A Message from Tony Long, Superintendent

On behalf of the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the educators, administrators, and the Boards of Education of the twelve districts in Adams, Clinton, Fayette, and Highland Counties for partnering with us in our efforts to ensure educational excellence for all students in our region. We congratulate all school districts on their successes and continue our commitment to serving all students and school districts. We are committed to providing high quality educational services that are customized to best fit the needs of our districts and welcome the opportunity to hear from school personnel, collaborative partners, and the community as we develop 21st Century skills that prepare students for higher education and our work force.

Mr. Long was hired on October 27, 2009 to succeed Robert Dalton on January 1, 2010 as the fourteenth superintendent of the SOESC. Mr. Long begins his twenty-fifth year with the SOESC and has held various positions within the SOESC.

Ohio’s New Local Report Cards

Ohio has changed how it evaluates and communicates the academic performance of its schools and districts. Schools and districts will no longer receive labels like “Excellent” or “Continuous Improvement.” In its place, they will receive letter grades on several measures in the same way a student receives grades for his or her classes.

The new report card was phased in over several years, starting in August 2013. Beginning in August 2015, schools and districts will receive grades on measures like the four-year graduation rate. The grades for measures will be combined into six broad categories, called components, which also will receive a grade. Finally, the component grades will be combined into an overall grade for the school or district.

The seven components that will be on the new report card are:

1. **Achievement**: This component measures absolute academic achievement compared to national standards of success.
2. **Progress**: This component measures the average annual improvement for each student (i.e., whether a student gained more or less a year of knowledge and skills each year).
3. **Gap Closing**: This component measures how well a school or district is doing in narrowing gaps in reading, math and graduation rate among students according to socioeconomic, racial, ethnic or disability status.
4. **Graduation Rate**: This component measures the percentage of students who entered the 9th grade and graduated in four and five years.
5. **K-3 Literacy**: This component measures the improvement in reading for students in kindergarten through grade three.
6. **Prepared for Success**: This component measures whether students who graduate are prepared for college or a career.
7. **Educational Data**: These measures answer several questions about spending and performance.

In August 2013, the report card had nine measures that receive grades. There will be no component or overall grades until August 2016. This will give schools time to adjust to the new system and focus their efforts on being successful in all areas that are being measured. The report card will also be interactive on ODE’s website.

The Mission of the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center is to foster educational environments that ensure excellence in performance through shared expertise, collaborative partnerships, and continuous learning.
Students must meet both testing requirements and curriculum requirements in order to earn a diploma. These new graduation requirements apply to students who entered ninth grade before July 1, 2014. See the information below for more information about these two diploma requirements. The third section provides information about an alternative way to meet the testing requirements.

**State Minimum Curriculum Requirements:**
- **English language arts:** 4 units
- **Mathematics:** 2 units
- **Science:** 3 units
- **Social studies:** 3 units
- **Health:** ½ unit
- **Other Studies:** 2 units
- **Physical education:** ½ unit
- **Economics and financial literacy:** ½ unit
- **Fine Arts:** ½ unit
- **Advanced study in one or more of the following sciences:** chemistry, physics, or other physical science; advanced biology or other life science; astronomy, physical geology, or other earth or space science.

*All students must receive instruction in economics and financial literacy during grades 9-12 and must complete at least two semesters of fine arts taken any time in grades 7-12. Students following a career-technical pathway are exempted from the fine arts requirement.

**Alternative Way to Meet the Testing Requirements:**
A student may meet the testing requirements for passing all five Ohio Graduation Tests if he or she meets ALL of the following criteria:
- Passes four of the five tests and has missed passing the fifth test by no more than 10 points;
- Has a 97 percent attendance rate, excluding any excused absences, through all four years of high school;
- Has not been expelled from school in any of the last four school years;
- Has at least a grade point average of 2.5 out of 4.0 in the courses of the subject area not yet passed;
- Has completed the high school curriculum requirement;
- Has participated in any intervention programs offered by the school and must have had a 97 percent attendance rate in any programs offered outside the normal school day; and
- Has letters recommending graduation from the high school principal and from each high school teacher in the subject area not yet passed.

NOTE: As specified in the Ohio Revised Code (Section 3313.615), this alternative way to meet the testing requirement applies only to students graduating after Sept. 15, 2006.
SOESC Superintendent Tony Long received the Buckeye Association School Administrator’s Exemplary Leader award for Region 6. Long received the nomination and award in October 2014. Region 6 includes districts in Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette, Highland, Butler, Hamilton, Warren, and Clermont counties.

Dr. Kevin Boys, president of Southern State Community College, nominated Long for this award. In his nomination, Boys stated that the small districts served by SOESC greatly value the services afforded to them. Boys complimented Long on his maintaining of relationships which are valued by the districts and superintendents with whom he directly works.

Initiatives specifically noted by Dr. Boys included SOESC’s Aspiring Leader Program, that grows area educators interested in becoming district administrators and building career skills, and post-secondary awareness through workshops for district educators and presidents in the area.

"The opportunity to meet with Senator Peterson and Speaker Rosenberger allowed administrators to speak candidly with those who represent their districts and make decisions that impact their students," said Tony Long, Superintendent of the SOESC. "It was time well invested, and we hope to keep the lines of communications open as decisions regarding education policy continues to evolve."

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State Legislators and Educational Leaders Discuss the Future of Education

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Ohio’s Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Richard Ross, and Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents John Carey met with students and staff at Blanchester High School, Lynchburg-Clay Elementary, and Sabina Elementary.

When speaking with students at Blanchester High School, Superintendent Ross and Chancellor Carey promoted the new College Credit Plus program that begins during the 2015-2016 school year.

The new program allows students to earn college credit while still in junior and senior high school at no cost to the students, and according to Dr. Ross, students who earn at least 9 hours of college credit before graduating high school significantly increase the likelihood that they will graduate from college.

Superintendent Ross and Chancellor Carey began the day at Blanchester High School where they honored students and staff for once again being recognized as a School of Promise.

As a School of Promise, Blanchester High School has demonstrated substantial progress in ensuring high achievement for all its students. This is the third consecutive year that BHS has earned this distinction, thus, qualifying BHS also as School of Honor for the second consecutive year.
**Highlights of 2014-2015**

**Clinton County Bus Drivers Honored**

The Southern Ohio Educational Service Center held its annual dinner meeting to honor Clinton County school bus drivers at the Laurel Oaks Campus in Wilmington on March 12th.

Tony Long, Superintendent of the SOESC, welcomed bus drivers from Blanchester, Clinton-Massie, and East Clinton Local, and Wilmington City Schools commending them for their work ethic and dedication to Clinton County schoolchildren.

Superintendents from each district spoke briefly expressing their gratitude to the bus drivers for waking up early each morning and putting themselves on the line for the safety and well-being of their students. Transportation supervisors and superintendents from each district presented milestone “years of service” awards for 5, 10, 15, and 25 years.

Following dinner, motivational speaker Harvey Alston shared his philosophy about working hard and working smart. He called bus drivers heroes and talked about the difference they make in the lives of students by simply being happy to see them each and every day. Harvey also engaged the audience in an activity highlighting who and what it takes to be happy every day: Heart—Attitude—Pride—People—You.

**Area Schools Honored**

The Southern Ohio Educational Service Center brought together superintendents, treasurers, building administrators, and board members from neighboring counties to recognize local achievements in education. Educators from Adams, Clinton, Fayette, and Highland Counties assembled on the Laurel Oaks Campus for dinner and awards ceremony.

The following were recognized as Ohio Department of Education-designated Master Teachers: Stephanie Eriksson and Andrea Harpen, both of Blanchester Local Schools; Nancy Reeves of East Clinton Local Schools; Kristen de Fasselle and Karla Heatt, both of Wilmington City Schools; Lara Hamilton and Kay Tyler, both of Lynchburg-Clay Local Schools; Stacey Camp of Adams County/Ohio Valley Local Schools; and Lorrie Goddard, Courtney Hagler and Sarah Kirkpatrick, all of Miami Trace Local Schools.

Three school buildings in the four-county region were recognized as a School of Promise: Blanchester High School, Lynchburg-Clay Elementary School and North Adams High School.

Blanchester High School was recognized as a High Performing School of Honor. And Sabina Elementary School was recognized as a High Progress School of Honor.

**Financials 2014-2015**

Rachel Meyer has just completed her first year as treasurer for the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center. Meyer, a long-time employee, joined the SOESC in 1988, serving first as a member of the support staff and later transitioning to fiscal manager for Region 14/Hopewell Center, a position she held for 23 years.

Meyer is committed to the success of the SOESC and its member districts. She strives for effective and accountable practices and led her fiscal team in receiving the honor of Audit of the State Award for exemplary financial reporting for fiscal year 2014.

Feel free to contact Rachel Meyer at 937-382-6921 ext. 1025 or so_rmeyer@mveca.org with any questions regarding the SOESC Fiscal Department.
During the 2014-15 school year, the SOESC was proud to continue to serve as fiscal agent for the Region 14 State Support Team as well as continuing to provide special education and related services through a cooperative arrangement with member school districts in Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette and Highland Counties.

State Support Team

The SOESC applied for and was selected by the Ohio Department of Education to serve as the fiscal agent for the Region 14 State Support Team (SST) in 2007. Since then, each year the SOESC has entered into a Performance Agreement with the Ohio Department of Education which specifies the activities and priorities of the State Support Team. The Region 14 Regional Advisory Council and its subcommittees, comprised of superintendents, parents, school board and teacher representatives, higher education and technology agency representatives serving school districts in Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette and Highland Counties, provide input into the implementation of the Performance Agreement to ensure that these initiatives are tailored to and meet the needs of our region.

The 2014 Performance Agreement included eight deliverables that were addressed by Region 14 SST consultants or through contracts with the ESCs serving the five-county region comprising Region 14. The eight deliverables focused on implementation of the Ohio Improvement Process, Third Grade Reading Guarantee, Early Learning and School Readiness Programs, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Diverse Learners, State Personnel Development Grant, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, Federal and State Requirements and learning activities to promote parent and community engagement in the education of children with disabilities and others.

Shared Expertise

Hopewell Cooperative

Since 1968, the SOESC has also served as the fiscal agent for the Hopewell Cooperative. This cooperative provides special education services and supports as identified by member districts within the five-county region. Generally, these are programs and/or services that individual districts and/or counties cannot provide because of the low incidence nature of the disability of the children for which it was designed, the recruitment for particular personnel is extremely difficult, or the service needs to be shared by multiple districts due to the costs associated with the service.

The cooperative currently provides the following services: occupational therapy, physical therapy, itinerant teacher services for preschool students and for those students who are blind or have visual impairment, deaf or hard of hearing, augmentative communication services, adaptive physical education consultant services, educational audiolog and consultation regarding Autism or other low incidence disabilities. Educational Interpreter Services were also provided as needed. Feedback from customers in the member districts of Region 14, indicated that the services were of high quality and valued by participating districts.

Like the State Support Team, the Hopewell Cooperative benefitted from the guidance and direction provided by the Region 14 Regional Advisory Council, which made recommendations to the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center Superintendent and Governing Board for development and implementation of programs and services provided through the Cooperative.

SOESC Earns Safety and Audit of State Awards

The Southern Ohio ESC was the recipient of two safety awards as presented by the Highland-Fayette-Clinton Safety Council at its May 6, luncheon meeting. Superintendent of the Bureau of Workers Compensation Safety and Hygiene Division, Abe Al-Tarawneh, presented the SOESC the “100% Award” for accruing zero injuries or illnesses resulting in a day or more away from work in the previous calendar year and the “Special Award” for achieving at least 500,000 hours and at least six months without an injury resulting in a day or more away from work.

Human Resources Administrative Assistant, Lisa Homan, accepted the awards on behalf of the Southern Ohio ESC.

Roger West Receives Service Award

Over 300 school board members and school district administrators from Southwest Ohio attended the March 13th Southwest Ohio School Boards Association Spring Conference held at the Miami Valley Career Tech Center where Roger West was honored with the Veteran Board Member Service Award.

Roger West has served on the Highland County Board of Education, Clinton-Fayette-Highland Educational Service District and the Southern Ohio Education Service Center Governing Board for 30 years. As a member of the governing board, West has served on various board committees in addition to serving as both president and vice president.

“Roger’s commitment to education and serving students has been steadfast for 30 years,” said Tony Long, superintendent of the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center. “He’s remained dedicated and thoughtful when making decisions about the future of our students, and we appreciate all that he has done for our region.”

Ohio Auditor of State Dave Yost announced that the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center, which servers K—12 Schools districts in Adams, Clinton, Highland, and Fayette Counties, has received its third consecutive Auditor of State Award for its clean audit reports.

Under the stewardship and steadfast efforts of outgoing treasurer, Alleen Unversaw, current treasurer Rachel Meyer and their staff, the SOESC earned a “clean” audit report free of any finding for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, Single Audit findings or questioned costs. The audit also recognized the SOESC for its timely filing of financial reports as required by GAAP, (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles).
Bennie Trail
American Red Cross Hero

The Southern Ohio Educational Service Center is proud to announce that long-time educator Bennie Trail was presented the Heroes Lifetime Education Award during the March 18th American Red Cross Heroes Awards Breakfast.

Trail has committed his professional life to serving children, working first as a health, physical education, and driver’s education teacher at Fayetteville-Perry and Clermont Northeastern Local School Districts where he also coached basketball, track, volleyball, and cross country. He later transitioned to administration where he served as principal at Clermont Northeastern, Blanchester, and Wilmington Middle Schools.

Trail currently serves as director for the SOESC’s Learning Center serving students in grades six through twelve. He works closely with students, parents, teachers, and administrators to assure that students with disabilities receive the highest standards of support and instruction as they pursue personal, social, and academic goals.

The Exceptional Achievement Award is a unique recognition in that it is an award by both parents and educators and is granted to a select number of individuals from throughout the five-county Region 14/Hopewell Center.

Exceptional Teacher Award Winners

Region 14/Hopewell Center presented Heidi Friend and Kristina Stuckey Exceptional Achievement Awards at its 32nd Annual Recognition Ceremony held April 23, at the Hillsboro Elementary School.

Heidi Friend, a speech-language pathologist working within the Fairfield Local School district and Kristina Stuckey, a multi-handicapped teacher working within the Bright Local School District, work closely with students, parents, teachers, and administrators to assure that students with disabilities receive the highest standards of support and instruction as they pursue personal, social, and academic goals.

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The Business Advisory Council Awards Scholarships to Area Seniors

The Clinton County Business Advisory Council (BAC) awarded its Integrity Scholarship to seven area graduating seniors who demonstrate academic promise, ethics, and ambition.

Established in 1998 as a way to make the cost of post-secondary education more affordable, the BAC has since awarded 117 graduates scholarships totaling over $53,000. This year’s recipients were each awarded $500 scholarships.

The generosity of Clinton County businesses and community members make this scholarships possible.

The BAC Scholarship Fund is administered by the Clinton County Foundation and the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center.

Summer Learning Academy

Just days after students celebrated the last day of school, teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators from Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette, and Highland Counties began preparing for the 2015-2016 school year by attending workshops during the “Summer Learning Academy” held June 8—11 on the campus of the Southern State Community College in Hillsboro.

Educators participated in workshops that offered new ideas and resources to empower students in Making Math Talk Outside the Box, to nurture writers of all ages, and to differentiate instruction by using Gamification (the layering of games into the learning process) and Classcraft (educational role playing) as a means to supplement classroom learning.

Long-time Director Retires—Passes the Torch to Justice

Lisa Barnhouse, long-time director of the Region 14/Hopewell Center, retired at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

Hired in 1981 as the coordinator of school psychology when the SOESC was named the Clinton County Board of Education, Barnhouse has been at the helm of Region 14/Hopewell Center since January 1999.

SOESC Superintendent Tony Long recognized Barnhouse at the annual Four County Dinner Meeting congratulating her on her retirement and her career of advocating for improved educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Barnhouse was also recently inducted into the Highland County Women’s Hall of Fame for her contributions to education.

As the new director at Region 14/Hopewell Center, Beth Justice shares her vision to build relationships with staff members and to familiarize herself with their jobs and what they offer the districts in the region.

Justice also believes it is critical to build relationships with district administrators and to collaborate with them to ensure her staff is providing optimal service to meet the needs of its most precious commodities—the students and staff.

Justice’s vision also includes becoming more efficient and effective in the day-to-day operations and collaborating with the Southern Ohio Educational Service Center, Brown County Educational Service Center, and South Central Ohio Educational Service Center in fulfilling their missions.
The SOESC invited international speaker and award winning teacher and author Rick Wormeli to share his experience with “Differentiated Instruction: Walking through a Lesson from Scratch.” Wormeli who is known for his innovation, validity and high standards in promoting instructional practices, has effectively coached teachers and principals to change their teaching perspective.

Over 200 educators from Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette, and Highland Counties were in attendance to hear Wormeli June 12 at the Gathering Place in Hillsboro. The event, was the capstone to a week long series of workshops offering teachers and administrators continuing education opportunities.

After a brief review of major differentiation principles Wormeli demonstrated a step-by-step process of creating differentiated lesson plans from scratch that empower teachers to explore ways to meet the diverse needs of student instruction while utilizing Ohio’s Teacher Standards and the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System framework.

As educators continued to work through the summer months preparing for the start of the 2015-2016 school year, they were more equipped to “teach smarter, not harder” having benefited from the techniques shared by Wormeli.

School improvement consultants Misty Ewry and Beth Justice served as guest speakers at The Ohio Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Winter Conference in February.

With the recent changes in House Bill 487 Ohio graduation requirements calling for additional and more challenging end of course assessments, it is essential that educators align classroom instruction and assessment to Ohio’s new learning standards.

In their presentation titled, “Next Generation Assessments, Social Studies & Science, and Understanding DOK Levels,” Ewry and Justice discussed new trends within these disciplines and offered participants the opportunity to explore assessment items and use formative assessment tools.

“It speaks highly of our staff when they are invited to present at a professional conference such as the Ohio ASCD,” said Tony Long, SOESC Superintendent. “I’m confident Ewry and Justice offered insights and opportunities that empowered participants to move forward with confidence as they incorporate new strategies into their school and classrooms environments.

Highland County’s Talented & Gifted (TAG) students recently experienced the nation’s capital on their annual TAG field trip.

The forty-seven fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students, along with their chaperones, toured Washington, D.C. making stops at the White House, United States Capitol Building, Lincoln Memorial, and Ford’s Theater.

Students honored the nation’s military by visiting the World War II Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, and Arlington National Cemetery, in addition to visiting the Iwo Jima U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, and the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, along with the Jefferson and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorials.

Students rounded out their trip by visiting George Washington’s Mt. Vernon Plantation, the American History Smithsonian Institute, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and by enjoying a narrated cruise along the Potomac River.

Students participating in this year’s field trip attend Bright and Lynchburg-Clay Local Schools and Hillsboro City Schools.

Blanchester Middle School student Nicholas Lansing was among 100 students from across the state who gathered on the campus of Ohio Dominican University in Columbus to compete in the National Geographic Bee.

Lansing used several sources to help him prepare, including Fact Books, Interactive Globes, National Geographic quizzes and National Geographic WII games. He also credits his reading of nonfiction titles such as Killing Lincoln and Killing Kennedy as they contain points around the world that allowed him to connect and better remember.
Highlights of 2014-2015

Franklin B Walter Award Recipients

The Ohio Educational Service Center Association recognized 82 of Ohio's top students from across the state during the 26th Annual Franklin B. Walter All-Scholastic Awards Program, named in honor of Ohio’s 31st State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Each year the SOESC honors one student from Adams, Clinton, Fayette, and Highland Counties to be the OESCA Franklin B. Walter Award Recipient. Award recipients must have demonstrated academic achievement in addition to other significant school and community accomplishments.

Adams County Recipient Karly Boerger
North Adams High School.

Clinton County Recipient Ian Henson
East Clinton High School

Fayette County Recipient Tobin Anderson
Washington Court House High School

Highland County Recipient Trey Moberly
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SOESC and OSBA Sponsored Leadership Academy

When the school year began in August of 2014, students were not the only ones returning to the classroom to learn new skills and strategies that would help them become better and stronger students. School board members, superintendents and treasurers also returned to the classroom to take advantage of professional development opportunities that would help them become better educational leaders.

Representative from Blanchester, Bright, Clinton Massie, East Clinton, Fairfield, Hillsboro, Miami Trace, Washington Court House, and Ripley Union Lewis Huntington school districts and the SOESC attended four installments of the ECS/OSBA Leadership Academy sponsored by the Southern Ohio Education Service Center and the Ohio School Boards Association that began in September 25, 2014 and concluded April 16, 2015.

This year’s Leadership Academy provided professional development opportunities to board members in regards to “The Board’s Role in Levy Campaigns,” “The Board’s Role in Student Achievement and Treasurer and Superintendent Evaluations,” “Current Trends with Negotiations and Negotiated Agreements” and “The Legal Aspects of Social Media and ASK an OSBA Attorney.”

SOESC Sponsored Teach Like a Pirate Book Study

School Improvement Consultant Misty Ewry met with teachers from Adena, Bright, East Clinton, and Fairfield Local Schools, the SOESC, and Ridge Jr. School Friday March 20th to conclude a seven week, professional development, book study that called upon teachers to “Teach Like a Pirate,” and hook students into learning by increasing student engagement and boosting teacher creativity when planning lessons.

Focusing on learning strategies that would “hook” and maintain students’ attention, area teachers read Teach Like a Pirate, by David Burgess and participated in weekly online discussions where they responded to assigned readings and shared ideas.

As a culminating requirement of the book study, participants met in person at the SOESC and presented “capstone” assignments—20 minute lessons that were so engaging, students would actually want to pay to observe them. Presentations included a kindergarten math lesson on teaching shapes like a rock star, a writing lesson for junior high students that focused on details, a superhero unit for middle school students, a health lesson on pregnancy, a fourth grade cross curricular unit on worms, and life skills for a Super 5 autistic unit.

As an added bonus, author David Burgess heard about the event via Twitter, and after a series of tweets back and forth, ended up taking part in the day’s discussion via Skype, yet another way to think like a pirate.