



# PASSING *notes*

## Housing Survey *results*

**Eight out of ten** residents rate the Hilliard City Schools as excellent or good.

A majority of residents feel that the Hilliard City Schools provide a **better education** than do other suburban communities.

Eight out of ten respondents recognize that **overcrowding is a problem**, particularly at the high schools.

Most voters favor building a **third high school**.

For many, the site on **Cosgray Road** remains undesirable.



## *Community Survey*

### Valuable to Long-Term Housing Solution

**T**he results of a recent community survey revealed valuable information for the Board of Education to consider as they search for a long-term housing solution to address the overcrowded conditions of the school district.

In response to the Growth Issue Community Group's request for a community survey, the Board of Education commissioned a follow-up survey of district residents. This district-wide telephone poll sought further feedback concerning the overcrowded conditions of the schools and the need for a long-term housing solution. Saperstein Associates, Inc., a Columbus-based public opinion and marketing research company, conducted the poll in late January.

The results are compelling. First, the survey makes it clear that the residents of the district recognize the overcrowded conditions of the schools and the



need for additional housing, particularly at the high school level. Nearly three out of five voters feel that the high schools are overcrowded, and two out of five consider it an urgent problem.

When asked what type of long-term housing solution they would prefer, 63% of the residents polled chose a third high school. When asked where that high school should be located in the district, 43% favored the area south of Roberts Road, while 40% favored the area north of Roberts. Seventeen percent said they didn't know. The data

suggest that the property on Cosgray Road continues to lack the support required for an electoral victory.

With the polling completed, the Board of Education will use the results as yet another source of information to help them reach their ultimate decision for a long-term solution to the overcrowded conditions of Hilliard City Schools. The district extends their appreciation to all the residents who took the time to participate in this important survey.

## points of pride

### **Britton Elementary 4th and 5th**

grade students participated in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart activity in February and raised nearly \$1,700 for heart research and education.

### **Hoffman Trails Elementary**

partnered with HomeReach Hospice of OhioHealth to offer interested students a grief support group. This seven-week program helped students remember and honor loved ones while dealing with their feelings.

**Alton Darby Elementary** is hosting Hilliard C.A.R.E.S., a program offered each Saturday for students grades K-5 to assist with academic support and review for standardized testing. Students from Hilliard Darby, Davidson and O.S.U. serve as tutors.

**Four seniors** in the district have been named National Merit Finalists. Just 15,000 students in the country are named annually to receive the prestigious scholarships. Recipients include Hilliard Darby student Stephanie Beattie and Hilliard Davidson students Jeremy Hilligoss, Alex Katko and Lindsey Tepe.

**Hilliard Tharp 6th grade** student Aleks Rannerviro qualified for the state championship competition of the Reader's Digest Word Power Challenge. On March 18, Aleks will join up to 100 students across Ohio to compete for the state title and move on to the national competition.

## *Housing Update*

Overcrowding in our schools continues to be a great concern and the need for additional housing more and more urgent. Outlined below are some of the temporary measures being taken to address the problem in the coming year.

### **Modulars**

While the search for a long-term housing solution continues, we have moved forward with a short-term remedy to address the immediate needs at our high schools. We have placed five two-classroom units at Hilliard Davidson High School and nine two-classroom units at Hilliard Darby High School to help ease some of the overcrowded conditions at both buildings. These modular units have been leased and are currently being outfitted with auxiliary systems such as electricity, heat, and decking. The modulars should be fully operable for classroom use this spring.

### **Transfers and Enrollments**

Even with the modulars in place, we are still challenged with the number of students we must house at the high school level. In the coming 2005-06 school year, Hilliard Darby High School is expected to have 2,469 students enrolled, and Hilliard Davidson is slated to have 1,884 students. Both buildings were built to house 1,800.

In an effort to move toward balancing the population of the high schools, eighth-grade students from Hilliard Heritage and Hilliard Memorial middle schools will have the opportunity until March 14, 2005 to enroll at Hilliard Davidson for the coming school year. The majority of eighth-graders at these two middle schools traditionally move to Hilliard Darby.





Interested students will be enrolled at Hilliard Davidson on a lottery basis, and transportation will be provided. Students who choose to move will be able to participate fully in all extracurricular activities without Ohio High School Athletic Association or district-sanctioned penalties.

Additionally, all new students who move into the Hilliard Darby attendance area will be required to attend Hilliard Davidson, with transportation provided. This new policy will take effect either September 1, 2005 or January 1, 2006, dependent on how many eighth-graders opt for the enrollment lottery.

Implementing these new policies is just another step in addressing the overcrowding at the high schools for the immediate future. We chose these options because they will be the least disruptive to our current high school students, and hopefully will provide some much needed relief to the Hilliard Darby population. However, modulars and shifting populations do not address the overcrowded conditions in the common



areas of our schools, such as hallways and cafeterias. A long-term solution still must be found.

### Latest Projections

Though the overcrowded conditions of our school district are most prevalent in our high schools, it is no secret overcrowding has become an issue across all grades, pre-K - 12. In fact, we are at capacity in the majority of our buildings, and we have needed to shift students in our elementary schools to maintain a population balance across those grades.

We will now be facing over-capacity conditions at all grade levels in the next few years. A recent enrollment projection report from Planning Advocates, Inc., a local educational planning research firm, confirms our numbers will continue to rise. In just five years, we are expected to jump from our current 14,591 students to 16,269 students. By school year 2014-15, it is projected we will be serving 18,933 students in our district. In short, we will continue to grow at a rate of 300 - 400 students per year

across all grades, with the sharpest increase at the elementary level.

## Tsunami Relief

Just as much of the world has jumped to the aid of the Tsunami victims, so too have the students of Hilliard City Schools. Kids of every age, from every grade level, have come together to raise funds for Tsunami Relief.

Thousands of dollars have been raised in a variety of creative fundraisers. They have held bake sales, lemonade stands, raffles and silent auctions; sold wrist bands and completed chores at home for donations; one school arranged a staff basketball game.

With a strong sense of compassion and community, the district's students embraced the opportunity to reach out to the other side of the globe and provide much needed assistance. As their efforts continue, we want to recognize their hard work and generosity and commend them on their commitment to make a difference.



# a note from the superintendent



**Dale A. McVey**



**W**elcome to our latest effort to keep the residents of our district well informed about Hilliard City Schools. *Passing Notes* will be distributed to our community two times during the school year to share student accomplishments and provide information concerning current issues and events in the district.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you extremely important work the district is undertaking with respect to school funding in the state of Ohio. As you may be aware, Governor

Bob Taft recently submitted his recommendations for the state's biennial budget. Within his proposals, he has recommended several changes to school funding that will undoubtedly cost our district significant dollars.

I am most concerned that the proposed changes could shift the burden of school funding even further onto the shoulders of our taxpayers. The number of recent school ballot issues is already at an all-time high in Ohio, and the result for many has not been positive.

It is important to remember that it is early in the budget process and much can change by July 1 when the final budget is presented. However, we are taking immediate measures to address the points of concern now. We are in close contact with our state legislators to discuss Governor Taft's proposal and the impact it would have on our schools. We also are combining our efforts with similar districts across the state to address this threat to our funding.

Meanwhile, our district's State Funding Issues Committee is also taking quick action. The committee has written a letter directly to the Governor and copied our state legislators voicing concerns on behalf of our district. Likewise, they also sent letters to the editors of our local newspapers.

We will continue to keep you informed of any new developments on this front as the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives begin their budget deliberations.



## **Hilliard City Schools**

5323 Cemetery Rd.  
Hilliard, OH 43026

### **Board of Education**

Libby Gierach, President

Dick Hammond, Vice President

Denise Bobbitt, Member

Tom Calhoon, Member

Doug Maggied, Member