



Where Opportunity Matters

April 2015

# THE Drum • Beat

OF THE PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS

## Opportunity Does Matter!

Great success continues to happen at Piqua City Schools as we stress "Opportunity Matters!"

Academically, our focus on early literacy and math skills has been aided by the "Straight A" grant, which provides over \$1 million to support early literacy in our students' classrooms and homes.

Our commitment to health and wellness has been enhanced with local partnerships with Edison Community College and the YMCA.

On our financial side we continue to operate within our budget projecting finishing in the "black" for an eighth year.

Our extra-curricular activities are also delivering great opportunities for our students beyond the classroom. Many of our winter student programs have qualified for "State" competition.

Rick Hanes, Superintendent

## FITNESS COURSES WITH THE YMCA/EDISON Intensifying Physical Education

In an effort to promote healthy lifestyles, Piqua High School has entered into a collaborative partnership with Edison

Seven YMCA fitness instructors, all adjunct faculty members at Edison Community College, oversee the 70 weekly classes enabling students to receive dual credit for college and meet graduation requirements.

"In 2013 an idea surfaced to supplement and assist PHS youth who had sedentary lifestyles and were not athletes," noted McMaken. The question became 'How can we engage them?' Students voted

which courses they wanted."

Heather Sever, health and wellness instructor at the Piqua YMCA branch, has been instrumental in coordinating the overall physical education program at PHS. Sever, who teaches several yoga/pilates classes, observes "The students are finding a program they like enabling them to become physically fit, perhaps lose some excess pounds and learn more about their bodies."



Community College and the YMCA (Piqua branch) and, according to YMCA Executive Director Jim McMaken, has approximately 275 students "moving, sweating and having fun."

Physical education has been intensified enabling students to burn calories and become energized. Six fitness classes have been introduced on the PHS campus including cardio kickboxing, sports agility, hip hop abs, yoga/pilates, zumba and high intensity interval training.

**Students are taking Zumba classes taught by Abigail Ngoza-Jordan, a YMCA fitness instructor.**



@raheducator



## REACH Helps Parents to Help Their Kids to Read

Engaging parents as learning partners is the ultimate goal of a literacy program being piloted by Piqua City Schools in tandem with the Milton-Union Exempted Village and Franklin-Monroe school districts. A total of \$2.1 million was awarded the districts as part of a Straight A grant made possible by the Ohio Department of Education.

Technology Director Erich Heidenreich and Superintendent Rick Hanes have provided the leadership on the operational side of the program (technology, equipment, security, and training) while Springcreek Principal Teresa Anderson, Tina Watts (Favorite Hill) and Sara Atkinson (Springcreek) are producing the learning modules.

The 36 learning modules (bytes) will enable kindergartners and first graders to grasp reading concepts and will reinforce those concepts at home with touch screen laptop computers. The program, better known as Reading Expands All Children's Horizons (REACH), enables both parents and students to interactively work together at home.

"Modules are reinforced with glossaries and a clear expectation of terms taught in the classroom," notes Watts. Resources have been readily available from PBS/Think TV to make learning fun. The "bytes" are developed based upon state standards and focus on five fundamental components. For example, to enhance the rhyming of words, one module "Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash" focuses on word rhymes, clap/count syllables, and word families such as "at", "cat", "bat" and "sat" complemented by video clips.

Team members anticipate the innovative REACH project will "revolutionize" classroom teaching and provide early learners with a boost on their educational journey. Children will be provided access beyond the school day through the 1:1 learning, interactive content. Useful parental tips and available resources are included with each module. "Computer production," admits Anderson, "has provided us with a whole different world and language."

Both the Crane Center at The

Prospective Washington Primary School kindergartner and her parents (left) examine REACH materials. Favorite Hill Primary School is among pilot schools reviewing laptop bytes (above).

Ohio State University and Wright State University serve as partners in this exciting venture.



Bennett Intermediate School fifth grader Gage Hammer is the new spelling bee champion.



PHS junior Ike Karn placed fifth in state diving competition. This year marked his 100th win and third consecutive trip to state.

PHS boys' and girls' bowling teams recorded an amazing season; boys placed ninth at district.



## REGISTRATION HAS BEGUN

# Countdown to Kindergarten!

Although kindergarten classes for the 2015-2016 school year don't get under way until August 26, parents and their children are already getting a "solid idea of what kindergarten looks like" according to Nicklin Principal Loretta Henderson.

"Countdown to Kindergarten!" represents a totally revamped six-step registration process which began in February. The rigors of the curriculum have also been scrutinized to ensure students have a strong set of reading skills, the ability to write and express themselves, problem solve and develop lifetime social skills.

A kindergarten kickoff was

held in March at both Springcreek and Washington primary schools. As parents and children entered the commons area hand-in-hand, faculty and administration warmly greeted them with skits and other activities.

Superintendent Rick Hanes welcomed this fall's kindergarten class by reminding everyone what Piqua City Schools have to offer: 1) identical facilities in newly-constructed primary schools; 2) all day, every day kindergarten for all students; 3) Chromebook laptops for students to take home as the result of a "Straight A" grant; and 4) caring, wonderful staff.



### Kindergarten awaits nearly 300 Piqua children in August.

"We hope you get an idea of what kindergarten is like," suggested Henderson, who along with staff, rotated kindergartners and their parents from room to room. "We can't wait to find out the unique qualities of your child."

Throughout April, scheduled screenings will take place as parents/guardians continue to discover unique opportunities provided by the school district, submit outstanding paperwork and communicate needed information to staff. An open house on August 20 will enable families to meet their child's teacher and classroom and participate in a special scavenger hunt.

Kindergarten registration is ongoing. Parents may visit the Board of Education office, or call 773-4321, or email hanesr@piqua.org. On August 24 and 25 each child will work individually with their teacher to complete the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and finalize the Countdown to Kindergarten!

**Colton Bachman (#22) scored 1,000 points on the basketball court and is among the top four scorers in Piqua High School's history.**

## Building Construction Reaches the Final Stretch

Staff, students and parents at both Springcreek and Washington are working well together familiarizing themselves with the new facilities, according to Business Coordinator Curt South, who reports "no glitches" since the move was completed prior to Christmas break.

"Due to redistricting, only the populations of the old Springcreek and High Street schools were moved," explains South. "The populations of Nicklin School and Favorite Hill School will move over the summer with both buildings to be fully occupied in August."

Washington School is "100 percent complete" while Springcreek's site work continues throughout summer months. South noted, "This includes finishing the demolition of the old building, constructing the student drop off and staff parking lot, and widening State Route 36."

Piqua Central Intermediate School will be complete in August.



**PHS junior Hunter Bryant placed in Top 10 in Division I wrestling. This is his second year as qualifier.**



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The *DRUM BEAT* is published and distributed quarterly by the Piqua City Schools for district residents, and is also posted on the district website.

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### TREASURER'S REPORT

# Finances Are in Good Shape

The Piqua City School District continues to operate as "good stewards of its fiscal resources," according to Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer Jeremie Hittle, who oversees the district's \$32.5 million annual budget.

"We've been financially operating in the black for the last seven years and are on target to complete our eighth consecutive year on June 30," noted Hittle, who attributes the healthy bottom line to a combined "team effort between

the administration, teachers and the community."

Cost-saving measures have included switching credit card accounts at a savings of between \$7000 and \$8000 and also purchasing natural gas through an Educational Purchasing Council (EPC) consortium adding an additional \$27,262 annually to the district's funds.

"Sometimes you need to do with what you have," he added. "You can't always get more."

Hittle indicated the district has also refinanced a bond issue for Piqua Junior High School enabling the school district to reduce payments by one year at a savings of \$382,746.26 to taxpayers.

"The PJHS facility was scheduled to be paid off in

### Where Opportunity Matters

December 2020; however, we had an opportunity to refinance due to reduced tax rates and did a public offering. We were able to lower our rate from 4.21 percent to 2.89 percent therefore cutting off a year and paying off the bond in December 2019."

## The Public is Invited

Sunday, April 12  
Commemoration of Favorite Hill  
Primary School

Saturday, April 18  
District Art Show

Sunday, April 19  
Commemoration of Nicklin  
Learning Center

Thursday, April 23  
Board of Education Meeting  
6:00 pm at Springcreek

Saturday, April 25  
Commemoration of Bennett  
Intermediate School

Sunday, May 3  
Commemoration of Wilder  
Intermediate School

Thursday, May 14  
Just Us Concert

Saturday, May 16  
Commemoration of High Street  
Primary School

Sunday, May 17  
Baccalaureate

Monday, May 18  
PHS Band Concert

Tuesday, May 19  
PHS Vocal Concert

Wednesday, May 20  
Academic Signing Ceremony

Thursday, May 28  
Board of Education Meeting  
6:00 pm at Washintgon

Friday, May 29  
Graduation

Sunday, June 28  
Dedication of Piqua Central  
Intermediate School

The  
Commemoration  
event at  
Springcreek  
Primary School  
drew a large  
crowd. The  
other schools'  
commemorations  
are scheduled  
this spring (see  
calendar at right.)

