

June 2024

THE TORCH

In This Issue



Sycamore Community School District 427 is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a Preschool for All (PFA) Grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to expand our Little Spartans Early Learning Program.



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Steve Wilder

This edition of the Torch coincides with the end of the 2023-24 school year, and the beginning of Summer Break for all of our students and staff. I want to begin by thanking everyone for their hard work, collaboration, dedication, support, and efforts that made this school year such a success! We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you, and I hope you all have a wonderful break this summer.

I would like to highlight the work on Strategic Planning our Board has

conducted throughout the 2023-24 school year. This has included a community survey, a Special Board Meeting dedicated to interpreting the feedback and identifying district goals, and work from our Leadership Team to further refine the goals and action steps. I'll be presenting the goals to the Board in June. I am excited about our progress, and I believe the outcome of our Strategic Planning will give our district direction for years to come.

Another initiative worth mentioning is the development and multi-year implementation of our Learner-Centered Education model. This is a way for us to personalize learning for each of our students and is an outgrowth of trends in education that have extended beyond the traditional education model. For many years, education has been trending towards less "whole class" instruction and more active and student-centered learning and teaching. As a result, our teachers and staff have implemented many of those practices throughout our district already. The next phase of this initiative was the development of our Portrait of a Spartan. This is our vision of what we want our students to become. Our portrait is less about specific academic achievements and more about skills and characteristics. In this day and age, information is more readily available than ever. As a result, memorizing

information is less important than being able to appropriately and accurately find and use it. In addition, in order to "empower our students to succeed in their world," they have to become good citizens...good people. Our Portrait of a Spartan lays that out and will give us direction for many years to come to support our students.

Finally, some of you may have attended, or read about, the State of the Community event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce on May 1. At that event, I talked about our successes and areas of focus for the coming years. We've accomplished much in the last several years, and this year, we turned our attention to long-term planning to our High School and the Administration Building. These buildings have served our students and community for many years and developing a long-term plan for these buildings is a priority. We are exploring all options, as well as the financial impact of any decision.

As you can see, it's been a busy year and the future is bright. I am so grateful to all of you for another fun-filled year of learning, building relationships, and growing. *Enjoy your summer, and see you in August!*

COVER STORY: SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 427 AWARDED PRESCHOOL FOR ALL GRANT

January 23, 2024

Sycamore Community School District 427 is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a Preschool for All (PFA) Grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to expand our Little Spartans Early Learning Program. This development is set to take effect at the start of the 2024-25 school year.

The State announced that our district was selected to receive funding from the competitive PFA program, which provides funding directly to public school districts to increase access to early childhood education and intervention services for children ages 3 to 5.

The grant represents a major milestone for our community, as it empowers the school district to offer preschool education at no cost to some families who qualify based on state criteria. This includes delays identified on screening instruments in intellectual processing, academics, speech/communication, social-emotional

development, and/or motor development. In addition, family environmental factors such as low income, homeless, parent/sibling with a disability, parent education level, family structure, non-English speaking household, and others are also considered when identifying eligibility.

This grant will also allow us to transition to a five-day-per-week schedule, providing a more comprehensive and consistent learning experience for our students and their families. This initiative is a testament to our commitment to providing high-quality early learning opportunities for children in the Sycamore community. "Providing learning opportunities and support for our preschool students helps prepare them to become lifelong learners in our district and beyond," said Mr. Steve Wilder, Superintendent. "We are always looking for ways to expand our programs for our students, and through the financial support of this grant, we'll be able to expand our Little Spartans program."



SCAN ME!

Or visit syc427.co/PFA

EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS: SYCAMORE HIGH SCHOOL SHINES AT ILLINOIS YMCA YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

April 4, 2024

The Sycamore-based Youth and Government Program has been fostering the next generation of leaders since its inception in 2016 based out of the Kishwaukee Family YMCA. Currently based out of Sycamore High School, it has seen remarkable growth and success over the years. Spearheaded by Kristin Miller and Sheri Wigant, in coordination with Jordan Wilkerson, this initiative has provided students with a unique opportunity to engage with the processes and procedures of state governance, while shaping them into informed and empowered citizens.

This year marked a significant milestone as Sycamore High School's delegation celebrated its eighth year of active participation in the Illinois YMCA Youth & Government program. With 44 students taking part, the delegation attended the 75th Annual Springfield Assembly, showcasing their dedication and passion for civic engagement.

One of the hallmarks of the program is its immersive approach to learning about government. Through assuming various roles such as legislators, attorneys, executive



officials, lobbyists, and press members, students delve deep into the workings of Illinois government. The three-day conference, held at the actual Illinois Capitol and Supreme Court facilities, offers students a firsthand experience of the legislative process, allowing them to witness how bills transform into laws.



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Or visit syc427.co/youthgovernment

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY WITHIN SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 427

May 31, 2024

For the first time this past school year, World Cultural Fairs took place at each of our five elementary schools. This initiative was spearheaded by Sycamore High School's World Youth Club (WYC) and English Language Learners (ELL) students and has provided a glimpse of global culture for our young learners.

The concept of the World Cultural Fair began in 2013 at North Grove Elementary School. Back then, SHS students read aloud in their native languages within classrooms. It was a simple yet powerful way to share the beauty of linguistic diversity. As the years passed, the initiative grew and eventually transitioned to West Elementary School, where it had expanded to include cultural presentations alongside the readings.

The driving force behind the expansion of the World Cultural Fair to all elementary schools in our district has been the passion and dedication of our WYC and ELL students. They believed strongly that every elementary student should have the opportunity to experience different cultures. This year, 30-40 high school students from grades 9-12 came together to make this vision a reality.



EMPOWERING ALL LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN THEIR WORLD



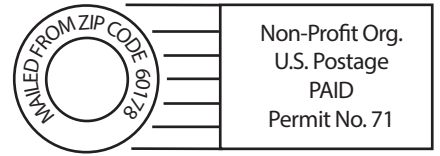
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Or visit syc427.co/CulturalFair

THE TORCH



245 West Exchange Street
Sycamore, IL 60178



*****ECRWSS*****

RESIDENTIAL POSTAL CUSTOMER



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To view the calendar
visit [syc427.org/
resources/news-
events/calendar](https://syc427.org/resources/news-events/calendar)

BACK2SCHOOL BASH

Downtown Sycamore

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13 | 5:00-7:00 PM.

TASTE OF BLACK AND GOLD

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23 | 5:30-8:00 PM.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22