

Dad, teacher big influence

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PIQUA — The rally cry of today's world is

"Do more with less." And, that definitely applies to Piqua City Schools instructor Dustin Hornbeck. The Piqua High

School social studies teacher has taken on more with the additional duties of certified Ohio Northern instructor for PHS's concurrent enroll-

ment program, new president of the teachers' union, after-school study tables coordinator,

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MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO
Piqua High School teacher Dustin Hornbeck talks to his class.

and part-time teacher at the Marion Branch of the Ohio State University. And, there is certainly less of Hornbeck because he has lost more than 160 lbs. since December.

Hornbeck was born and raised in Marion and graduated from Elgin High School in 2003. He was student council president, a state qualifier in speech and debate, and voted by his classmates as Most Likely to Become President. He did the unusual combination of playing football for the Comets and singing lead in the school musicals Titanic and the Music Man.

"The biggest influences in my life are my father Sanford and my high school speech and debate teacher Max Griffith," Hornbeck said. "My Dad was a minister at Grace Fellowship Church in Prospect, Ohio, and he encouraged me in every-



thing I attempted. Mr. Griffith taught me it was okay to be loud." Griffith was a high energy teacher who would jump up on tables or do anything to get the students' involved. "I tried that once," Hornbeck said with a smile. "The table didn't survive."

Hornbeck enrolled at The Ohio State University to major in history and political science. When asked why he chose OSU, he gave the typical alumni reply, "Is there another university?" His career goal was to become a lawyer or a teacher. "I got involved in political action groups at OSU," he said. "That led to several interesting part-time jobs."

During his senior year, he worked for seven months as an aide to State Senator Larry Mumper of the 26th District, Hornbeck's hometown. Later, Hornbeck worked in communications for state auditor Betty Montgomery. "I helped with press releases and speech writing," he said. "It fueled my interest in the political arena."

In 2007, after earning his bachelor's degree from OSU, Hornbeck took a job as a social studies teacher at Mt. Gilead High School. "I taught just about every social studies subject in my two years there," he said. "At night, I completed my master's degree in social studies education at the University of Findlay."

Piqua City Schools called Hornbeck in 2009, and he began teach-

ing at Piqua High School. In his two plus years at PHS, he has taught World Studies, U.S. Studies, Sociology, Advanced Placement Economics, and starting this year, U.S. History under the concurrent enrollment program with Ohio Northern University.

"Juniors and seniors with a 3.0 GPA and a 19 on the ACT can be recommended by a teacher to take the ONU History class," Hornbeck said. "It's a good deal. They receive both high school and ONU credit, which can be transferred to most universities." Hornbeck was trained and certified by ONU to teach this college class. He is considered one of the faculty by Ohio Northern. "Our U.S. History class is planning a trip to Gettysburg this December," he said.

Last December, Hornbeck made a life changing decision. "With the passing of my father last August, I finally decided to get healthy and lose weight," he said. "Now, I am feeling a lot better, and I have much more energy."

The popular social studies teacher was unofficially voted the Most Entertaining Teacher his first year, and last May, was given the I Care Award. The high school staff votes on one person each year who goes above and beyond the norm to help kids and promote the goals of Piqua High School.

In what little spare time he has, Hornbeck enjoys travelling. "I've been to 38 states and four foreign countries." He plays piano and electric keyboard. "I enjoy playing music with my friends," he said. At last spring's talent show, Hornbeck on keyboard and colleague Matt Siefker on drums performed Jerry Lee Lewis's Great Balls of Fire. They were the crowd favorites and got a standing ovation.