

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS ADDRESS
The Village of Ottawa Hills Town Hall Meeting—October 17, 2011

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. It is my pleasure this evening to report to you the state of Ottawa Hills Schools.

Our school district currently serves **994 students** in Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade. The district reflects a diverse population with students from many different ethnic backgrounds and special education needs.

The one constant is the continued academic success that is represented by the accomplishments of our students. The Ottawa Hills Local School District earned the rating of “**Excellent**” on the 2010-2011 State Report Card. Ottawa Hills met **all 26 indicators** as reported by the Ohio Department of Education, marking the **twelfth year in a row** that the district has met **100%** of the indicators on the state’s Local Report Card. In addition Ottawa Hills **met Annual Yearly Progress** as a district and in all subgroups. Meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress standard shows that our school district is meeting the academic needs of all students, including subgroups such as minority students and students with disabilities.

Once again, the Ottawa Hills School District placed near the top of all Ohio schools in achieving a **Performance Index of 110.4** on the Local Report Card. This placed Ottawa Hills **fourth in the state** on this measure of student achievement on state assessments. It is the **sixth year in a row** that Ottawa Hills Schools has placed in **the top five of over 600 school districts** in the state of Ohio on the Performance Index measure. Students scored at the **accelerated or advanced ranges** on **76% of the state tests** that they took. **Ninety-seven percent** of the tests taken by our students in Grades 3 through 10 scored at **Proficient or better**. The work of our teachers and students continues to show solid results that are among the best in the state.

According to the *Digest of Education Statistics*, there are 37,100 high schools in the United States. In 2010-2011, Ottawa Hills High School was **ranked as number 816** among those high schools according to the **Challenge Index**, developed by Jay Mathews of *The Washington Post*. This places our high school in the **top 2%** of all high schools in the nation. The Challenge Index is a measure of the rigor of the curriculum available to a school’s student body.

Our OH athletes demonstrated prowess on the local and state levels in their respective sports. Ottawa Hills claimed **TAAC league titles** in golf, junior high football, soccer, boys cross country, junior high boys and girls cross country, boys basketball, girls basketball, and softball. **Drew Fillis** qualified for state in singles tennis, while our boys cross country team qualified for regional competition. The Green Bear golf team captured sectional and district championships on their way to a **state runner-up title** in 2010. Just this past weekend, OH Sophomore **Ben Silverman** competed in the state golf tournament. The soccer team also had a banner year, earning a spot in the state **Final Four** after capturing sectional, district, and regional championships. Currently, the soccer team is ranked #1 in the state in their division. Last spring, our baseball team made a great tournament run by finishing as regional runner-up.

Ottawa Hills' tradition of excellence was seen not only in our athletic successes, but also in all other extra-curricular programs. As examples, Daniel Mohan and Nirhbay Jain received Highest Honors in their Security Councils as part of the Model United Nations CASC competition in East Lansing. In February, Ottawa Hills High School students joined over 400 students from 20 high schools to participate in the Mid-American Model United Nations simulation in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Earning Highest Honors in their Crisis Simulations were Alexandru Cioc, Christina Liu, and Geoff Nugent. The Ottawa Hills Quiz Bowl Team captured the TAAC league championship and participated in the NAQT national championships in Atlanta. Competing at the State Power of the Pen tournament were junior high students Audrey Rotman, Waverly Hart, Kathleen Johnson, and Alisa Martinez.

The marching band became a force once again in our Performing Arts program as band director Michael Leeds led our band in halftime performances during the football season. The Ottawa Hills Theater Department wowed audiences with three productions during the 2010-2011 school year: *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *Rumors*. The vocal music department presented quality concerts with a variety of groups ranging from the high school's Choraliers to the elementary's Brown Bag Chorus.

Elementary traditions continued to support academic content standards while also creating memories for students and their families. Whether it was Kindergarten Kaleidoscope, the First-Grade Circus, or the Fifth Grade Author's Academy, our teachers and students worked together to create learning opportunities that were both fun and educational.

The School Board operates under a five-year strategic plan. Goals are selected each year, and progress is measured through the accomplishment of these goals. Some examples of how the district worked toward the goals established include:

- English teachers in Grades 7 through 12 worked on philosophy, sequencing, pacing, and alignment as they developed a new course of study.
- Elementary teachers completed competency-based evaluations and placed writing samples and diagnostic writing tests into each student's Literacy Portfolio to support a district focus on improving writing skills.
- A successful Agora was held in November of 2010, and the program was featured in the March, 2011 issue of the Ohio School Boards Association's *Journal* magazine.
- Energy analysis studies were carried out in both buildings to determine areas where the district can operate its systems more efficiently.
- The Community Facilities Committee was re-formed to develop a long-term facilities plan.
- An electronic weekly newsletter was established. Weekly it goes out to over 850 subscribers keeping them informed of district news and events.

These are six of over 84 documented activities that took place during the 2010-2011 school year in support of 11 different goals that were chosen from the strategic plan. Work continues, as new goals have been established for the current school year. The work on the strategic plan is evidence of the district's commitment to continuous improvement.

While our teachers, students, and the entire district receive recognition for achievement, and while we realize that change and improvement are essential for maintaining excellence, we also know that there is a direct connection between the results we experience at the school and the strong involvement and assistance from our parents and community members. Parent and community volunteer hours are critical to our success and so is the financial support that allows us to provide educational resources, programs, facilities, and technology necessary to offer outstanding learning experiences for our students. Your continued support is invaluable to the success of our schools.

Last November, the voters of Ottawa Hills overwhelmingly approved a 7.6 mill levy for operating expenses of the school district. Even so, the challenges of school finance remain daunting with continued cuts in state funding, a poor investment market, and declining local property values. Almost one million dollars in cuts enacted during fiscal year 2011 helped to address the financial challenges that our school district faces. However, continued prudence is necessary to bring district expenses in line with revenue. We will continue to work on addressing our financial situation while we protect the curricular offerings and programs that make Ottawa Hills the unique and special school district that it is.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak about the Ottawa Hills Local School District. It is a pleasure and an honor to serve the community and to represent you as a school board member. The school district, the Village government, and members of the community recognize the value of a quality education. We will continue to work together to insure that the Ottawa Hills Schools continue to remain strong.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Gary Wilson
School Board President