

Superintendent's Weekly Wrap-up: Jan. 31 - Feb. 7, 2014

Dean Of Students Selected – I would like to announce that Mr. Jon Sweet has been selected as the new Dean of Students for Hamilton Township High School and Hamilton Alternative Academy. Mr. Sweet is an 11-year veteran of education, and began his career at Hamilton Middle School in 2003 as a computer applications teacher. Jon has served as a high school business education teacher since 2009. He also currently serves in the leadership roles of coordinator for our high school's AP program and supervisor of SAT and ACT testing. Jon holds a Master of Business Administration degree, and has taught courses as an adjunct professor for both Mount Vernon Nazarene University and Franklin University.

Jon is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education in Bookkeeping/Basic Business 7-12, Career Technical Integrated Business 4-12, and Principal 4-12. I believe that, during his 11 years in Hamilton Local, Jon has developed a strong understanding of our district and community, which will enable him to be a very effective Dean of Students. He has proven to be a very hard working, dedicated, and loyal employee. Mr. Sweet began his official duties as Dean of Students on Wednesday, February 5, 2014.

Feb. 3, 2014 - STRS January Board News / Board Discusses Options to Reduce Amortization Period for the Pension Fund - During the State Teachers Retirement Board's annual retreat, board members reviewed several options to reduce the retirement system's funding period. Ohio law requires the statewide retirement systems to amortize unfunded liabilities over a period of not more than 30 years, otherwise they must submit a board-approved plan to the Legislature to reduce the funding period to 30 years. STRS Ohio's current funding period is 40.2 years.

Click [here](#) to read full STRS eUPDATE on this story.

Schools Could Get Extra Time for Achievement Tests - The Ohio Department of Education might grant an extra week for local schools to administer elementary and middle school achievements tests because of all the missed class time from bad weather, but likely needs legislative assistance to make it happen.

State Superintendent Richard Ross has the authority to extend the Ohio Achievement Assessment testing window, now set for Monday, April 21 through Friday, May 9, and is considering adding an extra week, said department spokesman John Charlton. The tests are administered from third through eighth grades.

"It's still preliminary discussions," he said.

Complicating the decision is a state law requiring results to be returned by June 15. Charlton said even if lawmakers are willing to push it back, the department will still be under pressure to turn around results quickly, particularly for the third grade reading test. This is the first school year that a ban on social promotion to fourth grade takes effect, under the third grade reading guarantee enacted in 2012. Reading test performance can determine if a student will be retained or sent for summer intervention courses, for example.

"We need those results back as soon as possible so the decision can be made in the best interest of the children who are somewhat below that promotion score," Charlton said.

Charlton mentioned the possibility of asking the third-party scoring company to put a priority on finishing third grade results before all others.

"There's some logistical challenges," he said.

The Department of Education isn't looking to expand the administration window for the Ohio Graduation Test because it would be too difficult to get results back in time for seniors who still need to pass the tests for graduation, Charlton said. *Provided by Focus Education, a service of Hannah News service.*

Hamilton to participate in statewide tornado drill - Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week will be held March 2-8, 2014. Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) urges all organization to exercise a tornado safety plan during the Statewide Tornado Drill on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 9:50 a.m. All school in the Hamilton Local School District will participate in this drill. The drill will take the place of the weekly Wednesday noon outdoor warning siren test in Franklin County. The system will be activated one time for three minutes — a longer tone than in the regular Wednesday noon test.

Tornadoes are nature's most violent windstorms and are the number one risk for Franklin County. More than two dozen tornadoes have hit Franklin County since 1954. Designing and exercising a tornado safety plan for your establishment will help your organization respond safely in a real event.

SEVERE-WEATHER PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Be Informed

- Get a weather alert radio. They're available from most electronics stores and major retailers. For more information visit www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/
- Learn more about tornadoes and other severe weather hazards Franklin County faces on the FCEM&HS website at www.fcemhs.org
- Enroll in the Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. [Click here](#) for more information.

Make a Plan

- Decide on the safest place to shelter during tornadoes at work, home or school.
- Keep extra emergency supplies on hand, including a battery-operated radio, food, water and medication.
- Learn more about emergency plans at Ready.Gov.

Get Involved

- If you can't participate in the tornado drill on March 5, conduct your own drill on another day this spring.
- Volunteer five minutes each week with the FCEM&HS Siren Watch Program. Get details [here](#).

Provided by Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Maintenance - I'd like to give a warm thank you to our maintenance staff, led by Scott Ayers, and our building custodial staff for addressing the heavy snowfall on Wednesday. Parking areas, sidewalks and entry points were snow free and safe, thanks to their hard work!

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

4th Annual Autism Puzzle Shootout A Huge Success - On Thursday evening, HTHS played host to the annual Autism Awareness event presented by NBC4. Mr. Payne coordinated the event for the 4th year and provided free inflatables and food along with a raffle of many prizes. Our event generated enough funds to push us over the \$20,000 plateau in donations that have been split evenly between the Autism Society of Ohio and Autism Speaks. Mr. Payne is already working with our Hamilton Boosters and brainstorming on how we can make the event better for next year, including a new t-shirt design. Thank you to everyone who partnered with our district to make this event a success: Obetz Dairy Queen, Skyline Chili on South High St., Hamilton Local Boosters, John Fry w/ Teamwork Associates, Inc., Janice Crabtree Photography, Maria Varney Photography, and all of the other local small businesses who provided items for the raffle.

[You can see some of the highlights of our Autism Puzzle Shootout event here.](#)

WWII Battle of the Bulge Veteran Speaks To HTHS Students - Last Friday, Mr. Payne coordinated a special presentation to all of the HTHS social studies and government classes that included a presentation about the importance of WWII's Battle of the Bulge given by Chris Borman, a local military historian and collector. This brief presentation was followed by a discussion of the events as they occurred to Howard "Howdy" Friend of the Youngstown, OH area. Howdy was a machine gunner in General Patton's Third Army in the Battle of the Bulge and he earned a Purple Heart after being injured by mortar fragments. We would like to thank Mr. Friend and Mr. Borman for spending the entire day presenting to the students of HTHS.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

HTHS Student of the Month – Ciara Hardia - The faculty and staff of Hamilton Township High School would like to nominate Ciara Hardia as its Academic All-Star. Ciara, a senior at HTHS, is an outstanding leader in and outside the classroom. Please read some of the comments from Ciara's teachers.

"Ciara is responsible to the core! She's mature and isn't afraid to be take the lead if others are struggling around her. She is an asset to the choir, and to me as the director. I know I can count on her to be on task and working hard at all times." -HS Teacher

"Ciara is a very pleasant, cheerful and hard-working young lady who is an absolute pleasure to have in class. She maintains a positive attitude and strives

for excellence!” -HS Teacher

“Ciara is a model student. She is always prepared for class and consistently submits exceptional work. She is overdue to receive the student of the month award.” -HS Teacher

“I would like to nominate Ciara Hardia. She is a mature and intelligent young lady. She takes her academics seriously and is an absolute pleasure to have in class.” -HS Teacher

“Ciara Hardia is a kind and hard working student that uses her time wisely to keep her grades up.~ She's always willing to go out of her way to help other students struggling in other classes.” -HS Teacher

“Ciara is the type of student a teacher loves to have in class. She is diligent, thoughtful and never gives up. She strives to always do her best and shows improvement at every step.” -HS Teacher

Hamilton Township High School would like to congratulate Ciara for being named HTHS's Student of the Month and thank her for her hard work and dedication in her pursuit of academic excellence.

Listening To The Student Body - Like everyone, students need a voice. They have questions that can encourage misunderstanding or resentment when left unasked or unanswered. On Monday, February 3, the senior class met in the auditorium during ADVISORY period in the first of what is planned to be monthly forums with each class and the administration. The rules for the meetings are simple: there are no personal questions that would make anyone feel uncomfortable; no accusations can be made; and questions must be asked and answered honestly and sincerely.

Students responded extremely well to the forum, demonstrating insight and maturity. Mr. Miller and Mr. Morbitzer made it a point to enter the forum with no agenda, other than answering as many questions and considering as many points as possible. Students asked questions and gave suggestions about cafeteria rules, dress code, graduation policies, student parking, and calamity days. When the bell rang for the next period, not one student flinched; they wanted to stay, appreciating the opportunity to get some questions answered and they promised to bring more questions to the next session.

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

7th Grade Math Plays Jeopardy to Review for SCA - 7th grade math students took a break from doing a usual study guide and review to prepare for this week's SCA test. Students in Mrs. Vincent's and Mrs. Wills' class came together and competed class against class in a game of Jeopardy to test their skills for their upcoming SCA. Mrs. Vincent's class took the early lead in the morning but Mrs. Wills' class was able to stage a comeback in the afternoon to take the overall win. The students really enjoyed the change of pace to preparing for the SCA test instead of the traditional study guide and they used their papers they did the Jeopardy problems on to study from.

HAMILTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

That's So Cool! - On January 24, 2014, the fourth grade students of Hamilton Intermediate observed a demonstration on the properties of liquid nitrogen. Nitrogen is normally found in a gas state, however, when it is cooled down to - 371 degrees Fahrenheit, it condenses into a liquid state. This allows for unique opportunities to create controlled activities based on the various properties of solids, liquids, and gases in a classroom setting that would otherwise not be possible. Students were treated to the freezing and smashing of various household items such as balloons, hot dogs, bologna, flowers, and racquetballs.

We Mean Business - Fourth graders are thinking about their futures. In social studies class, students learned about resources and division of labor during a unit on economics. In language arts class, students took what they learned about economics and resources and their study of plot and characters to write stories about businesses they would like to create. The students had many good ideas for solving problems and making money. We definitely have some future entrepreneurs!

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student of the Month – 3rd Grade student, Selena Barbour was selected as the HES Student of the Month for January. Selena's teacher, Miss Brown, had this to say: "Selena is a student that is very kind and caring. She is always cheering on the other students in her classroom and encouraging them to do their best. She tries very hard in all her academic work and always completes her assignments with a smile. She often helps other students in the classroom with anything that they need. Selena views all the students in her classroom as friends and attempts to socialize with all her peers." Congratulations to Selena and her family.

Staff Members of the Month – Guidance Counselor Collett Hayes was selected as the HES Teacher of the Month, and Custodian Tootie Sloan was selected as the Classified Staff Member of the Month for January. The anonymous staff members who nominated Ms. Hayes and Mrs. Sloan had this to say: "I appreciate everything Collett does both seen and unseen: organize thematic character ed studies, helping our at-risk kids at recess, joining a conference at the last minute to help a parent in need, making sure our kids have the glasses and coats they would otherwise be without, constantly having a positive attitude even when things are difficult, and perhaps most of all, being that constant cheerleader - for both the kids and the staff!". "Tootie always has a positive attitude. She greets everyone with a smile and makes them feel welcome. She does a great job of cleaning the rooms and halls from top to bottom. I've seen her on a ladder dusting top shelves. She is always working hard to keep our school looking its best!" Congratulations to Ms. Hayes & Mrs. Sloan.

HAMILTON PRESCHOOL

Teacher of the Month: Mrs. Emily King - Emily is in her seventh year at Hamilton Preschool. She graduated with her Masters in Early Childhood in 2007 and then completed her PK-3 Early Intervention Specialist license at The Ohio State University in 2009. Emily is responsible for the District Art Show and The Scholastic Book Fair for the Preschool. She works cooperatively with other PK

teachers on unit plans, progress reports, and family events. She has continued to build strong family relationships and is respected by parents and her peers. Emily and her husband, Jason recently welcomed baby Noah to their family.

Transportation and Letter ID - Last week in Mrs. Davisson's classroom, students learned what the word transportation meant. They made lists of types of transportation and graphed the ways in which they travel to and from school, finding out which form of transportation had the most and the least. In addition, students also completed and created vehicle patterns, during centers they "drove" and parked cars labeled with the alphabet to letters in parking spaces on a parking lot, helping with letter identification and matching upper and lower case letters. Students also matched numerals with number words by putting cars together.

Lastly, students made groundhog headbands and matched pictures to their shadows in honor of Groundhog Day. We learned that the Groundhog saw his shadow so we have six more weeks of winter!

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Graham Earns Student of the Month Honor - Brittney Graham has been selected as Hamilton Alternative Academy's Student of the Month for January. Brittney works hard everyday to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the Academy. With only one exception, she has met or exceeded all weekly expectations the entire year! She's respectful to her teachers and always willing to offer a helping hand to her peers. Congratulations Brittney!

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Operating Standards for Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities Updated - At the January 2014 State Board meeting the Ohio Operating Standards were voted out of committee and forwarded to the full Board for a resolution, which is expected in February. Final approval is anticipated in April 2014 with implementation in July 2014.

Changes in the Operating Standards include -

3301-51-01 Definitions

- *Changes cognitive disability to intellectual disability (was mentally retarded in the past)

- *Aligns the definition of a visual impairment to that of federal language - includes both partial sight and blindness.

- *Clarifies and separates an initial evaluation team from a reevaluation team

- *Transition Services: Clarifies goal of employment in an integrated competitive environment and adds skills needed by personnel to coordinate and provide secondary transition services.

3301-51-05 Procedural Safeguards

*Adds the requirement for an initial informed consent for districts to access insurance benefits in the provision of related services and annual notice thereafter

*Removes language regarding IEPs serving as prior written notice

*Notice of Scholarship availability - initial evaluation and annual review of IEP

*Resolution sessions - removes the language regarding discussions being confidential

3301-51-06 Evaluation

*Removes a required reevaluation for children with disabilities transitioning from preschool to kindergarten, except for those identified as developmentally delayed

*Removes additional procedures for identifying children with hearing impairment or deafness.

3301-51-07 IEP (Individual Education Program)

*Adds comprehensive transition services for students starting at age 14 or earlier if determined appropriate by the IEP team

*Adds comprehensive eye exam required notice to parents at the time of the initial IEP

3301-51-08 Parentally placed nonpublic school children

*Clarifies that the district where the chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school is located is responsible for additional child find activities regarding children who are enrolled in either the "Autism Scholarship Program," or the "Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program," as well as a determination of whether or not these children will receive services through a services plan

*Clarifies that the district of residence is not required to make FAPE available to a child with a disability who resides in the district and is participating in either scholarship program; however, the parent of a child participating in either scholarship program has a right to file a written complaint or a request for a due process hearing. A complaint or request for a due process hearing may allege that the district of residence violated a requirement of IDEA, but may not allege a violation of any requirements involving the implementation of the IEP and whether the child has received FAPE.

3301-51-09 Delivery of Services

*Add clarifying language for the annual training of paraprofessionals specific to the knowledge and skills specific to the students they support, as well as direct supervision of paraprofessionals

*Clarifies language for intervention specialists and related service providers regarding workload determination, includes existing provisions with clarification for

school psychologists and speech/language pathologists regarding proportionate calculations when mixed caseloads.

More information will be forthcoming regarding the updates as they are approved by the State Board.

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Progress Reports – Student Progress Reports will be issued on Thursday, February 13.

Staff Professional Development Day – Students will not attend school on February 14, which is a scheduled staff development day. Staff members will spend the day in learning activities, and use the time to review first semester progress and to collaboratively plan for the transition to new academic standards and new state tests.

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

HTHS Senior Football Players Sign National Letters of Intent to Continue their Football Careers in College - On Wednesday, HTHS Seniors Lorenzo Bridges and Micky Crum signed letters of intent for college football scholarships. Lorenzo signed a letter of intent to attend Urbana University and Micky signed to attend the University of Louisville. Congratulations! We look forward to watching you both represent Hamilton Township!

Wrestling and Girls' Basketball Ohio High School Athletic Association Post-Season Tournament Draws Announced - OHSAA post-season tournament venues and dates have been announced for Varsity Wrestling and Girls' Basketball. The Varsity Wrestling team will compete in the Division I Sectional Individual Tournament at Marysville High School on Saturday February 15th. The Varsity Girls' Basketball team will travel to Whetstone High School on Saturday, February 15, 2014 for their first round game. Tip-off is set for 1:00 p.m. The Boys' Basketball Tournament draw will take place this Sunday. Good luck to all Rangers in their post-season action.

Indoor Track Update - Deric Phouthavong tied Almar Walter's 60-meter dash school record time of 7.16 seconds at The Ohio State University French Field House. Almar set the original record in 1999 and was recently inducted into the HTHS Athletic Alumni Hall of Fame. To view video footage of Deric's performance click [here](#).

The girls 4x800 meter relay team of A'riel Harris, Shanell Hayes, Natalia Welton-Torres, and Aaliyah Solis ran the 2nd fastest indoor time in school history with a mark of 11:44.47

UPCOMING EVENTS

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