



Maple Heights City Schools Community Connection

News for the community about the Maple Heights City Schools

Here's how to contact us

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Freshman block schedule focuses on math, science, language arts

A block schedule designed just for freshmen at Maple Heights High School puts emphasis on math, science and language arts.

According to **Dan Kovalak**, Small Learning Community Coordinator, "The Freshman Academy is focusing on supporting students by giving them a strong academic base in order to prepare for a college bound pathway."

Although a modified block schedule was introduced over the past two years, this fall the schedule for freshmen was reconfigured. The 180-day school year is now divided into two 80-day semesters and a 20-day review period. Students take math, science and language arts in 94- to 99-minute blocks. Social Studies alternates with Foods or Woods, the students' only elective. All take Computer Applications.

"Most of our teachers love it," Kovalak says. "They can start and finish a lesson in one block, getting more done with a minimum of disruption." Group projects and hands-on assignments are encouraged. **Shon Smith**, Freshman Academy Principal, emphasizes that the curriculum is aligned with Ohio Graduation Tests.

Freshman Academy Counselor **Amber Rahas** says teachers worked together to design an incentive program, agreeing on the rules last spring. A picnic in September rewarded those freshmen who earned passing grades and had no suspensions during



Freshmen English students worked in teams on a restaurant project, which incorporated a number of language arts skills. Students in Kimberly Sisson's class from left, Lynique Gray, Celeste Dennis, Asia Davis, Fatimah Saleen and Enoris Johnson.

the first month of school. Freshmen review their grades and keep track of credits towards graduation. "Students need to be much more aware and accountable from Day One," Rahas says.

Superintendent **Charlie Keenan** says, "This schedule helps us make sure that our freshmen have success and that by the time they are juniors and seniors they can enroll in Early College or college-credit programs."



Freshmen science students in Patrick Ryan's class work intently.

As the months go on, the rules will get more stringent, Rahas says. Upcoming events include possible trips to the Cleveland Zoo, a play, museum or sports event, as well as a pizza party and cookout.

Monthly "Advisories," where students meet in small groups with a teacher, have replaced

homerooms. Freshmen review their grades and keep track of credits towards graduation. "Students need to be much more aware and accountable from Day One," Rahas says.

Update on construction timeline for new schools

Planning for five new schools in Maple Heights is progressing according to a master timeline.

Thanks to the community's support of a bond issue last spring, five new schools will be built at less than half the cost to taxpayers. Plans must meet the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission planning and design guidelines, which specify rules about classroom and building space.

In the last few months, the Program of Requirement stage was finished for the elementary buildings and the middle school. This fall, middle school staff and teachers have been meeting as part of the schematic design phase to discuss space allocation and organization. The design of the new school will support the district's philosophy of teaching and its commitment to small learning communities. Community members will be involved in the next stage, which is the Design and Development stage.

The schematic design phase for the elementary buildings is underway and the Program of Requirement for the high school is scheduled for January.

Demolition of West Junior High and the bus garage is slated for this winter.

Are you smarter than a fifth grader?

Stafford fifth graders found out just how smart they are after appearing on Fox 8 Action News early morning show in September. Twenty-two students in **Annie Bucceri's** fifth grade gifted class answered "fifth-grade" questions and talked with the news team on the air. Then they were treated to breakfast and a tour of the studios. "We had a ball, even though we had to get to school at 5:30 a.m.," says Stafford Principal **Susan Harvey**.



Teacher Academy students spend a week at Notre Dame College

Nearly 60 students are part of the new Teacher Academy, which opened this fall at Maple Heights High School. This career pathway program is designed for those students interested in higher education and a career as a teacher.

As part of an educational partnership with Notre Dame College, 25 incoming students attended a one-week experience last summer. During the program called STAR, the students lived in the dorms, attended classes and received one college credit.

Principal **Wayne Marok** says the students benefited by getting insight into the college experience. "Many more of the students took advantage of this opportunity than we expected," he says. "We were happy to be able to support it."

Students are taking part in two field experiences each week, according to teacher **Melissa Jacot**. They spend two hours one day a week helping teachers in the elementary buildings, as well as two hours a week assisting high school teachers.

Other higher education partners include Cleveland State University, Mount Union College and The University of Akron.



Teacher Academy instructor **Melissa Jacot** and her students from left, **Melody Radcliff** and **Sundae Linton**.

Stafford's special guest

Cleveland Browns running back **Jason Wright** came to Stafford School recently and talked with fourth and fifth graders. In a Q & A session, he answered questions about his favorite subject in school, his goals in life and of course, playing professional football.





Already rehearsing for the winter band concert are Dunham sixth graders front row from left, Lauren Carr, Briana Cooper and band teacher Nick Puin. Back row from left, Erica Harris, Anfernee Wilson and Devante Dickson

Almost 50 band instruments donated by community members

Almost 50 used clarinets, flutes, trumpets, saxophones, trombones and even a complete drum set arrived at Dunham Elementary this fall. Thanks to this first-ever instrument donation drive, more Maple Heights students can be a part of the band program.

According to instrumental music teacher **Nick Puin**, the call for used instruments has been a huge success. Not only did a number of local residents donate, people from Mentor, Medina, Bay Village and other cities called and dropped off instruments. A segment on Channel 3 helped publicize the campaign.

“One Maple Heights graduate from the class of 1962, who lives in Medina, bought 12 used instruments and donated them,” Puin says. “And her mother sent a check for \$1,100 to help repair donated instruments.”

Puin credits Maple resident **Ron Jackson** with the idea of holding the donation drive. Maple Heights Board of Education member **Michael White** also helped coordinate the effort and donated the first instrument.

Motter’s Music of Lyndhurst, Academy Music of Cleveland Heights and Pellegrino Music of Canton all agreed to refurbish instruments at a discounted rate.

“Thanks to the generous donors, some students who can’t afford an instrument can now be part of our band program,” says Puin.

Puin is the band instructor for the fifth grade at Stafford and sixth grade at Dunham. Instrumental music teacher **Mike Janowitz** teaches at the middle school. The two co-direct the high school band.

For more information about donating an instrument, call Puin at 216-587-6100, ext. 7013.

Superintendent’s message

To our community members,



Our school year is off to a good start. Students are working hard, and I know they are committed to learning. Our teachers and administrators are focused on raising student achievement. We are building strong relationships and creating engaging work.

At the high school, we’ve made changes to the schedule for freshmen in order to ensure their continued success. When I walk the halls and observe the different classrooms, I can tell that real learning is going on. Read about our Freshman Academy on page 1 of this newsletter.

Planning for our five new schools continues this fall. The Board of Education approved a master timeline, which was prepared by our architects and construction managers. This fall, we are moving along with the schematic design phase for the middle school. Community members will be involved in the next stage, which is the Design and Development phase. I am pleased with the progress and the quality of the work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charlie Keenan
Superintendent of Schools

Community Forum date changed

The Maple Heights City Schools’ Board of Education was recently selected to present at the Ohio School Boards Association 2008 Capital Conference for its efforts in successfully passing a bond issue last spring. As a result, the date of the November Community Forum will be changed to **Tuesday, November 18**, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the high school auditorium.

Superintendent **Charlie Keenan** will make brief remarks at the forum about current issues in the schools, including the building projects. A question and answer session will follow. All community members are invited to attend.

Fall Sports Update



Girls Cross Country

Led by seniors **Leah Jones** and **Ariel Arnold**, fourteen dedicated runners have been training since July. According to Coach **Gary Frounfelker**, other varsity team members include junior **Bianca Dennis**, a three-year letter winner, as well as senior **Chenelle Fair** and freshman **Kimesha Flonney**.

Boys Cross Country

Junior **Joivally Turner**, regional qualifier, and senior **Leslie Polley**, three-year letter winner, are on the top 15 list of best times for Maple Heights runners. Others on the varsity team include senior **Deontay Tolliver**, junior **Sam Ivicic**, junior **Keith Warner**, sophomore **Otis Arnold** and freshman **Trevon Bradford**. First year runners include **Bennie Motley** and **Dionte King**.

Football

The Mustangs have won five of their last six games and are looking ahead to possibly making the playoffs this year. The team, led by senior co-captains **Deandre Grant**, **Kevin Thomas**, **Charles Teel**, and **Denzel Linson**, is under the direction of Coach **Todd Filtz**.

Girls Volleyball

The 2008 volleyball team posts their eighth winning season in a row, having winning seasons eleven out of the last twelve years. Over the summer, the team played in the Hiram College and Lake Erie College tournaments and attended volleyball camp at Kent State University. They also hosted two tournaments. Sophomore **Arielle Love** was selected for the All-Tournament Team at the Lakeside Invitational where the team placed runner-up.



Community Connection

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