



Twinsburg

NOVEMBER | 2016
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent's Message

Dear Community Members,

Each school year, the Twinsburg Board of Education establishes District Goals. The District Goals provide the “roadmap” to the success of our school district. This year’s District Goals focus upon student growth, the District’s financial health, community relations and our facilities and grounds. Each of the goals are student-centered:

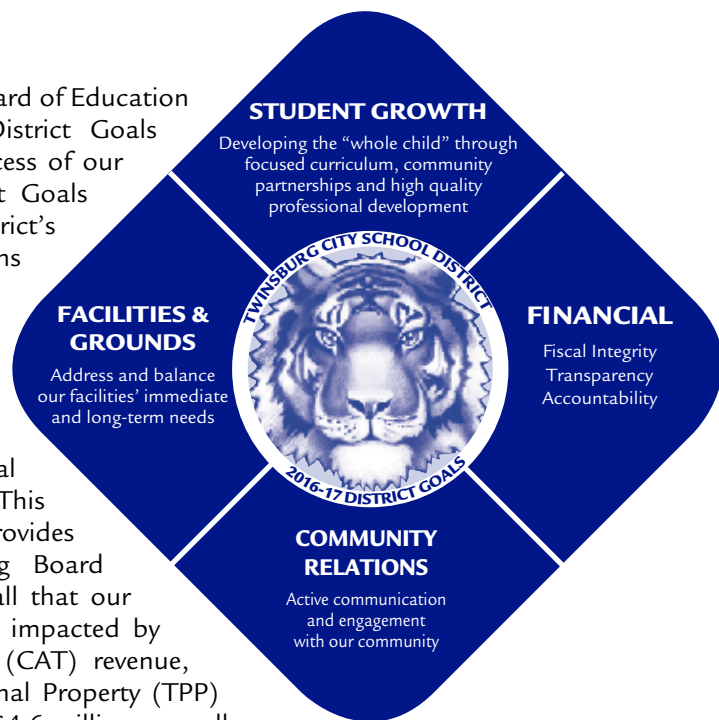
During the 2015/2016 school year, one of the District Goals was the development of a Financial Strategic Planning Flowchart. This flowchart is significant as it provides financial timelines the Twinsburg Board of Education must consider. Recall that our school district has been negatively impacted by the lost Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) revenue, which replaced the Tangible Personal Property (TPP) Tax. Currently the District receives \$4.6 million annually, however, due to ongoing legislative action, the Twinsburg City School District will lose this revenue in its totality by 2023. This is a very somber thought given the fact that our District is dependent upon this revenue stream.

As part of this year’s Financial Goal, our Treasurer Marty Aho and I have been meeting with members of our school community in Focus Group settings. The purpose for these Focus Groups is to gather feedback from our residents regarding their perceptions of our school district as well as their thoughts about a new money issue. As presented during the Focus Groups, the potential new money issue would generate the funds to replace the revenue we will no longer collect when the Commercial Activity Tax is totally eliminated. Once the Focus Group feedback is summarized, it will be presented to the Twinsburg Board of Education for their consideration.

I sincerely appreciate the hundreds of community members who have offered their thoughts, suggestions and ideas during our Focus Groups. The feedback we have gathered is invaluable and will help inform the Board of Education as they contemplate methods to maintain fiscal stability in the Twinsburg City School District.

Thank you for your continued support of our Tigers!

Kathi Powers
Superintendent





Samuel Bissell Elementary named *Blue Ribbon School*



The Twinsburg City School District is proud to announce that Samuel Bissell Elementary School is one of 329 schools nationally to earn a 2016 National Blue Ribbon Award. The 2016 Blue Ribbon Schools announcement was made by U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr.

In his video message to the honorees King shared, “National Blue Ribbon Schools are proof that we can prepare every child for college and meaningful careers. Your schools are on the cutting edge, pioneering innovative educational practices—professional learning communities, project-based learning, social and emotional learning, positive behavior systems—making you shining examples for your communities, your state and the nation.”

The 2016 National Blue Ribbon Award is the first ever received by the Twinsburg City School District. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students either achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap.

At the October 5, 2016 Twinsburg Board of Education meeting, Superintendent, Kathryn Powers said, “The Twinsburg Board of Education and I wish to commend the Samuel Bissell Elementary School administrators - Misty Johnson, Principal and Scott Winter, Assistant Principal, teachers, support staff, parents, and most of all our students for this significant achievement. At Samuel Bissell Elementary School, we know that visionary

leadership, skilled teaching and a very supportive community coupled with high expectations result in a wonderful learning environment where all students succeed. I am so very proud of Samuel Bissell Elementary School!”

“I feel tremendous pride that the Samuel Bissell Elementary School family has been honored with the 2016 National Blue Ribbon Award,” commented Misty Johnson, Samuel Bissell Elementary School Principal. “It confirms all of the hard work of our students, families, and the entire Samuel Bissell staff. The whole team has a common goal of meeting students’ needs and to know every child’s story and it is wonderful to be recognized for our efforts.”



Superintendent Powers, Principal Johnson and members of the Samuel Bissell team traveled to Washington, D.C. on November 6th, to receive recognition from the U.S. Department of Education. The District and Samuel Bissell were given a National Blue Ribbon School plaque and flag as symbols of this prestigious recognition. “The award plaque affirms the hard work of students, educators, families and our school community in creating safe and welcoming schools

where students master challenging content. The award flag will grace our school building and be recognized as a symbol of exemplary teaching and learning,” shared Powers.

For more information about the National Blue Ribbon Schools program, please visit <http://nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov/>

Celebrating Academic Success at Twinsburg High School



The National Merit Scholarship Program announced that seven Twinsburg City School District high school seniors were recognized in the 62nd annual National Merit Scholarship Competition.

In September, the Twinsburg City School District was notified that Nicholas Carcione, son of Tim and Christine Carcione and Lucas Wardell, son of Jim and Jennifer Wardell were named National Merit Semifinalists. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth about \$33 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship® award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition.



In addition to the two THS semi-finalists selected from the more than 1.6 million students, the following five Twinsburg High students were recognized as National Merit Commended Students: Angela Bekesz, daughter of John and Cheryl Bekesz; Michaela Mansfield, daughter of Jim and Michele Mansfield; Anishka Singh, daughter of Charan and Indu Singh; Kaitlyn Sterling, daughter of Jeff and Karen Sterling; and Madeline Sudnick, daughter of Steven and Jennifer Sudnick.

"National Merit Commended Students are named on the basis of a nationally applied Selection Index score. Although not continuing in the National Merit Scholarship competition, these Twinsburg students are to be congratulated for this prestigious honor," stated Louise Teringo, Twinsburg High School Principal.



Twinsburg High School Senior *Earns Perfect ACT Score*

ACT Kaitlyn Sterling scored a perfect score of 36 on the college entrance exam administered last June. Only 1,000 students nationally of the millions of students who attempted the ACT last year can celebrate this accomplishment.

The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. Each test is scored on a scale of 1-36, and a student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. Some students also take the optional ACT writing test, but the score for that test is reported separately and is not included within the ACT Composite score.

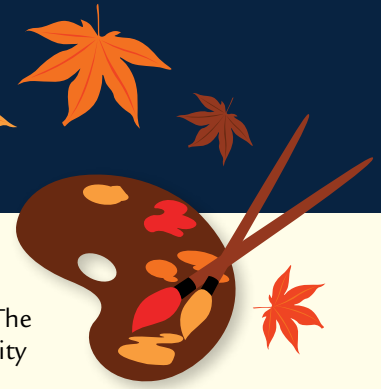


Wilcox Tigers Learn the Importance of *Fire Safety*

During the month of October, Twinsburg City Firefighters Mike Laing and Stan Bindas demonstrated the importance of fire safety to Wilcox students. The presentation included child-friendly strategies to help our youngest Tigers understand important information including; not to touch things that are hot, how to stop, drop, and roll, and what to do when there is a fire alarm at home – finding an appropriate exit and where to relocate with their families. The students appreciated talking with the firefighters as well as the interactive presentation.

Fall Art Festival

Twinsburg families who attended the “Fall into Art” Festival on Saturday, October 22nd at the Twinsburg Community Center had the opportunity to participate in self-expression through art. The free event was sponsored by the Twinsburg Parks and Recreation Department, Kent State University at Geauga and the Regional Academic Center, and the Parent Mentor Programs of Hudson City School District, Nordon Hills City School District, and Twinsburg City School District. This fun-filled festival provided children of all abilities the opportunity to participate in many different hands on crafts, and family fun time at the more than a dozen different stations with their young children. The Twinsburg City School District thanks our Parent Mentor Rebecca Huffman for her facilitation of this wonderful event.



District Earns Highest Rating in Special Education



The Twinsburg City School District received the highest rating, a 4.0 in all rated areas, from the Ohio Department of Education in Special Education. The special education programs in a District are the basis of the success for students with disabilities. Annually, the Ohio Department of Education issues a rating on the performance of the special education program for each district.

This rating evaluates the implementation of federal requirements, also called compliance measures. There are four ratings and the District’s overall rating was “Meets Requirements,” the highest rating possible. During the 2015/2016 school year, 99.7% of students with disabilities in preschool through 12th grade made progress in meeting the goals detailed on their Individual Education Plans (IEP’s).

Educating the Whole Child



The Twinsburg City School District is in its second year of services through our Beech Brook/Twinsburg City School District Partnership. This partnership provides mental health services, drug and alcohol prevention education for students, and assists in community

referrals and resources for our families. Services for families include home visits, parent education groups and ongoing communication regarding areas of concerns or improvements in their child’s academics and/or behaviors.

In addition, Beech Brook social workers provide professional development for District staff and students in the areas of mental health and the prevention of drugs and alcohol abuse and addiction. At George G. Dodge Intermediate and R.B. Chamberlin Middle Schools the social workers will offer Project PANDA (Prevent and Neutralize Drug/Alcohol Abuse). Teen Institute will be offered at Twinsburg High School. These programs are offered in collaboration with the Akron Community Health Center and will focus on prevention and making good choices.

Through grants funded by the ADM Board of Summit County and the Educational Service Center of Summit County, R.B. Chamberlin Middle School and Twinsburg High School will host nationally renowned speaker - Christopher Milo on January 2nd for staff and during the week of January 17-20th for students and families. His presentation “Thirteen Messages from Milo” will include life skills to include leadership, anti-bullying, suicide prevention, and drugs and alcohol addiction prevention. Milo has worked with school districts across the country and has reached over 100,000 students.



The R.B. Chamberlin Middle School PTA is full of energy, ideas and support for our school. Recently they worked with students to set up the fall book fair, providing students and staff the opportunity to purchase high interest novels at competitive prices.

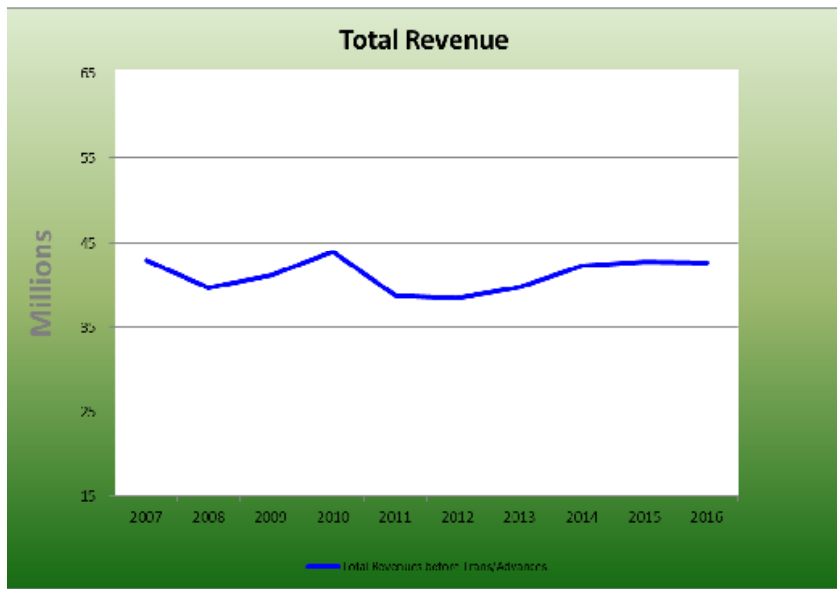
Your Tax Dollars *Count* Martin Aho, Treasurer

We take very seriously the fiduciary duty of managing the tax dollars and other resources entrusted to us by our communities. Over time, we have consistently worked to reduce or contain costs that are within our control. We strive daily to do more with less, operate as efficiently as possible and direct precious resources to the benefit of all students. While “shared services” in recent years has become a buzz word, our School District has long been sharing services at a lower cost through the use of consortium programs, cooperative purchasing agreements and educational service centers.

For many school districts in the State of Ohio, operating levies through the collection of property taxes fund school districts’ day-to-day expenditures (salaries, benefits, utilities, supplies and professional services). The majority, approximately 65 percent, of

funding for the Twinsburg City School District is derived from local property taxes. The remaining 35 percent is derived from the State Foundation to schools, Homestead and Rollback, and miscellaneous receipts.

Over the past ten years the School District has seen in essence zero growth in revenues. In 2007 the School District received \$42,833,041 in operating revenue and ten years later in 2016 the School District received \$42,886,438 in operating revenue. An increase of approximately \$53,400 over ten years.



COST PER PUPIL	
Solon	\$13,867
Bedford	\$13,732
Hudson	\$12,967
Aurora	\$11,319
State Avg.	\$10,985
Nordonia	\$10,907
Similar Districts	\$10,875
Twinsburg	\$10,645

COMMITMENT TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The benchmark for Twinsburg School District to measure fiscal responsibility is reported by the ODE. It is the cost to educate each student. According to the FY15 CUPP Report Twinsburg spent \$10,645 per pupil. This is less than State Average, Similar Districts and many of our neighboring school districts. And while the Twinsburg School District spends less than other comparable districts, the Twinsburg School District is recognized by the State as a high performing school district. It could be said that we provide “bang for the buck”.

The efforts of our parents and community members are important and critical parts of the Twinsburg City School District’s success and I want to thank everyone for their continued support of our students, staff and programs.

Regards,
Martin Aho
Treasurer

* Ohio Department of Education FY 15 CUPP Report.

Starting School is All about Making Connections



Parents and educators know that taking care of a child’s basic social/emotional and physical needs has to be the first priority before a child is ready to learn. “The staff at Wilcox Primary School decided to start the 2016-17 school year to expand connections with our students as we support them in their learning”, stated Lynn Villa, Wilcox Primary School Principal.

To do this the staff began the school year watching a documentary about Lisa Fenn, an ESPN reporter who became a driving influence in the lives of two high school students from Akron. The Wilcox staff read an old parable about a man who was faced with miles and miles of starfish that had been stranded on a beach. As he walked, he tossed one after another back into the water. Although he might not be able to help

everyone, he made a difference to the ones he touched. Using the parable for inspiration, each Wilcox staff member made a commitment to find their own “starfish”, a child who would normally not be part of their class or daily interactions.

Wilcox staff members are deliberately developing relationships with their “starfish” so children have another supportive adult in their lives. Teachers, instructional aides, custodians, and secretaries are reaching out to greet their “starfish” in the morning, take them for a walk during the day, and find a few minutes to read with them. These little efforts are already showing an impact on students’ self-esteem, behavior, and academic progress.

Fame Father’s Walk

On September 22, 2016, 536 fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, godfathers, cousins, and other significant male caregivers and mentors attended the George G. Dodge Intermediate School Father’s Walk program to show support for their children’s education. Our program invited fathers and father figures to listen to fantastic and motivating speeches by Twinsburg Mayor, Mr. Ted Yates, Dodge Father, Akil Hameed, and Twinsburg Police Lieutenant & Dodge Father, Mr. Tom Mason. Guests were then invited to take the ceremonial walk around the track and back to the building for light refreshments.

This event captured the essence of the Fame Father’s Walk Initiative by providing the opportunity for our children to engage in meaningful time and dialogue with their important father figures. The Dodge Father’s Walk promotes the importance of father figures in a child’s life.



Outdoor Science

Students at George G. Dodge Intermediate School learn about ecosystems as part of their science curriculum. Center Valley Park, adjacent to Dodge, is a perfect “classroom” for ecosystem study. Students on teacher Patty Spring’s team regularly use the park for class. One of the first lessons is capturing insects. Insects are a vital part of the ecosystem as they are both predator and prey. Insects have many amazing predator characteristics. These fascinating creatures are a food source for many animals in the ecosystem.



Students also learn about a specialized ecosystem known as a vernal pool. Center Valley Park has many vernal pools, which are sometimes referred to as “Wicked Big Puddles.” Vernal pools dry up for part of the year, so predatory fish cannot live there. Many unique animal species, particularly amphibians, depend on vernal pools for reproduction in the spring. Mrs. Spring’s students collect water and leaves from a vernal pool and create a classroom aquarium that is studied all year. Twinsburg naturalist, Stanley Stine, works closely with Mrs. Spring’s students and excites them about science by bringing it outdoors.

Community of Caring



Samuel Bissell Elementary School is committed to educating the whole-child. As part of our school's PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) mission, students and staff participate in our "Community of Caring" initiative. The program got off to a great start during the 2015-16 school year. Students and staff from different classrooms came together to eat lunch with one another. The idea behind the program is that, regardless of the class you're in, we are all part of the Samuel Bissell Elementary School Family. Throughout the last school year, every student participated in at least one session. Lunch sessions gave students and staff the opportunity to get to know each other and discuss the ideas of respect, responsibility, friendship and trustworthiness.

During the 2016-2017 school year the program is being expanded to include Twinsburg City School District staff members. District administrators from other buildings and departments will eat lunch with Bissell students and staff to reinforce the idea that we are ALL part of the Twinsburg City School District Family. "We are really excited about the success of our 'Community of Caring' program and look forward to expanding it in future years," shared Scott Winter, Bissell Assistant Principal.



Maintaining Buildings and Grounds...

District completes summer maintenance and improvement projects

Dozens of projects, ranging from paint jobs, renovated tennis courts and the installation of new hot water heaters, were completed this summer by District maintenance staff and hired contractors.



Asset preservation projects included:

- Tennis Court Renovations
- R.B. Chamberlin Middle School Parking Lot Renovations
- Tiger Stadium Drainage Renovation
- Partial Roof Replacement at R.B. Chamberlin Middle School
- Installation of new hot water heaters at R.B. Chamberlin Middle School and Twinsburg High School
- Upgraded computer labs at Samuel Bissell Elementary School and Twinsburg High School
- Renovations at T.A.P. (Twinsburg Alternative Program)
- Installed additional lockers in the R.B. Chamberlin Middle School Band Room
- Heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) upgrades at Wilcox, Bissell and Dodge
- Purchase of four new buses and one box truck

All of the projects were aimed at maintaining district infrastructure, the improvements will allow the Twinsburg City School District to better serve our students – keeping them warm, safe, and dry.

A new tool is being introduced at Twinsburg High School to assist students and families with the sometimes confusing, often complicated, path through high school and life beyond the THS campus. Naviance is a one-stop, online resource tool for college and career planning for students in grades 9-12. This tool helps streamline the formidable amount of paperwork and information presented to high school students and allows students, parents, and THS school counselors to access that information in order to make educated decisions about a student's future.

The student will be able to access Naviance to take college and career assessments, which are designed to guide them to various careers, exploring potential pathways. Students can use the tools within Naviance to research potential colleges and universities, majors, and careers that match the student's needs, and the program is able to process information such as letters of recommendations, college applications, scholarships and financial aid all through the program. This information is shared with counselors to assist them with setting up meetings and guide students in planning a specific individualized path. In addition, Naviance can be used as a powerful communication tool between student and counselor:

- Specific emails can be sent based on the need of the group.
- Bulletins can be posted to inform students and parents of meetings and deadlines.
- Articles and videos can be shared to inform and educate students and parents on various aspects of preparing for college.

Family members will benefit in many of the same ways as the student. Most importantly, Naviance will serve as a guide in helping the student find a potential path using well-organized, researched information. Parents are often unsure of what steps need to be completed. This program will help guide first-time, as well as experienced, parents through the process. Naviance will show parents what the student has completed, deadlines for submitting forms, interests of the student, potential college

and career pathways, all while still keeping the actual work focused on the student. Naviance also serves as a guide and discussion starter between students and parents to make sure everyone is beginning on the same page.

Twinsburg High School will be able to use the input from students and families to help guide decision making when assisting our student body with very individualized paths. School counselors can see student assessments, colleges the student may be interested in visiting and/or completing the formal application process, and potential career interests. This information can assist the school counselor in making sure the student is taking the right courses to increase the chances of acceptance to a college of choice. Collected information can give THS staff a clearer representation of which colleges and universities should be presented to our students at a college fair. It could also be used to streamline a career night program; industry invitations would more closely represent students' predetermined interests in potential careers. Naviance is a highly integrated program that will "talk" with colleges through the Common App, and other scholarship and admission tools used throughout the country.

Students and families will find that Naviance will make the next step in life a little easier to manage and provide a path that opens up opportunities, which may not have been investigated without this program.

Opportunities for students and families to learn how to use Naviance will be forthcoming in the near future. Watch for information on these sessions.



Twinsburg City School District

Board of Education

- Rob Felber**, *President*
- Mark Curtis**, *Vice President*
- Matt Cellura**, *Member*
- Tina Davis**, *Member*
- Kathy Turle-Waldron**, *Member*

The Twinsburg Board of Education meets in regular session at the Twinsburg Government Center in Council Chambers on the first and third Wednesdays of each month with the exception of June and September when the meetings are on the first and fourth Wednesdays. All Regular and Special Board Meetings are open to the public.

Administration

- 330.486.2000**
- Kathryn Powers**, *Superintendent*
- Martin Aho**, *Treasurer/CFO*
- Jennifer Farthing**, *Director of Curriculum*
- Belinda McKinney**, *Director of Human Resources*
- Denise Traphagen**, *Director of Pupil Services*
- Chad Welker**, *Business Manager*

More Than An Education... A Potential Career

During the month of September, students at R.B. Chamberlin Middle School in Mrs. Wilson's and Mrs. Jimenez's language arts classes paired up with the City of Twinsburg K-9 Task Force Unit to gain real world connections and bring non-fiction texts to life. Students demonstrated their literary skills including analyzing for author's purpose, central idea, tone and connotation. To add to their studies, Twinsburg Canine Officer Encarnacion and his partner Yasso, a German Shepherd, demonstrated Yasso's duties as a police dog, but also presented a positive message about working hard and being successful in school. These valuable community partnerships help Twinsburg students connect with members of the community and offer them opportunities to establish positive relationships with local law enforcement.

