

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Jan. 10-17, 2014

Board of Education Organizational/Regular January Meeting - The Hamilton Local School District Board of Education met in organizational and regular session on Tuesday, January 14 in the Board of Education Chamber at the Hamilton Education Center. The board re-elected Mr. Joe Jankowski as President for 2014 calendar year. Mr. Walley Obert was elected as Vice President.

The Board named Mrs. Pam Hallum as its Student Achievement Liaison and Mr. Walley Obert as their Legislative Liaison. The Board approved a regular meeting time of 6:00 p.m. (except June 17) at the Education Center Board Room for the following meeting dates for the 2014 calendar year: February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 17 @ 7:30 a.m., August 11, September 8, October 13, November 17, and December 8.

January is School Board Recognition Month - Too often we neglect to recognize the dedication and hard work of our board members. Few people fully understand the scope and far-reaching implications of board members' responsibilities.

On behalf of the administration, faculty, staff, and students of the Hamilton Local School District, I want to thank each of these community members for caring about the education of the children of this community.

Mr. David Schutte - Beginning his 15th year of service
Mr. Mark Wilson - Beginning his 9th year of service
Mrs. Pam Hallum - Beginning her 7th year of service
Mr. Joe Jankowski - Beginning his 7th year of service
Mr. Walley Obert - Beginning his 5th year of service

Our school children benefit every day from the dedication and commitment to public education of school board members elected by our Hamilton community.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) no longer serves as prior written notice to families - Parents or guardians of a child with a disability must receive a written notice when a change is proposed to the child's free and appropriate public education. This must occur even if the parents agree with the change. The IEP for that student no longer meets the definition of the written notice.

Hamilton Local Schools Director of Special Education, Mrs. Wynona Smith, informed the Superintendent's Cabinet on Tuesday of this change. She will coordinate all efforts to ensure a smooth implementation of change from current operating standards.

This is an immediate change from current [*Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities*](#), section (H)(4)(c). The standards are currently under review as part of the five-year review process and, once finalized, will reflect this change.

For additional important changes or clarifications to special education requirements, please visit [*Operating Standards and Guidance*](#).

District Finalizes Plans for February 14 Professional Development Day - Faculty and staff in-service is conducted regularly. It is the goal of the District to actively engage the faculty and staff in meaningful professional development, which directly relates to the building and District Improvement/Action Plans.

At the direction of Superintendent Lester, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Susan Witten submitting, and was approved by the Ohio Department of Education, for an Innovative Education Pilot Program Waiver to allow our district to better meet the learning needs of your students. Specifically, Hamilton Local was granted a district-wide exemption from Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.48 for this full instructional day during the 2013-14 school year.

All faculty (Certificated/Licensed Employees) and staff (Classified Employees) except bus drivers, educational aides, and cooks will work their full regularly scheduled workday.

Assistant Superintendent Witten heads up task force to study District's Alternative Academy - The Hamilton Alternative Academy is a community school, which is sponsored by the Hamilton Local School District, as per section 3314.01 of the Ohio Revised Code. Our Hamilton Alternative Academy was established in the 2003-04 school year with the assistance of a \$500,000 federal grant. It began accepting students during the 2004-05 academic year.

Educational delivery options and methods by both traditional and non-traditional educational institutions evolve as new technologies and techniques are developed. The Ohio Department of Education is working with our District to evaluate and revise the operations, goals and objectives of the Hamilton Alternative Academy. A large part of this work will be concentrated on the documentation protocols for the current school year and future.

Superintendent Lester established a Task Force to study the operations, goals and objectives of the Hamilton Alternative Academy. The Task Force is chaired by our Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Dr. Witten, and includes representatives from District and Alternative Academy administrators, faculty, staff, parents and students. They will be discussing total operations including the provision of non-classroom, non-computer, learning opportunities such as credit flex and correspondence courses.

The Task Force will meet two more times this month and provide a final report with recommendations to Superintendent Lester.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Building Operations - After last week's water damage to the high school and intermediate school, insurers, architects and vendors have toured our facilities. All visitors have expressed amazement at the speed in which our district staff brought our buildings back to perfect order. As mentioned last week, the teamwork and dedication of our custodians, maintenance staff, secretaries, teachers and administration was inspiring.

Administrative Meetings - Mr. Morrison met with the district's Assistant Principals, HTHS Dean of Students Matt Thompson and Alternative Academy Director Allyson Price to review alternative academy issues, residency, attendance and disciplinary issues and board policy changes on Thursday, January 16. These regular "AP" meetings also feature a book study, led by Dr. Witten. Our book study, "The Answer to How is Yes" by Peter Block, featured presentations by HTHS Assistant Principal Mike Morbitzer and HTHS Dean of Students Matt Thompson. Mr. Morbitzer detailed the concept of "claiming full citizenship" or shifting from focusing on methodology to focusing on

purpose. Mr. Thompson discussed the need to become a well-educated person, as opposed to being a well-trained person.

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

ACT Registration Deadline – HS Students scramble to register for the ACT before the deadline passes this Friday, for the February 8th scheduled ACT. A special Thank You is in order to Superintendent Lester and Mrs. Buchanan, Director of Technology, for providing 4 new Chrome Books stationed in the guidance department. The new Chrome Books make online registration effective and efficient for all HS Students.

Chemistry Wrap Up - Chemistry labs executed within the last weeks are highlighted below:

- Performing an oxidation reduction reaction in which 3 colorless solutions are used to coat a colorless glass Christmas ball and turn it silver (Chemistry II)
- Studying the effects of polarity & density on solubility by creating layered candles (Chemistry II)
- Studying the effects of temperature on solubility (Chemistry I & II).

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Language Arts Seeking Enlightenment - The seventh grade has been searching hard for a purpose -- an author's purpose for writing, that is! We have been focusing on non-fiction pieces that bridge between current Ohio Standards and future CCSS, determining if pieces are subjective/objective and evaluating the validity of the information provided within a text.

Shopping Percent Project - The 8th grade Math students were hard at work putting their skills on percents into real life situations. To begin, the students were to find five items they would like to sell in their made-up store. The students were busy putting their creative sides to work by creating a flyer that showed their items with the regular selling price and a percent off of their choice. Once their flyer was complete, they needed to fill out an answer key that solved for their five items sale price.

To wrap up the project, the students had a shopping day! Each student randomly selected a “budget” that they were allowed to spend and were sent off to shop at their peer’s stores. They had to find the sale price of the items they would like to buy, but had to make sure that it fit in their budget! They student’s were excited about shopping and spending money, and learned how to use percents the next time they are out shopping!

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Donations For Our Classrooms - As part of a fall program, friends and family members of our students had the opportunity to make a donation to our classrooms. We recently received \$350 for six teachers to use. The donations are gift cards that the teacher uses to access a website. From the website the teachers can select items for their classroom including books, magazine subscriptions, educational games, and school supplies. We greatly appreciate the generosity of our students' family and friends for supporting our school!

Glowstick Lab - Last week in Ms. Long's fifth grade science class students revisited the scientific method as well as the difference between types of variables. Students worked hard with their lab partners to discover which variables were the independent variables, the dependent variables, and the control variables. Students had two glasses of water, one with warm water and the other with ice water. Students placed glow sticks in the water to see the changes and effects that the temperature of the water would have on the glow stick. By doing so students learned that the molecules of warm things sped up and the molecules of cold things slowed down. Students also worked on answering 2- and 4-point questions that went along with the lab and writing well-thought-out conclusions. At the end of the lab, the fifth grade students got to keep their glowsticks and make them into bracelets so they would remember to tell their parents and guardians what they did in science class that day. Great job by all fifth grade students!

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Community Support - HES received substantial clothing donations from the Enchanted Acres Adult Community Center and the Hamilton Township Fire Department. In total over 300 items were donated including coats, hats, gloves, shoes, socks, and scarves. These items will be distributed to Hamilton Local students who are in need of such items. The Elementary staff and students sincerely appreciate both of these community organizations for their tremendous generosity.

The Joyful Reading Project - The Joyful Reading Project, designed to help create successful kindergarten readers, is the result of a grant Hamilton Elementary received last spring. Hamilton Elementary teachers and staff molded the program to fit the needs of some of our community's youngest learners. For four consecutive Wednesday nights, kindergarteners and their families are invited to the school to participate in workshops aimed at developing strategies for successful at-home reading. The families are provided a free catered meal from Flyers, lots of free reading materials, and an opportunity to learn alongside their children. Two family nights remain, and enrollment is still open. Look for more news on the success of this program in the future.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Preschool's Teacher of the Month - Mrs. Jennifer Davisson is in her first year as a Full Time Preschool teacher however she has had several teaching roles over the past twelve years at Hamilton Local Schools. This year she is responsible for the planning and organization of our two day a week class. She is well organized, patient, and very understanding with her students. She recently completed her Masters in Education from Marygrove College and is currently in her second year of the Resident Educator Program. Jenni is always smiling and has a very nurturing way when working with her students. We are thrilled to have Jenni our Preschool teaching team she has done an excellent job managing her classroom, student assessments, and schedules.

Second Progress Reports - All Preschool students have received their second progress report for this school year this week.

Scores reported are reflective of assessments and instruction given over the past nine weeks. It is hard to believe how fast this year is going. As you review your child's progress report please notice where they are having struggles and success.

If your child earned a:

- 0 - these are skills not yet mastered- work on these at home.
- 1 - they are working towards mastery and need a little more help.
- 2 - they have mastered this skill-we still practice.
- NA - these skills are taught but not assessed at this time (age 4 and up)

Please continue to work with your child at home and we will continue to monitor their progress in the classroom. Each progress report shows continued growth. It is important that your child succeed in these preschool skills to help them be better prepared for Kindergarten. The preschool/Pre Kindergarten skills taught and assessed are based on the Ohio Early Learning Standards.

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

OTELA Begins – The testing window for the Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition opened this week and extends through March 7. This state test is given to students identified as English language learners.

Free Non-Credit College Level E-Classes – Last month, the *Columbus Dispatch* did a feature on Coursera, which is an educational company that offers free online classes called MOOCs (massive open online courses) from a variety of universities. Ohio State offers one of the most popular courses – Calculus I, in which the professors help students use calculus to understand everyday problems. Although college credit is not available for the MOOCs, students can receive a certificate of completion. Information on Calculus I and other Ohio State course offerings, as well as links to other university's courses, can be found at <https://www.coursera.org/osu>.

Reward a Favorite Teacher – *The Barnes & Noble My Favorite Teacher* contest asks students to write an essay, poem or thank-you letter that describes how a teacher has influenced their lives. Middle and high school students are eligible. The maximum award is \$5,000 for the Teacher of the Year winner and his or her school. The deadline for submissions is March 1.

More information can be found at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/49937>

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

7th Grade Boys Basketball Improves to 8-1 with Win – The 7th Grade Boys Basketball team improved to 8-1 on the season with a win at Liberty Union on Monday. The Rangers jumped out to a big first quarter lead and held on down the stretch for a 31-24 victory. Congratulations to the players and Head Coach Matt Schutte for this impressive start to the season.

HHS 2013 Graduate and Capital University Athlete Named Ohio Athletic Conference Field Athlete of the Week – Ashley Freshkorn, a 2013 graduate of HHS and freshman at Capital University, was named OAC Women's Field Athlete of the Week for her recent performance.

Freshkorn posted a school-record throw of 48-11.00 in the weight throw to finish second in the 11-athlete field. She won the shot put with a toss of 37-08.00, besting eight other competitors in the event. Freshkorn's mark in the weight throw is currently sits as the nation's 8th best throw of the year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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