and held a number of positions in education and human services prior to coming to Hamilton Local. She feels honored that she played a part in the district's growth and achievements and will miss the amazing students, staff, and community members who have contributed to Hamilton Local's successes. Dr. Witten intends to spend more time with her family and pursue interests that have taken a back seat to her work.

## HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

**HTHS Support Staff Member of the Quarter: Mr. Billy Merryman**

*"I would like to nominate Billy Merryman for HTHS Support Staff Member of the Month. His connection with the students in his room is unbelievable."* - HS Teacher

*"Mr. Merryman has made a huge impact on our students, special education students, and student athletes at Hamilton Township High School in just a short time employed through HLS. Unfortunately, he leaves his important role as MH Aide this month but will return to us as a student teacher in January. I recommend Mr. Merryman for Support Staff Member of the Month." - HS Staff*

*"Mr. Merryman does outstanding work with our students, this group is in the top 10 of the stock market game - big feat." - HS Teacher*

*Merryman stated, "Thank you so much! I think I was chosen because I work with some awesome staff members who are very kind and willing to make my day go very smooth. I could not do it with the help and support throughout the day. My day is spent hanging out with Mrs. Shaw, Mr. Chapman, and Mrs. Walker for three periods. It is awesome to see how the students are so willing to help my Cross Cat students and how these teachers let them participate and get the most out of their classes. The rest of my class periods are spent in our room (52) with Mrs. Harger. She is an amazing teacher and the kids would be lost without her. Each day can be very unpredictable, but we have a lot of fun each day! I know individuals like Mr. Lowe and Mr. Morbitzer get to see a lot of our students and all of this fun they do have at school. If you have not had a chance to visit with us, stop by. It makes our students' day and we always have coffee! Thank you for this recognition! Go Rangers!"*

**Pricewaterhouse Coopers Visits HTHS** – Part of the Personal Finance curriculum is to educate students on Insurance. Guest speakers from Pricewaterhouse Coopers visited Personal Finance Classes to discuss numerous types of Insurance including teaching students how to file a claim after a car accident. Follow up assignments reinforced this Insurance topic.

## **HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**STAR Students Honored** - STAR Rangers! The teachers and staff selected students in the building who are STARS (Students Taking Action for Respect). These students have demonstrated respect to teachers, peers and others in the building. The seventh grade students who were chosen are: Matt Baisden, Jaylen Baldwin, Trey Booth, Daniel Collins, Maggie Cromer, Gavin Dzodan, Mackenzie English, Savannah Fraley, Malachi Gamblin, Taylor Hancock, Jonathan Havier, Logan Holland, Venessa Jackson, Makenna Jenkins, Christopher John, Derek Larimer, Dionte Manning, Sarah Sue Morbitzer, Jada Perkins, Hannah Potter, Madison Ramey, Samantha Ratliff, Jaimeisha Rowe, Jeffrey Salmons, Danielle Sater, Alayna Seitzinger, Morgan Shockley, Adaisha Smiley, Claire Thornton, Emma Vassar Gavin Wilhite, and Summer Yost. The eighth grade students who were selected are: Hailee Benrthold, Drysten Crallie, Chloe Davis, Lauren Dixon, Romeo Gabriel, CJ Grutsch, Cameron Hall, Dionnie Harris, Matt Howell, Brandon Hundley, Abby Lovett, Hailey Matheson, Emily McCarty, Jacob Mettler, Julian Miller, Devin Minniear, James Parsons, Cassady Perdue, Tyler Rice, Lauren Rose, Kaci Schneider, Susami Seth, Daylin Sharpe, Christina Shaw, Logan Shiflet, Karen Stuckey, Kaylynn Thacker, and Payton Welch. Congratulations to our STAR Rangers!

**Support Staff of the Quarter Named** - Congratulations go out the Middle School Support Staff Member for the second quarter, Mrs. Robin Mickens! Mrs. Mickens is a secretary in the main office of the Middle School and the face and voice that greets visitors and callers, alike. We are thrilled to honor her with this recognition!

**Ugly Sweaters are Back** - The National Junior Honor Society once again sponsored an "Ugly Holiday Sweater" contest. With many entries to choose from, the judges had a very challenging decision to make. Winners of the student and staff contests were: Abree Montoney and Mr. Pratt! Congratulations on having the best, worst sweaters!

## **HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

**Shawn Soltysik: Support Staff Member Of The Quarter** - *"I would like to nominate Shawn Soltysik for the Support Staff Star. Shawn is always busy keeping our grounds and building looking their best. We have the best looking windows in the district because Shawn makes sure all of the fingerprints are wiped away. He always has a smile on his face while doing his job. Shawn is always willing to listen and brighten the day with his cheerful smile!"* - H.I.S. Staff

**Deck The Halls With Sounds Of Music** - The Hamilton Intermediate School sixth grade band is presenting their winter concert on Thursday, December 18th, at 7 p.m. in the High School auditorium. These 60 students have been working hard for the past three months and are excited to show the community their accomplishments. Many of the band members have been voluntarily practicing during their recess time in order to be the best musician they can be at the concert. Some of the musical selections include traditional favorites such as "Hot Cross Buns" and the students' favorite, "Jingle Bells." The sixth grade band will perform a spring concert on May 14th, as well. We hope to see you in attendance for a fun evening of music!

**The Holidays Are Upon Us** - Students at H.I.S. were able to take a trip to the holiday shoppe during their recess time. They were able to purchase items for their friends and family members for the special winter holidays. A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the Intermediate's PTO for taking their time and putting together a very successful shoppe this year for the kids.

## **HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Classified Staff Member of the Quarter: Chris Trisler** – Educational aide Chris Trisler was selected as the Classified Staff Member of the Quarter for the 2nd quarter of the year. The anonymous staff members who nominated Mr. Trisler had this to say: "We are happy to nominate Mr. Christopher Trisler for classified staff member of the month. He consistently does an outstanding job with our student body. He spends quality time connecting with our students, as well as their families. In an effort to help our students master their behavioral goals, he recently purchased incentives with his own money. These incentives have provided a little extra motivation for some of our more needy students. From his efforts to improve the behaviors of our student body to his help with student attendance related concerns, Mr. Trisler is a key asset to the successes of the Hamilton Local School Community. We are truly thankful to have him as a

member of our district, and we look forward to his continued contributions.”  
Congratulations to Mr. Trisler!

**Late Arrival Assembly** – On Wednesday, HES specials teachers organized one of the most diverse late arrival activities that we have ever had. Students attended grade-level specific presentations where they were exposed to a variety of real world educational opportunities. Kindergarten students enjoyed a visit from a Metro Parks’ ranger who taught them how a variety of animals live and interact as part of the ecosystem. This presentation featured multiple animal skins and even a few live creatures. First grade students met with a representative from Franklin County Soil and Water and participated in an interactive lesson on river systems. Second and third grade students split time between an historical display of everyday items used in colonial times and ecosystem learning centers sponsored by The Ohio Historical Society. The colonial display was particularly enjoyable because students were able to use the items. Students wrote with a quill and ink, sealed an envelope with wax, carried a yoke to and from the river, and used a variety of other household items. Due to the many facets of these activities, it would not have been possible to provide this opportunity to our students if not for the over twenty volunteers who attended, in addition to HES staff members. Dr. Conley and Mr. Tyler would like to extend a special thanks to our parent volunteers and the thirteen high school students who did such a wonderful job of presenting to our students.

## **HAMILTON PRESCHOOL**

**Support Staff Member of the Month:** Collett Hayes, the Elementary Guidance Counselor has been a great resource for Preschool students and families this year. Collett meets with teachers and students to discuss concerns about behavior, anxiety, and transitioning to a school setting. Collett has been instrumental in assisting us with several students and always offers a reassuring message to our families. Collett is a good connection and friend to have when students go to the Elementary School. We thank Collett for all her help and support with our youngest Rangers!

## **DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS**

**Girls’ Soccer Senior Earns Central Ohio Soccer Officials Association Scholarship** - Senior Girls’ Soccer Player Maegan Watkins has received a \$1000 Scholarship Award from the Central Ohio Soccer Officials Association Excellence in Sportsmanship Committee. The Award recognizes Boys and Girls Soccer Players, Coaches and Teams from the Central District who demonstrate outstanding Character and Sportsmanship in the Sport of Soccer. Maegan, a captain of the 2014 team, will be officially recognized for this Award on Sunday, February 8th at The 25th Annual Excellence in Sportsmanship Banquet at Monaco’s Palace in Columbus. Congratulations to Maegan and her family on this outstanding recognition!

**7th Grade Boys’ Basketball Downs Teays Valley East** - The 7th grade boys extended their win streak to three games at Teays Valley East tonight. After the first half the Rangers led by a score of 29 to 7. The Rangers gave a total team effort in closing out the game with nine different players recording a basket. The Rangers never looked back in a 43 to 26 victory.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

[See what's happening in our district this week!](#)

Remember to ["Like" us on Facebook](#) & ["Follow" us on Twitter](#).