

Superintendent Laurenzi also initiated a business/school partnership program with the local business community that is of benefit to both students and teachers. He also has led the district's Strategic Planning process. The district earned a Blue Ribbon designation at Independence Primary School and Newsweek named Independence High School one of the top public schools in the country.

► Independence Superintendent David Laurenzi and Cuyahoga Heights Superintendent Peter Guerrero.  
▼ From Cuyahoga Valley Career Center: Michael Hall, Superintendent Roscoe Schlachter, Darden Blake and Bridget Murphy.



*“These three great leaders have certainly made a significant difference in education,” said ESC Superintendent Dr. Bob Mengerink. “We wish them well. Their work, and indeed their presence, has enriched the lives of students and serves as an example for all.”*

## In the Community

### Mayors Address Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce Members at State of the Communities

ESC board members and administration attended the annual Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce State of the Communities luncheon this past November. The mayors from Brooklyn Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, Seven Hills, Valley View and Walton Hills addressed the more than 200 people in the audience. The ESC was pleased to host a table of students from Independence and Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools. For the past two years, the ESC has hosted a table for students so that they can enrich their education through “real world” business experiences.



ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr., Cuyahoga Heights Mayor Jack Bacchi, Valley View Mayor Randall Westfall, Seven Hills Mayor David Bentkowski and ESC Board Member Tony Hovevar at the Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce's State of the Schools Luncheon.

*“We appreciate the opportunity to bring high school students to these chamber luncheons so that they can learn from the business presenters and give them a sample of the ‘real world’,” said Independence High School Principal Roger Howard.*

# the ESC COMMUNITY Connection

Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County

WINTER 2011



## A Tribute to Our Retiring Superintendents

Two of the three local school districts that the ESC of Cuyahoga County serves will be saying goodbye to their superintendents who have decided to retire this year. In addition, the superintendent of the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center (CVCC) is also retiring.

At the recent Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) Capital Conference in Columbus, the ESC of Cuyahoga County honored these three superintendents—Peter Guerrero, Cuyahoga Heights Schools; David Laurenzi, Independence Schools; and Roscoe Schlachter, CVCC—for their years of service to our local communities.

Roscoe Schlachter joined the CVCC as superintendent in 2001. His work in career and technical education began in 1976. In his tenure as superintendent, Schlachter was instrumental in the school's mission to prepare youth and adults to enter, compete, and advance in an ever-changing work world. Under his leadership, the school now offers technologically advanced programs, with state of the art equipment, as well as the strong technical foundation that today's employees seek.

Peter Guerrero, superintendent of Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools has been with the district for 15 ½ years. Under his tenure, *U.S. News & World Report* and *Newsweek* recognized the district for its academic

excellence. Every school in the district has been designated as a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Guerrero also initiated the high school's Work Ethic certification program where juniors and seniors are now being assessed on nine different standards ranging from respectfulness and discipline to community service and attendance.

David Laurenzi, superintendent of Independence Local Schools has been with the district since 1991. He was instrumental in the planning and construction of the Independence High School/Field House, a facility that is shared by both the district and the City of Independence.

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## Rose-Mary Center



The Rose-Mary Center in Tremont is operated by the ESC of Cuyahoga County. The school provides districts and parents of children with multiple disabilities an environment for individualized programming and services in a separate facility by trained personnel. Specialists certified to work with multiple handicapped children staff six classrooms. Each classroom can have up to eight students and is staffed with a minimum of one Special Education teacher and two Teacher Assistants. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed for each child and reviewed quarterly. The curriculum also incorporates community training, vocational education and daily living skills.

Several classrooms have been designed to incorporate the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children) methodology, although the school program utilizes a variety of methods. Classroom staff provides structured learning, visual schedules and individual work stations. The main goal of TEACCH is to help children grow to be as independent as possible. The students are taught how to understand their daily environment while acquiring communication skills so they can relate to others as they make appropriate choices concerning their own lives.

A Work-Study Coordinator, Physical Education Teacher, Art Therapist, One-on-One Attendants

and a full-time Nurse provide additional needed services. Occupational, Physical and Speech and Language Therapists work with students, education staff, and families to facilitate services. Facilities include a therapy room, home economics room, library, gymnasium, courtyard, and a multi-sensory room.

School districts where Rose-Mary Center students reside pay separate tuition to the ESC. Currently, 44 students from 21 school districts within Ohio attend. Approximately half the students are "day" students who live at home and the other half are residents of the Rose-Mary Center, a residential treatment center in Euclid.

## Enriching the Lives of Students with Extraordinary Opportunities



Throughout the school year, the ESC of Cuyahoga County provides an array of opportunities for gifted and talented students in all of our surrounding school districts. Whether it is working with local businesses to provide career education opportunities to finding ways that music and the arts can be impactful in a young adult's life, these programs and activities are truly making a difference for hundreds of local students each year.

Three times a year, Hyland Software, a Westlake-based software developer, partners with the ESC in opening its doors to students interested in careers in information technology. This past fall, students from Independence and Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools attended the program.

Another program held this fall was at the Beck Center for the Arts in Lakewood. Students learned how the arts could actually help young adults to get through life peacefully. Through singing, playing

instruments, painting, or molding with clay, everyone learned how cultural arts can have a positive impact.

Developing future leaders is also a topic of a workshop sponsored each year by the ESC. Approximately 50 students participated in a Leadership Workshop this past October. Dr. Sharon Kruse from Akron University instructed these students on leadership styles, vision, how to reach consensus, team building and how to create an environment to achieve success. She accomplished this through a variety of activities from Legos to being Lost at Sea.

Eighth grade students had the opportunity to go to the South Chagrin Reservation in Chagrin Falls and learn about using a GPS. The program is in its third year and helps students use a GPS to find their way while using problem solving skills. Students were motivated because each waypoint found earned them ice cream, a bowl, spoon and a different topping for a sundae.

## Family and Civic Engagement in Cuyahoga County

In early November, a team representing the ESC of Cuyahoga County presented on Family and Civic Engagement (FCE) in Cuyahoga County at the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) Capital Conference in Columbus, Ohio. The ESC, in collaboration with the Family and Children First Council of Cuyahoga County, has been partnering with school districts across the county to implement FCE teams. These teams bring together schools, parents, community and business members, and

health and human service partners. Every district in the county has developed an FCE team and has begun planning for ways to implement family and civic engagement strategies to meet district goals and improve student achievement. Districts have identified a number of priorities and the work beginning in Cuyahoga Heights, Independence and Richmond Heights is presented below.

### Cuyahoga Heights Local School District

Cuyahoga Heights is building on existing school/community committees to guide the family and civic engagement work of the district. The team will continue to focus on school and community data to indicate where intervention is needed to address common non-academic factors impacting student achievement, such as attendance, economics or student health. Through sub-committees, the team will continuously review the outcomes of new or existing engagement strategies and make improvements as needed. By understanding the full range of needs in the greater community, Cuyahoga Heights will work to develop multiple approaches to engagement that will reach all students and families.

### Independence Local School District

The Independence Local School District and the City of Independence have a long-term and remarkable history of partnerships and joint ventures. As a part of the district's FCE plan, programs are being developed that will attend to the needs and issues of all students to provide guidance on academic expectations, school-based behavior and sound decision making. The FCE team will review data around program outcomes and identify other programs and services that will benefit students of varying needs to positively impact the youth of Independence, Ohio.

### Richmond Heights Local School District

The Richmond Heights FCE team has developed priorities around improved performance in science and math, as well as providing a safe, caring and welcoming academic and social climate. Enhanced parent and community involvement will allow the district to explore options around tutoring programs and service-learning opportunities to improve academic development. To address the district's second priority, multiple methods of communication and feedback are being developed for students, teachers, parents and the wider community to assess barriers and strengths to ensure a positive academic and social climate for all students.

## Welcome New Staff for Local School Districts

The ESC of Cuyahoga County offers human resource services to Independence, Cuyahoga Heights and Richmond Heights Local School Districts and functions as the fiscal and payroll agent, employing personnel on behalf of the school districts. Currently the ESC employs approximately 100 administrative, certified and classified school employees for these districts. The majority of staff members are in the areas of special education, gifted education, related service providers and auxiliary positions.

The ESC prides itself on recruiting and employing the most qualified school personnel for the local districts of Cuyahoga County. The local school district administrators rigorously interview and select all candidates for ESC positions assigned to their local school district.

### The ESC welcomes the following new staff to our local school districts:

#### Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

Kathy Ruggiero Educational Attendant

#### Independence Local Schools

Barbara Mowrer Preschool Aide  
Rachel Palevsky High School Intervention Specialist  
Sarah Prahler Preschool Speech Teacher  
Nancy Wygonski Preschool Intervention Specialist

#### Richmond Heights Local Schools

Curtis Boykins Educational Aide  
Avery Davis Educational Aide  
Matthew Simonetta Educational Aide  
Tatyana White Educational Aide  
Jodi Hanford Intervention Specialist  
Odessa Johnson Supervisor of Special Education