

Know Your Schools ... Online

Good News You Can Use about the Solon Schools.

Friday, January 26, 2024

Know Your Schools ... Online is part of the district's [Strategic Plan](#) goals for communications. This is a monthly publication for families, staff and our Solon Schools community. Look for each issue on the last Friday of the month.

LOVE THE BUS! SOLON SCHOOLS RECOGNIZE SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION IN FEBRUARY



As part of the national Love the Bus program, the Solon Schools are recognizing the district bus drivers who safely transport students to and from school and extra-curricular activities every day.

Sponsored by the American School Bus Council, the Love the Bus program is celebrated in February as a way to raise awareness about school bus transportation. In addition to promoting safety, Love the Bus also emphasizes the positive impact that school transportation has on education. "By recognizing and appreciating the efforts of these professionals, we can inspire more people to consider careers in school transportation and help to ensure that students continue to receive safe and reliable transportation services," said Solon Superintendent Fred Bolden.

Love the Bus Month also serves as a timely reminder to review the traffic and safety laws regarding school buses. Bus drivers receive ongoing training in student loading and unloading procedures, state driving laws, student evacuation, student behavior and security management. In Solon, drivers receive in depth training to help prepare them for emergencies that could arise and participate in safety drills with students. Bus safety is especially important during the inclement winter months.

Following are important winter weather reminders:

- Cold, blustery and icy winter weather can create slick road conditions, so it is more important than ever that students follow all bus safety protocols.
- If a student misses the bus, please call the Transportation Department. Students should never chase after a bus and parents should not drive to catch up to a bus. Having students run alongside a bus to catch a missed bus at a subsequent stop is dangerous as students could be in a driver's blind spot. Our drivers follow very specific safety protocols.
- Consider adding reflective address numbers to your mailbox so that our drivers can more easily identify stop locations. This is particularly helpful when we have substitute drivers or regular drivers covering a different route. Students should also wear light-colored clothing or jackets on dark mornings (or add something reflective on coats or backpacks).



- Students must wait for the bus at their designated place of safety even in inclement weather.
- Students should alert the driver if they ever drop something near the bus. Students or parents should not reach to pick up items that fall near the bus or roll near the wheels until given the go-ahead that it is safe to do so by the driver.
- Students should not use technology such as phones or earbuds while waiting for a bus. Playing on a phone or listening to music impedes students' ability to watch and listen for potential dangers around them as well as hear or see safety instructions from their bus driver.
- Please talk to friends and neighbors about clearing snow and ice from driveways and sidewalks.



Thank you for your continued support and commitment to student safety as they travel to and from school each day. If you would like to join our transportation team, we are hiring. We offer competitive wages and benefits and paid training.

FINANCE FACTS: BOND ISSUES AND OPERATING LEVIES - WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES?



As part of the Strategic Plan, the district is working to continuously disseminate information to our entire community on how our Solon City Schools are funded. Last month, we provided [information on how Ohio limits the collection of levied dollars](#) to the amount approved in a ballot measure. In this issue, we are outlining a few common types of funding for districts like ours that are heavily reliant on locally raised revenues.

Schools are funded in a variety of ways, state and federal funding, grants, property and income tax levies, and bond issues just to name a few. The three that we hear about most often are bond issues, operating levies and permanent improvement levies.

Bond issues are utilized for capital projects and significant improvements in school facilities. These projects may involve constructing new buildings, renovating existing structures, acquiring land, or purchasing major capital assets. Bond issues essentially represent loans that the school district takes out, and the repayment, along with interest, is funded through property taxes over a period of time. Similar to operating levies, bond issues require voter approval, enabling the school district to address long-term infrastructure needs and enhance the overall learning environment.

Operating levies function as a form of taxation aimed at supporting the day-to-day operational expenses of a school district. These levies contribute to funding salaries, benefits, instructional materials, utilities, and other routine operational costs. Voters decide on operating levies, and if approved, property taxes within the school district increase to ensure the sustained quality of education.

A permanent improvement levy is a form of property tax designed to fund ongoing upkeep of public facilities and infrastructure. Unlike operating levies, which cover ongoing operational expenses, permanent improvement levies are specifically earmarked for capital expenditures. The generated funds serve a range of purposes, including the renovation or repair of buildings and other vital infrastructure. Additionally, these levies can finance technology and security upgrades, ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of technology and security systems throughout the district.

These funding mechanisms play crucial roles in the financial landscape of Ohio schools, with their approval directly impacting property taxes within the community.

ORCHARD STUDENTS WOWED BY THE MAGIC OF MATTER

Orchard 6th graders made dramatic connections to their science learning during an assembly with the Great Lakes Science Center. The Magic of Matter program featured chemistry demonstrations using liquid nitrogen to show some of the “magical” unexpected ways materials can react.



SOLON HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM PUNCHED A TICKET TO STATES



The Solon High School Dance Team earned a spot at the state competition at the end of January in Columbus thanks to an exceptional performance at Regionals.

The Comet Dance Team placed first in the Large Kick competition and will compete against the other regional champions at States on January 28.

PTA REFLECTIONS ART CONTEST

Solon students applied their artistic talents to the theme “I Am Hopeful Because” during the 2023-24 PTA Reflections Art Competition. This year’s contest had the most entries in recent years and the category winning pieces are on their way to the state competition. Students from Lewis, Parkside, Roxbury, Orchard, Solon Middle School and Solon High School participated.





WE ARE SC! 8th GRADE STUDENT & FAMILY ORIENTATION TO SOLON HIGH SCHOOL

Solon Comets spirit was electric in the auditorium this month during the 8th grade student and family orientation to Solon High School. The 8th graders and their families were greeted by SHS cheerleaders and Spirit Team, Student Council leaders, Pep Band and Dance Team. The program is aimed at giving students and families an energetic and informative look at the breadth of opportunities students have at SHS in the arts, athletics/activities and academics.

The students and family members had different programming after the “pep rally.” The families stayed in the auditorium for a presentation about the high school and academic program while the students headed off in groups to rotate through three areas showcasing athletics, clubs and activities, drama and arts/music. In the new gym, they learned the spirit song and met SHS athletes and statisticians. In the auxiliary gym, they met student representatives of the nearly 80 SHS clubs and activities. In the large study hall area, they learned about vocal and instrumental musical performance opportunities and drama productions.

The evening ended with a reception so families could meet representatives of the district’s four major parent groups - PTA, Academic Boosters, Music Parents and Athletic Boosters. Known Solon and Glenwillow 8th graders currently attending private or parochial schools were also invited. To watch the program on Solon Education TV, go to <https://youtu.be/YdHqxltlZtg?t=1920>.

Orientation nights for 6th graders heading to Solon Middle School and 4th graders heading to Orchard will be taking place soon. Watch your email for information from your school about these exciting student and family programs.



GIVING WEEK HELPS STUDENTS BUILD EMPATHY

Through the school's annual Giving Week, Lewis students and families provided needed items to children living in foster care. Working in partnership with the Fostering Hope Ohio organization, the students collected comfort and personal care items to fill Journey Bags for children who are transitioning between homes within the foster care system.

The students donated toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs/brushes, shampoo/conditioner, soap/body wash, new stuffed animals, blankets, crayons, colored pencils and coloring books.

The Lewis 4th grade Student Council designed posters for the hallways and wrote morning announcements that helped the school learn about the Fostering Hope organization and the Journey Bag comfort item collection. The students also created a video for each class to watch before they decorated the cards with messages of hope to be delivered with the donated items. Throughout the week, teachers read the book, Kids Need to Be Safe, to facilitate classroom discussions about foster care and help students make connections about why the Giving Week project was so important.

"Having opportunities like this for our school community to come together for the betterment of others ensures we are living up to our district mission to create more empathetic, ethical, contributing citizens," said Dan Ceci, Lewis counselor.



MOCK TRIAL SUCCESS AT THE BUCKEYE BRAWL



Solon's Mock Trial teams competed against high-performing teams from around the state at the OSU Buckeye Brawl in Columbus this month. Solon High School team members Siya Maheshwari and Jacob Khaykin earned Outstanding Attorney awards and Simone Davis, Vivian Li, Selena Liao and Chisom Ezetendu brought home Outstanding Witness awards.

The Buckeye Brawl is run by the Ohio State University Mock Trial team. SHS 2020 graduate Jonathan Hubbard is the vice president of tournaments for the OSU team. "This is an excellent example of the lasting impact that high school extracurriculars can have on our students," said Mary Clare Lane, an SHS social studies teacher, who along with fellow teacher Rob Rivera, advises the Comets team.

Mock Trial enables students to learn and apply knowledge and skills about law, court procedures and the judicial system by participating in mock trials in Ohio courtrooms. Students take on the roles of plaintiff and defense attorneys, as well as witnesses. A different case is argued and defended each mock trial season built around a topical constitutional issue that resonates with students. This year's case is *State of Buckeye v. Ash Espinosa*, through which students are studying the history and application of the Excessive Fines Clause of the Eighth Amendment in relation to the forfeiture of property resulting from a crime.

Mock Trial helps students build 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, reading, writing, public speaking and listening skills; understanding and appreciation for the law, court procedures and the judicial system; and understanding of constitutional rights and responsibilities.



CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS AND EFFORT

It takes a strong, committed and caring partnership of students, families and staff to ensure our students get the academic and social-emotional support they need to succeed. To celebrate the hard work and effort of our students, each Solon school is having a lunch-time celebration treat like the fun donut bar at Parkside Elementary. Congratulations to our students - you make us proud every day!



LEWIS STUDENTS STEPPING UP TO CHALLENGES WITH BASKETBALL JONES

All year, Lewis students have been learning strategies that help them to “step up to challenges.” They enjoyed an assembly this month with Jim Basketball Jones that reinforced that theme.



SCHOOL SAFETY BEGINS WITH YOU

As part of the district safety plans, the Solon Schools provide the Safe School Helpline as an anonymous way for parents and students to report threats of violence, suicide, self harm or illegal activity that could harm students in our schools. Reports to the Helpline are confidential.



SAFE SCHOOL HELPLINE
BREAK THE SILENCE | PREVENT THE EVENT

Call (800) 418-6423, ext. 359

Text TIPS to 614-426-0240

Web www.safeschoolhelpline.com

HOSA-FUTURE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS CLUB MEMBERS ADVANCE TO STATES

At the regional competitions this month, 22 members of the Solon High School chapter of HOSA-Future Health Care Professionals qualified for the state competition in April. A student-led global organization, HOSA's mission is empowering students who plan on pursuing careers in health care by providing opportunities to develop leadership, technical, collaboration and people skills.

The SHS students qualified for States through a combination of written assessments and in-person events.



In-Person Events:

- **Prepared Speaking** - Falak Dahiya, freshman - 1st place
- **Community Awareness** - Isaac Bai, Marianne Chang, Siya Maheswari and Riya Verma, seniors - 1st place
- **Forensic Science** - Hansika Kasa and Samantha Freidland, sophomores - 1st place
- **Health Education** - Eva Chakrabati, Sophia Zhang and Isabella Chang, freshmen - 1st place
- **Public Service Announcement** - Rakshita Ramesh and Leo Visani, freshmen - 2nd place

Written Assessment Events:

- **Medical Law & Ethics** - Steve Samuel, freshman - 1st place
- **Pharmacology** - Sarah Dong, senior - 1st place
- **Nutrition** - Shanvee Sood, freshman - 2nd place
- **Medical Math** - Kevin Lim, sophomore - 2nd place and Henry Dinh, freshman - 3rd place
- **Behavioral Health** - Ria Kiran, freshman - 3rd place and Sharvee Deshpande, freshman - 4th place
- **Human Growth and Development** - Vikram Sakthi Manikandan, freshman - 4th place
- **Medical Reading** - Ram Mallampati, senior - 4th place
- **Cultural Diversities and Disparities** - Sachi Bhandari, freshman - 4th place

KIDS BOOK BANK - SOLON SUPPORTS EARLY LITERACY

The Solon Schools partner with the Cleveland Kids' Book Bank by providing two drop-off locations - in the Solon Middle School and Lewis Elementary parking lots - for year-long book donations. The Kids' Book Bank recently reported on the success of the Solon drop boxes, noting that more than 19,500 books were donated in 2023, the most collected here in a year and 2,000 more than the previous high. Since the bins were placed in summer 2019, Solon has donated more than 62,000 books, an average of about 1,000 books a month. For comparison, a full semi truck full of books holds about 65,000 books.



Thank you for your support of this important program to share the gift of reading and building home libraries for children in need.

TECHNOLOGY TIP - OPTING BACK IN TO DISTRICT TEXT MESSAGES



The district sends important notifications such as late bus alerts by email and text message for immediacy. If you have opted out of text messages from the district, whether on purpose or accidentally, we are prohibited by FCC regulations from just opting you back in without permission. You must follow these instructions to begin receiving text messages again from the district and your child's school.

Reply **START** to "60680" from the phone line that has been opted out for non-emergency messages. Reply **START** to "54968" for emergency messages.

SCARED SILLY: ONE-ACT PLAYS SHOWCASE STUDENTS' ACTING AND DIRECTING SKILLS

The annual Evening of One-Acts is February 15-16. These student-directed productions showcase not only the talents of Solon student actors, but also their leadership abilities. The student directors select the shows, conduct auditions and oversee the backstage crew. This activity is an excellent opportunity for students to step out of their comfort zones and assume responsibility for an entire production.

This year's plays are an interconnected collection of 10-minute humorous and spooky tales called Scared Silly.

- The Rocky Junction Rumor, Left Hanging and The True Meaning of Halloween (the incredible secret of the trick-or-treater dressed normally who wants candy anyway) directed by Cori Arnopolin and Lizzie Walsh
- The Kev-Burger, Attack of the Cafeteria Zombies and The Midnight Club (detention at a school for the supernatural) directed by Vivien Luce and Chloe Sprafka
- In the Waiting Room at the Ghost Placement Agency (the only thing that scares ghosts), Life Comes at You Fast, Forever Friends and It's You! (what happens when a slasher-movie junkie tries to track down a killer) directed by Eileen Miozzi and Stevie Parker
- The (Completely Inaccurate) Legend of the Mummy Witch House directed by Kris Ferencie



**An Evening of
One-Acts**

Tickets are \$7 and go on sale on Monday (1/29). Seating is general admission for both shows. Proceeds support the SHS Drama Club's scholarship and awards program fund. Tickets can be purchased through the ticket portal at www.solonschools.org/showticketportal.

COMETS CLASS OF 2037 - SOLON KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION 2024

The Solon Schools are getting ready to welcome the Comets Class of 2037 with the launch of centralized Kindergarten Registration for fall 2024. Families with students who will be kindergarten age in the fall should mark their calendars with the important dates for Kindergarten Information Night and Kindergarten Registration.

Kindergarten Information Night - a virtual program on February 29 at 6:30 p.m. Please complete the [Solon Kindergarten Interest Survey](#) if you have a student who will be joining us for kindergarten next year and share it with friends and neighbors with preschoolers who will be Solon Comets in August 2024.

Kindergarten in Solon Schools is at Lewis, Parkside and Roxbury Elementary Schools. All three schools have full-day kindergarten, but decisions about which school would have half-day sections and whether those sections will be in the morning or afternoon cannot be determined until after the kindergarten registration process is complete.

District centralized online Kindergarten Registration - Monday, March 4, through Friday, March 15. The link to the online registration portal will go live on March 4 on the district website. Families must complete their child's registration during the spring centralized registration window March 4-15 to be guaranteed kindergarten placement at their home school.

Kindergarten enrollment numbers are a key data point for appropriate planning and staffing next year, so it is critical that families register their students for

kindergarten during the March registration window. Residents are urged to remind friends and neighbors who have students approaching kindergarten age to attend Kindergarten Information Night and register their students online March 4-15.


SOLON SCHOOLS
KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION 2024
INFORMATION NIGHT
FEBRUARY 29 AT 6:30 PM
ON ZOOM

Kindergarten Info Night is a welcome program for families of incoming kindergarten students for fall 2024. Meet the Lewis, Parkside & Roxbury Elementary principals & school counselors. Learn about the kindergarten program & the registration process.

Please Complete the Solon Kindergarten Interest Survey:
<https://forms.gle/NY8FHnSvJK5mvwAx6>


The link to the Kindergarten Info Night program will be posted on the district home page the week of 2/29. This program will be recorded.

CENTRALIZED REGISTRATION ONLINE
March 4-15
COMETS CLASS OF 2037!



REGANO EARLY LEARNING CENTER PEER MODEL SCREENING FOR 2024-25

Screening for peer model students at Regano Early Learning Center is February 16. The qualifications for students serving as peer models are very specific and are directly related to the daily preschool activities. Peer model preschoolers must live in Solon or Glenwillow and be 3 by March 1. You can learn more about the Regano ELC program and what it takes to be a peer model at

 24-25 Preschool Screening Information .pptx

To sign up for screening, please complete the [2024-25 School Year Regano ELC Preschool Peer Model Screening Request](#). If you have questions, please reach out to Amy Wallack, director, at 440-349-6214.



MEET THE COMETS: YOUTH HOCKEY NIGHT

Throughout the year, our Solon Comet teams work to build connections with younger students in the district. Next up is Ice Hockey this weekend. GO COMETS!



COMETS YOUTH HOCKEY NIGHT!

**ALL SOLON K-8 STUDENTS
ADMITTED FREE!**

JANUARY 28 | PUCK DROP 5 PM

COMETS VS CANFIELD

ON OUR HOME ICE @ GILMOUR ICE ARENA
2045 SOM CENTER RD, GATES MILLS

PRE-GAME GIVEAWAYS &
PLAYER MEET & GREET!

THIS IS NOT A DROP-OFF EVENT
ALL ADULTS MUST HAVE TICKETS:

<https://www.solonschools.org/ticketportal>

GO COMETS!

