



The South Westerner

An annual report
Fall 2025



A Message from Leadership

A Message from Mr. Randy Banks and Mr. Chris Boso

Dear SWCS Community,

Each fall, our South Westerner Annual Report serves as a means to keep our community engaged as to the happenings of their school system. In the pages to follow, we hope to give you a snapshot of the district heading into 2025 as to keep you informed about academic growth and instructional support in our vibrant learning community.

From a financial perspective, and dating back to March of this year, there have been many moving parts and efforts at the state level as it pertains to property tax reform and changes to funding for public schools. In terms of funding, SWCS has proudly not been to the ballot to ask residents for additional operating dollars or levies since 2009 - stretching what was originally a four-year promise now into its 16th year as good stewards of community support. While there are still many moving parts as to the full extent of financial cuts to public schools through the recently approved state budget (House Bill 96), we remain resolved to do all within our means to continue to be fiscally responsible for as long as we can to maximize the operational expenditures necessary to educate students.

As we reflect on another year of successes, we are proud to share that the Class of 2025 put together an incredible resume upon graduation this past May as they head out into the workforce and college. Of our May graduates, **27 students** enlisted in the U.S. armed forces, **more than \$38.6 million** in scholarship offers were awarded to students, and **9,401 college credits** were earned by 524 seniors over their four years with us. Furthermore, **21 students graduated with their associate degree** prior to walking across their high school graduation stage, and **543 students earned 2,241 industry-recognized credentials** during their SWCS career.

In terms of staffing, SWCS continues to be well-positioned as a place of tremendous opportunity - both personally and professionally - for those looking to make an impact in the life of a child through public education. This summer, we successfully came to an agreement with our certificated staff to solidify a framework for a new collaborative partnership through 2028. In terms of additional staffing, in the event you or someone you know is looking for a fresh start or to be on the same schedule as your school-aged children, grandchildren, or relatives, we encourage you to consider making "the smallest, big-place you can find" your next home from a career perspective! SWCS has many part-time and full-time positions still available. Visit www.swcsd.us/personnel.aspx for more information.

As we begin yet another academic campaign this fall, we look forward to building upon last year's successes guided by our new district mission - "*Endless opportunity. Infinite possibility.*" At SWCS we firmly believe the cornerstone of each community is a high-quality education and we are resolved this coming school year to continue increasing student achievement through the provision of endless opportunity. Thank you for your continued support and partnership and wishing a great start to the 2025-2026 school year to all this fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Randy Banks'.

Mr. Randy Banks
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christopher A. Boso'.

Mr. Chris Boso
President, SWCS Board of Education



Academic Achievement

27 
Military Enlistments



\$38.6 Million
Estimated Financial Scholarship Dollars Earned

Class of 2025 by the #'s



2,241
Industry Recognized
Credentials Earned



21
Associate Degrees Earned



9,401
College Credits Earned
by 524 Seniors during course of HS Career

Elementaries

In 2024, following legislative updates from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) and Governor Mike DeWine's ReadOhio initiative, the SWCS Board of Education adopted new instructional materials for grades K–6 that align with the Science of Reading. This initiative supports the district's ongoing commitment to improving literacy outcomes for all students.

The Science of Reading is a comprehensive, research-based approach to literacy that integrates phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension into instruction. Throughout the 2024–2025 school year, the SWCS Curriculum Department positioned our talented staff to thrive with these new learning materials through the delivery of engaging professional development that complements student growth and champions staff expertise. Now, the district is ready to fully implement the new materials and bring this valuable instruction to SWCS students.

Career Technical Education

As enrollment continues to grow at the South Western Career Academy, it is also expanding in all four high schools with new course offerings based on student interest and industry need! New 2025-2026 offerings include Drone Discovery, Introduction to Medical Terminology, Introduction to Entrepreneurship and more! Summer senior-only programs that are available to all SWCS students have also successfully been expanded **with more than 60 students** earning their Certified Nursing Assistant credential or Certified Premises Cabling and Fiber Optic Technician credentials this past June and July.

Our Work-based Learning (WBL) numbers this year were truly impressive!

- Overall WBL hours this past school year: **120,181.41 hours**
- **74% of CTE students** participated in WBL this year and 57% had 250 hours or more of work completed.

Did you know?

The top three incomes earned by SWCA students **before** graduating high school last year in their job placements were:

- \$39,120.00 (1,956 hours)
- \$35,010.00 (1,945 hours)
- \$33,592.00 (1,768 hours)

Middle Grades:

New in 2025! BizTown is coming to all students in fifth grade this fall! BizTown is a hands-on, simulated program where students are immersed in a fictional town to learn about financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship. The program combines classroom lessons with a visit to a miniature town where students work in various businesses, manage finances, and participate in a local economy. Additionally, all students taking Career Explorations in 7th grade will be attending Finance Park this year. Finance Park is a financial literacy program designed to help middle school students develop essential money management skills through a hands-on simulation. Students experience real-life scenarios of budgeting, saving, and spending within a simulated adult life.

High Schools:

New Year-Long Government Course comes to SWCS: All four traditional SWCS high schools are now offering a year-long government course to allow teachers to cover more content and give students the opportunity to explore civics in a more comprehensive manner beyond what time is traditionally afforded in a semester-only course. Students will have more opportunities to learn and engage with a wider range of topics due to the expanded course format. Finally, new math materials for grades 7-12 are on the horizon for implementation. Following a 2025-2026 school year that will be characterized by months of studying and learning with our professional staff, we are confident these new materials will eventually increase mathematical opportunities for our students in the years to come.

Graduation and Beyond

From college credits to Associate Degrees, high school students in the district are afforded many opportunities to get a jumpstart on their post-graduation endeavors. Last year, 21 seniors graduated with an Associate Degree (bringing our total to 45 associate degrees earned over the last three years). Finally, regarding our community's culminating achievement - graduation - the District's 4-year graduation rate (Class of 2024) is 89.9% and 5-year graduation rate is 92.7% (Class of 2023 cohort who graduated in 2024) bringing the combined graduation rate to a district all-time high of 91.0%.

*Calculated graduation rates are based on internal calculations and are subject to change when final percentages are released on the September 2025 state report card.

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www.swcsd.us

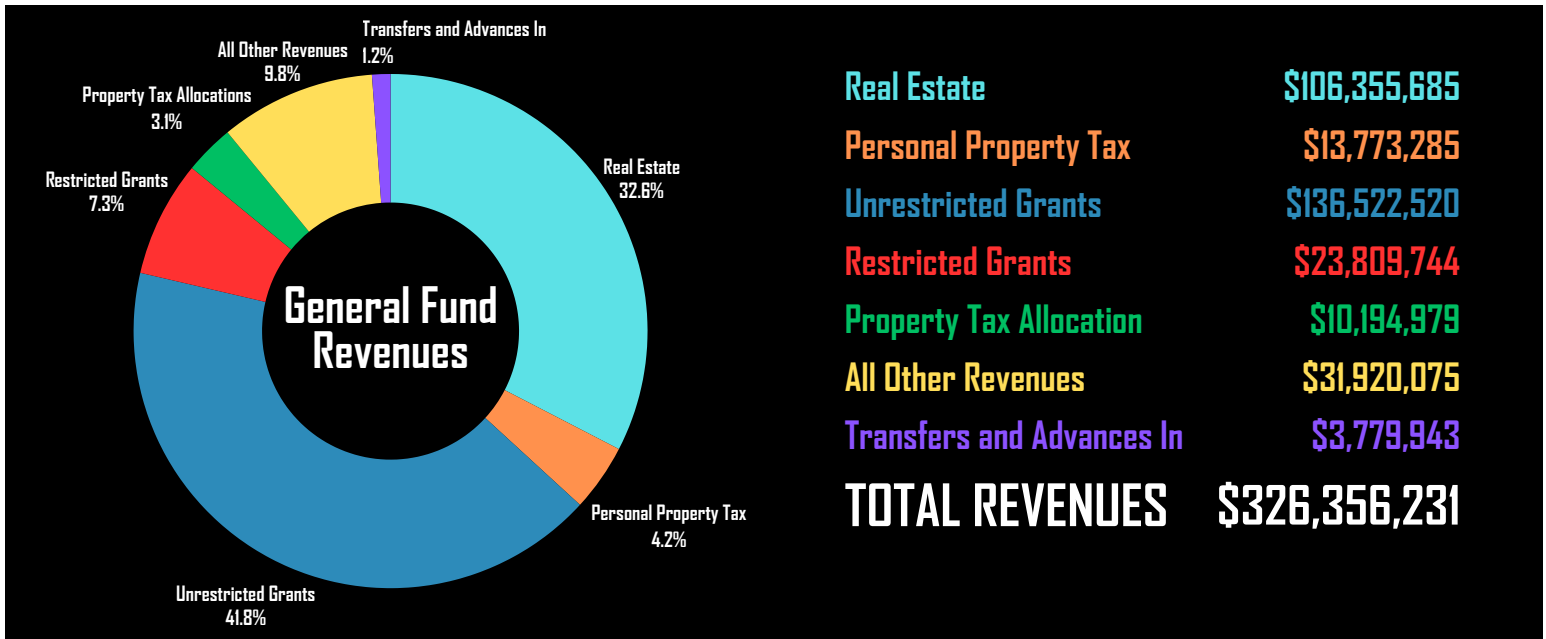
Fiscal Stewardship



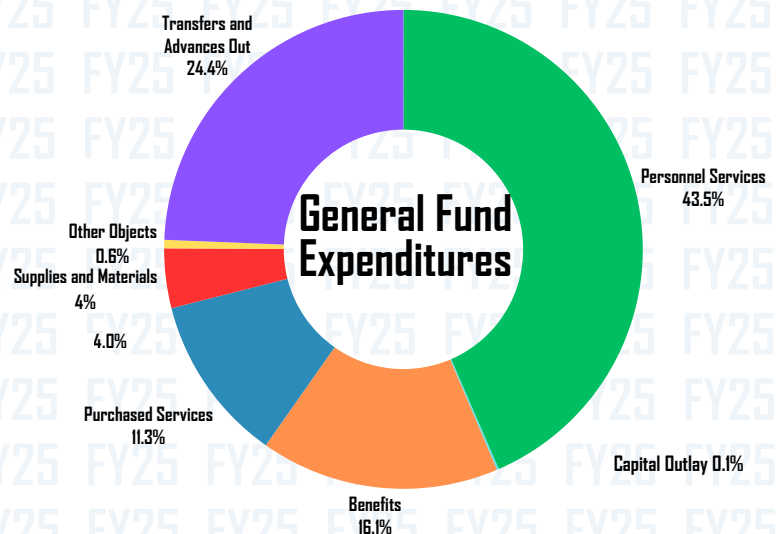
Overview of District Finances

Faced with many proposed legislative changes over the past five months, our district maintained its financial discipline and student-centered mission to end the 2024-2025 school year. Through thoughtful budgeting and a commitment to excellence, we ensured continued support for learning while protecting public resources. While expenditures did exceed revenues in FY25, such a difference can be directly tied to decreases in state funding that are still based on cost sets from the 2021-2022 fiscal year and do not account for inflation in 2025.

Despite these challenges, the district's fiscal stewardship was recognized once again in the spring of 2025, when the Treasurer's Office received the Ohio Auditor Award with Distinction. The honor highlights exemplary financial reporting, a commitment to exceptional ethical standards, and demonstrated fiscal responsibility and accountability. This extends the district's record to 16 consecutive years without additional ballot measures to increase taxes since 2009.



Personnel Services	\$191,598,243
Benefits	\$71,119,515
Purchased Services	\$49,761,747
Supplies and Materials	\$17,722,475
Capital Outlay	\$573,589
Other Objects	\$2,500,789
Transfers and Advances Out	\$107,347,776
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$440,624,134





Welcome Center

SWCS' newly rebranded Welcome Center moves to Southwest Blvd

The Welcome Center's move out of the South Western Career Academy to Brookpark comes following a period of significant growth at the SWCA and now allows for additional learning spaces and labs for 11th and 12th grade students in the years to come in Career-Tech.

New Welcome Center Address

2803 Southwest Blvd, Grove City, OH 43123

***Hours:* 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

For more information on the enrollment process or to start an online enrollment today, visit:

<https://www.swcsd.us/StudentEnrollmentCenter.aspx>.

If you wish to schedule an appointment, please contact our office at 614-801-6280.



Boys Lacrosse, Boys Volleyball come to SWCS in 2025-2026

South Western City Schools is thrilled to announce the addition of two exciting sports for the 2025-2026 school year: Boys Volleyball and Boys Lacrosse! This expansion marks a major milestone in our ongoing efforts to provide an array of athletic opportunities aligned to student needs.

These two new sports will be offered at all four high schools, allowing our students to explore new athletic passions and develop their skills in growing fields. The expansion also follows the recent additions of girls lacrosse and girls bowling last school year, further reflecting the district's commitment to offering opportunities that align with student interests. By introducing these programs, we are not only broadening our athletic offerings, but also fostering teamwork, discipline, and school spirit across our community.

We look forward to hosting you at an upcoming interscholastic contest this school year!





Endless Opportunity Infinite Possibility

A Branding Refresh Comes to SWCS in 2025

For the first time in nearly seven decades, South Western City Schools introduced a new district logo, namesake, and tagline - providing a modern update to a time-tested and robust educational standard for our 34 schools.

Prior to the rollout of the new branding in April, the district worked to assemble a comprehensive, community-sourced Brand Steering Committee made up of parents from all four high school feeder systems, the South Western Career Academy, the SWCS Council of PTAs, the South Western City Schools Educational Foundation, along with city and township representatives to unpack and shepherd this important work.

Our end goal was to develop a revitalized logo that unified our district while also honoring that neighborhood-driven feel and building identity that we have come to love and know here in South Western City Schools. From high school branded color schemes in the new SW logo and enhanced marketing efforts, we are committed to ensuring “Endless opportunity. Infinite possibility” to help students succeed for years to come.



Scan the QR Code to
Watch the Logo Release Video

A Little Encouragement Goes a Long Way

Meet the Voices Behind the East Franklin Elementary School Courage Hotline



This past spring, East Franklin Elementary School's first and second grade students proved that even the smallest voices can make a big impact. With the support of teachers Mrs. Kylee Snoke and Mrs. Abby Sweigart, these young changemakers launched the EFES Courage Hotline—a heartwarming initiative aimed at spreading positivity, encouragement, and hope.

The hotline features a series of motivational messages recorded by the students themselves, covering themes like being true to yourself, taking risks, facing fears, and persevering through challenges. Each message is a reminder that courage can come in many forms and, above else, encouragement can come from even the youngest among us.

Accessible to students, staff, and the wider community, the Courage Hotline offers a simple but powerful way to lift spirits. Whether someone needs a pep talk before a big moment, comfort during a hard day, or just a quick reason to smile, they can call (614) 801-8120 to hear a rotating selection of inspiring messages.

The EFES Courage Hotline is more than just a school project—it is a beautiful example of how empathy, creativity, and student voice can come together to make a meaningful difference.

www.swcsd.us



Paws on Patrol: SWCS Therapy Dogs Report for Duty



BO



LUNA

SWCS welcomed two new “staff members” to the district this past school year—four-legged ones, to be exact! Therapy dogs recently joined several SWCS schools as part of the district’s ongoing commitment to supporting student well-being and creating positive connections between school officials, students, and law enforcement.

Bo joined Central Crossing High School (CCHS) in January and his handler, Officer Pat Shaw of the Grove City Police Department (GCPD), accompanies him in his new role at the school.

Luna started training in February at Franklin Heights High School and her handler is Deputy Rachel Eads of the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office (FCSO).

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Jamie Lusher emphasized the importance of expanding this program, stating, “Our students face a variety of challenges, and we are

committed to providing resources that promote their mental health and emotional well-being. Expanding our therapy dog program in partnership with local law enforcement is an innovative way to connect with students and provide them with additional care and support.”

Therapy dogs are much more than comforting companions. They play a vital role in fostering emotional well-being, helping students feel more connected, and even supporting staff. Stay tuned for more updates on Bo and Luna’s adventures in SWCS!



New Faces, Familiar Support

Meet the SROs: Fostering a Legacy of Safety and Connection

School Resource Officers (SROs), currently serving in all four South Western City Schools high schools, have become an important part of the school community. In addition to providing safety support, they serve as trusted adults who build positive relationships with students and contribute to a welcoming school environment.

In February, Westland High School welcomed Deputy Heather Smith as its new full-time SRO. Deputy Smith has been with the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office (FCSO) for eight years and brings a strong focus on student safety and connection. In August, Grove City High School welcomed Officer Joe Hughes as its new full-time School Resource Officer. Officer Hughes has served the Grove City community with the Grove City Police Department (GCPD) for 16.5 years and brings valuable experience to the role.

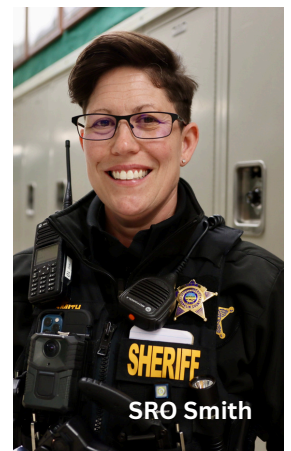
NEW in 2025-2026: Expanded Middle School Partnerships

Beginning this fall, the School Resource Officer (SRO) program is expanding to serve students in the middle grades. Deputies from the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office (FCSO) will now have a rotating presence at Norton, Finland, and Pleasant View Middle Schools, extending the support, safety, and relationship-building that high school students have benefited from in recent years. Such efforts supplement coverage from the Grove City Police Department (GCPD) with their school liaison officer program (covering K-12 Grove City schools and includes regular visits to Beulah Park Middle and Jackson Middle).

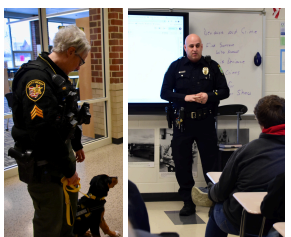
SWCS is grateful for the continued collaboration with the GCPD and FCSO. By working together, the district is fostering an environment where students feel supported, safe, and ready to succeed.



SRO Hughes



SRO Smith





Around The District

Be the Difference: Now Hiring!

As we start off another school year, and throughout the second semester, SWCS continues to recruit for full-time and part-time positions in addition to substitute positions.

Whether that be as an instructional aide, bus driver, cook, or in a substitute capacity (as your schedule permits you to do so), we invite you to visit www.swcsd.us/personnel.aspx today to view our current openings or to apply. Consider a career in "the smallest, big-place you can find" leaving a lasting impact on the educational trajectory of a child.

Substitute Financial Incentives

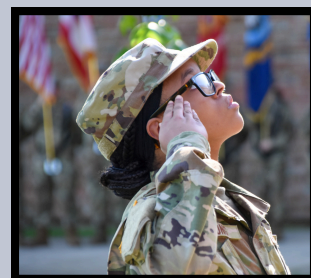
Prospective substitute Secretary, Custodian, Bus Driver, Educational Aides, Cooks, and Teachers are afforded an opportunity for days of service incentives based on days worked in the district! **Days served do not roll over from school year to school year.

- After subbing 50 days during the school year, substitutes will receive a \$500 lump sum payment.
- After subbing 100 days during the school year, substitutes will receive a \$750 lump sum payment.
- After subbing 150 days during the school year, substitutes will receive a \$1,000 lump sum payment.



Expanded Recruiting Efforts

At SWCS, we deeply value the skills, dedication, and leadership that military families bring to our team. To honor this service, we are proud to offer a \$3,000 Military Hiring Bonus (paid after one year of service to the district) for full-time eligible military individuals as defined by Ohio Revised Code 3319.285. This initiative reflects our commitment to creating a supportive workplace that recognizes and builds upon your unique experiences. In addition, we actively partner with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities to further expand access to meaningful employment opportunities and ensure that all individuals have the support they need to thrive.



Join our mission to inspire and empower students in one of Ohio's largest and most dynamic school districts. Together, we can make a difference for generations to come! **Read more about our military recruiting at www.swcsd.us/newMOS.aspx**