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The ESC Community Connection

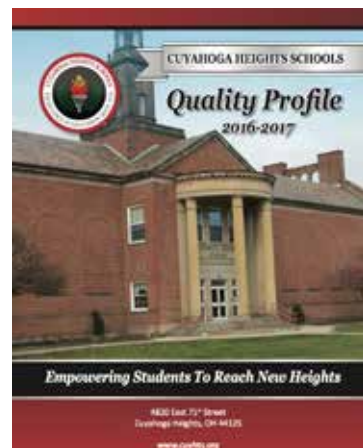
The Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County
The Bridge to Educational Excellence

Local School Districts Publish Quality Profiles

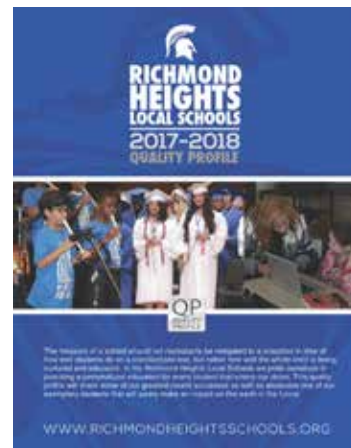
Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights Local Schools have published a Quality Profile. Each district has placed its Quality Profile on its website. Be sure to take a few moments to review your district's document.



Independence Local Schools
www.independence.k12.oh.us



Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools
www.cuyhts.k12.oh.us



Richmond Heights Local Schools
<http://www.richmondheightsschools.org>

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Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools - Independence Local Schools - Richmond Heights Local Schools

Richmond Heights Resident Graduates from the ESC School Program

The ESC School Program, formerly the Rose-Mary Center School, held its graduation on June 2nd. Congratulations to Diane who has been a student since January 2007. Richmond Heights Local Schools presented her diploma to her. Following the ceremony, a reception was held. Diane was one of five graduates, all of whom will be transitioning to an adult provider service.



Cuyahoga Heights Elementary Teacher Named State Finalist for Ohio Teacher of the Year

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools' Kindergarten Teacher Dr. Matthew Luginbill was named a state finalist for the 2018 Ohio Teacher of the Year award, in addition to being recognized as the 2018 Teacher of the Year for State Board of Education District 11. The award program recognizes influential and inspiring educators in the State of Ohio. The winner of the 2018 Ohio Teacher of the Year award will be selected by a panel of education and community stakeholders, and announced during the fall of 2017.

An early childhood educator for the past 15 years, Dr. Luginbill's passion for helping students learn is evident in his innovative and creative use of 21st century technology in the classroom, as well as his ability to connect content to real-world experiences. Dr. Luginbill has also demonstrated a commitment to professional development and lifelong learning by recently earning a doctorate from the urban education program at Cleveland State University.

"Teachers are changing lives and creating futures – not only for the students, but for our communities, our state and our nation," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria. "The Ohio Teacher of the Year program recognizes influential and inspiring educators who demonstrate some of the things I love most about teachers: they take our system to higher heights and continue the path toward excellence."



Independence Local Schools Language Arts Teacher Recognized for Power of the Pen

In addition to being a Language Arts teacher at Independence Middle School, Jill Wagner is also the adviser to the school's Power of the Pen team. The Power of the Pen is an educational enhancement program that aims to have interscholastic tournament competitions for young writers throughout Ohio. It also assists teachers by providing tools and an educational network to develop better student writing.

Wagner decided to start a Power of the Pen (PenOhio) team at Independence High School, as well. Her team competed last year, taking Second Place in the Junior Varsity division. This year, Wagner added a Varsity level to the team. The teams have virtual and in-person meetings with Wagner, and will compete in two or more writing competitions this year. "We are trying to have high-school writing become more of a competitive sport. Concerning Independence, I am hoping to start a scholarship for future writers and have students earn Varsity letters in writing," said Wagner. Her hope statewide is to add more high-school writing teams.

Due to her successful competitions and hopes for the program, Wagner was chosen to be a member of the United Fellowship of the Pen Board of Trustees. Additionally, she earned the 2017 Ohio Middle Level Association (OMLA) Regional Award for best middle level practice. The criteria for the award are: the nominee is involved at the local, regional and state levels and they promote the middle school concepts through programs, leadership, or research. Wagner will be recognized at the Awards Reception at the 2017 Ohio Middle Level State Conference at the Hilton at Easton in Columbus on Thursday, Nov. 2nd.



We Build Bridges For . . .

Educators • Districts • Agencies • Organizations
Universities & Colleges • Students • Adult Learners • Families & Communities • Businesses

Richmond Heights Schools Partner with Ohio Online Learning Program for World Language Courses

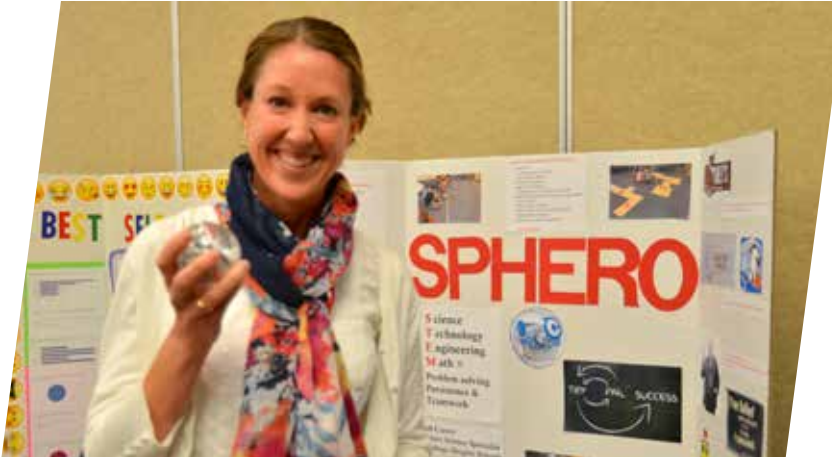
This year, Richmond Heights Middle and High School students can complete their World Language courses online. They have partnered with the Ohio Online Learning Program (OOLP) to enroll more than 120 students in multiple levels of Spanish and French. Joy Childress, World Languages Teacher at the district, is facilitating the program offering support as needed with the help of an OOLP Student Learning Advocate. This opportunity, along with other online courses, gives every student within Richmond Heights Secondary School the ability to experience online learning which is something inevitably they will encounter in the future. Superintendent Dr. Renee Willis has indicated that this type of "blended learning" model affords students with various World Language choices that would not otherwise be possible, as finding certified teachers in those areas is difficult.



First Ring Leadership Academy Graduates

The First Ring Leadership Academy is a professional development group for newly appointed administrators and teacher leaders, coordinated through the First Ring Superintendents' Collaborative. Twenty-one educators graduated from the 2016-17 class this past spring. Once a month, they came together to assist each other in advancing their professional knowledge and expertise. They discussed important issues such as poverty, mobility, and cultural diversity. Whether it is providing instructional strategies, building relationships, or creating a culture that supports the academic and social emotional needs of students, teacher leaders are important to our schools.

Congratulations to Barb Curry of Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools and Nia Davis of Richmond Heights Local Schools for being members of the 12th graduating class of the Leadership Academy. Both Curry and Davis presented to their peers and superintendents during the final meeting of the year this past May. Curry discussed the grant she received for sphero robots and a 3D printer, as well as the school's "STEM Coding Club," while Davis shared her views on "Cultivating a Culture of High Expectations--making sure each student knows college is a viable option for them."



Excellence in Education Awards

The Educational Service Center (ESC) of Cuyahoga County recognized Independence High School recent graduate Maria Sagi with a 2017 Excellence in Education Peer Achievement Award. Mary Bertoncin, staff member at Independence High School, received the Outstanding Educator Achievement Award. The recognition brunch, held on May 15th at Woodside Event Center at St. Michael's in Broadview Heights, was an opportunity for educators, teachers, students, and community members to celebrate the great things that are happening in special education today. Students, peers, and educators received awards. The Outstanding Peer Achievement Award recognizes students who have established positive relationships, assisted other students with disabilities, and have been exemplary role models. The Outstanding Educator Achievement Award honors educators and educational teams who are the exemplars in designing instructional strategies and programs.

work with Mary for the past eight years," said Director of Pupil Services Sandy McCullough, Independence Local Schools. "Her dedication to the students is exemplary. Mary is kind, caring and always puts the best interest of her students first. Some days are more challenging than others, but regardless of the circumstances, Mary always does her job with a smile. She is a team player and willing to do anything which is asked of her."

Maria Sagi, a recent graduate of Independence High school, developed a special friendship with fellow student Marissa Kovach. Marissa writes, "When I first transitioned from the middle school in January, I was assigned to the iced coffee station in our classroom cafe. Maria would come to the station daily and always complimented my fun, colorful socks! She also wore fun socks. As time went on, we grew to admire one another and started a friendship. When I would not be in school, Maria would leave me friendship notes letting me know she missed me and was thinking of me, which always made me feel special. Not only did Maria go out of her way to talk with me, she also included the other students in our cafe. Maria's compassionate character shines brightly wherever she goes."

Mary Bertoncin has been employed with the Independence Local Schools for 21 years. In her role as a paraprofessional, working with students with multiple disabilities, Mary has touched many lives. "I have had the pleasure to



Humanitarian Award Recipients: 2016-17 School Year

The ESC of Cuyahoga County recently named several area 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 2016-17 school year. One student from each middle and high school in the communities of Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights Local Schools

received the scholarships and awards. The awards were presented by ESC board members and administration during their individual schools' award assemblies during the months of May and June. 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.

Recipients from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools



Monica Menkhaus, eighth grader at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School

Monica continuously looks out for the welfare of her classmates and is always offering a helping hand to her teachers. Her acts of kindness are always unsolicited; Monica sees a need and does not think twice about stepping in and offering help.

She has a natural ability to shun pettiness and gossip and encourage generosity and friendship. Monica is the epitome of a wonderful humanitarian and a concerned citizen. ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. presented the award.



Hannah Michalski, senior at Cuyahoga Heights High School

Hannah has unwavering compassion for students, adults, and animals, especially dogs and reptiles, and the environment. Hannah completed 624.75 hours of community service. Many of those hours were spent volunteering with the Girl Scouts, the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Crew, and the Blue Wave Swim Team. She won the Silver President's Award during her junior year for outstanding service to her community. Hannah selflessly gives of

her personal time and can often be found heading up committees collecting non-perishables for a food drive or donation items for the animal shelter. She is a calm, gentle voice of caring and concern toward her peers and is always ready with a comforting hug. Hannah does not seek attention for herself, but celebrates others who are in the spotlight. She is a young woman who is a friend to everyone, grades 9-12. Cuyahoga Heights Board Member Dr. Holly Thacker presented the award.

Recipients from Independence Local Schools



Alyssa Pallini, eighth grader at Independence Middle School

Alyssa exhibits herself with grace and moral fortitude in every class, school club or athletic team in which she participates. These values include understanding and respect to support the pivotal points in the lives of her peers, teachers and coaches. She exhibits respect and responsibility while working cooperatively with the other members of the end-of-year committee. Alyssa is the constant and always honors her responsibilities in a timely and polite

manner. She is a leader. Other teachers describe her as being conscientious, respectful and kind, and willing to help others at any time. Yet, she is willing to offer her opinion at a moment's notice, but that comment is never hurtful or mean. She has sensitivity, a type of innocence that is remarkable. ESC Board Member Carol Fortlage presented the award.



Jesse Belitz, senior at Independence High School

Jesse is a true leader who others look up to. He has more than 700 hours of community service and is also class president.

Jesse is a distinguished student and outstanding musician. He is a great representative of Independence Local Schools and the City of Independence. ESC Vice President Christine Krol presented the award.

Recipients from Richmond Heights Local Schools



Rayna Williamson, eighth grader at Richmond Heights Middle School

Rayna is an outstanding student who shows promise inside and outside of the classroom. She is always willing to help others during class time. Every first period, she makes it a habit to help escort a student around the building. She is the president of the middle school student council and a member of our volleyball and track team at Richmond Heights. She volunteers at the homeless shelter to help other people in need. She is a leader and a true definition of a humanitarian. ESC Board Member Tony Hocesvar presented the award.



Yasmine Thornton, senior at Richmond Heights Secondary School

Yasmine is a well-rounded young lady who always thinks of others first before herself. She is a part of the Excel Tech program consortium where she studies early childhood education in hopes of teaching young children. Yasmine served as the Secretary of her Senior Class providing a whole new outlook on the role of an officer. Yasmine travels to the elementary school a few days a week to read to them. This not only allows Yasmine to fulfill her passion of teaching young children but it thrusts her unknowingly into the position of a role model.

Yasmine has been an honor/merit roll student her entire academic career, is a member of the prestigious National Honor Society, as well as College Bound Spartan Students. She gives of herself tirelessly to her classmates by offering to tutor them to successfully complete course requirements. ESC Board President Tony Miceli presented the award.