

The Highland HIGHLIGHT

ISSUE 3 ■ FEBRUARY 2016

Published by Highland Local Schools to promote our students, staff and programs.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MAKING HEADLINES, P2 HIGHLAND MAKES AP HONOR ROLL, P3 HIGHLAND HAPPENINGS, P4-5
UP & COMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS, P6 STUDENT-ATHLETES EARN SCHOLARSHIPS, P7 FOUNDATION NEWS, P8



MEET:

Lilly Barnett

4th Grade, Sharon Elementary

Highland Tops Medina County Schools

On January 14, 2016, the Ohio Department of Education released the first portion of results for the 2015 Ohio School Report Cards. Schools and districts were graded on Graduation Rates, K-3 Literacy and the Prepared for Success measure. Highland Local School District continuously ranks among the top districts in Northeast Ohio. On February 25, 2016, the ODE will release the remaining components (Achievement, Gap Closing and Progress).

GRADUATION RATES: This component represents the percentage of students whom entered the 9th grade and graduated four years later.

PREPARED FOR SUCCESS: The Prepared for Success component provides information on how schools prepare students for different pathways of college and career success.

K-3 LITERACY: Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee ensures that students are successful in reading before moving on to 4th grade. Schools must provide supports for struggling readers in early grades. If a child appears to be falling behind in reading, the school will immediately start a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan. The program ensures that every struggling reader gets the support he or she needs to learn and achieve. Highland received an "NR" on this measure because less than 5% of kindergarten students were not on-track.

"We believe that these results demonstrate that we continue to successfully prepare our students for a variety of college and career pathways. These are valuable and important benchmarks for us and we are very pleased to see year-over-year improvement in each of these measures. We are committed to the long-term success of each of our students."

~ Superintendent Catherine Aukerman

	ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) PARTICIPATION RATE	AP +3 RATE (HIGHEST LEVEL)
	Percentage	Percentage
Highland	42.3%	33.9%
Black River	7.8%	0.0%
Brunswick	11.0%	10.8%
Buckeye	7.9%	0.0%
Cloverleaf	14.5%	12.3%
Medina	N/R*	6.1%
Wadsworth	31.9%	18.0%

*Medina was not rated due to a possible calculation error on the part of ODE

Please refer to article on Page 3 for a full explanation of the above numbers on Advanced Placement classes.

4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE		
	Percentage	Grade
Highland	98.2%	A
Black River	87.4%	C
Brunswick	94.3%	A
Buckeye	91.5%	B
Cloverleaf	92.5%	B
Medina	95.9%	A
Wadsworth	96.1%	A

ACT PARTICIPATION RATE	
	Percentage
Highland	87.7%
Black River	56.3%
Brunswick	58.9%
Buckeye	67.7%
Cloverleaf	63.0%
Medina	64.7%
Wadsworth	78.9%

PERCENTAGE EARNING HONORS DIPLOMAS	
	Percentage
Highland	34.7%
Black River	11.7%
Brunswick	15.7%
Buckeye	14.8%
Cloverleaf	22.9%
Medina	21.8%
Wadsworth	28.5%

MAKING HEADLINES...

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR PRIDE AWARDS

Each school year, the Highland Board of Education recognizes two individuals whose work for the schools exemplifies an extraordinary spirit of pride. Highland Pride Awards will be given to one Highland Local School District employee and one member of the community at the May 16, 2016, Board of Education meeting held at Highland High School. A reception will follow.

The Highland Pride Committee is now accepting nominations of deserving individuals to receive this year's Highland Pride Award. Letters of nomination must include the following information and are due by Friday, April 1, 2016:

- Name, address and phone number of the nominee (must be at least 18 years of age)
- Reason(s) for the nomination
- Number of years of service and support
- Type of service to the Highland Schools
- Explanation of involvement in schools or with students
- A listing of specific actions, occasions, accomplishments, etc.

Submit letters of nomination to: Dawn Marzano, Director of Communications, Highland Local Schools, 3880 Ridge Road, Medina, OH 44256, or email nominations to marzano@highlandschools.org. Questions? Call 330-239-1901, ext. 1261.



TITTLE WINS 2ND IN ESSAY CONTEST

Congratulations to Highland High School junior David Tittle who placed 2nd in the Common Reading Essay Contest sponsored by the University of Akron. David was recognized for his essay, "Beautiful Family, Sad Addictions," based on the book *Beautiful Boy* by author

David Sheff. He was honored at a special reception in December and received a \$100 gift card and had a book donated in his name to the university's library. The purpose of the contest is to provide an introduction to the expectations of higher education and to encourage students to read beyond textbooks, while raising awareness and tolerance of intergenerational and cultural likenesses and differences.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. Norman Christopher, M.D. Mike Houska
Robert Kelly Diane Thomas Christopher Wolny

CONTACT US

Administration Office 330-239-1901
3880 Ridge Road, Medina, Ohio 44256

PRE-SCHOOL APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED

Highland Local Schools is now accepting pre-school applications for typically-developing three, four and five year old children for the 2016-17 school year. The "Little Hornets" half-day pre-school program is located at Granger Elementary School and runs Monday through Thursday. In order to register, your child must be three years old August 1, 2016. All completed applications should be mailed to the Highland Special Education Department, 3880 Ridge Road, Medina, OH 44256. Please call 330-239-1901, ext. 1256 with any questions. Screening will be held on March 18. Space is VERY limited. All applications must be returned by March 4. Preschool application can be downloaded at www.highlandschools.org.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS 3/10

If you have a child who will begin kindergarten this August, parents should mark their calendars for Thursday, March 10. Registration will be held at each elementary school from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m. Highland's program consists of an all day, every day model. In order to register, a child must be 5 years old by September 30, 2016. The following items are needed at the time of registration: personal identification with a picture I.D., proof of residency, the child's original birth certificate or passport, child's complete immunization records, and certified custody papers (if applicable). Registration forms are available online, at registration, or may be picked up any elementary school office. Bringing completed forms to registration will expedite the process.

10 HONORED BY AKRON TOUCHDOWN CLUB

Ten Highland High School student-athletes will be honored at the Akron Touchdown Club's Annual Fall Sports Banquet of Champions on January 11. The banquet recognizes outstanding athletic accomplishment and excellence in scholastic achievement by student athletes, coaches and schools. The Touchdown Club has a long and tradition-filled history as the oldest sports organization in Summit County, beginning operations in 1941. At its two annual banquets, student athletes from 44 high schools in Summit and Portage Counties are recognized. Congratulations to the following Highland students on their accomplishments this past Fall athletic season: CHAD DUBIEL, Golf; ANNA MARIE DIGIACCOBE, Cross Country; MARLEE PROFITT, Volleyball; MANNY DEL CERNA, Football; TYLER FREDERICK, Football; TYLER ZELINSKI, Football; MADISON BUTLER, Golf; ALICIA PORVASNIK, Golf; MADISON LESS, Soccer; and JOSH WOOLARD, Soccer.

Highland Again Named to AP District Honor Roll

Highland Local School District is among 425 school districts across the U.S. and Canada to be named to the 6th Annual AP District Honor Roll by the College Board. This is Highland's 4th consecutive year of receiving this honor. Highland is being recognized for simultaneously increasing access to Advanced Placement course work while increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams. Reaching these goals indicates that these districts are successfully identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are likely to benefit from rigorous AP course work.

The first step to delivering the opportunity of AP to students is providing access by ensuring courses are available, that gate keeping stops, and that the doors are equitably opened so that all students have an opportunity to participate.

Inclusion on the 6th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on the following criteria:

- Increased participation/access to AP by at least 4 percent in large districts, at least 6 percent in medium districts, and at least 11 percent in small districts;
- Increased or maintained the percentage of exams taken by African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students, and;
- Improved performance levels when comparing the percentage of students in 2015 scoring a 3 or higher to those in 2013.

AP course work and exams enable students to prepare to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments and see many sides of an issue – skills that prepare them for college and beyond. More than 90 percent of colleges and universities across the U.S. offer college credit, advanced placement or both for a score of 3 or higher

HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

- Highland High School offers 13 AP courses and exams.
- In the spring of 2015, 409 exams were administered to 209 students and 75.1 percent of the students earned scores of 3 or higher.
- Twenty-two seniors earned the title of AP Scholar, taking three exams with an average score of at least 3.0.
- Thirteen students earned AP Scholar with Honor, meaning they received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.
- Twenty-one seniors earned AP Scholar with Distinction, granted to students who receive at least a 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.
- Three students earned National AP Scholar, meaning they received an average of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these.
- Next year, Highland High School will add 3 AP courses - AP Music Theory, AP Art History and AP French - to its curriculum.

on an AP Exam, which can potentially save students and their families thousands of dollars in college tuition.

Inclusion on the 6th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on the examination of three years of AP data, from 2013 to 2015. The College Board is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education.

Highland Ranks 48th Among Ohio Schools

Highland School District ranks 48th out of 611 districts in the state of Ohio, according to a new survey done by Niche.com. The goal of the survey is to make choosing a neighborhood, college or K-12 school a more transparent process. Founded in 2002, the organization allows students and families to grade high schools. No other Medina County schools were recognized in the top 100.

The "2016 Best Public High Schools" ranking provides a comprehensive assessment of the overall experience of a public high school. This grade takes into account key factors such as the strength of academics, quality of teachers, school resources, the quality of student life, as well as student and parent reviews, in an

"We always relish the opportunities for external assessment. We have families, students, teachers and administrators who work very hard on behalf of the success of the district, so it's always rewarding to read positive perceptions."
~ Dana Addis, HHS Principal

attempt to measure the overall excellence of the school.

Based on the above criteria, Highland received an A in academics, B+ in health and safety, C+ in student culture and diversity, A in the teacher category, A- in resources and facilities, B+ in extra-curricular and activities and B+ in sports and fitness.

Source: The Post Newspaper 1/21/16. Reporter Rita Jean Wagar.



HMS students from left: Jordan Waddell, Stephanie Jirousek, Elizabeth Dannery and Danielle Pembridge.



HHS students from left: Sydney Hill (junior), Marcus Kyle (senior) and Brandon Lenhard (freshman).

CHAMPION OF CHOICES: MARC MERO

Marc Mero, former WWE wrestler, presented an emotional program to the students at Highland High School and Highland Middle School on January 8. Marc's personal mission to stand up, step up and speak up against bullying came across loud and clear in his powerful Anti-Bullying and Suicide Prevention "Choices" production. Marc is no stranger to the negative impacts of bullying. In his riveting life story shared with thousands of students in schools worldwide, Marc candidly talks about how he was bullied as a youngster and also how he treated his family. Marc shows how negative words and actions have the power to cause regrettable scars. The mission of Champion of Choices, Inc. is to empower students to make healthy and positive choices that lead to lifelong success, initiating personal and social change to make a difference in themselves and their communities. Both programs were generously funded by The Highland Foundation.

SERVING AS 'PRINCIPAL FOR THE DAY'

Sharon 5th grader Madison Pawlak and Hinckley 5th grader Jacob Sumodi had the opportunity to serve as "Principal for the Day" in January and learn the ropes of being a principal with Mrs. Katie Kowza (Sharon Principal) and Mr. Craig Caroff (Hinckley Principal). They had several duties throughout the day including helping with morning announcements, inspecting the building, announcing the safety drill, eating lunch with the principal, and of course, having their picture taken with the principal! They were also given a t-shirt that declared they were "Principal for the Day!" This day was one of the many items auctioned off during the 11th Annual Highland Foundation Dinner &



Benefit Auction held in November 2015. Each elementary school participated in the auction. Granger 5th grader Ayden Boucher will enjoy his day as principal on February 25.

Be sure to visit the District website and Facebook page for important updates and information.

STUDENTS EXPERIENCE MAGIC OF 'OZ!'

Highland students recently participated in a four-week musical theater project, which culminated with a special presentation of the "The Wizard of Oz" on December 16-17. The purpose of the theater project was to help students with special needs experience

and expand social and learning outcomes in a fun and creative outlet. Led by teaching artists Jodi Maile Kirk and Molly Andrews-Hinders of "Kids Love Musicals!," students from Highland elementary schools, Highland Middle School and Highland High School worked on singing, learning their lines, group participation and all the aspects that go into planning for a musical production. This is the first time that most of the students have been

involved in a theatre project. Over the four-week period, they experienced a hands-on introduction to the art, empowering them to experience musical theatre through performance and student-centered discussion. Students had a blast and so did the audience!



HHS student Alec Lancaster as the Wicked Witch.



Mirabella Gale with Molly Andrews-Hinders during the production at Granger Elementary.



Sharon kindergarten students Andrew Luipold, Connor Jordan and Michael Renner get set to race!



Sharon kindergarten student Emma Smith looks ready to hit the beach!

Students Spend Day at the Beach!

January 29 was a typical winter day in Northeast Ohio with blustery conditions, but not inside the elementary buildings where students celebrated "Beach Day!" Students enjoyed a variety of games and activities, music and dancing! Students and staff also showed their "summer spirit" by dressing in beach attire including hats, sunglasses, shorts, Hawaiian shirts and even sandals. The students and staff had a great day at the beach!

Happier Times

Swimmers Experience Another Unprecedented Year

Now in their third year, the Highland Hornets continue to make their mark in the world of competitive high school swimming that includes a progressive march toward the top of the Suburban League. On January 30 at the University of Akron, the Highland Girls and Boys finished 2nd and 5th overall in the Suburban League (SL) American Conference Championship Meet. Highland had multiple individual American Conference Champions: Ashley Mennenga (100 Fly & 100 Back); Mindy Wilkes (200 IM and 100 Free) and Kyle Skidmore (200 Free and 500 Free). The team of Mallory McCormick, Brit Stacho, Mennenga and Wilkes were Conference Champions in both the 200 and 400 Free Relays. Dom Apisa was 3rd in the 200 IM and 5th in 100 Breast. Stacho was 3rd in the 50 and 100 Free. Mal McCormick finished 3rd in the 200 Free. Nolan Marcellino was 4th in the 500 Free and Kaitlyn Niese was 5th in the 500 Free.

During the regular season, the girls compiled an overall record of 5-1 in SL dual meets. Although 1-5 during the regular season, the boys, with just seven swimmers, came ever so close against three SL opponents by margins of only 3, 4 and 14 points. This year, swimmers earned an unprecedented 32 points toward the Suburban League All-Sports Trophy for Highland. Earlier this season, an unprecedented eight Hornet swimmers qualified for the prestigious Viking and Northeast Invationals. The remaining nine Hornets all qualified for the Viking B-Meet. Mennenga (100 Fly, 100 Back) and Wilkes (100 Free) advanced to finals in both meets, while the girls advanced



to finals in the 200 and 400 Free relays at Viking. Mennenga was the Champion at both Viking and Northeast finishing 1st in the 100 Back. Junior Alex Wyszowski and sophomores Alyssa Horacek and Jackson Fisher have been significant contributors in both individual and relay events this year. Freshmen Kaitlyn Niese, Joey Vincek, Austin Pettay, Caitlin Donner, Gabby Quartaraco, Grace Axlund and Kenedy Kerr have been a big contributors this year as well and bodes well for Highland's future. Preparation is underway for a run through the OHSA State Tournament with Sectional Qualifying on February 13, Districts on February 20 and State Finals February 26-27. Highland swimmers are coached by Beth Starling and Steve Rhein.

UP and COMING

MARCH 2016

- **3/1:** Sharon Math Madness Begins
- **3/2:** HMS Choir Concert, 6:30 (HHS)
- **3/3:** Elementary School Conferences, 4-7:30 p.m.; 8th Grade Band & Orchestra Concert, 7 p.m. (HHS)
- **3/4:** Elementary Cuddle up & Read Day; Granger Father/Daughter Dance at 6:30 p.m.; 7th Grade BIONIC Night (HMS); HHS Band & Orchestra Host Contest
- **3/10:** Kindergarten Registration; HMS Musical, 7 p.m. (HHS)
- **3/11:** Granger Mother/Son Event; HMS Musical, 7 p.m. (HHS)
- **3/12:** HMS Musical, 7 p.m. (HHS)
- **3/14:** Highland Foundation Spring Grant Applications Due
- **3/15:** Sharon 4th & 5th Grade Choir Concert, 7 p.m. (HMS); HHS Winter Sports Awards Assembly, 6:30 p.m.
- **3/16:** 8th Grade Trip to Washington, D.C.; Parent/Athlete Pre-Season Meeting, 6:30 p.m. (HHS)
- **3/17:** HHS Spring Sports Picture Day; Granger 4th Grade Concert & Celebration of the Arts
- **3/18:** End of 3rd Grading Period; 8th Graders Return from D.C. Trip
- **3/20:** Hinckley's Annual Buzzard Day
- **3/21-28:** Spring Break / NO SCHOOL
- **3/29:** Students Return
- **3/31:** Sharon Math Madness Ends

APRIL 2016

- **4/1:** Report Cards
- **4/5:** COSI Assembly at Hinckley; Sharon PTO Muffin Mania
- **4/6:** COSI Assembly at Granger; Sharon PTO Muffin Mania
- **4/7:** COSI Assembly at Sharon; Granger PTO Muffin Mania
- **4/8:** Granger PTO Muffin Mania; Elementary Sports Day
- **4/9:** National ACT Testing; Mr. Hornet Contest, 7-10 p.m. (HHS)
- **4/12:** Sharon Book Fair Begins
- **4/14-16:** HHS Black Box Play, 7 p.m.
- **4/16:** Sharon Father/Daughter Dance
- **4/19:** Sharon Book Fair Ends; Sharon Celebration of the Arts, 6:30-8 p.m.
- **4/21:** Granger 3rd Grade Concert, 7 p.m.; Hinckley 1st & 2nd Grade Musical, 7 p.m.; High School Conferences, 4-7:30 p.m.; HHS Art Show, 6:30 p.m.
- **4/22:** Interims; Sharon PTO Spring Clean Up Event; HMS Activity Night, 7-9 p.m.; HHS Prom Promise Assembly; District Choir Contest (HHS)
- **4/23:** Sharon PTO Spring Clean Up; District Choir Contest (HHS); Highland Prom, 7-11 p.m. (Galaxy in Wadsworth)
- **4/26:** District Jazz Concert, 7 p.m. (HHS)
- **4/28:** Sharon Play Production, 7 p.m.; District Percussion Ensemble, 7 p.m. (HHS)
- **4/29:** Granger Volunteer Breakfast; Sharon Volunteer Tea, 2 p.m.; Sharon Play Production, 7 p.m.
- **4/30:** Sharon Play Production, 1 p.m.

HIGHLAND ATHLETIC NEWS

MAPP COMMITS TO AKRON

ALEX MAPP has committed to attend and play soccer for the University of Akron this fall, following in his father's footsteps where he was a former Zips player. He received a partial athletic scholarship to the Division I university and he plans to study business. He is a scholar athlete and played soccer on the varsity team as a freshman. Alex was also named the Top Player to Watch in the Great Lakes Region, was the Akron Summer Soccer Camps MVP 2011-2013 and is a member of the Internationals Soccer Academy (United States Soccer Development Academy). Alex is the son of Pete and Michelle Mapp of Granger Township. Pictured with Alex are his parents and his sister, Kylie, a 7th grader at Highland Middle School.



MAPP FAMILY

LESS COMMITS TO CINCINNATI

MADISON LESS has committed to attend and play soccer for the University of Cincinnati this fall. She received a partial athletic scholarship to the Division I university, where she will study mechanical engineering. She is a four-year varsity letterman on the Highland girls soccer team and was recently presented with the Senior Excellence Award by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. She was named 2nd Team All-State by the Ohio Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association and recipient of the Academic Excellence Award; 1st Team All-District by the Greater Akron Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association; and was recognized as an All-Star Athlete in 2016 by the Akron Touchdown Club. Named the American Division Player of the Year and 1st Team All-Conference her junior and senior years, she boasts impressive stats including 68 goals against, 341 saves and 409 opponent shots on goal in 71 games as a Hornet. She is also a member of the US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program, an AP Scholar Award winner, member of the National Honor Society and serves as a Peer Leader. Madison is the daughter of Ron and Lorie Less of Hinckley Township. She is pictured with her parents and her brothers, Hunter, a HHS freshman, and Luke, 1st grader at Hinckley Elementary.



LESS FAMILY

ZELINSKI COMMITS TO ASHLAND

TYLER ZELINSKI has committed to attend and play football for Ashland University this fall. He received a partial athletic scholarship to the Division II university, where he plans to study business management. Tyler was the quarterback and punter for the Hornets as they reached the D-II playoffs for the third straight year. He threw for 1,550 yards, rushed for 741 and tallied 21 touchdowns. He also carried at 35.1 average as punter. He was named 1st Team All-Conference, 2nd Team All-District, *Medina Gazette* Player of the Week and nominated by Time Warner Cable for "Play of the Year." He was also recognized as an All-Star Athlete in 2016 by the Akron Touchdown Club. He is the son of Matthew and Michelle Zelinski of Montville Township. Pictured with Tyler are his parents, his brother, Corey, a Highland graduate, and sister Madison, a freshman at Highland High School.



ZELINSKI FAMILY

District-wide Book Club Now Underway

Granger, Hinckley and Sharon Elementary students celebrated the start of a special reading project during a school-wide assembly on January 19 as they were introduced to their latest book, Roald Dahl's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Each school staff unveiled the book in a grand fashion with animated skits, music, costumes and a clever scavenger hunt complete with "golden tickets" to help bring the book alive to the students. The all-district book club aims to build a community of readers, both in school and at home. Everyone including students, parents, teachers and administrators will be joining in on the fun! Over the next few weeks, students will participate in daily trivia questions and various activities such as mystery readers and activities. This district-wide collaborative, now in its second year, is made possible through the generous support of The Highland Foundation.

At right: Members of the National Honor Society at Highland High School are serving as Mystery Readers. They visited Granger Elementary on January 25. From left, with HHS senior Amanda Finucane (center), are 2nd graders Kennedy Smith, Payton Berger, Kallen Whitling and Reid Oney. (Photo by Tara Ringgenberg)



COMING UP: Joe Deninzon



The Highland community should mark their calendars for 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 4 in the Highland High School Auditorium to enjoy a free concert by electric violinist pioneer, Joe Deninzon.

Born in Russia, Deninzon has been hailed by critics as "The Jimi Hendrix of the Violin," because of his innovative style on the electric seven-string violin and his compositions combining jazz and rock with Gypsy influences.

A musician who transcends many genres, he has worked with Sheryl Crow, Bruce Springsteen, Phoebe Snow, Everclear, Ritchie Blackmore of Deep Purple, Smokey Robinson and Les Paul among others.

Deninzon will lead Highland High School music students in a two-day extensive workshop, culminating in the Wednesday evening concert, featuring his original compositions and arrangements with Highland orchestra students, under the direction of Mrs. Rachel Gamin.



LEARNING WITH THE IPAD

Hinckley Elementary's moderate-to-intensive needs classroom recently received three iPads, made possible through The Highland Foundation, that will allow students to have interactive fun while they work on communication, language and motor skills, as well as academics and behavior. Staff can now record data and capture videos of new skills that can be shared with parents in meetings or through emails. Although The Foundation does not normally fund technology such as iPads, the gains for children in the special education classroom create a situation where this funding is deemed important. *Pictured is Evan Lynch, 4th grader at Hinckley Elementary.*