

## Famous Americans Land at Violet ES

Famous Americans Day has become a favorite tradition for Violet Elementary School second grade students and teachers. On this special day, you might even have had the chance to see Amelia Earhart, Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks or Jane Goodall walking down the hall with one of her famous chimpanzees hanging around her neck

Story on pg. 9

## All District Middle School Students to Receive Free Bicycle Helmets

As part of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant, this spring every middle school student will be provided with a new bicycle helmet to continue the mission of encouraging safe travel to and from school.

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Serving Pickerington Since 1964



# The School Bell

Spring 2010 Issue 3

A Pickerington Local School District Publication

### THIS ISSUE

Superintendent pg. 2

As Pickerington moves forward in excellence, we will continue to dialog with the community about the District's academic progress, financial health and how we plan to prepare students for the 21st century.



Math Day pg. 5

### Math-o-Letes

Toll Gate Elementary School competed in a worldwide math competition and placed 36th out of 56,000 teams.

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### Funding Woes

District Treasurer talks about how Ohio's new school funding formula adversely affects Pickerington Schools.



Harmon Cares pg. 10

Harmon Middle School launches various drives to help families in need and boost morale of U.S. troops overseas.



Photo by Lee Cole

## Finding the Right Fit

**T**he teenage years are a difficult time to navigate for any student, especially someone who has been diagnosed with autism or autism spectrum disorder. For the average person, a simple gesture, such as "hi" or "hello" usually evokes a smile and provides a sense of comfort. It may even ignite a friendship, but for a child with autism, this friendly display could be perceived quite differently. In fact, it could be frightening.

Teens endure many social and academic challenges during this period of their development, and in response, the staff of Pickerington Ridgeview Junior High (PRJHS) developed the Ridgeview Is Going to Help Their Students (R.I.G.H.T.S.) program to help build meaningful relationships among students from various backgrounds while providing opportunities for positive social interaction.

"This group shows that people with autism have rights

and shouldn't be alienated," said Josh LaRe, a seventh grade student at PRJHS.

Autism is a spectrum disorder. The symptoms and characteristics of autism can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations, from mild to severe. Although autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors, children and adults can exhibit any combination of the behaviors in any degree of severity. Two children, both with the same diagnosis, can act very differently from

### Separate but Equal

*Toll Gate Middle School Conducts Study on Single Gender Classrooms*

The debate over single gender classrooms has gained momentum in recent years, and Pickerington is not immune to the conversation. Its underlying theory, that boys' and girls' brains develop at different rates, has propelled a of group teachers at Toll Gate Middle School (TGMS) to conduct an educational experiment.

In the spring of 2009, a math teacher, posed a question to TGMS Principal Mark Jones, "How would you feel about single gender classrooms?"

"Anything is possible if it is well planned and researched," said Jones.

A flurry of ideas quickly circulated amongst a group of educators.

"I got very excited," said Teri Allen, a science teacher at TGMS. "I had been considering trying the idea in my science classes."

In the middle schools, students are taught by a team of teachers. Typically in the sixth grade, there is one math teacher, a science teacher and two language arts/reading teachers educating a cluster of 100 students.

"Mr. Jones is very supportive. He is eager to give teachers free reign to try new ideas for improving student achievement. He asked for the research and rationale," said Allen.

Finding the Right Fit continued on pg. 6

Equal continued on pg. 7

## State of the District



**Karen Mantia, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of PLSD

As Superintendent, I recently shared the annual State of the District address with citizens. One of the important matters discussed was the District's financial situation.

As a District, we face the prospect of continued dwindling state financial support. Just like the hard working families of the District, we must find ways to do more with less. We're committed to being careful stewards of your tax dollars. We are also committed to a proactive, relentless focus on costs; so much so that over the last several years, we've reduced the budget by nearly \$4 million while striving to have minimal impact on the classroom instruction.

However, we must do more. Currently, we receive 54% of our funding from the state, and the trend of shifting more of the funding to local taxpayers continues. Over the next two years, Pickerington will face another reduction in state funding. This time, it's \$2 million. That's the largest reduction of any district in the state.

As Ohio faces what truly looks like a budget crisis next year, we must be prepared to deal with further cuts.

As a District, we've had an unprecedented year of change and new requirements. For example, there is a new unfunded mandate for all day kindergarten; it is to take effect next year without a long-term implementation strategy. This is just one more challenge we face.

There can be no doubt that school funding is a complex issue subject to constant changes. However, we will continue to work with our community to make sure that the quality of the education isn't adversely affected.



Photo by Lee Cole

# Economic Development Does Matter

**By Joy Davis**

Violet Township Guest Editorial

Many people wonder what it means to be an economic development professional and what role economic development has on their everyday life.

Activities taking place on a daily basis at all levels of government are done in order to attract business and create an environment companies are able to function within effectively and efficiently.

How does all of this play a role in the life of an individual?

Job creation is self-explanatory. Jobs available

here in our community provide a method of supporting our families within the very environment we choose to live.

Also, having a thriving business environment opens local doors to our students whom we have educated very well and prepared to succeed.

Currently, we are faced with watching our promising students choose to live in other communities because the opportunities are greater elsewhere.

Increased revenues through property taxes paid

by businesses and income taxes paid by their employees have a positive impact on the level of services offered by both the Township and the City. More importantly, diversity of the tax base helps to offset the burden currently placed upon the residents of our community.

Growth in a community is often the single factor retail businesses consider. Increased commercial activities create growth. Economic development creates opportunities for commercial businesses. All are dependent upon each other, and success in one area furthers success in all.

### The School Bell

The School Bell is a community newszine dedicated to providing in-depth coverage of the Pickerington Local School District. Its staff is comprised of District staff and students. It is published four times a year.

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# Developing Minds Using Curriculum and Technology Integration

*Technology is Changing How Schools Prepare Students for Life Outside of the Classroom*

**By Leatha Lee**

Teacher, Toll Gate Middle School

Technology plays a substantial role in developing 21st century skills, and one must agree that technology is here to stay. So how do we integrate technology and 21st century skills into the curriculum?

Technology can make a big impact when it is used to teach curriculum. Imagine taking the excitement and energy students demonstrate about technology and aiming it toward educational goals and life skills.

Rather than a written report about Benjamin Franklin, why not make a MySpace page? What would the music be? What graphics would be appropriate for the background? Who would be his top forty friends and why?

Technology makes another big impact as students are becoming prepared for careers and the world outside the classroom. Students learn how to search out up-to-date and diverse material about topics when using the Internet.

Then the use of multimedia allows the students to present material in exciting ways that their peers understand and expect. What used to be an oral report about a country can become a Ken Burns style iMovie complete with music and narration.

Technology allows educators and students to manage more individualized learning in a practical manner. For example, web-based software such as Accelerated Reader allows students to learn new vocabulary words based on the books that they are reading.

Susie's reading vocabulary list is different than John's list, and Ira's list is different than both of the other two lists. Susie reads books that are a year or two

above her grade level, so the words she studies better match her abilities, whereas John's list contains words on his grade level.

Lower-level readers will also have lists that match their abilities. In this way, differentiation can happen without causing the teacher undue paperwork or time, and all of the students are being stretched and taught within their own ability levels.

Also, since the students are choosing the books that interest them, they become more motivated to learn new vocabulary.

Of course, with each new technology, there are new questions and challenges that must be conquered. Educators should be concerned about issues such as the safety of students, students that do not have computer and Internet access at home, cyberbullying and social networking morals and manners.

However, these issues should be viewed as obstacles to manage and overcome, not reasons to avoid the use of technology.

Fine educators and others know that technology alone will not make a great school. Great schools integrate technology, but still uphold a commitment to other important educational factors, such as sound curriculum, tested instructional practices, parent, family, and community participation, safe and secure environments, and quality teachers, among others.

The use of technology can, however, add excitement, increase differentiation, provide for the use of more higher-level thinking skills, increase achievement, and most of all, better prepare students for 21st century.

## Diley MS Fundraisers

*April 19th - All day*

### **LaFogata Monday**

1849 Winderly Lane . Pickerington, OH . (614) 864-9154  
Diley PTO receives 30% of the bill. This offer includes EVERYTHING on the menu!  
Giftcard purchases excluded

*May 18th from 5 - 8 p.m.*

### **Culvers Tuesday**

1912 Ohio 256, Reynoldsburg - (614) 863-2333  
Diley PTO receives 10% of everything sold between 5 and 8 p.m. No coupons necessary

**Offer is available for  
dine in and carry out items**

**You're Invited!!**

**Sycamore Creek Elementary's  
1st annual**

**"An Evening at the Creek"**

**Come enjoy a fun evening with your family!!**

**Cake Walk Carnival FOOD**  
**on May 14th**  
**INFLATABLES GAMES**

**Schedule of events:**

**Carnival : 5:30-8:30 pm**

**Silent auction: 5:30-8 pm**

**LIVE auction: 8-8:30 pm**


**(with special guest Greg Frey!)**

**Silent Auction**

**All money raised will benefit the new  
Sycamore Creek Elementary in Pickerington!**

**All donations are tax-deductable.**

**Contact Lee Ann Wurster at  
wurster2@hotmail.com for more information.**



**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
EDUCATION  
FORUM**

**APRIL 27, 2010 from 7-9 p.m.  
LAKEVIEW JHS, 12245 AULT ROAD**

**Facilitated by: Ken Kay, president  
Partnership for 21st Century Skills**

**A Community discussion and workshop on Pickerington  
Local Schools implementation of 21st century skills**

## C's for Success

By Jennifer Hewitt  
Vice-President  
PHSC Student Council

The fact is indisputable: students today must learn different skills than those taught in the previous century. But specifically, what skills do we need to be competitive in the 21st century? These five C's are the crux: core subjects, computers, communication, career knowledge, and creativity.

Emphasis on core subjects is essential to a student's success. Mastery of the basics allows students to eventually progress from general skills to specialization in a certain field. Well-rounded students are better prepared for future challenges.

Computer skills are also vital in the 21st century. Technology is become ever-increasingly embedded in everyday tasks. Without basic knowledge, falling behind is inevitable.

Communication: without it, accomplishing even the simplest task may become difficult.

Employers recognize this, which is why many rank the ability to communicate as one of the most important skills.

Career knowledge, whether students realize it or not, is actually a large part of the curriculum. Time management, analytical skills and goal-setting are applicable in both school and the workforce. Mastery of these skills early on will increase the chance of success in a career.

The importance of creativity is often overlooked. In an innovative century, those with imaginative ideas will go far. While creativity is not something that necessarily can be taught, it is something that can be encouraged.

Collectively, the five C's set up a student for success. While accomplishment may not be guaranteed, one who has learned these skills is more adequately prepared for the 21st century.

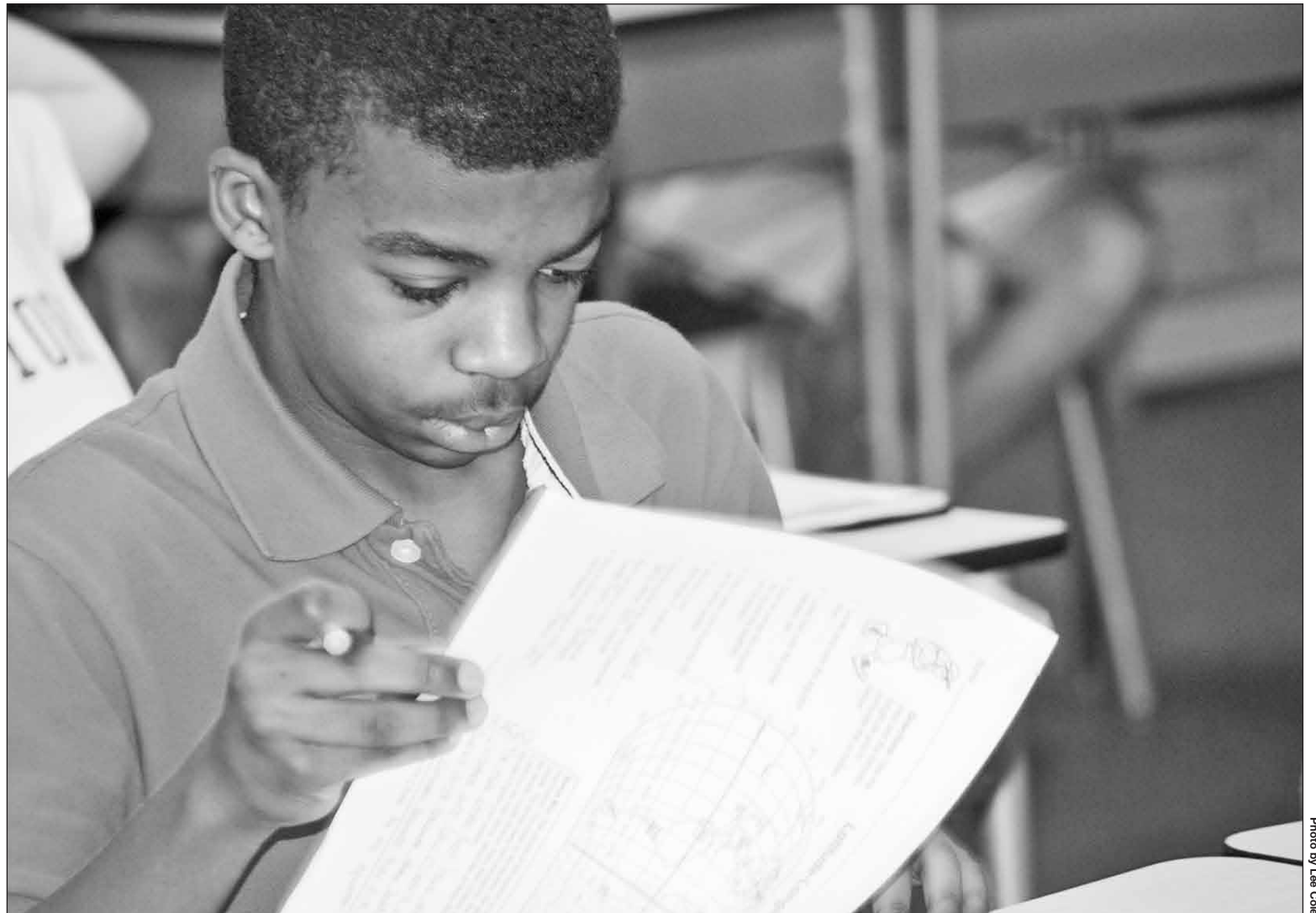


Photo by Lee Cole

# Challenging Advanced Students

*The Department of Teaching and Learning has Expanded and Revamped the District's Academic Offerings Including the Voyage Program to Better Meet the Needs of Gifted Students*

The mission of the Pickerington Local School District is to provide all students with a strong educational foundation that prepares them for life beyond the classroom.

All students need to be challenged; however, there are some students who require more advanced coursework to reach their full potential. These students are identified as gifted.

"We have many exceptional students here in Pickerington," said Sandy Meigel, gifted coordinator for Pickerington Local Schools.

"Due to the increasing demands from our students, we are expanding the Voyage program to meet the needs of District families," she continued.

As part of the District's curriculum reorganization, the program options for gifted students are being revamped.

For the 2009-10 school year, the District

placed full-time gifted intervention specialists into each of our elementary buildings. This allowed the District to increase opportunities to students by including advanced math services. This action has resulted in heightened peer-to-peer and student/teacher relationships.

"It has allowed gifted specialists to work more closely with classroom teachers to support them in various instruction techniques that focus on deeper understanding of content, higher levels of questioning and inquiry-based learning," Meigel continued. The middle school curriculum is expanding as well.

"We are looking at our middle school gifted options to focus on a program that will develop the skills necessary to take advantage of accelerated high school coursework earlier," she said.

According to Meigel, the middle school options will be phased in beginning with the fifth grade for the 2010-11 school year. All identification for placement in gifted service options will

continue to be data-driven and comply with Ohio Department of Education requirements.

At the secondary level, the District will continue to offer a wide variety of honors classes, advanced placement courses and the post-secondary option program. This allows qualifying high school students to take college level courses before graduation.

The members of the Teaching and Learning Department are evaluating all instructional programs to reflect the rapid pace of globalization and the explosion of networked communications, while confronting the fragile economic picture. These external factors will continue to be a guide as to how we deliver services to gifted students.

The accelerated services that are offered to students are predicated on the belief that academic excellence is multi-faceted and may manifest itself in many different ways and across groups of identified gifted learners.

## iPickerington

By **Caroline Johnson**  
President  
PHSN Student Council

The 21st century was first pictured as a time of flying cars, hover boards, teleportation and robots. Though we haven't quite reached this "Back to the Future" lifestyle, our world has made countless technological and historical advances that have changed the way people think, act and even communicate. The question is, "What does this mean for Pickerington students?" The answer is found in the curriculum and skills being taught to prepare students for this new environment.

One item that has become more and more useful in education and every day life is the computer. Students depend on them for reports, research and communication with teachers and advisors.

As students prepare for college or the workforce, programs such as Excel, iWork, Quick Books, Adobe Photoshop, PowerPoint, Flash and countless others are needed as secondhand knowledge for almost any class or job. Many teachers within Pickerington are encouraging the use of such programs in presentations and projects, so the students will not be blindsided by what is expected of them beyond high school.

Another popular staple of the 21st century is fluency in a second language. As our world grows and expands, communication with other nations and even communication within our own country is changing. Having a vast knowledge of another language not only makes a person more culturally aware, but it helps students to be more marketable in the workforce.

Overall, the 21st century has brought a new wave of ideas, advancements and has completely overhauled the way students should be taught. Undoubtedly, Pickerington is preparing its students to meet and exceed the standards of this fast-paced world.



Photo by Leanne Ross

# Math-Olympics

*Students from Toll Gate Elementary School  
Competed in a Worldwide Math Competition and  
Placed 36th out of 56,000 Teams*

By **Leanne Ross**  
Teacher, Toll Gate Elementary School

Classical music played in the background as 30 Toll Gate Elementary mathletes focused on processing mental math problems with astonishing speed. The international World Math Day Competition on March 3, gave the second, third and fourth grade gifted math students the opportunity to test their skills against their international peers.

By the time the sun set across the international dateline, the team consisting of second, third grade and fourth grade students had proven that they were some of the best in the world, coming in 36th place in the contest out of over 56,000 teams.

"This was such a huge confidence booster for the students. Not only did they improve the speed and accuracy of their math skills, but they began to believe that they really can compete with students from around the world," said Sabrina Sensabaugh, a fourth grade

teacher at TGES.

The World Math Day competition is an online set of games in which students have one minute to answer as many questions from a random category as they can. The level of difficulty is age appropriate.

The focus on math and higher-level thinking skills is part of the Pickerington Local School District's STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) initiative.

"This emphasizes the 21st century skills that students need in modern education. World Math Day raised global awareness among our students while building their communication and productivity proficiency," said Kristi Motsch, TGES principal.

"The energy and excitement about math was amazing. The students were engaged and



Photo by Leanne Ross

actively involved in using technology to learn and grow," she continued.

When playing a game, the World Math Day website attempts to find other players of the same level. The goal of the event is to promote mathematical thinking and commonality of math.

This year's competition included 1,133,246 students from 235 countries. Together they set a new world record by answering 479,732,613 questions correctly.

The top students from Toll Gate were Krista Trout answering 14,929 questions, Matthew Crandall answering 10,989 questions, Greyson Maddox answering 10,838 questions and Julia Vermilion answering 10,532 questions.



Photo by Sarah Butch

# Finding the Right Fit

one another and have varying skills.

Peer mentors can provide support for students with disabilities. Be a friend and a positive role model. Help develop a sense of belonging and increase self-esteem.

“The R.I.G.H.T.S. group has taught me a lot of stuff. Just because people [have] autism doesn’t mean they aren’t normal. In the time I’ve been in this group I have connected with these kids in so many ways,” he continued.

Sarah Butch, a teacher at PRJHS is the founder of the program and leads a diverse group of students to experience one another.

“We believe that each student has unique qualities, personalities and experiences they can share with others,” said Butch.

“Therefore, we have designed a program to help create new friendships that allow students to network in social situations. Our goal is to help foster relationships between students with disabilities and typical peers and to create a positive social environment,” she continued.

Students with autism lack social skills and often are ridiculed by their peers. The R.I.G.H.T.S. program

trained a very select group of students to withstand peer pressure and mentor a student that they would not normally choose as a friend. These students will be trained on characteristics of autism and how it affects students on a daily basis.

“I’ve learned many things about autism and understand them (people with autism) more clearly now. I have also loved being in the program to help them or just be friends with them. To me, it’s very important to have a friend,” said Jaren Dorman, an eighth grade student.

“In working with students, I found that most have little to no knowledge of autism or are only familiar with some more common misconceptions and misunderstandings of autism. Given the prevalence of autism (current research suggests, 1 in 110 children, 1 in 70 boys), students have to be educated about the disorder so that we can have acceptance and tolerance,” said Butch.

The R.I.G.H.T.S. group started as a suggestion from the parent of a student with autism. According to Butch, the parent felt that students needed to be educated on autism so that they would become more tolerant of her child.

“I knew about the rising number of students in our building with autism and thought that educating students about autism sounded like a great idea,” said Butch.

Taking suggestions from teachers around the building, Butch interviewed and selected students who would make role models for students on the spectrum. Each student and their parents were educated about autism, the goals and expectations of the program.

“We talked about how to be a friend and how to model good social skills,” said Butch.



Photo by Sarah Butch



Photo by Lee Cole

**EQUAL from page 1**

“It seems that once we took the girls away, the boys could no longer hide behind them. The boys were forced to start responding in class and doing their share on projects.”

- Teri Allen  
TGMS Science Teacher

“Currently, there is a lot of research out there. The positive research states boys and girls benefit from being taught according to their gender learning styles. The negative research states that while single gender teaching does not harm students, the worry is for segregation,” she continued.

Therefore, a team of four teachers, Eric Coffman, Becky Murphy, Jodi Hall and Teri Allen, with full parental knowledge and support, instituted an in-school single gender program at TGMS.

“Because of the research component, we decided to keep the students together in homeroom, sustained silent reading, social studies, lunch and specials classes. We segregate them for math, language arts and science,” said Allen.

Initially, students were surveyed to find what classes they felt most comfortable in and why.

“We are continuing to teach the same subjects to the same kids, we just grouped them differently,” said Eric Coffman. “The boys are off to Language Arts while the girls are in Math and Science. In the afternoon, the girls are off to Language Arts while the boys take Math and Science,” he continued.

“We researched learning styles and how best to teach each gender. I traded my desks for tables. The boys need a lot of movement, and I believe that it is easier to move quietly from table to table or table to floor than desk to desk,” said Allen.

“I also believe that with desks, there are more distractions for boys. They find things to play with. Now, I supply the pens, paper and pencils,” she continued.

Jodi Hall has also changed her room. Students can sit at the desks or on the floor with clipboards. Sometimes, Hall takes the students to the stage or cafeteria where they can spread out and work using a concept called “the daily five” or stations to keep the students moving and engaged.

Research also suggests that girls do better with color. Therefore, Coffman began copying the girl’s assignments on colored paper versus plain white paper.

Each team member has used more competition and games for the boys. The research states that boys learn better through risky situations and being pressured. Since girls learn better by forming bonds and making relationships, the girls

do a lot more group work. So far, the students seem to really enjoy their classes.

During the second week of instruction, each teacher found their niche and learned how to adapt their lesson plans for the students.

“I accidentally stumbled across a fast-paced, rapid-fire questioning technique. I had boys eagerly raising their hands to be the one called. From the back of the room, I heard someone say, ‘Hey, we are learning!’ That made my day,” said Allen.

“It seems that once we took the girls away, the boys could no longer hide behind them. The boys were forced to start responding in class and doing their share on projects,” she continued.

Hall reported that one day she was pressed for time in language arts. She kept trying to go to the next topic. Her boys would not let her. They were all very interested in a discussion they were having, and she could not get them to move on. This has never happened before.

At the conclusion of the program, the team will evaluate its findings and discuss with principal Jones whether to continue the program.

## We Want You



**Dan Griscom**  
Treasurer of PLSD

**W**ANTED: Interested members of the community to serve on a Finance Accountability Committee.

Would you like to join a volunteer committee that will dive into school finances headfirst, and see what all the fuss and excitement is about? No? Well then, how do some nice chocolate chip cookies sound to you?

We are looking for 8 to 10 community members who would be willing to share their time and energy with me, to serve on a Finance Accountability Committee (and enjoy occasional refreshments). This committee will review district finances and look at our short and long-term financial picture.

This committee is part of our District's ongoing effort to provide transparency with school finances. When it comes to our books, our philosophy is, "let the sun shine in."

As you may have heard, the District is experiencing large state budget cuts. We believe it will take a combination of reduced expenses and increased revenues to make our budget balance in the future. Therefore, the Board and administration are interested in getting your input on our school district's present and future financial picture.

Please do not feel you have to have an accounting or other business degree to participate. Believe me, some of my best friends are not accountants. We welcome participation from any interested community member. If you are interested, please send me an email at [dangriscom@fc.pickerington.k12.oh.us](mailto:dangriscom@fc.pickerington.k12.oh.us) or give me a call at my office, 614-833-2112.



Photo by Lee Cole

# Ohio's New School Funding Formula Adversely Affects Pickerington Schools

"Laws are like sausages — it is best not to see them being made," said Otto von Bismarck, a German statesman of the 19th century, who was famous for many things, not the least of which was this quote.

The same could be said for Ohio's school funding system, except the end result is not nearly as tasty as sausage.

"Considering all the pieces and parts that go into the school funding formula, it's a wonder that any result would be appetizing," said Dan Griscom, treasurer for the Pickerington Local School District (PLSD). "The state came out with a new "sausage recipe" for school funding last year. For some school districts, the recipe worked better than for others. Unfortunately, when we look at the state funding for Pickerington, I dare say, we have received the worst of the 'wurst,'" he continued.

Ohio is a wonderful and diverse state, with a wide variety of communities and school districts — big and small, urban and rural, industrial and residential, wealthy and not so wealthy. The state's school funding formula is extremely complex. It attempts to take many of these varying school district characteristics into

account when arriving at a fair funding amount for schools.

"The challenge is how to come up with a formula that adequately addresses the unique demographic and financial make-up of each school district. Furthermore, how can a formula be devised that is both fair and affordable to the state, in a time of economic recession?" said Griscom.

The new Ohio Evidence-Based Model was introduced in the summer of 2009, as the latest attempt to correct school funding. However, the new funding model moves more of the financial burden from the state to our local taxpayers.

"The Pickerington Local School District receives about 54% of operating revenues from the state. Any reduction in state aid has a huge and immediate impact on our budget. The cut we received this school year was substantial," said Griscom.

If the District were under the old funding formula, PLSD would have expected to receive an increase of \$1.4 million this year. This would have helped Pickerington meet the normal

increases in expenses that are associated with a growing school district. Instead, the District received a cut of \$600,000. Thus, the change in funding formulas costs Pickerington about \$2 million in state aid. In the fiscal year 2012, Griscom foresees even more troubling news as the federal stimulus aid (which has been used to prop up the state budget) will disappear, leaving not only Pickerington but hundreds of schools across the state in a perilous position.

"When we saw the signs in the last two years of the economy struggling and state revenue dropping, the Board and administration took a proactive approach. We took immediate steps to trim back expenditures and make sacrifices; just like many families have made, in light of the recession. We have made over \$3 million in budget cuts, and we continue to reduce further," said Griscom.

What's the bottom line? When it comes to state aid, Pickerington Schools are definitely not "bringing home the bacon." However, the District will continue to make the most of its resources, increase efficiencies, reduce costs and maintain our commitment to provide an excellent education to all students.

# Four Score and Twenty Minutes Ago



Photo by Gisele Moll

**By Gisele Moll**

Teacher, Violet Elementary School

On a chilly Tuesday morning, students were surprised when Benjamin Franklin nodded his head and welcomed students as they walked by.

Students smiled because Rosa Parks was not asked to move to the back of the bus. Instead, Parks road in a car with her mom, who was dropping her off at Violet Elementary School (VES) for the sixth annual Famous American Day Event at school.

“This special day has become a favorite tradition for Violet second grade students and teachers,” said Gisele Moll, a teacher at VES. “You might even have had the chance to see Jane Goodall walking down the hall with one of her famous chimpanzees hanging around her neck,” she continued.

On this day, the students came prepared to present their Famous American Wax Museum. This is a project Jackie Poeppelman, a second grade teacher at Violet, started about six years ago.

The project begins with the students researching information about a famous American of their choice and creating a poster of interesting facts to present to their classmates.

The posters are displayed in the hallway on a timeline, placing influential events throughout history in chronological order.

“The Wax Museum is the most exciting part of this project. It creates involvement on many different levels,” said Moll.

“Not only are the students memorizing their facts and creating their costumes, but parental support is impressive,” she continued.

After all the work and preparation, the students take

their places with note cards and props ready. They pose as they think their Famous American would stand in a wax museum and wait for a classmate to push the button on their prop to start the show.

Each year the list of Famous Americans coincides with what the students are learning in the classroom.

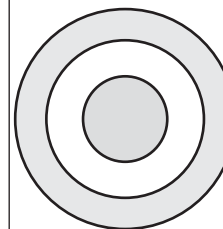
“It amazes me how each child can make a Famous American come to life,” said Moll.

“Not only is this a fun time where our students are learning new and interesting facts about our history; it also creates wonderful memories for our second graders at Violet Elementary School,” she continued.



Photo by Gisele Moll

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8				1	7		4
				6			
	4		9	8			7
	2	3			9	8	
4	7						1
	6					5	



## Hitting the Target

Pickerington Local School District is rated “Excellent with Distinction”

**PICKERINGTON HIGH SCHOOL NORTH THEATRE**  
presents  
**THE OUTSIDERS**

**PICKERINGTON H.S. NORTH**  
7800 Refugee Road

<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>APRIL 29</b>	<b>8 P.M.</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>APRIL 30</b>	<b>8 P.M.</b>
<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>MAY 1</b>	<b>8 P.M.</b>
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>MAY 2</b>	<b>2 P.M.</b>

**ADULTS: \$10    CHILDREN / STUDENTS: \$7**

**614-830-2750**

# Harmon Cares

*Students and Staff from Harmon Middle School Launch Various Drives to Help Families in Need and Boost Morale of U.S. Troops Overseas*

**By Betsy Frownfelter, Sally Stewart, Pat McDermitt**

PTSO President, Assistant Principal and Secretary; Harmon Middle School

Students and staff throughout the District are always there to lend a helping hand to those in need. At Harmon Middle School, the students and staff members are launching a charitable drive to honor and acknowledge our servicemen and women overseas.

The drive honors those who have sacrificed the comfort and safety of their homes and families to serve and protect the United States of America. The students want them to know how much they respect, appreciate and value their valor and bravery.

Earlier this year, Harmon staff conducted a survey to determine how many students had a family member who is currently or has formerly served in the military services. The student survey showed that there are 1,086 military personnel who have a direct connection to Harmon families!

Listed are requested items that will be collected then shipped overseas to our military troops serving in the different branches of military. Any food item individually wrapped (No Chocolate), Baby Wipes, Cereal, Books, LifeSavers, Clorox Wipes, Gum, Crossword Puzzles, Lollipops, Frisbees, Oatmeal, Magazines, Nuts & Raisins, Nerf Footballs, Rice Krispie Treats, Playing Cards, Twinkies, Prepaid Calling Cards.



Photo by Renee Frey

Donations will be accepted at Harmon Middle School beginning April 12, thru April 30, between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sixth grade, student service members will be responsible for this project by assisting in the handling, sorting and packaging of the items for shipping. For further information, visit [www.USO.org](http://www.USO.org).

Again, the Harmon Middle School community is accustomed helping those in need. They just completed a successful drive to aid the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. Their "Harmon Hearts for Haiti" drive raised \$2,400 for the Red Cross Haiti Fund. Harmon's hallways are lined with these hearts.

## Middle School Students to Receive Bike Helmets

**By Peggy Portier**

Contributing Writer

Spring is here and with the arrival of warm days and blooming flowers come children at play.

As part of the first Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant, each middle school student will be provided with a new bicycle helmet to continue the mission of encouraging safe travel to and from school.

"We are very excited to be able to provide these helmets," said Ira Weiss, a volunteer member of the Safe Routes to School Committee. "Some students may remember being asked to measure the size of their heads just after school started last fall. This project is the reason why," continued Weiss.

The helmets will be distributed as a part of the health curriculum later this year. Students will be taught how to adjust the helmets and ride their bicycles safely. The grant provided funds to purchase the helmets for this school year and for every fifth grader for the next three years (this includes the 2009-2010 academic year).

"The goal is to provide them with the tools needed to wear their helmet correctly, adjust the fit as they grow and ride in a safe manner," said Weiss. "A properly fit helmet, worn in the correct position on the head, is the best way to prevent a head injury. Safe riding habits can help prevent an accident or fall."

In the fall, SRTS identified and mapped safe walking routes to school. School staff, Pickerington Police and community joined students and created a walking school bus.

### FINDING THE RIGHT FIT from page 6

In addition to feedback from staff, Jeffrey Siegel, a program coordinator from The Ohio State University Nisonger Center was contacted to bring in young adults who were able to talk to the students about how their autism has affected their lives. After talking to the students who would later become typical peers, these young adults also met with the students who are on the spectrum.

"The peer mentors were recommended by their teachers, based upon the demonstration of exceptional character, empathy and compassion for others," said Susan Caudill, principal of PRJHS.

"It is our expectation that the peer mentors will learn with their partner to develop a better understanding of students with disabilities; display the qualities of patience, enthusiasm, flexibility, caring, responsibility, consistency and honesty; and, demonstrate an attitude of acceptance and tolerance of individual differences," she continued.

The Ohio State University Nisonger Center works with communities to value and support the meaningful participation of people with disabilities of all ages through education, service and research. The Center assists people with disabilities, families, service providers and organizations to promote inclusion in education, health, employment and community settings.

"Students completed surveys and have been matched with other students who share some of the same interests to promote interaction and conversation. When we have our 'lunch meetings' together, students sit with others based upon interests," said Butch.

"They sit with the same people, not to limit their interaction with others, but to provide a safe and predictable

environment," Butch continued.

"It is always great to see students talking and interacting during these times," she said.

Early on, Butch had to initiate conversations, but now students seem to keep the conversation going and include everyone. The students are also enjoying the process of making new friends.

"Through this group, I've made new friends and grown closer to my other friends who are also in the group. This is a great group to be in," said Shelby Chamberlain, a seventh grade student.

"I think that the activities we do are pretty fun, and I also think that I have met a few new buddies that I talk to more. I really think that what we do is fun," said Maria Skowronski, seventh grade student.

"We want everyone to have fun while participating in this program and to understand that it will be a model for fostering a caring and compassionate school that practices tolerance and acceptance of individual differences," said Butch.

"The typical peers have an amazing opportunity to be educated and learn new things about autism and people with whom they will be interacting for the rest of their lives. This knowledge will help them to become even more compassionate and caring individuals. The students with autism benefit from the social contact with typical peers as well as from the modeling, acceptance and tolerance that they experience during the group meetings. Everybody in the group wins and everyone benefits," she continued.

# The Pickerington Library: Its Not Just Books Anymore

By Colleen Pospishil  
Contributing Writer

There is a busy hum in the Pickerington Public Library. On the adult side, laptops are up, headphones are plugged in and keyboards are clicking away. The computer lab is full; people are checking their email, typing reports, looking for jobs and sending resumes. The children's side has happy chatter going on, and little people waiting for their friends to join them in their storytime with Miss Cathy or Miss Judy.

In the afternoon, teens stroll in, bookbags slung over their shoulders, music plugged in and cellphones out checking and sharing text messages.

This is the library right? Where you check out books?

Yes it is! In 2009, 352,655 items moved out of the library. The Pickerington Public Library is more than books. Although, there is still nothing better than picking up a book and cracking the spine for the first time, patrons can now check out e-books from the library website to read on hand-held devices or personal computers.

The library also has audio books on CDs and cassettes.

There are downloadable audio books and Playaways (self contained digital audio books) are great for working out or walking. The library also has music CDs, movies and magazines.

Times are tough right now, and the library can help by being an office away from home. The computer lab is equipped with Winway Resume Deluxe, a first-class resume-writing wizard. Patrons will need to bring a device to save the resume or purchase a USB from the library.

Finding a job just got easier using the online database found on the library website, LearningExpress Library and clicking on the Job and Career Accelerator. Don't forget that the library also has a fax, copier and free WiFi.

Thanks to the generosity of the community, the library's hours have been restored and additional staff hired. Come in and see what the Pickerington Public Library has to offer. Get a free library card.

Stop by to see what is new and what has changed.

## The Pickerington Public Library

Monday-Thursday  
9 a.m.-8 p.m.

Friday/Saturday  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

201 Opportunity Way  
Pickerington, OH 43147  
(614) 837-4104

# Pickerington ED Foundation Awards Grants for Innovation

On March 4, at the Hickory Lakes party house, approximately 100 community members joined the Pickerington Education Foundation in Celebrating Excellence.

At this annual event, previous recipients of Pickerington Education Foundation grants showcased how the grants enhanced education in their classrooms.

A short program included award presentations to the latest grant recipients. Recipients of the Spring 2010 grants are: "Using Smartpens to Aid Student Learning" Doug Forrest - PHS North; "Constructing With Geometry" Marie Renner - Diley Middle School; "Project Alphabet Stamps and Headphones" Terri Thomas - Tussing Elementary; "Listening to Reading" Sandy Kempf - Pickerington Elementary; "Senior

Project Presentation & Junior Trials" Susan Turley - Pickerington High School Central.

The Pickerington Education Foundation was founded in 2004 to enrich and support the total educational process in the Pickerington Local School District so that every student can achieve his/her full potential.

Through our commitment to the community and our support of quality educational programs, the Foundation strives to serve as a catalyst for fostering opportunities to enrich the curriculum, instruction and extracurricular activities of the students, faculty, staff and community. In addition to grants made to individual staff, the Foundation provides support for districtwide staff development. To learn more about the Foundation, visit our website, [www.pefoundation.org](http://www.pefoundation.org), or follow us on Facebook.



## CONTRACTOR JOB FAIR

Pickerington Local School District's  
Renovations to Ridgeview Junior High and High School Central

### Informational Meeting

To Discuss Bid Qualifications, Bid Schedule and Documents, Questions

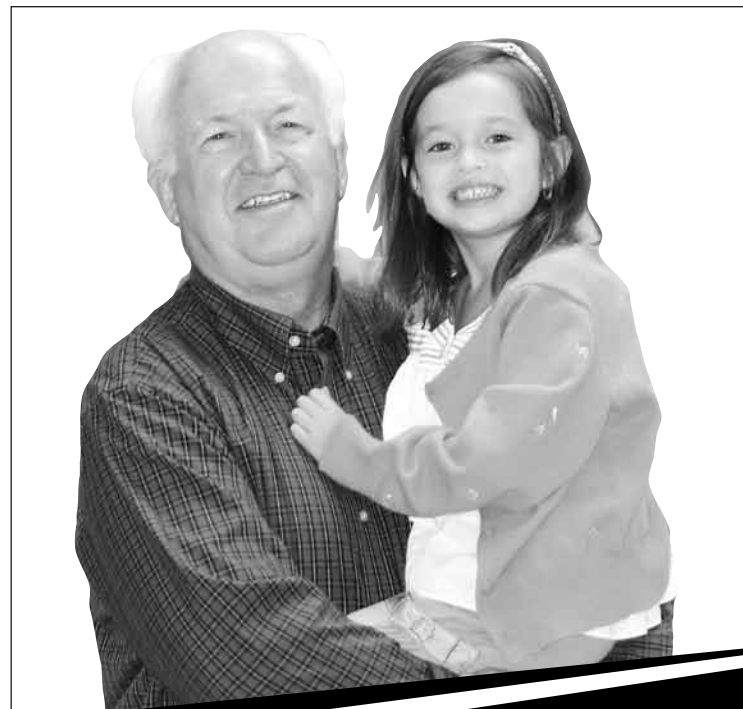
4:00 PM, Monday, May 10, 2010

Pickerington High School Central (Commons Area)  
300 Opportunity Way, Pickerington, OH 43147

Courtesy of



Construction Manager for Pickerington Local School District



We are  
Pickerington!

A Pickerington education extends beyond the classroom and engages every member of the family. A Pickerington education doesn't end in the twelfth grade, it evolves into a life-long commitment to teaching and learning.

*Pickerington Local Schools, using education to impact the local, national and global community.*



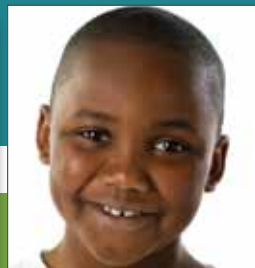
### One of Ohio's Premier School Districts

90 East Street, Pickerington, Ohio 43147 614.833.2110  
[www.pickerington.k12.oh.us](http://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us)

## PICKERINGTONKIDZ.COM / PICKERINGTONKIDS.COM Your Pickerington Parent Resource for Kids!

WATCH OUR SITE FOR DETAILS ON THE  
4TH ANNUAL PICKERINGTON KIDS FESTIVAL  
JUNE 6, 2010 • VICTORY PARK

- **SIMPLE** to find kid info you need in one site!
- **EASY** to navigate
- **CONVENIENT** only one website to remember!
- **MORE** information about all area businesses!
- **CURRENT** events on our events calendar
- **DAILY** updates to website to keep information current
- **FRESH LOOK** to reflect today's trends
- **LOCAL** information for *local* parents from *local* parents
- **FREE**, as always--sign up today!



Watch for us coming soon on Facebook!

PICKERINGTON **KIDZ**.com  
Everything Local for Kids ero to 18

Our goal is to simplify the lives of busy local parents!