

NO CHANGE IN KINDERGARTEN AGE

The Board of Education for the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District has decided to make no change in the Kindergarten Entrance Age Requirement for the 2006-2007 school year. The Board arrived at this decision after some discussions at various board meetings, and after receiving input from the kindergarten teachers and the elementary principals of the district. Present law states that a child must be five years of age on or before September 30th of any given year. A recently enacted provision to law gives school districts the jurisdiction to change the cut-off date from September 30th to August 1st. While several of the surrounding school districts have opted to change their policy regarding the entrance age cut-off date, this will not be the case for our school district. After weighing both sides of this issue, it was felt by those providing input that it would be better to leave the September 30th deadline as is for at least the 2006-2007 school year.

Nevertheless, some changes will be implemented for the 2006-2007 school year involving kindergarten. Most of these changes will reflect the same methods used by the district up until a few years ago. The dates for Kindergarten Registration are: Peebles – May 4, 2006; North Adams – May 9, 2006; and West Union – May 11, 2006. Initial screening dates have been set for June 19, 20, and 21, 2006. The screening process will be more thorough this year as we attempt to get a better picture of where each kindergartener is in his/her development stage before the school year begins. Once all of the screening results are scored, class lists will be created that will reflect a more even distribution of students in each kindergarten classroom based upon the strengths and

weaknesses of the incoming students. For this reason, principals will not be accepting requests from parents for kindergarten room assignments. In addition, the district plans on offering some form of more intensive intervention to those students having the need. Students receiving more intense instruction based upon need may receive this instruction for all or part of the school year. Also, a second screening date will be scheduled in August for any new students to the district or others who may not have been screened in June.

What is the goal of this new approach with regards to kindergarten? It's actually very simple. We want to work with our youngest learners with greater intensity. We want to make sure that we are doing all that we can to lay a strong foundation, not just for learning in the present, but for learning in the years to follow. Every bit of solid research available on best practices suggest that strong early intervention is a vital key to the successful learning experiences of children. Waiting until they are older can be catastrophic in terms of the amount of successful learning that can be accomplished once the student has fallen very far behind the rest of the class. We want all students to experience great successes in school. This is our mission, and our mission is guided by the belief that all students can learn, and that our best opportunities for helping students find success in school and learning is through the use of what we call best practices.

If you have any questions about the revised procedures for kindergarten screening, classroom placement, materials, etc., please feel free to contact your building principal.

NORTH ADAMS ELEMENTARY FIRE UPDATE

Speaking of kindergarten, we recently lost the services of two of our kindergarten classrooms at North Adams Elementary due to fire. The two classrooms housed in the modular unit next to the old red brick portion of NAE were heavily damaged by a fire on February 27th. We believe that the origin of the fire was electrical in nature, pending the investigation by the State Fire Marshall's Office. For the present time, the TAG room has been moved from a classroom in the basement of the red brick building to a classroom in the modular unit behind the building. Band classes, which were meeting in another area of the basement, have also been relocated. The two kindergarten classes have been relocated to the basement of the red brick section of the main building for the foreseeable future.

While this in no way represents the type of housing that we would like to provide for these students, it is the best option available to us at this time. The lack of available space in any of our present elementary facilities points to one of the major problems with our aging buildings.

ALL-COUNTY ARTS FESTIVAL

Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, March 29, 2006**. This is the date for our Annual All-County Arts Festival. Students from each of the school districts in Adams County will be involved with both the Visual and Performing Arts portions of the program. This year's event will, once again, be held at West Union High School. The Art Show will be open for public viewing at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Vocal and Instrumental Concerts

and Language Arts Presentations at 7:00 p.m. This year's recipient of the Tim Lewis Scholarship will be announced by the Adams County Arts Council. Come out and enjoy a fabulous evening of student achievement and presentations.

OCAN UPDATE

In an earlier article this year, I shared with you the good news about the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) Project coming to West Union High School. Its main objective is to educate students and parents not only of the availability and opportunity to continue their education after high school, but of the need to do so in order to obtain better jobs.

March will be a busy month for OCAN, as there are several "Gear-Up" activities scheduled. On Wednesday, March 8, 2006, OCAN Gear-Up will be the subject of a radio program that will air live on C103 Radio at 10:00 a.m. I would encourage the C103 listening audience to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about this program.

The following Monday, March 13, 2006, parents, students, and residents of the West Union attendance area are invited to attend the "Gear-Up Kick-Off" event at West Union High School. Gear-Up is a federal grant that is used specifically to encourage students to attend higher education after attending high school. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

P.A.S.S. MEETING

A meeting of People Advocating Superior Schools (P.A.S.S.) will be held on Thursday, March 9th at 7:00 p.m. at North Adams High School. We hope to see many folks at this meeting.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent