



Blue Ribbon Report

FALL 2010

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



"Making *Excellent with Distinction* is a real honor for our school system and for the Kettering Community. This year, only 13 percent of the 614 school district in Ohio earned the top state rating."

Jim Schoenlein, Ed.D.

The opening of the new school year corresponded with the breaking news of two very important happenings: The Kettering City Schools received the "*Excellent with Distinction*" state rating and our Kettering teachers' association voted to accept a pay freeze as a show of teamwork and understanding as we continue to work through difficult economic times here in our community, across the state and across the country.

Excellent with Distinction is the highest State Report Card rating awarded by the Ohio Department of Education. At the beginning of last school year, the Kettering City School District set a goal of improving our state ranking. Curriculum was reviewed, improved instructional strategies were developed, technology was enhanced and interventions were put in place to funnel assistance to

struggling students.

In order to make *Excellent with Distinction*, a school district must pass all state tests, produce exemplary attendance and graduation rates, demonstrate that all students achieved more than one year of academic growth, and show that all of our student sub-groups -- All Students, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient (LEP), Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/Non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Multi-Racial and White/Non-Hispanic -- met or exceeded expectations.

Earning the *Excellent with Distinction* state ranking was truly a team effort. Everyone from our Board of Education members to teachers in the classroom to curriculum leaders and building principals all focused, collaborated and persisted to produce these outstanding results.

"Superintendent" cont. on pg. 2

Kettering City Schools

EXCELLENT with DISTINCTION



EXCELLENT WITH DISTINCTION!

The Kettering City School District is extremely proud of its designation of **EXCELLENT WITH DISTINCTION** on the *State Report Card*. This represents the highest rating a district can receive from the Ohio Department of Education, and Kettering joins an elite group of just 13 percent of Ohio's 614 school districts to receive this recognition.

"This type of achievement only happens with a lot of hard work on the part of a lot of people," says Jim Trent, president of the Kettering Board of Education. "On behalf of the board of education, I'd like to thank our tremendous teaching staff, our great support staff, principals, administrators and the entire Kettering community for the work they did to help us reach this milestone. It takes teamwork to achieve this type of excellence, and everyone should be proud of the part you

played in making this happen."

Notes board vice president, Julie Gilmore, "I couldn't be prouder of our teachers and students for all of their hard work and efforts in taking our district to the top on the *State Report Card*. As Jim said, it takes the hard work of everyone to get that EXCELLENT WITH DISTINCTION rating, so in addition to our top-notch staff, we extend a big 'thank you' to the thousands of dedicated parents and hundreds of committed volunteers who come into our school and work daily with our students. I believe we make a good effort to engage the Kettering community in our schools, and when we see results like we are seeing among our students, then you know that what is actually a *community wide* effort is truly paying off."

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Making *Excellent with Distinction* is a real honor for our school system and for the Kettering community. This year, only 13 percent of the 614 school districts in Ohio -- and only six large districts of 6,800 or more students -- earned the top state rating.

In the midst of this great academic news, everyone in the Kettering Schools is being asked to do more with less, and our Kettering teachers have taken this theme a step further, agreeing to accept a pay freeze for the 2011-2012 school year after receiving the lowest raises in 25 years in both 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. The teachers also agreed to pay more of their own health insurance. This show of teamwork on the part of our teachers is solid evidence of their desire to do their part to help hold down over-all district expenses and to keep the millage for the operating levy that will be on the November 2nd ballot as low as possible.

Our Kettering teachers are highly trained professional educators who continue to produce great test scores in spite of budget cuts, staff reductions and rising class sizes. For them to take a pay freeze is monumental and speaks to their dedication to this school district and this community. No one could ask more of them.

Jim Trent, Board of Education president notes, "I am happy that the Kettering City School District teachers and the Board of Education could work together in reaching an agreement for the 2011-2012 school year that shows that both entities are serious about addressing the concerns of this community."

The Kettering City School District has a "backs-to-the-wall" levy on the ballot this November. The district has lowered the requested tax increase from 6.9 mills to 4.9 mills, cut \$10 million from the budget over the past five years -- including \$2.25 million in cuts this past summer -- and made the difficult decision to close one of our elementary schools.

The school system has now been recognized as one of the best in the state and the teachers and administrators have agreed to take a pay freeze. I hope the citizens of this great community will appreciate the hard work and the conscientious efforts of the school system to provide a top quality education at a fair and reasonable cost. As always, I welcome your questions about the Kettering Schools, our operations and the academic and extracurricular opportunities we offer to our students.

New Greenmont Principal Excited About Return to Elementary Education

When Lynn Cowell says she has a passion for education, she isn't kidding. As she, herself, notes, "I've known since I was in elementary school that I wanted to be a teacher." The new principal at Greenmont Elementary School, Cowell brings a wealth of experience to the position, having served as a fourth-grade teacher, a lead teacher and an assistant principal at both Neff Elementary School and Wantz Middle School in the Miamisburg School District. And this is to say nothing of her "private-world" experience as the mother of an 18-year-old son and six- and three-year-old daughters. "Yes. It keeps me on my toes having three kids from one end of the age spectrum to the other!" says Cowell.



A graduate of Wright State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree; and the University of Dayton, where she earned her master's degree; Cowell says that her true passion has always been elementary education, which is the reason she moved from Miamisburg to the Kettering Schools. "I've always loved working at the elementary level, and when the Greenmont position came open, I was excited at the opportunity," says Cowell. "This is a great community, rich in history and very supportive of its neighborhood school, and that was very attractive to me. I'm looking forward to working with a great staff, motivated students and a very involved group of parents. This is really the foundation to building a great environment where all kids can learn and be successful."

Cowell is also looking forward to continuing and building upon all the things that helped Greenmont earn the EXCELLENT rating on this year's State Report Card. "Greenmont has a great rewards program in place, and I'm definitely continuing that with the staff and students. We will also continue to build on the concepts of differentiated instruction, flexible grouping and the belief that every child at Greenmont can learn and achieve and succeed." And as she's busy making her mark on Greenmont School and the Greenmont community, Cowell says she will try to carve out some time here and there for her other "passions:" Ohio State University football, reading, gardening and cooking!

High quality academics and strong extracurricular opportunities have long been a tradition of the Kettering City Schools, and the Kettering community has traditionally supported these important building blocks for our students.

Last May, Kettering voters defeated a 6.9-mill operating levy. This levy was very important to maintaining the educational excellence that has become an expectation of this community. With this in mind, we listened to citizens following the May election and identified the three major reasons the levy had failed: citizens said the millage was too high, citizens wanted to see that the district had made significant cuts in order to hold the line on expenses and -- almost across-the-board -- citizens said that they felt school staff members should make financial sacrifices in light of these difficult economic times.

In August, the Kettering Board of Education voted to place an operating levy on the November 2nd ballot. The levy on the ballot in November will be a 4.9-mill operating levy. This lower-millage levy was made possible by additional cuts of more than \$2 million -- including the closing of one

of the district's elementary buildings -- that were made over the summer, as well as the agreement by Kettering teachers and administrators that they would take a pay freeze for the next school year.

"I believe this board of education took seriously the concerns of our citizens following the May levy by making further, significant cuts and closing our smallest school building to cut costs," says Jim Trent, president of the Kettering Board of Education. "I also feel that our teachers and administrators took the views of our residents to heart by taking a pay freeze.

"I absolutely understand that times are very tough right now for many families in Kettering, but I hope people keep in mind the fact that the quality of a community rises and falls with the quality of the schools. We need to provide every opportunity possible to give our students the chance for success. If we let our school district slip, our property values and, therefore, our community, will slip, as well. I don't think this is anything any of us who love Kettering wants to see happen."

NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION MEETINGS

In an effort to provide Kettering residents with as much information as possible about the upcoming 4.9-mill operating levy, the Kettering City School District will host **Neighborhood Information Meetings** during September and October. The following Neighborhood Information Meetings have been scheduled to give Kettering residents the opportunity to get information and have questions answered about your schools, how they operate and the district's 4.9-mill November 2nd operating levy. Residents are encouraged to attend any of the meetings being held at the elementary schools. **All meetings will begin at 6 p.m.**

Indian Riffle Elementary
3090 Glengarry Drive
Wednesday, September 29

Beavertown Elementary
2700 Wilmington Pike
Thursday, October 7

Oakview Elementary
4001 Ackerman Blvd.
Thursday, October 21

Orchard Park Elementary
600 E. Dorothy Lane
Monday, October 4

J. F. Kennedy Elementary
5030 Polen Drive
Tuesday, October 12

J.E. Prass Elementary
2601 Parklawn Drive
Monday, October 25

'FAQs' About November 2nd Operating Levy

The Kettering City School District will have an Operating Levy on the November 2nd ballot. As always, we want to provide voters with as much information as possible so that you can make an informed decision when you "vote by mail" or go to the polls on Election Day, so we have provided answers to some of the "Frequently Asked Questions" we have received about the levy. Please feel free to contact us at any time with any additional questions or comments that you may have regarding this operating levy:

- Jim Schoenlein, Superintendent • 499-1430 • jim.schoenlein@ketteringschools.org
- Kari Basson, Community Relations • 499-1458 • kari.basson@ketteringschools.org

Q. What is the amount of the operating levy the Kettering School District is placing on the ballot?

A. The district is placing a 4.9-mill levy on the ballot.

Q. How much will this levy cost a property owner?

A. The cost of a levy is calculated based on the "assessed value" of the property, which for purposes of determining a school levy, amounts to 35 percent of the market value of the home. For example, the owner of a \$100,000 home in Kettering would pay \$12.51 a month, or \$150.51 a year, on a 4.9-mill levy.

For homeowners who qualify for the Homestead Exemption (homeowners who are 65 years of age or older or homeowners who are permanently disabled) the cost of the 4.9-mill levy is \$9.38 a month, or \$112.55 a year.

Q. The district placed a 6.9-mill levy on the May 2010 ballot that failed. How is the district able to reduce the millage of the levy to 4.9 mills for the November election?

A. Several significant things have happened since May, resulting in an additional \$2.25 million in cuts that allowed the board of education to lower the millage of the November levy. This work on the part of the district to further cut costs means the district has cut \$10 million from the budget in the past five years. The following cuts have been made since the May election:

- The district closed Moraine Meadows Elementary School.
- Kettering teachers agreed to a pay freeze for the next school year; administrators will also take a pay freeze for the 2011-2012 school year.
- Teaching, custodial and clerical positions were eliminated and/or not filled when an employee resigned or retired.
- The central office has been re-organized, and administrative positions have been eliminated.
- New technology purchases have been put on hold for the current school year.
- Telephone and utility contracts have been re-negotiated and costs reduced.

Q. How are funds from an operating levy used by the district:

A. Operating dollars are used to fund the day-to-day operations of a school district. This includes:

- Putting teachers in classrooms;
- Purchasing textbooks and classroom supplies;
- Paying the heating and electric bills
- Buying fuel for school buses;

- Offering students Advanced Placement courses and the International Baccalaureate Diploma program that prepare them for post-high school success at the finest colleges and universities;

- Maintaining 1.1 million square-feet of building space, which is used every day -- after school and on the weekends -- by community groups and organizations.

- Supporting extracurricular opportunities, such as award-winning music and art programs and a full range of athletic options;

- Providing students with access to state- and nationally recognized Career Tech Prep programs;

- Offering a strong academic program with an emphasis on reading, math and science to elementary students;

- Providing middle school students with a nurturing environment centered on academic growth and achievement;

- Meeting the varied and unique needs of our special education population through a state-recognized program.

Q. What will happen if a levy is not approved by voters?

A. The district has worked very hard over the past few years to make cuts to the budget without unduly harming the educational programs and services offered to students. If this levy does not pass in November, the school system will lose an entire year of anticipated and needed new revenue. As a result, substantial reductions would have to be made. These reductions would include:

- The elimination of 30-45 teachers and a significant increase in class sizes;
- The elimination of administrative and classified staff (custodians, buildings and grounds staff, clerical staff);
- Cuts to many of the enrichment and intervention programs provided to our students;
- The elimination of all transportation that is not state-mandated. This would include the elimination of all high school transportation and transportation of any student living two miles or closer to their school.
- Cuts to extra-curricular activities across the district.

The Kettering Schools are truly at a cross-roads; these types of significant cuts are not intended to threaten voters....rather, the district needs to make sure everyone in Kettering understands the magnitude of this levy.

If we do not have the money needed to maintain the excellent opportunities we can provide to students, then we have to make cuts. Instead of being one of the finest school districts in Ohio, we will become a district that provides students with the minimum of services required by the state. If this levy fails, the Kettering Schools will be a very different system next year, and a far cry from the high-quality district parents and community members have come to expect.

This year's freshmen students – Fairmont High School's Class of 2014 – are the first students who will be subject to the new, legislative-mandated *Ohio Core* graduation requirements.*

Under the Ohio Core, every student in a public or chartered non-public high school will be required to earn 20 units** – or credits – in order to graduate from high school and be admitted as an undergraduate to any state college or university in Ohio.***

The Ohio Core, designed to better prepare students for college and the workforce, also adjusts some of the courses a high school student must now take in order to graduate and be admitted to a state college or university in Ohio.

Most notably, the Ohio Core requires students to take an additional unit of math, increasing the requirement from three units to four, and one of the units must be Algebra II or its equivalent.

While the number of units of science a student will be required to take in order to graduate will remain at three, new Ohio Core graduation requirements stipulate that one of the three units must be an *advanced study of science* course. Chemistry, Physics and Biology II are all current Fairmont courses that would fit the description of *advanced study of science*.

"It's important, particularly given the new math and science requirements under Ohio Core, that parents and students understand that we need to be looking at what classes our students are taking at the middle school level to make certain they are adequately prepared to take – at a minimum – Algebra II and an advanced science course when they get to Fairmont," says David DeLon, secondary curriculum leader. "We have been working closely with our middle school and high school teachers and principals to put in place the courses our students need at both levels in order to meet the new Ohio Core requirements and are confident that we're prepared to meet these needs."

Fairmont High School's graduation requirements include four units of English and three units of Social Studies as well as 6.5 units of additional electives. Under the Ohio Core graduation requirements, approved electives have been expanded and now include a combination of foreign language, fine arts, career tech education, family and consumer sciences, technology, or English, math, social studies or science courses that are not otherwise an Ohio Core requirement.

"Fairmont will continue to require our students to accumulate 6.5 units of electives," says DeLon. "Our students will have to work with their counselors to make certain the 6.5 units of electives they choose include a combination of the electives that are Ohio Core graduation

requirements.

"This is really just a different way of thinking," says DeLon. "We know that our focus for helping our students graduate, get into good state colleges and move on to successful careers can't wait until they get to Fairmont. Now, more than ever, Van Buren and Kettering middle schools will lay the foundations for success for our students as they move to the high school and beyond, and we want to make sure our parents and students are aware of this so that we can continue to work in partnership to help our students succeed."

* *The Ohio Core has established alternative graduation requirements for high school students, including successfully completing the 21.5 units of graduation requirements approved by the Kettering Board of Education. However, if a student "opts-out" of the Ohio Core program, he or she will not be eligible for admittance to an Ohio college or university*

** *Fairmont High School graduation requirements are and will continue to be 21.5 units. Our counselors will work closely with our students at the high school to make certain the 21.5 units required by Fairmont for graduation also fulfill the Ohio Core graduation requirements.*

*** *Central State University, Shawnee State University and Youngstown State University are excluded from the Ohio Core requirement.*

New Career Tech Program can lead to Lucrative Career

A new offering through the Fairmont Career Tech Center will put students on the path toward a career that the U.S. Department of Labor has deemed one of the fastest growing and highly paid careers over the next decade.

The new Accounting Program at Fairmont consists of three classes that students will take over the course of their junior and senior years. "Accounting is a core business class for any student who thinks he or she might want to major in business in college," says Nancy Brown, coordinator of Fairmont's Career Tech Center. "This means that EVERY business major will need to take at least two courses in Accounting while in college."

Brown notes that a student who completes the Accounting Program at Fairmont will be able to earn five quarter hours or three semester hours of college credit, which covers one entry level accounting class

"Accounting" cont. on pg.6

By Nancy Brown, Coordinator, Fairmont Career Tech Center

Once again students in Fairmont High School's Biotechnology Career Tech Prep Program received the highest overall score from among more than 103 participating teams in the 2010 Miami Valley Tech Prep Showcase Competition held in late Spring. This event attracts students and teams from all over the Miami Valley and is designed to showcase the skills and knowledge students have gained in their Career Tech/ Tech Prep classes.



Biotech juniors at the time of competition, now seniors in the Tech Prep Program - Luke Behnke, Dakota Carter, Hannah Garwood, Samantha Kolafa, and Matt Thomas

A total of 103 teams with 360 students participated in the event, where their "Capstone Projects" were evaluated by 73 judges representing Miami Valley business and industry, as well as professors from Sinclair Community College.

Fairmont's Biotechnology Tech Prep seniors, **Angel Bailey, Mikki Linden, Robert Priest and Brittany Taylor**, were presented with a *Blue Ribbon* and the *Champion* designation for their project titled, *Secrets of the Oyster*. Working with researchers from the University of Dayton Research Institute (UDRI), the students devised a study to determine the feasibility of using oysters to produce a coating material that could help reduce rejection that can complicate knee and hip replacements.

The Biotechnology team conducted experiments with the UD researchers that involved observation and analysis of Eastern Oysters. Their findings from the experiment will provide the stepping stones toward more research and testing of a greater number of oysters and this, in turn, may provide the key to the development of successful biomedical materials for use in such areas as knee and hip replacements.

Fairmont's Biotech juniors, **Luke Behnke, Dakota Carter, Hannah Garwood, Samantha Kolafa, and Matt Thomas**, earned the *Champion* designation for their work converting *Camelina Sativa* to biodiesel fuel. *Camelina sativa* is a fast-growing crop whose seeds contain much oil and whose remaining shell can be used as a type of animal feed & fertilizer.

The students first contacted a mentor in *Small Business Innovation Research* at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and then worked locally with mentors from Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) -- Tim Edwards and Richard Striebich -- to guide them as they worked on their experiment. The team found that *Camelina sativa* contains oil that may be extracted to serve as a renewable source of biofuel that is more economical and environmentally friendly than fossil fuels. WPAFB is currently using *Camelina sativa* oil as a fuel additive in jet fuel.

Allied Health students, **Katey Bates, and Amanda Schultz**, also earned a *Champion* designation for their project, *We Got a Problem...H1N1 Got Me*

"Career Tech Students Champions Again" cont. to pg. 8

"Accounting" cont. from pg. 5

at any Ohio college. "If your child is interested in a career in accounting or business, they can take the Accounting Program at Fairmont and start college with a credit already under their belt. This translates into anywhere from \$230 to \$1,200 in tuition savings, depending on the college or university your child attends," says Brown. In addition, students who complete the program are eligible to apply for a \$3,000 scholarship to Sinclair Community College and can matriculate with their associate's degree to any Ohio college to complete a bachelor's degree.

"This is a great opportunity for any high school student. The Department of Labor expects the need for accountants to rise by 22 percent in the next eight-to-10 years, and top CPAs earn upwards of six figures," notes Brown, adding, "And a recent article in Yahoo Finance, '7 Jobs Companies are Desperate to Fill,' identifies accounting as the number one profession U.S. companies are seeking workers for right now."

For additional information about the Accounting Program at Fairmont's Career Tech Center, contact Nancy Brown at 499-1634 or at nancy.brown@ketteringschools.org.

When Jim Trent, president of the Kettering Board of Education, approached Dr. Stephen Levitt and Charley Schuerholz about serving with him as tri-chairpersons of the Citizens for Kettering City Schools levy campaign, both gentlemen said “yes,” without hesitation.

Schuerholz is the owner of Schuerholz Printing, located on Marshall Road in Kettering, and a life-long Kettering resident. Those strong community ties no doubt came into play when Schuerholz agreed – for the second time! – to serve as a tri-chairperson. “When the levy failed in May, I was obviously disappointed,” he notes. “But I know this community, and I know there is a lot of pride in and support for our schools among Kettering residents, so I was more than happy to work on this second campaign and do everything I can on behalf of our schools.”

“Charley did a tremendous job for the school system when he worked on the May levy campaign,” says Trent. “He was a quick study and by the end of the campaign, he had a full grasp of the importance of supporting our students. Charley brings loads of talent and hard work to everything he does, and that’s why I asked him to return in the same capacity. No one will outwork him, and we need that from our volunteers when there’s an important levy on the ballot!”

Equally passionate about the Kettering community and the schools is tri-chairperson, Dr. Levitt. A dermatologist for more than 30 years with a large practice located in Kettering, Dr. Levitt likewise lives in Kettering and is a huge proponent of the importance of a quality school system to building and maintaining a strong community.

“Education has always been very important to me, and I feel it is vital to Kettering and to the greater Dayton region. If we want our community to continue to grow and flourish and if we want to keep Kettering number one, we need to support a strong educational system,” says Dr. Levitt, adding, “I believe very strongly that our youth of today are our leaders of tomorrow and that it is paramount that we, as a community, continue to support a strong public school system that can provide our students with a solid education.”

Dr. Levitt is a well-known philanthropist throughout the greater Miami Valley whose commitment to local causes spans everything from



Jim Trent, Charley Schuerholz and Dr. Stephen Levitt will serve as tri-chairpersons of the Citizens for Kettering City Schools Levy Campaign

the annual former Beerman Thanksgiving Dinner to avid support of the UD Flyers.

“Dr. Levitt is a well-respected physician and citizen in the Miami Valley, and I should know this because I’ve been a patient of his for most of the years he has served the community,” says Trent. “Dr. Levitt told me years ago that he would always back the schools because he knows that our future rests with our children and the foundation we can provide to them through a quality education. And every time I talk to him about a ‘quality’ educational program, Dr. Levitt is quick to say that he believes this includes excellent academic and extra-curricular offerings. I know that he will be a valuable component of the levy campaign.”

Do You Have Your ‘Seniors Are Special’ Card?

If you are a Kettering resident, 60 years of age or older, you qualify for a “Seniors Are Special” Card.

Provided free-of-charge to our “veteran” residents, the card provides the holder with free admission to any Kettering Schools event or activity, including all athletic and music events.

To request your “Seniors Are Special” Card, please contact the Community Relations Office at 499-1458 or at kari.basson@ketteringschools.org, and we’ll be happy to send your card to your home.

Lookin' Like a Goblin. The students created a rap song that highlighted the preventative techniques necessary to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus. They also wrote a children's book and created a class presentation which will be shared with elementary students throughout the district.

Digital Design students, **Jake Sage, Sierra Eggert, Kristin Brandenburg, and Oliver Shawen**, received a *Blue Ribbon* in the *Showcase Competition* for their project, "Business Design 101." The students worked with Junior Achievement to create a T-shirt design company. The Digital Design students invited other Fairmont students to compete in a T-shirt design competition and then the company made and sold the shirts. The company was very successful and the students learned important lessons in managing money and people, and problem solving.

Hailey Taulbee and Olivia Ciupak, students in Technical Theatre, are another first-place winner from Fairmont with their project titled, "The Odd Project," in which they consulted with professionals in stage management and design and developed a set for the play, *The Odd Couple*.

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Engineering students exercised their engineering and problem-solving skills by re-designing the tail and wings of a business jet to make it

more fuel-efficient. The team, consisting of **Brandon Wehner, Bill Timmer, and Brian Catrine**, researched ideas regarding different tail and wing configurations and won a *Blue Ribbon* for their work. The PLTW team was also recognized last February by Gov. Ted Strickland, when they received the first-place award in the Ohio Real-World Design Challenge for their project.

Fairmont's Information Technology team consisting of **Ryan Lane, William Ludwig, Kyle Wilkinson, Patrick Taylor, and Corey Baker** received a *Red Ribbon* for their efforts. Their project, *Happy TUTS*, started with the premise that Information Technology can seem vague and confusing and then created a purchasable kit that included materials and tutorials to take the mystery out of information technology. This year they will add to this project by expanding their tutorials to software issues as well. Fairmont's Information Technology seniors -- **Cole Chapman, Kevin Habib, Alex Peters, and Doug Shindeldecker** -- also received a *Red Ribbon* for their plan to launch a Kettering IT Support program. The program is designed to help Kettering staff and community with their software and hardware problems.

Kettering Board of Education
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