

# SOUTHWEST SCHOOLS: DEFINING THE FUTURE

Monthly Update About Facilities Planning, Community Engagement & More



March 1, 2017

## Substantial Progress Being Made On Facilities Master Plan

### *Key Goal: A Plan That The Community Will Support*

More than 150 people from throughout Greater Harrison have made important strides in developing a facilities master plan for the Southwest Local Schools, which they will ask the community to support.

The Community Advisory Team, with input from two other teams, has narrowed the possible master plans from 14 to six options. The goal is to identify one option to present to the voters. That option needs to be educationally appropriate, financially responsible and community supported.

“It is our hope that, with so many great minds coming together, we will shape a plan for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning spaces that will define the future of our children’s education for decades to come,” said Southwest Superintendent John C. Hamstra.

Southwest kicked off the community engagement effort in January with the first in a series of town hall meetings attended by more than 150 people. Since then, a second town hall meeting was held in February, drawing a comparable number of attendees.

The school district also created three teams whose work is ongoing:

- The Community Advisory Team has 65 members, including senior citizens, students, business leaders and local government officials.
- The Educational Visioning Team has 60 members whose objective is to create learning environments that not only will work now but also in 50 years.
- The Finance Team has 20 members who are thoroughly analyzing every dollar brought in by the district and every dollar spent to create a financial plan that supports the facilities.

## Final Chance to Attend a Town Hall Meeting

The final town hall meeting is scheduled for March 30 at 7 pm at Harrison Junior.

“We hope people encourage their neighbors, friends and relatives to attend, even if they question the need to make improvements to our buildings,” said Superintendent John C. Hamstra. “Their feedback is important to help us put together a realistic plan.”

### In Case You Missed It:

More information as well as videos of the Town Hall meetings are available at: <http://www.southwestschools.org/facilities>



**TIGHT FIT:**  
Students emerge from the Harrison Junior School gym through a narrow doorway.

## Design of Modular Classrooms Addresses Parents' Security Concerns

Southwest Local School District has finalized a contract for modular classrooms that takes into account concerns that parents had expressed about security.

Crosby Elementary will acquire one large modular unit, rather than two smaller units. That means it will only have one entrance and exit to monitor. Harrison Junior will lease one large modular unit with one entrance and exit, as originally planned.

"Safety and security are among the school district's top priorities," said Superintendent John C. Hamstra. "We're glad we were able to make the modulares as secure as possible for our students and staff."

The modular unit at Harrison Junior will contain six classrooms. The one at Crosby will contain four classrooms.

Southwest also ordered new modular units, instead of used modulares, after learning they'd be about the same price when all the costs, including decking and canopies, are considered.

To deal with dramatic overcrowding, the temporary classrooms are scheduled to be ready for the new school year that begins in August. Most or all of the installation will take place during the summer break to avoid disruptions and distractions at the schools.

The school district decided to acquire the modulares after enrollment at the two schools began soaring beyond projections. Average class sizes at both schools significantly exceed the average class size for public schools across Ohio. The space crunch is so severe that hallways, teachers lounges, walk-in closets and cafeterias are being used for instruction.

### MORE CLASSROOM SPACE:

Starting this fall, temporary modular classrooms will be in use at Harrison Junior and Crosby Elementary to ease overcrowding. At right, a look at a modular classroom that resembles the units the school district will lease.



### Did You Know? *Southwest Schools:*

- Spends less per pupil than all Hamilton County school districts, except one. Southwest spends \$9,399 per pupil. N. College Hill spends \$8,8541.
- Received the Ohio Momentum Award, one of only five Hamilton County school districts to be recognized. The award honored schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the 2015-16 school year.
- Earned the 7th highest grade among 22 Hamilton County school districts on the new Ohio School Report Card. Southwest maintained a 2.17 grade average on a 4.0 scale during the 2015-16 year.

### Community Engagement/Facilities Master Planning *What's Happening in March:*

#### Finance Team meeting

Harrison Elementary Library, March 2, 7 pm

#### Educational Visioning Team meetings

Harrison High Media Center, March 7 & 14, 7 pm

#### Community Advisory Team meetings

Harrison High Media Center, March 9 & 23, 7 pm

#### Final Town Hall meeting

Harrison Junior Auditorium, March 30, 7 pm