

October 15, 2012

Greetings:

Most of the time, I use this space to discuss policies and practices that impact the daily business of educating our 1.8 million students. Today I want to use part of my message as a reminder of what putting those policies and practices to work looks like at the classroom level.

Earlier this month, I presented Hamilton Township High School math teacher Carole Morbitzer the 2012-2013 Ohio Teacher of the Year award. I was thrilled to be able to surprise Mrs. Morbitzer, who also is the varsity girls' volleyball coach, during a game to benefit cancer research.

Mrs. Morbitzer's accomplishments, which led to her selection, provide a solid example of how regularly following the policies and practices discussed here, either directly or indirectly, can help students to achieve beyond established expectations. Principal Jim Miller said Mrs. Morbitzer loves the challenge of teaching students who dislike or struggle with math. She intersperses traditional methods with new technology and approaches to help her students realize that they can achieve in math. In the past school year, 93 percent of Hamilton Township High School sophomores passed the math portion of the Ohio Graduation Test, which is about 10 percent higher, on average, than at other public schools. Such accomplishment is a tribute to the daily work of Mrs. Morbitzer and her teaching colleagues.

The policies and guidance we offer at the state and federal level play a crucial role in ensuring our children are equipped with the skills to meet the demands of college and careers. While we recognize and celebrate Mrs. Morbitzer's dedication and determination as an example of putting policy into practice at the classroom level, I want to make it clear that she is not alone in her dedication. Ohio has many outstanding teachers dedicated to helping students learn and grow, in and out of the classroom every day; ODE is proud to be a committed partner to helping you help students succeed. Our work is hard; I remain committed to balancing our Agency's compliance role required by statute with the support that is essential to enable Mrs. Morbitzer, you and educators statewide to be successful. Congratulations to Ohio's 2013 Teacher of the Year and finalists!



State Board of Education Member Kristen McKinley and Vice President Tom Gunlock joined me in the surprise presentation to 2013 Teacher of the Year Carole Morbitzer.



2013 Ohio Teacher of the Year Carole Morbitzer (with proclamation,) and this year's finalists, from left to right: Paul LaRue, Washington High School, Washington Court House Schools; Holly Lavender, Liberty Union High School, Liberty Union-Thurston Schools; Tom Gregory, Gahanna Lincoln High School, Gahanna-Jefferson City Schools and Jim Mamer, Rockway Elementary/Middle School, Clark-Shawnee Schools with Acting Superintendent Michael Sawyers were recognized at the State Board of Education's October meeting last week.

Have a great week.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Sawyers

Approaching deadlines or important dates mentioned in previous editions of *EdConnection*

- 10/16** National Stop Bullying video challenge submissions due ([9/4/2012](#))
- 10/17** Completed Race to the Top District Competition grant applications due to ODE ([10/9/12](#))
- 10/19** Statewide Education Conference (Nov.1-2) registration closes ([9/17/2012](#))
- 10/19** Presidential Scholar nominations due ([9/24/2012](#))
- 10/26** Deadline for public comment on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, Restraint and Seclusion draft policy ([10/9/2012](#))
- 10/31** Beginning Principal Mentorship Program grant applications due ([9/17/2012](#))
- 11/1-2** Statewide Education Conference ([10/1/2012](#))
- 11/1** Alternative Compensation System RFPs due ([10/1/2012](#))
- 11/14** National Excellence in Urban Education program applications due ([10/1/2012](#))
- 11/15** Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship second round application period closes ([10/9/2012](#))

For School superintendents and treasurers

Body Mass Index waivers no longer required

As mentioned in the Aug. 20 edition of *EdConnection*, schools are no longer required to conduct Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings for students. Therefore, there is no need to obtain a waiver from ODE.

ODE needs your help offering upgraded Web-format newsletter to teachers

ODE recently converted its long-standing PDF-format newsletter, Tools for Teachers, to a Web-based publication and expanded its scope to include more topics affecting educators. For example, the 97,000 educators now receiving Tools can read the latest from ODE about the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System, academic content standards and Third Grade Reading Guarantee; see informational videos as well as clips from educator conferences; learn about professional and collaborative opportunities; and access links to events, programs and teaching resources. To see the latest issue of Tools, where teachers may subscribe, click [here](#).

This newsletter is presented on WordPress platform, which allows teachers to submit comments and ask

questions. Some districts do block WordPress sites, viewing them as blogs. But according to representatives of Ohio's regional ITCs, districts may direct their ITCs to unblock specific URLs such as, Tools for Teachers'. As superintendent of your district, please consider directing your district's ITC to unblock this specific URL so your teachers may enjoy access to the news and resources Tools contains.

For curriculum directors, teachers and school counselors

Community Service Learning can enhance Ohio's New Learning Standards

As your district works to implement Ohio's New Learning Standards, which apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations, keep in mind ODE's Web-based Community Service Learning (CSL) resources. They include ideas and tools for launching CLS initiatives that will help students apply what they are learning to actual community initiatives.

Current CSL projects underway in Ohio districts represent all academic subjects and occur at all grades. Some high school programs even offer academic credit. For more information, contact Charlotte Jones-Ward at charlotte.jones-ward@education.ohio.gov or (614) 466-8920.

Earth Science Week Focuses on Geoscience Professions

Earth Science Week in Ohio is Oct. 14-20 and emphasizes the opportunities in, and importance of, geoscience careers. Celebrated in conjunction with [National Earth Science Week](#), this year's theme is "Discovering Careers in the Earth Sciences" and focuses on how geoscientists gather and interpret data about the Earth and other planets.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Geological Survey will take part in several events around the state by leading hikes and sharing insights about how earth scientists work both indoors and at field sites to examine and interpret information that benefits society. These events will offer young Ohioans an opportunity to talk to geoscientists and learn more about possible future geoscience careers.

- [Gorge Geology Hike](#) – Black Hand Gorge State Nature Preserve, Newark
Saturday, Oct. 20, 10 a.m.
- [33rd annual Fall Hike](#) – Lake Hope State Park, McArthur
Saturday, Oct. 20, 10 a.m.

The Division of Geological Survey also has available a limited number of Earth Science Week Teacher Toolkits. The toolkits include experiment materials, a calendar, posters, activity sheets and more that teachers can use in the classroom. Toolkits are free for any Ohio teacher, while supplies last, by visiting the [Geologic Records Center](#) in Columbus; by calling (614) 265-6596; or emailing geo.survey@dnr.state.oh.us.

Christopher Columbus Awards program allows students to solve community problems

The Christopher Columbus Awards program challenges middle school students to identify a problem in their community and apply the scientific method to create an innovative solution to that problem. Eight finalist teams and their coaches will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Walt Disney World® to attend National Championship Week and compete for cash prizes and the \$25,000 Columbus Foundation Community Grant, plus a \$200 development grant to further refine their idea. These eight teams also will participate in the Christopher Columbus Academy, an interactive behind-the-scenes look at the science and technology at Walt Disney World®.

Complete details are available [here](#). The deadline for entries is Monday, Feb. 4, 2013. For more information, contact Stephanie Hallman at (800) 291-6020 ext. 3154.

ODE is interested in your thoughts about how EdConnection fulfills your information needs. Please send any comments or suggestions to Superintendent@education.ohio.gov.

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