

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Nov. 25 – Dec. 2

Senate Education Committee

The Senate Education Committee met the week of November 14-18 and heard testimony on House Bill (HB) 96, HB 157 and Senate Bill (SB) 220.

HB 96, sponsored by Rep. Ted Celeste (D-Columbus) and Rep. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell), seeks to designate dyslexia as a specific learning disability and to require a pilot project to provide early screening and intervention services for children with dyslexia. Several witnesses offered proponent testimony and Ann Brennan, director of the Ohio School Psychologists Association, gave written opponent testimony. In opposition, Brennan said school psychologists do not believe it is appropriate and are opposed to the requirement of screening students six and under for dyslexia, as during this time literacy skills are still emerging.

HB 157, sponsored by Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) and Rep. Tom Letson (D-Warren), would authorize educational service centers to provide teacher professional development on dyslexia. Several witnesses testified in support of this legislation.

Sen. Tom Sawyer (D-Akron) offered sponsor testimony on SB 220, legislation to require a study of interdistrict open enrollment, and to repeal sections of the Ohio Revised Code effective July 1, 2015, to terminate interdistrict open enrollment on that date with the possibility of renewal following the study's findings. During testimony Sawyer described the bill as an internationally broad and non-prescriptive piece of legislation that would allow Ohio to study the effects of its 22-year long “pilot program” on open enrollment.

House Education Committee

The House Education Committee met the week of November 14-18 and heard testimony on HB 205, HB 375 and HB 219.

Proponent testimony was offered on HB 205, legislation sponsored by Rep. Timothy Derickson (R-Oxford), which seeks to permit the establishment of hybrid community schools that provide both remote technology-based and classroom-based instruction.

Rep. Jim Butler (R-Dayton) offered sponsor testimony on HB 375, legislation that would allow school districts to sell real property to private, nonprofit institutions of higher education.

Lastly, proponent testimony was offered on HB 219, sponsored by Rep. Jeffrey McClain (R-Upper Sandusky). HB 219 seeks to permit public school students to attend and receive credit for released-time courses in religious instruction conducted off school property during regular school hours.

Ohio Retirement Study Council

The Ohio Retirement Study Council met on Nov. 16 to hear presentations from various groups bidding on an independent consultant project to review and make recommendations on changes to Ohio's public pension systems. The council unanimously voted to hire the joint team of KMS Actuaries and Pension Trustee Advisors to be its independent consultant on the possible pension reform changes.

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 web site at www.hamilton-local.k12.oh.us for school closing, delay, or emergency information.

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.

OFFICE OF THE TREASURER

State Budget for First Four Months of the Fiscal Year - The State budget from July 1, 2011 to October 31, 2011 is under budget by \$280 million. During the first four months of the fiscal year, the State has received \$16 million more than expected in revenue. On the spending side, the State has spent \$264 million less than their budget. As a result, the bottom line now stands at a positive \$280 million. That is great news heading into the holiday and shopping season. Tax receipts are above estimates for the year, which shows the people are still spending money. Expenses are below estimates in many areas, but the largest actual vs.

estimate is the State is paying out Medicaid and public assistance benefits at a much lower pace.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

District Website Continues To Attract Visitors - Since the start of the school year, our website has been a very busy portal for news and other information from across our district. It is our primary news and information vehicle because we can update it immediately.

Our website has had nearly 350,000 page views since August 21, 2011. The district's main home page is the most viewed and following it, rounding out the Top 5 most visited pages, are Hamilton Intermediate School home page (21,500 page views), Hamilton Township High School home page (18,100), Hamilton Intermediate teacher website links page (17,800), Hamilton Athletics page (13,000).

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Semesterizing for Credit - As part of our HS Postsecondary Action Planning, the HTHS Science Department has volunteered to experiment with next year's science schedule by dividing a yearlong core curriculum class into independent semester courses, a plan we will refer to as the "Semester A/B Plan."

The Science Department, lead by Department Chair, Phil Borkow and team member John Kuenzli decided to begin planning how Biology II could be structured according to the A/B format. John is excited to implement the plan with at least one section of Biology II and will continue to work with the Science Department and Administration to determine the best organizational and implementation strategy.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be recorded throughout the pilot, including at mid-quarter and quarter final. Qualitative data will center upon student and teacher surveys/questionnaires and our quantitative measurement will consist of grades, progress analysis, and pass/fail rate.

OSU Visit - 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*, the high school counselors took a group of 21 Hamilton seniors interested in attending The Ohio State University on a campus visit.

The campus visit for the seniors included an admissions overview that highlighted the academics and activities offered at Ohio State, as well as the application process for admission to OSU. A walking tour of the Ohio State campus was also

included in the campus visit, in which the seniors toured campus with an OSU Student Ambassador who shared their knowledge and experiences of Ohio State with our seniors. The tour highlighted various landmarks on the Ohio State campus, and allowed our students to tour residence halls, athletic facilities, and academic buildings.

The goal of the campus visit was to provide those Hamilton students interested in attending The Ohio State University with the experience of campus life and the college atmosphere, along with a better understanding of the admissions process.

Chemistry Students Teach Other Classes - The chemistry II students were given the opportunity to not have to take a test if they presented the knowledge they learned of the long and involved solution stoichiometry calculations and do the corresponding demo to non-science personnel. When given the opportunity to present, the students themselves all decided to create a Prezi for their presentation (although this was not required). Lauren Brady and Cheyenne Carter did an excellent job presenting to Mrs. Kline's special needs students, Dr. Witten, Mr. Miller, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Fitzgerald in class on Friday. On Thursday, Amina Cheema and Ashley Freshkorn did an excellent job presenting to Mr. Turner's study hall students. On Wednesday, Mrs. Jett's freshman English students were wonderful audience members for the presentation of Curtis Tyler and Chase Howell. More chemistry II students will present next week.

Science Demo Catches Students' Eye - Miss Hill showed all of her classes the beautiful chemistry behind fireflies and other bioluminescent animals. With that, the demo is also that which is used in forensics and glow sticks. The bright colors produced in these reactions involved an oxidation reaction (creation of bonds to oxygen) in which hydrogen peroxide or sodium hydroxide react with luminol and a few other chemicals. The assistance of a long winding colorless tube made for a glowing display on a dark, rainy day to the "oohs" and "aahs" of the students.

2nd Annual College & Career Night - On December 8th, in conjunction with regularly scheduled parent teacher conferences, Hamilton Township High School will provide the 2nd annual College Fair & Financial Aid Night for all parents and students. This event is part of a continuing effort to expose students to post-secondary opportunities and to get more family involvement in this aspect of the students' lives.

Representatives from a variety of schools, colleges, universities, U.S. armed forces, and other career-based businesses are scheduled to attend this year's event.

In Attendance for our College & Career Night:

Otterbein University

Ohio University

Bowling Green State University

Ohio Christian University

Eastern Kentucky University

Capital University

ITT Tech
DeVry University
Ohio Northern University
Columbus State Community College
The Bradford School
OSU Newark
OU Lancaster
Marshall University
Chamberlain School of Nursing
Mount Carmel College of Nursing
Wyotech
Ohio Dominican University
US Navy
Miami-Jacobs Career College

The following schools will have a representative from disability services present:

Hocking College
Marietta College
The Ohio State University
Otterbein

When: Thursday, December 8th

Where: Hamilton Township High School

What: Parent/Teacher Conferences will be scheduled from 4:00 - 7:30 p.m.
College & Career Night will take place from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Honors Assembly Recognizes Student Success - On Tuesday, November 29, the students that earned Principal's Honor Roll and Honor Roll were recognized in an assembly that included, parents, guardians, friends and family. Pictures of the event can be found by clicking [here](#).

Language Arts Uses Thanksgiving for a Project - During Thanksgiving week, students from Mrs. Drews' 8th Grade Language Arts class completed a PowerPoint entitled, "What I am Grateful for this Thanksgiving." Students were required to write and illustrate six things they felt thankful for this holiday season. Most students wrote being thankful for their homes, family, and friends. Many also wrote about being grateful for their education. Students were given a copy of their PowerPoint to share with their families over the Thanksgiving Break.

Anti-Bullying Project a Success - During the months of October and November, 7th grade Language Arts students and teachers focused their efforts on the theme of "Standing up to Bullying." Students read the novel, The Skin I'm In, which is written by Sharon G. Flake. After completing many assignments dealing with the

theme of bullying, anti-bullying resources and cyber bullying, the students reflected on several questions. Students were asked, "What does bullying look like?," and "What are some anti-bullying resources?" After answering these questions, the students wrote their answers on paper and had their pictures taken holding the small signs. After taking pictures of every 7th grader, Mrs. Murgatroyd, Mrs. Knorr, Mrs. Schuller, and Mrs. Herendeen-Ackerman, compiled all of the students' reflections into an anti-bullying video, complete with appropriate music. The students viewed the "Stand up to Bullying" 20-minute video on November 22, and were really excited to see the end result. The 7th grade Language Arts teachers hope that our students will take this message to heart and gain a greater understanding of how bullying affects others and what they should do in these situations to prevent bullying from occurring.

Teacher Selected by Lottery - The Ohio Lottery selected, 7th Grade Language Arts teacher, Tiffany Murgatroyd as the Partners in Education Teacher of the Month. Nominated by a fellow teacher, Mrs. Murgatroyd was very humble in her acceptance.

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Students Honored For Grades And Attendance - On November 16, 17, and 18, the students of H.I.S. that earned Principal's Honor Roll, Honor Roll, and Perfect Attendance attended the first grading period's Honors Assembly. There were 419 certificates given out among the three grades. Great job to all the students who were recognized for their successes during the first grading period!

Teachers Help Out Community Partners - The teachers at H.I.S. generously donated \$450.00 to [The Community Partners of Southern Franklin County](#) to help with the holiday season. By donating \$10, teachers were able to wear jeans on Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving break. If a grade level team donated \$150, then the entire team could wear jeans and tennis shoes. Thank you to House 4-2 for making the donation of \$150 to help families in our district have a happier holiday. This is just another example of the community commitment of our faculty and staff.

5th Graders Are Working To Develop Their Character - All fifth grade students are working on developing their character by creating a character account booklet and how they would handle different situations. To create this booklet of Good Character, students are viewing clips from the Learn360 series: [Hollywood Film Clips for Character Education](#) that gives examples of being a better person. Different movie clips they have watched are *Coach Carter*, *Cheaper By the Dozen*, *Akeelah and the Bee*, *Drumline*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Back to the Future*. Classes are then discussing good and bad peer pressure, how to show kindness, what to do when people don't cooperate, respect, doing your best and how to stand up for yourself. This is an awesome opportunity for our 5th grade students to grow as a whole person.

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student of the Month – Third grade student Brendi Strawser was selected as the HES Student of the Month for November. Brendi’s teacher, Mrs. Martinez had this to say: *Brendi Strawser is a perfect choice for Student of the Month. Always prepared, Brendi comes to school each day ready to learn. Never one to do the bare minimum, Brendi always asks for "more work" and looks for ways to help others. When asked to choose partners, Brendi often pairs with those who need help rather than choosing a friend. She is a role model for her peers and a huge help for her teachers. You can always find her with a smile on her face and a positive attitude. She is the epitome of what teachers love to see in class!* Congratulations to Brendi and her family.

Staff Member of the Month - Kindergarten aide Terri Green was selected as the HES Staff Member of the Month for November. The anonymous staff member who nominated Mrs. Green had this to say: "Terri is such an amazing person! She is dependable, flexible, and amazing. She is constantly on the go and she never lets an obstacle stop her. She is patient and demanding of the students she works with, always working to help them become more independent and to reach their potential."

Whenever a teacher or aide is selected as Staff Member of the Month, their students all receive Ranger Bucks because no teacher can be “excellent” without “excellent” students. Congratulations to Mrs. Green and her students.

Cleanest Classrooms of the Month - The building custodians select a “Cleanest Classroom of the Month” in each grade level. The winning classes get to display a golden broom “trophy” in their room during the month. This is done in an effort to both recognize the good cleanliness habits of our students and teachers and to develop pride in the cleanliness of the building amongst our students. The winning classes for the month are: Mrs. Strickland’s class (Kindergarten), Mrs. Hess’ class (1st grade), Mrs. McNeely’s class (2nd grade), and Mrs. Gartland’s class (3rd grade).

America Recycles - Hamilton Elementary School celebrated America Recycles Week and students wore green clothing to demonstrate their pledge to recycling both at home and at school. Students also had the opportunity to learn about what they could recycle in the cafeteria. Students from Ms. Kowalski’s Home Economic class at Hamilton Township High School visited the Elementary school to help collect those materials. Recycled materials included: brown paper bags, cardboard, and plasticware. We were very proud and excited to see our high school and elementary school students working together as a team to make such a huge impact in our environment.

Students also celebrated recycling week by creating a Recyclable Creature from the recyclable material that they collected and by participating in a writing contest. One of the selected winners was Drake Tackett from Mrs. Forrest’s class.

Drake read his writing over the morning announcements!

*"I reduce, reuse and recycle when
I toss my paper in the green bin
They take it and make paper again
I reduce, reuse and recycle when
My old clothes make someone grin
I love my Earth, let's keep it clean
Throw your recyclables in the green (bin)."*
-- Drake Tackett

Thanksgiving Dinner for Kindergartners - After completing a unit centering on the pilgrims' journey to the new world the kindergarten celebrated with a Thanksgiving feast. Teachers and parent volunteers worked hard to serve Thanksgiving dinner to over 240 students. The donations that parents made to the dinner were greatly appreciated. It was truly a wonderful experience!

Survivor: Pilgrim Style - In November 2nd grade students had the opportunity to learn about the Pilgrims and Thanksgiving in an entirely new way. They participated in a *Survivor*-style simulation to try to understand the experience of the Pilgrims and the many challenges they would have faced when trying to make a new life in a new world.

In this Pilgrim Simulation Project, students were divided into teams. The teams became their core group of "colonists." Each team worked together throughout the project on various tasks. Students had to complete hands-on tasks, engage in answering comprehension questions about historical facts, and even act out scenarios to show their understanding.

The better our modern-day colonists performed on the various tasks, the more positive their colony's outcome would be. They would earn homes, acres of food, and other various survival items as they completed the various tasks with excellence. However, if they did not perform their best on a task, their colony was not able to "survive" as well. Each colony tracked their team's simulated fate against that of the historical Pilgrims, and kept a visual reminder in the classroom to reference throughout the project.

Overall, it was a fun, relevant learning experience that the students will not soon forget. They did a wonderful job of working together to establish guidelines for their colonies, use strategies to complete their tasks as efficiently as possible, and record their learning in a daily Pilgrim Log. Most of all, they have a new appreciation for the people we now refer to as The Pilgrims.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

State of the Schools Luncheon - Mrs. Moore's all day Preschool Class was asked to perform for the guest at this year's Superintendent State of the Schools Luncheon. All 41 students participated and sang *Jingle Bells*, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*, and *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*. The kids did a fantastic job. Thanks to Mrs. Moore, Miss Davis, Mrs. Newsome, and Mrs. Moore for preparing the students for this performance. Our preschoolers are looking forward to caroling on December 19, 2011 at the administrative building.

A Kind Word - A parent recently sent me a note regarding the effort and great job of one of the preschool teachers.

Dear Mrs. Strahm,

Mrs. King has adjusted and added things for Mya to do on her level of learning. I appreciate the extra time she takes to be sure Mya is included in all the activities. Small little things like putting tape on the yarn so it is easier for her to thread for Mya. She always plans ahead and the room is ready when Mya arrives for class. Thanks again for going the extra mile for my daughter! -- Robin Smith

The Support Team - Lisa Payne, the School Psychologist assigned to our preschool, has worked diligently to maintain assessment schedules, create behavior plans, consult with staff, and contact parents about their concerns or questions. Lisa has the task of testing all special needs preschoolers who will transition into kindergarten. It is great to work with a well-organized professional like Lisa.

Megan Kish, Speech Pathologist assigned to the preschool, currently works on Friday mornings with preschoolers who are in need of assistance with expressive and receptive language activities. Megan is a great resource for all the preschool teachers. She has had great impact on the students she works with.

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

First Quarter Attendance Awards - One of our Action Plans for 2011-2012 is to improve attendance. Teachers are keeping track of attendance on a large chart in the classroom. Students earn stars for perfect attendance and check marks for good attendance. The good news is that the chart is motivating our students.

The Alternative Academy gave out several gift cards to students who met attendance requirements during the first quarter. Congratulations to those students!

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Third Grade OAA - Our district received a report on our 3rd grade performance on the Fall Reading OAA this week. This test is given in the fall and again in the spring. The fall test determines where students are in terms of reading that allows

teachers to design more customized instruction. This year we had the best performance ever on the fall administration with 65% of the students scoring proficient or higher. The report from the Ohio Department of Education states, “Compared with students across the state, more Grade 3 students in your district are performing at or above proficient in Reading.” Congratulations to the 3rd grade staff and students for this achievement.

PK and ES Benefit From Research Partnership - The district recently received \$4,450 from the Ohio State University Research Foundation for participating in the Language and Reading Research consortium’s Reading for Understanding initiative. Funds will be used to support reading and provide additional reading resources at the PK and Elementary School buildings. Staff members and students will continue to be involved in this multi-year research project.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Bullying - The Counsel for Exceptional Children has published the following statistics regarding bullying and children with special needs. I have found that in most cases, Hamilton students are very supportive of each other. Bullying is not tolerated here and is dealt with swiftly. We pride ourselves in fostering a safe and supportive environment for all of our students.

[CEC Resources](#)

[National Bullying Prevention Month](#)

[Other Resources for Mental Health](#)

Bullying is defined as behavior toward another person that is intentional, repetitive, and hurtful resulting in an imbalance of power between the bully and the target.

The issue of bullying is particularly relevant for students with exceptionalities—and therefore for special educators. Bullies target their peers based on real or perceived differences in appearance, behavior, or ability, and many children with exceptionalities exhibit such characteristics.

Some facts:

- According to a 2007 Mencap study, **80 percent** of children with learning disabilities are bullied at school.
- The National Autistic Society reports that **40 percent** of autistic children and **60 percent** of those with Asperger’s syndrome have experienced bullying.
- Children with behavioral disorders such as ADHD are almost **10 times more likely** as others to have been regular targets of bullies, according to a report in the *Journal of Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*.
- A 2006 study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics reported that **having a special health care need is associated with being a target of bullying**, while having a behavioral, emotional, or developmental issue is associated with bullying others *and* with being a bully/victim—that is, someone who both bullies others and is victimized by his peers.

As school communities become increasingly diverse, it is more important than

ever that teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together to create a tolerant school climate where each student feels safe and valued. **The school must not only be safe—it needs to be perceived as safe and calm.**

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

New Library Online Catalog - Our libraries have now converted to an online solution called Follett-Destiny. School library-media specialists completed training this week on the new library system, which allows staff and students to search the district's libraries for materials from any computer with an Internet connection. Staff and students can login from a computer's web browser in order to find materials, view checkout history, due dates, fines, etc. Library Media Specialists will be sharing login information in the upcoming days.

Access to the district libraries can be found at: <https://hls.follettdestiny.com>

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Hamilton Girls Basketball Victorious - Our Rangers Girls Basketball Team opened the season with victories over the Columbus South and Northside Christian. The Rangers played tough against the Bulldogs, coming back from an eight-point deficit in the second quarter for a 55-38 win. Senior captain Ashley Mitchell led all scorers with 16 points while Kristina Pickett and Danielle Reynolds each added nine points.

In the second game this season, the Rangers defeated Northside Christian 48-16 with twelve players contributing to the scoring column. Junior Kayla Bledsoe led all scorers with eight points. The Lady Rangers now sport a 2-0 record and play host to Amanda Clearcreek to open the MSL season at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 3rd.

JV Rangers Open with Win - JV girls basketball opened the season with a great victory over the South Bulldogs by a score of 41-28. Kayla Bledsoe led the team with 11 points and Blaire Gray-Harrison contributed 10.

JV Wrestling Team Travel to Groveport - Our JV wrestling team opens the season in an invitational tournament on Saturday, December 3rd at Groveport.

Digg900 Volleyball Working Off Season - The volleyball team will be working hard in the off-season. There will be 34 girls ranging in grade level from the 4th-12th grades that are playing club volleyball in the spring and competing in Ohio Valley Region tournaments. Most of the girls will play for the Dig900 Volleyball Club. The club season begins in late February and runs through May with the athletes playing at various locations throughout central Ohio.

Indoor Track Club Ready to Run - Track and Field athletes have been spending

their off season in the weight room with over forty athletes registering to participate on the Indoor Ranger Track and Field team. The season kicks off January 14 when the throwers go to Akron University and compete in the shot put and weight throw events. The rest of the team will begin competition January 21st at The Ohio State University French Field House.

Track athletes will compete against the best athletes around the state, visiting colleges from all over Ohio. Throughout the course of the season the team will have the opportunity to travel to The Ohio State University, Akron University, Bowling Green State University, Kent State University, Youngstown State university, Capital University, University of Mount Union, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University, and Cedarville University.

Each track meet will be an official qualifying meet for the OATCCC State Championships. The top 25 performers on each individual event in the state will qualify to the championship meet in March.

Please check the HT Track website for more information about Ranger Track & Field. (Check out the new ATHLETE ROSTER PAGE, TRACK HISTORY PAGE, and CLUB TEAM PAGES)

UPCOMING EVENTS

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