

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Dec. 13-20, 2013

School Calendars and Schedules Change from Days to Hours – Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Hamilton Local Schools along with all school districts in Ohio will be required to comply with minimum hours of instruction instead of a minimum number of school days each year, as per Ohio Revised Code 3313.48. School districts will be required to be open for instruction for a minimum of 910 hours for students in full-day kindergarten through Grade 6; and 1,001 hours for students in Grades 7-12.

Hours eligible to count as “open for instruction” include time when the district or building is open and all students are:

- attending regularly scheduled classes;
- participating in supervised activities such as assemblies;
- participating in approved education options; and
- participating in co-curricular activities during the scheduled school day.

Calamity Days - Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, districts will no longer have calamity days. Instead, schools may schedule “excess” hours above the minimum number. Hours missed above the minimum do not have to be made up. However, if a school closes enough that it will fall below the minimum number of hours, the school must extend its scheduled year.

I recommended, and the board approved, the 2014-2015 school year calendar on June 18, 2012. This approval was prior to the General Assembly amendment of RC 3313.48 on July 1, 2014, which requires the change. My preliminary calculations indicate that we are well above the minimum required hours of instruction at all levels. Therefore, I do not expect changes to the 2014-2015 school calendar. I will be updating the calendar to show the number of hours of instruction.

Ohio's graduation requirements may change with House Bill (HB) 193 – Earlier this week, the Ohio House Education Committee adopted 27 amendments to HB 193, legislation that makes changes to Ohio's graduation requirements. The bill was then passed by the committee. HB 193 will go to the full House for a vote after holiday recess. Some of the changes include:

- delaying online assessments until the 2015-16 school year; and
- delaying the phase-out of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) so students entering ninth grade after July 1, 2015, will be subject to the new graduation requirements.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Enrollment - With the holidays approaching, we would like to remind all new students and parents that our next enrollment date for Hamilton Schools will be Monday, January 6, 2014. Please check our enrollment/registration webpage to review all required documents necessary for successful enrollment.

Health and Safety - We take great pride at the Hamilton Local School District in providing for our students and staff a very safe educational and working environment. The district, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 3313.536, has established protocol for addressing serious threats and emergencies to the safety of students and staff. Each school will follow our comprehensive school safety plan, which must be revised every 3 years, in the event of a serious threat or emergency. Our teachers and school staff also review and practice our emergencies procedures at least twice per

year. Our comprehensive school safety plan and site plans for each of our facilities has been delivered to the Ohio Attorney General's office, as well as to our local police and fire departments.

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

HTHS Students Get Remind101 - Remind101 is a service that allows teachers to communicate with students and parents via text message or email without sharing phone numbers or email addresses. Teachers give students a number to text; the service asks the students for their names, and that is all the information a teacher can see from the dashboard on the site. This service can also be accessed via a free App for smartphones and tablets. Currently, teachers use Remind101 to remind students of upcoming tests and tutoring dates. Coaches use Remind101 to remind students about practice schedules and weekend events. Now, HS guidance counselors are using Remind101 to remind Seniors and Juniors of ACT and SAT registration deadlines and testing dates along with College Nights and Parent Teacher Conferences dates for underclassmen.

Ohio Model United Nations - Congratulations to the OMUN team for their hard work and commitment to make a difference. OMUN spent 3 months preparing author speeches, resolutions, and talents for the three-day conference and debate. Forty-six schools from across Ohio presented and debated 186 resolutions with 1,400 students. HTHS took six dedicated teams to the conference with a total of 44 students. The students representing the country of Slovakia won an Outstanding Resolution Trophy. The students in this group include: Michael Anderson, Alisa Askew, Kristen Bishop, Brandon Blevins, Colleen Fitzsimmons, Alicia Jarvis, Micaela Powell, Celina Saksith, and Ben Sipe. An Outstanding Leadership Award was presented to Brandon Blevins exemplifying his dedication to his team and hard work on assisting his team in presenting a resolution asking the United Nations to relocate the persecuted Gypsy population of Slovakia to the land area titled New Israel. Michael Anderson was also elected as an OMUN officer of one of 16 Council Presidents, and he will serve his term next year at the 2014 Sr. OMUN. Mrs. Murgatroyd would like to thank all OMUN participants for their passion, dedication, and excellent Ranger representation at the conference.

HTHS Choir Concert - On Wednesday, 136 high school singers presented their Holiday Choir Concert to an audience of parents, families, friends, and alumni. Some of the highlights include concert choir's "Feliz Navidad," and "Home For The Holidays." The women's choir presented "Mary Did You Know?" and the 4-part audience pleasing, "Candy Cane Lane." The Symphonic choir processed into the auditorium and walked through the audience by candlelight singing "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning." Another highlight was "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas." Chamber Singers made an appearance as well singing, "You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch." The evening concluded with former members of Symphonic choir joining the current members on stage to sing a traditional seasonal song. It was a festive evening with lots of beautiful moments, thanks to all members of the choir program.

HTHS Band Concert - The Hamilton Township High School Instrumental Music Department held its annual Holiday Concert on Wednesday, December 18 at the Hamilton Township High School Auditorium. This concert showcased a variety of ensembles including jazz band, percussion ensemble, concert band, and wind ensemble. Each ensemble treated the audience to a diverse playlist of holiday favorites for all to

enjoy. The musical growth and maturity of the students' performance was exceptional, especially from the wind ensemble that only had 6 group rehearsals leading up to the concert.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bedtime Stories & PJs Motivate Students In Community Service Effort - During the month of December, the Middle School joined up with Scholastic Reading Club and the Pajama Program and held a Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive. Staff and students who donated a new pair of pajamas to the program were allowed to wear pajamas to school on Dec. 13, and many people loved this incentive! We collected 46 pairs of pajamas, and these will be donated to a shelter here in our area. In addition, Scholastic will match our donations with books, so the recipients will have a bedtime story to read in their new PJs!

Kelly Jett and Stephanie Evans, the Drive's coordinators, thank everyone for their efforts throughout this drive. Over 22,000 pairs of new pajamas and books have been collected nationwide through the Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive. Some "elves" in Ms. Schuller's 1st period class brought in PJs for the HMS pajama drive. Their giving spirits earned them Tim Horton donuts. They were also treated to homemade hot chocolate with toppings such as chocolate chips, whipped cream, and marshmallows. They gave some warmth while receiving some warmth for themselves on a chilly day.

Poe Provides Suspense & Inspiration For 8th Grade Writers - 8th grade students got their dose of horror as we studied our suspense unit. Learning short story elements such as universal theme and mood and tone is fun when you are reading such classics as "The Tell Tale Heart", "The Cask of Amontillado", and "The Third Wish". Students learned about the original horror writer Edgar Allan Poe and used his works as a model to create their own suspense stories. With titles like "A Long Time Coming", "A Night with a Bite", and "Insane in the Membrane", these promising Hamilton writers may be the famous authors that future 8th graders may be studying!

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Holiday Cheer - The staff of Hamilton Intermediate came together to help a family of four children have a happier holiday season. They donated money and brought in items such as toys, art supplies and personal hygiene kits to donate to the family. The staff's monetary donations purchased several outfits, pajamas, socks and a fleece blanket for each child as well as other items on their wish lists.

Several staff members contributed to the Community Partners Christmas Assistance Program by providing toys, clothing, Stompies, fishing gear and other wish list items for families in the district. The Community Service student helpers collected stocking stuffers for the program, and many staff members donated to that as well!

Science "Matters" - The fourth graders in Mrs. Penrod's class have been learning about matter. The students had to find pictures in magazines, newspapers, photos, or advertisements to demonstrate their understanding of solids, liquids, and gases. The students organized their project in a booklet or on a poster. This is an example of Keegan Foreman's poster.

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Canned Food Drive - This holiday season, The Elementary School along with our local Community Partners Group participated in a canned food drive. The items collected were used in food baskets for families who are experiencing difficult times or donated to local food pantries. As part of our character education initiative our word for the months of November and December is "*Citizenship*". What a wonderful opportunity for our students to exhibit good citizenship by contributing a canned food item to this worthy cause!

High School Band Performs for HES - On the last day before winter break, the Elementary school was treated to a performance by the High School Band. The band did an outstanding job and the elementary students loved the concert. Mr. Tyler and Dr. Conley would like to thank all of the members of the band as well as Mr. Frazier for their time and effort and the elementary specials teachers for organizing the event.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Holiday Sight Word Practice - Mrs. King's students have been working hard on identifying and spelling their color and number words. This week the students are learning about Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. They learned that candles are a symbol for both of these holidays. Mrs. King developed a center where the students used candles to practice spelling their color and number words. The students were excited about the center and worked hard to recognize and spell their sight words. This type of center encourages the students to do a higher-level activity that they can enjoy and be engaged in. Practicing sight words is preparing Mrs. King's class for Kindergarten and beginning reading.

A Visit from Santa - A very special thank you to The Village of Obetz and City Administrator, Mr. Rod Davison for the books, cookies, and a visit with Santa. The Preschoolers were thrilled. One little one said, "He knew my name!" We are all believers at the Preschool. We wish all Hamilton families a very happy and safe holiday. See you in 2014!

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Santa's Helpers - The Alternative Academy assisted the Community Partners Christmas Assistance Program by adopting a family this holiday season. The family has four children from 10 to 15 so the staff did their very best to make Christmas special for them by buying each of them some needed as well as fun items. The family will also be given food items to help round out their Christmas. The students in the Alternative Academy acted as Santa's Helpers and wrapped all the gifts. We wish the entire Hamilton Community a safe and happy Holiday Season.

Holiday Cheer - Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. Brickey helped bring about some Holiday Cheer this season by hosting an "Ugly Christmas Sweater" day. Students had fun planning and participating in the event and prizes were given for best sweater. You can decide!

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A New Semester – For the first time, our second semester will begin with the New Year, fitting nicely with this annual time of renewal. Hopefully, students, staff, and families will find time over the winter break to refresh their energy in preparation for a successful second term. *Happy Holidays!*

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

Hamilton Township Varsity Girls' Basketball Wins Third Straight - The Varsity Lady Rangers Basketball team won by a score of 53-49 in overtime over Fairfield Union on Monday. They were lead in scoring by Kristina Pickett with 13 points, Devyn Stevens with 11 points and Josie Kasprzak with 10 points. The following Rangers also contributed to the scoring efforts: Lauren Longbrake with 9 points, Ariona Brown with 4 points, Blaire Gray- Harrison with 4 points, and Kaylee Davis with 2 points. This victory marked the Rangers third straight victory after wins over Amanda-Clearcreek and Bexley.

Hamilton Township Varsity Wrestling Finishes in 5th Place at Hamilton Classic - Hamilton Township played host to 14 teams on December 14th. The Rangers placed 5th behind Grove City, Hilliard Darby, Clyde, and Hilliard Davidson. Top finishers for the Rangers included Clayton Ray (2nd) and Alonzo Jewell (2nd). Congratulations to the Rangers for this strong showing in a very competitive tournament.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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