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District wins second Straight A grant; funds to transform 8th-12th grade instruction

Beavercreek City Schools will receive a second grant of **\$995,000** from the state's Straight A Fund to implement an innovative educational plan that provides 8th through 12th grade students with 21st century learning skills through investigative learning and entrepreneurship. The district will use the grant to enhance its instructional practices, courses and educational environments to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need for college and careers.

The information below includes an interview with **Susan Hayward**, Ph.D., Beavercreek Schools' director of Curriculum and Instruction, who offers an overview of the grant and explains how it will be used.

Q: Why did Beavercreek propose this program?

A: Research, businesses, institutes of higher education and local community members emphasize that students need a new set of skills to be successful in today's workplace. These skills require a different way of teaching and learning — one that fosters collaboration, creative and analytical thinking, problem solving, research, and effective communication.

Q: How will the program work?

A: Beavercreek's plan is built around the concept of "**Design Thinking**" — an interdisciplinary approach that promotes investigative learning across all subjects and content areas, from core courses to elective opportunities. Students are



STRAIGHT A FUND



taught a process for assessing and defining a problem, and learn to apply relevant knowledge to a range of solutions. Then they create, test and refine prototypes in an effort to identify innovative solutions. This hands-on, learn-by-doing methodology encourages deeper conceptual understanding and encourages students to think about issues from multiple perspectives, preparing them to apply what they learn to challenges at the personal, community and global level.

Q: Why is the district adopting this approach?

A: One of the benefits of Design Thinking is that students identify clear connections between what they learn in the classroom and how it relates to their lives. By using an interdisciplinary, hands-on approach to instruction, they see the relevance of educational content in all curricular

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areas, which helps them take ownership of their learning and leads to stronger engagement in the learning process.

Q: Why is this grant important to the schools?

A: This grant will provide our district with the funds needed to undertake an effort that is truly innovative — one that allows us to enhance our instructional practices and offer a dynamic educational model that is focused on investigative learning and entrepreneurship. The funds will allow us to partner with representatives of the Henry Ford Institute, who are experts in Design Thinking, to train our instructional staff, and will also provide monies we need to redesign 8th through 12th grade workspaces to allow for more collaborative learning and concept testing.

Q: When will you begin implementing this grant?

A: We will begin training our instructional personnel in Design Thinking methodology at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year. We will also begin remodeling specific locations in our secondary buildings this fall to create the kind of specialized learning spaces we need to support our efforts.

Q: What is the goal of this grant?

A: Our goal is to prepare Beavercreek's students with the knowledge and skills they need to flourish in college and the 21st century workplace. We believe that the plan we put forth — which focuses on investigative learning across all subjects — offers the framework that will make this happen. It will help students become more engaged in their studies *and* better understand the processes used for problem solving in the workplace. We also believe that our plan is not only sustainable over time, but can be replicated by school districts elsewhere.

Q: Why is it important to start this sort of instruction now, as opposed to in college?

A: Research has shown that students benefit from the investigative learning and entrepreneurial approach to education in terms of engagement and achievement. By targeting 8th through 12th grade learners, we help them become accustomed to the inquiry-based approach they will encounter in college and their careers. This provides them with a stronger foundation and skills base when they graduate from high school.



beavercreek.k12.oh.us/StraightA
for further details.



Report from 21st century Community Input Sessions available online

What kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities do students need to succeed in the future? And how should instruction and programming evolve to meet those needs? Community members were invited to share their input and insights at a

special event on Tuesday, March 18.

A summary of the findings from this Community Input Session is available on the Beavercreek City School District homepage at www.beavercreek.k12.oh.us.

Bond and permanent improvement funds to address outstanding facilities needs

With \$5 million remaining after the completion of its 2008 bond-funded facilities program, the Beavercreek City Schools Board of Education authorized a number of construction projects to address the district's outstanding facilities needs. These projects include:

- An 18,500 square foot preschool addition to the current Board of Education offices, located at the corner of Kemp and Hanes roads
- A 7,500 square foot gymnasium at Shaw Elementary
- A covered, non-enclosed walkway connecting Beavercreek High School to Ferguson Hall, which serves as the home of BHS 9th graders
- Athletic facility improvements at Coy Middle School, to include a storage building, scoreboard and baseball/softball dugouts

The preschool, gymnasium and walkway were part of the district's original bond-funded facilities proposal of 2007, which was scaled back when the Board of Education decided to reduce the size of the bond request. **Funds for the new projects will be**

drawn from the remaining bond surplus and existing permanent improvement funds. No additional dollars will be requested from the community.



The district's new preschool will be an addition to the Board of Education Office building on Kemp Road.

State and federal laws mandate that public school districts offer preschool services to children with developmental delays. Beavercreek's current preschool is housed at Parkwood Elementary, which was built to serve a kindergarten through fifth grade student population.

Construction of a separate preschool will allow the district to eliminate the use of mobile classrooms (trailers) at Parkwood, and offer Parkwood and preschool students better and more secure learning environments.

"We have an opportunity to address some of our facilities needs in a cost-effective way due to the favorable bidding climate, and we are able to do so thanks to prudent fiscal management on the part of district leaders," said Al Nels, president of the Beavercreek Board of Education.



beavercreek.k12.oh.us/construction
for further details.

Historical Society presents stone from first schoolhouse

The Beavercreek Historical Society recently presented a stone from the foundation of Beavercreek's first schoolhouse, originally erected on the land of Jacob Coy, to the Beavercreek Board of Education. This stone will be incorporated into the design of the district's new preschool building at 3040 Kemp Road.

For more information about the building, or to read the speech given by Beavercreek Historical Society President Jill Kincer at the presentation event, visit www.beavercreek.k12.oh.us/foundationstone.



Class of 2014 graduates 562; 205 earn Honors Diplomas



The Beavercreek High School Class of 2014 graduation ceremonies were held at Wright State University's Nutter Center on June 1, 2014. \$17 million in scholarship money was offered to class graduates.

District recognizes nine Outstanding Educators



One teacher from each of the district's nine school buildings received the district's Outstanding Educator Award for the 2013-14 school year.

Beavercreek City Schools recently recognized nine individuals with 2013-14 Outstanding Educator awards. Recipients include:

- **Beavercreek High School:** Paige Rizzotte
- **Ankeney Middle School:** Kristine Montague
- **Coy Middle School:** Sheri Steeber
- **Fairbrook Elementary:** Courtney Youngs
- **Main Elementary:** Tracy Moorhead
- **Parkwood Elementary:** Leah Mosser
- **Shaw Elementary:** Kristen Sines
- **Trebein Elementary:** Kelly Rice
- **Valley Elementary:** Bonita Cochran

Candidates are evaluated on the basis of guidelines established by Phi Delta Kappa, a professional fraternity for men and women in education.

Meet the district's new Treasurer

Penny Rucker, who joined the district June 1, brings both breadth and depth of experience to Beavercreek Schools.

Beavercreek City Schools' new Treasurer and CFO, **Penny Rucker**, brings a strong track record of financial leadership to the district. Prior to joining Beavercreek, she spent five years as Treasurer and CFO of Columbus City Schools, the largest school district in the state, where she oversaw a budget of more than \$1.2 billion.

Her career includes three and a half years of service as Treasurer/CFO for Springfield City Schools; two years as Treasurer/CFO for London City Schools; and four and a half years as Assistant Treasurer for Upper Arlington City Schools. She also operated a financial consulting firm for seven years, providing counsel to a wide variety of school districts and private businesses.

Rucker began her career as an auditor with the Ohio Auditor of State's office, and worked as an internal auditor for The Ohio State University as well. Her educational background includes a Master of Education in School Treasury and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. A brief interview with Rucker follows.

What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as a treasurer?

I'm proud of my work with struggling districts — helping them restructure, strategize and implement budgets and efficiencies to improve their audits and their financial bottom line.

What do citizens of the Beavercreek City School District need to know about you?

I've performed every job in a treasurer's office, from accountant to accounts payable, and have managed both the specific functions as well as the bigger picture, so I'm well versed in operations.

I also believe in a very strong moral and ethical code of conduct,

which my record and experience demonstrate. I believe that my job is to serve the students and residents of this district.

What attracted you to the Beavercreek position?

Beavercreek Schools have a strong reputation, and my research pointed to a district that was well run — one dedicated to cost containment and efficiency, that was focused on offering the best education possible to its students.

What do you hope to accomplish here?

While this district is in a sound position thanks to its fiscal management practices and the support of the electorate, it's impor-



**Beavercreek City Schools
Treasurer/CFO Penny Rucker**
treasurer@beavercreek.k12.oh.us

Leadership Perspectives

Getting acquainted with the people who are leading Beavercreek City Schools

tant to realize that we cannot take our situation for granted.

My goal is to ensure that we are as efficient as possible, and manage our expenditures in a way that is aligned with best practices, so that we are able to operate in the best interests of the students of this district.

I also see communication as a critical part of the Treasurer's job, and I am committed to transparency and accountability in district finances. I encourage residents to consult the Treasurer's section of the district website, www.beavercreek.k12.oh.us/treasurer, for regular updates and information.

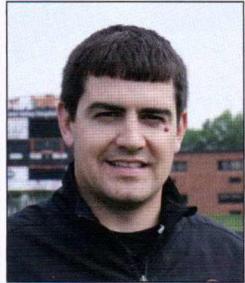
BHS names new marching band director, varsity football and basketball coaches

New talent will be leading several of Beavercreek High School's key music and athletic programs this fall.

Matt Frost joined the BHS music program as both its instrumental music teacher and the high school marching band director. Frost joined Beavercreek Schools 16 years ago as the Ferguson Middle School Band Director, and served as Assistant Director for the BHS Marching Band program. He moved to Coy Middle School when that building opened in September 2013. A graduate of both Bowling Green State University and Wright State University, Frost has 22 years of experience and a strong track record of success in band programs and professional leadership.



Matt Frost



Nicolas Black



Mark Hess

his work as Springboro High School's Assistant Head Coach, Defensive Coordinator and Strength Coach. Black served as Head Coach for Graham High School

in St. Paris; as Assistant Football and Strength Coach for the University of Dayton's football program; and as Inside Linebacker and head Strength Coach for Millikin University.

Mark Hess will join

BHS as both a mathematics teacher and as the Head Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach. Hess spent two years as the head of Hilliard Darby High School's Boys' Basketball program, and also served four years as Assistant Varsity Boys' Coach for Olentangy Liberty High School, which, like Hilliard and Beavercreek, is a Division I competitor.

Hess began his coaching career at Willard High School in Huron County, Ohio, and has served as coach, tournament site director and co-director or director of numerous basketball camps for youth.

Congratulations to these new BHS program leaders!

Ohio schools to implement conversion from instructional days to instructional hours

Effective at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, all public schools in Ohio will shift from providing a minimum number of days of instruction per year to a minimum number of *hours*.

In calamity or inclement weather situations where it may be necessary to delay school or cancel it entirely, schools will only have to make up time if they are under the minimum number of hours of instruction. Since Beavercreek Schools surpass the minimum number of required hours at all grade levels (students attend the equivalent of 136 hours, or 23.43 days of instruction, over and above what is required), make-up hours would be unlikely. Should make-up time become necessary, those hours would be added to the end of the 2014-15 school year.



K-8 Straight A grant program pilot complete, ready to roll out district-wide in September

With a successful pilot program complete, Beavercreek City Schools is ready to roll out Phase II of its efforts to provide Kindergarten through 8th grade students with more targeted, individualized instruction through the use of technology.

This September, using a **\$3.866 million grant** from Ohio's Straight A Fund, *all* of Beavercreek's K-8 students will receive an iPad loaded with curriculum software that assesses their knowledge base and achievement in mathematics and English Language Arts. The grant will also allow the district to partner with eSpark, an educational technology firm that **develops a personalized curriculum for each student** that is aligned with Common Core and state standards to support individual academic growth and achievement.

"Our program complements classroom instruction to ensure that students' individual learning needs are met, but does so in a fun and engaging way," said Susan Hayward, Ph.D., Beavercreek's director of Curriculum and Instruction. Students complete baseline assessments online three times yearly. eSpark takes the data from these assessments and creates an individualized curriculum for each child.



Nearly 5,000 iPads were prepared and programmed for students over the summer.

From there, students complete learning "quests" based on their strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers use the eSpark curriculum housed on the iPads to allow students to practice skills using apps and other programs selected especially for them.

Students are then tested on their knowledge, and must demonstrate a score of 80 percent or higher AND complete a re-teaching video to advance to the next quest.

Beavercreek's program is one of just 24 proposals that received funding in the first round of grants from the Straight A Fund.

Richard Ross, Ed.D., superintendent of Public

Instruction for the Ohio Department of Education, visited Ankeney Middle School in April to check on the pilot program.

"Seeing what's occurring here in Beavercreek with the use of the Straight A Fund has really been encouraging," said Ross. "Focusing instruction on the individual level for students is so important, and I think the program is really setting a model for school districts around the state."



beavercreek.k12.oh.us/StraightA
for further details.

Moody's affirms Aa1 credit rating for district

Moody's Investors Service, one of the nation's leading independent credit rating agencies, recently evaluated the financial health of the Beavercreek City

School District and **affirmed its Aa1 rating**. An Aa1 rating is considered the highest of the ratings in the "high quality" category, which indicates that Moody's

considers Beavercreek Schools to be in a sound financial position thanks to prudent management. This means its debt represents a relatively low risk to investors.