Superintendent Message: A New Year Begins

Dear Teachers and Staff,

The beginning of a new school year, always brings with it new challenges and opportunities. I hope that your summer was relaxing, because you deserve it. The opportunity to refuel over the summer is a necessary component of the important work that each of you do. As we begin the 17th year of ECOT providing education to the students of Ohio, I wish everyone the greatest success as we welcome over 15,000 students to ECOT.

ECOT continues to have great accomplishments, including another graduating class of over 2,400 students. We now have had the largest graduating class in the State of Ohio for four consecutive years. One in every twenty Ohio high school graduates attended ECOT the last three years. ECOT has had over 19,000 total high school graduates in 16 years.

In addition to initiatives already in place, this year we will also focus on career technical education. With five courses already in place, our goal with this program is to give our graduates job-ready skills. Under Sarah Hanka’s leadership, we have the right faculty and staff to guide these students towards that path.

The 2016-2017 school year will also present challenges to ECOT, including the disagreement that ECOT has with the Ohio Department of Education on how our school is to be funded. As always ECOT will follow Ohio Revised Code and work with our sponsor the ESCLEW on issues of compliance as stated in our contract. ECOT further believes that it has an obligation to follow Ohio Revised Code and not allow the Department of Education to circumvent the law with a new interpretation of e-school school funding that is being applied retroactively.

In closing, please let me reaffirm that I know each of us wants to make a difference in the lives of our students. Do not let negative outside comments affect the instruction and education that you provide to our students. Let us all work together to provide the highest quality education delivered with the latest 21st century technology.

Sincerely,
Rick Teeters

Convocation Unites ECOT Educators on School Choice

ECOT teachers forge ahead and educate the economically disadvantaged and the most highly mobile students in the state.

That was the message during last week’s Convocation as ECOT Founder Bill Lager encouraged ECOT’s staff to help Ohio’s most underserved children.

“When you measure our students against public schools - counting highly mobile and economically disadvantaged, we’re one of the top-performing schools in the state,” Lager said. “Whatever you’re doing is working. Keep doing it.”

Rep. Kyle Koehler (R-Springfield), Rep. Andrew Brenner (R-Powell) and Sen. Bill Coley (R-Liberty Township) all spoke during last week’s convocation and each touched on the crucial role educators play in unlocking a student’s potential.

“We need charter schools and alternative education,” Koehler said. “Sticking a child in a classroom seat with a common curriculum doesn’t work.”

“Kids need these charter schools. You guys help out thousands of kids at half the cost,” Brenner said. “For that reason, school choice is highly important.”

For Coley, his grade school teacher helped him reach for his dreams.

“You inspire our future leaders,” Coley said. “Our economy depends on being frontiers in education. And you are the first ones out there in this digital world.”
For Easter Swain, archery was simply a way to spend more time with her father. That passion soon grew into a competitive sport due to ECOT’s flexible class schedule.

“She used to go out bow hunting for white-tailed deer with her dad,” said her mother Robin Swain, who is also her archery coach. “Easter realized she wanted more time with her archery, and ECOT seemed to fit that profile to give her more time.”

Although Easter will start her 8th grade year with ECOT, she still has the opportunity to compete in archery at her home school district in Meigs County. She recently placed 2nd in the Appalachian Archery Conference, which includes 17 schools across Ohio and West Virginia. As a 7th grader, she placed 25 out of 788 girls during a national archery competition in Louisville, Kentucky. During a recent state competition in Columbus, she was ranked fourth out of 105 competitors.

Easter’s teachers have been very helpful in giving her the time and opportunity to balance her archery and schoolwork, Robin said.

“Her education is very important to us, but it does help a lot that she has that flexibility,” Robin said. “She can get back on track right away. That’s a big plus.”
Healthy Bytes

Wellness Team

$200 from UHC

Did you know that each year you are eligible to receive up to $200 from UHC? Get rewarded for going to the gym, completing a health screening or taking a survey. The rewards are available through a program called Rally. **Spouses are also eligible to receive up to $200 as long as they are covered under ECOT’s health insurance.** View this [document](#) to learn about the different rewards. For information on registering and rewards, visit the Rally SharePoint page.

Labor Day Virtual Walkingspree

Participants will take a virtual walk in New York City from Sept. 3-5 to be entered in the prize drawing. Four (4) winners will be randomly selected for a $50 cash prize. Winnings will be taxed as income. For more details, [click here for the flyer](#).

4th of July Walkingspree Winners

Congratulations to our 4th of July walking challenge winners who will receive a $50 prize. Winners were randomly selected.

- Julie Cannell, Teacher, Columbus
- Barbara Huntwork, DEC Teacher, Baltimore
- Amy McFarland, LIFT Teacher, Waldo
- Christopher Ray, Teacher, Akron

As always, you can get more information by visiting the [Healthy Bytes SharePoint site](#).

Academic Success: Mission and Vision is Key

The ECOT mission: To maximize academic growth for students seeking a non-traditional educational alternative through individualized instruction delivered by a highly effective faculty and staff. The ECOT mission is one of taking students where they are and providing the educational opportunities, intervention, and services to enable them to “close the gap,” and be on target to graduate, as well as to master the skills necessary in the 21st century.

ECOT is the leader in online learning by offering a flexible education based on individual needs of students in a supportive nonthreatening environment.

The ECOT vision is one of steadily improving learners whose achievement trajectories project future academic success, culminating in a diploma. This vision is translated into measurable goals and benchmarks so that each student’s growth may be measured and support provided wherever it is needed.
Career Technical Education Offering 5 Courses

Sarah Hanka
Assistant Superintendent,
Career Technical Education &
Community Partnerships

Jacob Hanes knew he wanted to pursue computer science after high school, but felt underprepared. When his counselor asked him about attending Cisco Networking Academy, one of five courses offered through the Career Technical Education (CTE) program, he jumped at the chance.

“I figured it would give me a head start on college or a job immediately after high school,” Hanes said.

In addition to Cisco Networking Academy, CTE offers Computer Programming, Finance, Business Administration & Services and Marketing.

To encourage students and families to consider career-technical programs, all incoming 9th graders will be enrolled in the CTE Survey Course, which highlights each course that we offer. In addition, the course will include a unit about soft skills and résumé writing. ECOT works with career centers across the state of Ohio, and our students are permitted to take core courses at ECOT while participating in programs that other districts offer. Future pathways include Culinary Arts, Performing Arts and Engineering. Teachers can choose to recommend any of their High School students who show a propensity toward a particular career-technical pathway.

Above and Beyond: Jenna Guess

Title:
Staff Lead Software Developer

Department:
Software Solutions

Nomination:
She has completed under tight

Jacob Hanes works through a hands-on lab as part of the Cisco Networking Academy, one of five courses offered through the CTE program.

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New Employees Join ECOT Staff

Please join us in welcoming our new faculty and staff to the ever-growing Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow. For the 2016-17 school year, ECOT will employ over 1,200 people, many of whom work from home, all over the state.

More New Hires: 39 Employees

Christopher Stanley (Cross Curricular Coordinator), Ellen Brandon (Teacher), Molly Stevens (Perm Sub), Debra Wells (Perm Sub), Michael Kalka (HS Science Teacher), Erin Shaffer (HS SS Teacher), Kristin Bergstrom (HS Science Teacher), Elizabeth Edussuriya-Brown (HS ELA Teacher), Sarah Waldow (HS Art Teacher), Karen B. Jones (HS ELA Teacher), Jennifer McCann (Teacher), Kelsey McKinley (FCS Teacher), Angela Herrel (Teacher), Julie Jones (Tutor), Lea Moser (Perm Sub), Khandise Baertsche (DEC Teacher), Therese (Teri) Absher (HS Math Teacher), Rachel Gernert (Counselor), Colleen Coole (DEC Teacher), Diana Boehmer (HS Math Teacher), Becky Schone (Perm Sub), Brittany Thompson (DEC Teacher), Stephanie Shaffer (DEC Teacher), Zachary Clark (HS Math Teacher), Julie Merrill (DEC Teacher), Katelynn Jordan (Teacher), Krystal Spurlock (Assistant Principal), Cathy Callahan (DEC Teacher), Kimberly Siebenaller (Teacher), Janet Warner (DEC Support Coordinator), Jeri Riffle (Teacher), Kelly Hoover (DEC Teacher), Holly Stotz (DEC Teacher), Christina D. Callahan (Teacher), Courtney R. O’Connell (DEC Teacher), Michelle Roman (DEC Teacher), Jacqueline A. Barr (DEC Teacher), Kelsie L. Ozinga (DEC Teacher), Ellen M. Shimko (Teacher)

Liz Rollyson
Special Education Administrator

Todd Coleman
DEC Support Coordinator

Chris Hoyte
Validations Specialist I

Olivia Martin
Records Clerk I

Deidra Muse
Counselor
Communications: Keeping You Informed

Welcome back! For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Jacob Lammers, and I’m the internal communications manager for ECOT. While I had the pleasure of witnessing graduation back in June, ECOT’s Convocation is new to me and has been a whirlwind of excitement.

Having spent my career working in education journalism and public relations for the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, I hope to connect ECOT teachers and staff to all the crucial information you need to better serve our students. This newsletter - ECOTtoday - is one way I hope to keep everyone up-to-date on ECOT news.

To start, we hope to publish this newsletter quarterly and perhaps on a more frequent basis as we move ahead in the school year. The newsletter will consist of messages from our superintendent, critical information regarding ECOT’s operations, education directives and employee recognition. And of course, featured stories on our unique and varied student population.

To that end, I want to make sure I keep everyone informed. And I cannot do that without your help. For any story ideas, please contact me by phone at x2208 or email at Jacob.Lammers@ecotoh.org.

Looking forward to a great school year!

School-Parent Compact Bolsters Academic Achievement

Through a new School-Parent Compact, the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow plans to bolster academic achievement through parental collaboration.

“Research has shown that parent involvement has a positive impact on student education,” said Marieca Mattox, Assistant Director of Outreach Services and Intake Systems (OSIS). “Having parents partner up with teachers and other support staff creates a dynamic educational support system for the student. That fosters a caring, cohesive, collaborative relationship. When the support is readily available and all parties have an understanding of the expectations it results in increased student achievement.”

Among the many goals for the 2016-2017 school year, ECOT will strive to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction, enabling the students to participate in a more effective learning environment. Parent-teacher conferences will provide a chance to discuss how to coordinate a student’s progress via a face-to-face conference in the fall and multiple online opportunities throughout the year. Parents will also be provided progress reports four times a year.

The School-Parent Compact also relies on parental support when it comes to monitoring their child’s schoolwork. ECOT also relies on parents to maintain constant communication with teachers. Of course, school attendance by logging daily and documenting that work will help ensure their child gets the education they need.

“ECOT teachers have always provided high quality instruction and maintained a line of communication with parents,” Mattox said. “Providing more opportunities for teachers and parents to work together improves that partnership around student learning.”