



WELCOME NEW ADMINISTRATORS



Jamie Hogue is the new principal at Independence High School. Hogue has been principal of Streetsboro High School since 2014. Prior to that, he was the assistant principal. He began his career in education as an English teacher.



Mike Janatovich is the new principal of Cuyahoga Heights Middle and High School. Janatovich began his teaching career as a middle school science teacher at Cuyahoga Heights, then moved on to Aurora Schools where he was a middle school assistant principal and an elementary principal.



Matt Young returns to Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools as assistant superintendent after spending two years at Summit County ESC as Director of Curriculum & Instruction. Young previously served as Cuyahoga Heights Middle/High School Principal.

News from BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

School readiness starts early with Parents as Teachers program

Will my child be ready for school when the time comes? That is one of the many questions new parents are trying to answer for their babies and toddlers; especially during these uncertain, atypical times brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

But for families in Cuyahoga County, the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program continues to offer support for optimal early childhood development. One of the main goals of the program: school readiness! PAT enrollment is open to families with a child from birth to age three, but services can continue up to kindergarten. The program provides parents with the knowledge and tools to support the health and development of young children at every stage. All services are home-based or virtual, voluntary, and at no cost to families.

"Many children in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County begin their first day of kindergarten already behind," says Tom Wetzal, the Parents as Teachers manager with Bright Beginnings. "The pandemic only increases the need for PAT. Children develop through interactions with others, experiences and activities that are now limited to families for safety and/or economic reasons. Think about libraries, day cares, playgrounds, museums, etc. PAT can help fill the void."

Through PAT, parents and caregivers can also join the online parenting support group, Parents Connect, to share resources and experiences. Parents Connect was the first of its kind to use Facebook for program participants in alignment with program goals.

The Parents Connect initiative has been so successful in recent years that it received a grant from the Bruening Foundation to conduct a formal evaluation and to create a manual that could be used by other programs. Over the last two years, PAT programs nationwide have created their own social media parent groups based on Parents Connect. At this year's Parents as Teachers International Conference, PAT leadership in Cuyahoga County fielded questions about how other programs can improve engagement. "Parents Connect has become more valuable with the pandemic so parents, who may be more isolated now and limited in their ability to get together with other parents and children, can have a platform to interact with others," Wetzal added.

To connect families to PAT or other evidence-based Home Visiting programs, school leaders can start the referral process at brightbeginningskids.org or call (216) 698-7500. Parents as Teachers at Bright Beginnings is proud to be an affiliate of the Parents as Teachers National Center. ■



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ESC OF NORTHEAST OHIO HELPS SCHOOL FAMILIES "START SMART AND STAY SMART" DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

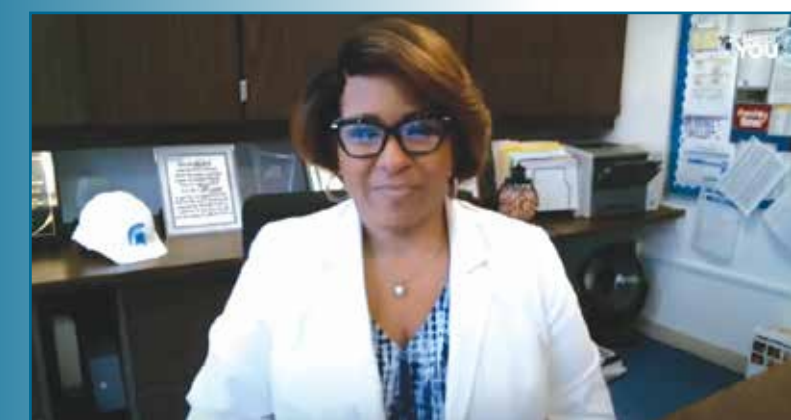
As part of the U.S. Department of Education grant Project Prevent, the Educational Service Center (ESC) of Northeast Ohio worked in partnership with WKYC TV3 and iHeart radio in August and September to create a public service campaign to engage students, families and staff and connect them to resources and linkage as they transition back to school.

The Start Smart/Stay Smart Campaign included messages to parents and students about easing fears, concerns, anxieties and questions about returning to school in the fall during this COVID-19 pandemic. Parents/guardians play an essential role in understanding and supporting the needs of their youth. This campaign enhanced links between districts, internal mental health supports and community providers to ensure impacted students and their families are successful in the transition.

Superintendent Dr. Renee Willis of Richmond Heights Local Schools was a guest on WKYC TV3's "It's About You" show as well as an interview segment on iHeart radio. She discussed how the top priority of superintendents has become safety of their students and staff because of this global pandemic. After safety was addressed, academic fidelity, student achievement, developmental appropriateness all came next in establishing district reopening plans. ■



"Our hearts are with our parents as they try to manage this new way of learning while managing their own work schedules and mental well-being. I encourage you to take care of your child's safety first, their social/emotional well-being, and help your child feel safe during these unpredictable times. Students won't remember the social studies lessons they had. They are going to remember how they felt during this pandemic. Their children's children are going to be reading about this time in textbooks. They are going to read about how their grandparents or parents survived this global pandemic of 2020. So let's take care of their social/emotional well-being first by creating a village to support our children now."
- Dr. Renee Willis, Superintendent, Richmond Heights Local Schools



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Recognizing students, peers & educators

Although the 2020 Excellence in Education Awards ceremony was not celebrated in May this year due to restrictions of COVID-19, the celebration of those nominees by districts of educators, students with disabilities, and peers were recognized in a video.

The Outstanding Student Achievement Award acknowledges achievements of school-age children and youth with disabilities in Northeast Ohio.

The Outstanding Peer Achievement Award recognizes students without disabilities who serve as exemplary role models by assisting students with disabilities and establishing positive relationships with them.

The Outstanding Educator Achievement Award honors educators who are the exemplars in designing instructional strategies and programs.

"I want to sincerely congratulate your district nominees for the Excellence in Education Awards," said Superintendent Dr. Bob Mengerink, ESC of Northeast Ohio. "Without a doubt, this unprecedented school year has taught a lot of us about resilience and how we can all work together to create so many positive changes in spite of a lot of unknowns. While many of us are just now truly testing our resilience, all of this year's nominees for the Excellence in Education Awards have been demonstrating resilience and nurturing resilience in others for a very long time."

Congratulations to these individuals...

Independence Local Schools

Ben Cober – Outstanding Student Achievement Award



Ben Cober is a middle school student at Independence Middle School. During the second quarter, Ben was able to develop his passion within the Genius Hour, a course designed to give students time and choice

to pursue an area of focus within the school day. This opportunity really let Ben shine. He was extremely self-driven and held himself to very high standards. He spent the first half of the class researching and reading everything he could get his hands on about World War II, specifically Tiger Tanks which is something he is very passionate about. Ben was detailed in the creation of his plan and weekly goals. He read thousands of pages even through his recess time. He retained everything he read and shared his knowledge with his peers when he would report out. Ben did not stop there. He started to build a tank using a 545 piece LEGO tank set which he assembled in 30 minutes. He created a book to aid his model and a diorama for his tank. Although this was a personal passion for Ben, he helped raise the bar for his peers through his role modeling.

Dana Wolf – Outstanding Educator Achievement Award



Dana Wolf is an intervention specialist at Independence Middle School. Her level of calmness has proven time and time again just how welcoming of a person she is for all fortunate enough to work with her on a daily basis. Dana's communication skills are second to none with both parents and students. Dana helps design and implement engaging and fun lessons for all students. She has been known to dress up in character to add authenticity as well. Dana goes above and beyond in her design to ensure the learning objectives are achievable for each and every student. She looks at the whole child, not just their academics.

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

Brent Blasinsky - Outstanding Student Achievement Award

Brent Blasinsky graduated from Cuyahoga Heights High School in 2020. He was an excellent contributor to the Cuyahoga Heights community and grew significantly as both a person and a student during his time at the



high school. Brent found math challenging, but, as a senior, he earned excellent grades in a challenging math class. He also took time to work with students in the community room, using his winning personality and life experiences to meaningfully connect with students. He was an active member of our sports teams and contributes to his community by working as a lifeguard at the pool. Brent truly used his four years at Cuyahoga Heights to grow into a person ready to enter the post-secondary world.

Kyle Galvey – Outstanding Peer Achievement Award



Kyle Galvey graduated from Cuyahoga Heights High School in 2020. He is attending Bowling Green State University studying to become an intervention specialist. Kyle volunteered at the elementary school resource room three days a week to help and interact with students. He read with students and helped them with their activities. Kyle already possesses so many skills that will make him a fantastic Intervention

Specialist someday. He doesn't get phased when things don't go smoothly, and has a calm, caring way of encouraging students to do their best work. He excels academically, athletically and socially in the school community. He is a leader in the classroom and on the playing field. Some people are natural teachers and Kyle is one of those people.

Dr. Brian Friedt – Outstanding Educator Achievement Award



Dr Brian Friedt has dedicated his career to expanding and improving opportunities for children and youth with disabilities in the school and general community. His focus on career readiness and transition planning in Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools has provided countless students with the skills to obtain gainful employment upon graduation. Prior to the start of the 2019-20 school year, we had a late resignation that resulted in the need to hire an additional teacher to work with our most significantly disabled students. Dr. Friedt volunteered to take on the assignment while simultaneously mentoring a student teacher. Not only did Dr. Friedt survive in his new placement, but he thrived, taking student development in the community room to new heights. Dr. Friedt understands that the fostering of positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues is one of the foundations of a caring and productive learning environment. His gentle demeanor and relentless dedication to student success is infectious. Dr. Friedt believes that a disability does not define an individual. In fact, he provides support to any student in need. Seldom will one find Dr. Friedt not working with a student, whether it is before school, during his planning period, his lunch break, or after school. When he is not working directly with a student, he is most certainly collaborating with another staff member to help a student in need. ■

HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS RECOGNIZED

The ESC of Northeast Ohio named several students as recipients of their annual Humanitarian Awards. Recipients were nominated by administrators in their schools for showing leadership and community service as well as possessing great character during the 2019-20 school year. One student from each middle and high school in the communities of **Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights Local Schools** received scholarships and awards. In addition to a cash award, students receive a personalized plaque, starfish pin, and starfish bookmark. The starfish is the symbol of a story of the impact one person can make in a community. ■



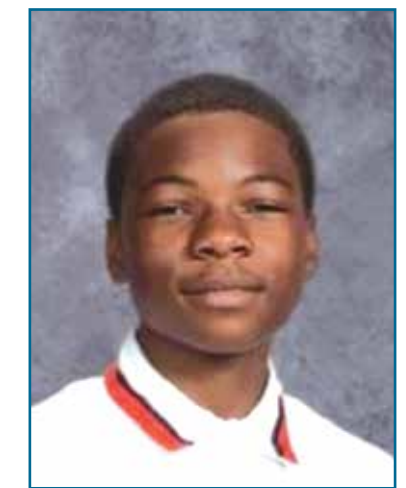
Cuyahoga Heights Middle School Bradyn Rusch, 8th grade

Bradyn continuously looks out for the welfare of his classmates and teachers. His acts of kindness are often unexpected and unsolicited. If Bradyn sees someone in need, he always steps in and offers help. He has a natural ability to shun pettiness and unkind behavior while encouraging others to be considerate.



Independence Middle School Emily Richards, 8th grade

Emily Richards has gone above and beyond all school year. Even before school started, she demonstrated her leadership skills as an eighth-grade WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) leader. She was the president of Student Council. Her kindness, leadership and determination will be greatly missed at Independence Middle School.



Richmond Heights Secondary School Tae Boze, 8th grade

Tae is a thoughtful, hard-working student who lends a mature voice to class discussions. Outside of academic work, Tae also shines. He's a leader, but never one to seek the spotlight; instead, he prefers to stand back and excel. Tae is endlessly patient, kind, and encouraging, unknowingly serving as a quiet role model for all students. Tae was Student Council president and led the Leadership Conference. He also volunteered at a food bank. Tae played baseball and basketball. He also was a merit roll student every quarter.



Cuyahoga Heights High School Kyle Galvey, Senior

Kyle has a passion to help the special needs community. He has worked at Camp Pals for the past two summers and is a regular volunteer at Jacob's Ladder Special Needs Fitness classes. Kyle is caring and patient and is great at connecting with the participants. His enthusiasm is contagious; therefore the kids love being around him. He has shown new students around the building, he has shared study tips with students struggling to pass tests, and he has taken the awkward or outcast under his wing. Kyle's career choice also speaks to his character - working with the disabled to make a positive difference in their lives.



Independence High School Carolyn Klima, Senior

Carolyn earned more than 267 service hours, which is the most of any student in the Class of 2020. She was in the top academic 10 of her class and challenged herself with rigorous courses. Carolyn also was a member of the Marching Band and Key Club.



Richmond Heights Secondary School Alyssa Bartley, Senior

Alyssa is a natural born leader who displays leadership in everyday activities. A member of the National Honor Society, she also attended the medical assisting program through the Excel TECC Consortium. She was actively involved in Student Council, College Bound Spartan Scholars and president of her class for all four years in high school. She volunteers at Harbor Light and also received the Humanitarian Award at Diversity Camp.



*Congratulations,
Humanitarian Award Recipients*