



Superintendent News

News & Updates from Talawanda School District

Empowering Every Learner...Every Day!

Back to School Issue- August 2017

From Kelly Spivey:

Where did the summer go? It is hard to believe that it is time to begin a new school year, but we are all looking forward to seeing our students and having a wonderful school year! So...welcome back Talawanda students, parents, and community members!

We have been busy preparing for the 2017-2018 school year. Upon your return, you will find new staff, new materials, new copiers, new buses, and a beautiful new Kramer. We truly have many blessings to celebrate in the Talawanda School District! We are fortunate that our Board of Education continues to invest funds that directly impact public education in our community and increases opportunities for students to learn and achieve.

Over the summer, we've hired several new teachers and replaced one administrator. Mrs. Lori Brown, Director of Student Services left Talawanda School District. I'm excited to report that Ms. Stephanie Norris will be replacing her. Stephanie comes with a strong special education and administrative background, and most recently she served our community as an Assistant Principal for Kramer Elementary. We are so pleased with the level of talent among our team in Talawanda School District. Our faculty and staff are known for their passion for education and their compassion for students!

Teaching & Learning- Assessments & Graduation Requirements:

The State of Ohio will release report card results soon. As the former President of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), I've had the opportunity to discuss Ohio's accountability system with legislators, board members, and superintendents. Many are in agreement that it is necessary to provide evidence of student learning, however, Ohio assesses students very frequently, far above the minimum number of assessments required by the federal government. Experts and parents alike have continued to be concerned about this issue in public education in Ohio.

Recently, Ohio legislators introduced a bill which creates two new graduation pathways for the class of 2018. In one pathway, **students must fulfill two of the following nine criteria:**

- *A 12th grade attendance rate of at least 93 percent.*
- *A GPA of at least 2.5 in 12th grade, based on taking at least four full-year courses.*
- *Completion of a capstone project.*
- *Completion of 120 hours of work experience or community service.*
- *Earning at least three credit hours through College Credit Plus.*
- *Passing an AP or IB exam with a score sufficient to earn college credit.*
- *Reaching minimum cut scores on sections of the WorkKeys assessment.*
- *Obtaining an industry credential or credential worth at least three points.*
- *Meeting the conditions to earn an OhioMeansJobs-readiness seal.*

In the second pathway, students can complete an approved career-technical training program and then fulfill one of the following criteria:

- *Earning a cumulative score of proficient or better on career-technical education exams or test modules required for the training program.*
- *Obtaining an industry credential or credentials worth at least 12 points.*
- *Completing 250 hours of workplace experience, documented by positive evaluations from workplace and school officials.*

State tests on social studies for fourth and sixth grade students are being eliminated under HB49, replaced with a requirement that districts teach the content and administer a test selected by experts in each local district.

Talawanda Board of Education members approved a change in policy which will change class ranking procedures for future classes. Beginning with the Class of 2022, GPA will continue to be calculated, but class rank will no longer be calculated for publication on transcripts, nor will a valedictorian or salutatorian be recognized. Class rank can be requested by a college, university or scholarship committee, and the counselors will provide that information upon request. In addition, beginning with the Class of 2018, students will be recognized for academic success at Graduation, using a Latin system based on their GPA at the end of the 7th semester. The designations will be: Summa cum Laude GPA: 4.200 and above, Magna Cum Laude 4.000 to 4.199, Cum Laude 3.800-3.999.

We will continue to follow legislation and provide a voice, always advocating for what is best for children in the Talawanda Community. If you're interested in this type of work, please consider joining our TSD Community Advisory Committee by contacting kspivey@talawanda.org.

Strategic Plan Update:

A community committee has been working on the district strategic plan since June of 2013. This school year will be the fourth year of implementation. Below you will find a summary of this plan:

The TSD MISSION: Talawanda EMPOWERS Every Learner Everyday!

TSD's Vision: Talawanda will be a collaborative, flexible, inviting community where innovation guides learning inside and outside of the school walls.

TSD Goal(s):

1. Teaching and Learning - To empower learners to demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation while engaged in the pursuit of authentic learning as evidenced by every child gaining a year's worth of growth in every setting.

The focus has been to expand STEM opportunities to a greater number of students, while adding new course options in this area. Also, there was an emphasis to partner with the local Chamber of Commerce and local businesses within the community to create programs that better prepare our secondary students for the job market, technical schools/trade schools, and college. The district continues to focus on providing a high quality program for all students K-2.

2. Climate and Culture - To empower all stakeholders to actively create and sustain a positive learning environment.

The district continues to implement a district-wide equity plan, which is evaluated through student, staff and parent surveys, strategies implemented through book studies, professional development opportunities, student anti-bullying programs, and gap-closing measures.

3. Communication - To empower the community to be involved and engaged in the educational process by developing a multi-functional / multi-sensory communications plan that addresses the new Talawanda key message and ensures that all relevant constituencies receive and understand the message.

The Communications Department successfully launched a new website, and a new delivery system for school and district news. There is a strong emphasis to expand news through social media outlets due to the growing number of followers the district receives annually. One area that has received a great deal of attention was expanding the contact data for each student's family by adding a parent's mobile number to the new texting feature of our School Messenger contact software, while also increasing the parent email database to expand school E-newsletters to all families. A new "Community Activities" page has been developed for the website to allow for advertising of community events and programs targeting families and youth.

Facility Update:

The Talawanda Board of Education entered into a Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) agreement in 2000-2001. Since then, the district completed a new high school project in 2012, the new Kramer was just completed and opened in early 2017, and the district is in the discussion/early planning stages for a new Marshall. This winter the board will be studying this topic further.

The Talawanda School District is more than excited about the recent completion of a new Kramer Elementary School at NO NEW dollars to the community. A community tour is planned for Monday, August 14th at 5:30 PM. Please join us for this celebration!

Community Engagement:

Talawanda is very pleased to announce that due to popular parent request, the district has contracted with *Final Forms* to bring electronic student registration software to the district.

The benefits to this include:

- Increased security for student records
- Saves time for parents and staff
- Improves customer support and service
- Environmentally friendly - reduces paper usage/paper waste
- Provides internal/external notifications for tracking information
- Customizes TSD forms
- Centralizes data management/detailed reporting
- Data is updated every 24 hours

In the coming days parents will be receiving information regarding updating their student's information and family contact data electronically. Secretaries in our schools have received training in order to assist with the transition to this new process.

Upcoming Events:

- August 14th 5:30 pm - Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Kramer Elementary School
 - 7:30 pm Board Meeting at Kramer Elementary School
- August 16th - First Day of School for Students

- Open Houses Dates:
 - **THS**
 - Freshmen Orientation- Wednesday 8/9/17, 6:30 pm-9 pm
 - Open House- Monday 8/14/17, 5pm for seniors, 6pm for soph/juniors
 - **TMS**
 - Open House- Monday 8/7/17, 6pm for 7th grade
 - Open House- Monday 8/7/17, 7pm for 8th grade
 - Open House- Tuesday 8/8/17, 6-8pm for 6th grade
 - Meet the Teacher Nights- 8/22/17 & 8/24/17, 6pm-8pm
 - **Bogan, Kramer, Marshall**
 - Open House Grades 1-5 Tuesday 8/15/17, 4:30pm-6pm

- Homecoming 2017 Events:
 - Homecoming Weekend- October 5-7, 2017
 - Homecoming Parade- October 5th
 - Homecoming Game THS -vs- Mt. Healthy - October 6th
 - Homecoming Dance- October 7th

- Community Advisory Meeting- September 26, 2017 8am-10:30am at the THS Media Center

