

Greetings! I hope this update finds you doing well! If you're looking for something to do tonight or tomorrow come on out and cheer on our boys' basketball team as they look to continue their great play from last Friday when they take on Leipsic. If you're up for traveling you can cheer on our wrestlers at the Thunderbird Invite hosted by LCC tonight and tomorrow. The last time the wrestlers traveled to Lima (2 weeks ago) they placed 8<sup>th</sup> overall and had several top 5 finishers including Isaiah Colvin (3<sup>rd</sup>), Tyler Stoodt, Blaine Peterson, and Dylan Stoops (4<sup>th</sup>), and Logan Korpics (5<sup>th</sup>). Good luck Hornets!

### Events

In addition to the aforementioned events, our band will be traveling to perform at the Ohio Music Educators Association Conference on Thursday. The band, directed by Mrs. Wendi Davis, was selected for this prestigious honor to represent what is possible in an "exemplary, rural program". Our band will perform for music educators from all over the state as part of a session on how to improve rural bands across the state. It would be an outstanding honor to present at this conference once, but this will be the second time they have presented in the last 4 years! Congratulations to our band and Mrs. Davis on being an excellent representation for our school and community!

### KG Registration

Kindergarten registration for Cory-Rawson School District will be held during the week of February 21-24, 2017 in the Elementary Building. Registration hours will be from 9:00 –11:30 a.m. and 12:30 –3:00 p.m. daily. There will also be two evening times available for registration, February 22 and February 23 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Children must be five years old on or before August 1<sup>st</sup> to enroll. A Birth Certificate, dated immunization records, social security number, proof of residency and any custody papers are to be presented at the time of registration. Appointments for the March 23<sup>rd</sup> Kindergarten Screening will be made when you register.

### Legislation and Your Voice

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has released their draft plan to meet the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In short, ESSA replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and is the defining legislation for education policy across the country. Each state must put together a plan as to how they will meet the requirements of ESSA. If you remember from previous updates, I noted that ESSA represented an **opportunity** for a shift, albeit it a small one, to decrease federal control of education and increase state and local control. It also provided an **opportunity** to decrease the amount of testing required by states. The draft plan demonstrates that ODE only partially seized on these opportunities. To ODE's credit, they held numerous meetings across the state to gather stakeholder input prior to developing their plan. Unfortunately, ODE only selected portions of that stakeholder credit and their draft plans clearly **miss some opportunities** to make real and effective changes to education in Ohio. While I encourage you to take some time to read the draft plan, I thought I'd share some highlights with you...

**Testing:** ODE notes that stakeholders wanted to decrease testing (to federally allowed minimums). However, ODE's plan only states that they will "reexamine its testing requirements"...which means there is almost no change to testing in Ohio despite the opportunity to do so.

**Report Card:** ODE states in their plan that they take "pride in the fact that Ohio's [report card] is nationally heralded for its comprehensive, innovative, and easy-to-understand structure. I do not want to purport to speak for everyone, but my personal opinion is that the report card is neither comprehensive nor easy-to-understand. The Report Card, by its definition, is a snapshot in time of learning and does not encompass all that our students do throughout the year. Moreover, it clearly does not tell the whole picture – if education were simply about getting kids to pass a test this might be true. We provide a well-rounded education for our kids – something that isn't measured by a test. Quite frankly, I wish we could provide a better well-rounded education for

our kids – but the current requirements imposed upon us in the form of mandates doesn't allow time to do so.

As for the Report Card being “easy to understand” ...unless I'm missing the boat, from everyone I've talked to including community members, parents, and educators the report card is far from easy to understand. Fortunately, ODE took this claim from stakeholders and have indicated that they will “improve specific report card measures...and use parent surveys to make report cards more user-friendly and understandable”.

- Grad Rate:** While I have little issue with Ohio's graduation rate requirements, I would encourage them to more fairly report the data. Our school has always had stellar graduation ratings; however, Ohio's report requirements have hurt us at least once – we had a student enrolled for less than a week who then moved elsewhere and never graduated. Guess's whose graduation rate that student counts against? Cory-Rawson.
- K-3 Literacy:** ODE noted that stakeholders said the “measure was difficult to understand and caused confusion among parents”. Indeed it does. For example, if you remember, 2 years ago we received no grade because we had so few students who were not at or above the required level. Many saw this “no grade” as a negative rather than a reflection of the work our students and staff did. It would be akin to having a student take 100 point test, they get 99% and the teacher saying I'm not going to grade you because you did so well. Despite such issues, their proposal only claims that they will “explore better alignment...”. In effect, they wish to submit a plan that only claims they will “explore”. One has to wonder why they don't include specific plans...

ESSA Comment/Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ESSAOhioOverview>

ESSA (ODE) Webpage: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA>

ESSA Draft Plan: [http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA/ESSA\\_Framework\\_Report.pdf.aspx](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA/ESSA_Framework_Report.pdf.aspx)

Ohio State Board: <http://education.ohio.gov/State-Board/State-Board-Members>  
District 1 – Linda Haycock – [linda.haycock@education.ohio.gov](mailto:linda.haycock@education.ohio.gov)

Joint Education  
Oversight Committee

Members: <http://jeoc.ohio.gov/about/committee-members>  
District 1 – Senator Cliff Hite – [hite@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:hite@ohiosenate.gov)

There is certainly more to the document and, again, I encourage you to take a look (see link above). **At the very least, please share comments on the comment/survey link (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ESSAOhioOverview>).**

What I cannot encourage strongly enough, though, is for you to contact your state board of education representative and state legislators. For once the federal government has provided us an opportunity for local control - please do not let this opportunity be wasted. Speak up! Tell your representatives that you want more specifics in the plan and are not satisfied with generic claims that they might explore some changes. Tell them that you want real reductions in testing. Tell them to listen to their stakeholders – those they are supposed to represent – and do what is best for kids (and tell them that testing is not always what's best for kids!).