

Community *Connection*

Winter 2020



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From the desk of the Superintendent

Forest Hills School District enthusiastically and uncompromisingly follows a very clear vision: to strive to ensure success for all students. Students are perpetually at the forefront of everything we do and the decisions we make - and I believe our devotion for engaging the 7,200 children in our district is reflected through their outstanding accomplishments, state and national accolades, and strong support felt community-wide.



This school year, we asked the Forest Hills community to support a 4.7-mill operating levy to maintain the district's excellent programs and services. On November 5, nearly 58% of Forest Hills voters approved this request. On behalf of the Board of Education, staff and myself - thank you. Funding from this levy will directly support students and classroom instruction. Forest Hills will continue to prioritize personalized learning opportunities, rigorous curriculum including advanced placement courses and global language, 21st-century technology in classrooms, target class sizes, a wide array of extracurricular options, and health and wellness resources. However, it's important to note that the district remains steadfast in its commitment to provide a great education at an efficient cost to taxpayers.

As we usher in a new year and decade, I would like to reflect on a few recent achievements in Forest Hills.

Anderson High School again earned the 2019 Momentum Award from the Ohio Department of Education and is the *only* high school in Hamilton County to receive this award four years in a row! The Momentum Award recognizes schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the year. Turpin High School was recognized by Newsweek magazine as one of the best schools nationwide for STEM education, and Nagel Middle School has again been named an Ohio "School to Watch," for being high-performing and growth-oriented.

The Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA) recently nominated Nagel, Sherwood Elementary and Summit Elementary for "Hall of Fame" awards, which reflects the positive impact that the schools have on students and the community. OAESA nominated Ayer Elementary Assistant Principal Heather Hoelle for the Outstanding Assistant Principal of the Year award. Sherwood Principal Dan Hamilton, Principal Michele Sulfsted of Summit Elementary, and Principal Jodi Davidson of Mercer Elementary are nominated for the Ohio National Principal of the Year award. We are extremely honored to have these incredible individuals working in our schools!

Additionally, the state attorney general recently announced that Forest Hills has earned a safety grant worth more than \$32,000. The district will use these funds for facility-based security updates (cameras, keyless locks, etc.), staff and school resource officer training, and distribution of safety educational materials. The safety and security of students and staff is a top priority for the district, and we are eager to use these funds to continue to expand our efforts at no cost to the taxpayer.

I hope you enjoy reading through the next few pages and learning more about the outstanding work taking place in our classrooms. I wish you and your family a happy new year and I look forward to a successful 2020!

Respectfully,

Scot T. Prebles
Superintendent

scotprebles@foresthills.edu
231-3600

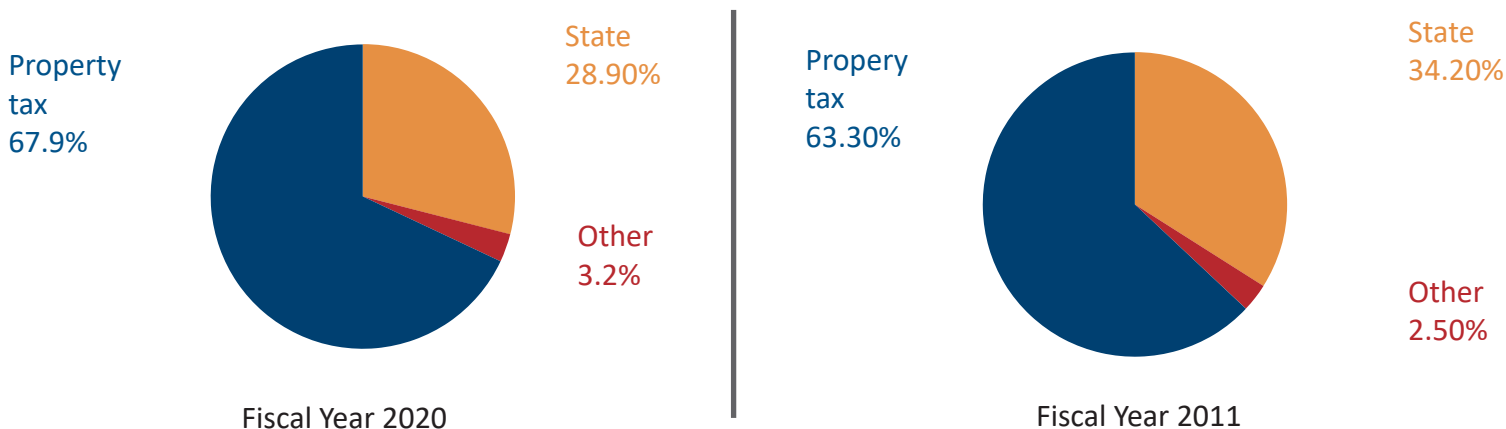
From the desk of the Treasurer



Many thanks are due to our supportive community for approving the 4.7-mill levy in November of 2019. This levy will allow the district to continue to provide the high-quality, affordable education our Forest Hills community deserves. The Board of Education approved the updated five-year forecast that includes the new levy dollars and \$1.5 million of reductions, first implemented in our current school year, at their November 2019 meeting. That forecast presents a healthy, stable financial picture through 2022, as promised during the levy campaign. The district will continue to evaluate and analyze our programs and services for cost efficiencies and improved instructional and operational practices.

Our district is primarily funded through the local support of its taxpayers as the state continues to reduce funding in districts they consider wealthy, such as the Forest Hills School District. When the district's new tax levy is fully realized, local revenue sources will comprise 67.9% of our general operating funds, with 28.9% received from the state and 3.2% from various funding sources including student fees, facility rental fees and Medicaid reimbursements.

This is 5.3% drop in the percentage of funding the state contributed to our general fund over our last two levy cycles. Prior to the previous levy passed in 2012, the state funded 34.2% of our General Fund. We do not expect this downward trend to improve in the near future.



Forest Hills has been responsible fiscal stewards of its public funds by cutting costs and achieving efficiencies at every opportunity, while continuing to provide a high-quality education. We appreciate the continued support of our community and we are fortunate the residents of Forest Hills value education and the students we serve.

Please keep an eye out for a special financial update, to be sent from my office, in the fall months. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to me with questions regarding the district's financial performance.

Sincerely,

Alana Cropper
Treasurer/

alanacropper@foresthills.edu
CFO 231-3600

AHS students present to Governor DeWine about district's drug prevention efforts

A group of Anderson High School students recently met with Ohio Governor Mike DeWine to discuss their role in the school district's drug prevention efforts. The event, which was held in Norwood, also included Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction Paola DeMaria, Senator Rob Portman, Senator Cecil Thomas and members of the governor's cabinet.

The Anderson students are part of the school's Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT) and recently presented to students at Nagel Middle School about why drug prevention is extremely important.

"As student athletes, we have a special opportunity to talk to the middle school and elementary school students who might see us as at our sports camps or in the community," said AHS junior Sammie Engel.

"If they see us out making the right

choice, it's really important," she said.

"It's cool to stay on your own path and give back to other kids to make sure they go down a similar path that you went down," said senior Bennett Snyder.

During the special meeting, the students participated in various tabletop exercises and spoke directly to

Governor DeWine about what makes Forest Hills School District successful in its drug prevention work.

"We talked about what makes us different than other schools here and a lot of it came back to that 'AHS is family' mindset. We feel that we're so trusted and loved in our school. If we ever have a problem, they asked us who we could go to. Most of the time we said teachers because we feel that each and every student has a teacher in our school that they can talk to," said Snyder.

Forest Hills School District provides drug prevention programming in each of its nine schools.



AHS students pose with Governor DeWine

Engaging:

The Forest Hills Bands was recently recognized as one of the top 30 bands in the nation! The students earned a semi-finalist title at the Bands of America National Championships in November. The popular program is a joint effort between Turpin High School and Anderson High School and proudly represents the Forest Hills School District as a whole.



We are

Empowering:

The Ohio Department of Education recently recognized all six of the district's elementary schools for outstanding PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). PBIS empowers students by improving social, emotional and academic outcomes. Several FHSD schools have earned this recognition multiple times.

Turpin, FHSD staff recognized for excellent STEM education

At Turpin High School, it's not uncommon to see students in Mrs. Burton's popular Human Body Systems class wearing gloves and goggles as they dive into hands-on lessons. From traditional dissections to building organs and tissues on a skeletal mannequin, the students put themselves in the shoes of a biomedical professionals to solve real-world medical cases.

Human Body Systems is just one of the various STEM related courses offered in FHSD to prepare students for future careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

"We have a lot of really interesting STEM classes and classes that other schools don't have, like forensic science," said Turpin senior Ariana McTernan. "I've doubled up on science classes the last two years because we have a lot of really cool classes."

This fall, Turpin High School was named one of the best high schools for STEM education in the nation by Newsweek Magazine. Teachers from both Turpin and Anderson recently received The Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education and Student Research from the Ohio Academy of Science. The Governor's Thomas Edison Award recognizes Ohio schools and teachers who stimulate scientific student research and extend opportunities beyond traditional classroom activities.

"The teachers are very passionate about their content area, but more importantly, passionate about helping our students develop into the best versions of themselves. We want our students to leave high school with the skills needed to become the innovative leaders of the future," said THS teacher Lindsay Burton.

Student Carly O'Rourke says the



THS students complete dissection lab in Ms. Burton's class

classes she has taken as a Spartan will help her reach her future goal of becoming a nurse.

"Being able to learn about the body and getting access to these hands-on experiments keeps me more interested," she said. "We have a lot of cool materials, we have Project Lead the Way, and we do a lot of interactive projects. It's fun."

"It is so important to provide them with STEM opportunities because they promote independent thinking and problem-solving. Many of the top careers of their generation don't even exist yet and the ones that do are very much STEM-based," said Burton.

FHSD!



Excelling:

Ten Forest Hills high school students are National Merit Scholars! The scholars were recognized for this special achievement during the September board meeting. Six of the students earned Commended status, which places them among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.6 million students who took the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Four FHSD students are Semi-Finalists and scored in the top 1% nationwide.



Nagel Middle School launches Hope Squad program

A new group of leaders at Nagel Middle School are on a mission to identify and help students who are struggling with mental health – or simply need a friend to talk to. The group, comprised seventh and eighth grade students, marks the school's first Hope Squad.

Hope Squad is a student-to-student suicide prevention program that educates and empowers young people to see warning signs amongst their friends. The nationwide program was launched last year at Anderson and Turpin.

"I think it's important for students to have someone they can vent to," said Nagel 7th grader and Hope Squad member, Quinn Kueper. "Even if it's not a counselor, just to have a peer they can vent to. Not everyone has that resource."

Students nominate their peers to have the opportunity to join Hope Squad. Nagel's squad includes 43 seventh and eighth-grade students; all of whom have undergone potentially life-saving training such as "Question, Persuade, and Refer," also called "QPR."

Teacher and Hope Squad advisor JT Shelton says the middle school has embraced the program.

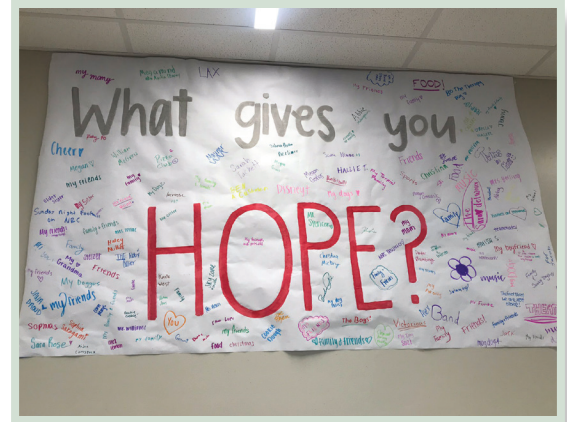
"It's really kind of a heavy thing; it's a lot of responsibility and it stems from things that can be kind of dark or taboo. But these kids really understand the importance of it," he said.

A special week-long kick-off called "Hope Week" officially introduced Nagel's student body to the program. Students wore special t-shirts that identified themselves as members of the Hope Squad. They planned special activities including a photo booth, scavenger hunt and sidewalk decorating to generate excitement and educate others about the purpose of Hope Squad.

According to the Hope Squad members, their work is part of a long-term goal to change the negative stigma surrounding mental health and ultimately make it easier for young people to reach out for help. It's not a change that will happen overnight, but these difference-makers are confident that they're taking steps in the right direction.

"The thing that we feel is our big vision for Hope Squad this year is to say it's OK to not be OK. To change that culture to 'I can ask for help if I need it.' We've told our Hope Squad people that our goal isn't to get out there and talk to everybody; our goal is to change the culture and give people a place to go to talk to someone when things are hard," said Kathy Roberts, Nagel counselor and Hope Squad advisor.

"It's really cool to be able to say, this wasn't something we saw before but now we see it now, so now we need to address it," said 7th grade Hope Squad member Connor Bergman.



High school Hope Squad members write inspiring messages during Hope Week



NMS Hope Squad members celebrate their inaugural Hope Week

➔ For more information about Hope Squad, visit [HopeSquad.com](https://www.hopesquad.com).

Forest Hills & FHFE bring new team sport to students

Forest Hills School District and Forest Hills Foundation for Education are launching a new district sport that requires a different set of skills. E-sports is online, competitive, team-based gaming. Founded by students and teachers, Forest Hills E-sports will be a Turpin and Anderson combined experience.

“With the new E-sports team, there is finally a team I am interested in joining,” said Turpin student Bennett Finn. “I have never been the fittest person, so something that accommodates my ability to play video games has always been my dream.”

The Forest Hills E-sports team will engage in many career-connected activities and skills, ranging from graphic design, IT, audio/visual via live streaming, and public speaking. The team will participate in a league, E-sports Ohio, which offers potential scholarships and establishes connections between FHSD and other Ohio schools.



A FHSD student participates in E-sports try-outs



FHSD students practice their E-sports skills

The Forest Hills E-sports team is made possible through generous support from the Forest Hills Foundation for Education (FHFE) and is part of ongoing effort from FHFE to support innovation in FHSD schools. In addition to E-sports, the organization provides virtual reality equipment at Anderson and Turpin, supports robotics teams at the secondary level, and funds Destination Imagination for elementary students and Nagel, among other important activities.

"E-sports is an activity that more students are participating in but has not been recognized as a traditional sport," said Dee Stone, FHFE executive director. "Having an E-sports team will help engage those students so that they too can be part of a team."

The league begins in February. To learn more about the new team, follow them on Instagram at ForestHillsESports. You can also look more about the Forest Hills Foundation for Education at www.FHFE.org.

FHSD receives perfect score in ODE special education report



Forest Hills School District received the highest possible score in this year's Special Education Rating from the Ohio Department of Education.

The annual rating evaluates the implementation of federal requirements for students with disabilities and is calculated based on data submitted through the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The 2019 rating was calculated using data from the 2017-2018 school year.

“We have incredibly dedicated and highly-trained staff members who serve our students and empower them to achieve success,” said Betsy Ryan, director of teaching and learning. “This rating strongly reflects the quality support that Forest Hills students receive every day and we are proud of the work that is taking place within the district.”

The rating measures key indicators that include reading and math proficiency rates, early childhood and secondary transitions and evaluations.



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It's time to register the Class of 2033!

Parents and guardians of children who will be five years old by August 1 can register their child for full-day or half-day kindergarten options now through February 21.

Parents can complete the first step in the registration process by providing student information online at www.ForestHills.edu/departments/registration.html.

Once a parent completes the online portion of the registration process, they should attend a Kindergarten Round-Up event to provide required documents for registration: parent/guardian driver's license, child's current immunization records, child's official birth certificate, custody papers (if applicable), and proof of residency (mortgage deed, rental/lease agreement). A \$75 deposit (check only please) is also required for all-day kindergarten registration. This deposit will be applied toward the program tuition.

Round-Up events will be held on February 13 and February 20 from 4 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Parents need to attend only one Round-Up event, held at the student's school of attendance. It is preferred that Round-Up events are parent-only events to help expedite the registration process. Parents who cannot make the February Round-Up events should complete the online registration and then call Debbie Conover, registrar, at 231-3600 to make an appointment to provide the required documentation.

For more information on the district's kindergarten program, visit www.ForestHills.edu/kindergarten.html.



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