

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Sept. 20-27, 2013

STRS Ohio Launches Updated Member Website - On Sept. 6, STRS Ohio launched its updated, responsive member website to improve members' access to information about their pension system on multiple devices. The new site was a long-term project, done completely in-house as a collaboration between the Communication Services, Information Technology Services and Member Benefits departments. The updated site will now "detect" how members are connecting to it and display content appropriately on their smart phone, tablet or desktop computer. The site also was restructured to guide members to information related to the two key phases of their STRS Ohio membership — "During Your Career" and "Receiving Benefits."

Annual STRS Statement Testing Completed for Benefit Projections - With the passage of pension reform, projections of various retirement scenarios based on age and service will once again appear on members' Annual Statements. These projections will help members understand the personal impact of the pension changes.

In particular, members will be better able to understand the transition benefit, which is designed to ensure that members who retire after July 1, 2015, under the new 2.2% benefit formula, will receive the same or higher benefit than if they retired July 1, 2015, or earlier under the current formula. All members who are eligible for a July 1, 2015, as well as a July 1, 2016, retirement will be presented with both estimated benefits. If the transition benefit is the higher benefit, the member will see a July 1, 2016, benefit that is the same as the July 1, 2015 benefit.

Students in independent public schools do not have a athletic participation opportunity at Hamilton even if Hamilton is the parents' residential district - The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) distributed and published on July 23, 2013, regarding the Budget Bill and the provisions contained therein, which affects participation opportunities for students, not enrolled in a district and/or attending Hamilton Local Schools.

Are students who attend the Ohio Virtual Academy, Ohio Connections Academy, ECOT, TRECA Digital Academy, etc. affected by the provisions of this Budget Bill?

Answer - No. The schools such as those mentioned above, along with all other community schools (defined as independent public schools that are part of the state's educational system created pursuant to ORC Section 3314.01), are not included in this legislation. Thus, unless the community school (sometimes referred to as a "charter school") is sponsored by a member school's Board of Education, students who attend "independent public schools" are not affected by these changes in the law and do not have a participation opportunity at the member public school in the parents' residential district. Please see Exception 3 of Bylaw 4-3-1 and the guidance here: <http://ohsaa.org/eligibility/4-3-1.pdf> for more information on this option for students who attend the Hamilton Alternative Academy which is sponsored by the Hamilton Local Board of Education. In addition, the ODE provides a directory of Ohio community schools and their sponsors at this link <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/School-Choice/Community-Schools/Forms-and-Program-Information-for-Community-School/Directory-of-Community-Schools-and-Sponsors>. Please visit this site in the event you have questions as to the status of any of these schools.

Keeping up with transportation rule changes - All student transportation in Ohio must comply with Ohio Revised Code (RC) and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC). On July 25, changes were enacted in eight of the administrative rules. There also were some changes in revised code enacted through the biennial budget bill, House Bill (HB) 59. Superintendent Lester has provided these updated rules to Assistant Superintendent Morrison and Transportation Coordinator Haughn. They will be updating the District's transportation operation and safety rules reference library.

Here is a summary review of the changes enacted.

OAC 3301-83-09 Pupil instruction.

- Adds the requirement to train students in the dangers of trespassing on railroad right-of-ways and other dangerous areas. Eliminates the requirement to provide training in the first two weeks of school to students who do not ride on regular routes. (These students receive that training as part of a requirement to provide training for all passengers participating in non-routine trips at the time the trip is taken.)

OAC 3301-83-10 Personnel training program

- Adds the requirement for a bus driver to meet the requirements of OAC 3301-83-06, in addition to the requirements in OAC 3301-83-10, before a pre-service certificate will be issued.
- Adds a requirement to train drivers in emergency evacuation procedures.
- Requires drivers to meet all requirements of OAC 3301-83-06, including having a pre-service certificate and valid commercial driver's license, and then observe a route with an experienced driver and students aboard, and drive a route with an experienced driver and students aboard.
- Adds a requirement to include bullying behaviors in training on student management.
- Restricts the use of temporary pre-service certificates by individuals attempting to certify for the first time, or drivers whose pre-service certificate has not expired within the last 12 months.
- Adds a time limit of 12 months for completing and reporting of all requirements for certification or recertification.
- Adds a requirement for on-the-bus instructors to attend in-service trainings scheduled by pre-service instructors.

OAC 3301-83-16 Non-routine use of school buses

- All references to fees have been removed from this rule and adopted in a new rule (OAC 3301-83-24).
- All of the itemized approved non-routine uses of school buses listed in the previous rule have been deleted. Those uses have been replaced with language stating that uses may require the school bus owner to obtain approval of the vehicle and operator as a

commercial motor carrier pursuant to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Ohio Department of Transportation, in addition to other rules. This change will be the most problematic for schools when they determine what trips are appropriate. In general, FMCSA regulations apply to commerce. As long as schools avoid any operations that can be construed as commerce, they should be able to continue to operate under the same regulatory controls as in past years.

- Out-of-state travel on school transportation vehicles has been expanded to 1,000 miles in accordance with changes adopted in RC 3327.15.OAC 3301-83-22 Vehicle maintenance.

- The Ohio State Highway Patrol must be notified within 15 days of any school buses involved in accidents that result in mechanical damage or damage in excess of \$1,000. The former rule set the value for damage at \$500.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Civil Rights - Mr. Morrison is reviewing data to submit for the new Civil Rights Data Collection Survey. This collection of data regarding the access to educational opportunities for public school students is a yearly and on-going collection of information that allows policymakers and researchers to review and develop better ways to work with children.

Health and Safety - Ohio immunization law (ORC 3313.671) requires children to meet state immunization requirements for continued school attendance. The Ohio Department of Health has revised the School Immunization Requirements to include a dose of Td or Tdap to be administered before a student enters the seventh grade. Record of immunizations must be provided to our middle school or your child is subject to exclusion. Please contact Mrs. Kathy Brickey, School Nurse, immediately with questions or concerns.

Food Services - OCTOBER IS NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH, a time to celebrate the connections that are happening all over the country between schools and local food. In 2010, Congress approved a resolution to officially designate October as National Farm to School Month. The passage of House Resolution 1655 demonstrates the growing importance of farm to school programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food.

Employment - The school district is always looking for local residents who would like to work as substitute custodians, bus drivers or cooks. If you are interested in joining our classified team, please contact Mr. Morrison at 491-8044 ext. 1203.

Enrollment - Mrs. Crabtree and Mrs. Varney enrolled 13 new students this week.

Residency - Mr. Stevens confirmed 32 new residencies during the past week.

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 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Vote Daily To Help Us Win \$10,000 For Athletics - The [2nd Annual McDonald's High School Team Challenge](#) began this week and we are asking everyone affiliated with our district to go online and VOTE DAILY for the Hamilton Township Rangers. You can vote once per each valid email address you register with. Voting will be done over a six week span and will conclude on Nov. 1st with the Top vote-getting D-I or D-II school getting a \$10,000 check from Central Ohio McDonalds to help subsidize pay to participate fees. So tell Siri to set a daily reminder to vote at www.highschoolteamchallenge.com because we can't win without your support and votes! Thanks in advance and GO RANGERS!

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Preparing Students for College - 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, September 25, 2013, the PLAN test was administered to all 10th grade students and a practice ACT test was administered to all 11th grade students. The PLAN is a curriculum-based assessment program for 10th grade students designed to assess academic progress and provide an early indicator of college readiness. The PLAN will help students understand and explore the wide range of career options, as well as assist in enhancing a high school coursework plan that prepares them to achieve their post-high school goals. More information about the PLAN including sample test questions and guidance for interpreting PLAN scores is available at the PLAN website, www.planstudent.org.

The practice ACT test will give our 11th grade students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with ACT test questions, test-taking strategies, and conditions similar to the actual ACT testing environment. This opportunity will give the students feedback on how well they performed in the subject content areas of English, Mathematics, Reading and Science.

Women's Weight Training Focuses On Yoga Movements - Mrs. Shaw's female weight training class participated in Yoga to help increase student flexibility and balancing skills. By participating in alternative fitness activities we hope that students will find an activity they enjoy and participate regularly during in and out of school functions. Students should value physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

7th Grade Math Has Lots of SWAG - The 7th graders took their weekly quiz last Friday and many of them did very well earning some major SWAG (students with amazing grades). Based on their mastery of one of the concepts from the quiz Mrs. Wills, Mrs. Vincent and Mrs. Bennett split the students into 3 groups during their class period. Each group did an activity to reteach, enforce or extend the concept of scientific notation. At the end of the period all of the students did a quick quiz to check for understanding. The students and the teachers felt that the switches were a great success and are looking forward to doing it again based on the next quiz.

Roller Coaster Physics - 8th grade science students have recently been hired by Cedar Point's design team and have been asked to design next summer's roller coaster! Over the next three weeks Miss Luchini and Mr. Aitken's students will be participating in a project-based learning activity sponsored by Ohio Dominican University. Students will be using the iPads to conduct a webquest, designing their own digital roller coaster. They will then work with their group to design and construct their own roller coaster out of foam piping. Once the design has been created and tested, students will then create a design proposal to present to their classmates a.k.a Cedar Point's design team. As students are working on this project, we will be focusing on potential and kinetic energy as well as energy conversions!

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Hamilton Intermediate Gains Sixth Grade Math Teacher - Maura Dickinson is excited to join Hamilton Local Schools as a 6th grade math teacher. She is from the Cleveland area but moved to Columbus, Ohio to pursue an education degree at The Ohio State University. Miss Dickinson attended OSU for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees, graduating with a Masters in Education. She is also coaching Hamilton Intermediate School's first 6th Grade Volleyball Team!

Battle Of The Books Kicks Off - A select group of 5th and 6th grade students met with Mrs. Smith for an informational meeting about Battle of the Books. Battle of the Books is a reading motivation program. The goals are to recognize and encourage students who enjoy reading and to broaden their reading interests. It also encourages teamwork and strategy because students compete in the Battle of the Books in teams of five. The 5th graders have a list of 14 books to read before their competition in February, and the 6th graders have a list of 20 books to read by their competition in May. Students will meet weekly the month before their competitions for book talks and to quiz each other on their comprehension of the novels. A BIG thank you to the PTO for providing all of the books for the students to read! And thank you to the High Street branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library for obtaining extra copies of the novels for the students to use as resources.

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Hamilton Elementary Students Are Bucket Fillers – As part of our character development theme this year students are learning to be bucket fillers. To begin this initiative students heard the story, “Have You Filled A Bucket Today?” by Carol McCloud. The story discusses how positive interactions (bucket filling) build confidence and self-esteem while negative interactions (bucket dipping) tear them down. Students learned strategies to help fill the buckets of other students and participated in activities that helped reinforce the concept.

HES Continues to Partner With The South High Library – You may recall seeing previous articles that have detailed all the ways that Hamilton Elementary and the South High Library partner together to help engage young students in reading activities. The summer reading program at the library was a huge success with many more students participating due to the library staff rewarding students with special Ranger Bucks provided by the school. Fresh off the heels of this summer activity, Keith Henson, the head librarian at the South High branch, was back in the Elementary this week reading to kindergarten students. Students love the visits by Mr. Henson because he is highly

engaging and makes reading fun. Bring Mr. Henson in exposes students to some of what the library has to offer and motivates parents and students to take advantage of this tremendous community resource.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Making A Difference - Thanks to Keith Henson, South High Library's Head Librarian for creating a storytime for the Preschoolers once a month. Keith will read, sing, and engage the students in literacy activities. Keith is a great resource and we are thrilled to have him visit our school.

Staff Member of The Month - Mrs. Darlene Chandonnet is the glue that holds us all together! She is well-organized, always willing to help teachers and parents, and is able to stay calm in any situation. "I enjoy working with Darlene because she is so helpful and always has a kind word for everyone." We are truly lucky to have Darlene in our office! Thanks for Making a Difference!

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

September Student of the Month - The Hamilton Alternative Academy named Brittney Graham for Student of the Month of September. During the month of September, Brittney has met all the attendance and work requirements and displays a positive attitude towards her peers and teachers every day. Congratulations Brittney!

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Late Arrival Reminder - Our October 2-hour late arrival for students is Wednesday, October 2. Teachers will use this time for collaborative work on curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Education Jargon - Schools and educators have their own language. Titles and phrases are often shortened to acronyms, such as OGT for Ohio Graduation Test, and we have our own words for things that we do. For those of us who work in schools, these shortcuts, phrases, and terms are so familiar that we sometimes forget that we are using a foreign language when trying to communicate with families and the community. School Wise has published a glossary on their web site that is helpful in translating the acronyms and understanding education terms: <http://www.schoolwisepress.com/smart/dict/dict.html>

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Rangers Volleyball Comes Away with Volley for the Cure Victory - On Wednesday, September 25th, the Rangers Varsity and JV teams defeated Groveport-Madison. This night marked the Volleyball programs yearly Volley for the Cure event. NBC4's Matt Barnes served as MC for a night that was filled with donations and support for Komen. Survivors were recognized with a standing ovation during a pregame ceremony and donations were collected from ticket sales, general donations at the gate, raffles, and bake sales. Obetz Dairy Queen also donated over 300 "Dilly Bars" with the proceeds of these sales going to Komen as well.

The Department of Athletics would like to offer a special thanks to Head Coach Carole Morbitzer and Director of Public Relations Vince Payne for working to organize yet

another successful event geared toward raising awareness and donations to help find a cure for breast cancer.

Varsity Football Defeats Circleville during Homecoming Game - The Rangers tamed the Tigers on Homecoming night winning 26-21. Dante White threw for 296 yards and 2 touchdowns. Deric Phouthavong had 5 catches for 111 yards and 2 touchdowns. Xavier Harris added 8 catches for 88 yards. The Rangers were down 14-13 going into the second half. Great play by the Rangers defense and special teams allowed Lorenzo Bridges to take over in the second half running for over a hundred yards and a touchdown to give the Rangers a 26-14 lead in the fourth quarter.

The Rangers move to a record of 2-2 and 1-0 in Mid-State League play. The Rangers travel to Amanda-Clearcreek on Friday with game time slated for 7:30pm.

Varsity Soccer Defeats Circleville - The Varsity Soccer Team moved to 7-4-0 and 4-1-0 in the MSL with a 4-0 victory at Circleville on Thursday. Senior Captain Bleu Molinar had 2 goals, Junior Forward Wil Garcia Jr. and Sophomore Derek Bradford also scored. The win was the 3rd shutout for the Ranger defense in the last 4 games. The Rangers now return home for a key match up with Teays Valley on Tuesday. The game is also the "Kick for the Cure" match to help in the fight against Breast Cancer. Game time is 7:15 pm.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[See what's happening in our district this week!](#)