

April 18, 2011

Good afternoon,

Despite some chilly mornings last week, flowering trees and tulips are blooming in Columbus. Like Logan County's Riverside High School, which is featured in today's Spotlight column, I hope you are preparing for a celebration of Earth Day on Friday. I also hope you had an opportunity to not spend the weekend on your taxes, which are required to be filed by tonight (oops- hope that didn't stress anyone out).

At its monthly business meeting last week, the State Board of Education of Ohio appointed Stan W. Heffner as interim Superintendent of Public Instruction, confirming the nomination made on March 29 by the Board's Executive Committee.

Given his history with ODE, Stan clearly understands the complexities of the agency, as well as the many challenges we are facing given the current economic conditions, the proposed budget and potential legislation. His knowledge of these issues is important as the next few months evolve. Stan and I are working collaboratively through the remainder of April to ensure a smooth transition. I wish Stan all the best as he assumes his new role.

This week, the State Board recognized Ohio's 18 buildings that have been selected as [2010 Blue Ribbon Schools](#). This designation identifies a building as being among the top-performing schools in both the state and the nation. These schools have successfully supported students in ways that have yielded consistently higher academic achievement and also significant growth. I congratulate them for their focused work and sustained academic success.

Next week begins the official start of the three-week window for administering the spring Ohio Achievement Assessments. You may wish to remind students and parents about the connection between good nutrition and academic success. Studies have shown a link between eating a healthy breakfast and improved scores on standardized tests. In fact, a 2001 study by the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical Center found that students who regularly ate breakfast at school had higher scores on assessment tests than those who did not eat or ate at home. Read more about this topic [here](#). Also, if your district is not already participating in the U.S. Department of Education's School Breakfast program through ODE, please consider joining in. For more information, review these [Web resources](#) or call (614) 466-2945.

As you know, many of the onetime grants funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will end within calendar year 2011. To provide districts with a maximum opportunity to utilize their ARRA funds without filing a new FY2012 CCIP application, ODE has extended the FY2011 CCIP application obligation period from June 30 to Sept. 30 for these grants. **The liquidation period and Final Expenditure Report (FER) also will have a deadline of Sept. 30.** Please note that the expiring ARRA funds cannot be included in the FY2012 consolidated application schoolwide pool. These changes affect the Title IA, Neglected, Delinquent, School Improvement Part A, McKinney Vento Homeless, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Early Childhood Special Education grants. I encourage both superintendents and treasurers to check their balances in these funds so they do not lose the opportunity to support their general funds.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently sent state education departments a letter addressing the need for specific attendance policies for military children. It is important to remember that, as we enter our nation's 10th year of continuous combat operations, military

children have parents who are on their second, third or fourth deployment. Given the complexities military families face, they definitely need time together during leaves of absence. Duncan points to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children, of which Ohio is a member, for guidance on excused absence policies. The compact specifically states that superintendents of local education agencies are to be given discretionary authority to develop local district policies addressing additional excused absences for military children. You may access the compact [here](#). To further support military families, see the news item below about a free two-day program for educators and families, and find links and other resources on [the ODE website](#).

Best wishes for a great week and let's hope for continued spring-like temps and more flowers!

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle

News items that may be of interest or require follow up are:

- Information about new calamity day legislation posted
- All-day, every-day kindergarten waivers not required for 2011-2012 school year
- Free training sessions to support military families are in May
- Free summer institutes for K-12 teachers accepting applications
- Peace Corps experiences shared online
- Spotlight on Riverside High School

Information about new calamity day legislation posted

House Bill 36, which was approved and immediately effective on April 13, restores the two excused calamity days that previously were cut from the 2010-2011 school year, raising the total number of calamity days for this school year from three to five. In addition, the bill:

- Eliminates the requirement that school districts, STEM schools and chartered nonpublic schools make up the first five (that is, unexcused) calamity days as whole school days; and
- Requires each community school to make up calamity day time to reach the 920 minimum hours in statute, rather than the number of hours stated in the school's contract.

Districts with the minimum school calendar that have used all five excused calamity days have two options for making up all unexcused calamity days: 1) they may use their required contingency days as full days of make-up time, or 2) add time to other school days in 30-minute increments, a practice termed the "extended-day" option. Districts choosing the second option should indicate they are using the extended-day mechanism when completing the calamity day waiver form.

The waiver form and a new guidance document (#2011-001) are posted [here](#) under the *Calamity Day Waiver* heading. In addition, please review the Minimum School Year/School Day Summary for an explanation of relevant Ohio Revised Code requirements. This page also is available by visiting education.ohio.gov and searching for: *forms for traditional schools*.

All-day, every-day kindergarten waivers not required for 2011-2012 school year

With the recent passage of Am. Sub. House Bill 30, waivers from the requirement to provide all-day, every-day kindergarten are no longer required. Beginning in fiscal year 2012, the following

provisions apply to all public school districts, including community school districts:

- School districts may operate all-day kindergarten or extended kindergarten, but are no longer required to provide all-day kindergarten to all students.
- School districts that did not receive poverty-based assistance for all-day kindergarten in fiscal year 2009 may charge tuition or fees for students enrolled in all-day kindergarten. However, if a district charges fees or tuition for all-day kindergarten, the district shall develop a sliding fee scale based on family incomes.

For more information, please click [here](#) or contact ODE's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness at (614) 995-9974 or ELSR@ode.state.oh.us.

Free training sessions to support military families are in May

ODE and the Ohio National Guard are offering two sessions of a nationally recognized training program, titled *Guard and Reserve Institute: Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve*. The free sessions, to be conducted by the Military Child Education Coalition, will take place **May 16-17** in Columbus and **May 19-20** in Blue Ash, outside Cincinnati.

The program is appropriate for all educators, especially K-12 counselors. Members of the National Guard and Reserves and their families also will benefit. Continuing education unit and graduate credits are available. For more information more about the institute, see this [brochure](#), and to register, click [here](#) and scroll down to the date of choice. Other educational opportunities are described at www.militarychild.org. To make hotel reservations at the institute locations, click [here](#) for the Columbus training and [here](#) for the Cincinnati event. Questions may be directed to christine.kane@ode.state.oh.us.

Free summer institutes for K-12 teachers accepting applications

Teachers may enrich their classrooms with new content by attending one of seven free *Summer Institutes for Ohio's K-12 Teachers* planned by the Ohio Humanities Council (OHC). Educational institutions are allowing approximately 200 teachers to study with scholars at the five-day programs, which are funded through OHC grants that are made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Some programs may offer continuing education and graduate credit for a fee. Application deadlines begin this month. Registration details and more information are available [here](#) for the institutes, which are open to any interested educator. The listing below specifies teachers of particular content areas who will be most interested in each program:

- **June 13-17**, *The Scientific Revolution: Science & Society from the Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment*, The Ohio State University Department of History (Columbus) – Middle and high school social studies teachers will study the impact of 16th and 17th century discoveries. Apply by **April 26**.
- **June 20-24**, *River of Slavery, River of Freedom*, University of Rio Grande (Rio Grande) – K-12 teachers of social studies and Ohio history will investigate the Underground Railroad, and the concepts of slavery and freedom in today's world. Apply by **May 20**.
- **June 20-24**, *Ohio's Appalachia: Up River and Hinterland*, Gallia-Vinton Educational Service Center (Rio Grande) – Social studies teachers of grades 3-8 will learn about the stories, culture and folkways of Appalachian Ohio. Apply by **April 22**.
- **July 11-15**, *What Is Human? A Humanities Institute for High School Teachers*, Hiram College (Hiram) – Grade 9-12 English language arts teachers will explore the concept of "human" in classical and contemporary writings. Apply by **April 25**.

- **July 19-22, Chautauqua Civil War Teachers Institute**, Central Ohio Technical College-Coshocton Campus (Coshocton) – K-12 teachers of social studies and history will see scholars portraying historical figures of the 1860s. Apply by **May 1**.
- **July 24-29, Language of Nature: Teaching in Place**, Otterbein University (Westerville) – Grade 4-12 teachers will study contemporary and classic writing about nature and explore the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Apply by **May 20**.
- **August 1-5, Picturing History: Editorial Cartooning in America, 1754-2011**, The Ohio State University (OSU Columbus) – High school teachers (in social studies, communications or art) will explore the history of American editorial cartooning and access primary source materials at the OSU Cartoon Library and Museum. Apply by **May 2**.

Peace Corps experiences shared online

As the Peace Corps celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, OSU's College of Education and Human Ecology is featuring on its [website](#) the related experiences of alumnus Ryan Wertz of ODE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction. A volunteer with the Peace Corps from 1989-1994, Wertz called upon his agricultural roots to teach residents of the Philippines and Panama sustainable agriculture practices that continue to make a difference in their lives. After the Peace Corps, continuing his education at OSU, and teaching Spanish in the Columbus and Hilliard City school districts for nine years, Wertz joined ODE in 2006. As foreign language consultant, he is currently working on updates to Ohio's foreign language content standards, planning professional development for teachers and overseeing several international education programs.

Spotlight on Riverside High School

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) club of Riverside High School in Logan County got a head start on Earth Day activities that many schools will be engaging in this week. Earlier this year, Riverside horticulture and landscape design students gave the high school courtyard a facelift. After trimming shrubs, and removing weeds and dead trees, the students laid down weed-prevention matting and covered it with washed stone. Students also planted grass, spread straw over the seed and watered for proper germination. Craig Sammetinger, agriculture education instructor and FFA advisor, said that a community service project is an annual FFA chapter activity. The activities, he said, "provide an opportunity for FFA members to develop a better understanding of the role civic activities have in society."

Hats off to Riverside students for sprucing up their school's environment!

Note: If your students are engaged in helping their communities and you would like to share what they are doing, send an e-mail to superintendent@ode.state.oh.us and include "Spotlight" and your school or district in the subject line. We also are pleased to receive digital images of these activities.

Follow ODE's Twitter feed by clicking [here](#).