



THE GENERAL'S DISPATCH

Northern Local Schools

February 2012

Dear Generals,

What a wonderful Christmas break we had, except for the lack of snow that is! I can not say as though I wish I could get up more mornings to check roads but it just doesn't seem like winter when the temperatures go from 17 degrees one day to 60 degrees the next! Hopefully the groundhog does not see his shadow and we can move quickly into spring without any more snow days.

We have had an exciting fall with our cross country teams winning the 3 MVL titles and the girl's varsity going to the State meet. Two boys earned ALL-OHIO for the running generals, as well. You can read more about them and view photos on our website. The football team ended another playoff year with a 9-2 record and the volleyball team won the district title! Our band continues to impress during the halftime shows and at their competitions. The

golf team represented the district well during their 2011 matches and look to compete for the MVL in the near future. We are so proud of the character and sportsmanship that all of our student athletes demonstrate and consider ourselves so fortunate to have such young men and women representing the district each and every week. I encourage you to attend our winter sporting events to experience the same level of pride that we all have for our teams!

We were also fortunate to participate in an administrator shadowing program with China in the month of November. This program brought Mr. Zhu Guozhang, principal of Tianmen High School, to our district for a week. This proved to be an exciting visit for our students and our staff. You can read more about the week of activities in the pages to follow.

Finally, our food service department was recently recognized by the state for the Stellar Award for Excellence in nu-

trition. You can see a picture of this amazing staff on our website. They are just another example of the EXCELLENCE we all have come to expect from our GENERALS!

In closing, it is my hope that each of you are able to take the time to enjoy some of our many district activities this spring and that I will get to meet each of you personally so that I may continue to share the many memories our students write daily that serve as a testament that there is no better place to raise a family than right here in the Northern Local School District! Thank you for your continued support of our students!

Yours in Education

Thomas Perkins
Superintendent

Race to the Top

By Angie Gussler,
Curriculum Director

As part of our Race to the Top initiative teachers and administrators on our Formative Instructional Practice (FIP) team continue to provide support for our district teachers in formative instructional strategies and discussions. On December 6th Battelle for Kids organized a District Network Team Summit for all districts in the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative, 5 members of our team provided a round table discussion about our

journey through 9 week assessments, and how they have evolved over the years to meet the needs of our students. At the end of the day our team met to discuss relevant information that was learned to share with our district.

We are encouraging our students to be active participants in their learning. By developing and posting student friendly learning targets in the classroom students should be able to answer the age old question, "What did you learn today?" Northern Local students know what they need to do

to be successful, and where their learning is taking them.

Per Assurance Area C in our Scope of Work, all staff participated in introductory value-added training through Battelle for Kids' learning portal during our January release time. These modules are self driven and were completed either as teacher based teams or individually. By increasing teacher knowledge in value-added we can begin to identify patterns in student growth, and focus high quality instruction to target areas.

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Glenford Elementary School News

Lisa Householder, Principal

I hope that everyone had a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season. We have completed our second nine weeks of school. It's hard to believe that the school year is half over. Glenford Elementary has been very busy the past few months.

Glenford Elementary was fortunate to welcome Zhu Gouzhang, a principal from China, on November 16th. Principal Zhu visited Mrs. Cardiel's and Mrs. Conrad's classroom. Several students and staff members had the opportunity to meet our guests. The lanterns that filled our entrance and office area were created by our fourth grade students to help Principal Zhu feel welcome. Each grade level had student representatives to help welcome our guest.

The Glenford Community is working together on a project called Safe Routes to School. Safe Routes to School is part of a nationwide effort to:

- Improve overall safety on school routes
- Encourage Ohio's school children to bike or walk to school
- Remind all travelers to drive safely in school zones
- Support more school awareness and planning around safety

We asked parents to complete a survey for us about how their child gets to and from school and about walking and biking to school. Thank you to everyone who completed and returned the survey. If the survey was returned their child/children names were put into a drawing for a new bike. The winners of the bicycles were Quincy Johnson and Erica McConaha. Congratulations!

A new sidewalk has been added to Glenford. Longtime Glenford resident and community volunteer, Jim Loughman, was recently given the honor of cutting the ribbon of the "Loughman Walkway". ADR helped to fund the sidewalk enabling area children to have a safer walk to school.

On March 23rd Glenford students will attend an assembly titled "Stronger Than a Bully". This assembly will be packed with important lessons imparted through

lots of audience participation, magic, ventriloquism, role playing, comedy and fun.

Somerset Elementary School News

Ed Wolfel, Principal

The students and staff of Somerset Elementary have had a very eventful second quarter. We hosted several visitors, worked on a number of community projects, and had our Christmas concert, all while coming to school everyday ready to learn something new.

In November, the fourth grade students had the pleasure of meeting Sherry and Kim Black, grandparents of Max and Austin Emmert, as they shared their Native American artifacts. This was a great opportunity for our students to form a connection between what they have read and tangible items from the past. With Christmas right around the corner our visit from Santa Claus was another opportunity for families and friends to visit with each other at Somerset and to watch The Polar Express in the auditorium. Our last day of school was shared with dads and grandpas who attended Donuts with Dad. Thanks to the PTA for all of their help and sponsoring this event.

Just as the community of Somerset helps those in need, so did the students of Somerset Elementary this Christmas by providing support to families in the community. We held a canned food drive in which all of the items collected went to the Somerset Children's Fund. Students in second grade continued their annual civic project which helped a family in our community. This included writing letters to businesses seeking donations, as well as, selling baked goods and other small items to help raise money. In addition to these two events, Somerset Elementary was able to assist other families in our community during the Christmas season.

The results of the fall 3rd grade reading OAA reflect the hard work of our third grade students. Somerset Elementary had a fall passing rate of 74% which alone is great. Comparatively, the state average this year was 59% which shows the dedication to high achievement of our students and staff.

Without the support of the staff, families, and students all the great things happening at Somerset Elementary would not be possible. Thank you!

Thornville Elementary School News

Matt Sheridan, Principal

It is hard to believe that the school year is already halfway over. Students and staff have been very busy with all of the different programming that has been going on at Thornville Elementary in the last quarter.

During the month of November, we held our annual Thanksgiving feast for our students, staff, and a few community members. Our fifth graders served the food, while the third graders provided us with a musical performance. Thanks to the kitchen staff and PTO members that helped to make this event a huge success again this year.

November was also the month of our cookie dough fundraiser. I would like to express my gratitude to all of the students for their hard work and to you, the community members, for purchasing so much cookie dough. We sold over \$14,000 in cookie dough, earning the school over \$5,750. Fundraisers like this one help pay for programming at the school and help to purchase technology. We have been able to nearly double the amount of classrooms that contain SmartBoards. We would also like to thank the Buckeye Lake Moose Lodge 2434 for their continued support of Thornville Elementary. December seemed to quickly pass us by as well. On December 1st, we were visited by the Columbus Children's Theater. They helped kick off the holiday season through their performance of Mr. Scrooge. I would like to thank the PTO for making this performance possible. Also, we were fortunate to have been visited by members of the American Legion on December 7th. These gentlemen presented the school with a new flag and performed a short presentation for Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Thanks again for visiting our building.

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Sheridan Middle School News Rich Warren, Principal

This year the middle school students raised \$2,174.56 for Adopt-A-Child. Each grade did different activities to raise the money with the help of Student Council and National Honor Society. Turkey Teacher was one of the activities used by National Honor Society. Penny More and Pennies for Movies were two organized by Student Council. Spirit pints were awarded for the class that collected the most. Sixth grade collected the most. Eighth grade was second and seventh grade was third. The Meijer store has added an additional 10% (\$217.46) to what we have collected. We are serving 45 middle school students with gift cards to the Meijer store this year. Their Christmas will be a little brighter this year.

Also the Student Council raised \$95.50 in their chain link drive this year. This will be given to a deserving student that has special needs beyond their control. Students bought red and green chain links for 10 cents. They were displayed in the halls before Christmas break and used as decorations at the Christmas dance. Spirit points were awarded to the class with the longest chain. Seventh grade was the longest followed by sixth grade and then eighth.

Mark your calendar for parent-teacher conference night on February 16. Please call for appointments.

Sheridan High School News Rick Caldwell, Principal

On January 5, 2012, the Sheridan FFA Meat Judging Team traveled to Denver, Colorado to compete in the National Western Livestock Show Meat Judging Competition held at Colorado State University. The team placed 9th overall in the nation and the team consisted of Randi Shaw, Robert Householder, Dirk Lewis, Emmalee Ours, Liz Selegue, Cari Koehler, and Ethan McGlothlin.

The Sheridan High School Art Department has been invited to take part in a mural painting project at the Perry County Health Department. The Art Department will be painting specific health related murals on the walls of the Health Department. The high school students

that will be painting the murals are Aubrey Miller, Amanda Paeltz, Rachel Zambito, Megan Taylor, and Makyah Snider.

The PLAN Test was given to the 10th grade students in December and they received their results in January. The PLAN Test: 1) let's us know if they're on track for college 2) points out academic strengths and areas in need of improvement 3) helps them find careers that match their interests 4) provides an estimated ACT score. If you're the parent of a 10th grader, now is a critical time to talk

What you think matters

The Northern Local School District is currently developing a survey that will inform us about what each of you think of Northern students' educational experience in our schools. We will be conducting a phone survey on Monday, March 12, and Thursday, March 15, between the hours of 6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. in an attempt to gather a sense of customer satisfaction. If you see the school number on your caller ID and do not wish to participate, please simply do not answer the phone.

Consolidation isn't what they would like you to believe

The Coalition of Rural Appalachian Schools, the governing body of the schools that united to push for the DeRolph case, have again conducted a study that refutes what many politicians claim to be facts about the benefits of consolidation. I have provided a bulleted summary of their findings for your information and welcome any opportunity to talk further if you are interested in the complete study results. You can view all of CORAS studies that apply to our rural schools on their website at www.coras.org.

-Across the decades, educators, including those in Ohio, have not recommended district consolidation as an economizing measure. (e.g., Cubberley, 1914; Shibley, 1957).

-Before-and-after studies show that consolidation does not save money (e.g., Andrews, Duncombe, & Yinger, 2002; Cox & Cox, 2010; Streifel, Foldes, & Holman, 1991)

-Consolidation damages not only student achievement but also adult earnings (e.g., Kuziemko, 2006; Berry, 2004)

-Consolidation has improved school inputs, and perhaps as a result, schooling has become much, much more expensive (e.g., Hanushek & Rivkin, 1997)

with your son/daughter about the future.

Also, some reminders: we will be having a second parent/teacher conference night this year on Thursday, Feb. 16. This is new this year and we are hoping parents take advantage of this opportunity to visit with second semester teachers. And a reminder that the OGT tests for 10th grade students and Practice OGT for 9th graders will be given March 12 – 16. During that week we will have a 2-hour late arrival for juniors and seniors who have passed the OGT. You will receive more information as we get closer to the date.

The survey will only take between seven and 10 minutes, depending on the length of your responses. We will also be making the survey available on our website in the event you would like to share your thoughts but were unable to take the call survey. We take great pride in the service we provide our students and our community and value your input as parents, grandparents and community members.

Please take the time to complete the short survey so that we can continue to provide the best for our students.

-Small district size helps close the achievement gap by weakening the connection between poverty and achievement (e.g., Friedkin & Necochea, 1989; Howley, 1999, 2002)

-Larger districts and schools impose high achievement costs on the most disadvantaged students, but in some cases they do confer modest achievement benefits to advantaged students (e.g., Friedkin & Necochea, 1989; Howley, 1999, 2002)

-When districts merge, school closures follow: the loss of a school in a community depresses housing prices and undermines overall economic health (Brasington, 2004; Lyson, 2002)

-School districts with an enrollment larger than 3,000, and especially those larger than 15,000, are predictably inefficient and ineffective (Duncombe & Yinger, 2005; Walberg & Fowler, 1987)

-Districts of 3,000 may be fiscally optimal (Andrews et al., 2002), but in Ohio this means that deconsolidation seems a more fiscally and more educationally productive strategy than consolidation, especially since many of the largest Ohio districts enroll large proportions of disadvantaged students.

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United States and China Administrative Shadowing Project



Mr. Wolfel of Somerset Elementary Presents Mr. Zhu with a ceremonial key to the building as a sign of the open invitation to come back to visit.

The Northern Local School District has been very fortunate to have been selected as only one of ten districts in the state of Ohio to host an administrator from China as part of a shadowing project on education. Mr. Zhu Guozhang and his interpreter Claire visited our district from Friday November 11 – November 17. This program provides funding for Mr. Zhu to spend a week in our district observing and learning about the educational programs that we provide to our students. The two were greeted at each of our buildings in grand fashion as our students had spent precious time learning about the culture and history of China in preparation for the event. The guests were very impressed and humbled by the respect and kindness our students and staff demonstrated. They spent time touring each building and interacting with the students, answering questions throughout the day for curious youngsters.

The high school provided a true com-

parison for Mr. Zhu to his usual day as he is the principal of a school that serves grades 10-12. The middle school in China serves 6-9 while the elementary would consist of grades pre-k through grade 5. It was interesting to discover that a true misconception exist in regard to how long students in China attend school. The average school year is very similar to our own with a two month summer break and a variety of holidays. Students in elementary school attend each day for 5 hours, middle school students go

7 hours and high school students attend for 10 hours. It should be noted that a common practice in China is a two hour

rest time (lunch) during the day so that it is not a 10 hour day of instruction.

The entire experience was enlightening and interesting to say the least! I think that exposing our students to a global learning experience will serve them well in making connections as we study different cultures and societies in history. It also afforded them the experience of communication with someone who speaks a foreign language and that it doesn't have to be a barrier to that communication.

Additional pictures of



Glenford students welcome our Chinese visitors.

the visit are available on our website.

“Meet our partner – The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio”

Sheridan High School is one of several in the region to receive a grant from the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio's Walmart Foundation Strive for Excellence Initiative this year. After completing a grant proposal, Sheridan High School received notification that the Foundation would be able to support the Computer Science program with a \$2415 grant.

The Foundation-supported program will provide for the purchase of eight Lego Mindstorms kits to be used within the Computer Science classes at the high school.

The 43 students currently enrolled within two Computer Science classes will be given the opportunity to build robots after completing a study of basic computer science programming techniques and terminology.

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