OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS
FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

ABOUT THIS PAGE

■ This weekly page is focused on the 16 Montgomery County public school districts involved in Learn to Earn Dayton, a collective impact initiative committed to ensuring that children in the Dayton region are ready for kindergarten, third-grade reading proficient, and college and career ready. ■ **This week:** Trotwood, Centerville, Dayton, Brookvillex

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BROOKVILLE

Tim Hopkins is superintendent of Brookville Local Schools.

'All In?' is the critical question

For the last 21 years I have been a school superintendent. During these years I have seen more education initiatives than I care to count. Some were good, many were not, and often they lacked sustainability. There are many reasons why education initiatives are successful, or not. We'll forgo that debate and focus on the Montgomery County School Districts' buy-in to Learn to Earn Dayton. Why is it necessary and why do I believe "All In?" is the critical question to the program's success?

Learn to Earn Dayton isn't about silver bullets to improve test scores or new social reform programs that ask teachers to act as surrogate parents. Instead, it's about solid research on what is needed for our community to survive – reaching the goal of 60 percent of our workforce obtaining a certificate attesting to a skill or holding a college degree by 2025. Learn to Earn Dayton is about workforce development. It goes beyond the sustainability of an initiative and addresses the sustainability of an entire region.

Our school districts work in conjunction with Learn to Earn advocates to establish meaningful education benchmarks. We know a child being ready for kindergarten, having appropriate reading skills by third grade, strong math skills in the middle grades and successful attainment of basic credits in ninth grade, are imperative. Hitting these marks practically ensures they will graduate from high school, on time, college and/or career ready.

Now comes the question; "All In?" I can assure you the Montgomery County Public Schools are – "All In." We are dedicated to inspiring every student to find his or her individual greatness. This is our common goal.

I believe the business community is – "All In." Phillip Parker, president of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, has written and spoken of the Chamber's recognition that education is paramount in giving the Dayton area a competitive edge in business and job creation.

Can we count on you as parents and caregivers to be – "All In?" In all my years in education, I have not met a parent who didn't want more for their child than themselves. That desire transcends economic, social and geographic boundaries. We need all of you to provide your children guidance and encouragement.

And lastly, what about students? It is time for us to ask them – "Are you 'All In?'" They must come to the table. They must be willing to participate. Attendance and attitude by our young people is more important than ever.

If we are "All In," we may have found a sustainable initiative that will help save this region.

Montgomery County Public Schools are dedicated to inspiring every student to find his or her individual greatness. This is our common goal.

CENTERVILLE

Forte releases second CD

Centerville High School a cappella group Forte has released a new CD featuring all originals. In 2013, Forte's first all originals CD, "Life's So Lyrical," won a Contemporary A Cappella Recording Award for best overall high school CD in the nation.

CHS senior's art picked for competition

Centerville High School Senior Emily Burkett's original artwork was selected for the Regional Round at the Governor's Art Competition. Burkett's piece was one of 12,000 entries selected from the 15 regions in Ohio for consideration at the state competition, which is held each year at the James A. Rhodes State Office Tower.

Primary Village North a school of character

The Character Education Partnership, a national advocate and leader for the character education movement, has named Primary Village North a 2014 National School of Character for "demonstrating its use of character development to drive a positive impact on academics, student behavior and PVN's climate."

Centerville schools host children's author

Award-winning children's author and acclaimed educator Lester Laminack met with Centerville parents during an open meeting about how to support children as readers and writers at home. During the day, he visited with PVS students and staff, sharing tips about how to become an effective writer, the value of a writing notebook and how educators can embed the Common Core State Standards into oral storytelling.

TROTWOOD-MADISON

Amanda Grear is a science teacher at Trotwood-Madison Middle School.

Profile
Amanda Grear
Science teacher, Trotwood-Madison Middle School

Education: Stivers School for the Arts (2001), bachelor's from Otterbein College (2005) and master's from Miami University (2012).

What do you enjoy most about teaching in Trotwood-Madison City Schools? The sense of being a member of one big extended family. It's big enough to have your own identity, but small enough to not feel like just a name/number.

Describe some of the real-world experiences you bring into your classroom: I have done a lot of traveling over the past few years. When I visit places I try to bring something back for my classroom, something that might engage or connect with at least one student. I'm from Dayton and attended Dayton Public Schools. I was raised by a single mother whom didn't have much of money. I say that because I'm familiar with some of the circumstances that many of my students are facing. Throughout middle and high school I was encouraged to take advantage of every opportunity offered to me. I encourage my students to do the same. I want my kids to know that being from an urban setting and having some hard times, isn't an excuse for failure or not being the best person you can be.

Describe your teaching philosophy in 10 words or less: Inquiry and problem-solving. Start with what you (they) know.

How do you make science fun and engaging for middle school students? Middle school students are unique and I try to incorporate projects that encompass all sorts of interests and skills so that there is some aspect that they individually would be interested in and helps them connect with the content. I am always looking at ways to incorporate new ideas into what I'm teaching, new projects, new labs and new ways to integrate technology into their learning.

What is your greatest teaching achievement so far? Surviving the first five years of teaching and not becoming a new-teacher burn-out statistic.

Who would you most like to meet and why? Up until I went to Mexico and Peru I'd probably try and name some famous person, but after being there in such rural and isolated places I'd have to say I'd like to meet someone who's from a place that may not have been contacted before.

What do you do on a snow day? After jumping out of bed and running around shouting "Snow Day!" I usually catch-up on TV, surf the Internet, read, craft, shovel, clean-off the car and look for some new ideas for my classroom.

IN BRIEF | DAYTON

Parent University series presents primary

Join Dayton Public Schools at 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. or 7 p.m. Thursday at Cleveland PreK-6 School, 1102 Pursell Ave., to learn more about primary literacy. DPS staff will talk about the state-mandated third grade guarantee, share resources students need to become proficient readers, and offer family activities aligned to Ohio's learning standards. Three free gas cards will be raffled off for families who attend the Primary Literacy sessions. For more information, call 937-542-3013.

DPS dedicates newest school on Oct. 28

A dedication program will be held at the new Rosa Parks Early Learning Center, 3705 Lori Sue Ave., at 10 a.m. on Oct. 28. The district's newest school is designed to meet the academic and social needs of young children 3 and 4 years of age. Programs offered by DPS and Miami Valley Child Development Center's Head Start provide optimal learning that supports readiness for kindergarten. Morning, afternoon and full-day classes are offered in a caring and safe environment. To enroll, call 937-542-3205.

DPS to hold town hall meetings

DPS families and other community members are invited to attend a DPS Town Hall meeting to hear updates on district progress and offer input on a variety of topics. Dates and times are: 6-7 p.m. on Oct. 30 (Belmont High School) and Dec. 3 (Dayton Boys Preparatory Academy). For more information, call 937-542-3013.

Coffee with the superintendent, board

Parents and community members are invited to have coffee with Superintendent Lori Ward and members of the Dayton Board of Education from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 8 at Belmont United Methodist Church, 2701 Smithville Road. District leaders welcome your input and are committed to continuing the dialog as Dayton Public Schools works to provide a high-quality education for every child.

Thurgood Marshall is region's newest STEM

Thurgood Marshall High School is the region's newest STEM school, following approval of its application by the Ohio STEM Committee. The new designation means students will benefit from a STEM curriculum that includes design thinking, along with problem-based learning and inquiry, preparing them to compete in the landscape of 21st century jobs.

District recognized for excellence in finances

DPS recently received a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International and a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013. The awards represent a significant achievement and reflect the district's commitment to the highest standards of school system financial reporting, accountability and transparency. The announcement marks the 21st consecutive year DPS has earned this recognition