

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
March / April, 2019



School District Outreach Results in \$25,013 Donation to Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

After two weeks of teacher dares, bake sales, penny wars, odd jobs around the house, etc.—our students and staff raised a whopping \$25,013 that was donated to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in early March. This was our third full district fundraiser— following on the heels of the Day of Service in the fall, and the SLSD Canned Food Drive this winter. A HUGE thank you to the teachers that helped spear-head this endeavor: Mary Rudolph, Molly Hasenohr, Jen Kiefer, Nicole Lee and Sharon Gieringer. Thank you also to the many, many parents that jumped in to help out! What an incredible act of generosity!



Superintendent's Message: Student Mental Health

“Kids these days...” how often have we heard or maybe even said this line ourselves? I would argue that kids today have to deal with far more than we did as adults, in our youth—in terms of societal pressure. Technology is the root cause of this issue and like many things, can be used for good or bad. Social media has helped raise awareness for important causes as well as millions of dollars in relief for those affected by tragedy. It also can be used to shame and ridicule an individual relentlessly with hundreds, and sometimes thousands seeing or hearing the comments. Prior to cell phones and the internet, it took much longer for rumors to spread... today, it's instantaneous, regardless of truth or validity. Youth today are constantly under the microscope—and feel pressure from all angles. Respecting our children's reality can be a strong first step in developing a positive relationship with one's child or when working with children today.

This time of year especially, we see an enormous uptick in student discipline and students behaving in ways that are outside of their norm. Their sometimes outlandish

behaviors are in response to a need somewhere, not being met. We impress upon our students that it is ok to “feel their feelings, but they must be in control of their actions.” Empathy can go a long way, as well as listening to their take on the situation. And as most all parents know, this is not easy! Mental health takes time, work and learning from mistakes. The goal—for both our students and as adults, is to not repeat our mistakes.

Positive affirmation always goes a long way, as does unconditional love for our children. They are the future!



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

Students Participate in Lego Club at Miamitown Elem.

Bridging the Old with the New!

As we continue designing the new schools, slated to open in August of 2021, we will start looking at ways to bridge the old schools with the new. One way in which this task is accomplished is through the pride / history wall. In each of the three new elementary schools, the new middle school and in the renovated high school, a large portion of the entrance will be dedicated to displaying pictures and a timeline of the original schools / previous schools that made up SLSD. Starting on March 20, 2019, a group of over 55 alumni, historical society members, school officials and students will begin this project. We have spent a lot of time designing both the exteriors and interiors of the new schools, and the pride walls will truly serve as the center piece of the entrances. Our school district is rich with tradition and these walls will really bring the history info to focus.



This and next month (March / April) we will be working with our architects, engineers and construction firm to finish the second phase of design. Site prep will start as soon as students leave for the summer and dirt will start moving later this summer.

If you were unable to attend the 2nd Town Hall meeting where virtual tours of the new schools took place, I encourage you to visit: Southwestschools.org and click on "Facilities for the Future" (middle of the page). This tab details our journey in to the new schools!

Thermo-Fisher STEM Challenge a HUGE Success!

The 2019 Southwest Ohio Thermo-Fisher Scientific STEM Design Challenge was held at the Activity Center on Friday, February 22nd. For the second consecutive year, Harrison Junior School had four teams out of 28 total competing in the challenge. The teams were challenged to make the world healthier by treating cancer. After researching various types of cancer, the teams were then given about three weeks to design and build a model of a nano-machine that can capture and treat a type of cancer cell or tumor of their choice. They were provided with specialized K'Nex kits to build their prototypes. The four teams from Harrison met after school during the three-week period to prepare for the challenge. A total of ten awards were handed out to the 28 teams participating, and three of those went to teams from Harrison Junior School. Two teams received Honorable Mention awards; and one team earned top honors for best use of the engineering design process!

State Testing Season is Here!

Ohio public schools are getting ready to administer the 2019 Ohio State Tests in grades 3-8 to show evidence of what students know and can do in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and in Science in grades 5 and 8. Additionally, at the secondary level, students enrolled in English 9, English 10, Algebra 1, Geometry, United States History, American Government, and Biology are also preparing to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of content on the Ohio high school End of Course assessments. Testing will begin April 2 and conclude on May 10!

What can you do as a parent or guardian to help make your child or children successful on their state tests? There are a few ways that you can help! First, make sure that your student is in attendance on state testing days. Please delay any vacations until after the school year is over. Second, make sure your child or children get a good night's sleep before their tests so that they can perform at their best. Finally, ensure that your child eats a good

breakfast before their tests. Our teachers have been working hard all year with students to make sure that they are academically prepared for their state tests, and these simple suggestions above are ways that parents or guardians can do their part to ensure our students are set up for success on state testing.

Important dates coming up:

- Spring Break (No School): March 25—29
- State Testing: April 2—May 10
- Spring Musical: April 12 & 13
- Good Friday (No School): April 29
- Coffee with the Superintendent: April 26

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