

So the spring comes...

This upcoming August will begin my 15<sup>th</sup> year at the helm of our Northwestern Schools. This will also mark my 30<sup>th</sup> year as an educator, 25<sup>th</sup> year as a school administrator, and 18<sup>th</sup> year as a public school superintendent. I live in this community and my three children graduated from Northwestern. I am proud of all of these ties to our school district and community. I am sharing this to encourage my friends, family, neighbors, Northwestern graduates, and our entire community to *trust* our Educators, our Extraordinary Board of Education Members, our Administrators, and my leadership regarding the needed PI money. These funds are a **“necessity”**, plain and simple. I am asking that you rally for the needs of the buildings our tax dollars have built. The PI Levy renewal with necessary increase is on the ballot in May. Come vote. My vote will be **“YES!”**

My friends, Northwestern continues to be the school district to follow, the district others desire to emulate and partner with. We have the absolute best faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Education leading our school district and preparing our students. The success of *our students* is so very evident! Review this newsletter, area newspapers, our website, read our facebook and Twitter feeds to follow the tremendous success of our current students and graduates.

Our foundation and culture are in **AGRICULTURE**. Agriculture was the first hands-on, authentic learning STEM Curriculum. This has not changed. The success and student engagement of our Agri Science Program and FFA competitions, authentic projects, structure, and other requirements have been emulated by our other programs. Aside from the obvious exceptional talents and dedication of our teachers so many visitors and experts ask “what is your secret” of student engagement, STEM program success, Fine Arts program success, the success of our Foundational program successes, and our overall student positive attitudes and it is so very simple that we have followed this simple model of **Learning by Doing**: 1. **Learning Through Problems**; 2. **Learning Through Projects**; 3. **Learning by Collaborating**; 4. **Learning with Purpose**. Now THAT “is the rest of the story...”

The accomplishments of our students has been fantastic! The articles within this newsletter provide evidence of our schools doing the great work for our students. Whether it be fine arts, Agri Science and STEM programs, core foundational courses, or extracurricular activities we do **“prepare our students today for tomorrow’s opportunities!”**

**Several achievements:**

- ✓ STEM Preschool – 5-STAR Step-up to Quality Rating! (the highest rating!)
- ✓ 5 organizations working with our students mental Health, Counseling, Problem-Solving (Catholic Charities, AZAZAO, Counseling Center 360, Family Life Counseling, Goodwill Industries)
- ✓ Ongoing *Farm to School* partnership with “A Whole Community” (we are in a collaborative grant to with OSU-ATI, A Whole Community, and Wooster City Schools to expand and improve our current Farm to School program)
- ✓ We are in the midst of our successful \$425,000 Expanding Opportunities Grant (we have shown ongoing effective grant writing for student programs)
- ✓ Effective After School Programs
- ✓ National Award Winning School Leadership (2015 National SREB Recognition)
- ✓ An approved Ohio Pre-Apprenticeship Program
- ✓ 3,000 Sq. Ft. Greenhouse & Clean Energy Lab for hands-on, authentic learning
- ✓ Maple Syrup Sugar Shack which further promotes hands-on, authentic learning

- ✓ Excellent Gifted Programs & Services (look at the enclosed summary of our service as compared to other schools)
- ✓ Special Education Programs & Services (read the enclosed article for the effort, supports, and activities it entails to manage such an important program for our students)
- ✓ Career Programs, Career Plans & MS-HS Career Pathways that are second to none!
- ✓ Graduates are the best prepared – with college courses, experiential, senior seminar capstone, 4-year pathways, authentic learning, scholarships, competing and winning in state and national venues...
- ✓ Graduates are ready for life with *Industry Credentials, The Ohio Readiness Seal, Honors Diplomas, Internships, Apprenticeships, Capstone Projects, College Credits* and experiences which lead to;
  - **Employers seeking Northwestern graduates** over all others (we hear this all the time – that Northwestern graduates are more mature and more prepared!)
  - **Student College and Career Successes** (we hear repeatedly that our graduates are more advanced with greater leadership development and can handle major responsibilities and projects!)
  - **Parents & Family** (we are repeatedly reminded of the positive experiences, leadership, preparation, and strong relationships graduates have received as they move on to their careers!)

We will continue to strive for what is best for our students. Every opportunity we can create – from helping secure college scholarships as we move forward with our mission in preparing our students today for tomorrow’s opportunities, as has been our practice.

We have a contingent of teachers, West Virginia Dept. of Education officials, and other public officials visiting our schools and programs in late April to learn how a successful rural school district operates. With open enrollment at an all-time high others surrounding our fabulous school want their children to attend and graduate from Northwestern (Open enrollment was 263 incoming students for this 2018-2019 School Year).

**Below are a Several Honors:**

- ✓ Southern Regional Education Board National “Outstanding School District Award”!
- ✓ Over 7 million in scholarships over past five graduating classes (doubling prior five years)
- ✓ Consistent “Excellent” Ohio Dept. of Education Academic rating.
- ✓ State Superintendent “School of Honor” (multiple years)
- ✓ National SREB “Gold High School Award” (multiple years)
- ✓ State Superintendent “School of Promise” (multiple years)
- ✓ SREB National Math Rigor and Improvement Award
- ✓ SREB National Depth of Implementation Award

Northwestern has been listed as a “smart school” district in the National Knowledge Works “smart schools” efficiency study.

Northwestern received the highest marks on the American Progress “Efficiency Study”. This national study of public school efficiency measured school district per pupil cost to educate against student productivity.

- High on Basic Return on Investment
- High on Adjusted Return on Investment
- Predicted Efficiency Index

Our community has so much to be grateful for - our families, friends, and wonderful school system with great facilities, that will be paid for in little more than 4 years. We must take care of our buildings that we paid for. In our schools we have extraordinary teachers and support staff, wonderful administrators, and wise board members. But we need heat and we need dry roofs, insulation, and classrooms. We need to properly maintain our buildings or it will cost far more down the road. We also have numerous support organizations which help our mission such as Ruritans, All Sports, PTOs, Music Boosters, Alumni & Friends, FFA Alumni, etc. Without our community of leaders working collaboratively and exhibiting transparency we would not be serving our students to the fantastic degree that we are. **I want to thank our 5 outstanding School Board Members for their leadership and support – Phil Keener, Kim Wellert, Laura Woodring, Chuck Beck, Paula Abrecht. We are blessed with these 5 amazing leaders!**

I take great pride in sharing the continued accomplishments of our students, community, and schools. The supports and relationships throughout our community are unique. We can take great pride in our schools and together we can continue to strive for even greater heights. With our dedicated administrators, staff, and community we will continue striving for and achieving well-beyond expectations.

We are all about excellence and increasing expectations at Northwestern. Within our Northwestern family we will continue to focus on the needs of our students. We will continue to prepare our students today for tomorrow's opportunities!

I am always willing to listen to ideas, questions, and concerns from students, parents, and anyone in our community. It is only by asking, sharing, and participating that we can continue our important work. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason and "thank you" for your ongoing support.

**Work: 419-846-3151**  
**Cell: 330-317-5175**  
**e-mail: nrws\_Layton@tccsa.net**

Jeffrey N. Layton  
Superintendent  
Northwestern Local Schools