Ohio School Models Democracy – Receives National Nod for Excellence

Federal Hocking High School in Athens County has been recognized by the Freedom Forum as a highly regarded First Amendment School—one of only a handful so designated in the United States. Federal Hocking’s drive to become a First Amendment School began in 1992—with nothing less than a radical restructuring of the way the school district met its mission. In fact, even the mission was revamped! Under the leadership of principal George Wood, various members of the community, from every walk of life, met to develop a model that allowed Federal Hocking to become a more democratic community. The strategic plan included a new mission, a new way of scheduling, internship programs and a senior portfolio requirement.

The happy result: more Federal Hocking grads are attending college, there are fewer disciplinary problems, and higher test scores. Federal Hocking High School trains its teachers in Socratic seminars, students have more free time during the day and the responsibility to use it wisely. Staff is entrusted with all major curriculum decisions. The school’s evolution reflects community support for the idea that the purpose of education is to serve, in the words of William Wordsworth, “as democracy’s finishing school, the last shared experience for citizens in our republic and the place where we can inculcate the virtues of civic life.”

Principal Wood says the problem is that students often find themselves preached to about such values instead of practicing them. “That’s why our efforts have been to focus on practice rather than exhortation. In everything we do, classroom teaching, practices, school governance, student experiences in and out of school, assessment, even the organization of the school day is done with an eye toward developing a democratic community.”

The students had no small say in Federal Hocking’s new lease on life—they worked to clarify the school dress code, to revise the student handbook, and convinced the school board to include a student in its ranks.

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Eva Phillips, in honor of Curtis Hansen, Bishop Hartley H.S.
Jeff and Marie Schad, in honor of Bob Unholtz & Greg Bell, Kirtland H.S.
Peggy Seymour
Dawn Sues, in honor of Ellet H.S. & Brittanie Sues
Eva Phillips, in honor of Curt Hansen Bishop Hartley H.S.
Cathy Liviskie, in honor of Jim O'Connor, Princeton H.S.
Andrea Troyer

Up to $25
Dr. Theodore & Nanita Adams
Mr. & Mrs. Tony Alesci, in honor of John A. Alesci
Diane M. Allchin, in honor of Hop Collier, N. Canton Hoover H.S.
Karen Ashleman, in honor of Michael O'Brien
Karen Bade, in honor of Nick Bade
Jo & Bruce Bailey
Glen Becker
Sandra Behler
Anne Biermann
Mike & Donna Budai, in honor of Brian Budai
Mary Beth Burkholder, in honor of Joyce McCurdy
Peter & Patricia Burling
Steven & Gretchen Cheneke
Leslie & Mark Clifford, in honor of Rusty & Maggie Miller
Larry Diemand & Beth Yauman
Jane & Timothy Dominique, in honor of Alex Dominique
Paul & Janie Downing, in honor of Darren Downing
Andy & Kathy Drnjevich, in honor of Archbishop Hoban H.S. Mock Trial teams
Kevin & Kelene Gluntz
Michael & MaryAnn Grady, in honor of Maureen Grady
Kathleen & Jude Grondin, in honor of their sons
Stanley & Andrea Hirtle, in honor of Chaminade-Julien H.S.
Joyce & Tom Housley, in honor of Lauren Housley
Hudson High School
Jaysheree Ishwar, in honor of Buzz Trafford, legal advisor, Upper Arlington H.S.
Ronald Janetzke, Esq.
Kim & Joseph Jones
Lauren Krivo & Robert Kaufman, in honor of Ms. Kay Sloan, Eastmoor Academy
Kathleen & Timothy Krucki
George Mokodean, in honor of Joseph Mokodean
Thomas Moscovic, teacher
Joseph & Janet Mure, in honor of Archbishop Hoban H.S.
Donna Perry, in honor of Erica Perry
Steve & Cheryl Pierce, in honor of Patrick Charest
Elizabeth & Jay Pomeroy
Jeffrey Powers, in honor of David Klingenberg, Harvey H.S.
Juliano & Janice Ritoso
David & Doris Sheafer, in honor of Ashley Sheafer
Robert & Dr. Jennifer Shoenfelt
Karen & Blake Simpson, in honor of Mr. Charles Collier, N. Canton Hoover H.S.
Scott & Sherri Slovin, in honor of Zach Slovin
Cynthia M. Smith, in honor of Lindsay Smith
Leah Stoner, in honor of Mr. Charles Collier, N. Canton Hoover, H.S.
Joan Wickham, in honor of Blaire Wickham
James & Linda Wilson

Ohio School Models Democracy — Receives National Nod for Excellence, continued from p. 2

“Becoming a First Amendment School,” says Principal Wood, “has allowed our community to push forward our work to ensure democracy is not just a slogan but a way of life.”

Schools designated as First Amendment provide students with an apprenticeship in Freedom and Responsibility, focusing on the five freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition. They receive a $12,000 grant each year of a three year commitment and teach not only the First Amendment but find ways to model and apply the democratic first principle with whatever they are charged with teaching.

To learn more about First Amendment schools visit the www.ocire.org and click on the link.

First Amendment in Schools: Education for Freedom and Responsibility

The First Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.