



# Legacy



## STUDENTS PERFORM VIRTUAL RECITAL FOR CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF MUSIC MUSICIANS



Ever dream of playing piano alongside a world-class pianist, or receiving advice from a professional vocalist? For most music students, the chances of either encounter seem virtually impossible.

Through the wonders of interactive, video-distance learning (IVDL) equipment, such seemingly impossible dreams become a reality. For the past seven years, the Lorain County ESC/Region 2 SST has offered Virtual Recital as part of its Lorain County Solo & Ensemble

Contest. This performance-for-critique recital gives students the chance to demonstrate their talents and exchange musical thoughts and ideas prior to competing in the county's solo and ensemble contest.

This year, eight talented students took part in Virtual Recital from February 16th through 18th at the Lorain County Educational Service Center. Each student played for and conversed with a Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM) musician, proficient in the same instrument or voice type as the student. The musicians listened to performances and offered practice and performance suggestions via cameras set up inside the Cleveland Institute of Music. On the video screen, students could see their image superimposed in the concert hall at CIM.

Anyone who enters the Lorain County Solo & Ensemble Contest—for vocal or instrumental performance—can participate in Virtual Recital for a \$10 fee. Students must perform the same piece in the recital and contest. Pupils of any age are eligible to participate in Virtual Recital. Because the recital is held one to three days before the solo and ensemble contest, the experience helps students better prepare for their contest performances.

As for the competition that follows a few days after the recitals, hundreds of students get a chance to flex their musical muscle. What sets the Lorain County Solo & Ensemble Contest apart from other performance competitions is its inclusion of many different categories, including barbershop quartets four-hands piano, jazz solo, and jazz ensemble. In one day, approximately 1500 students perform for 22 judges. Students in grades 4 through 12 may participate.

"We start at grade four because of the number of kids who are studying Suzuki piano or Suzuki violin," says Jim Hartline, LCESC/SST 2 project coordinator and contest administrator for the Lorain County Solo & Ensemble Contest. "We encourage everybody to perform. If you're a kid and you want to perform, we take you. We encourage studio teachers, private teachers, parents, and home-schoolers to have their students participate."

The virtual recital program was a brainstorm of Hartline and his co-worker Dave Miller. Hartline, no stranger to performance, has been involved in solo and ensemble contest for 60 years, either as a student or instructor.

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### UPCOMING EVENT



#### 50 WAYS TO PRACTICE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Presenter: Robin Hanson

Dates: Monday, June 21 through  
Friday, June 25, 2010  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: ESC conference room

Hanson will present ways to achieve  
a balanced assessment system.

Registration Deadline: Friday, June 11

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## Letter from the Superintendent

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Thomas Rockwell, Ed.D. Superintendent

Our economy may be lethargic and underperforming, but our investment in two noteworthy programs is already paying major dividends to the ESC/Region 2 SST and the districts we serve. The first is our sustained effort on developing meaningful initiatives to support the four major goals of our Strategic

Plan. The second relates to the importance of substitute teachers in our region and how guided professional development can improve their classroom performance.

How can strategic planning pay dividends? In mid-February, representatives from the original Strategic Planning Team assembled to review and summarize the progress of the four Action Teams. The following is a summary of the Action Team Leaders report.

## ACTION TEAM #1:

## "Improve Internal and External Communications"

- Developed a survey of staff professional skills, experience and expertise

- Developing a database of staff information
- Initiated bi-weekly staff meetings including supervisors, directors and coordinators
- Created awareness of work responsibilities during general staff meetings
- Coordinated staff training in the use of various electronic communication tools

## ACTION TEAM #2 "Develop a Marketing Plan"

- Analyzed customer base and provided some preliminary analysis
- Created the framework for development of a comprehensive marketing plan
- Assessed the effectiveness of current marketing strategies
- Will train all staff to ensure their understanding of the marketing plan and their role

## ACTION TEAM #3 "Assess the Needs of our Customers"

- Created a needs assessment for internal and external stakeholders/customers
- Evaluated the assessment response
- Will use data in development of products, programs and services
- Created and disseminated a "superintendent" customer-satisfaction survey

- Met with district superintendents to review current district services and explore new programs, products and services

## ACTION TEAM #4 "Increase Self-Generated Revenues"

- Expanded the Lorain County Academy to include a 10th-grade element
- Developed guidelines for rental of conference rooms
- Rented two classrooms to a local district for every-day kindergarten
- Established a substitute teacher professional development service
- Developed a cost benefit analysis assessment for new programs, products and services
- Contracted for Grant Writing Services to assist the ESC/Region 2 SST in grant acquisitions

In addition to these outstanding activities, discussion during the meeting also detailed what still needed to be accomplished before the end of the school year. The plan review concluded with a decision to convene the entire Strategic Planning Team at the end of the year to complete a final analysis of the process and redefine existing goals as well as identify new ones.

Substitute teachers play a vital role in providing consistency and effective learning opportunities for our students. Consider the following statistics:

- The equivalent of one full year of a child's K-12 education will be taught by a substitute teacher.
- On any given day, up to 10% of the nation's classrooms have substitute teachers.
- Studies show that 10 days of someone other than the regular classroom teacher will have a negative impact on student achievement.

Professional development for our substitute teachers will become one of the important services we provide during the 2010-11 school year. Why does training matter? It matters financially. It matters legally. Most importantly, it matters for the students and their achievement.

This spring, ESC/Region 2 SST staff completed a two-day leadership training as professional development specialists in providing training for substitute teachers. Late this summer, they will conduct seminars that help substitute teachers become more effective teachers in the classroom. We are truly excited about the prospects of providing this valuable service to our regional partners.

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## STUDENTS PERFORM VIRTUAL RECITAL FOR CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF MUSIC MUSICIANS

"It's great training on how to present yourself to an audience," says Hartline.

Several years ago, Hartline and Miller, senior director of technology and innovation, shared an office at Lorain County ESC. Due to such close working quarters, Miller—who oversees the distance-learning programs—and Hartline were not immune to overhearing each other's work-related conversations. As fate would have it, their individual areas of expertise came together to form a unique learning experience for young musicians.

"I could hear what was going on in his place, and he could hear what was going on in my place," says Hartline. "We just started talking, and this whole (virtual recital) idea was birthed from our discussions."

Originally, the Virtual Recital team traveled to and held performances at a different area school each year. One year, a particularly nasty snowstorm forced the Avon Lake district to close its buildings on Virtual Recital day. The event was cancelled. From that year forward, Hartline and his team hosted the annual event at the Lorain County ESC. The facility houses a small television studio, the perfect spot for the Virtual Recital broadcasts.

"Our goal is to give kids an alternative critique experience," says Hartline. "Virtual Recital is a combination of verbal critique and master lesson. When you go to compete, you get a written critique. Our solo and ensemble contest is unique in that we encourage and expect our judges to give verbal critique as well as written comment."

The recital is a rare opportunity to receive a fair, impartial, understanding critique of the performance, he continues. The Virtual Recital is all verbal; no paperwork is involved. Students get one-on-one experience with a professional musician with their instrument, or their voice range. All performers must be prepared to discuss their performance, music and composer, their instrument, and their private-lesson experience.

Beyond a master music lesson and critique, the Virtual Recital program offers a way to network with musicians at a high level of performance. Take the case of a female violinist from Elyria. A few years ago, she participated in Virtual Recital as a high school sophomore. Musicians from the Cleveland Institute of Music were so impressed with her skills that they contacted her and encouraged her to take lessons at CIM.

The Virtual Recital experience is unlike any other because students get the chance to be on television with a professional musician and work with them. The CIM musician talks to the student about all kinds of things, including the instrument, the composer, and the music itself.

"The kids love it, and parents are thrilled, too," says Hartline. "We've had a number of kids who come back year after year. Students of any age can do this. The only thing we ask is that the teachers not send someone who is at elementary-level playing. The young kids who are performing in Virtual Recital are very talented."

The level of critique students receive from Cleveland Institute of Music musicians is unmatched. For example, CIM teacher and acclaimed pianist Gerardo Teissonniere offered critique and master lesson to the February 17th Virtual Recital. Teissonniere has performed in concert series throughout the world and has made numerous radio and television appearances. His students have played concert venues such as Carnegie Hall and in National Public Radio's From the Top. Teissonniere was appointed to the CIM faculty in 1989.

"Anyone who wants to perform for a musician like this should sign up for Virtual Recital," encourages Hartline. "For someone who is interested in music as a vocation, you can't beat an experience like this."



## ★ WORKSHOP OFFERS 50 WAYS TO PRACTICE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Simon and Garfunkel's blockbuster hit song, "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," suggests:

*The problem is all inside your head, she said to me  
The answer is easy if you take it logically  
I'd like to help you in your struggle to be free  
There must be 50 ways to leave your lover.*

For Robin Hanson, Regional School Improvement Coordinator, Lorain County ESC/Region 2 SST, this song holds some parallels to her "50 Ways to Practice Formative Assessment" workshop. At this program, she presents **logical** solutions to resolve some of the **problems** teachers face in their **struggle** to determine whether or not their students understand various concepts in the classroom. In fact, she offers **50 ways!**

At the "50 Ways" workshop, scheduled for Monday, June 21 through Friday, June 25, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, Hanson will present ways to achieve a balanced assessment system.

"The program is designed for classroom teachers of all grades and subjects. I will share various techniques for incorporating formative assessment into daily instruction. Participants will not only learn the specifics of a balanced assessment system but experience and debrief the suggested practices with other teachers to maximize implementation success," Hanson explains.

Hanson, in her second school year with the Lorain County ESC/Region 2 SST, was formerly employed as part of a team of six master teachers who assisted veteran K-12 teachers in a large urban district in Southern California with improvement to their teaching practices. This important position, housed in Certificated Human Resources, directly followed a number of years teaching in California and Ohio districts with varying degrees of urban challenge reflecting poverty, violent crime, racial animosity, English as a second language, student mobility, etc. Hanson holds a variety of administrative and teaching credentials including a National Board certificate, a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) license, and a Gifted endorsement. She earned a M.Ed. in Measurement and Evaluation and is currently working on a M.S. in Special Education.

December through February this program was provided to three districts in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP): Clearview, Vermilion, and South-Central. The June workshop is open to individual teachers or districts that elect to participate regardless of their standing with the ODE. Graduate credit is available through Ashland University for 2 semester hours.



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IS A BROAD TERM THAT IS USED TO DESCRIBE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PRACTICES THAT TEACHERS USE TO GAUGE STUDENT MASTERY OF CONCEPTS AND AS A RESULT, ALTER INSTRUCTION TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS.



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## WORKSHOP OFFERS 50 WAYS TO PRACTICE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

"I present '50 Ways' with as many possible grade-level adaptations and subject-matter adaptations that I can develop. I also encourage teachers to contribute ideas on modifying the techniques," Hanson says. "To further promote engagement during the workshop, I design the instructional day to allow teachers to experience many of the strategies as students, and even provide a general 'lesson plan' for teachers as a scaffold to help determine where in the lesson such formative assessment techniques might be used most easily."

Formative assessment is a broad term that is used to describe a number of different practices that teachers use to gauge student mastery of concepts and as a result, alter instruction to meet student needs.

THIS WORKSHOP PROMPTED ME TO GO BACK THROUGH SOME OF MY OLD MATERIALS AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND DECIDE WHAT WAS WORKING AND WHAT NEEDED TO BE THROWN OUT OR CHANGED.

student needs and, subsequently, change instruction as soon as possible to meet student needs."

One of the workshop's formative assessment strategies, "Two Stars and A Wish," provides feedback to students about two skills they have demonstrated successfully and one area for tomorrow's relearning and practice. Another formative assessment strategy uses Popsicle sticks to call on students and note who struggles so that the teacher may pull a small group for extra help.

James Hong, a 9-12 grade teacher at South-Central Local School District, attended Hanson's "50 Ways to Practice Formative Assessment" workshop and encourages other teachers to attend. "To me, teaching is both a science and an art. I like to be 'in the loop' or 'in the know' of what's current out there — what works and what doesn't work in the classroom. Concerning education, I echo the sentiments of my superintendent and principal in that it's about the three Rs (I think Bill Gates first said it): we need to bring RIGOR and RELEVANCE to the classroom, and it starts by building RELATIONSHIPS. For the past few years, I knew I needed to improve my formative assessment," admits Hong, in his 7th year of teaching, all at South-Central.

"As our school district is in the middle stages of the OIP, one of our district and my personal goals has been to come up with ways to practice formative assessment in the classroom. This workshop offered 50, yes 50 ways!" Hong insists enthusiastically. "And these are research-based. Even better, experts showed me how to use them and how I could incorporate technology into the curriculum — a win-win situation. It was totally worth my time."



Hong insists the workshop opened his eyes. "Funny how just a couple minutes here and there of listening and seeing different types of formative assessment activities can open up a whole world of new possibilities and more meaningful learning experiences for myself and my students. This workshop prompted me to go back through some of my old materials and assessment tools and decide what was working and what needed to be thrown out or changed," Hong says.

One of the "50 Ways" that Hong learned was "Dots" — a simple strategy where one looks over student work and 'dots' the mistakes or trouble spots on the page. For instance, his freshmen Physical Science students, working on kinetic energy problems, were able to pick out the dots and make corrections, giving them hope and a sense of accomplishment, says Hong.

Karlene Hollars, celebrating her 10th year as a teacher and currently teaching 5th grade with the Vermilion Schools, attended the workshop hoping to expand her bag of tricks. "I like to keep things unpredictable in my classroom," she admits with a smile.

Hollars, a social studies and science instructor, says she learned ways to evaluate student progress without using paper and pencil and how to keep track of those students who need additional support. "Robin focused on students evaluating themselves one session, and I learned how to redirect students to make sure they are on the right track, and how to help them there until they reach the final goal," explains Hollars.

The seasoned teacher says she now has 50 concrete ideas to plug into her lesson plans thanks to attending this workshop. "Robin Hanson did a fantastic job of keeping us moving and not sitting in our seats too long. She had us get up and try many of the strategies. She even allowed us to brainstorm ideas with our peers while ideas were still fresh in our minds," Hollars adds.

In collaboration with the Northern Ohio Research, Training & Technology Hub (NORT2H), Dave Miller and Paul Hieronymus provided the group with technology strategies to enhance formative assessment activities. Using emerging technologies like Voice Thread, student response systems, blogs and Google Documents, teachers learned assessment applications and best practices with the technologies.

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## HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN BECOME COMPETENT, LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

Reading wasn't always easy for Nancy Osko, M. Ed. However, her own challenges as a youngster give her a special perspective in her current position as Region 2 State Support Team Early Learning Literacy Specialist.

Osko is responsible for delivering high-quality, professional development content to meet the needs of early childhood educators working with all children, including those identified with a developmental delay or disability.

"Working with educators in this capacity has become an endeavor of mine because I, too, was a struggling reader," Osko confirms.

"The practitioners that I work with come from programs such as Head Start, early childhood education or preschool special education programs operated in school districts or community-based public preschool and child care settings," she continues. "I find that each member of the early childhood community plays a distinct role in helping the youngest children become competent, successful, life-long learners. I believe that begins with rich and developmentally appropriate early literacy experiences."

I FIND THAT EACH MEMBER OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY PLAYS A DISTINCT ROLE IN HELPING THE YOUNGEST CHILDREN BECOME COMPETENT, SUCCESSFUL, LIFE-LONG LEARNERS. I BELIEVE THAT BEGINS WITH RICH AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EARLY LITERACY EXPERIENCES.

Preschool Core for Literacy and The Teacher Leader Project are two professional development opportunities that Osko presents. The Preschool Core for Literacy is a comprehensive early literacy curriculum for early childhood educators and administrators. This series has been developed to assist in understanding the ways in which early childhood educators can provide quality learning experiences and intentional teaching strategies that support the early literacy development of young children. The series helps teachers "connect the dots" among Ohio's Early Learning Standards; Get It, Got It, Go!; Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) and research-based practices as they document their own professional growth.

The Teacher Leader Project is designed for Early Learning Literacy Specialists (ELLS) to facilitate site-based teacher leaders in the coaching and mentoring of protégés within their organization. The purpose

of the project is to help build capacity in implementing effective literacy strategies into teachers' daily routines that will have a direct effect on children's literacy outcomes. Participants learn coaching techniques and create a progress portfolio that illustrates the teacher growth and the transferring of additive knowledge.

Osko teaches content and coaches participants -- building upon their knowledge and creating the opportunity for educators to begin to coach and mentor others within their organizations. Currently, Preschool Core for Literacy courses are being offered within Region 2 SST - one at the Lorain County Early Learning Center, in LaGrange, and the other at the Educational Service Center of Lorain County, in Elyria. Each class meets once a month.


Registered participants learn content and are given the opportunity to dialogue and reflect on specific preschool literacy strategies. Utilizing the content knowledge based on one of the five domains (environment, play, oral language development, early reading and early writing), participants are asked to return to their campuses and implement changes based on each session within the learning domains as they relate to the needs of their children.

Both The Teacher Leader Project and Preschool Core for Literacy provide the opportunity for early childhood educators to utilize the reflective model to build internal collaboration on their own campus. These professional development opportunities truly rely on conversations between professionals that bring about enlightening "ah ha" moments.

For example, after a Preschool Core for Literacy session about environment, Osko recalls that several teachers began to reflect about how they could add more literacy material into their classrooms. They brainstormed and came up with adding menus, phone books, writing paper (to make grocery lists) and coupons to place in the kitchen center. Some teachers also reflected on how lighting affects behavior and mood.

Osko remembers one teaching saying, "I added a small lamp to the reading center and soft pillows to make it inviting for my children. Since doing this, I observed that the children in the center stay longer and 'read' more books. This also changed some of their conversations, and they have begun to adapt the stories more."

To articulate the significance of the educator's role in supporting the early literacy development of young children, Osko cites an excerpt from Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs, by National Association for the Education of Young Children, editors Carol Coope and Sue Bredekamp:

"A teacher's moment-by-moment actions and interactions with children are the most powerful determinant of learning outcomes and development. Curriculum is important, but what the teacher does is paramount. Having said this, providing effective, research-based content is important, but giving early childhood educators the opportunity to dialogue, reflect and change practices based on these actions to me is paramount." 





## COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH BOOSTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



“Healthy, physically active students learn better.”



If it takes a village to raise a child, it may take a school to help keep a child healthy and smart.

According to the ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), there is a direct correlation between student health and school

performance. In addressing health, Lorain County ESC/Region 2 SST promotes a multi-faceted approach that goes well beyond the school cafeteria and gymnasium.

Coordinated school health (CSH) is a process in which schools manage and organize health-related programs. The Lorain County Coordinated School Health Professional Development Series offers one-day workshops and two-day summer workshops for school teams wishing to establish the CSH process.

Teams are comprised of school nurses, counselors, food service employees, health teachers, physical education teachers, maintenance workers, and regular classroom teachers. Administrators and parents can be involved, too. This cross-functional team works together to decide which interventions would influence a child the most in a school atmosphere.

Eight components make up the coordinated health approach:

- health education
- physical education
- school health services
- counseling, psychological, and social services
- nutrition services
- staff wellness
- healthy school environment
- family/community involvement

“We are a coalition that works to initiate and support coordinated school health in the schools by providing professional development services,” says Russ Maruna, general education supervisor, Lorain County ESC. “As a coalition, we have a lot of members.”

Members include representatives from each of the following groups: Lorain City General Health District, Educational Service Center of Lorain County, Ohio State University Extension, Lorain County Community College, Lorain City Health Department, Lorain County Joint Vocational School, American Cancer Society, Lorain City Schools, Amherst City Schools, and Wellington Schools.

“Our mantra: healthy, physically active students learn better,” Maruna states. “That’s the message we try to get across. We show people how to improve the wellness of the staff, the student and the whole environment in order to have a positive impact on student achievement.”

CSH is a process promoted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, GA. The Lorain County General Health District, American Cancer Society and the LC/ESC started the effort in Lorain County in 1997.

“We try to promote coordinated school health in our workshops with a bottom line of improved student wellness and achievement,” explains Maruna. “Achievement can’t be overstated. That’s why we send kids to school—to learn and achieve.”

Workshop clientele are encouraged to complete the School Health Index (SHI), developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The SHI is a user-friendly self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve health and safety policies and programs. SHI is structured around CDC’s eight-component model of a coordinated school health program.

According to the CDC, improving student health and safety can increase students’ capacity to learn, reduce absenteeism and improve physical fitness and mental alertness.

“There has been some very positive feedback,” says Joyce Davis, health education director, Lorain County General Health District. “Some of the interventions that schools implemented resulted in decreased number of playground injuries, decreased discipline visits, and decreased visits to the school nurse. If students are in their seats and are more attentive, they have better chances for learning.”

Sometimes, to keep kids *in* their seats, teachers must first let them *out* of their seats. After expelling nervous energy, children are less likely to be distracted. One clever technique that helps channel that energy is the Energizer. Originally developed by the East Carolina University Activity Promotion Laboratory, Energizers are classroom-based physical activities that combine exercise with academic concepts.

“Energizers are a way to incorporate some physical activity into the day,” says Molly Stout, health educator, Lorain County General Health District. “Teachers can take ownership of getting their kids up and moving for a few minutes. If a teacher does that every class period, that’s a lot of physical activity by the end of the school day.”

For example, during one popular activity called “California Dreaming,” kids pretend to be surfers or movie stars waving to fans. Such exercises are a fun way to burn energy, gain focus and break up the monotony of the day. (For more on Energizers, visit [www.livehealthyloraincounty.com](http://www.livehealthyloraincounty.com).)

Kids aren’t the only ones who benefit from the coordinated health effort. Staff wellness plays a huge role in student achievement, according to Maruna.

“When you hear about a football player being injured, everyone immediately understands how important wellness is,” he says. “The same thing is true with teachers. If a teacher is healthy and has good energy, then that is a teacher who can really teach.”

Another way to keep students, staff, and community members moving is through Lorain County Walks, an ongoing lifestyle fitness program designed to promote a healthy, active lifestyle. Participants use pedometers to track the number of steps they take each day, which they then record online. Of course, everyone who participates in a walking program wins, since walking increases energy and decreases stress.

For schools, Lorain County Walks ([www.loraincounty.com/walks](http://www.loraincounty.com/walks)) program goes a step further. Teachers use pedometers and combine walking activities with learning exercises. For example, students may map a route from Elyria to Disney World, and track how far they’ve gone in terms of steps taken. Combining exercise with a creative geography or math lesson is a great way to promote learning and health.

To encourage more physical activity in Lorain County schools, the LC General Health District offers mini grants to be used for one of the following physical activity initiatives and resource toolkits:



- Safe walking route mapping and pedometer walking promotion
- Fitness initiatives using Dance Dance Revolution (DDR) video game or Wii Fit equipment
- FitnessGram fitness assessment and reporting program

Finding new, fun physical activities will motivate kids to keep exercise as a part of daily life. In addition to engaging in physical activity, it is imperative that children learn to make healthy food choices. More than 30 percent of students’ calories come from snacks, says the Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition.

The center, located at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Columbus, OH, developed the Snackwise® program based on the current dietary guidelines for Americans. Snackwise® measures the nutrient density of snack foods, making it easier for schools to implement nutrition standards for all snacks in vending machines, school stores, a la carte lines, and other venues. Even concession stands at athletic events are sporting Snackwise® labels.

A nutrition calculator evaluates the nutritional quality of a snack food for eleven weighted nutrition parameters, and color-coded symbols identify healthier snack choices: green (best choice), yellow (choose occasionally), and red (choose rarely.) Nationwide Children’s Hospital suggests a ratio of 30% green, 55% yellow and 15% red. (For further details, go to [www.Snackwise.org](http://www.Snackwise.org).)

Coordinated school health is a multi-faceted process. Where does a school team begin in such a wide-spread initiative? Are some facets more critical than others? Not exactly, according to Davis.

“All eight components of coordinated school health are equally important,” she says. “In the typical model, what is being taught in the classroom may be very different from what is happening in the cafeteria. In this (CHS) model, they work together. Schools prioritize and decide what would make the most difference in terms of intervention.”

Generally, most schools begin with changes related to nutrition or physical activity, she continues. Sometimes, improvements are made by correcting inconsistencies. For example, students may be learning about low-fat foods, but their school cafeteria may not sell skim milk. Though this may appear to require an easy fix, it takes a team to recognize such inconsistencies and implement solutions.

For information on the coordinated school health professional development workshop series, please contact Lorain County Coordinated School Health Coalition at (440) 322-6367. [www.loraincountyesc.org](http://www.loraincountyesc.org)



## FIRST ANNUAL ESC HEALTH FAIR A HUGE SUCCESS

The Lorain County ESC cares about the health and well-being of its employees! That is why LCESC sponsored its 1st Annual Health Fair on Jan. 22. The event featured a wide variety of wellness-related sessions and informational booths designed to help our employees take steps toward adopting a healthier lifestyle.

Nurses from the Community Health Partners Occupational Health Center provided Biometric Screenings at several locations on December 7 and 8, in advance of the health fair. These screenings involved drawing blood to test employees’ cholesterol and sugar levels, kidney function and provide a profile of other potential health-threatening conditions. (Employees unable to have their blood drawn during the available times were still able to make an appointment with their primary care physician for a blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose test at no cost as preventive services are paid under their health plan at 100 percent.)

Employees received the results of this screening in a sealed envelope at the health fair. A nurse was available to immediately answer any questions employees had at that time concerning the results of the Biometric Screenings. Nurses at the health fair also performed blood pressure checks, weight/height measurements, and waist circumference measurements – all required to complete the online HRA.

The Health Risk Assessment (HRA) process is an online tool through Medical Mutual of Ohio (MMO) that asks employees a series of questions. LCESC employees were able to complete this process even if they were not enrolled in the MMO plan. Once LCESC employees completed the questionnaire, they received:

- An overall picture of their health
- An understanding of any risks for certain chronic diseases; and
- Suggestions to help make healthier lifestyle changes.

Representatives from MMO also attended the health fair to assist LCESC employees in completing the online HRA.

All health information gathered was strictly confidential and was not shared with their employer. LERC, the Schools Consortium in which the district participates for health coverage, and LCESC received an aggregate report of the participants’ results to enable them to provide appropriate wellness programs for employees in the future. For example, if the aggregate health screening results indicated a risk for diabetes or high blood pressure exists in the group, an on-site nurse counselor may be provided to educate the group on preventive practices that could lower risk.

Many local community vendors sponsored informational booths at the fair. These vendors included Fit for Life Gym, Health Source, Metro Parks, Chiropractors, Lorain Health Department, French Creek YMCA, Lorain County Alcohol & Drug Services, Mon-a-Vie, Weight Watchers, a dentist, and a nutritionist. To top off a great time, the North Director of Technology Integration made healthy waffles for guests of the health fair.

One step toward a healthier lifestyle is Weight Watchers which is now sponsoring weekly meetings at the Lorain County ESC every Monday evening.



## STUDENTS AT TOP OF THEIR GAME IN MATH MANIA COMPETITION



Their faces are set in grit and determination with a keen focus on the top honors for performance. They have trained for months, are well prepared and have confidence in their skills. Now the time has come to demonstrate that they are at the top of their game, and like Olympian athletes, they are eager to compete at the highest level. Let the Math Mania games begin!

More than 300 young people from districts in Lorain County came together to demonstrate their math prowess at the Math Mania competition held on March 26 at Lorain Community College. Hosted by Educational Service Center of Lorain County Gifted Consortium Coordinator Mary Lou Kaminski, Math Mania is an annual event that provides an excellent way for gifted students from districts throughout the county to compete among peers at their own grade level.

“Just like competing in sports provides students the opportunity to apply their athletic talents and skills, we want to give our academically talented students the opportunity to participate with those of like abilities and compete using their academic talents and skills,” says Kaminski.

During the competition, students are grouped according to grade levels 3-8 for two academic events: Techno-Math and the 24 Game Challenge. Techno-Math is an interactive competition between school districts wherein students answer critical-thinking multiple-choice questions that are generated on a large-screen PowerPoint presentation using Turning Point software. Each student is provided a clicker to choose and enter his/her answer. Immediate feedback is given, and students learn as they play and compete. Students participate in the 24 Game in groups of four in an effort to move forward through two rounds of play and then become one of the 16 semi-finalist teams to earn enough points to advance to the challenge of winning the first place trophy. To earn points, they need to apply their knowledge of basic addition, subtraction, division and multiplication facts and, at the same time, recognize factoring and patterns of numbers that will equate to 24. It is an exciting way to challenge their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

At the close of the day, all the students representing districts Amherst, Avon, Avon Lake, North Ridgeville, Oberlin, Vermillion and Wellington come together for awards and recognition for the day's competitions.

“The goal for Math Mania is to challenge and recognize our Lorain County academically talented students. It is also intended to provide students the opportunity to enjoy a fun day of learning with their intellectual peers. It is a pep rally for student learning,” Kaminski advocates.

While the concept for Math Mania originated with Rondell Belt, former ESC of Lorain County gifted coordinator who is now retired, this is the fifth year that the event has included the current format of activities. The idea for the 24 Game came from Avon Lake City Schools gifted teacher Pam Geraci whose students had previously participated in a similar competition held in Cleveland. She told Kaminski about the game, who thought it sounded like a great event to offer to students as a county-wide program. The Techno-Math section came to fruition because of high interest in technology and because it also specifically addresses the academic standards.

The popularity and success of Math Mania is due to the efforts of many, claims Kaminski. With help from her secretary, Mary Ellen Clark, Kaminski coordinates the entire day. Many hours and weeks go into the planning, not just from the coordinators but from the teachers who allow their students time to practice before the event. Some school districts have their own 24 tournaments — which members of the Parent Teacher Association organize and volunteer their time to provide the opportunity for students to practice during lunch or recess time.

With the help of her colleagues at the ESC of Lorain County and parents acting as proctors and coaches for finals and semi-finals, Math Mania has become a very well-organized and rewarding day of learning. Kaminski gives a special thanks to Michelle Vilagi, mother of a past winner of the 24 Game. Mrs. Vilagi volunteers her time every year to help Kaminski with the county events Math Mania, Mock Trial and the High School Town Hall Youth Council. The Techno-Math competition runs smoothly because of assistance from ESC of Lorain County Director of Technology Integration Dave Miller and Consultant for Technology Integration Paul Hieronymus. And through grants from McDonald's each year, a part of the cost for materials is defrayed.

More than 50 high school students from the T-Program, which offers Lorain County high school students the opportunity to learn about professions, volunteered to help out at Math Mania and experienced a day of leadership. In addition, this year Town Hall Youth Council members, consisting of high school students across Lorain County, offered their support as well. Both groups acted as proctors for Math Mania. Each table of elementary students had a high school student to assist and lead them through the 24 Game. Furthermore, the high school student volunteers took charge of the final presentation of trophies and ribbons in the awards ceremony that is the culmination of the event.

Serving as advisor for the Council, when Kaminski asked these students from Wellington High School, Firelands High School and North Ridgeville High School if they would like to help, all hands went up because many of them remember participating in the event when they were in grade school.

“It is encouraging to hear it was one of their fondest memories from grade school,” acknowledges Kaminski. “It makes all of the work that goes into the planning each year well worth the time.”



Not only does the event provide positive experiences for students, results provide quantifiable data that teachers can incorporate in their daily classroom instruction. For example, during the Turning Point activity all of the questions entered into the software are achievement test questions. Therefore, by reviewing the answers provided by the students, areas of difficulty can be tracked. Teachers can then take this information back to their classrooms and work on these skills with their students.

Kaminski, who holds an undergraduate degree from Baldwin Wallace College and a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction certification in Gifted and Supervision license from Ashland

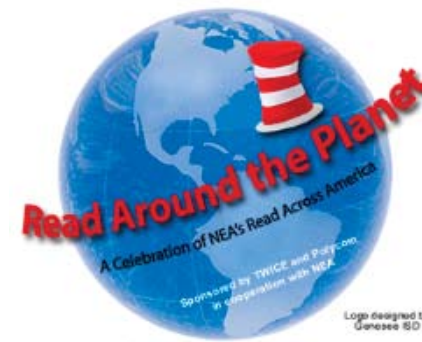


## READ AROUND THE PLANET

*Video-conference technology brings together local classrooms across the miles*

### It's a “RAP”!

Students and teachers around the area are wrapping up another successful year of Read Around the Planet (RAP), an annual event where local classrooms have the chance to video-conference with others across the United States and beyond.



“The program is really a celebration of literacy and the Read Across America program,” says Paul Hieronymus, consultant for technology integration at the Educational Service Center of Lorain County

and the Northern Ohio Research, Training and Technology Hub (NORT2H).

The National Education Association's Read Across America program, begun in 1998, is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that is celebrated on the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss on March 2.

For Read Around the Planet - sponsored by the TWICE consortium and Polycom in cooperation with the NEA - classrooms use interactive video to connect with other classrooms “around the planet” to exchange reading activities.

“The Read Around the Planet project is a great way to bring the world into your classroom through collaboration,” says Dave Miller, Senior Director of Technology and Innovation at NORT2H and the ESC of Lorain County.

The program is open to all kindergarten-12th grade students in public and private schools who have access to two-way interactive video equipment. There is no fee to participate in RAP.

More than 2,000 classrooms participated in this year's event. Though the word “planet” is in the name, usually more than 90 percent of the classrooms are from the United States. Twenty-four teachers in school districts throughout the area signed up their students for the program, from grades 1 through 12.

University, is passionate about the programs and services schools provide for the gifted and is appreciative that Math Mania is so well-received.

“Fewer and fewer people,” according to Kaminski, “have the attitude that gifted children will learn in spite of us or that we can use them to be teachers for other students. The days of drive-by gifted service are dwindling. We are making every effort to give these academically talented children the education they need and deserve. In this new millennium of ever-changing challenges for our next generation of leaders, it is worthwhile that servicing gifted is being recognized as an integral part of planning for the future.”

“What happens is teachers put their names in a hat, so to speak, and based on times available and the grade level, they are paired up with a teacher somewhere around the world,” explains Hieronymus, who has been involved with RAP since 2003.

The local students were randomly matched with classrooms in Michigan, Virginia, South Carolina, Oklahoma, New Jersey, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York, Louisiana, and Alberta, Canada.

NORT2H provides project management, such as performing all of the test calls for teachers, scheduling the test calls and the sessions themselves, and handling all technological aspects of making Read Around the Planet happen locally, including handling the bridges, or units that allow multiple sites to be connected over a video conference.

TWICE provides the registration tool, matches classrooms with partners, and supplies support documents. Participating classrooms are responsible for their own video connections and developing their own reading activities for their one-hour sessions. The first 15 minutes are for connecting and introductions, followed by a 15-minute presentation by each of the classes. The last 15 minutes are question-and-answer sessions between the classrooms.

Locally, events were scheduled in late February through early March.

“We are always amazed at the presentations made by the students,” Miller says. “They really look forward to this project and seeing their partner class online. The students take great time and care preparing for these projects — making them go beyond just a language arts activity.”

Many of the classes prepared theater events, where they acted out a story read earlier in the school year, Hieronymus says. One class - a 12th-grade Spanish class - was matched with a kindergarten ESL (English as a Second Language) class in Texas. Other presentation ideas include activities such as skits, raps, songs, game or quiz shows, persuasive essays, sign language, painting a mural or a putting on a news show about the community.

“For some teachers this is their first time doing a video-conference,” Miller notes. “This is a great interactive project introducing students to a fun videoconferencing project.”



PARENT  
CORNER

**PARENT MENTOR PROGRAM PROVIDES WEALTH OF  
SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Parents of children with disabilities learn quickly that they are their child's best advocate. But effectively advocating for a child without the background knowledge of how a school system works can be a daunting task. That is where parent mentors come in.

The mission statement of the Ohio Parent Mentors program is to provide support and resources to families of children with disabilities and the professionals who serve them. Three parent mentors serve districts locally through the Educational Service Center of Lorain County, North Point Educational Service Center and Region 2 State Support Team.

"Our main goal is to build collaborative relationships between families and schools to support students with disabilities and allow them to be successful in both school and the community," explains Sarah Baldwin, Huron/Lorain County Parent Mentor.

Parent mentors provide information and guide parents through the special education process, ensuring they know their rights and responsibilities. Mentors also listen and provide support to families and educators on an individual basis; provide information and resources on education laws, district programs and services, and community resources; attend IEP and other meetings at parent or staff request; and organize and conduct workshops and/or training for parents and educators.

An important thing to know about parent mentors is that they have firsthand experience: All parent mentors are parents of children with disabilities.

"As we are going through this process with our own children, we fully understand how a parent feels and can better help them," says Vicki Deel-Lezon, Erie County Parent Mentor. Deel-Lezon and her husband Todd have a 14-year-old daughter with cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus. "We are also able to try to give some perspective to school personnel as to how the parent is feeling," she adds.

"One important part of our job is to give parents the tools to be able to advocate for the educational needs of their child," Deel-Lezon continues. "With a good understanding of their rights, parents can be a much better participant on the IEP team."

"It is intimidating many times for parents when they feel like there is a whole table of educators, and one or two parents. Knowledge gives them the confidence to really feel a part of the team and feel more comfortable providing input to the team. Parents have said they feel better when we attend meetings with them," Deel-Lezon says. "Even if we don't have to say a word, it is just nice to have someone with you. I always recommend that every parent take someone else with them, perhaps just to be extra support or take notes so you can concentrate fully on the conversation."

"Sometimes, just our presence there makes all the difference in the world," agrees Canda Papa, Lorain County Parent Mentor. "This can be a very intimidating process to parents, especially if it is brand new to them."

"Sometimes parents just need to vent, and to know that there is someone they can talk to who understands what they are going through," Papa adds.

Services are provided free of charge. The program, which includes approximately 70 parent mentors across Ohio, is funded by grants through the Ohio Department of Education. Technical assistance for the mentors is provided through the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children With Disabilities. Parent mentors are professionally trained and are required to attend two parent mentor conferences per year and to continue their professional development.

"Parent mentors attend a wide variety of seminars to be aware of new and best practices in special education," Deel-Lezon notes.

Ohio's Parent Mentor Program, started in 1990, has been used as a model for other states starting similar programs. The program has been successful in reducing the number of both complaints filed and due process hearings.

About seven years ago, Deel-Lezon retired as an assistant vice president of commercial lending in the banking industry to become a parent mentor. She had been approached about the position by a parent mentor who moved from the area. "This opportunity gives me the opportunity to attend to the needs of my daughter and be able to help other parents at the same time," she says.

Papa and her husband Mike's 12-year-old son has Aspergers Syndrome and ADHD. He has attended the Positive Education Program in Grafton since second grade. Now a sixth-grader, he is starting to mainstream back into the public middle school in Sheffield Lake School District for ¾ of his day. The Papas also have a 10-year-old son.

The clinical liaison at the Positive Education Program had encouraged her to apply to be a parent mentor. She is in her second year in the role.

"I get great satisfaction in knowing I can help these families to help their children to be more successful," Papa says. "In turn, when changes are made the student feels better about themselves. I have a good rapport with all my districts, and they are always open to any suggestions I have."

All of the parent mentors try to be flexible for their families.

"Life can be very challenging in and outside of the school for these parents," Baldwin says. "Often, a parent just needs someone to talk with and validate their concerns for their child. I try to make myself available for this in any way that I can, whether it is day or evening hours, weekend or weekday."

Mentors also have some special expertise due to areas of special interest with their own children. For example, Deel-Lezon's areas of expertise are inclusion, curriculum modification, reading programming, transition and others. Papa's are behavior modifications and autism.

"The ongoing wealth of information that I am supplied with has helped me help my child and other families of children with disabilities," Baldwin says. "Additionally, my daughter's disability has taught me much about children with mental health and behavioral problems. So, I've become very aware of the best practices with these types of students. They include Positive Behavior Supports, Crisis Prevention Intervention, and Wrap Around Services."

SOMETIMES, JUST

OUR PRESENCE

THERE MAKES ALL

THE DIFFERENCE IN

THE WORLD.

Baldwin and her husband have four children, one of which has been diagnosed with ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and anxiety disorder.

"After going through the process with my own child, I heard of the opening for this position from a friend whom is also a parent mentor and thought that I would love to help parents, families and districts with the process in any way that I could," says Baldwin, who is in her second year as a parent mentor and also attends Lorain County Community College.

In addition, Baldwin serves on the Parent Mentor Council and the Regional Transition Council. The Parent Mentor Council works to support Parent Mentors all over the state and to mediate information between Parent Mentors and the Office for Exceptional Children and ODE. The Regional Transition Council, on which Papa also serves, seeks to improve and coordinate transition services for students with disabilities into post-secondary education and employment.

The feedback from parents about the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

"One parent I worked with last year called me recently to tell me how much better her child is doing with the changes in his education that were brought about as a result of my services," Baldwin says. "It is so nice to hear that I've have been able to assist a family and district in making a student successful. Moreover, many districts are very appreciative of the services, too. They frequently call to ask questions or to invite me to assist a family."

"The feedback that I receive from families is that they wish they would have found out about us sooner," Papa adds. "They like having an extra set of ears because they feel like they sometimes are not part of the team and they are not being heard."

Sometimes, the job of a parent mentor is to get everyone back to the table to work toward some common ground and keep the best interest of a child in mind.

"It's really all about improving the outcomes for our children with disabilities," Deel-Lezon says.

Papa serves seven school districts in Lorain County; Baldwin serves most districts in Huron County and some in Lorain County; and Deel-Lezon serves all six districts in Erie County. Papa may be reached at (440) 324-3178, Ext. 1257; Baldwin at (440) 324-3178, Ext. 1258; and Deel-Lezon at (419)684-5385, Ext. 27. Parents in districts not served by parent mentors may call the Ohio Coalition at (800) 374-2806, Ext.20. ©


**PARENT  
MENTOR  
DISTRICTS  
2010**

**Canda Papa**  
440-324-3178 X 1257

Avon Lake  
Columbia  
Elyria City  
Lorain City  
Midview  
North Ridgeville  
Oberlin

**Sarah Baldwin**  
440-324-3178 X 1258

Bellevue  
Firelands  
Keystone  
Monroeville  
New London  
Norwalk  
Sheffield/Sheffield Lake  
South Central  
Wellington  
Western Reserve  
Willard

**Vicki Deel-Lezon**  
Parent Mentor for Erie County:  
vlezon@npesc.org

Vermilion  
Huron  
Berlin-Milan  
Sandusky City  
Margaretta  
Perkins

**Register:**  
Parents of Students with  
Disabilities Support Group  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
5/20 ESCLC/Region 2 SST



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### WORKSHOP OFFERS 50 WAYS TO PRACTICE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

“It was fun,” concludes Hong. “You get to associate with your fellow teachers, meet teachers from other schools, and share ideas. The strategies are proven, and you will see the result.”

The workshop costs \$350, including lunch and light snacks each day. **The registration deadline is Friday, June 11.** To register, please contact Robin Hanson at 440.324.5777.

*She said it grieves me so to see you in such pain  
I wish there was something I could do to make you smile again  
I said, I appreciate that, then would you please explain about the 50 ways...*

