

January 2012

A mid-year report
to members
of the South-Western City
School District community

Issue 8

on the
March 6, 2012 ballot
that gives the District
the legal authority to
continue collecting
2.9 mills of bond money.
It will not increase
taxpayers' current costs.

Polls are open
from 6:30 a.m.
to 7:30 p.m.
on March 6

Visit the Franklin County
Board of Elections
Web site at
<http://vote.franklincountyohio.gov>

Voter Registration Information

Deadline for registration is
February 6, 2012

Voters must be 18
on or before March 6

Early voting begins January 31

South-Western City School District
3805 Marlane Drive
Grove City, OH 43123
www.swcs.us

Fellow Community Members:

What an opportunity we have before us! Through the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), the State of Ohio is offering the South-Western City School District approximately \$120 million to improve its aging school buildings.

With existing bond debt retiring this year, the Board has placed Issue 8 on the March 6, 2012 ballot to replace the retiring debt. This 2.9 mill bond issue will secure our local share of the project required to access the State funds. Approval of the bond issue will give the District the authority to continue collecting what we are currently collecting. Again, this is possible because the District has other bond debt that is expiring. With current interest rates and building costs low, plus the State paying \$120 million toward the project, the timing couldn't be better for our community.

Here's what we'll be able to do with the help of the State's money and the bond issue:

- Replace 13 elementary school buildings
- Renovate the remaining two elementary school buildings
- Build a new replacement Franklin Heights High School

This project will help eliminate the disparities among our school buildings by providing current technology access, positive learning environments, and the educational resources our students need plus the space for all-day, every-day kindergarten.

We will also be able to eliminate \$40 million in deferred maintenance, which would otherwise continue to increase annually. This allows us to use our limited existing funds for other buildings so all schools benefit. The new buildings allow the District to take advantage of the most current energy savings options and reduce an administrative position, which will save precious operating dollars.

The State funds and the bond issue funds will be used for new buildings, renovation of existing buildings, and permanent improvements – none of it will be used for operating costs, salaries or benefits. We will be able to upgrade our facilities, with the State paying \$120 million, with no increase in collection rates, which also saves \$40 million in maintenance and provides value to our community.

Please visit our Web site for more information: www.swcs.us. If you have questions, please e-mail them to info@swcs.us and we will provide you with an answer.

Sincerely,



Dr. Bill Wise
Superintendent of Schools

Headed in the Right Direction

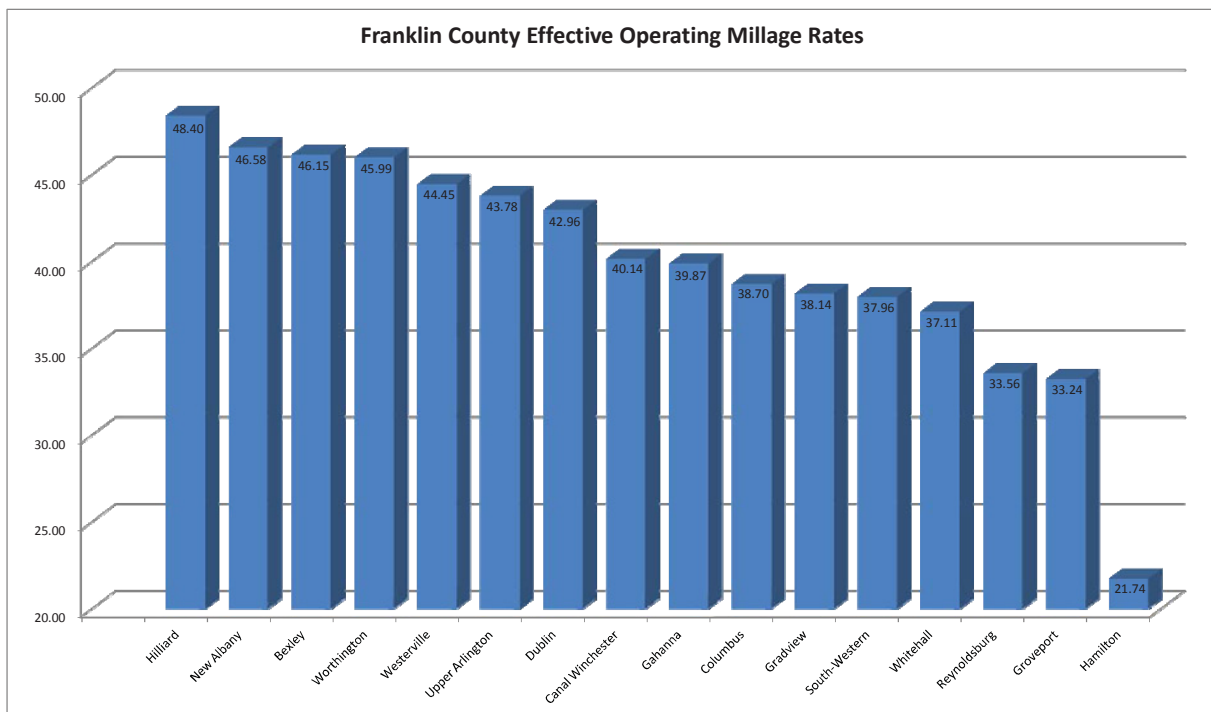
Some positive items of interest that will affect the South-Western City School District geographic area are:

The continued build out of **Buckeye Parkway Project** provides area shopping, dining, and entertainment experiences, drawing others from neighboring communities into our community.

The **Prairie Township Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ)**, approved on November 8, 2011, will provide the Township with the ability to refresh and beautify the West Broad Street corridor, which will, in turn, attract additional businesses into the area.

The construction and completion of the **casino** on Broad Street and Georgesville Road will most likely strengthen existing businesses and attract other businesses, creating new opportunities for community members.

These factors, coupled with the possibility of the replacement of 13 elementary buildings, renovation of the remaining two elementary buildings, a new Franklin Heights High School, and one of the lowest school district tax rates in Franklin County, will make South-Western an attractive area in which to live.



District Treasurer Hugh W. Garside, Jr., presented the five-year forecast for fiscal year 2011-12 through fiscal year 2015-16 at the October 10 Board of Education meeting. This forecast is prepared conservatively based on economic trends and known facts, which are detailed by category in the written assumptions that accompany the forecast.

Based on these assumptions, the forecast indicates that the District is in a solid financial position. The Board of Education, administration, and employee groups continue to work together to reduce and streamline operational expenditures that enable the District to stretch the operating funds even further than anticipated.

The most recent per pupil expenditure numbers from the State were released in December 2011. The South-Western City School District ranks 14th in the County in per pupil expenditures, and is below the State average by \$174 per student.

Academic Growth Above Average

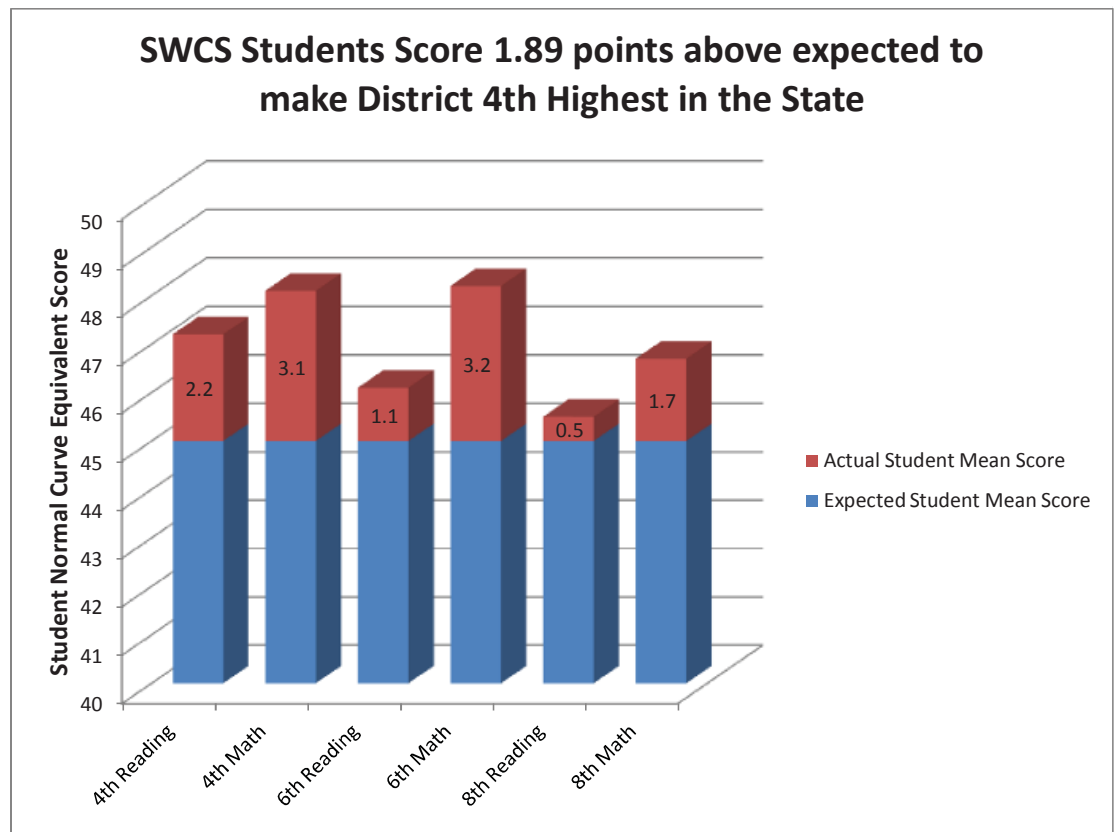
For the second consecutive year, the South-Western City School District has earned an A or EXCELLENT rating on its Ohio Department of Education Local Report Card. In addition, 77% of the District's buildings earned an A or B rating. While our rating remained the same, learning improved as the measures of student achievement demonstrate significant improvement from previous school years.

The EXCELLENT rating represents achievement in four different areas: Indicators, Performance Index, Adequate Yearly Progress and Value-Added data. Value-Added is believed to provide the most complete picture of the District's affect on student learning. This past school year, South-Western recorded some of its best marks as it relates to academic achievement. More students passed the State tests than any other year. The District had the fourth (4th) highest Value-Added Index among all of the school districts in the State of Ohio.

At the building level, twenty (20) of our schools recorded Above Average Growth for Value-Added, meaning that the students in those buildings learned more than an average year's worth of content

in one school year. For the fourth consecutive year, our students earned Above Expected Growth as measured by Value-Added, which means our students are achieving at higher rates because they are growing academically at a faster pace.

From kindergarten through high school, the environment in which our students learn has been proven to affect their performance and their future. We all know that factors such as teachers and parental involvement have a profound impact on student learning and achievement but so do well-designed school facilities. A growing number of studies confirm the relationship between a school's physical condition and student performance. New buildings would create environments that can support the use of instructional technology and create learning environments more consistent with 21st Century Skills. New buildings would also be energy and resource efficient, while providing more comfortable environments with proper lighting, air temperature, humidity and noise levels, which could contribute to even higher levels of student performance.





South-Western City Schools

District Service Center

3805 Marlane Drive

Grove City, OH 43123

www.swcs.us

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First Class
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Columbus, OH
Permit No. 711

Frequently Asked Questions

Issue 8

Will Issue 8 cost taxpayers more money?

Taxpayers will not be paying any more annually than they are currently paying. This bond gives the District the legal authority to continue to collect what is currently being collected - but for a new project - our aging facilities.

What's the scope of the project?

The District can break ground as soon as 2013 and begin opening buildings in 2014. It will be approximately a five-year project from start to finish. It improves all of the District's elementary buildings.

- Thirteen replacement elementary school buildings
 - Finland Elementary and East Franklin combined into one larger, more efficient building
- Two renovated elementary school buildings
 - Minor renovations at Buckeye Woods and Darby Woods including technology upgrades
- Replace Franklin Heights High School, our oldest high school

This allows existing funds to be used to make improvements to all other buildings in the District.

How do the economics of this work?

We will receive \$120 million in State funds toward the cost of the project, if voters approve Issue 8 to fund our local share.

- Without the matching funds provided by the bond issue, the State will send those dollars elsewhere.
- If we wait, the State's program could end.
- We can fund our local share without increasing annual costs to taxpayers.
 - Passage of the bond issue (2.9 mills) will keep our current collection rate at or below 2012 levels because of retiring debt.
- We can eliminate \$40 million in current deferred maintenance costs saving taxpayers money.
- All of the State funds and the bond issue funds will be used for new facilities, building renovations and other permanent improvements. **None of the funds will be used for operating costs, salaries or benefits.**

Issue 8 will not increase taxpayers' current costs. It will eliminate disparities across the district, wipe the slate clean on millions of dollars in maintenance costs to our school buildings, and add value to our community.