

## Community Update

12-12-14

Holiday Greetings to all of you! I hope this newsletter finds you doing well and, hopefully, almost done with all of your Christmas preparations!

### In the News

Education news is certainly not lacking as we wind down the calendar year. Ohio, in particular, has had a whirlwind of noteworthy items including the state board of education voting to do away with the “5 of 8 rule” which mandated (within certain guidelines) that schools had to maintain 5 of 8 non-core positions (generally related to social services and the arts). The State Board vote only triggers a legislative review and does not mean that it immediately goes into effect. Proponents of the move claim it will give more local control while opponents argue that it will encourage schools to cut the arts or necessary social services. While I cannot predict the future, I can say that this particular situation does not appear to have any impact upon our district as we currently meet the rule and foresee no reason to not continue to meet the rule as we highly value contributions the arts make to a well-rounded education.

On another note, the Ohio Senate appeared to finish in a flurry of activity which (pending House votes) may impact end-of-course exams for science, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading guarantee, and full-time status for students and graduation requirements. As always, we’ll have to wait and see what survives the legislative process and how the Ohio Department of Education will implement the legislated changes.

Finally, the White House recently unveiled a plan to inject \$1 billion into early education (preschool and Head-Start) aimed at improving access for tens of thousands of students in 18 states. Unfortunately, Ohio was not one of the finalists for the proposed grants. Despite the unsuccessful push for one of these grants, it is quite likely that Ohio will continue to push for increased early educational opportunities for all students. It’s no surprise to see this, though, as we’ve already seen an educational impact from our move to all day Kindergarten from the part-time model we previously used. We continue to focus on investing in our primary grades because we know that if kids can build a strong foundation early on their chances for academic success throughout their school careers improve exponentially.

### School Events

Our students have not disappointed with the elementary and high school Christmas programs thus far. I’m always amazed at the compilation of talent among our students and how quickly they can learn and perform the songs. If you haven’t had a chance to see one of the programs, there’s still one more opportunity at the middle school concert on Tuesday evening.

### Principal Interview Committee

As many of you might know, Mr. Mark Willeke is retiring after 35 amazing years of service to Cory-Rawson. I would be remiss if I didn’t note that 35 years of service at any one place is truly amazing, especially in a career which spanned eras where people would statistically hold between 5-10 different jobs! Mr. Willeke has given so much to this school and community over his career that there is no way we can sufficiently demonstrate our appreciation (but we’ll certainly try to later this year!). In the meantime, though, we must begin the search for someone to take over where he will leave off and take the high school to new heights. To that end, I will be convening a principal interview committee much like we did for last year’s search for a new elementary principal. If you have any interest in serving on this committee please contact my office. Committee members will need to commit at least 4-6 evenings or weekends in January/February for meetings and interviews. Please know, upfront, that we may not be able to accommodate every request because in order to keep the committee efficient and effective it will be limited to 2-3 community/parent representatives and 2-3 staff representatives. Every effort will

be made to create a committee which offers the best representation of our district so we can seek and find the best possible candidate.

### **'Tis the Season**

With the holiday season upon us it's been a blessing to see our school community come together to help those in need. From canned food drives to donations from our staff to families it's been an amazing and generous outpouring of care and kindness. Local agencies, churches, and even individual families have contacted us to offer donations for families. I'm not sure you'll find a more caring community than ours (though I might be a little biased!). It's this type of caring and devotion to neighbors that make Christmas come alive and, I hope, will continue to bless each one of us throughout the year.

### **Congrats and Good Luck!**

Congratulations to the girls' varsity basketball team for their hard-fought victory over Pandora-Gilboa on Thursday night. After losing a tough one against Miller City earlier in the week, the girls bounced back, played tough defense, and kept the pressure on PG all night. Great job girls!

There's quite a bit of action this weekend! The boys' basketball team travels to PG tonight then to Riverdale tomorrow evening. The JH wrestlers travel to Allen East tomorrow. Later in the day, the girls' basketball team travels to USV. Amongst all of that, some of our students will also be traveling to participate in the District Honors Festival rehearsal in Van Wert. Good luck to all the teams this weekend and next week!