



# TheCO-PILOT

Linking the Community & PILOTs of the Ayersville Schools

August 2007

[www.ayersville.k12.oh.us](http://www.ayersville.k12.oh.us)

Phone – 419-395-1111

## FROM THE DESK OF TOD A. HUG

As with past August issues of the “Co-Pilot” you will find information concerning the opening of school and a continuation of previous newsletters concerning school funding.

### **Start Times**

The first bell will ring at 8:10 a.m. Students will be tardy if they are not in class/homeroom by 8:12 a.m. as this will be when the tardy bell will ring. All students arriving prior to 8:00 a.m. will report to the cafeteria. Grades K-4 will be released at 3:10. Grades 5-8 and high school bus riders will be released at 3:12, while high school students who drive to school will not be released until 3:16 p.m., or after the buses have left the south parking lot.

Due to supervision issues, we ask that you do not drop off your children before 7:45 a.m. Contractually, our school day does not begin until 8:00 a.m. If you drop off your children too early, there is no supervision in the school buildings, except in the cafeteria. All students arriving between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. must report to the cafeteria. Breakfast is served during this time.

### **Bus Routes**

Once again, I am happy to report that there are very few changes from last year’s routes. We ask that you have your children ready a few minutes early the first two weeks of school so we can adjust routes accordingly.

We do have a new bus driver. The Board hired Mrs. Marjorie (Joey) Buchanan to fill the position left vacant by the retirement of Shirley Stevens. Mrs. Buchanan is an experienced bus driver, having driven as a substitute bus driver this past year in our school district. She will be driving bus #8 and will be driving the route that Shirley Stevens drove last year.

Buses will continue to drop and load students in the back of the school. This alleviates mixing of cars with students and buses. **Only buses will be allowed in the rear of the school.** Due to the drop off in the morning behind the school, the playground will be off-limits. All students arriving before 8:00 a.m. should report to the cafeteria, while students arriving after 8:00 a.m. may report to their classroom for the start of the school day.

## NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Students will notice new faces as they begin the school year:

Miss Katelyn McBride will be a new intervention teacher. Miss McBride is originally from Ottawa, Ohio, and she received her Bachelor’s degree from Ashland University. She will be teaching special education students in the middle school.

Mrs. Coleen Smith will be a new intervention teacher. Mrs. Smith received her degree from Kent State University and will be teaching special education in the high school. She previously taught at Wayne Trace and Perrysburg schools.

Ms. Lisa Fast will be teaching Spanish part-time in the high school. Originally from Edgerton, Ohio, Ms. Fast received her degree from Bowling Green State University. Ms. Fast has taught the past few years for the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center.

Ms. Janet Cramer will be the new high school Computer Science teacher, replacing Mr. Jeff Hunt who resigned. Ms. Cramer received her Bachelor's Degree from Bowling Green State University and her Master's degree in Instructional Technology from the University of Nebraska.

Mr. Brian Wehri will be teaching social studies and special education in the middle school. Mr. Wehri is originally from Kalida, Ohio, and received his Bachelor's degree from Defiance College.

Miss Alexis Zippay will be the new district librarian, replacing Mrs. Dielman, who retired. Miss Zippay is also from Edgerton, and she received her bachelor's degree and certification in Library/Media Sciences from Clarion University located in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Miss Katie Budke will be replacing Mrs. Sarah McCombs as a high school language arts teacher. Miss Budke received her degree from Bowling Green State University.

Mr. Keith Ruhe will be the new middle school principal. Mr. Ruhe had previously served as middle school principal for 14 years in the Patrick Henry Local School District. He received his bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University and his Master's Degree from the University of Toledo.

## **PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS**

Summer maintenance issues are well under way and/or have been completed for the summer. The district maintains the Permanent Improvement funds which can only be used for improvements and maintenance of the district's buildings and grounds and the purchase of property with an estimated life of five years or more, such as desks, computer/technology purchases, etc...

This summer we continued the replacement of domestic waterlines in the older part of the building. The four-inch main water line to the school was replaced.

As previously reported we have experienced continuing failure of domestic water pipes in the 1937 and 1952 additions, and we are in the process of replacing some of those pipes, which are in complete disrepair. These pipes are the original, galvanized steel pipe that over the years have become completely clogged and are rusting through, causing leaks in the ceilings as well as very little pressure in the waterlines.

Additionally, we replaced some interior doors of the 1952 gymnasium that were simply worn out from the years of use.

Permanent Improvement funds help us to maintain our facilities without having to use general fund money.

## **DISTRICT FINANCES**

At the end of the previous school finance cycle (fiscal year 2006) our district's expenditures exceeded its revenues in the general fund. This is not uncommon when dealing with school district funding, but does require a response to correct, in order to preserve a positive cash balance in future years.

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At the completion of the most recent finance cycle (fiscal year 2007), the district ended the fiscal year with revenues exceeding expenditures by just less than \$5,000. Although expenditures were held constant with fiscal year 2006 expenditures, they would have exceeded revenue had it not been for the receipt of an unanticipated, one-time tax settlement.

Projections for future years show that expenditures will trend as in 2006, and again exceed revenue. This will occur even as we realize cost savings through attrition and programming changes. In our case, it is not due to overspending, but rather from a decline in revenue.

As has been communicated in the past, *the tax structure of our district is changing*. Due to legislative changes from House Bill 66 in July 2005, taxes generated from business personal property such as machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures, and inventory, have begun to be phased out. The state has pledged to replace these phased-out dollars for the next four years. However, this change in our funding structure has greatly reduced our growth potential from this local tax source, and once the tax is completely phased out, (should the state not replace this source), the impact on our district will be even greater. Associated donations from enterprise zone agreements related to business personal property will also eventually phase out, with no replacement funding. In addition, due to a reduction of value in certain commercial real estate property in our district, we have experienced a reduction in real estate revenue. Because of these factors, overall district revenue projections are decreasing.

As we continue to monitor the financial health of the district, there is still an apparent need to generate additional revenue. Historically, we have relied heavily on property taxes generated from personal property from our local industry. Due to the changes outlined above related to HB 66, it will become more difficult to rely on personal property values to generate additional tax revenue for operations. Because of this, it is necessary that the district consider alternative sources of funding. At the time of this writing, the board is again studying the choices that are involved with an income tax levy, including the term of the levy and the type of tax base, to determine the best option for the district as a whole. Financial stability of the district is of utmost importance as we continue to provide the best possible services and programming for the students in our school system.

More information on school district income tax is available at:

[http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/tax\\_analysis/tax\\_data\\_series/school\\_district\\_data/documents/sditqa.pdf](http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/tax_analysis/tax_data_series/school_district_data/documents/sditqa.pdf)

If you would like more information, feel free to call Connie Nicely, Treasurer, or Tod Hug, Superintendent.

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### **New Homestead Exemption -- A Tax Break for Seniors and Disabled Citizens!**

Governor Strickland and the Ohio General Assembly included in the recently enacted state budget a new tax break for seniors and disabled citizens. Unlike the former Homestead Exemption, this new plan does not include an income ceiling.

The new plan allows homeowners age 65 or older, permanently and totally disabled, or surviving spouses aged 59 to 64 of persons who apply and qualify for the tax reduction to receive the exemption. This new exemption will begin in tax year 2007 (the current year) for real property homeowners. For manufactured homes, it will apply beginning in tax year 2008.

For purposes of the new exemption, \$25,000 is subtracted from the market value of the home. The tax rates that apply to the property would be calculated on the lower value resulting in a tax reduction. Participants in the old Homestead Exemption program would receive the greater of the tax relief for tax year 2006 under the old program, or the level provided by the new one.

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## POSTAL PATRON

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Note: Homeowners who currently receive the Homestead Exemption will automatically qualify for the expanded exemption and do not have to reapply.

Homeowners must apply through their county auditor's office for the new exemption. The application deadline for receiving the exemption in 2007 is October 1st. In future years, the deadline will revert back to the first Monday in June, the same as the old Homestead Exemption.

Seniors and Disabled citizens who own their homes are urged to apply. The new exemption will apply to current levies and any passed in the future. This new exemption has the effect of reducing the property tax burden for homeowners who qualify.

The Ohio Department of Taxation has prepared a flier with information about the new exemption and who to contact with questions. The following is the web address for accessing a copy of the flier:

[http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/communications/documents/homestead\\_internet.pdf](http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/communications/documents/homestead_internet.pdf)