

Bright and early on Thursday, August 24, the yellow buses will roll, the school bells will ring, and approximately 1000 students in pre-kindergarten through high school will return to class at Fort Frye Local Schools for the 2017-2018 academic year. We are excited that Fort Frye High School is celebrating its 60th year (1957-2017).

I want to share with you a few of the academic things happening in our school system. The district will continue to offer our students courses aligned to the Ohio Learning standards as well as programs for exceptional learners. Families can arrange pre-school services at Lowell Elementary School. Fort Frye High School will offer many College Credit

Plus classes at the school site and provide online access to many more. All of our students can utilize computer labs and mobile devices for instructional purposes, and students in grades three through six receive keyboarding classes. Students in grades 7 and 8 will be required to complete career education classes for a nine-week grading period, and the district is beginning a career mentoring program for small groups of 8th grade students. The mentors will be community volunteers representing various career fields.

Research shows that students need to be reading proficiently by grade 3 in order to be college and career ready. Fort Frye Local Schools will be training all of its kindergarten through third grade teachers in the specialized Orton Gillingham reading program, which was piloted last school year with a few students. The reading improvement in these struggling readers was amazing. We are excited to see how this program will benefit more of our younger students.

Fort Frye will continue to focus on using effective and consistent approaches to teaching writing across all grade levels and subjects. Our teachers will spend a portion of their first few days back working with one another to set expectations and share consistent strategies related to effective writing skills.

There are many wellness challenges that our students, families, and staff face, and our Wellness Team will continue to guide our district in offering wellness programming. Ohio does not require a consistent approach nor content for Health education in grades K-6, but Fort Frye Local Schools firmly believes our students must be educated about a wide variety of wellness topics such as dental health, body systems, dangers in the environment, safety skills, drug and alcohol prevention, abstaining from sexual activity and other unhealthy behaviors, healthy social relationships, nutrition, exercise, and mental well-being to name a few. Our K-6 classrooms will all be using the Human Body Shop curriculum resource on age-appropriate wellness topics. The district will sponsor monthly wellness themes and activities, and families of students in grades K-6 will receive a monthly newsletter that goes along with our wellness curriculum.

Our support staff has worked hard in making sure that our buildings are safe and clean for the opening of the school year and that our buses are ready to transport our students hundreds of miles each day. A huge project this summer has been the replacement of interior and exterior lighting throughout the district. This is an energy savings while simultaneously improving the quality of lighting for the learning environment. Carpet that was 25 or more years old in some classrooms and offices has been replaced. Because the district will now offer an athletic trainer through Marietta Memorial Hospital, we also have converted a small space in the basement level of the high school for the trainer's office.