

# COMMUNITY *Connection*

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LET'S STAY CONNECTED! **#WeAreFHSD**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
AND KUDOS  
**PAGE 2**

REMOTE LEARNING  
REFLECTIONS  
**PAGE 3**

LOCAL COMMUNITY  
SUPPORTS FAMILIES  
**PAGE 7**





# FROM THE DESK OF THE *Superintendent*



The final quarter of the 2019-2020 academic year was unlike anything I ever could have imagined. Each of us was faced with challenges, frustrations and uncertainty as our community collectively united to do its part to stop the spread of coronavirus. When more than 7,300 Forest Hills students left our school buildings in mid-March per Governor

Mike DeWine's order, I had no idea that our staff would not see them in-person for the remainder of this academic year.

While district buildings were closed, school was not. Forest Hills School District rolled out a robust remote learning plan to serve all students shortly after the buildings closed. In a very short amount of time, our teachers, counselors and administrators re-imagined the classroom, lesson plans, upcoming projects, student engagement and support.

Through technology and direct outreach, our staff found creative ways to provide instruction and maintain meaningful connections with students, we put comprehensive structures in place to continue to support students with special needs, and our food services and transportation departments provided boxed lunches to families in need of assistance. I am incredibly proud of what was accomplished during these past few months.

While we were forced to be physically distant, Forest Hills School District worked closely with leaders from Anderson Township and the Village of Newtown, local public health experts, non-profit organizations, and other school districts statewide to ensure that we were doing what is best for our students, families and staff. Together, we each did our part to meet the needs of our community's children. As superintendent, I cannot thank you enough for the role you played in our success.

I invite you to flip through the next few pages to learn more about remote learning and the great things happening within the Forest Hills School District. I hope that in the near future, we will welcome students back into their classrooms, enjoy all of their "live" interactions, and gather "in-person" to celebrate their successes. In the meantime, I wish you and your family health and happiness.

Respectfully,



**SCOT T. PREBLES**

*Superintendent*

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# FROM THE DESK OF THE *Treasurer*



Myriad changes have occurred in our homes, workplaces and schools since Governor DeWine issued Ohio's "Stay at Home" order. As state and federal governments are grappling with significant budget reductions that have resulted from COVID-19, we're seeing that our school district's general fund and five-year financial forecast are not immune to the same impacts from this

global health pandemic.

The state of Ohio recently announced budget reductions to K-12 education totaling \$300 million. As it does with most budgetary decisions, the state considered the income and property value of a school district when deciding the burden of the reduction. Throughout the 610 school districts in the state, the reductions ranged from \$89 per pupil to \$304 per pupil.

What does this mean for us? Forest Hills has a \$1.6 million reduction in state funding this fiscal year, ending in June 2020. That equates to 9% of the district's state funding, or \$231 less per student.

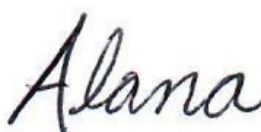
Once again, Forest Hills has received a disproportion of the state cuts, further eroding the percentage of our budget supported by the state of Ohio and placing a higher burden on our community.

We are working swiftly and cautiously to determine how to best offset these revenue reductions while continuing to protect high-quality education and student programming. Due to our transition to remote learning, we estimate a savings of approximately \$993,073 in costs associated with substitute teachers, in-person events, utilities, fuel, materials and supplies, and the cancellation of spring sports. In addition, the district has identified \$746,298 in attrition and additional staffing efficiencies for the upcoming year.

At this point, many unknowns exist as to how school will operate in the upcoming school year, the resources necessary to support our instructional programs and services, and what our state budget will look like. We don't yet know if the state will reduce funding again for the upcoming school year, although we have to think that this is a very real possibility.

For now, we must concentrate on what we can control. We will remain focused on finding better and smarter ways of doing business while also protecting the Forest Hills student experience to the best of our ability. We will also remain committed to balance our budget regardless of what challenges come our way. I will continue to share more updates in the coming weeks as more information becomes available. In these times of uncertainty, one thing I do know is how fortunate we are to serve a supportive community that values education.

Sincerely,



**ALANA CROPPER**

*Treasurer/CFO*

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# #WeAreFHSD



## 2020 TEACHERS & STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

Terrie Meister



Emma Gasser



Jack Lambert



*U.S. News and World Report* ranked Anderson High School and Turpin High School among the top 10 high schools in the Cincinnati area! The report also ranked both schools among the top 50 in Ohio out of more than 900 high schools.

### The Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce announced the 2020 Student of the Year and Teacher of the Year recipients.

Congratulations to Mercer Elementary School kindergarten teacher Terrie Meister, Anderson High School senior Emma Gasser and Turpin High School senior Jack Lambert! All three recipients were nominated based on their dedication to school and the community.

### Five Forest Hills students earned perfect ACT scores!

Anna MacLennan, Sam Tilford, Jack Behling, Hannah Hazelwood and Elizabeth Liu earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36. Less than one-half of 1% of all test takers earn the top score. Among US high school graduates in the class of 2019, just 4,879 out of nearly 1.8 million students who took the ACT earned a composite score of 36.

## FOREST HILLS PERFECT ACT SCORES

Anna MacLennan



Sam Tilford



Jack Behling



Hannah Hazelwood



Elizabeth Liu



### The National Association of Music Merchants has again named Forest Hills School District as one of the Best Communities for Music Education in the country.

Only 47 districts in Ohio and 750 districts in the nation earned this year's award for displaying an exceptionally high commitment to providing students with comprehensive music education.

Forest Hills students can begin playing an instrument in the 5th grade and starting next year, elementary music education will be more accessible to all students. Music classes that previously only took place prior to the school day will now be available during the day.

### Excellence in financial record keeping and sound accounting practices have again earned Forest Hills School District the distinguished Auditor of State Award for its 2018-2019 audit.

The Ohio auditor presents this award to local governments and school districts upon the completion of a financial audit. Entities that receive the award meet the criteria of a "clean" audit report including filing financial reports in a timely manner with the state auditor's office.





# FOREST HILLS STUDENTS AND TEACHERS STAY CONNECTED DURING REMOTE

# Learning



When Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's school closure mandate went into effect March 16, Forest Hills School District began delivering high-quality learning opportunities for all students remotely. The remote learning plan will continue through summer school. Teachers, students and parents have embraced creative ways to ensure all students can achieve success every day.

**Teachers and parents share below what remote learning has looked like for them over these past two months!**

## AYER

*One of the most positive aspects of remote learning has been the strength of the relationships we made this year. The connections with the kids and families made working through the first couple of weeks of this journey possible. Parents were so helpful in providing feedback, and it helped us develop a plan for remote learning that would work for the kids and their families. Without these strong relationships, it would have been far more difficult to make the best of this curveball that was sent our way!*

- Amy Feldkamp, teacher



## SUMMIT

*The team at Summit Elementary collaborates daily to create lessons and activities for students to stay engaged and motivated during remote learning. Students interact each day with our morning meeting sharing and have the option to join a weekly Google Meet for a live "Wednesday Workout." On Fridays, we meet as homerooms and do fun things like dress a certain way and do scavenger hunts.*

- Gena Shields, teacher



## ANDERSON

*I have used Google Hangouts as my main source of communication with students. The best part of teaching is seeing the students, so I have tried to find ways to have face-to-face conversations with the students. I have also used Google Hangouts for small group essay feedback sessions, as well as 'Coffee Shop.' Coffee Shop is something that we do once a quarter to share creative pieces that we have written.*

- David Lunn, teacher



## WILSON

*We close every meeting with an air "virtual hug" that we throw out and catch. Hugs are a part of life in almost everyone's family. Our classroom family is no exception, and we will practice being safe for ourselves and each other by giving socially distant hugs whenever needed!*

- Monica Taylor, teacher







## TURPIN

*I think the most important thing we can do for our students right now is be there for them. I always try to motivate my students with silly things like a candy bar, so this year that meant delivering to mailboxes. Dropping those off and hearing from students brought more joy to me than it did for any of them! A few weeks later, I dropped off 46 yard signs that I then painted "Home of AP Calc Star"—my term of endearment for them. I think it helped fulfill my ultimate goal, which is for them to know I'm thinking of them and I care about them so much*

**- Lindsey Stelzer, teacher**



## NAGEL

*We've had book trains, fire drills, pranks, trivia, an Outsiders read-aloud, bring-your-pet-to-school day (even if that pet is a toad), lunch bunches, breakfast parties, and of course LEARNING! We've learned just how important building a sense of community online is for student engagement and motivation.*

**- Allison Hardman, teacher**



## WILSON

*We've all learned the importance of being flexible. Routine is great for everyone in our house, but we've learned to embrace change, adapt and go with the flow. I think it's helped decrease previous anxieties. I've seen an increase in my kids independence. I've started to give them several tasks at once and they choose the order and pace. They enjoy the ownership and I enjoy the independence.*

**- Sarah McGough, parent**



## MADDUX

*There is no doubt that Aiden misses his kindergarten classmates and Mrs. Foltz, so the Google Meets are the highlight of his mornings! His favorite parts of remote learning are when Mrs. Foltz calls on him to share his work and also when he gets feedback on his classwork that we upload. What I love most is seeing the validation on his face when he learns how to spell a new word or if he counts accurately during a math exercise. It's fun to experience "school" with him during the day and see how he engages with his classmates and teacher.*

**- Elizabeth Erby, parent**



## SHERWOOD

*Our students have been utilizing a variety of technology tools to enhance remote learning and to help us stay connected. Each week, students take part in "Weekly Connections" using digital platforms such as Padlet, Flipgrid and Google Meet. Our goal is to use this time to connect with one another and have fun!*

**- Julie Thorp, teacher**



## MERCER

*During remote learning, we have learned that being flexible and empathic with students and families is key. Teachers don't see or know exactly the stress some families are going through right now, so we have to be flexible and empathic with students and the work they turn in.*

**- Minoli Burch, teacher**





# FHSD, FHFE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS DISTRIBUTE SUPPLIES TO LOCAL

# families

Collaborations between the district and its community partners connected Forest Hills families with boxed lunches, groceries and toiletries during the building closures.

The Forest Hills Foundation for Education, in partnership with FHSD, 7 Hills Church and Inter Parish Ministry, organized the packing and distribution of hundreds of Power Packs to local families. Each package contained essential shelf-stable food items and toiletries for local families in need of assistance.

**“By the first week in May, we had already distributed more than 1,000 Power Packs throughout Forest Hills,”** said Dee Stone, Forest Hills Foundation for Education executive director. “People moved quickly to unite and provide donations of their time and supplies. This is another example of what makes our community so special, and the Forest Hills Foundation for Education was honored to be able to help meet this important need.”

**In addition to Power Packs, Forest Hills School District provided more than 7,400 boxed student lunches by early May.**

“Parents could pick-up these items, but many of the student lunches and Power Packs were delivered directly to families by school bus, thanks to the help of our transportation department and other staff members who volunteered their time,” said John Eckert, coordinator of special programs. “In total, we had more than 140 employees volunteer to help in any way possible.”

District volunteers also delivered more than 250 grocery boxes to local families, in partnership with the Freestore Foodbank and Inter Parish Ministry.



Forest Hills distributed nearly 800 laptops to students during the closure and a telecommunications company provided free internet to families in need of assistance.

Forest Hills School District donated personal protective equipment to local first responders, including goggles, gloves and UV light sterilizers.

## We're in this TOGETHER

The district's maintenance and custodial departments thoroughly sanitized all buses and buildings, including re-sanitizing weekly following the lunch distribution. Custodians continued to check all buildings daily, cut grass and finish spring cleaning, conduct storm cleanup, and complete a long list of maintenance tasks still needed during the closures.

In May, FHSD schools held socially distanced caravans to spread positivity and celebrate students! Following carefully organized routes and led by school buses, teachers drove through neighborhoods to spread messages of encouragement and support.





PRIORITIZE MENTAL HEALTH  
AND WELLNESS OVER

# Summer Break

Summer is a fantastic time to improve or enhance your family's self-care habits. With long sunny days and warmer weather, there are more opportunities than ever to switch up your routine and enjoy what the season has to offer!

Our Forest Hills School District counselors hope their self-care checklist will help you remain mindful, stay healthy, and continue to take care of yourself and your loved ones over the break.

1

## DITCH THE COUCH AND RELAX OUTDOORS

Pick out something from your reading list (or an audio book!) and set up camp on a shady patch of grass.

2

## FOCUS ON HEALTHY HABITS

Choose healthy foods to eat, drink plenty of water, sleep eight hours a night, and remember to limit your screen time!

3

## TRY SOMETHING NEW

Now is the time to try something you've always wanted to try. Dive into a new passion—such as gardening, learning a new instrument, or even learning to knit!

4

## TIDY ONE SMALL SPACE

It's time to tackle that junk drawer! Even having just one space clean and free of clutter can help you feel calmer.

5

## MAKE A SUMMER FEEL-GOOD PLAYLIST

Bring on the summer tunes! Music can be an effortless way to improve your mood and motivate you to get moving. Bonus points for listening while exercising or cleaning!

6

## GET ACTIVE

Getting those endorphins flowing can help calm your mind and improve your mood. Think about doing something outdoors like hiking, walking, tennis or swimming. Just don't forget your sunscreen and bug spray!

7

## START OR CONTINUE A JOURNAL

Writing can be a great way to express how you feel and check-in with your emotions. Or, it can just be a place to doodle or draw. Make it whatever you need.

8

## RECONNECT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Call an old friend—or even a grandparent, aunt or uncle. Spend quality time with family.

9

## GO EXPLORING

Pull out a map and find a new area of town or park that you haven't been to yet. Remember to continue to follow the state's current social distancing mandates.

10

## STAY PRESENT

Try a meditation or mindfulness exercise. Practice gratitude by making a list of 10 things you are thankful for!

You can use these ideas or make your own self-care checklist this summer. Even small changes to your routine can improve your self-care practice and your overall mood. Try to focus on new ways to be active, get outside and get involved with your community. Make this summer a season of self-care!





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# *Congratulations*

TO THE

# CLASS

# OF 2020

ON MAY 31, ANDERSON AND TURPIN GRADUATES WERE CELEBRATED DURING TWO VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONIES. TO VIEW THESE SPECIAL CEREMONIES, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.FORESTHILLS.EDU](http://WWW.FORESTHILLS.EDU).