



# THE DrumBeat

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OF PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS

## PIQUA STUDENTS ARE SUCCESS BOUND



*PHS Senior Cameron Foster receives instruction from Engineering/STEM Instructor Jennifer Bertke.*

Piqua High School (PHS) Senior Cameron Foster plans to attend Wright State University following graduation and major in mechanical engineering.

Until then the PHS senior hopes to get certified as a state tested nursing assistant (STNA) so she can become employed in a nursing home earning needed money to pay for college.

Junior Blane Ouhl is a football and baseball Phenom who already has his sights set on studying broadcasting or sports communication at the University of Cincinnati. The talented junior is honing his skills as a commentator on “Off the Bench”, a show produced at PHS where Ouhl appears three times weekly to discuss high school, college and professional sports. The show enables him to interview student athletes as well

enlisting in the military or choosing a vocation such as the Peace Corps. Piqua’s Success Bound program has caught the eye of several area school districts that have visited PHS to see firsthand the opportunities offered to our high school students.

In order to prepare everyone for their chosen field, counselors and staff work one-on-one to help students select courses and electives which will prepare them for their years beyond high school. Courses in robotics, engineering, graphic design, broadcasting, nursing and mechatronics are among the newest offerings provided in PHS’s

**“These initiatives allow students to marry the educational world with the business world.”**

A scholar with a 3.95 GPA, he already has a head start having taken robotics and two classes in engineering design. His interest in engineering has further been heightened with field trips to Honda of America in Anna, Crane Pumps & Systems in Piqua and Advanced Composites in Sidney.

Classmate Lilly Kendall was undecided about her future until a year ago when she enrolled in courses at Piqua High School to study medical terminology and anatomy. Today she’s eyeing a career in psychiatric nursing. She plans to attend Edison State Community College to become a registered nurse and pursue studies in mental disorders.

as cover current topics in the sports world. In the near future he’s expected to meet an ESPN broadcaster who can share his experiences with Ouhl.

These students represent a sample of all PHS students who are being afforded unique opportunities to pursue their future dreams here and now thanks to Success Bound, an innovative program which provides graduation readiness for everyone districtwide. Superintendent Dwayne Thompson explains Success Bound is aligned with the State of Ohio’s strategic plan to meet the needs of all graduates whether they are college bound, entering the work force,

500 wing which has been revamped from an “old woodshop wing” into fully-equipped classrooms with modern programs. Want to become a forklift operator after graduation? There’s dedicated space for such equipment where students can become OSHA certified before receiving their diploma. Such offerings have enabled students to “widen my views”, learn basic trades and “figure out what I want to do” in the next chapter of their lives. For Foster and Kendall, it has allowed them to enroll in an elective culinary arts class.

*(Continued on page 2)*

*There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure."*

*Colin Powell*

## Message from the Superintendent

It's hard to believe that the first semester of the 2019-2020 school is over already. We have accomplished a lot the first half of this year and look forward to a strong finish this second semester. On behalf of the Piqua Board of Education and the staff and students of Piqua City Schools, I would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for your continued support. We could not provide the quality programs for our students without the support of the citizens and businesses of the Piqua community! I hope you will join us for the remainder of this year as we showcase our staff and students' talents through our sports, music, and academic programs.

Dwayne Thompson, Superintendent

*(Success Bound - Continued from page 1)*

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Success Bound is the unique partnership Piqua City Schools (PCS) share with Upper Valley Career Center and Edison State Community College. The trio has forged a pathway which enables students to earn credit for their chosen field and be better prepared to enter the world of work following graduation. This is especially helpful, according to PHS Principal Rob Messick, for 60 percent of graduates who opt to enter the world of work. Many are currently participating in apprenticeships or internships to gain work experience. A business advisory council comprised of top local businessmen and women meets regularly to provide guidance to PCS and help plan field trips to various manufacturing facilities to introduce students to a number of fields where opportunities in engineering, computers, human resources and graphic design await them.

The business advisory group mentioned attendance, soft skills (communication) and problem solving and critical thinking as skills needed on the job. A recent Manufacturing Day coordinated under the auspices of the Piqua Area Chamber of Commerce allowed hundreds of students to visit Evenflo, Crane

Pumps, Hartzell, French Oil Mill Machinery Co. and Harmony Systems & Service. These initiatives, suggest Messick, allow students to "marry the educational world with the business world". Such exposure to the global marketplace, he added, shows the importance of good work ethics, punctuality, good attendance and loyalty, which are all traits that are stressed in grades K-12 at PCS.

While many soon-to-be graduates are eyeing a two or four-year degree in May, it is reassuring knowing those who opt for the world of work will be better prepared thanks to educational and business partners who have plenty of job openings available and the ability of students to earn work key points (credits). A 2019 graduate, Mike Schubert, is a prime example of success. While enrolled in engineering classes at PHS, he developed an assembly part on a 3D program now being used by Harmony Systems where he is employed.

While academics and testing are vital to a student's future success, Piqua City Schools are demonstrating "exposure to the workplace and to reality" are equally as important. ■

## SUCCESS BOUND IN ACTION



Forklift safety training in progress.



Nursing Student Lilly Kendall takes Lauren Hammon-White's blood pressure.



Media lab provides expert hands-on experience.

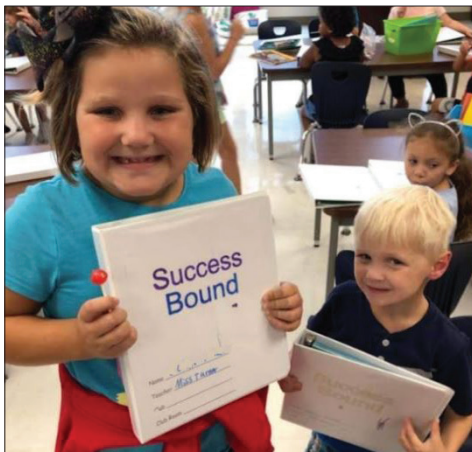


# #Wearepiqua

## PCS PAYS OFF MORTGAGE FOR JR HIGH SCHOOL

Christmas came early for the Piqua community as the district made its **final payment** of \$1.2 million on Dec. 1, to pay off the mortgage of Piqua Junior High School. Treasurer Jeremie Hittle reports the refinancing of bonds allowed the district to retire debt in 19 years rather than 20. As a result, Hittle noted, “We were able to **save the taxpayers** \$865,034 and also **reduce taxes** for our community by 1 mil or \$35.00 on a \$100,000 home”.

Hittle noted, “There is no better feeling than completing this task. In this case our community has completed the task of paying off the Piqua Junior High School one year earlier than expected. We are grateful to have the support needed to make this possible so it is an exciting day for Piqua City Schools.” ■



3rd grader Sophia Palmer helps kindergartners set goals.

## 2019 VETERANS DAY BREAKFAST

Military veterans and family members attended a special Veterans Day Program at Piqua High School where they were recognized for service to their country. Breakfast and special musical entertainment was provided. Superintendent Dwayne Thompson said, “Piqua City Schools values and appreciates all veterans and their families for the many sacrifices they have made to serve our county. It is our pleasure to provide this breakfast to those who have served.” He also noted, “It is important for our students to meet these heroes and show appreciation for their tremendous dedication to preserving life as we know it!” ■



## PIQUA BOARD OF ED WELCOMES NEW MEMBER



Sean Ford, Kelly McMaken, Clint Bostick, Andy Hite, and new member, Steve Frazier

*"Honoring the past to inspire the future."*

*Alumni of Distinction Committee*

## PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS ALUMNI OF DISTINCTION HONOREES ANNOUNCED



William M. Alexander  
Piqua Central High School  
Class of 1927



Terri Hemmert  
Piqua Central High School  
Class of 1966



Sandy Jones  
Piqua Central High School  
Class of 1978



Steven Staley  
Piqua Central High School  
Class of 1973

Piqua City Schools is proud to announce the first Alumni of Distinction Honorees. The Alumni of Distinction Committee reviewed a number of nominations submitted for consideration of this honor. Superintendent, Dwayne Thompson said, "The purpose of the recognition is to honor individuals who through their achievements inspire present-day K-12 Piqua students to establish goals for their future." The Piqua City Schools Alumni of Distinction honorees reinforce and enhance a positive image of the Piqua City Schools both inside and outside the district and foster an increased sense of pride among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and residents of our community. Honorees will be formally recognized at a public event in April 2020. More details will be available at a later date.

### **WILLIAM M. ALEXANDER**

Mr. Alexander began his 45 year-long teaching career at the age of 20 in a one-room schoolhouse in 1930. In 1941 he began teaching for Piqua Schools. World War II moved him from teaching to a draftsman's position with the Piqua Lear Avia plant where he helped design small motors for B-24 aircraft in 1943. He returned to teaching in Piqua in 1948

where he taught at Bennett, Wilder, and Piqua Central High School during the day and at college at night until he retired in 1977. Mr. Alexander worked his way through college due to financial hardships, taking eight years total to earn his degree from Miami University. Because of this, he cared deeply about helping his students with their own education. He offered extra tutoring to those in need throughout his career and advised a number of student groups and activities. Even after retirement, Mr. Alexander tutored a number of students to help them earn their GED. Later in his retirement, he developed bone cancer and became paralyzed but he continued to read and study math books until he died at the age of 87 with a sharp mind.

### **TERRI HEMMERT**

Ms. Hemmert's story is one of a young Piqua girl with a dream that goes into the world with a 'never give up attitude' and excels in her career while giving back significantly to others. As a result, she overcame barriers and found a place in her heart to give back in significant ways. Forging her own path to become a radio DJ, she began

her professional broadcasting career in 1970 at WGLD/Chicago. Later she moved to WXRT where she ultimately became Chicago's first female morning drive personality in 1981. A strong humanitarian and activist, Hemmert has served on the Board of Directors for the Peace Museum, volunteered for the AIDS Pastoral Care Network, and has created music education programs in partnership with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She also serves on the advisory board for the Elmhurst college station, WRSE. Ms. Hemmert's fans may know her best for her highly successful *Breakfast with the Beatles* radio program. Terri Hemmert was inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2010.

### **SANDY JONES**

Mrs. Jones comes from a family of seven children. She worked her way through college and began teaching for the Piqua City School District in 1985. Mrs. Jones spent her whole career teaching first grade at South Street Elementary and Favorite Hill Primary Schools. She spent hours in her classroom each night preparing for her students to enter her classroom each day - but not without a hug first. Mrs. Jones believed that each child had the right to an equal educational opportunity. She clearly understood that all children had dreams and desires and that they wanted to grow up to 'be something.' You never saw Mrs. Jones without a smile nor did you ever hear a negative word come from her about anyone. She had great empathy for others and always sought to be helpful. She was nominated many times by her

*(Continued on page 5)*



More information about the Piqua City Schools Alumni Association or how you can nominate future candidates for this honor can be found here: [piqua.org/alumni.aspx](http://piqua.org/alumni.aspx). Nominations for the 2021 induction are being accepted now through September 30, 2020.

*(Alumni of Distinction continued from page 4)*

peers to be Piqua Teacher of the Year before she secured the well-deserved honor in 2011. In her application for the State Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Jones wrote, “As a graduate of the Piqua City Schools, I can only hope that I, as a teacher, am giving to my students what my teachers gave me - a chance to grow and learn in a loving and caring atmosphere where individualism is truly accepted as well as encouraged”. Those that had Mrs. Jones as a teacher can confirm that she did just that!

#### STEVEN STALEY

Mr. Staley has been a successful businessman in the Piqua Community for many years. Success can be defined in a number of ways, but with Mr. Staley, one important way to describe his success is through his time, dedication to this community, and his efforts to give to others. Always working ‘behind the scenes’ and never putting himself ‘out front’ earned Mr. Staley the honor of Piqua’s Order of George in 2000. Mr. Staley’s outreach has impacted the community’s school district, YMCA, churches, hospital, library, sports and music programs, foundations, The United Way, veterans, and many local clubs and organizations that have community outreach and impact. Citizens of all ages and backgrounds have been impacted by Mr. Staley’s kind contributions financially and most importantly, through the time and volunteerism that he has given over the years. Mr. Staley is an officer with Koverman Staley Dickerson Insurance Agency. He began his career in insurance in 1978 after graduating with a bachelor’s degree in business economics from the College of Wooster. He became a licensed agent and earned the prestigious Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter professional designation. ■

## FARM CAREER DAY

Piqua Central Intermediate School students enjoyed a field trip sponsored by Hartzell Propeller and The Miami County Parks District where they learned about careers related to farming. Skills such as harvesting food, milking cows, and caring for equipment were explored as part of this day. ■



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019



PHS Show Choir entertaining during Senior Citizen Holiday Breakfast.



Blane Ouhl hosts the popular “Off The Bench” program.



2019 Christmas Parade.



PHS Show Choir ‘The Company’ provide holiday entertainment

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The Drum Beat is published and distributed by the Piqua City Schools for district residents, and is also posted on the district website.

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# DATES TO REMEMBER

## FEBRUARY

- 12 PCIS Grade 5 Music Program
- 13 Parent/Teacher Conferences (by appt.)
- 14 Parent/Teacher Conferences Day-No Classes
- 17 President's Day/District Closed

## MARCH

- 10 Springcreek Grade 3 Music Program
- 11-14 PHS Musical "Tarzan"
- 13 Early Dismissal/End of 3rd Grading Period
- 16-23 Spring Break Begins/Classes Resume

## APRIL

- 4 Kindergarten Registration at Washington
- 9 Two-Hour Early Dismissal
- 10 Good Friday/District Closed
- 16 Washington Primary Grade 1 Music Program
- 18 Kindergarten Registration at Springcreek
- 21 Kindergarten Registration at Washington
- 23 Kindergarten Registration at Springcreek
- 25 District Art Show/PCIS
- 30 PJHS play, "The Ransom of Miss Elverna Dower"

## MAY

- 4 PHS/PJHS Spring Band Concert
- 5 PHS Spring Choir Concert
- 6 PJHS Spring Choir Concert
- 13 PCIS Grade 5 Music Program
- 16 PHS Show Choir 'Just Us' Concert
- 19 PCIS Grade 6 Band Concert
- 25 Memorial Day/District Closed
- 29 Class of 2020 Graduation Day; Last Day of Classes



Celebrating Coach Nees' 200th Victory!



Piqua High School Marching Band Takes Honors at Contest