SOUTHERN YORK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR
Southern York County School District Mission
The Southern York County School District, through a cooperative effort with the family and community, will provide a quality learning environment that promotes character, fosters responsibility, and challenges students to achieve their potential.

Southern York County School District Vision
Our vision of the Southern York County School District is that of a dynamic organization that will work in partnership with the family and community and will continuously strive to develop productive, contributing, responsible citizens, capable of meeting the global challenges of the future.

Southern York County School District Beliefs
We believe:
1. Everyone can learn.
2. Every person is entitled to the opportunity for an education that allows maximization of individual capabilities.
3. Responsibility for education is shared by students, family, teachers, administrators, and community.
4. Learning is a lifelong process that includes not only the intellectual but also the social, emotional, cultural, and physical development of the learner.
5. Preparation and motivation for learning must begin at home.
6. Learning is best achieved in a safe environment.
7. Respect for individual diversity is an essential element of a positive learning environment.
8. Teaching the process of learning, which requires various levels of thinking, is as important as teaching the content.
9. High expectations are an integral part of the learning process. Practical, applicable learning skills, knowledge, and abilities should provide the foundation for the teaching process.
Dear Members of the Southern York County Community:

I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Southern York County School District Annual Report. The focus of this report is to communicate with you how well our School District is performing its core mission. Our focus is to work in partnership with our families and community to ensure students are able to collaborate, communicate, create, think critically, and thrive in the world that awaits them.

We are proud to show we have sustained academic achievement on many levels, and our students continue to excel outside the classroom in a variety of extracurricular activities. We are extremely proud of our staff for their dedication and for their commitment to provide the highest quality learning environment for our students.

In addition, our business operations continue to be a model of efficiency.

Please take the time to carefully examine the information contained in this document which highlights our exceptional accomplishments and successes.

I am truly thankful for your continued support as we work in partnership to create a caring and meaningful learning environment for our students.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Sandra L. Lemmon
Superintendent of Schools
High Student Achievement

Classroom Environment

The Southern York School District believes in a safe classroom environment where all students have the equal opportunity in succeeding. It is critical that students feel comfortable expressing their ideas, accept each another’s differences, and engage in civil discourse. This is the foundation for their success in a 21st century work force.

These concepts, learned in the classroom, foster lifelong skills which will allow students to adapt and to manage their lives efficiently. We want to build a strong foundation for students to become productive citizens in today’s world in any career field. We strive to engage students in project-based activities that challenge them to think critically and find solutions to real world problems.
Real World Problem Solving

One example of a project which encouraged students to collaborate to find solutions to real world problems is Susquehannock High School's water bottle initiative. The students formulated a plan to turn the school’s water fountains into water bottle fillers as a way to reduce the amount of plastic used throughout the high school. As a result, they formed various committees for financing, marketing, research, and engineering for the project.

Through donations from high school staff and local organizations, students have raised enough money for the installation of several water bottle fillers.

Each time the fillers are used, they calculate the number of water bottles saved. “We are currently saving 165 bottles a day, based on the data from the machines,” AP Environmental Science Teacher Barbara Nealon said.

“They have done it all themselves, from developing a plan, conducting the re-search, meeting with commu-nity members, administration and the maintenance staff,” she said. “They worked through a real-life and relevant problem and found a solution.”
High Student Achievement

Southern York Digital Academy

The Southern York Digital Academy was created in 2011 to provide a flexible learning environment for the students of the Southern York County School District. In addition to taking classes online, Digital Academy students have the option to attend classes on campus and participate in extra-curricular activities and events. Graduates of the Southern York Digital Academy receive a Susquehannock High School Diploma.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Scores

The SAT college admission test lets students show colleges what they know and how well they can apply that knowledge. Susquehannock High School students performed well beyond the state and national averages on the SAT. These assessment results reflect the efforts of outstanding teaching and learning from kindergarten through grade 12.
Southern York County School District’s Advanced Placement (AP) program had another successful year. Susquehannock students participated in 358 AP exams in 2016. Students can earn college and university credits in one or more subjects for qualifying AP scores.

“Our staff has made it a goal to offer as many students as possible the opportunity to take an AP course,” Dr. Bryson said. “The AP results are an indication of how successful the students and staff are at reaching this goal.”

“We are proud that as a District, we are able to provide students the opportunities to be challenged in such meaningful ways,” said Dr. Sandra Lemmon, Superintendent.
Academic Excellence in Athletics:

- Fifty-four student athletes earned the York-Adams Academic All-League Award.
- Twenty-two student athletes earned the District III E. Jerry Brooks Academic Excellence Award.

Band, Southern Middle School:

- Our school hosted the York County Middle School Honors Band Festival for the first time since 1992. The honors band brings together band students from 13 different middle schools in York County to perform a concert together. We hosted 125 middle school musicians (9 were from Southern) for two rehearsal days and a concert.
  - The band and jazz band performed two concerts for the public (Winter and Spring).
  - The jazz band played as the pep band for SMS’s Dodging Heart Disease Fundraiser.
  - The jazz band played as the house band for SHS’s annual Jazz Fest.
  - Several band students performed at the February board recognition night.
  - The band traveled to Dorney Park in Allentown to participate in the High Note Festival. The students were judged by professional musicians at the festival and earned the highest rating of “Superior.”
  - The jazz band provided entertainment for the SMS Awards Ceremony on the last day of school.

Band, Susquehannock High School:

- Marching Band finished in 3rd place in the Yankee Class Open at the Cavalcade of Bands Championships.
- Eight students participated in the York County High School Honors Band Festival.
- Five students participated in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 7 Band Festival.
- One student participated in the PMEA District 7 Jazz Festival.
- Jazz Band performed at the 16th Annual Jazz Fest.
- The Susquehannock High School Indoor Color Guard placed 7th at the Keystone Indoor Drill Association (KIDA) Solo and Ensemble Championships.
Excellence Outside the Classroom

- Percussion students (grades 4-12) worked with Mr. Joe McCarthy as part of the District’s Annual Percussion Day.

**Baseball:**
- One player was named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.

**Basketball, Girls:**
- One player was named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
- The varsity team won the YAIAA Division II girls basketball title.
- The girls basketball program won the Gretchen Wolf Sportsmanship Award.

**Bridge Building Competition:**
- One SHS engineering student finished first and another earned second place in the Pennsylvania Society for Professional Engineers (PSPE) Bridge Building Competition.

**Choir:**
- Ten students from elementary through high school participated in the Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE) National Youth Choir in Long Beach, California.
- 10 FES students performed in the York County Elementary Honors Choir Festival.

**Chorus, Elementary:**
- Four FES students performed in the PMEA District 7 Song Fest.
- FES sixth grade theatre students presented *Sleeping Beauty for Kids* during their Dinner Theatre.
- FES sixth grade chorus sang the National Anthem at a York Revolution baseball game.

**Chorus, Secondary:**
- Various SMS and SHS students performed in the Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE) National Women’s Chorus in Minneapolis.
- Ten SMS students and one SHS student participated in the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Sweet Soundsations Women’s Choral Festival.
- Seven SMS students attended the 2016 PMEA District 7 Middle School Song Fest.
- Ten SMS students and five SHS students attended the ACDA Boyz Noyz Men’s Choral Festival.
Excellent Outside the Classroom

- Ten SHS students attended the Temple University MANChoir Festival.
- The SMS choir students earned a Superior Rating at the May 2016 High Note Music Festival.
- Two SHS students were selected for the PMEA District 7 Chorus Festival. One Susquehannock High School student was selected for the PMEA Region V Chorus Festival.
- The SHS Concert Choir performed at the PA State Capitol Building as part of Music in Our Schools Month in March 2016.
- The SHS select vocal ensemble, Chanticleer, performed multiple public performances.

**Cross Country, Boys:**
- One athlete qualified for the PIAA Cross Country Championship and earned a 9th place finish.

**Driving Competition:**
- Three SHS students earned first place overall as a team at the 25th Annual York-Adams County Safe Driving Competition.
- One SHS student driver was one of the top three individual finishers which qualified them for the state competition.

**Field Hockey:**
- Competed in District III Championships.
- One player was named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.

**Football:**
- One player was named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
Excellence Outside the Classroom

Golf:
- Four golfers qualified for the YAIAA tournament.
- One golfer qualified for the District III Championships.

Lacrosse, Boys:
- Two players were named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
- The varsity team competed in the District III Championships.

Lacrosse, Girls:
- Four players were named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
- The team qualified for District III Championships.

Orchestra:
- Southern Middle School students earned a Superior rating at the High Note Music Festival at Dorney Park.
- Six elementary school students participated in the York Junior Symphony.
- Five Susquehannock High School students participated in the York Youth Symphony.
- Four Susquehannock High School students participated in the PMEA District 7 Orchestra Festival.
- Three Susquehannock High School students participated in the Regional Orchestra festival.
- One Susquehannock High School student participated in the PMEA Central Region Orchestra.

Orchestra Festival:
- One Susquehannock High School student participated in the PMEA All-State Orchestra Festival.
- 15 Susquehannock High School students participated in the Lebanon Valley College Honors Orchestra.
- Two Susquehannock High School students participated in the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Eastern Division Honors Ensemble.
PA Computer Fair:
- One SHS student placed first and another placed second in the Graphic Design category; one student placed first and another placed second in the Logo Design category in the regional competition of the Pennsylvania High School Computer Fair.
- Two of the students moved on to the state competition at Dickinson College. One of the students placed second in the Logo Design category.

Publications Contest:
- The student-based digital newspaper, *The Susquehannock Courier*, earned an ‘Award of Honor for Electronic Newsletter/Communications.’

Punkin’ Chunkin’ Competition:
- Four SHS engineering students earned second place at the York County High School Punkin’ Chunkin’ competition.

Soccer, Boys:
- Two players were named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
- Finished as York-Adams Division II runner-up.
- Placed 3rd at District III Championships.
- Reached the semi-finals in the PIAA State Championships.

Soccer, Girls:
- Two players were named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
- York-Adams Division II Champions.
- Finished 3rd in the District II Championship.
- Competed in the quarter finals of the PIAA State Championships.

Softball:
- Two players were named to the York-Adams All-Star Team.
- YAIAA Division II Champions.
- Qualified for the District III Championships.

Tennis, Girls:
- Qualified for the YAIAA Tournament.

Theatre:
- The SHS Theatre presented *The Crucible* for its fall play.
- The SHS Theatre presented *Pippin* for its spring musical.
Excellence Outside the Classroom

• SHS Theatre received the award for Most Creative Original Performance at the York County HS Theatre Awards for their performance from Pippen.

• One student received an award for Outstanding Female Vocalist at the York County HS Theatre Awards.

• One student received the International Thespian Society Hall of Fame Award at the PA Thespian Festival.

• One student received the International Thespian Society Actor’s Crew of Fame Award at the PA Thespian Festival.

Volleyball, Girls:

• Won the Division II Championship.

• Qualified for the YAIAA Tournament.

• Competed in the District III Tournament.

• Two players were selected to the PIAA District III All Stars.

• One player was named to the PIAA Class AA All-State Team.

Wrestling:

• YAIAA Division II runner-up.

• One wrestler competed at the PIAA South Central Regional Championships.

• The team earned the YAIAA Division II Sportsmanship Award.

Track and Field, Boys:

• YAIAA Division II Sportsmanship Award.

Volleyball, Boys:

• Qualified for the YAIAA Championship Tournament.

• One player was selected for the District III All-Star 2nd team.
The Southern York County School District helps to foster future leaders as its students display acts of kindness and generosity for those less fortunate throughout the school year. Here are just a few:

**SES Students Collected for Food Pantry**

Southern Elementary School students demonstrated the meaning of philanthropy by collecting 1,600 nonperishable food items for the Southern York County Food Pantry. In just two weeks, students collected the items, from baby foods, cereals, crackers, and pasta sauce to soup, fruit cups, juice boxes, and toothpaste. The program was a school-wide effort for students and staff.

**FES Students Honor Local Heroes with Patriotic Program**

First grade students at Friendship Elementary School honored local heroes with a patriotic program as they sang songs, recited poems, provided historical information, and marched around the gym.

During the program, the students provided background information about the American flag and highlighted congressional changes to the flag throughout United States history.

Students also honored all of the parents and family members in the audience who currently serve or have served in all branches of the military along with emergency responders, such as fire fighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians.
**Schools Battled, Raised Money for Scholarship Program**

Administrators, teachers, and staff from the Southern York County School District battled one another as they tossed egg balls, threw whiffle balls, shot baskets, dressed as snowmen, and were shoved across the gym floor as human bowling balls, all to raise money for the Southern York County School District Foundation’s scholarship program. The eighth annual Battle of the Buildings event raised more than $6,000 for student scholarships.

**SMS Students Opened Student-Run Aevidum Closet**

Students at Southern Middle School opened a student-run boutique within the school to help serve fellow students. As part of the school’s Aevidum Club, students created the Aevidum Closet, where they offer free items to those in need within the Southern York County School District. The items include new and gently used clothing, sports equipment, school supplies, as well as new toiletry supplies.

From designing, painting, and decorating the boutique, to collecting, sorting, and displaying donated items, the Aevidum Club students were involved in every aspect of the project.

The Aevidum Closet is one way that the Southern Middle School Aevidum Club helps promote positive mental health and raise awareness of important issues that face students. One of the goals is to help students feel accepted, appreciated, and acknowledged.
District Programs Named Exemplary

Two Southern York County School District programs were selected by Shippensburg University as ‘Exemplary Programs.’ The Shippensburg University Study Council recognized the ‘Steam Into History’ program at the elementary level and the ‘Utilizing Data to Transform Physical Education K-12’ program district-wide. Teachers from the Southern York County School District showcased these programs and received awards at Shippensburg University’s annual ‘Exemplary Program’ presentation.

The ‘Steam Into History’ program provides fifth grade students the opportunity to learn about 19th century life and the role the railroad played in the growth of small local communities. ‘Utilizing Date to Transform Physical Education K-12’ collects, monitors, and tracks growth in the area of physical fitness for students in grades K-12.

Susquehannock Students win Bridge Building Contest

Two Susquehannock High School engineering students finished first and second in the Pennsylvania Society for Professional Engineers (PSPE) Bridge Building Competition. The annual contest, sponsored by the Lincoln Chapter of the PSPE, was held at Penn State York. Students from area high schools brought their wooden bridges to compete for the sturdiest bridge.

Senior Ryan Gloeckner and junior Ethan Daviau were awarded first and second place honors at the event, earning county-wide recognition, trophies, and cash prizes. Gloeckner’s bridge design consisted elements of a Pennsylvania truss and a K-truss while Daviau’s bridge was smaller in design and lighter in weight.
District Earned Publications’ Awards

The Southern York County School District earned two awards in a state-wide annual publications contest. Susquehannock High School’s student-run digital newspaper, The Susquehannock Courier (www.shscourier.com), as well as the Alumni newsletter, The Alumni Pride, were recognized by the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association (PennSPRA) and have received Awards of Honor for Electronic Newsletter/Communications.

Teachers Received ‘Outstanding’ Awards

Two teachers from the Southern York County School District were recipients of the ‘Outstanding Teacher Award’ for 2015-16, sponsored by the Shippensburg University School Study Council. SHS and SMS health and physical education teacher Brett Maxwell and FES librarian Anne Bozievich. This was the 17th year in a row that at least one teacher from the District was selected.

Bozievich began 2015-16 in her seventh year at the District. As the librarian at Friendship Elementary School, she works closely with classroom teachers to ensure students have access to books. “I am flattered by this recognition and I am thrilled that this honor puts our District’s libraries in the spotlight,” she said.

Maxwell began his fourth year as a health and physical education teacher at both Southern Middle School and Susquehannock High School. “I’m honored to be nominated and to receive the award, but I’m most excited to see health and physical education being recognized as an integral part of a well-rounded education,” he said.
Highlights from the 2015-16 School Year

Shrewsbury Elementary Students Compete in National Geography Bee

Students in grades four, five, and six at Shrewsbury Elementary School participated in the National Geography Bee. The top three students advanced to the state qualifying round. Following a qualifying test, students from each class proceeded to the preliminary round of competition, where they answered questions on United States geography, state geography, American cities, continents and oceans, and cultural geography.

Sixth grade student Nathan Ferguson earned first place. Fifth grade student Mateo Ramirez finished in second place, and Kaden Snedegar, also in fifth grade, won third place.

Students Display Artistic Talents to Community with Annual Fair

Susquehannock High School was transformed into an art gallery recently as elementary, middle, and high school students displayed their artistic creations when the District presented its 10th annual Southern York County School District Arts and Technology Fair.

Students exhibited their work, which ranged from paintings, photographs, drawings, furniture, metal sculptures, clothing, and video projects. The exhibits were displayed throughout Susquehannock High School’s main gymnasium, the lobby, and surrounding Guidance hallway.

Susquehannock High School art teachers Wes Myers and Wade Bowers organized the free event, which they said continues to grow each year. This year’s event hosted many senior displays in the center of the gymnasium.
The Southern York County School District Foundation was organized in 1997 as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization to benefit the students of Southern York County School District.

The Foundation provides scholarships to graduating students, technology for use in elementary classrooms through the “Classrooms Without Walls” initiative, and essential needs for low income students such as eye glasses. These programs are funded entirely through generous contributions from our community.

For further information or to contribute to these programs, please contact Dr. Wayne McCullough, Executive Director, Southern York County School District Foundation, PO Box 128, Glen Rock, PA 17327. Email: SYCSDFoundation@sycsd.org

Highlights of the SYCSD Foundation

One of the seven “Highly Effective Educational Foundations” by the Pennsylvania Consortium of Education Foundations

$27,000 for “Classrooms Without Walls” technology program

$180,506 in 2015-2016 contributions

Net Assets approaching $800,000

169 Scholarships to 100 Students

Nearly $1 million in contributions in the past 5 years!
The Southern York County School District Board of Education and Administration understand that public education is funded with taxpayer funds and ensure that these funds are spent in a responsible and cost effective manner. We believe we have an impressive rate of return, especially considering our low tax rate and high student achievement, in comparison to other York County school districts. We pay careful attention to the proper use of all resources and implementation of the highest accounting and reporting standards.

The District’s general fund balance (operating reserve) exceeds the target minimum of 5% of budget, but remains below the state’s upper limit of 8%. In addition, our physical plant is in excellent condition.

Financial Condition of the School District

- The Southern York County School District received an audit of the financial statements and our federal programs, both of which were unmodified opinions, which are the best opinions an auditor can give. Additionally, there were no findings in either of the audits.

- 2015-16 was a difficult year due to the state budget impasse and withholding of state funding. Years such as this emphasize the need for reserves at the local level.

- General Fund operations showed a deficit of $787,000 because of the $1,037,000 of construction funding owed from the state until November 2016, five months after the end of the fiscal year. With receipt of this budgeted funding, the District would have shown a surplus of $250,000.

- Expenditure control was responsible for positive financial results.

- Actual expenditure increase from 2014-15 to 2015-16 was only 1.23%.

- General Fund Unreserved Fund Balance exceeds 5% of budget target.

- Physical plant is in excellent condition due to ongoing capital program.

- District maintains Moody’s Aa2 underlying rating, which reflects its satisfactory financial position, reserve levels, and manageable debt burden.

- Financial condition of the District supports a high quality educational program.
Fiscal Responsibility

Tax Rates

The table below shows the real estate tax mills of the District in comparison to other York County districts in the Lincoln Intermediate Unit.

What is a Real Estate Tax Mill?

A mill levy is the number of dollars a taxpayer must pay for every $1,000 of assessed value. For example, the current 2016-17 real estate tax rate of 18.46 mills results in a tax bill of $1,846 for a home assessed at $100,000.

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The Southern York County School District Board of Education approved a $53.5 million budget for 2016-2017, which reflects a 2.4% increase from the previous budget.

The budget approved by the Board of Education on May 19, 2016 is based upon the priorities of maintaining overall student to teacher ratio, maintaining all educational programs, continuing to offer the award-winning Advanced Placement Program, and continuing to emphasize infusion of technology into the educational program.

To meet these priorities, the budget included additional funding for contracted special education, two additional special education teachers, and funds for extending the One to One Technology Program into Southern Middle School. In addition, the budget was reduced by two professional staff positions and two paraprofessional positions – all through attrition.
Funding of education is currently one of the most volatile issues in Pennsylvania politics, which continues to have a significant impact on the School District. Specifically, anticipated State funding at the proposed levels did not happen for 2015-2016. In addition, the cost of State mandated retirement continues to rise, which comprised most of the expenditure increase. Other increases include mandated special education costs. The budget included an assumption of no increased State basic education funding, $1.42 million use of fund balance, and a 2.9% real estate tax increase.

Compared to other York County school districts in the Lincoln Intermediate Unit, Southern York County School District’s real estate tax rate is the lowest. The School District’s “site-based” budgeting process is an extensive process to prioritize needs and continues to be an effective way to control expenditures. This approach includes an annual review of every budget expenditure, including a review of every position.

We are committed to outstanding financial reporting, transparency and availability of all financial information, and strong internal controls. In addition, we take very seriously our responsibility to ensure that public revenues are spent in a responsible manner.
The weather was beautiful again this year, and the graduation ceremony was held outside on the Robert E. Lau Athletic Field. The event was a celebration of traditions from beginning to end. More than 230 successful seniors marched before packed bleachers. The band played “Pomp and Circumstance;” the choir sang the “Alma Mater;” scholarship winners were recognized; class officers and academic honor winners spoke; and the loudest ovation was reserved for graduates entering the military.

Another popular tradition, the alumni speaker, continued with John Berthold, a member of the Class of 1963 and Distinguished Alumni honoree.

As a partner with our families and community, and stewards of our citizens’ tax dollars, the Board of Education and the Administrative Team of the Southern York County School District embrace the importance of open, thorough, and regular communication with our citizens. Please contact the School District at 717-235-4811, ext. 7278 or boardsecretary@sycsd.org if you have any questions, concerns, or would like information related to our School District.