



The Wigwam

Southern Local School District Newsletter

Winter Edition 2020

SLBOE Begins 2020 with New Board Members

The Southern Local Board of Education kicked off 2020 with new board members as Patty Exline and Rodney Edmiston were sworn into office.

Exline and Edmiston took the oath during the Jan. 8 reorganization meeting, succeeding Jay Cole and Michael Abraham in the positions. The board then respectively elected Kip Dowling and Linda Morris to lead as president and vice president for the remainder of the year and approved policies and matters related to operations. The session was followed by a brief tax budget hearing where District Treasurer Greg Sabato said figures for 2020-21 would be sent to the Columbiana County Budget Commission.

"The only things that are outstanding is the bond retirement fund and classroom facilities. We'll probably have the bond paid off in December for \$995,000," Sabato added. "The classroom facilities fund expires in two years and we use it for operational replacements in the building."

He cited the outdated boiler system as well as roofing and equipment that are nearing the end of their lifespan.

"We have a 22-year-old roof and its economic life [ends in] less than 24 months. It's never easy to plan for [upgrades] but we do what we can."

The board concluded its trifecta of meetings with its first regular session of the year and heard updates from school leaders about planned projects and operational matters.

Southern Local High School Assistant Principal Ron Sines said a new Tattletale wireless alarm system is being added which would inform officials of emergencies in the building. The portable system provides two buttons for teachers and staff to alert school administrators and law enforcement, and Sines said the first would text administrators' phones if help was needed to deal with an issue in the building while the second would contact safety forces.

"We're looking to get it for each teacher



The Southern Local Board of Education reorganized for 2020 and swore in Patty Exline and Rodney Edmiston as the newest members. The board also recognized January as School Board Recognition Month and pictured are, front from left, Exline and board Vice President Linda Morris. Back: Edmiston, John Sawyer and board President Kip Dowling.

and it's instant and wireless and can be programmed into the fire and sheriff's departments," Sines continued, saying it would also alert the school resource officer, administrators and board office.

Superintendent Tom Cunningham noted that it would provide another resource for enhanced security.

"We put in schoolSAFEid, which is a neat resource, but when people are scanned in they are in the office. We're looking at other programs [for further security]."

Oklahoma-based schoolSAFEid is a privately owned company which specializes in cloud-based identification software, both for visitor management systems and

generating printable student ID cards. Southern Local recently acquired the system to track students and visitors each time they enter and leave the building. Users simply scan driver's licenses and state identification cards in a kiosk inside the school offices and it also can issue physical badges and digital visitor ID's, the latter of which are kept on users' phones if they are regularly in the building.

Both passes can be scanned when visitors leave and the technology also texts teachers when a parent checks in through the system. The key is to help keep track of anyone who visits the schools while also boosting security and efficiency for staff.

Speaker Christopher Milo Returns to SLHS

Professional speaker Christopher Milo brought his message back to Southern Local High School on Jan. 10 and addressed such topics as bullying and making good choices.

The Chagrin Falls-based speaker and concert pianist has made regular trips to Salineville since fall and plans to do so for the remainder of the school year. Not only does he interact with students at Southern but he has ventured to football games during their successful season and cheered them on, plus he has worked with school leaders as an advisor. Milo has been visiting schools, universities, churches and businesses for the past 13 years and has spoken to roughly 500,000 students and school officials during that timeframe. He has blends his messages with stories about his own life, namely his six-month ordeal as a paraplegic in 1992 who was told he would never walk again, but he also touches upon bullying and stresses the importance of values and good character.

Styled with his trademark sky-high Mohawk, he most recently met with teachers and staff and visited classrooms before speaking with high school pupils in the cafeteria.

"I'm here in this building because each and every one of you matters. I'm here to help and I'm here to offer assistance you might need," he told a group of sophomores during one of his gatherings.

He uses his lectures to instill his 13 Messages from Milo (13MFM) mentoring program, which aims to positively impact the entire school, cultivate a school atmosphere where students are eager to learn and attend classes, excite the student body by giving them purpose which creates hope and a "can-do" attitude and instill kindness. The 13 messages are to be positive, be genuine, accept, love one another, listen, communicate, work together, be curious, inspire, coach, use your talents, be creative and trust. Part of his latest discussion centered on his teenage son who, after



Professional speaker Christopher Milo returned to Southern Local High School to speak with students about his 13 Messages from Milo motivational program and inspire them to live positive lives. Milo met with students and teachers throughout the day and stressed the importance of attending school and making good choices to ultimately lead successful lives. He plans to return to the school district regularly for the remainder of the academic year.

being bullied for his weight, decided to get fit. Not only did he lose the weight but his grades improved in the process.

Milo said the purpose of his talks was to get the students motivated to live more positive lives.

"I'm not here for me. This is for you. Every little bit of this is for you," he said. "What is important is tomorrow. Yesterday is gone; your tomorrow is what matters to me. It's my belief that if we applied the 13 Messages from Milo to your daily life, it will make a difference."

He continued that his goal wasn't to preach to the youth but to inspire them to succeed, and part of that success is going to school.

"Being here is half the battle. You need to be here and on time. This year is 2020

and this is a new decade. For 2020, you look at things with a new lens."

He told the youth to think of someone to apologize to and someone to forgive, adding that his message had less to do with academics and more to do with life in general.

"We have to be intentional about our choices. Once we align our hearts, everything else will fall into place. If you want things to change for you, you need to change you."

He also encouraged the youth to seek help from teachers when necessary and to know that school faculty truly had their best interests at heart.

"There is so much opportunity out there. Go to school, get good grades, graduate and go get it," he concluded.

Schools' Food Collection Benefits Village Pantry

Students and faculty supported the Southern Community Center's food pantry this Christmas with a little friendly competition among classes.

The Touchdown Club Football Boosters coordinated a Battle of the Classes food drive to entice students to contribute non-perishable items to stock the pantry and feed local needy families. Club trustee Kelly Malone said the food drive began after Thanksgiving break and concluded Dec. 19 with 1,324 items gathered, while the goal was to engage students and give back to the community.

"We had the food pantry open up and a lot of organizations were challenging each other," she said. "The girls' basketball

team challenged the boys' basketball team, and that team challenged the wrestlers who then challenged the band. We had already decided to do a Battle of the Classes to see who can bring in the most items. We got a list from [center director Scott Hart] on what was needed and every Friday the Touchdown Club collects them and delivers them to the pantry."

The buildings were divided into grades PreK-6 and 7-12 and the top collecting classes received a pizza party as a reward in January.

(Continued on Page 4 as PANTRY)

Sensory Space Soothes Students

Students at Southern Local Elementary School now have a place of tranquility to help them concentrate in the classroom.

Fourth-grade intervention specialist Jessica Coleman established a sensory area and calm down corner last year and is expanding the site with funding from a \$600 Best Practice Grant through the Jefferson County Educational Service Center.

Coleman said the site is open to all elementary students and offers room for some respite when dealing with emotions, behaviors and regulation. The goal is to help them return to class so they can complete their studies without further distraction.

"I began at the end of the [school] year and worked on it through the summer," she said. "I felt like we had kids with some behavioral issues and they needed somewhere to calm down so they could return to class."

A section of the resource room has been designated as a calm-down corner and features soft lighting, pillows, a "choices" wall with techniques to help relax them, as well as fidget items, stress balls, books, coloring pages, Play Doh, puzzles and more. The JCESC mini-grant has helped her procure a weighted blanket and soothing LED projection light, plus she plans to add bean bag chairs and sensory pads to make the corner more comfortable. Coleman also has a portable "Chill Zone" to use in the classroom and said either space could be used for preschoolers to sixth-grade students.

She said calm down areas can also be



Southern Local Elementary School has a designated sensory area and calm down corner to help soothe students when they feel overwhelmed. Soft lighting, pillows, books, puzzles and other items are available to relax them so they can concentrate in the classroom. Pictured is fourth-grader Serenity Smith showcasing the space which is available to grades PreK-6.

used for students who need scheduled breaks, social or emotional specifically designed instruction or who benefit from check-ins throughout the day.

"It has been used and the kids love it," Coleman said.

Aiming High Program Returns in February

The Family Recovery Center's Aiming High program returns to Southern Local Elementary School in February to teach youngsters how to stay on the right path.

Representatives from the center's education department will be on hand from Feb. 5-26 to speak with kindergarten and second-grade classes about life skills, such as making good decisions, character building and knowing how to be a good person or citizen.

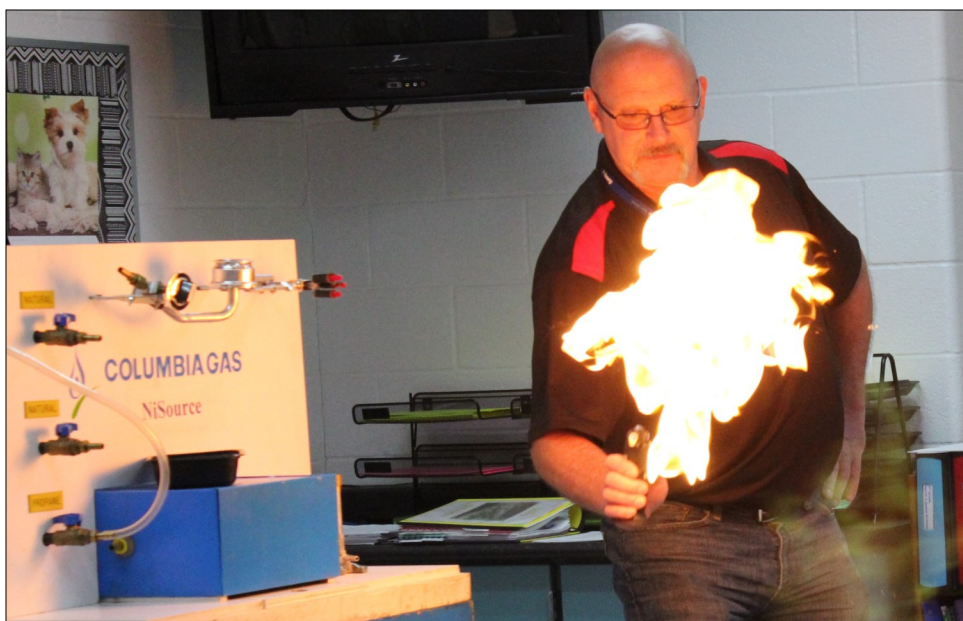
The kindergarten program will use Tuggles the Teddy Bear to discuss healthy choices, as well as peer pressure and being too good for drugs in an age-appropriate, interactive curriculum that promotes positive youth development as well as a life free of violence and drugs.

Second-grade students will gain an understanding about making good decisions, good friendships, peer pressure and safe and appropriate ways to use medicine with lessons featuring Wagner the Peaceful Pup. The goal is to avoid problem behavior while also building self-confidence and communication skills.

SLES Guidance Counselor Larry Rudloff said the Family Recovery Center was a longtime partner and representatives work with classes throughout the year.

"They've had a presence here and provided a program for well over 20 years. It's a free program offered by Family Recovery Center and they now have multiple topics."

Safety Demonstration



AT LEFT: Don Crum, a representative of Columbia Gas Ni Source, demonstrates how flammable a propane-filled bubble can become during a safety demonstration at Southern Local Elementary School. Crum and fellow company rep Justin Magestro were on hand to discuss natural gas characteristics and safety to fifth-grade classes as part of the school's Safe Student/Healthy Student initiative.

Southern Included in Project R.E.A.C.H. Grant

Southern Local High School is among four rural schools collaborating in a special environmental education initiative through Project R.E.A.C.H.

The Southern Local, Lisbon, United Local and Crestview School Districts will split an estimated \$68,830 for Project R.E.A.C.H. (Rural Education to Advance Clean Habitats), with \$40,563 provided through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Columbiana County Educational Service Center giving a \$28,267 match. Southern Local Schools Superintendent Tom Cunningham said CCESC officials wrote the grant application and SLHS will use its portion for cross-curricular projects to benefit primarily sophomore students.

"This is the first time we received the grant," Cunningham said. "The whole idea is to have project-based learning where students are trying to solve problems or issues."

According to the grant application, the

project is critical because students lack conservation skills to be good stewards of water and changing water quality has caused the Hellbender Salamander to become an endangered species. Project R.E.A.C.H. allows students to study the impact of water quality on species habitat with environmental experts, plus it would provide professional development for teachers on applying STEM to water quality and habitat preservation.

Teachers and students will conduct field studies to gather and analyze data and they will visit local waterways such as Highlandtown State Park, Beaver Creek State Park, the Beaver Creek Wildlife Center and local ponds and streams. Among the experts involved in the project are representatives of the OEPA, the Ohio State University Extension Office, SilverApple and the Columbiana County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Twenty middle school teachers from four schools will participate in profession-

al development while 400 students will be guided on field trips by experts to gather and analyze data, form a hypothesis and consider alternatives. Students will also learn to collaborate in teams to develop solutions and alternatives that consider conservation practices affecting water quality and species habitat considering feasibility, economic impact and practicality.

Their research and findings will be featured at a symposium that is open to parents and the public and will feature both oral and visual presentations.

Cunningham said Southern students will also incorporate math and English/Language Arts into their projects and hone their public speaking skills at the symposium.

"We're really looking forward to the hands-on learning and being able to do activities that are cross-curricular," Cunningham concluded. "It will help us down the road to do more activities like that."

Funding Benefits Young Author's Conference at SLES

Southern Local Elementary School teacher Tonyea Kellison is instilling creativity among students in her school and a recent windfall will help procure plans to inspire young writers.

Kellison, who instructs technology at SLES, received a \$250 teacher's grant from the Columbiana County Retired Teachers Association to conduct a Young Authors Conference this spring. The program includes a visit from a published author who will meet with students and advise them on ways to bring their imagination to life.

"I had written this grant because we had a Young Author's Conference and I'd like to bring it back," she said during a recent school board meeting. "I'd like to bring it back on a lower scale."

Last April, SLES hosted Tricia Springstubb, a Cleveland-based author who has published more than 20 children's books during her career. Springstubb conducted exercises and a question-and-answer segment, plus she visited classrooms where students

shared stories they wrote, illustrated and published and each pupil received a signed copy of one of her works. The program is based on a similar event conducted across the county and the school decided to have an event of its own. Kellison's previous project was funded by a Best Practices Grant she received through the Jefferson County Educational Service Center and the goal was to encourage literacy. Meanwhile, she planned to contact an author to potentially conduct a daylong workshop with first-to-third-grade students in the spring.

"We're going to have students write books and publish them," she said. "They can share their stories with the author and we'll do a workshop on bookmaking and being excited about books."

Southern Local Superintendent Tom Cunningham commended Kellison for her work in obtaining the funds and coordinating the project.

"Mrs. Kellison did a great job," Cunningham said.

Pantry ————— **(Continued from Page 2)**

"We thought it would be something nice to do to get kids involved in a way to give back," Malone added. "It goes to the Southern Community Center of Salineville and we hoped to give enough for at least 100 meals for Christmas."

Meanwhile, Hart was grateful for the assistance, saying the site just opened at 34 Washington St. next to the Salineville Volunteer Fire Department. Since then, it has been stocking shelves to fill a growing need.

"I think it's great. The faculty members volunteered at the last distribution and also made donations," Hart said.

Distribution was held Dec. 21 for the holidays, but it is

normally slated the fourth Saturday of the month. He said the number of people assisted has grown over the past few months from 85 households to 118, while he expects it to rise even further this month. Turkeys were provided through local churches and Malone said Southern Local classes and groups donated potatoes, stuffing, sugar, flour to cake mix. Meanwhile, school organizers hoped to continue the program each year.

"We hope to do this as an annual event," Malone noted. "It helps all of our kids realize the importance of giving. I want to thank everybody for their support."