

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Jan. 27 - Feb. 3

Proposed Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 11 - SCR 11 would approve ODE's proposed graduation rate changes to the state accountability system for public schools. Testimony on behalf of ODE stated that the new graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who graduate in four years or less by the number of students who form the final adjusted cohort for the graduating class. This final adjusted cohort includes students who are identified as first-time ninth-graders and is adjusted by adding any student who transfers into the cohort, either later in the ninth grade or sometime in any of the next three years. The calculation also subtracts any student who transfers out, immigrates to another country or passes away during that same period. Representatives voted after the testimony and reported the resolution out of committee. Click here for a copy of [SCR 11](#).

Proposed House Bill 191 - HB 191 would adjust the minimum school year for school districts from one based on days to one based on hours. The legislation also would prohibit school districts from opening prior to Labor Day or after Memorial Day, except in specified circumstances. A substitute bill was proposed and accepted during the hearing.

The substitute version changes the minimum school year for school districts from 182 days to: 455 hours for half-day kindergarten; 910 hours for full-day kindergarten and grades one through six; and 1,001 hours for grades seven through 12.

The substitute bill also would eliminate the prohibition against staying open after Memorial Day, but retains the bill's prohibition against opening prior to Labor Day, while adding a waiver process by which a school district may open earlier. According to the legislation, school districts can start before Labor Day if the district or school holds a public hearing on opening prior to Labor Day, approves a resolution allowing schools to open prior to Labor Day, files a copy of the resolution with the superintendent of public instruction no later than July 1 and receives a waiver to open prior to Labor Day from the superintendent. It specifies that the superintendent cannot deny a waiver to a school that has complied with the procedure, and must make the verification within 10 business days of receiving the resolution.

The effective date of the bill's provisions was changed from 2012 to July 1, 2013. Click here for a copy of the substitute version of [HB 191](#).

Ohio Core Opt-Out Information Available Online - SB 311 provides students who entered high school for the first time on or after July 1, 2011, a path to graduation without completing the Ohio Core curriculum

requirements. The Opt-Out provision is temporary and was designed to provide some students with a period of transition to the more rigorous curriculum requirements of the Ohio Core.

ORC 3313.603(D) sets forth the requirements for students and parents to provide consent to opt out of the Ohio Core, consequences for utilizing the Opt-Out provision and requirements for districts to provide both support and counseling to students who opt out.

To help districts in explaining, initiating and implementing opt-out plans, informational resources have been added to the [ODE Opt-Out Web page](#).

High School Principal Mr. Jim Miller and District Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Susan Witten will coordinate the Opt-Out provision for students who entered high school for the first time on or after July 1, 2011. Students or parent who have questions concerning the provision should contact their high school guidance counselor.

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.

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.

Campus and Athletic Grounds - Work is ongoing to upgrade our Middle School softball field. Fencing should be completed by early next week. Our Middle School physical education classes as well as our softball team may use this facility.

Maintenance - Mr. Lester and Mr. Morrison reviewed and purchased a towable boom lift this week after Head of Maintenance Scott Ayers demonstrated the device. This lift can be used to address many of the high locations in and around our buildings and campus. The purchase of this lift will provide a substantial savings to the district as we will no longer need to lease similar items.

Construction - Mr. Morrison met with local contractor Randy Linton to review areas in need of concrete work. The district will be adding a pathway from the Middle School parking lot to the Intermediate School education wing during our spring break.

Student Information Services - Mrs. Crabtree attended a work session at the Metropolitan Educational Council (MEC) to resolve errors involving data shared between districts. While our data is very clean, other surrounding districts tend to have many errors that must be corrected before funding is distributed. Mrs. Crabtree works to see that Hamilton receives the appropriate monies.

Health and Safety - The Franklin County Public Health inspection report was received this week and our schools scored very high, with two schools, our high school and preschool, receiving perfect scores. Thanks to our maintenance and custodial staffs for keeping our facilities safe and beautiful!

Food Services - Mr. Morrison and Mary Anne Hillerich met on Wednesday to review and complete the district's Accountability Review. This review assures that school districts are accounting for all student lunches and has alternative plans in place for emergencies or events that may hinder a typical serving day.

OFFICE OF THE TREASURER

State Budget for First Six Months of the Fiscal Year - The State budget from July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011 is under by \$302 million. During the first six months of the fiscal year, the State has received \$75 million less

than expected in revenue. On the spending side, the State has spent \$377 million less than their budget. As a result, the bottom line now stands at a positive \$302 million.

That is a mixed bag of news heading into the second half of the year. Income Tax receipts are now below estimates for the year, which shows that what people are making is slowing down. Sales tax receipts are still up for the year, which shows people are still spending money, but for the month of December they were way below estimates. It will be critical to see how the numbers appear in the months of January and February. Expenses are below estimates in many areas, but the largest actual vs estimate is that the State is paying out Medicaid and public assistance benefits at a much lower pace.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Website Goes Over Half Million Page Views; Intermediate Teacher Websites Seeing Large Amount Of Traffic - Since the start of this school year, our district website has seen increased traffic and page views. We eclipsed 500,000 page views last week and are still reaching for 1,000,000 page views as our goal by the end of the school year. We are on pace to have more visitors and page views than ever. This shows that our web site is becoming more valuable to our community, alumni, and stakeholders as a resource for up-to-date information.

Our Top 5 Most Viewed Pages (with the district home page excluded) are:

1. Intermediate School Home Page
2. High School Home Page
3. Athletics Home Page
4. Elementary School Home Page
5. Middle School Home Page

We have many teachers throughout our school district who have developed, manage, and utilize teacher websites as an added tool for their students to use after the school day has ended.

Hamilton Intermediate School's teaching staff and administration need to be recognized for their commitment to utilizing our web technology throughout their building.

Our intermediate teacher website pages have combined to be viewed more than 75,000 times over the past five months. This type of traffic shows that our community will utilize the resources if they are made available.

Mr. Meade and Mrs. Bassett worked with Mr. Payne to implement and

utilize this technology in order to open up their school and classrooms to our students, parents, and community members.

Beginning next week, we will be featuring a teacher website on our district home page to highlight our many excellent teachers and their websites.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

FAFSA Pin - Now that most college applications have been submitted and admission letters have begun to roll in, it is time for seniors and their parents to start thinking about filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). 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 Wednesday, January 25th during the students' lunch periods, the high school counselors offered seniors the opportunity to apply for their PIN that they can use to electronically sign their Federal Student Aid documents, in an effort to initiate the FAFSA process. The counselors helped over 25 seniors apply for their PIN and jumpstart the process towards applying for financial aid for their postsecondary education!

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Mr. Sweet, who instructs Business & Technology classes and coordinates our AP and ACT efforts, recently received notice that HTHS will be a testing center for the SAT. Mr. Sweet deserves sole credit for gaining this opportunity for our students. Now HTHS students can take the SAT and the ACT in the environment where they are most comfortable. We are thankful for Mr. Sweet's efforts and proud that we can add the SAT to our postsecondary action plan that prepares students for college.

Liz McSkimin Is HTHS Staff Member of the Month

"In light of the recent comments within the Star Ranger Icon, Liz McSkimin would be a good candidate. I know that she spends an incredible amount of her time, entire weekends, looking over students' papers. It sounds like her students really respond to the time and effort she devotes to giving them detailed feedback, not just a grade." - HS Teacher

"I nominate Liz McSkimin for teacher of the month. She is an incredibly dedicated teacher that works diligently to help our seniors be successful. She spends countless hours helping her students improve their English skills. In addition, she has collaborated with OSU to bring professors into our school. Her compassion is evident in all that she does, but does not sway her high

expectations of her students. Mr. Collins once joked that he doesn't prepare his juniors for college -- he prepares them to survive Mrs. McSkimin's class! What a neat compliment." - HS Teacher

"After three years, Mrs. McSkimin already is a better teacher than I was ten years into my career. She pushes her students and sets for them very high standards that she relentlessly pursues with them. She refuses to let students do less than their best and constantly searches for ways to give them what they need to learn. It is no surprise that she has been asked to help present, at the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention, the results of a writing study with which she has helped The Ohio State University. Mrs. McSkimin is a superstar." - HS Teacher

Mrs. McSkimin states, "I think all the teachers work really hard here, and care a lot about the kids... so since I have been here I have been following suit, and trying to live up to the standards set for us, and the standards I set for my students. I have really high expectations for my students, and at times that will create frustration and discomfort on their part, but through that I find they can grow and blossom. I have been impressed time and time again at how much they can achieve simply because I expect them to. I have seen kids who cry at the beginning of the year because they think what I expect is too much, and too hard... and then those same students beam with pride when they get to that level, obtaining a sense of self and autonomy. And then... when they get to that level... we go to the next. They often ask when we'll get a break, and I say you can't grow when it is easy."

"My days go so fast at school. Kids often come in to get help during my plan period and after school. We focus a lot in my class on writing as I am trying to get my students ready for college. Because I teach all seniors, I try as much as I can to make my class similar to what they will experience in college. They have a major paper due each quarter. It is a lot of work for them, and for me...but I think it is extremely important. Being able to effectively write in an organized fashion is not only important for kids to get a good grade on papers, but the articulation of thought is directly linked to critical thinking, which transcends all subject areas. I am currently involved in an Argumentative Writing study with The Ohio State University. They are interested in how teachers "teach" writing. The ongoing experience has been very rewarding. It has taught me a lot, and helped me to reflect on what I do, how I do it, and if it is working. I look forward to my, and Hamilton's, continued partnership with OSU." - Mrs. McSkimin

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Science Students Get Inventive - The 7th grade science class has put their creativity to a test last week. They had to create an invention that people would like to buy. All inventions start as ideas. Some are really big ideas, such as the light bulb; others are small like bendable straws. We could probably live without them, but why would we want to? Where would we be if everyone said life couldn't be better?

Physical Education Classes Get Fit - Last week the MS Phys Ed classes started a Fitness Unit. In the fitness unit the students are learning how to get in shape, stay in shape, current fitness level (according to the President's Fitness Test), and all about heart rate. They have learned what their resting heart rate is, target heart rate, and maximum heart rate.

Students have been engaged in Circuit Training this week, 7 to 10 stations a day, with different stations every day. One day the students will stay for a minute and then rotate to all stations or they may only go for 30 seconds. The next day the students will do stations with out being timed and rotate when they do a certain amount of sit-ups, push-ups, jump rope or dumbbell lifts. Next week they will jog, run and walk. The students will be timed at the end of the week in a half-mile run. The last week of the unit we will participate in video work outs that are available at the library or to purchase at the store. Yoga and Taebo are two examples of exercise videos they will perform. By the end of the four-week unit, the students will be in shape for any spring sport.

Power of the Pen Competes - Eight seventh and eighth grade students from Hamilton Middle School participated in the District Power of the Pen Tournament at New Albany on Saturday, January 28. The students had a great time competing in three rounds of creative writing against over 280 students from 24 Central Ohio schools. After the results are calculated at the Power of the Pen State Office, we will find out if any of the students will qualify for the Regional Tournament this March in Dublin.

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

High Standards Are Rewarded In The 5th Grade - Students in Mrs. Ingham's and Mrs. Fullen's homeroom classes have been given a challenge since the beginning of the year. If students are proficient on at least 4 out of 5 of their short cycle assessments, they will be rewarded with a party and a movie after school. During the first round of short cycle assessments, three students qualified. During the second round, five students qualified. At our last party, 11 students qualified. Students enjoyed ice cream and a movie

after school! They are proud of their students and the progress they are making on their short cycle assessments! It will be exciting to see how many students are proficient on the 4th round of SCAs.

Integrating Social Studies into Reading - Students in Ms. Hageman's social studies classes have been reading about various types of transportation that Ohioans used during the 1800s. They have completed graphic organizers that they used to write a summary about each type of transportation, and demonstrated their understanding by creating transportation murals. This is allowing students to take the skills that they are learning in reading and applying them in other subjects so they will be better prepared for the OAA this spring.

Homecoming Spirit Radiates Throughout The H.I.S. - Students and staff participated in the winter homecoming festivities this past week. Pajama day was the most popular with many people wearing their cozy PJs and slippers to school. It was great to see how much Ranger Pride our students and staff have at the Intermediate building.

Reach Out And Read Collection Is A Huge Success - January's community service project was to collect books for the Reach Out and Read Program. Students and staff were asked to donate gently used or new books to be donated to the Nationwide Children's Hospital. HIS did an awesome job and collected 1,008 books! Congratulations to the 5th grade for donating the most books! They will proudly get to display the Community Service Banner in their hallway! Thank you to everyone who participated.

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student of the Month - Third grade student, Angel Castro was selected as the HES Student of the Month for January. Angel's teacher Mrs. Allinder had this to say: "Angel Castro is an excellent choice for Student of the Month! He is one of those students whom you can always depend upon. He is always prepared for class and is ready to work and put forth his best effort. He is such a joy to have in class. Angel is also extremely caring and helpful. He is always ready to lend a friend a pencil or help a friend clean-up a spilled crayon box. He is an excellent role model for the other students in our third grade class." Congratulations to Angel and his family.

Staff Member of the Month - Third grade teacher, Katie Forrest was selected as the HES Staff Member of the Month for January. The anonymous staff member who nominated Mrs. Forrest had this to say: "She is always cheery and upbeat which is nice for students and teachers to be around. Her energy and spirit helps lend excitement and enthusiasm to

learning new things. I appreciate her willingness to share ideas and support others in their quest to be great teachers." Whenever a teacher 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. Forrest 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: Mr. Allgood's class (Kindergarten), Mrs. Young's class (1st grade), Mrs. Case's class (2nd grade), and Mrs. Martinez's class (3rd grade).

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Spirit Week at Preschool - The students all took part in the fun activities planned for spirit week. Monday we had class color day and the preschool looked like a rainbow! Tuesday the kids and staff enjoyed learning in their pajamas! Wednesday we had super heroes come to school as the students all told us of their special powers! Thursday the students dreamed of being: doctors, scientist, chefs, truck drivers, and fashion designers. We hope all their dreams come true. Friday the students wore their tie dyed t-shirts to show their Ranger spirit. All this fun and learning still took place everyday!

100th Day of School - We celebrated being in preschool for 100 days on Wednesday, February 1, 2012. The students decorated crowns, colored 100 items, and made a special soup of 100 different items. This is always a big day for the students they have been counting for this day since the first day of school. Time really does fly when you are having fun learning!

Winter Fund Raiser- A very special thank you to all the preschool families who helped make this fund raiser so successful! We will use the money for library materials, center activities, and two family events we have planned for the spring!

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Students and Teachers Get Into the Spirit - Spirit Week gave several students and staff the opportunity to show off their super hero support - Here is Autumn Prindle, Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. Benton.

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Grant Awarded - Otterbein University, in partnership with Hamilton Local School District and Lancaster City Schools, was recently awarded grant funding from the Ohio Board of Regents to support OP2: Operation Physics. The goals of this professional development project for middle grades teachers -- (1) increasing teachers' physical science content knowledge; (2) increasing teachers' enthusiasm for teaching physical science; (3) increasing time spent on teaching physical science topics; (4) improving teachers' understanding of research-based pedagogical techniques; and (5) increasing students' enthusiasm for physical science study -- are aligned with our own district's goals in science education.

HLSD teachers will be able to enroll in five tuition-free semester hours of graduate coursework, and to meet and work with science teacher colleagues from across Central Ohio. We know that our teachers will also be excited to receive hands-on science materials to use in their classrooms. We have three Hamilton Local teachers currently participating in the OP2: Operation Physics 2011-2012 program, and middle school students have engaged in exciting projects as a result. We agreed to participate as a school district sponsor of next year's program on the positive recommendation of one of the current participants, 7th grade teacher science teacher Mr. Blaney. Information about the 2012-2013 program will be distributed to HLSD middle grades teachers this month.

New Assessments Webcast - Dr. Witten attended the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) webcast on the New Generation of Assessments on Wednesday. Ohio is part of a 24 state consortium (PARCC) to develop assessments based on the common core standards. New assessments are to be rolled out in 2014-15 and will replace current state assessments. The long-range plan is to have a system of assessments that include diagnostic and formative assessments as well as mid-year and summative (year-end) assessments. Initially reading, writing, and mathematics will be assessed with intent to eventually include social studies and science. High school English language arts, grades 9-11, and mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or Integrated Math I, II, III) assessments will become part of the new graduation requirements. Summative tests will include computer-based tests as well as performance-based tests that will measure application of knowledge and problem solving. Resources and support materials will be released through PARCC and ODE as developed. Current resources can be accessed through the following web sites: www.ode.state.oh.us (search academic content standards); www.ptacommoncore.org/ (includes grade-level parent guides); and www.parcconline.org (provides an overview of the common core assessment initiative).

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education Department Hosts Transition Evening - Mrs. Shepfer, Mrs. Bennett, and Mrs. Brown hosted a transition evening at our high school on January 30. They had several agencies present including the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Social Security. Parents had the opportunity to discuss available supports for their children as they plan for the world of work after high school. It is extremely important that parents be aware of the supports available to students with disabilities and the steps they need to take while still in school for those supports to be in place after graduation.

The Department of Special Education would like to start a parent support group, where parents can share the challenges they are facing with their children and perhaps get ideas from each other. This support group could meet one time per month, and we can invite these agencies in again to discuss opportunities in a more personal environment. Any parent interested in joining a support group, please contact the special education office by calling Wynona Smith (614) 491-8044 ext. 1234 or you can also [email her](#). Parents may also contact their child's special education teacher to express an interest in the parent support group. To further address transition needs of parents please take the time to [complete our short survey](#).

The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD) suggests the following time line to transition from School to Adult services with their agency. There are many options for adults with significant disabilities, but parents and schools must work together in order to access the supports.

Parents' Suggested Timeline for Transition from School to Adult Services

Student Age	Action Needed
11-14 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child's IEP (Individualized Education Plan) should include goals from the four Continuum Focus areas: Life Enhancement, Self Management / Home Living Skills, School/Career Outcomes, and Community Living
By 14 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin Transition Planning (Statement of Needed Transition Services in the IEP) Learn about exit options to ensure that your child will be able to reach his/her goals
No Later Than 16 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition planning (focus on interagency responsibility or any needed linkages) Identify job interests and abilities and some job training Begin to identify community services that provide job training and placement Prepare job placement file with references and skills that have been acquired Consider summer employment or participate in volunteer experiences
16-18 Years Old	<p><u>Contact Adult Services:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine eligibility for Service Coordination & Adult Services Social Security Administration Residential or independent living services Recreation/leisure groups Medical services
17-18 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to consider & research Guardianship Continue to review & update Transition Plan Tour adult service facilities & day programming sites Make referral for adult services through Service Coordinator
18-21 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review & update Transition Plan Establish needed health benefits Develop long-term financial support plan (Example: SSI) Begin transition process to adult service location Transition to & begin adult services along with job & residential opportunities

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

SMART Slates “Interactivity with no strings attached” - Some teachers throughout the district are using SMART Slates, in conjunction with their classroom SMART boards to increase classroom participation. This technology allows teachers and students to interact digitally with their SMART boards from anywhere in the classroom. This gives students greater opportunity to solve problems, or demonstrate their knowledge, as the teacher is free to walk around the classroom. As the student (or teacher) completes the problem or demonstrates a skill, it is displayed on the SMART board for all to see, discuss, and collaborate.

Five elementary school teachers are set to be the newest recipients of this wonderful collaborative technology, which is already being used at the Intermediate, Middle, and High Schools.

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Athletic Department Seeking Individual Records - In an effort to compile individual and team records for the *History of Hamilton Township Athletics*, we are asking anyone with historic team publications such as team banquet booklets or records documented by any coach be presented to the Office of Athletics to review for possible record breaking performances. Please drop them by the Athletic office, mail or [email](#) the documents.

If you would like to see a sample of our efforts, please review our updated Track & Field Records, go to the *Track Web Page* and find Meet Results on the right side of the page, click on High School results, look under Hamilton Township and click on “All” next to Team Records and enjoy reviewing the boys and girls school records dating back to the 1950s. The top 20 performers in each event are listed with times converted from yards to meters.

A special thank you goes to Head Track Coach Adam Beggrow for his research and commitment to the completion the Track & Field records.

Varsity Wrestling Moves to 2-1 in MSL - The gym was electric and you could feel the anticipation of the league title on the line, as HTHS and Amanda Clearcreek started their dual with both teams showing high levels of skill. In the end, our Rangers lost 32-26. Hamilton Township bounced back against Logan Elm in the second dual winning 58-21 moving the Rangers’ record to 2-1 in the MSL.

Varsity Wrestling Wins Classic Duals Tournament - HTHS varsity wrestling took first place for a second week in a row at a tournament. There was a great Central Ohio match up between River Valley (ranked 3rd in Central Ohio) and HTHS (ranked 4th in Central Ohio). The Rangers beat River Valley 57-18.

The results of the Hamilton Duals were:

HAMILTON TWP 68	STIVERS 12
HAMILTON TWP 69	JACKSON 6
HAMILTON TWP 70	INDEPENDENCE 6
HAMILTON TWP 57	RIVER VALLEY 18
HAMILTON TWP 44	VAN WERT 21

Indoor Track @ BGSU - The indoor track team traveled to Bowling Green State University on Saturday, January 28th. Two athletes broke school records at the Sid Sink Open. Austin Niemann broke his second record of the year, surpassing Dustin Campbell's 12-year old record time of 2:11.90, by running a 2:05.70 in the 800m run. Brandon Hedges surpassed his own record in the weight throw by reaching a mark of 42'1".

UPCOMING EVENTS

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