

SPOTLIGHT ON SOUTHWEST

A monthly publication for the parents/guardians and local residents sharing good news and updates about our students, staff and the Southwest Local School District
January / February 2019



SLSD Earns Momentum Award for 2018

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education awards school districts and schools that earn all A's on Value Added Measures (how much a student grows academically in reading and math) stemming from state assessments. Students are tested in grades 3—10, in both reading and math. Our goal and mission each school year is to grow our students academically 1.5 years in just the nine months that we have them in our care. To make these types of gains requires tremendous instruction in the classroom and concrete assistance at home. When our schools and families work together, hand-in-hand, the results are significant gains in each subject area and overall student success. The Momentum Award started in 2016 and SLSD has earned this award each of the three years it has been in existence. We are just one of 2 school districts in Hamilton County (23 school districts) and one of 28 across the state (610 school districts) to accomplish this feat! Miamitown Elementary School also earned the Momentum Award and was named a High Progress school of honor for 2018. We had three schools earn the "Overall A" Award for earning a summative grade of A on their 2018 Building State Report Card. What all this means—we are making tremendous progress towards our mission and to earn awards speaking to such accomplishments is

Superintendent's Message: Balance Matters

Happy New Year! As a child and teen, I remember the adults in my life constantly talking about how fast life goes and the importance of living every day to the fullest. I also remember rolling my eyes and thinking how great it was going to be in the summer or turning 16 and getting my drivers license. Now, as an adult, I find myself repeating those same messages to my kids and our students—live every day to the fullest, life does, in fact, move fast! The importance of balance becomes more and more apparent as we work closer to the end of the school year. Balance in a sense that school or work is just one facet of our daily lives. Time with family, friends and leisure is another key component.

There is a real push in life—to overcommit and get caught up in the throes of the day to day. From waking up early and getting to school, to sports and extra-curriculars, squeeze in a family dinner, homework and then bed. Rinse, repeat and do it again the next day. Weekends often consist of sports, more sports and family commitments that may require travel.

All this said, it's important to create balance in both your family's calendar and your child's life. Little things like turning off the radio or not allowing them to have their cell phone in the car, when you are driving to a game or practice and pushing engagement is powerful. Stress seems to really peak this time of year and we see it in the classroom as well. Setting goals each quarter—both academic and social, can make a significant difference in the short and long term. Take some time this winter and spring to "un-plug" and connect while with your children. Regardless of age, it's an important exercise. Balance is a great habit to create early and often!



Harrison Elementary Students Work on ELA Assignment (Left)
Harrison El. Students Calculating Distance in STEAM (Right)

Junior School students complete Leadership Exercise

New School's Design Phase Nears Completion

The design work for our three new elementary, new middle school and high school renovation is nearing the home-stretch! Our 2nd full-community town-hall meeting will take place on January 24, 2019 @ 7PM in the Activity Center. All are welcome to attend this meeting—for an update briefing on our new schools. The process has been extensive, in gathering input from school personnel, parents, students, local business leaders and government officials, as well as other school districts that have recently built new schools. The design work started shortly after the bond issue passed in November 2017 and will wrap up this March. We fully expect to start moving dirt in May / June 2019. We plan to open our schools officially on August 1, 2021!



On-time and on-budget are two guiding forces with our project. Both will take a concerted effort throughout the next two years—to make happen. As one could imagine, with a construction project of this size (\$97M) where four schools are being constructed concurrently, coupled with a \$10M renovation of the high school over the next three years, there are a lot of moving parts that impact the “cost of doing business” locally, geographically and globally (tariffs). The new Harrison and Crosby Elementaries will be built directly behind the current schools and be approximately 72—75,000 square feet. We will have around 675 students in both schools. The new “Central Elementary”, which will be built behind our current High School, will house approximately 775 students, will house three Multiple Handicap units, this building will be a bit larger in size (80,000 square feet) than the other elementary school and the middle school will have almost double the square footage as our current Harrison Junior School. We expect to have nearly 1,050 students in the middle school when it opens. All four of our new schools are being built to accommodate the growth—with additional square footage or the option to add on more classrooms down the road.

Athletic Upgrades Coming!

We are working to align several new athletic upgrades with the completion of the new schools. The athletic project will be broken up into three phases and will be paid for with ZERO TAX DOLLARS! We will rely on several corporate and private donations to make this project a reality. Phase one will involve new turf in the football stadium—allowing for boys and girls soccer to move from the baseball outfield to the stadium field. It will also allow for greater youth sport access and large band competitions to be housed in this area. We hope to have this phase completed by the Aug. 1, 2020!



State Superintendent Visit & School Priorities

We are focusing on 8 major priorities for this school year and with the progress being made on each, the State of Ohio Superintendent (Paolo Demaria) is planning to visit SLSD on January 22, 2019! The priorities below tie in directly with our mission and day to day activities:

1. Safety—for both students and staff
2. State Report Card Indicators—hitting 100%
3. Performance Index—Improve to 82%
4. Graduation Rate—97%
5. Prepared for Success—75%
6. K-3 Literacy—Grade of A
7. Facilities / efficiencies planning (all-in mindset / ownership)
8. 100% student participation in an extra curricular

Our Ohio State Report Card can be found at: <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/>

*Starting in March, 2019—our Spotlight on South-west will be video vs. print or email! Be on the look out for these video clips of important stories coming out next month! Links to these videos will be pushed out via our social media channels and website.

Important dates coming up:

- Martin Luther Kind Day (No School) - Jan. 21
- State Superintendent Visit—Jan. 22
- New School Town Hall—Jan. 24
- Coffee with the Superintendent—Jan. 25
- HS Drama Production—Feb. 1

*Our District webpage offers a much more detailed layout of key dates and events coming up at each school!