



THE Drum • Beat

OF THE PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS

STATE REPORT CARDS

Higher Goals Set for Schools

State measures, expectations, and accountability continue to change and rise!

In September the Ohio Department of Education will release local district report cards based on the 2013-2014 school year. While great public school districts like Piqua City Schools offer more than a classroom education for students through a variety of opportunities and experiences, the report card communicates the academic performance, based primarily on student test results. The report card will provide letter grades on six academic measures including: Achievement, Progress, Gap Closing, Graduation Rate, K-3 Literacy, and Prepared for Success.

Unlike previous years when districts received an overall rating in which Piqua City School District received an "Excellent" rating, no overall grade will be determined this year. The new measures, percentages, and expectations continue to be developed and implemented by the Ohio Department of Education. An overall grade will be determined starting with data from this

current school year and released in the fall of 2015.

Our new report card is calculated with new proficient measures, expectations, and accountability. Percentages to meet indicators have been raised from 75% to 80%. Last year under the 75% standard, Piqua City School District met 20 out of 24 indicators earning a "C" letter grade.

Based on previous measures our results would have remained the same with an achievement of 20 out of 24 indicators. Based on new measures of 80%, our district results are projected at 14 out of the 24 indicators for achievement earning a "D" letter grade. Our preliminary graduation rates based on a 4-year comparison rate was at 88.5% earning a "C" letter grade. Our preliminary graduation rates based on a 5-year comparison rate was at 90.6% earning a "B" letter grade. Data has not been completely processed by the Ohio Department of Education to determine our preliminary grades in the other report areas of Gap Closing, Progress, K-3 Literacy, and Prepared for Success.

We are not on hold at Piqua City Schools waiting for the State. Rather we have entered the 2014-2015 school year with a renewed focus on student achievement.

A new K-6 Math program is being implemented which raises the expectations of instruction and achievement. Our goal is to ensure all students possess the Math skills to compete in any life endeavor.

We have implemented an extended learning program for literacy targeting our primary students to strengthen emerging skills. We have secured over one million dollars through a "Straight A" Grant from the State to tackle our early literacy problem. These funds will provide literacy resources to extend into the homes of our students. Our goal is to ensure all of our students read at their

grade level or higher. During the past decade Piqua City Schools has stepped up successfully to the challenge every time the State increased measures and expectations.

Once again we are strategically stepping up to the new challenges with our commitment to excellence! We continue to strengthen our focus on student achievement while providing great opportunities and experiences on a daily basis in our classrooms. We Are Piqua!

Rick Hanes, Superintendent



Favorite Hill Primary students arrive for the first day of school. (See story on page 2).



@raheducator



New teachers (left) and administrators (below) welcomed elementary, junior high and senior high students on the first day of the new school year.



35 NEW TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS First Day of the New Year

Smiles were in abundance as parents walked hand-in-hand with their youngsters to the Favorite Hill Primary School (photo on page 1) on opening day. Children could hardly conceal their excitement as they quickly reunited with friends and classmates. The first, second and third graders stepped into line sporting brand new sneakers with colorful book bags as teachers greeted them at the entrance.

As a group of youngsters filed indoors accompanied by their parents, others waited outdoors as mothers and fathers observed from the sidelines. "This is my daughter's first day," commented one proud father, giving his daughter a quick hug goodbye. "I still have three others to take to different schools and a baby at home."

Such was the scene at the Piqua City Schools as nearly 3,700 students joined teachers, staff and administrators for the start of a new school year.

New administrative staff personnel include David Larson,

assistant superintendent, Board of Education; Jennie Gearhardt, principal, Bennett Intermediate; Josh Kauffman, principal, Wilder Intermediate; Rob Messick, assistant principal, Piqua High School; and Connie Strehle, principal, Favorite Hill Primary.

New professional staff hires include the following: Sarah Atkinson, Springcreek Primary, reading; Matthew Baltes, Bennett Intermediate, science; Brandy Bidlack, Piqua Junior High, science; Brittany Bollheimer, High Street Primary, first grade; Pamela Broering, Washington Intermediate, mathematics; Carolyn Crouner, Piqua High School, Spanish; and Jennifer Dyas, Favorite Hill Primary, second grade.

Also Alicia Everman, Board of Education, psychologist; Chad Fitzwater, Wilder Intermediate, social studies; Brian Gillespie, Piqua High School, language arts; Kevin Grieshop, Piqua High School, mathematics; Amy Group, Piqua High school, science; Sarah Haight, Nicklin Learning Center, kindergarten; and Daniel Hickman, Wilder

Intermediate, mathematics. In addition, Kimberly Marchal, Wilder Intermediate, social studies; Lauren McCord, Bennett Intermediate, language arts; Amy Meyer, Piqua High School, intervention specialist; Amy Meyers, Washington Intermediate, language arts; Jennifer Moore, High Street Primary, first grade; Carl Phlipot, Intermediate Buildings/PHS, instrumental music; and Jessica Reed, High Street/Washington, art; and Holly Rohr, Nicklin Learning Center, kindergarten.

And Jaelyn Saulmon, Piqua Junior High, language arts; Josh Smith, Piqua Junior High, social studies; Steve Stamper, Piqua Junior High, STEM; April Taylor, High Street Primary, third grade; Georgia Willson, Piqua High School, guidance; and Kellee Wolters, Bennett Intermediate, intervention specialist.

Piqua City Schools also welcomes two new members to its nursing staff: Liana Webster, Springcreek Primary/Piqua High School; and Courtney Drees, Favorite Hill Primary/New Washington Primary.

Financial Matters

The Miami County Auditor recently completed new valuations as part of a six-year cycle. The results show that the district witnessed a loss of \$30,803,740 in valuation, which is an 8 percent loss in property values. This is a significant loss in value.

According the Miami County Auditor and their estimates our funding will remain level. The changes in valuation will affect all of our residents differently. Depending on the property type and location, an individual may see a lower tax bill or a higher tax bill than the previous year. We are relying on estimates provided by the County Auditor to create the five year forecast and for budgeting on the FY 2015 school year. Any changes from the estimates provided to the district will have a direct impact on our finances.

We will keep a close eye on the next property tax settlement in September to see how actual revenues hold up to estimates.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Strategic Plan

"We Are Piqua!" This slogan exemplifies the spirit which has resounded throughout the school district in recent weeks. After examining the principles of the district's mission statement and scrutinizing the recently revised strategic plan, Superintendent Rick Hanes explains, "Our goal is to define who we are and what we do in our classrooms to ensure excellence for all of our students."

While most businesses/ organizations operate within the scope of their mission statements, the Piqua City Schools (PCS) and its collaborative leadership team comprised of 60-plus staff members have stepped up efforts by developing "belief statements" centered around strategic centers including students, staff, school/ community relations, finance and facilities. "This [strategic] plan is the backbone of every decision made in our district," Hanes says.

Throughout the school year members of the school community will be asked to give input into the belief statements (see survey above) through the district's website, advisory groups and the Drum Beat. In essence, everyone is a stakeholder and offers a voice into the district's plan for greatness.

"During the upcoming year we plan to work together to further develop these belief statements so they represent the expectations for the members of our school community," emphasized Hanes. He added, "Our belief statements will underscore the pride in the three words that define our district 'We Are Piqua!'"

- Check all that apply:
- Piqua resident
 - Alumni
 - Parent
 - Student
 - Staff

Name and contact info (optional) _____

Additional comments are welcome on a separate paper.

Clip and mail to Rick Hanes, Superintendent, 719 E. Ash Street, Piqua, OH 45356. Or, complete the survey on the website: www.piqua.org

What do you believe?

- As a community member of the Piqua City School District, please share with us your opinion of these Belief Statements:
- T F We believe all students will learn at their highest potential.
 - T F We believe all students have a role in their learning.
 - T F We believe all staff is accountable to collaborate professionally to ensure quality instruction and student growth and achievement.
 - T F We believe staff will provide quality instruction that ensures students will perform at their highest potential.
 - T F We believe staff will work together to support quality instruction.
 - T F We believe school and community will benefit from mutual communication to develop an interactive relationship.
 - T F We believe staff will be financially responsible and provide efficient operations focused on student growth and achievement.
 - T F We believe staff has the duty to provide inviting, safe, and clean environments that are adaptable to support student growth and achievement.

"Straight A Grant" Targets Early Readers

"A \$1.1 million early literacy grant awarded to Piqua City Schools will not only revolutionize what homework looks like," predicts Springcreek Primary Principal Teresa Anderson, "but the increased use of technology will enable our students to be better prepared for the future".

Anderson refers to a "Straight A" grant made possible by the Ohio Department of Education to help kindergartners and first graders get a head start on reading. Laptop computers will be provided to the students to reinforce and extend what they are learning in the classroom.

The grant project is part of a consortium led by Milton-Union Exempted Village school district in partnership with PCS and Franklin-Monroe school district. Overall, a total of \$2.1 million was awarded with monies allocated to the three districts based upon student enrollment.

The project is entitled Reading Expands All Children's Horizons (REACH), a kindergarten/first grade literacy initiative aimed at increasing student achievement by engaging parents as the child's at-home learning partner. Children will be provided access beyond the school day into homes through 1:1 laptops and reading support media based upon classroom instruction.

According to Anderson, students will be guided by modules called "bytes" in collaboration with Think TV/PBS. These modules, in turn, will be accessed by students/parents through a laptop computer. Both the Crane Center at The Ohio State University and Wright State University serve as partners in this ambitious undertaking.

As part of the grant, each student receives a laptop. "The goal is that parental involvement will increase as a result of having the technology and the modules that will guide and enable

parents and students to work together at home. The resources available from PBS/Think TV make learning fun. Training sessions will ensure parents and children have the skills needed to utilize the laptop safely and effectively.

Secondly, Anderson added, "We want to impact early literacy skills. Each 'byte' will be developed based on state standards and focus on the five fundamental components of literacy."

Curriculum Coordinator Dwayne Thompson is equally as enthusiastic indicating the REACH program is another resource to help our youngest students achieve academically. In recent years, following the state-mandated Third Grade Reading Guarantee legislation, Thompson with reading specialists and staff play a major role in making sure everyone can read.

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Final Months of Construction

Only months remain before first, second and third grade students from Springcreek Primary vacate their present location and walk less than 100 yards into the entrance of their newly-constructed school.

Project Manager Curt South reports Springcreek and Washington Primary Schools are both targeted for opening after the Christmas holidays. The Piqua Central Intermediate School (grades 4-6), located at the former site of Piqua Memorial Hospital on Park Avenue, will open in August 2015.

Although designed to accommodate kindergarten through third grade, both primary schools will not be at full capacity until August 2015. At that time the Springcreek Primary population will include students from Nicklin and Favorite Hill; the Washington Primary population will include students from Nicklin,



Redesign of the PHS Commons area using red and blue.

Favorite Hill and High Street; and Piqua Central Intermediate will include all students from Bennett, Wilder and the learning chalets adjacent to High Street School.

Buildings left vacant will eventually be demolished, noted South, although the Nicklin facility is being considered to remain open for other purposes.

Great Schools at Great Value - Committed to Excellence!

Interior Upgrade at PHS

The spirit of the Piqua Indians is alive and well judging by the transformation of the Commons at Piqua High School. The tan-faded soffits now sport brilliant red and blue panels and Indian insignias. Eight 70-inch television screens are used for instructional purposes during class time and sports/weather channels during the lunch hour.

Principal Tony Lyons and Food Services Director Terri Meyer say the motif complements the predominant blue and red theme used in three new school buildings providing a consistent theme throughout the district.

In addition to upgrading

soffits with colorful fabric panels, Meyer (PHS '81) says digital menu boards have been installed announcing daily food items along with new vending machines adjacent to the gymnasium. Magnetic murals of food items add a pop of color to the exterior of the serving stations. Bistro-type tables and high chairs also complement the renovated area.

Long tables will soon be replaced by round tables and chairs for ease in conversation and collaborative work. Flooring will eventually get a face lift and rope lighting will also be installed to illuminate the Indian logos overhead.

Extended learning areas have been arranged within the lobby and both floors. Groupings of sofas and chairs provide space for students working on projects outside the classroom.



The red and blue color scheme is to be incorporated in all three new buildings, for example, (left) the music room at Springcreek.