

POINTS OF PRIDE

Ontario Local Schools

457 SHELBY-ONTARIO RD

ONTARIO, OHIO 44906

LISA CARMICHAEL, SUPERINTENDENT

419-747-4311



WHAT IS YET TO COME

A Message from Superintendent Lisa Carmichael

OUR COMMUNITY HAS GROWN TO EXPECT EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMANCE at all levels of our operation. As Superintendent of Ontario Local Schools, I am responsible for keeping a promise to every person in this district who values and respects education. That promise is to design an educational program that has carefully assessed expectations of the Ontario community and the learning needs of every student. I must not only design a high quality educational program, I must assure that our schools and our teachers effectively deliver the design. While I welcome that responsibility, from time to time, it becomes necessary to seek the continual support of our voters.

I became part of the Ontario community in the summer of 2011. I quickly learned what has drawn people to this special place for so many years. It's much more than the nice homes, the multitude of restaurants, and the numerous sources of recreation – it's a deep sense of community pride and cooperation. I recently spent time over the holiday break reflecting on the time back in 2011 when I was interviewing for my position. My husband and I spent several days in Ontario, engaging in conversations with random community members about our schools. I look back with a smile, as every single person who I spoke with said that Ontario Schools was a great school district. Several people told me that they purposefully purchased a home in Ontario to ensure their children's placement at Ontario. One grandparent proudly said to me that Ontario Schools were the best schools around!

In this edition of our *Points of Pride* quarterly newsletter, you will hear from a few students who will share what they believe makes Ontario a great school. More than fantastic teachers and nice facilities, we have a sense of family here at Ontario Schools. A young lady at Ontario Middle School told me last week that she feels like her teachers look after her and want the best for her. What more can we ask for? I really think you'll enjoy hearing what some of our students say about our schools.

I am very proud to serve as your Superintendent of Schools. Throughout the last five (5) years, we've dramatically increased and enhanced the number of educational program opportunities available to students. Students attending Ontario High School may now earn up to forty-one (41) free semester hours through participation in our College Credit Plus courses. Honors classes are now available to all middle school students. Both intervention services and gifted program services have been implemented at Stingel Elementary.

Educating students is expensive. And it's certainly not cheap to operate a school district. In 2016, we spent \$92,000 on student technology programs and equipment. In addition, we spent \$112,000 on textbooks and curriculum materials. A new school bus costs \$90,000, and we pride ourselves on continuing to pass our bus inspections annually. In the last two (2) years, we've spent over \$450,000 renovating our parking lots at Stingel Elementary,

(Continued on the next page. . .)



A Message from Superintendent Lisa Carmichael (Continued)



When the new National Honor Society members were "crowned" by the current members to join the prestigious society, the students attended an honorary luncheon at the Ontario Event Center.

Ontario Middle School, Ontario High School, and our Bus Garage. In 2016, we spent \$380,000 in utilities – electric, gas, and water. We work very hard to maintain our facilities. Our newest buildings (our middle school and our high school) are seventeen (17) years old. In 2016, we spent \$227,000 in routine maintenance items alone. I share these facts with you because it's very important to note that we have NOT received additional taxpayer dollars since 2006 when we passed a 4.5 Mill Emergency Operating Levy. I am amazed at everything we've been able to accomplish throughout the last five (5) years with such a limited amount of money. And we're not asking for more.

On November 8, 2016, we tested the waters early and placed a 4.8 Mill Substitute Levy on the ballot. An overwhelming number of people voted on November 8, 2016 with a record high of 6,011 votes throughout the fourteen (14) precincts in Ontario. Our Substitute Levy failed by just sixty-five (65) votes. The outcome resulted in 3,038 No's and 2,973 Yes's. As evident in the November 2016 election, the majority of those who voted did not approve of the Substitute Levy being "ongoing" and "continual." Therefore, on May 2, 2017, we will ask voters to support a five (5) year Renewal Levy. This will be a renewal of a levy that was originally passed in 1992, and it has been renewed every five (5) years thereafter, in 1997, 2001, 2007, and 2012. It is a dollar levy, which means Ontario Schools will continue to receive \$1,320,000 annually. This Renewal Levy will simply continue to provide the same dollars that it has been generating since 1992. Once again, we're not asking for more. This Renewal Levy will NOT provide us with any additional funds. Revenues from this Renewal Levy will be used to fund basic school operations, including textbooks, educational materials, and support services for Ontario Local School students. If passed on May 2, 2017, we will have to ask voters to approve the levy again in 2022.

While I am proud to be a member of this great community, I am extremely humbled to serve as its Superintendent. It's an honor to work with such a fine group of educators as they strive to make a positive impact in the lives of our students. I am invigorated by the thoughts of what is yet to come. Over the next few years, we will be laying the groundwork to build upon our district's tradition of excellence and reach even greater levels of achievement and opportunity for all students.

Educational leadership does not rest in the hands of one person. I know well the value of working together in partnerships with other parties who have an interest in and a desire to have quality schools. Ontario Schools is fortunate to have a Board of Education made up of a group of professionals who care deeply about education and the future of our students. They work diligently with me to create an exemplary model of operational consistency, coordination, and communication.

I encourage you to assist us in the work of the schools, to become involved in that work, and to answer the call for excellence in education. Together, we can achieve any dream that we choose to dream. Together, we can keep the promise to maintain a top-notch educational program.

Ontario is a proud city. It respects its history and its traditions. It also commits to growth and change. Most importantly, it values its children.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carmichael
SUPERINTENDENT

