

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Nov. 15-22, 2013

Study of District Spending Comparisons Provide Further Evidence that Hamilton Residents Get More for Their Tax Dollar - Three school leadership groups released an analysis Tuesday by education funding expert Howard Fleeter that examines how much school districts' spending varies when taking into account high-need students, and suggests that the state gives too little weight to the added costs of teaching impoverished children.

The analysis builds on the [Ohio Department of Education's Fiscal Data Project](#), which includes an "expenditure per equivalent pupil" measure that attempts to account for the costs of education of children who are economically disadvantaged, limited-English proficient or in need of special education services.

"By making this adjustment, the equivalent expenditure per pupil figure reflects the amount that each district has to spend on the typical student. While the ODE methodology is generally sound, the weight used for economically disadvantaged students appears to be too low," Fleeter writes, citing Gates Foundation research on California's school finance system.

Hamilton, Olentangy and Upper Arlington were Central Ohio's top performing school districts following the release of the 2012-13 State Report Cards. Below you will see a chart that will show our district provides the best educational return on investment of your hard-earned tax dollars when compared to every other school district in the area.

Controlling Board Hears School Security Grant Request - The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) went before the Ohio Controlling Board on Monday to get approval for the release of \$12 million in capital funds as part of a new program created in the budget.

The commission said the funding will go towards providing grants under the new school building security grant program that was authorized under HB59 (Amstutz). The program allows schools to seek reimbursement for up to \$2,000 per school building for emergency radios and up to \$5,000 per building for entrance security measures. Those measures may include security cameras, an intercom and remote access equipment.

Already, local schools have sought grants for about 1,000 buildings. According to the request from the OFCC, the grants cannot be used to pay for operating expenses or personnel, such as school resource officers.

Hamilton is in the process of completed and submitted a school building security grant. These funds, if approved, will add to the security measures, procedures, and equipment purchased and installed with local funds.

U.S. Department of Education Early Learning Update - On November 13, Secretary Duncan joined members of Congress, business, law enforcement, and military leaders, teachers, parents, and students to announce the introduction of a [bipartisan early learning bill](#). The Strong Start for America's Children Act, sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representatives Miller (D-CA) and Hanna (R-NY), builds on the framework laid out by President Obama in his 2013 State of the Union address and Fiscal Year 2014 budget proposal. It focuses on four critical goals: boosting funding for high-quality

preschool programs serving four-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families; increasing the quality of infant and toddler care offered by providers; supporting broad-scale quality improvements to child care programs; and encouraging continued support for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.

This legislation would establish a new federal-state partnership with formula funding for four-year-old preschool -- with a state match -- to all eligible states, based on each state's proportion of four-year-olds under 200% of the federal poverty level.~States would make subgrants to high-quality, local providers, including school districts and community partners, such as child care and Head Start. The legislation also authorizes Prekindergarten Development Grants to help support state and local initiatives. *Reported by Adam Honeysett, U.S. Department of Education-Office of Communications and Outreach.*

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

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, expulsion hearing procedures, residency, attendance and disciplinary issues, board policy changes and search procedures on Thursday, November 21. 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 a presentation by Dr. Josh Conley regarding the concepts of "acting on what matters" and "the pursuit of ideals".

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

College Initiative - 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 Tuesday, Mrs. Steele, Ms. White, Ms. Stevens, and Mr. Thompson chaperoned a group of 45 Hamilton seniors interested in Capital University and Columbus State Community College for a campus visit. Students had to submit an application to attend the campus visit and express in a statement why they feel they should be chosen for the field trip. Students' interest in the Capital University and Columbus State, their attendance, academic standing (both past and present) and discipline record were all taken into consideration when determining the roster for the field trip.

The program at each college included an admission overview that highlighted the academics and activities offered at both institutions, as well as the application process for admission. The students were also led on walking tour of both campuses by student ambassadors who shared their knowledge and experiences with our students. Students and chaperones were also able to eat lunch in the main dining hall on Capital University's campus.

The goal of the campus visit was to provide those seniors interested in attending Capital University and/or Columbus State Community College with the experience of campus

life and the college atmosphere, as well as a better understanding of the admissions process, from both the 4-year and 2-year perspective.

Holocaust Survivor Speaks to HTHS - As tenth grade students studied the book *Night*, by Elie Wiesel, based on Wiesel's unfathomable experience during the Holocaust, Teacher Ms. Spencer directed students to focus on annotating parts of the text to discover meaning, recognize the author's mood and tone, and relate it to the understanding of the text. Then, major assessments were created to mirror the wording of the OGT. Because students were so amazed and intrigued by the end of this story, Ms. Spencer arranged to have Holocaust survivor Mr. Koenigsberg to speak at HTHS. Mr. Koenigsberg positively influenced and affected many students on Friday, as he told his story. After his presentation, students arranged to have a more intimate setting with snacks and only a few students in Ms. Spencer's room for further questions and answers. It was obvious that Mr. Koenigsberg was just as impressed with HTHS students, as they were impressed with him.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Best Practices Conference Helps MS Teachers Team Up - After attending a conference on co-teaching, MS teachers in two 7th grade classrooms and two 8th grade classrooms are implementing different models of co-teaching practices in their daily classroom instruction. Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Ryan, Mrs. Beeker, and Mrs. Wills will be implementing station teaching using corrections on the weekly quizzes and introducing new content as well as implementing parallel teaching to help review topics. Mrs. Knorr, Mrs. Drews, Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Mayhew will be using the same practices with vocabulary strategies and other reading comprehension concepts. All of the teachers involved are excited to see how the changes increase student involvement and find out what the students think of the new strategies.

Sweet Writings! - The 8th grade Language Arts classes just "wrapped" up their favorite project, Descriptive Writing. They had to describe their favorite candy in great detail using all of their senses. Their goal was to make their paragraph mouth-watering. The cover for their paragraph was to be creative and colorful using their wrappers, and the only way to get the wrappers they needed was...to eat the candy first! So that is what they did!

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Amarea Lucas Student of The Month - *"I would like to nominate Amarea Lucas from House 4-2 for star student of the month. Amarea is a positive role model for other fourth grade students in her homeroom class. She is always on task and raising her hand to participate in discussions. She works to her fullest potential by putting a tremendous amount of effort into all of her assignments. Amarea also shows responsibility. She has all of her homework assignments turned in for the first nine weeks. Her excellent grades reflect her dedication to school.*

Amarea will go out of her way to be kind and help other students who may be struggling. She is always polite and supportive of teachers and classmates. As a teacher, I can count on her to make choices that will be beneficial to all". - H.I.S. Staff Member

Brooke Eckenrode Teacher of The Month - *"I nominate Brooke Eckenrode for Star*

Teacher. Mrs. Eckenrode is a leader in the school and in the fifth grade. Her take-charge attitude and willingness to accept challenges are her strengths. This school year Mrs. Eckenrode has really stepped up to keep her homeroom organized and on task. She has committed to improve achievement with our IEP students. Mrs. Eckenrode has been an innovator and a key to getting the fifth grade going down the right path. Her lessons on figurative language and historical fiction are just a few of the engaging and thoughtful practices she has brought to the classroom. Brooke Eckenrode truly is a Star Teacher." - H.I.S. Staff Member

Angie Kirk Support Staff of The Month - *"I would like to nominate Angie Kirk as Star Support Staff person for the month of November. Angie is always ready and willing to help students, staff, and members of our community when they enter the front office. She is quick to provide an answer or find an answer to any question! ~Angie's efficiency at her job helps to provide a positive work environment for the students and staff at Hamilton Intermediate School!" - H.I.S. Staff Member*

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HES Students Learn Fire Safety from the Pros – The Hamilton Township Fire Department made their annual trip to the Elementary School to discuss the importance of fire safety with students. Each grade level had an assembly where students were taught what do to in case of a fire in their homes. Students were able to see a fire truck, an ambulance, and a firefighter in full gear. Students all received an activity book and their very own fire hat. The students had a great time and the entire building is grateful that the fire department took time to meet with us and for the protection they provide us everyday.

PTO Fundraiser Nets a Huge Profit – The Elementary PTO made over \$11,000 with the recent Otis Spunkmeyer cookie dough fundraiser and over \$2,000 with the fall book fair. As with all PTO fundraisers, the profits go directly to programs, incentives or activities for our students. The entire HES staff would like to thank the PTO for their time and effort as well as all of the students and parents who worked so hard to make these fundraisers a huge success.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Fire Assembly - Thanks to the Hamilton Township Fire Department for their wonderful fire safety assembly. The kids learned the stop-drop-and roll motion and the emergency number to call 911. The students then had the chance to look through an ambulance and fire truck. It is always a great opportunity for the students to interact with the fire department. We also received a great job for our second official fire drill of the year! The preschoolers did an excellent job leaving the building, staying in line, and waiting to hear the all clear from the office.

Community Helpers - Mrs. Davisson's students were busy this past week learning about the importance of community helpers. During center time they read through community helper books, pretended to be bakers flipping cookies to match letters, and acted as construction workers building with blocks and making tool belts. Students were police offices wearing their official police badges home. Students have also been learning to be good community helpers in our classroom by helping each other and by being responsible learners.

We are Thankful - This week in Mrs. Moore's Class, the students participated in activities about Thanksgiving and turkeys. The class read the story "Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks" and discussed what it means to be "thankful". The students then had the opportunity to share what they were thankful for and write it on a feather. They decorated the feathers with all different kinds of materials and then they were used on the bulletin board for everyone to see!

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Hamilton Alternative Riding for Knowledge - Students sometimes have trouble staying focused and awake while at school. So the Alternative Academy has done some research to rectify the problem and is allowing students to ride stationary bicycles while reading their coursework. Clemson University started a new study, led by Dr. June Pilcher, to see if students really learn better while active on Fit Bikes. Dr. Pilcher believes "while exercising, our brains work better and students are able to think more clearly and remember more information when they are active. Even though your brain is trying to be active while studying, your body is still and unmoving. This causes confusion in the brain and limits brain potential."

Naperville Central High School in Illinois is finding positive results since adding stationary bikes in the classrooms. Reading scores have nearly doubled, and math scores are up "by a factor of 20," ABC News reported. Harvard Medical School professor John Ratey has written extensively on the subject, saying exercise makes the human brain "more ready to learn." It will be interesting to see the effect that incorporating physical fitness has on success in school for the Alternative Academy students. The added benefit of extra physical fitness makes it an effort worth investigating.

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

High School Science Goes Technical - The High School Science Department has taken full advantage of technology in their instruction.

Teachers are using Google Apps for Education as a way to easily share course materials and assignments with their students, in addition to using it as a tool to collaborate--digitally. The teachers also use Google Apps as a platform for virtual meetings and professional development/collaboration with their colleagues.

Ms. Avery has also been utilizing the handheld SMART Response Interactive Response Systems to provide immediate feedback on student understanding of the content. The handheld devices are being used to digitally deliver quizzes/tests/assessments--which provide students with a means to show what they know using technology as a tool, as opposed to paper and pencil. These handheld devices provide valuable immediate insight into student understanding of the content, which allow teachers to adapt their lessons, based on how students respond. It also provides students insight into their own understanding, so they are better informed of their strengths and weaknesses in the course.

The science department also uses a cart of iPads loaded with many science "apps" that not only enhance learning, but make it exciting and fun, as well. Teachers and students also have the ability to collect data within some of the iPad apps while doing labs, and

then they can wirelessly print their results to further analyze and share.

"Science is based on analyzing data, and before the iPads I had to spend a large portion of time dedicated to teaching students how to use a program instead of how to look at their data. Now, it takes me 3 minutes to show them how to graph, fit a curve, and print that I can spend the majority of my classtime working with students on what their data is telling them," says Ms. Avery.

With technology, science at the High School is a cutting edge experience that immerses and allows students to become a part of the learning processes.

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Director of Athletics and District Treasurer Serve on OHSAA Financial Panel -

During this week's Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association's annual fall conference, Director of Athletics Ryan Fitzgerald and District Treasurer Adam Collier served as panelist on OHSAA Chief Financial Officer Jeff Jordan's panel on best practices for finances in athletic departments. They answered questions and concerns over the proper way to run athletic department financial accounts from other athletic directors and Mr. Jordan regarding ticket accountability, tournament accounts, and auditing accountability.

This marks the second time the OHSAA has asked Hamilton Local Schools to speak on this topic signifying their confidence and assurance that our athletic finances are in good standing with the best practices throughout the state of Ohio.

Hamilton Township Hosts OHSAA Playoff Football Contest -

On Saturday, November 16th, the OHSAA selected Hamilton Township Alumni Stadium as a host site for a Division V Regional Semi-Final contest between Martins Ferry and Wheelersburg. The Department of Athletics would like to thank all of workers for their help in putting on this game and proving that Hamilton Township serves as a great host for the OHSAA and high school athletics.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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