



District NEWS

WEST SHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 2017 Special Edition

Superintendent's Message

Todd B. Stoltz

As a district with "excellence" at its core, I am excited to share this edition of District News with you. In this issue, you will find articles related to curriculum, instruction, achievement, technology, budget, and finance. You will also find a special section devoted to our feasibility study and the two facilities options being considered by the Board to prepare our District for a new generation of learners.

Providing an excellent educational experience for our students includes having robust curricular offerings, engaging experiences, access to technology, well-trained teachers and staff, resources to support student needs, and facilities that foster best practices, inspire creativity, and assist in meeting the needs of the broader community. Regardless of your role as parent, taxpayer, or both, you are vital to ensuring the future success of our students. The information contained in this edition is meant to provide you a glimpse of the many great things happening for our students now and into the future and to raise awareness of the many challenges that hinder our ability to continue to do so.

As you review this information, I ask that you carefully consider the value and the impact our schools have on our community, and I welcome your feedback.

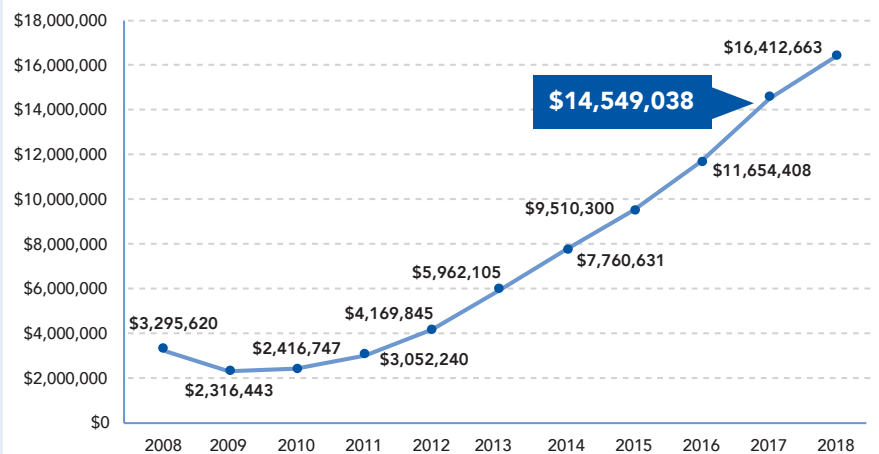


The West Shore School District is committed to providing this generation with a quality education serving as a foundation for responsible and successful citizenship.

Understanding the Legislative Impact on the Budget

In early May, the Board will vote on the Proposed Final Budget for the 2017-2018 school year, which contains mandatory costs, not controlled by the Board or administration. For example, the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) is a cost-sharing pension plan for all eligible school district employees. School districts are required to contribute to PSERS at a percentage rate determined by the state. Over the last several years, the contribution rates have increased drastically and escalating PSERS costs often consume a significant portion of District revenue. Charter school funding also places a significant strain on local budgets. These are just two examples of common budget stressors that require legislative reform.

District Historical & Projected Contributions to PSERS



In 2008-2009 the District's contribution to PSERS accounted for 2.89% of the overall budget. By the 2015-2016 fiscal year it accounted for 12.61%, and in the proposed budget for 2017-2018, PSERS will account for 14.32% of the \$114.5 million operating budget.

State and federal funding also affect the annual budget; however, the exact amount the District will receive is typically not known until after the District's budget must be finalized. Furthermore, any new legislation or regulations can require that unforeseen expenses be absorbed by the District. Most recently, Senate Bill 76 (SB 76) has garnered attention, suggesting property taxes could be eliminated. Although potentially reduced, property taxes would not be eliminated but instead would be shifted to an increased personal income tax and an increased sales tax. These tax dollars would then be distributed by the state, not local school boards. To view the resolution adopted by the Board in opposition and to determine how SB 76 could impact you, please use the tax calculator found on our website.

Despite these challenges, the District remains committed to developing budgets that support excellence in education, control increasing costs, consider the impact on taxpayers, and otherwise protect the District's long-term financial stability.

STUDENT GROWTH & ACHIEVEMENT



West Shore's motto of *Excellence in Education* reflects the District's commitment to providing a quality education for all students and its dedication to teaching and learning that fosters continuous improvement and growth. The District uses data from a variety of assessments during the school year to determine if we are meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student. As the District and schools analyze scores and testing data, we are able to develop effective strategies and implement changes that are necessary to increase student achievement.

Pennsylvania's Standardized Testing

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is administered annually, with every student in grades 3 through 8 assessed in English language arts and math; and every student in grades 4 and 8 assessed in science. Meanwhile, secondary students are assessed in algebra I, biology, and English 10 through the use of Keystone Exams. Results of these exams offer us an opportunity to understand where the District falls in comparison to surrounding districts. State exam results are also used to determine a Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (SPP) score for each building.

School Performance Profile (SPP) Scores

While there are other indicators included in a SPP score like attendance, AP results, and industry exam results, the PSSA and Keystone Exam scores hold the most weight. Last year, the state did not issue SPP scores for elementary and middle schools. It was the first year a more rigorous PSSA exam was administered which resulted in a drastic drop in scores across the state. This year, however, the state did release SPP scores for all levels and West Shore demonstrated growth in many areas.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - All of our secondary schools showed growth in English language arts. We attribute middle school growth to several strategic steps we took last year that include the work of the middle school literacy specialist, focused professional development, access to Study Island at school and home, analysis of student data on a regular basis to guide instruction, and regular professional conversations about best practices.

MATH - All but one of our elementary and middle schools showed an increase ranging from 3.4% to 12.5% on their PSSA math scores. While at the state level, the increase ranged from 1.4% to 5.9%. We attribute growth to the tighter alignment of the math curriculum to the PA Core Standards; the focus on regular use of data to guide instruction; Study Island use at school and home; alignment of course sequences from kindergarten through grade 8; a better understanding of the PA Core and the eight mathematical practices; and the adoption of a more rigorous math program at the elementary level.

This year, a middle school math anchor team is working with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) to bring guided math to West Shore. Guided math is similar to guided reading in that the teacher places students into small groups and students work on specific standards.

Small groups enable teachers to differentiate instruction and better meet each student's needs. The anchor team will serve as trainers and support for math teachers next year.

Looking at the Algebra Keystone Exam administered to grade 7 students, the scores received by students at all three middle schools indicate our grade 7 students were appropriately placed and challenged. At the high schools, our current sophomores will need to pass all three Keystone exams to graduate. Staff are working hard to ensure our students will be successful.

SCIENCE - Overall, last year's District science scores remained steady and competitive with neighboring districts at all levels. We are optimistic that we will see gains in the 2017 scores as a result of the adoption of a new science resource for students in grades 6 through 8; K-12 aligned curriculum; and an enhanced focus on best practices.

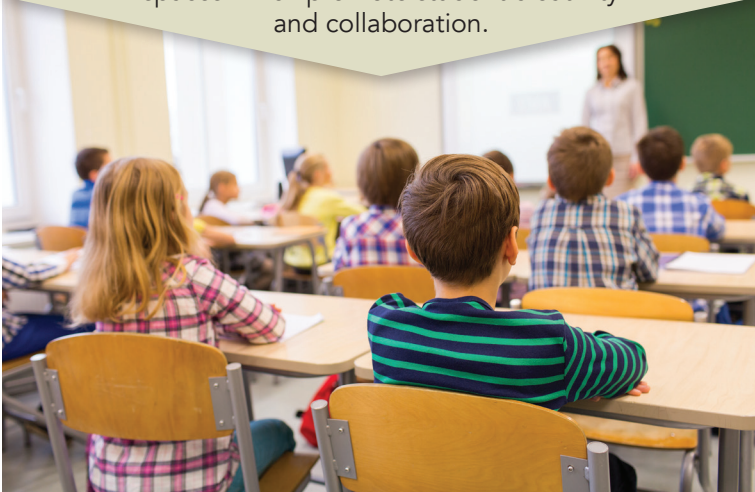
The way in which public schools are assessed by the state continues to evolve. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has proposed a new school rating system called the Future Ready Index. According to PDE, the standardized tests that Pennsylvania students take every year are not going away, but they will count less under this new accountability system. The Index will provide a more holistic approach to measuring school proficiency and growth. Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera says the new system will include heavier weighting for offering Advanced Placement and dual-enrollment classes; offering career awareness at elementary schools; assessing progress among non-English speakers in learning English; and factoring in other reading and math assessments. District and school progress will be reported using a dashboard rather than a single score.

School Performance Profile information for each school may be accessed on the District website at www.wssd.k12.pa.us.

Feasibility & Facilities Update

Current Instructional Challenges

Our current school classrooms have inadequate space to meet the needs of students and lack flexible learning spaces which promote student creativity and collaboration.



Future Ready Classrooms

Future Ready classrooms engage students and are designed to meet their current and future needs.



Community Input Matters

When asked to rate the importance of a variety of factors considered when building new facilities and renovating existing schools, survey participants ranked these focus areas as most important.

1. Building Security
2. Availability of Technology in the Classroom
3. Climate Control/Air Conditioning

SOURCE: Feasibility Survey Results, November 2016

Planning for the Class of 2029 & Beyond

Perhaps you have heard the term “Feasibility Study” in discussions at the bus stop, at a District event, or even in aisles of the local grocery store and wondered: What is a Feasibility Study? A Feasibility Study is an in-depth review of facilities that results in a plan for ensuring schools meet the needs of their students. The West Shore School District is currently finalizing a Feasibility Study. In May 2015, we partnered with RLPS Architects to conduct the study and assist the District in answering three key questions.

- What are the current conditions of our facilities?
- What is the capacity of our current facilities, and do we have enough space for our projected enrollment?
- Are our existing facilities aligned with our instructional practices and program offerings?

It has been approximately ten years since the District last conducted a Feasibility Study and much has changed since then in terms of demographics and facility usage. The update provided to the Board in September 2016 showed we have several buildings in overall poor condition which do not meet our current needs and a shifting student population.

In November 2016, an online survey was conducted to seek input from students, staff, parents, and community members about the issues they feel are most important when considering facilities. The District received over 2,000 responses to the survey. This feedback helped to guide the development of preliminary options for potential renovations and construction.

In January 2017, the Board of School Directors narrowed the list of options to three and tasked the Committee with eliminating an additional option from discussion. Two options were presented to the Board in a public study session on March 16, 2017.

The District is looking to improve the form and function of the District’s aging facilities, address enrollment projections, and otherwise meet the needs of current and future generations of students while being careful stewards of taxpayer dollars. It is an exciting time to be a part of the District as we craft a vision for facilities that will serve students and our community well into the future.

EXAMINING OUR OPTIONS

As the District worked through the development of options for the Feasibility Study, several issues were considered. These issues were identified by the committee and prioritized based on feedback contained in the surveys conducted, as well as input from the various focus groups.

While both options address the District's needs and accomplish the goals of the Feasibility Study, there are distinct differences between the two options. An overview of the two approaches and the impact they will have on our facilities is shown below. For additional information about the options, including past presentations made to the Board and community, please visit the District website.

OPTION ONE

Feeder School Concept

- Elementary level changes to Kindergarten to Grade 4
- Establishes an intermediate level for Grades 5 and 6
- Middle school changes to Grades 7 and 8
- Maintains separate Red Land and Cedar Cliff High Schools with 1,100 to 1,400 students in Grades 9-12 at each school
- Alteration of grade level configurations provides needed space for programs in existing buildings
- Fairview Elementary closes and students in that attendance area will attend Rossmoyne, Fishing Creek, and Newberry Elementary Schools
- Moderate sized intermediate and middle schools (550-650 students at each)
- Lower Allen Elementary and New Cumberland Middle School are vacated
- One building is eliminated, District continues to operate 13 schools
- Phasing is aligned with facility needs so the highest priority needs are addressed first
- Majority of construction is done with existing schools operating in place or at a new site
- Continues to use the spaces renovated at the high schools in 2011 and utilizes the HVAC upgrades done at Red Land (2016) and Cedar Cliff (2017)
- Removing sixth grade from Crossroads Middle School is expected to improve traffic flow along Fishing Creek Road

OPTION TWO

Focus on Consolidation

- Elementary level remains Kindergarten to Grade 5 and middle schools stay Grades 6-8
- Creates a single high school at Red Land site with a population of 2,400-2,600 students and Cedar Cliff becomes a middle school
- Alteration of attendance boundaries provides needed space for programs in existing buildings
- New Fairview Elementary is built that absorbs parts of the Hillside and Highland attendance areas and a southern portion of the current Fairview attendance area shifts to Newberry
- Larger sized middle schools (approximately 1,000 students at Cedar Cliff)
- Lower Allen Elementary, Rossmoyne Elementary, and New Cumberland Middle School are vacated.
- Three buildings are eliminated, District continues to operate 11 schools
- Phasing is forced to require construction in buildings that are lower on the priority list of needs
- Requires a large amount of renovations while school is in session
- Cedar Cliff has underused spaces because of lower enrollment and switch to middle school configuration
- Red Land needs larger spaces to replace common spaces renovated in 2011. The HVAC system, replaced in 2016, at Red Land is unable to support the expanded facility and needs supplemented or upgraded
- Doubling the number of students accessing the Red Land campus could cause major traffic and parking concerns

PHASING

Both of the final options include funds for modern climate control, security, accessibility, and technology. Additionally, both options will add spaces that address our enrollment needs, ensure that subjects like music and art are provided with appropriate spaces, and create flexible learning spaces that support 21st Century teaching and learning. Addressing these issues in more than a dozen facilities will take time. The projects have been broken into phases, showing the sequence of construction and associated costs.

OPTION ONE

PHASE 1: 2019-2020

Open 5/6 at New Property
Open K-4 at Rossmoyne site
Close Lower Allen Elementary School
Close Fairview Elementary School
Crossroads Middle School becomes 7/8
Phase 1 Costs: \$43.8 - \$48.1 million

PHASE 2: 2020-2021

Open 7/8 at Fairview site
Open 5/6 at Allen site
Close New Cumberland Middle School
Phase 2 Costs: \$63.4 - \$69.7 million

PHASE 3: 2021-2022

Open K-4 at Fishing Creek site
Phase 3 Costs: \$21.1 - \$23.3 million

PHASE 4: 2022-2023

Open K-4 at Newberry site
Phase 4 Costs: \$21.6 - \$23.9 million

PHASE 5: 2023-2024

Completed renovations at Cedar Cliff
Completed renovations at Red Land
Phase 5 Costs: \$30.6 - \$37.4 million

PHASE 6: 2025-2026

Completed renovations at Crossroads
Completed renovations at Red Mill
Phase 6 Costs: \$23.5 - \$28.0 million

PHASE 7: Beyond 2026

Renovate Highland
Renovate Washington Heights
Renovate Hillside
Phase 7 Costs: \$14.1 - \$16.2 million

OPTION 1: Total Cost: \$218.3 - \$246.7 million

OPTION TWO

PHASE 1: 2019-2020

Completed renovations at Red Land
Cedar Cliff becomes a 6-8 Middle School
Close New Cumberland Middle School
Phase 1 Costs: \$60.9 - \$68.4 million

PHASE 2: 2020-2021

Completed Renovations at Crossroads
Open K-5 at Fairview site
Close Allen Middle School
Phase 2 Costs: \$45.1 - \$51.1 million

PHASE 3: 2021-2022

Open K-5 at Allen site
Close Lower Allen Elementary School
Phase 3 Costs: \$23.4 - \$28.1 million

PHASE 4: 2022-2023

Open K-5 at Newberry site
Close Rossmoyne Elementary School
Phase 4 Costs: \$22.4 - \$25.8 million

PHASE 5: 2023-2024

Open K-5 at Fishing Creek site
Phase 5 Costs: \$23.4 - \$25.8 million

PHASE 6: 2025-2026

Completed renovations at Cedar Cliff
Completed renovations at Red Mill
Phase 6 Costs: \$23.1 - \$27.5 million

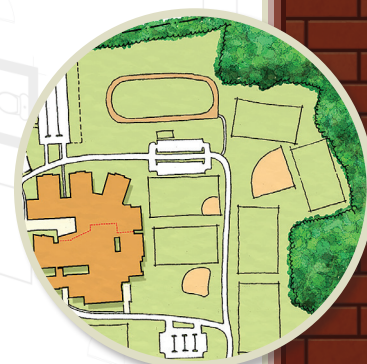
PHASE 7: Beyond 2026

Renovate Highland
Renovate Washington Heights
Renovate Hillside
Phase 7 Costs: \$14.1 - \$16.2 million

OPTION 2: Total Cost: \$212.6 - \$242.1 million

REDISTRICTING

One of the issues all stakeholders wanted to see addressed in the Feasibility Study was the separation of students during building transitions. By modifying the existing attendance areas, both options one and two would address this issue and prevent the separation of peers. The balance of student populations and alignment of building enrollments with capacity were carefully considered when evaluating attendance boundaries. Potentially impacted areas were shared in the presentation on March 16, 2017. More detailed plans and timelines for redistricting will be developed in conjunction with stakeholders after a finalized option is selected.



PROPERTY TAXES

Ten Year Projections

Placing our District's facilities on a path of excellence will require a long-term financial commitment. The volume of construction and renovations required will necessitate financing the projects using several bond issues with 30-year terms. The impact on expenditures is larger than the budget could absorb within any single year. However, multiple strategies can be employed to help phase in the debt and shift costs from other areas to help pay for construction.

Operational savings can be gained by reducing fuel costs and eliminating the need for emergency repairs and maintenance. The District can utilize the capital reserve funds to pay for portions of the debt payments, so the full impact of the projects is not placed on the General Fund Operating Budget, and therefore the taxpayer. Construction has been broken into phases, so borrowing can be done in smaller amounts over time, rather than facing the need to borrow all of the funds at once.

It is worth noting the state no longer provides funding for PlanCon, the process that would allow school districts to receive reimbursement from the state for capital projects. During prior projects, as recent as the 2011 construction of Hillside Elementary, PlanCon provided a revenue stream that took some of the financial burden off of homeowners.

Realistically, the magnitude of the projects, coupled with all of the District's other operational costs, could translate into a need to raise taxes to the Act 1 Base Index every year for the next ten years to help fund these needed capital improvements.

The charts below illustrate the impact a millage rate increase of 2.9% each year for the next ten years would have on a taxpayer in Cumberland or York County with a property valued at \$200,000.

Cumberland County

SCHOOL YEAR	MILLAGE RATE	MONTHLY TAX INCREASE	TOTAL ANNUAL TAXES
2016-2017	10.92	Current Year	\$2,184
2017-2018	11.24	\$5.33	\$2,248
2018-2019	11.56	\$5.33	\$2,312
2019-2020	11.90	\$5.67	\$2,380
2020-2021	12.24	\$5.67	\$2,448
2021-2022	12.60	\$6.00	\$2,520
2022-2023	12.96	\$6.00	\$2,592
2023-2024	13.34	\$6.33	\$2,668
2024-2025	13.73	\$6.50	\$2,746
2025-2026	14.12	\$6.50	\$2,824
2026-2027	14.53	\$6.83	\$2,906

York County

SCHOOL YEAR	MILLAGE RATE	MONTHLY TAX INCREASE	TOTAL ANNUAL TAXES
2016-2017	13.82	Current Year	\$2,764
2017-2018	14.22	\$6.67	\$2,844
2018-2019	14.63	\$6.83	\$2,926
2019-2020	15.06	\$7.17	\$3,012
2020-2021	15.49	\$7.17	\$3,098
2021-2022	15.94	\$7.50	\$3,188
2022-2023	16.41	\$7.83	\$3,282
2023-2024	16.88	\$7.83	\$3,376
2024-2025	17.37	\$8.17	\$3,474
2025-2026	17.88	\$8.50	\$3,576
2026-2027	18.39	\$8.50	\$3,678

Note: 1 mil = \$1 of annual property taxes per \$1,000 of assessed property value

For More Information...



District Public Meeting

The community is invited to share comments and provide feedback on Monday, April 24, 2017, at Crossroads Middle School starting at 6 p.m.



@ Website

Past presentations made to the Board of School Directors and community, links to video streams, and more can be found on the District website at www.wssd.k12.pa.us



Email

Questions about the Feasibility Study can be submitted via email to feasibility@wssd.k12.pa.us



Connect With Us

For updates directly to your news feed, follow the District on Twitter and Facebook @WestShoreSD

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Curriculum and Instruction

The District is heavily invested in enhancing curriculum, instruction, and assessment for students from kindergarten to grade 12. It is commonly acknowledged, however, that one important component of student achievement and success is parent involvement.

Within the District website on the **Curriculum Department page**, families can review pacing guides and documents for every subject as well as learn about the assessments we administer. District teachers and administrators are in year two of a three-year process to update all curricular documents. As our professional staff works to better align and enhance the curriculum, they are incorporating four **21st Century Skills** identified as essential for current and future success: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. As part of the inclusion of these skills, teachers will be designing performance tasks with the assistance of Jay McTighe, world renowned educator and author. Mr. McTighe states that...

A performance task is any learning activity or assessment that asks students to perform to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and proficiency. Unlike a selected-response item (e.g., multiple-choice or matching) that asks students to select from given alternatives, a performance task presents a situation that calls for learners to apply their learning in context.

A team of educators from West Shore and the Mechanicsburg Area School District worked with Mr. McTighe on March 8th to learn more about designing performance tasks.

In addition, our District is committed to nurturing a **Growth Mindset** in students and staff. The hope is if our staff and students embrace this Growth Mindset, they will be comfortable tackling challenges, solving problems in unique ways, trying new things, and understanding that effort is a huge part of success.

Finally, the District is working to get our students **Future Ready**. The Future Ready framework will help the District design a road map to personalize student learning. With student learning at the center, the District will align each of the seven gears, in order to achieve the goal of being Future Ready.

THE SEVEN GEARS OF THE FUTURE READY FRAMEWORK

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Use of Space and Time
- Robust Infrastructure
- Data and Privacy
- Community Partnerships
- Personalized Professional Learning
- Budget and Resources

The work of the District as it relates to curriculum and instruction is in step with preparing our students for success. We have more to do over the next few years and in the spirit of the Growth Mindset, our staff is ready for the challenge. Stay tuned for updates on our progress.

Anytime, Anywhere Learning

Adoption of new resources follows a cycle. This year, teams of teachers and administrators worked to select resources in English language arts and world language that would best meet the needs of our students. Having anytime, anywhere access to the student and teacher resources was an important factor, as was the ability to differentiate based on student needs and interests.

COLLECTIONS

English Language Arts (ELA) Grades 7 & 8

Collections uses a multi-media approach to reach students. The digital text is available anytime, anywhere, and informative content is also available through a variety of video services. The text and resources are engaging and the resources reflect best practices.

BENCHMARK LITERACY

Language Arts Grades K-2

Benchmark Literacy is aligned to the new state standards and provides a balanced approach to literacy instruction that includes whole group, small group, intervention, and acceleration. Assessments help guide instruction to ensure all students are mastering the foundational reading skills and interactive technology helps motivate students. Grades 3-5 currently use this series.

English Grades 9-12

A variety of resources were selected to support the English courses offered at the high schools. New purchases include anytime, anywhere access for teachers and students. The core English classes will keep the current anthology and bring in additional technology and resources that support 21st Century teaching and learning.

EMC

World Language Program

EMC delivers digital learning with interactive curriculum and unique video-based collaboration and assessment tools to promote student engagement, proficiency, and culture in world languages. It uses native speakers from a variety of countries, builds cultural competency, and blends learning opportunities that allow students to participate in real time language practice through technology. EMC includes anytime, anywhere learning.

WEST SHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

507 Fishing Creek Road, P.O. Box 803
New Cumberland, PA 17070-0803

The West Shore School District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, or disability in accordance with state and federal laws governing educational and vocational programs and in its recruitment and employment practices. Inquiries concerning the application of Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, the ADA, and the implementing regulations may be referred to the Director of Human Resources, 507 Fishing Creek Road, P.O. Box 803, New Cumberland, PA 17070-0803, telephone (717) 938-9577.

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Todd B. Stoltz, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Jamie A. Whye, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

West Shore Foundation Gala

The second annual West Shore Foundation Gala will be held on October 21, 2017. Funds generated through this event support many District initiatives.

Commencement 2017

Red Land High School seniors will graduate on Thursday, June 1 and Cedar Cliff High School students on Friday, June 2.

Both ceremonies will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center. There will be no limit to the number of guests each student may bring and parking will be free. All are invited to join us!

DISTRICT NOTICE

Special Education Notice of Programs and Services

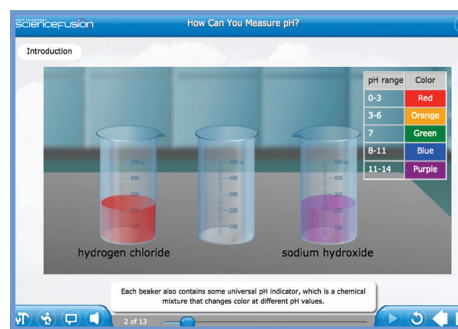
The District employs certain procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating the needs of school-aged students requiring special programs and/or services. In accordance with federal and state regulations, the District's Notice of Programs and Services is available on the Special Education page of the District website. If you are unable to access the notice online or have questions, please contact Mr. Thomas Burnheimer, Director of Pupil Services, at 717-938-9577.

District-wide Technology Integration

Across the District, our goal is to ensure every student is prepared for a successful future. Part of student success depends on the availability of technology and the integration of technology into the classroom. Over the past two years, the District has provided students with additional devices to support new resource adoptions as well as the integration of 21st Century Skills. Below are some highlights at each level.

ELEMENTARY - Red Mill Elementary School is currently piloting new teaching and learning software from Edmentum, the publisher of Study Island. Edmentum's Individualized Learning Solution is designed to provide teachers and students with targeted, assessment-driven practice, reinforcement, and support. This package is highly focused on understanding where students are academically, identifying strengths and weaknesses for each student, and taking data a step further to offer targeted instruction paced to each student's needs. Red Mill was one of only 14 schools selected to participate in this pilot following a nationwide search by Edmentum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL - New this year at the middle schools is ScienceFusion, by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. ScienceFusion is an inquiry program, which means it does not just present information; it begins lessons with questions to engage student interest. Students are continually challenged to think about real-life applications, restate concepts in their own words, research, and think beyond the information presented. In addition, ScienceFusion allows students to be active participants in the learning process through its use of simulations, animations, videos, and virtual labs.



HIGH SCHOOL - High school students are enjoying a new course this year, Programming and Developing Code. The course explores several common computer-programming languages such as Java, C, C++, Python, and HTML. The content prepares students with a foundation for growth in a career, trade school, two-year, or four-year program for continuing education. Students have the opportunity to develop basic programs, applications, and games, in a self-paced, project-based atmosphere. Next year, we will offer a website and multimedia design course that is sure to pique students' interests.