



**MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO**  
Rachel Sukel works in her classroom at Wilder Intermediate School last week.



## No such thing as can't for Sukel

**BY JOHN HAUER**

For the Daily Call  
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PIQUA — Do not use the word 'can't' in Rachael Sukel's fourth grade language arts or

social studies classes at Wilder Intermediate School. "We have a 'Can't Jar' in the room, and students can fill out a piece of paper with something they think they can't do," she said. "I read it,

and we work on that can't for the rest of the school year. In May, we review all the papers and see how many became 'can do.'"

**See Sukel/Page 3**

# Sukel

Continued from page 1

Sukel grew up in Amish country in Millersburg, in eastern Ohio. She was the valedictorian of the Class of 2001 at West Holmes High School. She was a cheerleader, a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and National Honor Society, and she played flute in the concert band.

"I always wanted to be a teacher," she said. "My mother worked with pre-school students for Head Start in Millersburg, and I have aunts and uncles who are teachers." Sukel's parents were a huge influence on her. "My mother Deb Massaro taught me to be kind and respect everyone," Sukel said. "My father Doug Akins gave me my drive and taught me to never give up."

Sukel credits her interest in language arts and social studies to two of her teachers. "Mr. Frank, my sixth-grade social studies teacher, made history come alive. He was very animated," she said. "Mrs. Limbacher, my 7th grade English teacher, developed my passion for reading and writing."

Sukel enrolled at the University of Toledo and majored in middle childhood education, grades 4-9. "I chose Toledo because it was the perfect distance from home - not too close, but not a long drive away." Sukel was a member of the Golden Key Honor Society and was active in the Alpha Chi Omega sorority. In 2006, she earned her bachelor's degree. Later, in 2010, she received a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Bowling Green State University.

Her first teaching job was at the Horizon Science Academy, a charter school in Dayton. She was there for one year. "I attended a job fair and met people from Piqua City Schools," she said. "I was hired by PCS to teach fourth grade at Wilder." Sukel teaches about 50 students, half the 4th graders, at Wilder.

"The fourth-graders really like to do the hands-on projects," she said. "I'm a terrible

singer, but I do a rap song about the social studies topic of colonizing America, and the kids get into it and write their own versions. We wrote a song to King George to the background of Taylor Swift's song Mean." Students are assigned famous people they must research and then create a Facebook page for that person. "Many things are possible with today's technology," Sukel said. "Kids can research anything and make very creative presentations."

Sukel states she is lucky to work at Wilder. "The staff is a

very caring and supportive group of people," she said. "We share information, help each other, and work for what is best for all the students." The kids are Sukel's favorite part of teaching. "They are inspiring," she said. "They come to school and are smiling and happy no matter what problems they might be having."

Outside the classroom, she has served on the building Leadership Committee and the district Design Committee for the new buildings. "I am very excited about what is happening on the Design

Committee," she said. "We are making decisions that will impact the students and district for many years to come."

At home, Sukel enjoys reading romances and mysteries, traveling to see family, and bowling. "I'm in a bowling league usually every year," she said. She and her husband Rob, a program administrator for Choices an organization that works with people with disabilities, have been married five years. The couple lives in Piqua with their 'spotted' German Shepherd Milla.