

YOUR SCHOOLS

2007

Aurora City School District

Top 20 in quality – Top 200 in expenditures

Aurora ranked at the top of Ohio's Schools

One of the best ways to determine the value of a community's investment in its schools is to look at the comparison data released by the Ohio Department of Education each year. Once again, the Aurora City School District is ranked at the top of the state in academic performance and is consistently ranked as one of the best educational investments in Ohio.

Aurora City School District administrators were thrilled to learn that, academically, Aurora ranks 17th out of 613 school districts in Ohio, while the district's expenditures remain comparatively low—126th in the state.

"We offer an outstanding education at a great value in Aurora," said school treasurer Bill Volosin. "We're proud to know that we have been able to stay at the top of state rankings and we are still able to keep our costs down."

That value is what Dottie Dupuy, Branch Manager and Vice President of Howard Hanna Smythe Cramer says is what continues to attract homebuyers to Aurora.

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*It is today that our best work can be done...
Today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow...
Today is the seed time,
now are the hours of our work,
and tomorrow comes the harvest.*

W.E.B. DuBois

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AHS artists win state, national awards

Five AHS art students win national awards

Aurora High School has received word that five of its art students received national recognition for art work that advanced to the nation's highest competition for high school art students.

Katy Filarski won a Gold Key, the competition's highest award, for her colored pencil work; **Joe Lawrie** won a Gold Key for a surrealist linoleum block print he created in his art 3 class; **Sara Mirolli** won a Silver Key for an oil painting of her brother, and

Emma Kropp won a Silver Key for a pen-and-ink self portrait. **Alyssa Johnson** won a Silver Key at the national competition for her colored pencil drawing of a figure in perspective.

Artwork of seven AHS students selected for exhibit

The works of seven Aurora High School art students will be on display from April 15 to May 17 in Columbus as part of the 2007 Ohio Governor's Youth Art Exhibition. Only 300 works were selected from among thousands of pieces submitted to the annual competition, which places

Aurora's young artists once again at the top of the state in achievement.

Students whose artwork was recognized include: **Emma Kropp** (two works selected), **Katy Filarski**, **Joe Lawrie**, **Ariana Lindenfelser**, **Emily Carr**, **Alyssa Hungerman**, and **Danielle Dobies**, all of whom will be

honored at a brunch on April 15 in Columbus.

Thirty-nine Aurora High School students had 68 works of art recognized for regional honors this spring.

Alumni Corner



The Class of 1977 is planning its 30-year reunion and is working to connect with all of their class-

mates. Organizers are asking for the community's help in locating classmates and ask that anyone interested should e-mail **Bob Ranc** at bobr@superproduct.com or to call **Liz Hagenbuch O'Neil** at 440-338-7939.

Several AHS alumni are currently writing for their college newspapers: **Joe Habbyslaw**,

University of Akron; **Elizabeth Rund**, Kent State University; and **Lindsey Hoepfner**, University of Indiana.

Your Schools wants to hear about the plans and accomplishments of our alumni. E-mail alumni information to YourSchools@aurora-schools.org.



YOUR SCHOOLS

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Your Schools is a publication of the Aurora City School District. Its purpose is to keep residents of Aurora informed of current events and progress in the Aurora City Schools and to foster pride and a continuous communication link between the schools and the community.

Your Schools has been awarded the "Mark of Excellence" and "Best of the Best" Awards by the Ohio Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for service as a school district newsletter. *Your Schools* is a quarterly publication, mailed to all residents of Aurora. For information, comments or story ideas, e-mail Editor, Roseann Canfora at: yourschools@aurora-schools.org.

Class ACTS



Popular writer **Sandra Phillipson**, author of the “Max and Annie” books, visited with students at Craddock Elementary school recently, with her famous dogs in tow.

Kindergarten and pre-school students took a trip in space at a NASA assembly held recently at Miller School. Students learned about space in one of many activities held during Right to Read Week.



Several **AHS music students** earned superior ratings at the annual Ohio Music Educators Association solo and ensemble contest. The association’s highest honors went to: **Fred Hirschman** and **Gabrielle Lyons**, **Jonathan Tung**, and **Nathan Sender**, violin; **Caitlin Houlahan**, alto vocal; **Chrysa Kovach**, flute and piccolo; **John Rausch**, piano. Students **Calvin Shieu**, violin, and **Aubrey Boswell**, percussion, earned Excellent ratings.

Juniors at AHS visited New York City this spring, where they enjoyed tours of Chinatown, the Empire State Building, NBC Studios, Times Square, Broadway, Ground Zero and the Statue of Liberty. **Sophomores** will travel to Chicago this spring for their own cultural experience.

Journalism students at AHS enjoyed a visit from Channel 8 news anchor and Aurora resident Tim Taylor and Candace Perkins Bowen of the journalism school at KSU. The students are also planning a visit to a newspaper organization and will host a guest speaker from *Cleveland Magazine*.

Leighton Elementary School art students are focusing on authentic media in their art projects, with the use of technology and cross-curricular integrations. Leighton Art, under the direction of department chair Lois Girbino, welcomed artists from American Greetings - Kids Division, who shared their newest cartoon creations and guided students in character drawings with an entire day of class activities.

For the second year, the art work of students in grades 1 through 12 have been displayed together concurrent with the high school play. Seven beautiful chairs, painted by the **AHS Art Club** will be auctioned off to benefit Relay for Life and can be viewed at the art webpage.

‘Leaping Stars’ jump to benefit others

Aurora students raise \$15,850 to benefit the American Heart Association

Students at Miller School and Leighton Elementary School held their annual Jump Rope for Heart events in February and raised thousands of dollars to benefit the American Heart Association.

Miller students raised \$3,526.40 for the Heart event, and the Leighton Elementary School Demonstration Jump Rope Team traveled to area

elementary schools in Portage and Summit County to promote the AHS Jump Rope for Heart Program.

Leighton students, under the direction of physical education teacher, Stacey Slackford, raised \$12,336.75 for the Heart Association.



Outstanding reputation...

- Aurora City Schools has been designated an "Excellent District" by the State Board of Education.
- Aurora City Schools earned the "Achievement of Excellence" award by the Ohio Partnership for Excellence.
- Aurora High School earned the prestigious "Schools of Distinction" award.
- Aurora's achievement test scores are among the highest in the state.
- Aurora High School is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, one of only six high schools in the state to achieve this level of academic study, and is the only IB school in the Greater Cleveland area.
- Aurora offers 25 AP and IB courses, servicing over 200 students.
- Aurora's membership in the Mayfield EXCEL Consortium has expanded opportunities for technical and vocational education for our students.
- Aurora athletic teams have won 10 conference championships since 2005, including a place among the Final Four in football in 2006. Boy's cross country is 4th in the state and our wrestlers consistently place at the top of the state.
- Aurora offers a full range of services for students at all ability levels.
- Aurora's performance index score of 106.5 ranks our district 17th in the state out of 613 districts.

Outstanding value...

- Aurora ranks 229th in Ohio in revenue generated per pupil
- Aurora ranks 126th in Ohio in expenditures per pupil
- Aurora spends \$9,411 per student, near the state's average of \$9,339, and Aurora still outperforms its competition.

Actual Operating Millage 1-1-06

Inside 10 Mill Limitation	5.6000
Outside 10 Mill Limitation	28.3043
Total Millage Collected - Operating	33.9043
Permanent Improvement Millage	1.2329
Bond Retirement Millage - High School	1.7900
Total Millage - All Purposes	36.9272
Total Accessed Property Evaluation 1-1-06	\$559,603,063
Per Pupil Property Valuation	\$186,100

District Comparison Data

School District	School Performance Ranking	Total Effective Millage - TY2005	Revenue/Pupil FY06	Revenue/Pupil State Rank	Expend/Pupil FY06	Expend/Pupil State Rank
Orange	31	43.39	\$19,456	3	\$17,518	4
Solon	1	43.18	\$11,154	52	\$11,125	38
Chagrin Falls	3	41.78	\$10,680	73	\$10,746	56
Kent	164	41.22	\$11,284	49	\$10,835	49
Hudson	13	40.73	\$10,249	92	\$10,609	60
Kenston	33	39.34	\$10,751	66	\$ 9,910	90
Aurora	17	36.93	\$ 8,867	229	\$ 9,411	126
West Geauga	47	33.40	\$ 9,341	161	\$ 9,009	173
Streetsboro	308	33.19	\$ 9,044	195	\$ 9,279	142
State Average			\$ 9,735		\$ 9,339	

Aurora ranked at the top of Ohio's Schools

Continued from page 1

"Good schools and property values go together," said DuPuy. "More and more, people want to move to Aurora because of the schools."

Comparison data released by the Ohio Department of Education looked at key indicators, including achievement scores, graduation rates, and attendance rates to determine which

schools were providing the best education at the lowest costs.

"We're proud to know we are providing the highest quality education possible for our children at such a great value to our citizens," said Superintendent Russ Bennett. "It's a great feeling to know we have maintained our standing in the top 20 at a time when Aurora is experiencing continued growth. This says a lot about the value of education in our community."

General Fund Receipts - FY06

Local Sources		
Taxes	\$19,049,446	74.4%
Tuition	\$248,447	1.0%
Transportation Fees	\$2,572	0.0%
Extracurricular Activities	\$-	0.0%
Class Materials & Fees	\$46,230	0.2%
Earnings on Investments	\$273,059	1.1%
Misc. Receipts	\$209,090	0.8%
Total Local Sources	\$19,828,844	77.5%
Intermediate Sources	\$-	0.0%
State Sources	\$5,760,401	22.5%
Federal Sources	\$-	0.0%
Total Receipts	\$25,589,245	100.0%
Starting Balance 7-1-05	\$4,811,973	
Total Receipts & Starting Balance	\$30,401,218	

Our growing community

Enrollment data shows 500 more students will enter Aurora City Schools by 2012.

The Aurora City School District is preparing for the arrival of as many as 500 additional students, expected to enroll in our schools within the next five years. Superintendent Russ Bennett says he expects the district will soon hit the 3500 mark.

"We are looking at 1200 students at Aurora High School, which is 300 more than we have now," said Bennett.

"Harmon, now at 720, will jump to 850 students in 1.5 years."

Bennett said the district enrollment projections show that by 2008, Harmon Middle School alone will get another 125-130 students.

"That means we need to begin planning now for the need to create additional space," he said. "That also means we will need to hire more teachers, buy more busses, and assume more operational costs to keep up with the growth of our city."

School treasurer Bill Volosin said he

**Most Likely Projected Enrollments by Grade Groups
Aurora City School District**

Grade	Actual 2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
K	188	222	224	213	214	218	218	215	215	215	215
1-2	423	394	434	468	461	451	456	461	458	456	455
3-5	702	735	705	697	697	736	763	756	749	752	755
K-5	1313	1351	1363	1378	1369	1405	1437	1432	1422	1423	1428
6-8	711	728	790	816	853	819	809	800	843	864	859
9-12	926	948	952	995	1066	1119	1167	1225	1218	1186	1201
K-12	2950	3027	3105	3189	3291	3343	3413	3457	3483	3473	33472

and other school administrators are taking steps to prepare for the inevitable changes that come with continued growth.

"Last year and this year, we have worked hard to run below our budget schedule and we have been successful in reining in our expenses," said Volosin. Two years ago, we reduced costs by choosing not to replace the business manager and with decisions like that, we have done a good job of holding administrative costs down."

The district's membership in the Ohio Schools Council has also produced

cost savings for the district, by making it possible for the district to purchase utilities, busses, fuel, and supplies at significantly reduced costs.

"Being part of a consortium gives us better buying power," said Volosin. "When we join with other districts and buy as a group, we are able to keep costs down and get more for our money."

Superintendent Russ Bennett said he fears that recent newspaper articles hailing the state's proposed education budget as one that will provide increased funding to schools may have been misleading.

"The state's recent budget projections did not take into account Aurora's actual enrollment projections and the most recent property valuation in our county," said Bennett. "We have to plan for our growth based on what we have and what we know we will need if we want to maintain our outstanding educational program."

Bennett said the state's proposed budget does not mean the state's measure will be passed and that he is appreciative that state legislators are putting school finance at the top of their agenda.

"In the meantime," said Bennett, "we are looking at real numbers and preparing to meet the real needs of a growing number of students in our community."

General Fund Expenditures – FY06

Instruction	\$14,587,721	55.3%
Supporting Services	\$10,471,958	39.7%
Operation of Non-Instruc. Services	\$-	0.0%
Extracurricular Activities	\$496,120	1.9%
Facilities Acquisition & Construction Services	\$-	0.0%
Other Uses of Funds	\$814,247	3.1%
Total Expenditures	\$26,370,047	100.00%
Debt Services	\$387,869	
Other Revenue Sources	\$675,299	
Ending Cash Balance	\$4,318,602	
Outstanding Encumbrances	\$456,971	
Average Operating Cost per Pupil	\$8,770	
General Fund Indebtedness	\$-	

Who's Who and What's New

SARA SCHMADER was honored on March 31 with the Aurora Schools Foundation's "Friend of Schools" award. A long-time volunteer in the Aurora City Schools, Sara is best known for her tireless work with PTO, the AHS marching band, and the AHS "After Prom" event, which she continued to spearhead even after her children graduated. The mother of four children, all of whom graduated from Aurora High School, Sara Schmader is also active with the Aurora Garden Club, Scouts, Relay for Life, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Cuyahoga County.

Craddock School volunteer **PATTY KRONZ** worked with elementary students this spring to create colorful quilts to adorn their school. The second grade stitchers learned the art of quilting while learning how much fun it is to work individually and collectively on a class project.



Look out world...here they come! **THE CLASS OF 2020** registered for kindergarten on March 6 and 7. With wide eye and big smiles, Aurora's future graduates accompanied their parents to two day-long events at Miller Elementary School, where Aurora's future academicians, athletes, and artists will begin their educational journey.

Local dentist, **DR. CRAIG HUFFMAN**, visited our elementary students this spring to talk about the importance of good oral hygiene. Using his own puppets, the guest speaker demonstrated proper brushing techniques and answered student questions about good oral health.



Famous actress **CHITA RIVERA** chatted live with students in **ROB ALBRECHT** and **GAYLE LEWIS'** classes in a special program through WVIZ Radio.

Students in **DAVE MURRAY** and **JEFF STENGER'S** eighth grade English classes at Harmon created and sent cards for American troops in Iraq this year.



They're back, and they're state-bound!

'Power of the Pen' returns to Harmon with a bang

After a hiatus from competition, Harmon Middle School has brought 'Power of the Pen' back as one of its best events to inspire young writers. Of the 12 students who participated in the first year of its return, seven qualified for regional competition and will now advance to

the state competition on May 24 at the College of Wooster.

"We're so glad to have this activity back," said LaQuita Timberlake, who is assisting advisor Len Spacek in touting the efforts of this year's team. "The kids are working hard and are so excited about going to state."

Harmon students bound for the state finals are: **Olivia Coady, Katie Clark, Kara Yogan, Liz Vitlin, Rob Alston, and Ian Kropp.**

Kropp had a piece of his writing qualify for the Power of the Pen "Best of the Best" book.

The Aurora Board of Education

CLOSE UP

Jerry Kohanski, School Board President (B.A., MBA John Carroll University; M.A. Case Western Reserve University). Jerry has served on the Board of Education for 10 years, two as Vice President and the last eight as President. He and his wife Mary, have three children, all graduates of Aurora High School.

Jerry is proud to have been a key decision maker in the hiring of two superintendents and the current school treasurer, in the naming of Veteran's Stadium, and in bringing improvements to the treasurer's office and the district's financial reporting system.

"Our most important challenge as board members is maintaining our vision and educational excellence while facing serious funding challenges," he said. "Not only must board members be strong supporters and designers of educational policy, we must be smart business people and fiscal managers." The moments which Jerry says have made him most proud as a board member were getting a surprise hug from his son when handing him his diploma and seeing the tears and emotion in Ken Leighton's eyes when told that the new elementary school would be named after him.

Ann Morrison, Vice President. (BBA, Cleveland State University), has lived in Aurora since 1977 and has been on the school board for seven years. Married for 31 years, Ann and her husband Joe have three children, all graduates of Aurora High School: Elizabeth (1997) Joe (2000) and Daniel (2003). Ann has served on the Board

of Directors of the Aurora One Fund from 1979 until the present. A pre-school teacher since 1991, thousands of Aurora students know the Board's Vice President as "Miss Anne," for her work in the Pre-K class at the Aurora Children's Day Center.

Active in the Aurora community and the Aurora schools since moving to Aurora, Ann has volunteered for the past 14 years with the Aurora Sports Boosters, the Aurora Band Boosters and the Aurora Schools Foundation. She is a founding member of the Aurora Ultimate Boosters organization.

Mike Frigo (B.A., Clarkson University) is CEO at Copperfield, LLC. He has lived in Aurora with his wife Denise for the past nine years and has served on the board since January, 2004. Their son, Tyler is a graduate of AHS, currently attending Miami University, and their daughter, Rachael, is a senior at AHS. A member of the Aurora Ultimate Boosters, Mike is also active at his parish, Holy Angels, and Mike sees his service on the board as reciprocal.

"It's important to give something back to our vibrant community," he said. "Serving as a school board member is one of the most rewarding things I do." Frigo believes securing state and local funding is the board's most important challenge, and he is proud to have been part of charting a path of continuous improvement.

Mike continues to act as an advocate for differentiated learning and for the creation of an educational environment where individualized learning is fostered.

Bev Kuch (B.A. Cleveland State University) moved to Aurora in 1999 from Aurora Shores where she lived for 17 years. Bev has served on the school board since January 2004. She and her husband Larry have a daughter Heather, who attends Aurora High School and two adult children, a daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren. Bev worked as a chemical engineer for British Petroleum before leaving to start her own business. She currently works part-time at the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center and remains active in several community organizations.



Front Row: Pam Mehallis, Bev Kuch
Back Row: Anne Morrison, Jerry Kohanski, Mike Frigo

Pam Mehallis (B.S., Miami University) is a graduate of Aurora High School who has lived most of her life in Aurora, Ohio. Pam, a board member for four years, began her second term this year. Actively involved in her children's education for the past 15 years, she is a familiar volunteer in numerous school activities. Pam enjoys working with the music departments at both the middle and high school and is currently self-employed as a piano teacher.

APRIL 2007

19	10:00AM	Harmon Parent Communication Forum
20	7:00PM	CES Family Fun Night (M-Z)
23	7:00PM	School Board Meeting @ LES
24	7:30AM	Beta Club Induction
27	7:30PM	High School Musical
	TBA	Kindergarten Concerts
28	7:30PM	High School Musical
30	7:00PM	Second Grade Concert @ AHS

MAY 2007

2	7:30PM	AHS Band Concert
3	7:30PM	AHS Choir Concert
8	7:00PM	Leighton Band & Choir Concert
9	7:30PM	AHS Orchestra Concert
10	10:00AM	Leighton Parent Communication Forum
	7:30PM	Harmon Choir Concert

MAY 2007

11		PTO Flower Sale
14	7:30PM	AHS Academic Awards
15	7:30PM	Harmon Band Concert
17	10:00AM	Harmon Parent Communication Forum
	7:30PM	Orchestra Concert
21	7:00PM	School Board Meeting @ LES
22	7:30PM	AHS Spring Awards
24	7:00PM	Leighton Orchestra Concert
	10:00PM	MES/CES Parent Communication Forum
30	7:00PM	6th Grade Awards @ AHS
	8:00PM	7th Grade Awards @ AHS
31	7:30PM	Baccalaureate

JUNE 2007

1	7:30PM	8th Grade Farewell to Harmon @ AHS
4	7:00PM	8th Grade Awards @ AHS
5	7:00PM	AHS Graduation @ Parkside Church
6		Last Student Day

'Children in the Middle'**District offers support for children of divorce**

Leighton Elementary School counselor Leann Lampers has announced the start of a new program in Aurora designed to help children who are dealing with the difficult changes they face when their parents choose to divorce.

In conjunction with Town Hall 2 in Kent, the Aurora school counselor provides an opportunity for a parent and his/her children to share dinner, participate in activities, and talk together once a week for three weeks

in a program titled "Children in the Middle."

The program, which began in March, provides emotional support for the students and his/her family. For information, call 330-995-7764.

**AURORA CITY SCHOOLS****Committed to Excellence****102 East Garfield Road, Aurora, Ohio 44202**

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