



Where Opportunity Matters

June 2015

THE Drum • Beat

OF THE PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS

Exciting Times Ahead

Our graduates in the Class of 2015 are moving forward to a new stage of their lives with a solid foundation built at Piqua City Schools. Best wishes to our graduates!

On behalf of Piqua City School District students and staff, I want to extend a "thank you" to our community members for the support given to make our district a great place for our students! This has been a very busy year with many changes occurring to help make our district better for the future.

Exciting times are ahead for our district and community! Our building project is coming to completion with the opening of Piqua Central Intermediate School in August. Throughout the summer and into the fall, abatement and demolition will come to completion for all buildings being vacated. Our building project continues on schedule and within budget!

Thanks for the support and have a great summer!

Rick Hanes, Superintendent



@raheducator

CLASS OF 2015

Commencement for PHS Graduates

"Don't let fear of failure deter you from achieving your goal," advised Superintendent of Schools Rick Hanes as he, along with Board of Education members, conferred diplomas on 257 graduating seniors during commencement exercises May 29 inside Garbry Gymnasium.

Quoting former President Abraham Lincoln, Hanes noted, "The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be great. Put another way, we can't be afraid to fail."

During his welcome, he acknowledged the "struggles and triumphs" achieved by members of the Class of 2015 in the past 13 years. Examples of the myriad of risks that have been taken might include "taking that first step into a classroom, onto a field or a stage, answering a question or adding a comment to class discussions."

"Piqua City Schools have enhanced their educational offerings through community and business partnerships, career training programs and chances to earn college credits while still

in high school. These have been all new during your time; however, you took advantage of a new opportunity despite the possibility of failure."

"My wish for each of you is to hold onto this same willingness to try new things and take risks. Decide what is important to you and don't let your fear of failure deter you from achieving your goal. For only those who have risked failure have ever really achieved." He concluded his remarks by suggesting Lincoln failed in business and politics 10 times before becoming elected president in 1860.

Valedictorian Joling Hsiang, daughter of Wen and Yanging Hsiang, was graduated with a 5.46 GPA and plans to attend The Ohio State University where she will major in psychology while taking prerequisite courses for medical school.

As one of three children whose parents immigrated to America from Taiwan, Joling challenged



Salutatorian Kenton Kiser (left) and Valedictorian Joling Hsiang.

fellow graduates, "Don't allow your background to hold you back. It doesn't matter where you came from, possessions, color or race. Don't count your shortcomings and take charge. My dad says, 'If you have the heart, you can break past anything.'"

Salutatorian Kenton Kiser son of Tom and Jenny Kiser, was graduated with a 5.32 GPA and also plans to attend OSU to major in engineering physics. A golf enthusiast, Kiser encouraged classmates, "Challenge yourself and be the best you can be. Experience the life you want to experience, do whatever you want, and accomplish it with feverish enthusiasm."

Scholarships Are Funded for 2015 Grads and Past Grads

Strong donor support and a positive investment climate resulted in a record \$295,500 distributed in scholarships to members of the Class of 2015 and alumni of Piqua High School during the annual Awards Night ceremony on May 27 at the Hartzell Center for the Performing Arts.

Sam Robinson, chairman of the Piqua Education Foundation (PEF) scholarship committee, enthusiastically reports 183 PHS graduates and students currently enrolled in college (Classes of 2012, 2013 and 2014) received a total of \$295,500. The average scholarship awarded amounted to \$1,600.

"The ability to increase our grants from the 2014 level is attributable to both the performance of our investments and continued strong support from our donor community," commented Robinson. "Almost \$140,000 of our scholarship funds come from annual gifts from regular supporters."

He indicated the PEF realized a significant increase in college applicants. "PHS Principal Tony Lyons and the counseling department did a terrific job of encouraging both seniors and college applicants to apply for our scholarships," Robinson said. The scholarship committee granted nine more senior scholarships and 23 more college student scholarships than 2014.

To receive a scholarship, students must meet certain criteria such

as financial need, academic performance, specific interest or talent, and field of study.

The PEF scholarship committee, in addition to Robinson, is comprised of PEF board members Doug Hulme, Bonnie Murray and Soha Shah. Superintendent Rick Hanes also serves on the committee in his capacity as managing director of the PEF. Other PCS representatives on the committee are Tony Lyons, Counseling Department Chair Beth Rosenkranz and Class of 2015 Counselor Lindsay Muhlenkamp.

"After serving as chair of the scholarship committee for over 25 years, Cliff Alexander is now an emeritus member of the committee," noted Robinson. "He was not able to attend our meeting in person but he was certainly among us in spirit."

Donations are always welcome. Individuals can send their tax-deductible contributions to the Piqua Education Foundation, 719 East Ash St. Piqua, OH 45356.



Grads switch mortarboard tassels from right to left at ceremony's conclusion.

PEF Scholarship Recipients:

2015 Graduates

Amanda Ellis, Sean Higgins, Andrew Lamphar, Lauren Ashcraft, Tasha Potts, Kayla Schrubb, Corinne Crawford, Molly Smitley, Hannah Honeycutt, Cole Graeser, Madison Huber, Jordan Kiefer, Kailey Byers, Hannah Went, Michael Anderson, Ashley Gregory, Joshua Homer, Kirstin Malone, Kyrstan Mikolajewski, Summer Ortlieb, Andrew Short, Shelby Bynum, Jacob Karn, Jill Lyons Scholarship, Reganne Tate, Jessica Ford, Heaven Curtis, Kylie Hays, Nicole Peterson, Erik Quinter, Levi Welch, Victoria Whitten, Zachary Adkins, Austin Hall, Charles Graves, Thomas Stein, Michaela Bell, Braygen Saine, Dylan Jacobs, Carrie Beck, Brendan Fries, Kendall Grunkemeyer, Luke Hanes, Alaina Mikolajewski, Andrew Newbright, Eleanor Ryan, Lyric Wyan, Kenton Kiser, Caje Kindred, Jenna Fidelibus, Justin Frey, Madison Hegedus, Jade Piatt, Devin Bragg, Samantha DeBusk, Amy Hall, Joling Hsiang, Tyler Calhoun, Mara Haas, Latiesh Roberts, Austin Sims, McKenzie Stephenson, Dylan Runge, Logan Ernst, Noah Gertner, Dillan Gump, Morgen Grunkemeyer, Marley Huelskamp, Madeline Marshall, Allison Divens, Tyrone Collier Jr., Rebekah Wiles, Alexis Burch-Burns, Ashlynn Hutson, Megan Mullen, Abbigayle Soliday, Braden Wise, Alexis Branam, Corbin Meckstroth, Nicholas Clayton, Ivey Kaye, Clayton Brown Jr., Cecily Stewart, Grady Stewart, Francis Haney, Tate Honeycutt, Hannah Wise, Jessica Apple, Faith Branson, Frehley Mehaffey.

Past Graduates in College

Samuel Roth, Audrey Allen, Myles Conner Ferror, Jonathon Kiefer, Carly Lyman, Devin Magoteaux, Alyssa McKinney, Adam Meyer, Alexandria Rohrbaugh, Hayley Ryan, Catherine Smith, Emily Marie Smith, Ashley Strunk, Austin Tamplin, Layne Wright, Katie Allen, Taylor Bachman, Brandon Baumeister, Taylor Baumeister, Cheryl Bell, Madison Boze, Taylor Bryant, Nathan Burkholder, Channon Collins, Allison Comstock, Teija Davis, Christy Graves, Sarah Grunkemeyer, Levi Hess, Joye Hsiang, Griffen Jennings, Emily Mikolajewski, Sean Murphy, Matthew Stollmer, Alexander Thobe, David Wysong, Olivia Barhorst, Kendra Doak, Sarah D. Palmer, Thomas Brown, Benjamin Crawford, Madison Evans, Isaac Hale, Brenna Heinle, Sierra Dawn Iddings, Mykaila Ingle, Christin Libbee, Bryan Mayse, Kristen McMaster, Alessandra Painter, Sarah Lynn Palmer, John Reedy, Kaele Snapp, Emily Marie Wenrick, Jonathan Wirt, Hannah Ryan, Imari Witten, Blake Zimpher, Kyler Ashton, Jaron Cantrell, Cody Congdon, Joshua Cooley, Andrea Ferree, Jacob Ganger, Danielle Good, Cody Hogston, Josh Holfinger, Levi Homer, Madyson Kuhn, Travis Nees, Jacob Nill, Jared Nill, Alexandra Olds, Christopher Palmer, Katie Stewart, Natalie Thobe, Shelby Vogler, Nathan Wise, Zach Zimpher, Amanda Leggett, William "Brad" Anderson, Courtney Bensman, Abigail Buecker-Berger, Danajha Clemons, Abigail Helman, Madison Hilleary, Victoria Hostetter, Bailey Manning, Kaitlynn McCawley, Carl Stang, Macy Yount, Daniel Monnin, Nicholas Thompson, Caitlin Cromes.

ANNUAL AWARDS FOR Outstanding Achievement

Teacher of the Year

Pam George is an exemplary teacher who is "always willing to go above and beyond to meet the needs of her students". That sentiment was echoed repeatedly by colleagues who nominated the popular music teacher as 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year.

George, who taught first through sixth grades at High Street Primary and Washington Intermediate Schools this past year, was presented with a plaque and a bouquet of flowers by Superintendent Rick Hanes, during a surprise classroom visit.

"Pam's enthusiasm and passion for teaching is truly an inspiration to all that know her," said nominator Sue Subler. "As a music teacher, she not only encourages students to appreciate music and its history, she also is able to open the minds of her students in

understanding how music connects to the world around them." In addition to classroom teaching, George also coaches the fifth and sixth grade bands after school.

An active community member, George co-organized and directed the Youth Chorus for the Piqua 9/11 Day of Remembrance. She also teaches private flute lessons, has been a regional coordinator of Piqua Destination Imagination and is actively involved in church work.



Pam George.



Gary Hornbeck (center) with family members.

Classified Employee of the Year

Gary Hornbeck, selected as the Classified Employee of the Year, is described as the "unseen glue that holds the Piqua City Schools transportation department together." As part of a great team of drivers who routinely go out of their way to ensure safe and efficient school bussing, Hornbeck helps train new drivers, schedule trips, coordinate drivers' routes and resolve the daily issues that arise. In the event there's a shortage of drivers or spur of the moment scheduling dilemma, Hornbeck rises to the challenge. He was also instrumental in the redesign of bus routes for the new school building alignment



Miami County Dental Clinic (left); Gordon Wise (right).

Friends of the School

The Miami County Dental Clinic and **Gordon Wise** have been named as 2015 Friends of the Schools. The dental clinic serves students who otherwise would not have dental services. Staff provide an initial examination for every kindergartner during an annual screening.

Wise has provided a lifetime of energy and dedication serving on numerous PCS committees for bond issues, school levies, facilities planning, the Superintendent's Advisory Council and interacting with first graders in Subler's classroom to develop an "I can" attitude.

Retirements and Years of Service Celebrated at Year's End

Retirees

Fourteen dedicated staff joined the ranks of retirees during the End of Year Staff Celebration on May 29 at the Hartzell Center for the Performing Arts at PHS. As Superintendent Rick Hanes acknowledged each individual, applause resounded throughout the auditorium, beach balls were volleyed overhead and one recipient even wore a banner and sequined tiara presented by her colleagues.

Retirees and number of years of service include the following: Deb Bolen, 18 years; Cheryl

L. Burkhardt, 16 years; Linda DeMange, 30 years; Judy A. Drees, 30 years; Marilyn Malone, 35 years; Vickie J. Miller, 35 years; and Curtis M. Montgomery, 11 years.

Also Kimberly D. Piper, five years; Linda Reason, 21 years; Mike Riley, 27 years; Thomas D. Roeser, 36 years; Fay Shoemaker, 20 years; Kris Stewart, 26 years; and Susan J. Subler, 22 years.

Service Awards

Years of Service Awards were distributed as part of the celebration. Those individuals

recognized included: Marilyn Malone and Vickie Miller, 35 years; Linda DeMange, Judith Drees, Brenda Galley and Becky Jenkins, 30 years; Connie Dowell, Melissa Ferree, Richard Jones, Cynthia Staley and Sherry Tyson, 25 years; and Cathy Barhorst, Joyce Bostick, Diane Fox, Scott Kaye, Linda Reason, Polly Reynolds, Cynthia Saum and Fay Shoemaker, 20 years; and Brad Havener, Erich Heidenreich, Susan Hopkins, Melinda Janson, Holly McElwee, Brenda Newburg, Kathy Schwaiger, Russ Sponsel, Jamie Wion and Angela Younce, 20 years.

Also Amy Boutwell, Heath Butler, Richard Cruikshank, Seth Fashner, Veronica Gaier, Jennie Gearhardt, Mark Goldschmidt, Darrell Hite, Rory Hoke, Misty Iddings, Karen Keeran, Kristen Mitchem, Allison Nickolai, Sarah Patrizio, Eric Pence, Amanda Redinbo, Michelle Robbins and April Vosler, 10 years; and Mara Alexander, Shellie Berkemeier, Larry Bolin, Fred Drapp, Kensey Kahlig, Kim Piper, Nick Schemmel, Jill Shaneyfelt and Allison Subler, five years.

Piqua City Schools
Administrative Offices
719 E. Ash Street
Piqua, OH 45356
937-773-4321
www.piqua.org

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Piqua, OH 45356

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Where Opportunity Matters

State Competition Challenges the Most Talented and Creative

Congratulations to the following Piqua student groups/individuals who excelled outside the classroom:

Symphonic Band, Men's Chorus and Concert Band for Excellent II rating at State OMEA Adjudicated Event.

PHS Science Olympiad Team members who finished third in regionals and competed in State Science Olympiad.

Fourteen students who participated in Southwest Regional Invention Convention.

Ohio Choice Inventor's Award Nominees
Cael Barr,

Bailey Thompson and Rod Walker.

PHS students Andy Mayse and Darby Bulp for superior ratings in Science Fair District Competition.

Six Destination Imagination teams who participated in regional competition.

PHS Students Annie Fletcher and Andy Mayse for superior ratings in Believe in Ohio competition.

PJHS and PHS students who qualified for State History Day competition.



The PHS
Science
Olympiad
Team.

Strong Fiscal Management Helps to Raise District's Credit Rating

Standard & Poor's (S&P) Rating Services has upgraded Piqua City Schools' long-term credit rating from an "A+" to "AA-." This upgrade is due in part to a history of strong community support, very strong general fund reserves and good financial management practices.

"We have taken a conservative approach to managing our finances," said Treasurer Jeremie Hittle. "We have been mindful of the taxpayer's dollars and made adjustments when needed to ensure that Piqua City Schools was in a strong financial position."

S&P's noted that Piqua City Schools is predicting strong cash reserves for the foreseeable future. This surplus is great news and was achieved through income tax and state aid growth, coupled with the district holding the line on health care costs and other expenditures. The S&P analysts considered the financial

management practices of the district as "good."

Another key factor in the rate increase is the strong support from the community. Piqua City Schools' voters have approved seven consecutive new or renewal ballot issues, indicating that they believe in the good value the district provides to the community.

"We are so thankful for the continued support of our community," said Superintendent Rick Hanes. "It is because of this great partnership that we are able to keep great teachers in our new and improved classrooms as well as earn this higher financial rating. This will continue to strengthen the already great opportunities for Piqua students and our community."

You can read S&P's full report about the change in the district's credit rating online at www.piqua.org.