

Garfield Heights City Schools

A publication designed to keep an open line of communication with the community.

OPEN LINE



Superintendent's Report



*Superintendent
Terry Olszewski*

The 2017-2018 School Year officially began on Tuesday, August 15, 2017 as students and staff shrugged off their summers to return to the classroom once again. The first day of school is always one of the most anticipated days of the entire school year, and this one was no different. Operations ran very smoothly, teachers and staff members were quite energetic, and students were eager to begin their studies. The GHCS is always grateful for the parents who tirelessly prepare their sons or daughters for this time of the year.

Thank you for your dedication to read with your children over the summer and to mentally prepare our students for classes once again.

In beginning my sixth full year as your PROUD superintendent, the very same values that accompanied the time when I started in this capacity prevail to this day. First, trustworthiness in the educational relationship among teachers, students, families and administrators is a critical first value that must be present in the school environment. You have my word that as your superintendent, trustworthiness will be among my top priorities. As the entire staff and students come together for the school year, the feeling of unity begins to emerge as the first few weeks unfold. One important trait that others know about my time in this position, is that I believe that we all have the potential for exhibiting Bulldog Pride. As we collectively work together to take pride in our education and our district, we all exhibit a profound sense of unity. Parents in the district can expect to observe a level of trustworthiness and respect, and the demonstration of unity in all that the staff does for your students. These are time-honored core values in which my staff and I firmly believe.

The Fall Family Fun Night was another incredible success this year, and I thank the members of Citizens for Garfield Heights for hosting this event for everyone on September 15, 2017. Elementary School and Middle School families were treated to an evening of family and fun activities just before the home varsity football game to demonstrate Bulldog Pride. Hot dogs and sodas were served, bounce

houses were provided for added fun and the Garfield Heights Safety Forces provided supplemental educational opportunities for our students. Raffle winners were drawn before the start of the home varsity game, and the final rounds of competition for the elementary school PUNT-PASS-AND KICK competitions were held on the varsity football field. Thank you to all involved.

As the 2017-2018 School Year continues to unfold, please remember to visit the district website for important updates on significant items. Daily news stories are shared. Principals post critical documents and other items for student use and as parental resources. The website is there for you! Thank you for your continued support of the Garfield Heights City Schools.

GO BULLDOGS!

*Terry Olszewski
Superintendent of Schools*



*Superintendent Terry Olszewski with High School Students
on the First Day of School*



Board Brief

2017-2018 School Year Off to a Fine Start



Gary Wolske
President
Legislative Liaison
Policy Liaison



Christine A. Kitson
Vice President
Cuyahoga Valley
Career Center
Policy Liaison



Robert A. Dobies, Sr.
City Liaison



June A. Geraci
Student Activities



Joseph M. Juby
District Liaison

The Garfield Heights Board of Education officially welcomes back all students and staff to the 2017-2018 School Year. From reports that Superintendent Olszewski has made, there's no question that the school year is off to a great start and we collectively look forward to a successful school year. October will begin the rotation of the Board of Education's public meetings at the various school buildings in the district and the Board encourages the community to attend. The purpose for rotating the meetings to the various school buildings is so that each building principal can deliver a substantive building update, but more importantly, so that the Board can make its meetings accessible to the community at large.

The Board of Education remains dedicated to improving nutrition in the meals it serves and prepares for students. A great deal of study and analysis has taken place over the last twelve months, and the changes to the menu and dietary resources in the district have been met with great acceptance. The GHCS will continue to find ways to reduce plate-waste and improve the menus for lunches and breakfasts that it serves, with the belief that more productive learning takes place when students are well fed and their nutrition levels remain high.

The community will note in Mr. Sluka's Talking Finances article that the state budget that has been passed will dramatically and negatively impact the district's overall budget. With nearly \$1 million being stripped out of the district's budget over the course of the next two years, the leadership of the district will once again continue the process of looking very closely at resources and allocations. Unfortunately, statewide elected officials have continued to pursue a path whereby urban districts feel the pain of reduced funds. Just as the Board of Education makes itself available as a body, and as individual members to its constituents, these statewide officials are answerable to you as well. The Board encourages you to contact the people who make decisions on our behalf, and express frustration and disappointment with this most recent budget passed. The GHCS will keep the community posted about developments as they continue to unfold.

One thing that does remain constant is the Board's strong advocacy for parents and grandparents to be actively involved in their students' academic lives. Simple tasks such as inquiring about your student's day at school, or reading for a regular amount of time each night promote the learning environment. The education that is reinforced at home helps improve classroom success. Beyond actual skill work, the GHCS has many opportunities for parents to get involved including the building Parent Teacher Organizations, All Pro Dads and other organizations. Please stay involved with your students' academic careers! The GHCS already knows that the earlier our district can engage students and keep them in our school system for the long haul, the better education our students will receive.

While the fall sports activities are underway, please take a moment to come see your Garfield Heights City Schools student athletes perform. As they participate in various activities throughout the district, they are doing so as representatives of our school system and our community. Also, this November is an Election, and the Board thanks the community for the opportunity it is to serve the people. This current Board of Education works extremely well together, and when there are moments of disagreement, matters are worked out professionally and with sensitivity. Ultimately, each Board Member makes decisions with the students' best interests in mind. Please remember to vote!



Allen Sluka,
Treasurer

Talking Finances\$ With Garfield Heights City Schools Treasurer and Business Director Allen Sluka

The Garfield Heights City Schools will be experiencing an overall negative impact on the district's budget as a result of the recent passage of the State of Ohio's Biennium budget. Relative to public education funding, this budget was a clear assault on urban public education districts. The Ohio General Assembly passed a budget that included an overall reduction of approximately \$958,000 over the next two years to the GHCS, well below the Governor's initial proposal. The district will be impacted so strongly, that I felt the need to write to our representatives, to express dissatisfaction and concern, and for this edition of Talking Finances, I decided to include excerpts of that letter for the community to review. The letter below is dated June 16, 2017 and is addressed to Chairman Scot Oelslager of the Ohio State Senate.

I am writing to you with my concerns on the Senate's proposed funding amounts for school districts in the upcoming biennium budget. The reductions in funding to the Garfield Heights City Schools' allocation as compared to the House and Governor's proposal will have a devastating effect on our district. As a low-wealth district, local funding for our district is a major challenge and reliance on state funding is crucial. Any reduction to that funding has a crippling effect on our educational programming. Let me highlight below some of our challenges.

- 3 year average valuation per pupil is \$73,122 – 584th in the state
- % change in valuation per pupil is -11.9% – second lowest in the state
- % change total ADM FY '14 – FY '16 only a -.61 per 4,000 students
- State funding is over 58% of the district's revenue base
- Resident tax rate is the second highest in the state, affecting our ability to pass a property tax
- Based on the State's current funding formula, the GHCS would be over a 5% cap by \$6.1 Million in FY '18 and \$5.4 Million in FY '19
- In using the Senate's funding cap percentage, those amounts jump to \$6.6 Million in FY '18 and \$6.3 in FY '19
- Based upon a 5% cap funded amount, the district's forecasted fund balances for the next three years are \$727,727... \$260,491 and (\$798,926)
- GHCS has the lowest expenditure per pupil amount of all Cuyahoga County school districts
- The district pays over \$4 Million to community and Ed Choice Schools

We need help from the Senate if we are going to succeed as a low wealth urban school district in the State of Ohio. Lastly, I would like to point out from the funding spreadsheet provided to our district the perceived assault on funding for low wealth urban school districts. In doing an analysis of only Cuyahoga County school districts, it looks like the Senate cut funding to all low wealth districts while increased funding to the more affluent suburban districts. Case in point, Garfield Heights had reduced cap funding amounting to almost \$1.7 million while Mayfield City Schools had an increase in funding of \$1.4 million (30% increase) even though Mayfield had significantly higher 3 yr. valuation per pupil average, significantly lower % change in valuation per pupil and a higher Total ADM % decrease than the Garfield Heights City Schools. We are not asking for significant increases in State, all we are asking is that the Senate raise the cap to a level that matches the recommendation of the Governor and the Ohio House.

The GHCS is prepared to have difficult conversations about how the district will reconcile this substantial cut in state funding. Please stay tuned for more information in the future.

Allen D. Sluka

Student Success Stories from Around the District



District Welcomes Back Students for 1st Day of School

The Garfield Heights City Schools welcomed back students for the first day of the 2017-18 school year on Tuesday, August 15, 2017. The bright, sunny morning was the perfect start to the new school year, as administrators, teachers and staff, including Superintendent Terry Olszewski, welcomed students to their respective buildings with smiles and friendly greetings. Parents can find important information regarding parent-teacher conferences, picture days and other upcoming events by regularly visiting the district website at www.garfieldheightscityschools.com. For questions or concerns, parents are encouraged to contact the district main line at 216-475-8100. Thank you for supporting the Garfield Heights City Schools!



Garfield Heights High School Students



Maple Leaf Kindergarten students



William Foster Students



Elmwood Students on the first day of school

Amy Tomon Wins Martin H. Miller Award for the Garfield Heights City Schools

Garfield Heights High School Teacher and Advisor Amy Tomon is this year's recipient of the coveted Martin H. Miller Award, which she received on Friday, August 11, 2017 at the district's annual welcome back meeting. Nominated by Pandora Cunningham, Amy Tomon plays a variety of roles at the High School, including serving as an Intervention Specialist and the Advisor for the Students of Service organization. She is always prepared to lend a hand to help, is very organized and makes an impact on students. According to her nomination form, "Amy has a passion for the underserved," helping to promote and host events such as the dance marathon, Winterfest Dance, the K-3 Carnival and the empty bowls project, just to name a few. Her background before coming to the Garfield Heights City Schools is very comprehensive as well, blending a number of real-world experiences to her service in public education. She has worked as a naturalist, a National Park Ranger and spent time in the Peace Corps in Africa. She has a tireless energy for our students and this community!

The Martin H. Miller Award is given to a teacher who demonstrates excellence in teaching or counseling in the Garfield Heights City Schools. For receiving the award, Ms. Tomon receives a \$500.00 award from the Martin H. Miller Fund, which was originally established by Martin H. Miller (Garfield Heights Class of '33), and is overseen to this day by members of his family. A special congratulations to Amy Tomon, this year's Martin H. Miller award winner!



Congratulations Amy Tomon on winning this year's Martin H. Miller Award!

Garfield Heights City Schools Intends to Continue Meaningful Intergenerational Programming

The Garfield Heights City Schools has placed an increasingly important emphasis on engaging students in the district with senior citizens from throughout the community. Partnered with both the City of Garfield Heights and also Jennings Home, on a monthly basis, some form of meaningful engagement is taking place between the oldest and youngest generations in our community. The GHCS views this as another 'opportunity' for learning. Though not done in the formal setting of a classroom, the learning comes in the form of students at all grade levels listening to speakers, honoring our veterans, learning how to act or perform drama or singing vocal number and playing instruments. Each of these 'opportunities' came through the deliberate pursuits of the school district desiring interaction with our community's Greatest Generation. What's more, parents of the students who have been involved have contacted the GHCS to express their pleasure and gratitude for taking this bold step toward learning about relationships. Look for continued partnerships in the future between the GHCS and our senior citizen population.

The GHCS has considered its partnership with various senior citizens organizations as valuable student learning opportunities.





**GARFIELD HEIGHTS
CITY SCHOOLS**
5640 Briarcliff Drive
Garfield Heights, OH 44125

PRSR STD
US Postage
PAID
CLEVELAND, OH
PERMIT NO. 647

www.garfieldheightscityschools.com  

District Spotlight:

Garfield Heights City Schools Welcomes New Assistant Principals: Jill Frimel, Paul Glazer, Kali Strickland

The Garfield Heights City Schools welcomes three individuals who are new to the position of 'assistant principal' at three different buildings in the district. For this edition's Spotlight, the GHCS would like to give the community a brief background of each of these individuals, so people in the district can provide each of them with a warm welcome.

Jill Frimel: Assistant Principal at William Foster Elementary School

Jill Frimel was named Assistant Principal at William Foster Elementary School in light of Mrs. Costa's pregnancy leave, but joins this team as a veteran instructor of the Garfield Heights City Schools. Mrs. Frimel has spent her entire career in the district, beginning here as a 4th grade instructor 17 years ago. She is highly certified in public education, with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from John Carroll University, a Master's of Educational Technology from Cleveland State University and her Principal's licensure from Baldwin Wallace College. She is also a graduate of the First Ring Leadership Academy. Mrs. Frimel considers Garfield Heights City Schools her home, very much enjoys the students and couldn't think about teaching or leading students anywhere else. She says that she is excited to join the high performing elementary school and intends to be part of their success.



Jill Frimel with WF Students

Paul Glazer: Assistant Principal at Garfield Heights Middle School

Garfield Heights High School Alumnus Class of 2006, Paul Glazer, was recently named Assistant Principal at Garfield Heights Middle School. Mr. Glazer grew up in Garfield Heights, attending just about every school in the district. He went on to The Ohio State University to earn a Bachelor's degree in Education and a Master's degree in Middle School Math and Science. He also has an Education Specialist's degree in Administration, grades 4- 12. Mr. Glazer has coached football and wrestling in the district, and taught Math and Science over the years. He also serves as the MS Athletic and Student Activities Director. He says that he hopes to have a large impact on kids, and is excited to be involved in all aspects of the school community.



Paul Glazer with MS Students

Kali Strickland: Assistant Principal at Maple Leaf Elementary School

Kali Strickland is a newcomer to the Garfield Heights City Schools, but a veteran administrator and teacher with a career in public education that spans more than 20 years. Joining us after administrative and instruction careers in the Cleveland, Akron and Canton public schools, Kali is excited to be part of the Maple Leaf Team. Her formal education includes a Bachelor's degree from the University of Akron in Elementary Education, (where she also was a scholarship tennis player) and a Master's degree in Administration from Cleveland State University. She has two years of Educational Leadership Training as well. Mrs. Strickland is excited for her new position, and appreciates the teamwork approach for the betterment of the students. She strongly believes in modeling the integrity she expects from the staff and students at Maple Leaf as well. She will be responsible for assisting in instruction, discipline and school initiatives.



Kali Strickland with ML Students

The Garfield Heights City Schools welcomes these individuals into their new positions. Congratulations Mrs. Frimel, Mr. Glazer and Mrs. Strickland!