

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Oct. 17-24, 2014

Hamilton Local Officials Review Policies and Procedures Upon Learning Of Ebola Virus Reaching The U.S.

- In the wake of the first report of the Ebola Virus reaching our country, district officials took proactive measures to review all current policies and procedures, while taking part in conference calls and webinars to learn more details about the virus, including: identification of symptoms, how the virus can be transmitted, and what you should do if you potentially exposed to the virus.

"Our employees are trained annually on the importance of workplace safety, and how to handle scenarios when bodily fluids or other potentially infectious materials are involved," explained district superintendent, Christopher Lester. "We are being proactive in our efforts to educate our employees on details related to Ebola, while communicating directly with government organizations to stay informed."

Ohio House considers safe harbor bill - House Bill 642 SCHOOL DISTRICT-TEACHER EVALUATION SAFE HARBORS (FEDOR T) To provide a three-year performance rating safe harbor for school districts and schools and to provide a three-year student academic growth rating safe harbor for teacher evaluations. *Provided by Focus Education, a service of Hannah News.*

House Committee hears From witnesses favoring Common Core repeal

- The House Rules and Reference Committee heard from another round of witnesses who favor withdrawing from Common Core standards last Tuesday as it continues deliberations on repeal measure HB597 (Huffman-Thompson). Parents and teachers critical of the standards came to the evening-hours hearing to air complaints similar to those of earlier witnesses, decrying a testing mania they link to Common Core and arguing the standards take public education in a dispiriting direction.

Provided by Focus Education, a service of Hannah News.

Momentum building or fewer assessments – At the federal and state levels, the push to limit the amount of testing in schools is gaining steam. At the federal level, EdWeek reports that there currently are proposals in Congress to cut down on the number of assessments of students, some of which depart dramatically from the requirements of No Child Left Behind. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan appears to agree, recently stating he shares teachers' concerns that testing takes up too much time. Similar conversations have been happening in Ohio as well. As part of HB487 signed into law earlier this year, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly by January 15, 2015, reviewing the number of assessments currently administered as well as recommendations to reduce the number and duration of state assessments. Also addressing the amount of testing in schools, recently-introduced HB629 would require a limit of four hours per student per year for state-mandated assessments, with exceptions.

Provided by the ESC of Central Ohio

Results on the new Common Core tests won't be available for months

- Results of how your kids do on [the new Common Core tests](#) that they'll take at school this spring won't be available for months – possibly not until 2016. The multi-state consortium running the new tests, the [Partnership for Assessment of](#)

[Readiness for College and Careers \(PARCC\)](#), won't make a key and potentially controversial decision until next fall – what test scores will count as good ones and what scores count as bad ones.

Ohio has to wait until then to start using that new framework to compile student, school and district scores for the state report cards for the 2014-15 school year.

Full story from the Cleveland Plain Dealer available [here](#).

Annual Actuarial Valuation Shows Steady Improvement in STRS Ohio Funding - At its October meeting, the State Teachers Retirement Board received a report of the annual pension valuation results from its actuarial consultant, Segal Consulting. The report provides a “snapshot” of the actuarial position of the retirement fund as of July 1, 2014. Segal’s report this year shows the funding period for the pension fund — the amount of time needed to pay off any unfunded liability — decreased to 29.5 years from 40.2 years, and the funded ratio improved to 69.3% from 66.3%.

Better than expected investment returns were the primary driver for the funding improvement. Other significant notes from this year’s actuarial valuation report include:

- The unfunded actuarial accrued liability decreased to \$29.5 billion from \$31.8 billion — this represents the difference between STRS Ohio’s actuarial value of assets and the actuarial accrued liabilities.
- STRS Ohio paid about \$6.7 billion in benefits during the fiscal year.
- The pension fund has a net \$5.2 billion in unrecognized gains being deferred to future years. STRS Ohio uses a common actuarial technique called “smoothing” to spread investment market volatility over four-year periods. This method helps pension funds recognize investment returns for a given year over a four-year window rather than a one-year “spike.”
- Contributing payroll decreased by 0.4%, and the number of active members decreased slightly.

Ohio’s public retirement systems are required by law to amortize any unfunded liabilities over a period of not more than 30 years. Following last year’s valuation, the Retirement Board took action to reduce the amortization period, or “funding period,” by discontinuing the allocation of 1% of the 14% employer contribution to the system’s Health Care Fund. This step, along with expected strong investment returns, put STRS Ohio on track to reach a 30-year amortization period by 2016; however, better than expected investment returns helped the pension fund reach the 30-year funding period earlier than projected.

The Retirement Board will continue to regularly monitor the strength of the pension and health care funds. The board is also working with Segal and STRS Ohio staff to study its funding policy, and this month’s pension valuation report is an important step in that process.

From STRS October Board News.

The Ohio Department of Health provides information about Ebola - With news that a Dallas healthcare worker who contracted the Ebola virus had recently traveled to Northeast Ohio, you may be curious about what efforts are being taken to address the issue.

While it may be the first time most of the public has thought about Ebola in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Health has been working since summer to make sure those on the frontlines—local doctors, EMS, hospitals and health departments—have the information and resources they need. In fact, on Tuesday, Oct. 14, officials from the Ohio Department of Health conducted a preparedness seminar and a tabletop exercise with healthcare partners representing hospitals, physicians, nurses, EMS responders and local health departments to test the response to a hypothetical positive case.

Ebola is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. Ebola can cause disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas and chimpanzees).

- Ebola is spread by touching the blood and body fluids of a person who is sick with Ebola or items with the blood and body fluids on it, like clothes and bedding. Ebola is not spread through the air, food or water.
- Patients are contagious only when they are symptomatic and show signs of a fever.
- Anyone believing that they have been in contact with a person with Ebola should call his or her health care provider.

To learn more about Ebola, you can visit the Ohio Department of Health's [dedicated website](#) or refer to its [fact sheet](#). Click [here](#) for some talking points you may find useful.

While Ebola is in the headlines, we as educators should strive to be prepared to deal with infectious diseases throughout the school year. That is why we strongly encourage each school to review its infection control policies and procedures with teachers and staff. And, please take every opportunity to reinforce healthy, germ-stopping habits with students.

Good information on preventing the flu and other infectious diseases can be found on the Ohio Department of Health [website](#).

Provided by the Ohio Department of Education.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Maintenance - On Wednesday, October 22, Ohio Utilities Protection Service Public Awareness and Services Coordinator George Gillespie met with Mr. Morrison, our custodial and maintenance staffs to review the appropriate methods for excavation. Mr. Gillespie provided very specific details for those present and presented each custodian and maintenance employee with information that would help to keep our employees safe during an excavation procedure. Mr. Gillespie discussed Ohio Revised Code, the mission of OUPS and the types of tickets issued by OUPS.

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 TEACHING & LEARNING

Fall Ohio Graduation Assessment – High School students who have not yet passed one or more of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGTs) will have an opportunity to retake tests the week of October 27. Students currently in grades 10 – 12 must pass all five tests to qualify for a diploma in Ohio.

Ready for Kindergarten – The South High Library is offering a program for Parents of pre-kindergarten children to provide tips and tricks on how to get their child ready to start reading. Sessions are Tuesdays from 11:15 – 11:45 AM and Thursdays from 6:15 – 6:45 PM.

Report Cards – First quarter report cards were distributed on Friday, Oct. 24.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

kNOw Bullying - Hamilton Township High School takes a proactive approach to Bullying by participating in Bully Awareness Month. This week, HTHS students and staff participated by following the daily themes.

Monday -You're Bright! Wear neon or bright colored clothing.

Tuesday -You Count! Wear a jersey or clothing with numbers on it.

Wednesday -Wear Orange for Bullying Awareness!

Thursday - Green and Gold Day! Once a Ranger, Always a Ranger. *Televised football game vs. Bloom Carroll. Be prepared for the GOLD RUSH.*

Friday -You Rock! Wear your favorite concert t-shirt.

Ohio Revised Code 3313.666 (B)(8) requires that HLS has a "*means by which a person may report an incident anonymously.*" Hamilton Township High School administration has in place an area located on the high school website to report bullying. Click link below to view this kNOw Bullying website.

New kNOw Bullying web page - <http://www.hamilton-local.k12.oh.us/kNOwBullying.aspx>

Kids Voting Youth Summit - On Wednesday, our 11th grade AP Government students attending the Kids Voting Youth Summit were excellent representatives of HTHS. They heard from a panel of young elected officials including Representative Michael Stinziano and Christina Hagan. In a breakout session, our students met personally with Representative Mike Curtin to discuss issues that impact youth and were given a legislative perspective. Finally a few of our bravest students summarized our discussion for the audience of more than 200 Central Ohio High School students.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Balloon Cars! - As the 8th grade students wrapped up their physical science unit, they were required to design a "balloon car." This balloon car was to be powered by only one 9" balloon. Students could use any household material to construct their cars. The only constraint they had to follow was that the car must exhibit rolling friction for the ENTIRE length of its run. There were unfortunately no flying cars allowed! Students were very excited for race day to show off their

cool balloon car designs! The student in each class period whose car traveled the furthest advanced onto the final round. Results are posted below:

1st Place: Mckayla Fuller 39 ft

2nd Place: James Fulton 38.5 ft

3rd Place: Haley Cheadle 36.5 ft

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

6th Graders Get Pumped Up About The ACT - Over 80 6th graders met with Mr. Meade, Mrs. Buxton, and Mrs. Smith last week to discuss an amazing opportunity. The Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search allows students to experience taking the ACT before high school. These students' 5th grade OAA scores qualify them to take the ACT in the spring with students at HTHS. This allows students to think about their future goals and aspirations.

H.I.S. Students Say Cheese! - The students at the Intermediate school gathered with their homeroom classes to get their class pictures taken. The students and teachers also got their individual portraits taken for the school's yearbook.

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HES Fall Festival – Nearly 3,000 students, siblings, parents, grandparents, and other community members came to the elementary school for the Fourth Annual Fall Festival. Families had a wonderful time enjoying the numerous fall themed activities and also had an opportunity to check out the PTO sponsored book fair. Activities included: the monster mash costume contest, using a real fire hose to put out a faux fire courtesy of the Hamilton Township Fire Department, a petting zoo, a photo booth with photographer Belinda Anderson, a pumpkin patch where students took home 800 free pumpkins courtesy of Hann's Farm Market, and numerous games and craft activities.

Parents seemed to most enjoy free hotdogs provided by Skyline on South High Street, 5-minute back massages from Dr. Appell of The Chiropractic and Wellness Center also located on South High Street, and the variety of items raffled off by the PTO.

The event was a part of the elementary school's parent involvement action plan, which is designed to help build relationships between parents and school personnel. The HES Parent Involvement Committee, chaired by Karen Schutte, worked hard for several weeks to plan and organize the event. Without them it would not have been possible.

This event has grown each year mainly due to the efforts of this committee and the incredible generosity of volunteers and local business owners who donate time, food, and merchandise for the raffles.

Mr. Tyler and Dr. Conley would also like to thank all of the members of the PTO, the Obetz Police Department, Obetz Dairy Queen, Lombardi's Dairy Diner, McDonalds on South High Street, Lowes, Firestone, Tropical Fruit and Nut, Ultraprints, Amanda Condrath, Nancy Archer, Nancy Robey, Krysten Case, Shari Stewart, Shannon Fleming Jeremy Newman, Foreacres Lawncare, Wedgewood

Pizza, Roosters of Grove City, United Skates of America, Kraft Foods, the South High Library, all of the HES staff members who volunteered their time and the high school cheerleaders who assisted with the activities.

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 to do in case of a fire in their homes and were given important safety tips for trick-or-treat night. Students were able to see a fire truck, an ambulance, and a firefighter in full gear. The students had a great time, and the entire building is grateful that the fire department took time to meet with us. We are thankful for the protection they provide us everyday.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Circle S Family Day - Thanks to the record-breaking number of family members who enjoyed a day at the farm. Everyone enjoyed a hayride, sunflower maze, petting zoo, and a special treat. Family Days like this are special. The weather was perfect and the kids had a blast! As we saw first hand this is a place where pumpkins and friendship grow!

Preschool's Teacher of the Month- Mrs. Breanna Moore is in her seventh year as a Preschool teacher. She is responsible for the planning and organization of our older 4 and 5-year-old half day classes. Breanne is well organized, patient, and very understanding with her students. "Breanne is always smiling and has a very nurturing way when working with her students". Breanne has two children enrolled at school this year, Caleb is in Mrs. Strickland's Kindergarten Class and Bryson is in Mrs. King's AM Class. Congratulations Mrs. Moore and her two Rangers!

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Computers in Action - The Alternative Academy students are taking advantage of the new Chromebooks. They are using Google apps and the learning management system of iLearn Ohio to complete coursework, receive instruction and communicate with their teachers and Ms. Price. Ohio Graduation Test Prep materials are available to each student. Students are making progress in their courses and have expressed that they "like the computers a lot more than the books."

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Rangers Football Beats Bloom-Carroll 35-12 on CW's Thursday Night Lights Telecast - The Rangers rallied back from a 12-0 deficit to beat the Bulldogs 35-12. The Rangers offense had 603 yards on the night. Aaron Williams accounted for 241 of the yards on the ground along with 3 touchdowns. Patrick Robinson finished the game 19 for 24 with 218 yards and 3 touchdowns. Deric Phouthavong led receivers with 10 catches for 172 yards and a touchdown. The Rangers defense only allowed 51 yards rushing on the night along with a single touchdown. Brandon Marable and Xavier Harris both had key interceptions in the second half to secure the 35-12 victory. The Rangers move to 6-3 on the year and play the final regular season game at home against Logan Elm next Friday.

Rangers Volleyball Sets School Record for Wins - The Rangers Volleyball team set a school record for wins on Thursday with a victory in the Sectional Finals. The Rangers defeated Heath in four sets to advance to the District Semifinals to improve their overall record to 19-5. Congratulations on a great season!

Rangers MS Football Teams Sweep MSL Titles - The 8th grade Rangers finished their season 8-0 with a 42-0 victory over Fairfield Union. The 8th grade had 5 different players score. Tion Williams scored twice, once on a 31 yard run and the other came on a 22-yard pass play. Payton Sandine, Alex Mathias, James Fulton, and Dristin Crallie also scored for the Rangers. The defense came through with its 5th shutout of the season. The Falcons turned the ball over three times and were held to 7 total yards of offense. The 8th grade Rangers ended their Middle School careers with a 16-0 record and two Mid-State League Titles.

The 7th grade Rangers defeated Fairfield Union 36-0 Monday night. Led by Trent Salyers on both sides of the ball and a defense, which posted its second consecutive shutout, the Rangers took home the win. The Rangers finished 6-0 in the league and 7-1 overall. The win secured the outright league title for the Rangers.

Congratulations to both teams and their coaches on great seasons and MSL Championships!

Rangers Athletes Earn MSL Honors - Mid-State League awards for Cross Country, Volleyball, Soccer, and Girls Tennis have been announced. Below is list of athletes and their recognitions. Congratulations to all athletes for their recognitions. MSL awards for Football will be given once their season is complete.

MSL 1st Team

- Will Garcia, Boys Soccer
- Andrew Juarez, Boys Soccer
- Erick Juarez, Boys Soccer
- Danielle Rodriguez, Girls Tennis
- Khloe Row, Girls Tennis
- Nikki White, Volleyball

MSL 2nd Team

- Alisa Askew, Girls Tennis
- Derek Bradford, Boys Soccer
- Victor Higgenbotham, Boys Soccer
- Jacob Marcum, Boys Soccer
- Sierra Springer, Volleyball
- Tanner Stuller, Boys Soccer

MSL Honorable Mention

- Mike Krigbaum, Boys Soccer
- Anna McClain, Volleyball
- Josh Raine, Boys Soccer
- Jacob Rollins, Boys Cross Country