



Twinsburg

MARCH | 2020
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent’s *Message*

Dear Community Members,

It is hard to believe that we are winding the corner and approaching the last stretch of another school year. If I had to summarize this school year from a big picture view, it has been one of progress. You may have been a part of this progress through your involvement in one or more of our many committees or events. Perhaps you have a student enrolled in one of our schools and have been involved in that way. Progress, though, may sometimes occur without much fanfare.

In this edition of our newsletter, we will share several initiatives that impact the big picture of our school district. We provide an update of our new Strategic Plan, which was approved in November. While a Strategic Plan is an ever-evolving document, we are happy to report that many of the action steps outlined in this plan are underway. This means that the strategies and actions are being implemented to benefit our students and the community. Progress on a Strategic Plan can sometimes receive little attention, but we hope to provide you with frequent updates so you can witness what is being achieved for the benefit of all students and for the benefit of our school community.

Progress is also being made with our *Conceptual Legacy Project*, which is focusing on the future of our school district’s facilities. Many community members have been engaged in great conversations both here in the District and in the community. Listening to our constituents is truly shaping this project. We continue to schedule presentations for the remainder of the school year with the goal of presenting the feedback being gathered through these conversations to the Board of Education for their consideration in Summer 2020.

Finally, please read about the progress being made with our intensive focus on student wellness and meeting the needs of the whole child. We have always believed in educating the whole child. The work being done by the District as it relates to the mental health and well-being of our students is a significant part of that effort.

Congratulations to all of our students and staff for their accomplishments so far this school year, many of which are highlighted in this edition of our newsletter.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me at kpowers@twinsburgcsd.org or 330.486.2000.

Yours in education,

Kathi Powers
Superintendent



Strategic Plan *Set in Motion*

Since the approval of the new five-year Strategic Plan by the Twinsburg Board of Education in November 2019, work is underway toward meeting the goals defined in the Plan. The Strategic Plan includes a focus on 21st-century teaching and learning, communications, culture/climate, facilities, finance and safety with each area working toward achieving specific goals over the next five years.

In November, the Board approved **“Unwavering Commitment Unlimited Possibilities”** as the District’s new vision statement and **“Partnering with the community...Providing excellent educational programs...Preparing future-ready students”** as our new mission statement.

“Great work is underway in the Twinsburg City School District as we implement strategies defined in our Strategic Plan,” said Twinsburg City School District Superintendent Kathi Powers. “We are making progress in meeting the goals, strategies, and action steps outlined in the Strategic Plan to ensure the outcomes meet the community’s expectations.”

The Safety Committee has also seen progress. Keeping in line with Goal One, principals have formed various student advisory committees in efforts to build relationships and discuss safety-related issues as appropriate for the age level. Superintendent Kathi Powers established a Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council, with students from grades 6-12 comprising the committee. They have met twice this school year. Building principals and curriculum specialists have also begun looking at intervention and diversion programs to address substance abuse, addressing Goal Two. Twinsburg High School Assistant Principal John Moeschberger is leading



the discussion on updating student handbooks, and the District has also begun working on Goal Four, contracting with Ohio Schools Council and Neonet to perform safety audits on District buildings and infrastructure.

The Communications Committee has launched the new Teacher and Classified Staff Member of the Year nominations. Staff members, nominated by their peers, will be announced at the May Board of Education meeting. The website redesign has been in process since September of 2019, a Twitter account was created for the Human Resources Department to help with recruitment and teacher recognition, while all teachers have been encouraged to create Twitter accounts to highlight educational activities.

Other committees are also actively engaged in progress toward their goals.

The full strategic plan can be viewed at www.twinsburg.k12.oh.us.

Conceptual Legacy Project making progress

Progress is underway on the *Conceptual Legacy Project*, which is addressing the future of the Twinsburg City School District’s facilities. The project was launched in 2019 to address the urgent facility needs of the District. *The Conceptual Legacy Project* is the outcome of the 2016 facilities assessment commissioned by the District and completed by two top facilities and construction firms in the state of Ohio. The firms provided an assessment that developed facility priorities for the future.

“We continue to hold focus groups to gather feedback on the *Conceptual Legacy Project*. These sessions included focus groups with the community, staff members, students, and parent/booster groups,” said Chad Welker, the school district’s Business Manager.

The next part of the feedback phase is to gather opinions and ideas through a phone survey to be conducted with Fallon Research and Communications. This survey will be done over the winter with results incorporated in a report back to the Board of Education this spring.

“We have held presentations and continue to gather valuable feedback regarding the community’s thoughts on the potential project,” Welker offered.

The *Conceptual Legacy Project* includes recommendations for the future of facilities. There are also options for flexible furniture and the relocation of the District’s Transportation Department.

The “Why” Matters

District’s New Student Wellness Programs Underway

It is essential to understand the “why” behind the work that is in the infancy stages within the Twinsburg City School District regarding Social Emotional Learning. Why are we investing in Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and how does that differ from Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)?

In recent data collected by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Summit County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) on health-risk behaviors for students, we see a rise nationwide and locally in many areas that affect learning. This can range from anxiety, depression, drugs, family structure, nutrition, and more. Focusing on teaching resilience skills to address non-academic barriers began to show as a poignant need as these areas came to the forefront.

PBIS has been in the District for many years and is not being eliminated. The focus of PBIS is to teach behavior management and modification techniques, whereas SEL is the framework or operating system that houses emotional management techniques, which includes PBIS. Combined, the synergistic effect of both in a school is outstanding.

SEL coordinates strategies and age-appropriate lessons/activities across classrooms, schools, homes, and communities. In other words, SEL is the house where PBIS and other behavior management strategies live. Each methodology helps with a particular skill or set of skills unique to our students.

As the year winds down, decisions regarding SEL programming will be selected. It is important that we find a program that is built on a K-12 continuum, contains universally transferable language, measures our progress that ties back to actionable steps, and, lastly, aligns with our previously adopted efforts already in practice.

Twinsburg City School District Educators Participate in Blended Learning Professional Development

Twinsburg City School District educators who are implementing Blended Learning strategies in their classrooms have been given opportunities to attend professional development sessions with Marcia Kish, an expert in the field of Blended Learning. During these professional development sessions, our teachers developed a deeper understanding of “The Three Phases of Blended Learning.”

The Three Phases of Blended Learning include transitioning into a future-ready classroom setting, shifting the idea of teaching the same thing to all students to differentiating instruction by exploring data, and constructing learning targets that will showcase the implementation of project-based learning, 20% Time, or Genius Hour projects. Our teachers and students are very excited about teaching and learning in our Blended Learning classrooms.



Physical Education at Wilcox *is Golden*



Each year, schools across Ohio have the opportunity to apply for recognition by the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (OAHPERD) for their commitment to Physical Education, nutrition, and an emphasis on living a healthy lifestyle. For the second time, Wilcox Primary School has been recognized by receiving the *Ohio Gold Excellence in Physical Education Award*. The award is reflective of the school's practices, which reflect the quality of its Physical Education program and the commitment of the school's staff and administration to offer developmentally appropriate instruction.

According to OAHPERD's website, "Research has shown that unhealthy behaviors that lead to poor health outcomes are established during youth and extend into adulthood. Research has also shown that physical activity and learning are intertwined. Youth who get regular physical activity through quality Physical Education are better prepared to learn. "

Key components of Wilcox's application included information about weekly Physical Education classes for all students in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade; a commitment to offering specialized instruction through Adaptive Physical Education for students with disabilities; and lessons that incorporate proper nutrition and ways to maintain an active lifestyle outside of school.

"Wilcox was the only school in the State of Ohio to earn gold status," Mrs. Lauren Wilson, a Physical Education teacher at Wilcox Primary School, proudly shared. "The award committee asked if they could share Wilcox's application with other schools to show them what the expectations are."

Wilcox Primary School is proud to add the 2019 award and banner to the one received in 2015. Both are hanging in the school's main foyer.

Wilcox Students have a Dream for the Future

Each January, as we begin a new year, it is common for adults to reflect on the past twelve months and look ahead with a renewed effort to improve in some way. At Wilcox Primary School, January is an excellent time for students to learn about our nation's heroes who had a vision for themselves and our country and resolved to make a difference for future generations.

The Ohio Learning Standards in Social Studies emphasize the diversity of the human experience to develop a basic knowledge of our government, including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Primary grade students learn about American symbols, the passage of time, and the importance of communication skills in effective civic participation.

During January and February, the Social Studies standards come to life as students engage in research projects about our presidents and famous African Americans such as Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubman. Students compare and contrast home, school, and communities in the past with the present.

As part of their typical literacy practices, Mr. Scolaro's first-grade students read and recite poetry and passages to develop fluency in reading and oral expression. The class has been

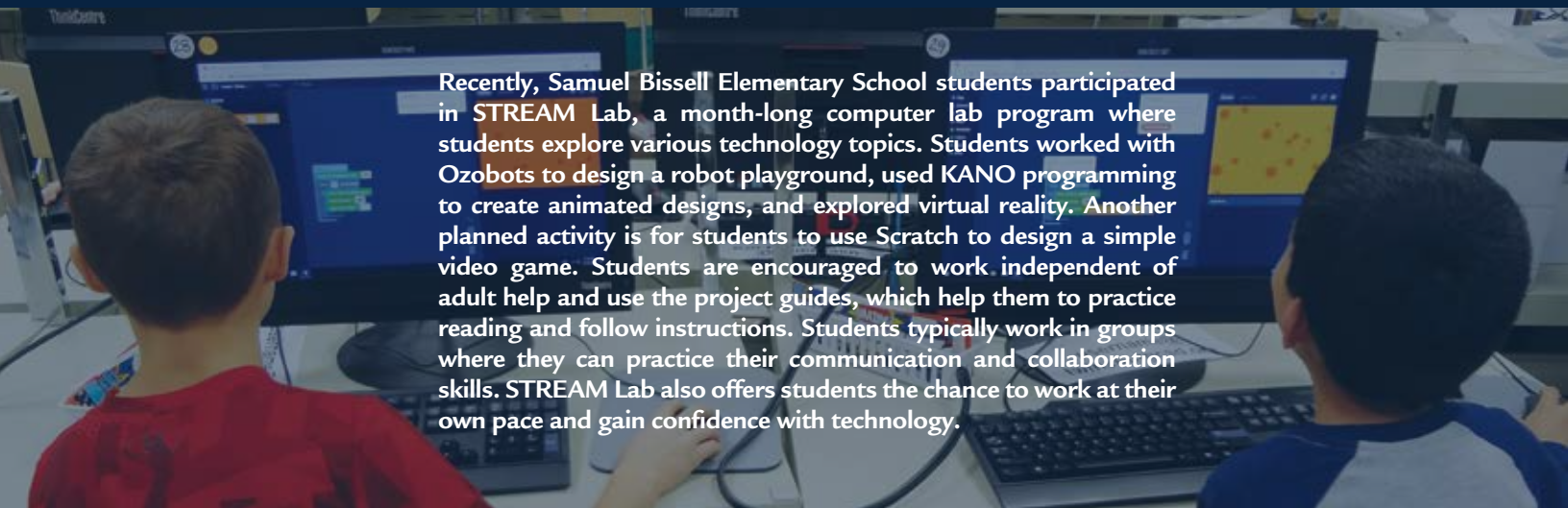
learning excerpts from Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech and practiced the line that said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." This practice sparked a conversation about their dreams and hopes for the future.

Likewise, students who work with Ms. Lipnos wrote their dreams and posted them in the hall for others to read and consider. Mrs. Scolaro and Mrs. Littler worked with their classes to create vision boards related to their personal goals for 2020. Each student used magazines and technology to find or print words and pictures that were representative of acts of kindness, things they want to learn, and ways they can improve in school, at home, and in the community. Students used iPads to video record themselves talking about their vision boards and emailed these videos to their parents.

This project was an excellent example of how students in the early grades participate in deep thinking, use technology in meaningful ways, and are empowered to set goals for their future.



STREAM Lab Gives Bissell Students *Confidence with Tech*



Recently, Samuel Bissell Elementary School students participated in STREAM Lab, a month-long computer lab program where students explore various technology topics. Students worked with Ozobots to design a robot playground, used KANO programming to create animated designs, and explored virtual reality. Another planned activity is for students to use Scratch to design a simple video game. Students are encouraged to work independent of adult help and use the project guides, which help them to practice reading and follow instructions. Students typically work in groups where they can practice their communication and collaboration skills. STREAM Lab also offers students the chance to work at their own pace and gain confidence with technology.



Virtual Reality Comes to Life for Bissell Students

Recently, Samuel Bissell Elementary School students had the exciting opportunity to discover virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) with ClassVR. Students had the chance to learn about virtual reality technology and then spend some time exploring. They “traveled” to the Galápagos Islands, the surface of Mars, and got up-close and personal with a Great White Shark. Students also learned how VR could allow us to explore places and events where it would be very expensive or difficult to travel to in person.



Bissell’s Change Agents Work to Spread Positivity

Recently, Samuel Bissell Elementary School’s Student Advisory Committee, known as the Change Agents, met to discuss ways to improve their school. The meeting started with a “Get to Know You Circle,” where students had the opportunity to build positive relationships and share one thing about themselves. Students also made signs with positive messages that are displayed around the school. The next activity will be “Monday Matters,” where students will share positive messages over the morning announcements every Monday.

Starting the Day with a Smile at Wilcox Primary School

First-grade students at Wilcox Primary School are part of the school’s “Smile Patrol”. Each month students are nominated by their teachers for being responsible, friendly, and outgoing. They arrive early to school each day, put on their yellow *Smile Patrol* sashes, and go to various locations near the entrances and in the halls around the school building. As classmates enter Wilcox from the bus stop and car rider drop off, they are greeted by *Smile Patrol* members with various greetings and lots of high-fives.



School Counselor Esther Boutros and Principal Lynn Villa started the program as part of the school’s Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program to help create a warm, welcoming environment and to offer students leadership roles and opportunities to develop civic responsibility.

2020-2021 Kindergarten Registration

THS Senior Performs with OMEA All-State Orchestra

Enrollment for Kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year will tentatively begin the week of March 16, 2020. Parents must pre-register for an appointment by visiting the District website at www.twinsburg.k12.oh.us. Once there, please click on the “For Parents” tab and scroll down to “Registration and Enrollment (New Students).” Please complete the online pre-registration process. Children must be 5 on or before August 1, 2020. Parents will be able to schedule a screening appointment after submitting their information.

Kindergarten Screening Appointments will be available Tuesday through Thursday, April 21-23, 2020. Your child will need to attend. The appointment will take approximately one (1) hour. Please note, there will be dates in July and August if you are unable to schedule an April appointment, however, we encourage our new Kindergarten parents to register their child in April.

Screening appointments will be at the Twinsburg Community Center, 10260 Ravenna Road, Twinsburg.



Twinsburg High School senior Rebecca Mold recently had the honor of being selected to perform with the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) All-State Orchestra. The performance took place during the association’s professional development conference. OMEA is the principle organization in Ohio promoting music education in elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. Way to go, Rebecca!

Three THS Artists Recognized for Work

Since 1923, the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards have provided opportunities to student artists and writers, filmmakers and photographers, poets and sculptors, video game artists, and science fiction writers to be celebrated and encouraged for their creativity. Students across America, including Twinsburg High School Tiger artists, submitted nearly 340,000 original works this year in 29 different categories of art and writing.

Scholastic jurors look for works that exemplify originality, technical skill, and the emergence of personal voice or vision during a rigorous judging process. Past winners include artist Andy Warhol and writer Sylvia Plath. Twinsburg High School Gold and Silver Key winners were recognized at the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Ceremony at Kent State University (Stark). Their work was displayed for a week during January.

Students recognized for their outstanding creativity:

Gold Key Award Winners

Hannah Moeliono – *A String of Heavenly Tribute*
(also nominated for the American Visions Award)

Makiyah Harris – *Can I Tell You a Secret?*
Drama Club Poster (Fall 2019)

Silver Key Award Winners

Makiyah Harris – *The Importance of Being Earnest*
Drama Club Poster (Spring 2019)



Busy “Bees” Spell Their Way Through Competitive Event

The members of the RB Chamberlin Middle School Spelling Club were busy “bees” practicing and refining their spelling skills for months in advance to prepare for the school-wide spelling bee held in January. Their hard work and determination were quite evident as the eventual champion took the Spelling Bee into the 20th round.

Seventh-grader Jesse Grum earned the honors of Spelling Champion, while Nathan Kalhan (seventh grade) and Amy He-Schenk (eighth grade) placed second and third, respectively. These top students moved on to compete in the Summit County Spelling Bee in February.



George G. Dodge Career Day Fair

Each year George G. Dodge Intermediate School hosts a College and Career Day Fair for our fourth, fifth and sixth graders. The goal is to introduce our students to a variety of careers. We also inspire to provide our students with the opportunity to look deeper into their personal interests and strengths as they begin to plan and visualize a future for themselves.

The counselors and staff at George G. Dodge Intermediate School work hard to bring this opportunity to our students, however without the support of our parents and community members, this event would never be a success. Each year, parents and community members volunteer their time to share their careers with our students. We truly appreciate their support which makes this a successful event for our Dodge Tigers.



Ellis Reaches 1,000 Points in Hoops Career

Twinsburg High School senior Alana Ellis achieved a milestone in January by scoring 1,000 points for her high school career as a member of the Lady Tiger basketball team. The achievement came during Twinsburg’s 49-45 victory over Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School.

Ellis is a four-year member of the varsity girls’ basketball team and has grown into an outstanding leader in the program. She has earned the respect of her coaches, teammates, and opponents through her hard work, dedication, and constant desire to make herself better as a player.

We are Tiger Proud of Alana!



Looking Ahead

March 2020

March 4	Twinsburg Board of Education Meeting
March 13	End of Third Quarter
March 18	Twinsburg Board of Education Meeting
March 20	Report Cards Issued
March 23-27	Spring Break
March 30	School Resumes

April 2020

April 1	Twinsburg Board of Education Meeting
April 10	Good Friday - No School for Students & Staff
April 13	No School for Students & Staff
April 14	Data Day - No School for Students
April 15	Twinsburg Board of Education Meeting

May 2020

May 6	Twinsburg Board of Education Meeting
May 20	Twinsburg Board of Education Meeting
May 25	Memorial Day - No School for Students & Staff
May 31	THS Class of 2020 Commencement

Community Support Helps Overcome Challenging School Funding Model

By Martin Aho, Treasurer/CFO

Ohio's public school funding model is needlessly complicated. So much so, it can be challenging to believe when trying to explain its machinations. Here is an interesting example comparing the Twinsburg City School District to a neighboring district. On the January SFPR from the Ohio Department of Education, our nearby school district received \$5,703,669 in Foundation Formula Funding for an Average Daily Membership of 528.5 students. On the other hand, Twinsburg City School District received \$5,943,689 in Foundation Formula Funding for an Average Daily Membership of 4,098.2 students. Because of the complex Ohio public school funding model, the Twinsburg School District, with an almost eight times larger student population, receives only \$240,020 more in state funding.

Fortunately for the Twinsburg City School District, our community members have graciously supported the academics, athletics, arts, and extracurricular activities over the years. The Twinsburg City School District administration understands its fiduciary responsibility and is continually looking for ways to contain costs and deliver excellent educational opportunities to all that enter the halls of the District.

In his autobiography, "The Education of Henry Adams", Henry Adams writes, "A teacher affects eternity; he/she can never tell where his/her influence stops." The Twinsburg City School District appreciates your support of educational excellence.



Twinsburg City School District

Board of Education

Mark Curtis, President

Tina Davis, Vice President

Angela DeFabio, Member

Rob Felber, Member

Adrienne Gordon, 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.

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330.486.2000

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Superintendent

Martin Aho
Treasurer/CFO

Chad Welker
Business Manager

Jennifer Farthing
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Denise Traphagen
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Andrea C. Walker
Director of Student Wellness