

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



Design Phase of New Schools Projects Marches On!

Throughout the months of August and September, numerous groups of stakeholders have been meeting with SHP (architect / engineering firm), Skanska-Megan (Construction Company) to design our three new elementary schools and new middle school. Students, parents, administrators, teachers, classified staff, and a multitude of community members have attended the series of meetings to provide input on all aspects of the build. As of Sept. 7, we are approximately 60% of the way through the design phase. We plan to host an additional full community / Town Hall update on our schools in late September / early October. We plan to start moving dirt in April / May, 2019. The schools will be complete (including air conditioning) by the fall of 2021! Updated information with regards to the design process can be found on our website: Southwestschools.org and under the “Facilities for the Future” tab. Our goal with this project, aside from constructing the absolute best schools to prepare our students for the 21st century workplace, is to be “On time and On Budget”. All aspects of this lofty goal are being worked through currently, as we design with the end in mind!

Superintendent’s Message: A Tremendous Start to the 2018 / 19 School Year!

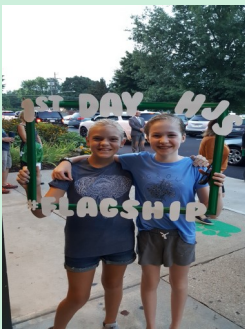
The start of the school year is filled with a myriad of emotions for both the kids and adults alike. As a parent, there is an extreme sense of pride, positivity, and even a bit of fear for sending your child off in to the unknown. Our kids often experience these same emotions as they take on yet another new grade.

Day one and week one went really well! Over 4,100 students made their way through the doors of our 6 schools, the largest enrollment in SLSD history! During the first week of school we push relationships, learning style identification, classroom / school behavior expectations, and we start laying the ground work for the academic pace in each subject area.

Week two and three the heat and humidity came back with a vengeance! The heat index hovered around 100 degrees outside, with temps near that number in classrooms. With 5 of our 6 schools lacking air conditioning, learning is tough to come by. Our teachers and students soldiered on and frequent water and popsicle breaks were the norm.

Most all of our district priorities for this year were spoken to on multiple occasions via the parent survey that was completed by over 600 folks in May. Our focus this year will be:

1. Safety—Students / staff are safe each and every day.
2. State Report Card Indicators—hit 100% of the benchmarks this school year.
3. We will improve our Performance Index (over academic gains, for all students) to 82% (from 77% currently).
4. High School graduation rate will increase to 97%
5. An increase in facilities and efficiency planning
6. 100% student participation in extra curricular activities



Day 1 with students at both Harrison Junior School (Right) and at Whitewater Valley Elementary (Left)

School Resource Officer Joe Willig greets high school students as they enter day 1

Community-Wide “Day of Service” is This Month!

On Saturday, Sept. 15, volunteers from throughout the community will come together to embody the spirit of service in honor of September 11. The Harrison Rotary Club is leading a special community “*Day of Service*” event, in which students, service clubs, churches and local residents work together to benefit all parts of the community that SLSD serves.

The Day of Service is part of a 9/11 memorial service and recognition effort. The idea is to gather the community to work on service projects together with a fun meal and celebration. “*We’re excited to be part of the inaugural Day of Service and to see how involved our students are in planning the day, as well as Jamie Johnson and her team*” states Superintendent John C. Hamstra.

Dozens of opportunities to serve one’s neighbors are being planned, including basic landscaping, painting, park cleanup, packing snacks, donating blood and many more. “*In addition to many of our staff serving as project leaders, numerous Southwest students of all ages have already signed up to be part of this event. Many have taken on leadership roles in the planning of the projects, which is evidence of their compassion and consideration for their community.*”

Those interested in participating can view a list of projects and sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/>



Quality Profile Set for September Release

Keep an eye out for the SLSD Quality Profile (QP) which will be released on September 11, 2018! The Quality Profile is meant to serve as a companion to the State of Ohio Report Card that is released soon after the Quality Profile.

This year's QP will again focus on our academic highlights, progress and state test scores as well as the arts, student leadership endeavors, fiscal stewardship, parent / community involvement, and extra curricular activities.

The sole purpose of the QP is to provide stakeholders with concrete data on all aspects of our school district. There are areas where we are doing extremely well and some where we struggle. Our district priorities aim to build on strengths and shore up areas that are not as strong. As we mentioned in the August Spotlight— it takes a village to see our students reach their maximum potential each year.



Mother Nature’s Impact on the Learning Process

The warm and often hot temperatures of late summer, early fall and spring often impacts how we educate our students in our non-air conditioned schools (Harrison Elementary, Miamitown Elementary, Crosby Elementary, Whitewater Valley Elementary and Harrison Junior School). In total, we have over 3,200 students that are learning in the above schools each day.

Two years ago, SLSD implemented an Extreme Heat / Cold protocol to provide parents and students with the guidelines we follow in dealing with the super hot and humid days, as well as the ultra cold days in the winter. We have placed the extreme heat protocol on our website: Southwestschools.org in an effort to again share what we look at in determining whether or not students should be in school. Ultimately, it’s a judgement call on the school district’s behalf and the focus is always safety first.

We greatly appreciate our parents, teachers and students handling these extreme weather situations with patience and flexi-

bility. Again, our number one focus for this school year is Safety. A close 2nd is living our mission: “Academic and Social Growth, for ALL Students, Every Day!”

Important dates coming up:

- First quarter mid-terms go home— Sept. 14
- Community Wide Day of Service—Sept. 15
- SLSD School Board Meeting—Sept. 20 @ 7PM (HJS)
- Parent Teacher Conferences (High School) - Sept. 27
- Homecoming Week (Sept. 30—Oct. 6)

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