

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

When do we break ground?

As the heat continues to impact our day to day operations in the classroom several students and teachers asked: “*When do we break ground on the new schools again?*” We are slated to break ground on the three new elementary schools, new middle school and begin renovations on the high school this April. Typically, with a project of this scope (nearly \$100M), 18 months of planning and refined design is the norm. We have numerous groups participating in this effort to ensure that the project is completed ON TIME and ON BUDGET: The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), SHP (architects), Kleingers (Engineers), and Skanska—Megan (Construction firm). As you can imagine there are many moving parts and variables to this process, however, our end-goal has not changed from the days of our bond-issue campaign back in the fall of 2017: to provide our students with schools built that are future-ready and give them the absolute best facilities to grow academically and socially. Air conditioning, security, technology, flexibility and community will all be key facets of the new schools. We are still in the design phase and are still seeking input from stakeholders. To date, over 800 folks have provided input on the design—both internally and externally. Below are key dates for additional input opportunities!

Superintendent’s Message: First Quarter Reflections and True North

This week marks Homecoming 2018 and it also signals that the end of first quarter is rapidly approaching! We complete numerous diagnostics and assessments such as MAP and subject specific tests to help us gauge where our students are starting academically. This also provides a start line, if you will, for our growth progress this year. Our RTI (Response to Intervention) programs are in full-swing at this point as well. RTI provides a time in the school day for added intervention or help in areas of struggle and also gives teachers times to enhance or further a certain skill that a student may want to explore. Academics are just one facet of our mission and our delivery. As important is knowing the “whole child” or the social growth aspect of our students.

Social growth is a bit more difficult to measure, due to the myriad of personalities that are part of our 4,150+ students. Traits such as empathy, passion, compassion, grit, perseverance, trustworthiness, ownership, leadership, respect, and active participation are key aspects of what we push throughout lessons and Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). We realize that our families are also

striving to instill these same traits in their children at home! To share in the development of the “whole-child” is a powerful journey for all involved! And it also brings up the notion that no child, or adult for that matter, is perfect. Mistakes are going to happen. Grace is powerful, as is learning from mistakes in an effort to not repeat them.

First quarter is often not as challenging as 2nd or 3rd. We are now in a solid routine, however, the school work and day to day relationships will start to become a challenge at times. Hang in there. Communicate openly and often with your child and work through both the academics and social pieces mentioned above. Progress requires many ups and downs. It requires risk and challenge. Working together in this journey will yield the best end-game, our true north!



*Crosby students manipulate shapes in their math class (Left)
Art class at WWV - students are proud of their work (Right)*

Junior School Cross Country runner setting personal best times each week! Social growth and mental toughness!

The State Report Card, Quality Profile and Where We Stand?

Recently, the State of Ohio released the 2017 / 18 report card for each of the 610 school districts in Ohio and for each school specifically. Big picture, this is simply one data point in our journey. It's a one day, 2.5 hour test that is taken by students in grades 3—10 in the spring. Does this data help? Sure. Is it all that we are? No. The Quality Profile, which was released at the same time as the State Report Card, provides a much more robust picture of what we are about—from academics to extra-curriculars to our community engagement. Just last month, over 800 staff, students and community members took part in our Day of Service project—where 40 projects in our 68 square mile school district were tackled in effort to improve our community. Projects like this are not calculated in the report card... but would be part of our Quality Profile.

Ohio School Report Cards



When breaking down our performance data and report card results, we graded out with a B overall and finished 7 out of 22 districts in Hamilton County—if you used our grades and plugged them in to a GPA formula. Our goal is to be the top school district in the county and we have work to do in several areas to make this happen. It truly is a balancing act, using metrics to gauge progress academically, yet still pushing the social growth side and community mindset both areas matter, both require serious time, resources, opportunity and support.

SLSD Day of Service is a Tremendous Success!

On September 15 over 800 students, teachers, family and community members and civic leaders took part in our first Day of Service aimed at improving our local community. 40 projects located throughout our 68 square mile school district were tackled and beautification projects dominated the day!

Mrs. Jamie Johnson, High School Intervention Specialist, and her team planned for this day over the last 8 months. The logistics behind squaring up the necessary volunteers, supplies, and projects over a large geographic region took a ton of work and effort. “We applaud Mrs. Johnson and the over 800 folks that took part in our first Day of Service on September 15. A major goal of our school district this year is to plug our students in to the local community and to “give back”” said Superintendent John C. Hamstra. “To see our students, teachers, support staff and administrators jumping in to help others out is a powerful witness to what we are called to do! To better the environment around us!”



Three Varsity Fall Sport Teams take home SWOC Titles!

As we near the end of the fall sports season, winning the league is always the goal! Three teams to date have won league titles: Boys Golf, Girls Golf and Girls Volleyball. All three teams have excelled throughout the fall and finished league play on a high note! Seeing our HS Students first hand, step up when things get tough was most powerful, as well as the sportsmanship displayed. We also had Makenna Williams win the Girls Tennis individual title this fall and she was named the Co-SWOC player of the year—falling behind to the #1 player from Ross early, but Makenna dug deep and battled back to win the individual league title. Also of note—Maddy Pittman (Girls Soccer) was recently named the Penn Station Athlete of the month for October—as she continues to lead the league in goals scored!



Kudos to our fall student athletes and good luck to our teams that are still in action! Finish strong!

Important dates coming up:

- PSAT Testing at HS—Oct. 10
- First quarter ends / no student attendance—Oct. 12
- Fall Break / no school—Oct. 15 & 16
- SLSD School Board Meeting—Oct. 18 @ 7PM (MT)