

Press Release

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Leadership Highland Education Day

Leadership Highland spent their March meeting exploring local education by touring four schools and interacting in panel discussions. The panels discussed serving on a school board, The Southern Ohio Education Service Center, and challenges facing our local superintendents. The participants of Leadership Highland joined the participants of Leadership Clinton for part of the day to discuss the joint educational services offered to both counties.

Southern State Community College (SSCC) was the first stop of the day. Dr. Kevin Boys, President of SSCC, discussed enrollment and trends. Boys discussed the trend of lower community college enrollment rates when the job market is booming. When the economy shifts, people become more interested in learning a new skill to remain an employable candidate. Since unemployment is low, SSCC's enrollment is 2,455 students, of which sixty-seven percent attend part-time. Boys also discussed the College Credit Plus program in which High School students take college classes.

Laurel Oaks Vocational campus was the second tour of the day. Mike Hart, Assistant Principal, explained that many of the programs offered at Laurel Oaks maintain enrollment around 25 students per program and acceptance is competitive. Criteria such as GPA and attendance determine acceptance decisions. Laurel Oaks school provides students with a way to earn certificates and experience so they are prepared to enter the workforce directly after high school graduation.

Wilmington College was the third stop of the day. The history of the college and the facilities were showcased through a tour of the private school's campus. Wilmington College offers financial assistance programs to entice local students to stay local during college. The goal after college is for graduates to accept jobs and remain local residents.

Participants of Leadership Highland also traveled to Greenfield Exempted Village School District to tour the McClain High School with Mr. Jason Potts, the High School Principal. In addition to being one of Highland County's high schools, the school is unique in the sense that it is historic and is home to an extensive art collection.

The superintendent panel addressed educational challenges in modern society. The panel explained how our educational system is vastly different than it was ten years ago. A huge concern is that today's children are not prepared to be successful. There has been an increase in social and emotional issues that children are experiencing in life, which hinders the learning process. Issues such as poverty, drug abuse, neglect, and social media can leave students emotionally traumatized. Schools are no longer teaching kids solely academics, as schools must adjust their way of thinking and prepare kids to be successful in school and life. Mindy McCarty Stewart, Wilmington City Schools Superintendent, explained how Wilmington's schools train all

teachers (K-12) in trauma training so they know how to interact with children of drug abuse or other emotional issues. They are also using restorative practice training to reintegrate students and involve the parents regarding issues. For example, simply suspending a student does not help anyone, having them take ownership of their actions and learn from it is a better approach.

The big lesson of the day was learning that schools K-12 are evolving to keep up with the social and environmental trends many students face when they are home. Schools have adapted to meet societal needs. Our educational systems are working hard to teach children things they may not have learned at home or to find ways to relate to traumatized children so they open up to learning. This is essential so our young children have opportunities later in life to participate in College Credit Plus programs, attend vocational schools and eventually be ready to attend college if that is their best choice.

The next meeting of Leadership Highland will be a tour of the Ohio Statehouse in April. For more information about Leadership Highland, contact the OSU Extension Office of Highland County at 937-393-1918.

Upcoming Programs:

Join the Highland County Extension Support Committee for the annual **Extension/4-H Fundraiser** on Saturday, April 6, 2019, in the Rabbit & Poultry Barn at the Highland County Fairgrounds. The dinner will begin at 6 PM. Dinner costs: ages 11 and up are \$10.00, ages 4 – 10 are \$7.00, and ages 3 and under are \$3.00. For more information, contact Kathy Bruynis at 937-393-1918. Donations are appreciated.

Global Climate Change Update with Dr. Thomas Blaine will be held on April 25, 2019, at 6 PM in the Large Meeting Room in the basement of 119 Governor Foraker Place, Hillsboro, OH. Come and learn about the history of climate change, its current trends, and outlook. Hear how it applies to your backyard, farm, and everyday life. RSVP to reserve your seat by calling 937-393-1918.

Forage Webinar with Christine Gelley will be held on April 30, 2019, at 5 PM in the Large Meeting Room in the basement of 119 Governor Foraker Place, Hillsboro, OH. Gelley will discuss a variety of forage related topics to help you prepare for the 2019 growing season and upcoming winter. This webinar will provide information for both hay and livestock producers. RSVP to reserve your seat by calling 937-393-1918.

The **Germinate International Film Fest** will be accepting submissions through June 30, 2019. The festival will be held on August 16 & 17, 2019, in Hillsboro, Ohio. For more information or to apply visit <https://filmfreeway.com/GerminateInternationalFilmFest>. Contact Brooke Beam at the OSU Extension Office of Highland County at 937-393-1918.

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