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 Jaratovich is the new principal of Cuyahoga Heights Middle and High School. Jaratovich 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, and at no cost to families.

“Many children in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County begin their first day of kindergarten already behind,” says Tom Wetzel, 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 Browning 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,” Wetzel 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.

Parents as Teachers
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We build bridges for... Educators • Districts • Agencies • Organizations • Universities & Colleges Students • Adult Learners • Families & Communities • Businesses

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 linkages 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

Resources are still available on the website www.startsmartNEO.org

The ESC
Community Connection

For...
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. They show a deep commitment to helping every student achieve his or her potential.

The Achievement Award is given for contributions to the local schools in the Northeast Ohio area. It is an honor that recognizes excellence in education.

The Need for Hope Award is given to a student who has demonstrated resilience and determination in the face of adversity. It celebrates the determination of those who have shown courage in the face of challenges.

The Role Model Award is given to a student who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to their community through volunteer work or other community service.

The Humanitarian Award is given to a student who has demonstrated a commitment to helping others and making a positive impact on their community.

The Excellence Award is given to a student who has demonstrated excellence in their academic work and community involvement.

The Positive Impact Award is given to a student who has demonstrated positive impact on their peers and the community.

The Sportsmanship Award is given to a student who has demonstrated good sportsmanship and fair play.

The Inspiration Award is given to a student who has demonstrated inspiration to others through their actions and behaviors.

The Integrity Award is given to a student who has demonstrated integrity and honesty in their actions and decisions.

The Leadership Award is given to a student who has demonstrated leadership and responsibility in their role as a student.

The Community Service Award is given to a student who has demonstrated a commitment to community service and making a positive impact on their community.

The Creativity Award is given to a student who has demonstrated creativity in their work and projects.

The Innovation Award is given to a student who has demonstrated innovation in their work and projects.

The Ethics Award is given to a student who has demonstrated ethics and moral principles in their actions and decisions.

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