

Finneytown Secondary PTA Newsletter

June 2009

Principal Jack Fisher

Finneytown Secondary PTA, c/o Finneytown High School
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**Finneytown
Secondary**

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President's Message:

Greetings! As we close this school year, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Finneytown Secondary PTA to congratulate the class of 2009 on all of their successes over the past 13 years that led them to this point, as well as wish them continued successes as they embark upon their futures. For many Finneytown students and their families, this is both an end of a chapter in their lives as well as a wondrous beginning of chapters yet unwritten, as they enter a world of independence and exploration of the people they will become. We wish you all only the best! You are what make Finneytown special!

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all of the many parent volunteers who coordinated and executed all the Senior activities and events, as well as the Junior parents who volunteered to make the Graduation evening an enjoyable experience for the Seniors and their families. Special thanks to the Class of 2009 Parent Representatives, Cindy Rebman and Karen Hug. All of your hard work is certainly appreciated!

As always, I would like to extend the invitation to become involved in the Secondary PTA. We cannot be a successful support organization without the involvement of parent volunteers. Secondary PTA does so much that many people do not know about...grade level representatives, scholarships for the seventh grade D.C. trip, senior scholarships, Mini-Grants (staff requests that wouldn't otherwise be covered within the budget to benefit our students), Secondary PTA

financially supports the efforts of the After-Prom committee, as well as sponsors the Kroger Gift Card fund raising program, Community Service, Hospitality, Student and Staff recognition, and sponsoring the "Reflections" program, among other things. I am sure that you can find a niche for your strengths and talents within Secondary PTA.

As we say farewell to another school year and another graduating class, I would like to congratulate the recipients of Secondary PTA scholarships. Best wishes for continued success in your future pursuits, I am sure that you will make Finneytown proud!

I am grateful to the many people, staff and volunteers alike, who have assisted and guided me throughout my presidency. I made new friends, strengthened relationships in some cases, and met and got to know people that I otherwise might not have had the opportunity or the pleasure of knowing. My heartfelt thanks go out to a few folks that always supported me and the Secondary PTA: Randy Parsons, Jack Fisher, David Kennedy and Therese Prysock, Shawn Maus, Emily Harman, Vickie Stump, Elise Fessler, Cathy Zimmerly, Beth Mizelle, Angela Murphy and Cindy Rebman. I am quite sure that there are many more names that could be listed. I doubt that we could fit them all in this space, and I am sure that I have inadvertently left names out, but please know that I appreciate everyone who has been a part of the Secondary PTA these last two years, and mean no offense by not listing everyone.

Enjoy the summer...August is right around the corner!

Warmest Wishes, Tricia Baker

Life is my college. May I graduate well, and earn some honors.

~ Louisa May Alcott

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

~ William Butler Yeats




“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who'll decide where to go.”

~ Dr. Seuss's - Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Congratulations to our graduating seniors. Many of you have definite post-graduation plans while others are undecided. We wish all of you the best in your future endeavors. You all have an excellent educational foundation on which to build. May you succeed in finding careers which enable you to build on your strengths, exercise all of your natural talents and discover possibilities which you have not yet dreamed.

Hamilton County Council Happenings

Hamilton County Council (HCC) celebrated their Evening Dessert meeting on April 22nd, 2009, at Rapid Run Middle School. Students and staff were recognized from the seven member school districts. Congratulations again to our Finneytown honorees:

-  **Rick Canter, Finneytown's HCC PTA Outstanding Educator Nominee**
-  **Joe Rebman, our Finneytown HS HCC PTA Scholarship recipient**
-  **Elizabeth Leal, State Reflections Award of Merit Winner**

The **2009-10 Reflections** theme has been announced:

"Beauty Is..."

Encourage your students to start working on projects in any or all of the Reflections categories (Dance Choreography, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts, & Video Production). Contact Elise Fessler for details. The Submission date for entries will be November 3rd.

Also mark your calendar for the Hamilton County Council PTA Executive Luncheon Wednesday, September 23rd, 2009 at The Meadows.

Submitted By: Elise Fessler, Finneytown Elementary (Alternate Delegate) & Secondary (Delegate) 931-4234 or bfsing@cinci.rr.com

Seeking Host Families for International Exchange Students!

Have you ever thought about hosting an exchange student from another country? It's a great way to expose your family to another culture, share your life, hobbies and interests with a young person from another country and learn a lot about yourself in the process. There is an urgent need for families right now!

If you are interested in exploring the possibilities or finding out what kind of students are available, please contact Linnea Eschenlohr, EF Foundation International exchange coordinator (Sarah, Fabian, Susi, Clio, Dylan and Affonso's host mom) at 513-931-7447 or by email at prlinnea@rocketmail.com.

Advocacy Update May 2009!

Here is a short summary of some recent legislative and advocacy activities:

The following is from "PTA Takes Action" E-mails:

- **FY 2009 Appropriations Boost Ed Funding**

President Obama signed into law the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act, funding federal programs, including education, until September 30, 2009. The Omnibus Appropriations Act slightly increased funding for Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) by 0.9 percent, to a total of \$39.25 million for FY 2009. This is far short of the \$86 million needed annually for PIRCs to effectively implement their expanded and critical role since their strategic reorganization in 2007. PTA asks all its members to urge Congress to increase funding for PIRCs to \$86 million within the FY 2010 appropriations bill. [Take action now! Contact your members of Congress today!](http://capwiz.com/npta2/issues/alert/?alertid=13044831&PROCESS=Take+Action)
(<http://capwiz.com/npta2/issues/alert/?alertid=13044831&PROCESS=Take+Action>)

Several other education programs received significant boosts. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- No Child Left Behind (ESEA-NCLB) Title I Grants received a 4 percent increase, to a total of nearly \$14.5 billion for FY 2009. Title I Grants assist states and school districts with high concentrations of students from low-income families. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education State Grants received a 5 percent increase, to a total of just over \$11.5 billion. Title I School Improvement Grants, intended to help increase student achievement in underperforming schools, received an 11 percent increase, growing to \$0550 million. These funds are in addition to the stimulus' one-time infusion of \$10 billion for Title I Grants, \$11.3 billion for IDEA Special Education State Grants, and \$3 billion for Title I School Improvement Grants.

[Learn More about National PTA's Recommendations for PIRCs in the PTA 2009 Public Policy Agenda](http://www.pta.org/Documents/PTA_PublicPolicyPDF_final.pdf)

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The following is from Ohio PTA:

- **Support Mock Elections**

In 2008, PTAs across the United States partnered with the National Student/Parent Mock Election. Ohio PTA and our members helped contribute to the success of this program in our state. Your help is needed to secure continued funding for this successful grassroots program. Please write to our Ohio Senators and ask them to sign on to a letter Senator Kennedy is circulating on behalf of the National Student/Parent Mock Election organization. Most Senators will not sign such a letter unless they have a request from someone in their state. For more information, visit the Web site at: <http://www.nationalmockelection.org>

You may send the letter to the Senator's staff aide email address as follows:

Senator George Voinovich: Sean Stiff, Sean_stiff@voinovich.senate.gov

Senator Sherrod Brown: Christine Wells, Christine_wells@brown.senate.gov

The following is from Ohio Fair Schools "What's Up With School Funding":

- **Education Reform Debate Moves to Senate**

The Ohio House voted 53-45, along party lines, approving a plan to provide a new school-funding system. The bill now moves to the Ohio Senate. The Dayton Daily News said, "The centerpiece of the 4,086-page budget proposal is a move to distribute school funding based on what a child needs, not on what money the state has available. Over 10 years, the state would increase annual spending on K-12 education by about \$2.5 billion once all aspects of the plan are phased in."

How will the changes to Gov. Strickland's education plan affect your district? School Funding Matters has provided information about the House version of the school-funding plan, including a chart showing how Ohio districts would fare under the revised plan as compared to the original. Visit:

<http://www.schoolfundingmatters.org/content/RevisedSchoolFundingPlan.aspx>

- **Student Achievement and the Nation's Report Card**

The results of the 2008 long-term trend assessment in reading and mathematics were released on April 28. The National Assessment of Educational Progress offers a long-term view of U.S. student achievement. The results show several bright spots: The average reading scores for 9-year-old White, Black, and Hispanic students were higher than their scores in all previous assessments. White students at age 9 scored 14 points higher in 2008 than in 1971, while Black students scored 34 points higher, and the score for Hispanic students was 25 points higher than in 1975. To learn more and view the 2008 results, visit: <http://nces.ed.gov/NATIONSREPORTCARD/>

The PTA Mission:

- A powerful voice for all children
- A relevant resource for families and communities
- ***A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child***

(Elise Fessler @ bfsing@cinci.rr.com, HCC & Finneytown PTAs' Advocacy Chair) 5/09

Texting May Be Taking a Toll (May 26, 2009 - By [KATIE HAFNER](#))

They do it late at night when their parents are asleep. They do it in restaurants and while crossing busy streets. They do it in the classroom with their hands behind their back. They do it so much their thumbs hurt.

Spurred by the unlimited texting plans offered by carriers like [AT&T](#) Mobility and [Verizon](#) Wireless, American teenagers sent and received an average of 2,272 [text messages](#) per month in the fourth quarter of 2008, according to the Nielsen Company — almost 80 messages a day, more than double the average of a year earlier. The phenomenon is beginning to worry physicians and [psychologists](#), who say it is leading to [anxiety](#), distraction in school, falling grades, repetitive stress injury and sleep deprivation.

Dr. Martin Joffe, a pediatrician in Greenbrae, Calif., recently surveyed students at two local high schools and said he found that many were routinely sending hundreds of texts every day. “That’s one every few minutes,” he said. “Then you hear that these kids are responding to texts late at night. That’s going to cause [sleep issues](#) in an age group that’s already plagued with sleep issues.”

The rise in texting is too recent to have produced any conclusive data on health effects. But Sherry Turkle, a psychologist who is director of the Initiative on Technology and Self at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) and who has studied texting among teenagers in the Boston area for three years, said it might be causing a shift in the way adolescents develop.

“Among the jobs of [adolescence](#) are to separate from your parents, and to find the peace and quiet to become the person you decide you want to be,” she said. “Texting hits directly at both those jobs.”

Psychologists expect to see teenagers break free from their parents as they grow into autonomous adults, Professor Turkle went on, “but if technology makes something like staying in touch very, very easy, that’s harder to do; now you have adolescents who are texting their mothers 15 times a day, asking things like, ‘Should I get the red shoes or the blue shoes?’ ”

As for peace and quiet, she said, “if something next to you is vibrating every couple of minutes, it makes it very difficult to be in that state of mind. “If you’re being deluged by constant communication, the pressure to answer immediately is quite high,” she added. “So if you’re in the middle of a thought, forget it.”

Michael Hausauer, a psychotherapist in Oakland, Calif., said teenagers had a “terrific interest in knowing what’s going on in the lives of their peers, coupled with a terrific anxiety about being out of the loop.” For that reason, he said, the rapid rise in texting has potential for great benefit and great harm.

“Texting can be an enormous tool,” he said. “It offers companionship and the promise of connectedness. At the same time, texting can make a youngster feel frightened and overly exposed.”

Texting may also be taking a toll on teenagers’ thumbs. Annie Wagner, 15, a ninth-grade honor student in Bethesda, Md., used to text on her tiny LG phone as fast as she typed on a regular keyboard. A few months ago, she noticed a painful cramping in her thumbs. (Lately, she has been using the [iPhone](#) she got for her 15th birthday, and she says texting is slower and less painful.)

Peter W. Johnson, an associate professor of environmental and occupational health sciences at the [University of Washington](#), said it was too early to tell whether this kind of stress is damaging. But he added,

“Based on our experiences with computer users, we know intensive repetitive use of the upper extremities can lead to musculoskeletal disorders, so we have some reason to be concerned that too much texting could lead to temporary or permanent damage to the thumbs.”

Annie said that although her school, like most, forbids cellphone use in class, with the LG phone she could text by putting it under her coat or desk.

Her classmate Ari Kapner said, “You pretend you’re getting something out of your backpack.”

Teachers are often oblivious. “It’s a huge issue, and it’s rampant,” said Deborah Yager, a high school chemistry teacher in Castro Valley, Calif. Ms. Yager recently gave an anonymous survey to 50 of her students; most said they texted during class.

“I can’t tell when it’s happening, and there’s nothing we can do about it,” she said. “And I’m not going to take the time every day to try to police it.”

Dr. Joffe says parents tend to be far less aware of texting than of, say, video game playing or general computer use, and the unlimited plans often mean that parents stop paying attention to billing details. “I talk to parents in the office now,” he said. “I’m quizzing them, and no one is thinking about this.”

Still, some parents are starting to take measures. Greg Hardesty, a reporter in Lake Forest, Calif., said that late last year his 13-year-old daughter, Reina, racked up 14,528 texts in one month. She would keep the phone on after going to bed, switching it to vibrate and waiting for it to light up and signal an incoming message.

Mr. Hardesty wrote a column about Reina’s texting in his newspaper, The Orange County Register, and in the flurry of attention that followed, her volume soared to about 24,000 messages. Finally, when her grades fell precipitously, her parents confiscated the phone.

Reina’s grades have since improved, and the phone is back in her hands, but her text messages are limited to 5,000 per month — and none between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. on weekdays.

Yet she said there was an element of hypocrisy in all this: her mother, too, is hooked on the cellphone she carries in her purse.

“She should understand a little better, because she’s always on her iPhone,” Reina said. “But she’s all like, ‘Oh well, I don’t want you texting.’ ” (Her mother, Manako Ihaya, said she saw Reina’s point.) Professor Turkle can sympathize. “Teens feel they are being punished for behavior in which their parents indulge,” she said. And in what she calls a poignant twist, teenagers still need their parents’ undivided attention.

“Even though they text 3,500 messages a week, when they walk out of their ballet lesson, they’re upset to see their dad in the car on the BlackBerry,” she said. “The fantasy of every adolescent is that the parent is there, waiting, expectant, completely there for them.”