

THE TORCH



245 West Exchange Street
Sycamore, IL 60178



*****ECRWSS*****

RESIDENTIAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

All Board of Education meetings begin at 7:00 P.M.
Meeting locations vary; please check the district website for location of the meeting.

JAN	28
FEB	25
MAR	18
APR	22
MAY	27
JUN	24

2025 DAYS OFF

FEB	14 & 17
MAR	24-28
APR	18 & 21
MAY	26



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Feb 2025

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In This Issue



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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Steve Wilder

It's been an amazing first semester for our district, filled with accomplishments and moments that reflect the hard work and dedication of our students and staff. From classrooms to extracurriculars, their commitment to excellence continues to inspire and remind us of the incredible strength of our Spartan community.

One of our focuses this year has been the Portrait of a Spartan initiative. This district-wide effort is designed to foster growth in our students beyond academics, athletics, and extracurriculars by cultivating the eight dispositions we believe are essential for their success in school and beyond. This year, we have created a monthly

video series to share with our community, highlighting each of the dispositions that make up our Portrait of a Spartan and how they are integrated into daily life at every grade level.

If you haven't had an opportunity to view the introductory video, you must know that the Portrait of a Spartan was developed from a broad spectrum of input that started with the people who know our students the best: our staff. From interactions in learning spaces to the hallways, lunchrooms, playgrounds, fields, and courts, our staff knows our students the best. Many of them also grew up in, or near, Sycamore. They know the heartbeat of our community and what's most important for our students to be productive citizens when they graduate. Then, the challenge was distilling a very broad list of characteristics to the eight that are most important.

Those final eight dispositions represent the qualities that came up most often in the feedback from our staff, and which represent what we believe our Spartans should exemplify in our local and global community. They should act responsibly and with empathy when they interact with others. They should be confident in who they are and resilient when faced with adversity. We hope they are flexible

thinkers, problem-solvers, and effective communicators in the workplace, at home, and in our community. And finally, we hope that they are collaborators who understand that the value of working together as a team exceeds the value that individuals have when they work alone.

Our work with the Portrait will remain an ongoing focus in our district. Moving forward, we will identify exemplars at every grade level to bring these dispositions to life across all grades. As we grow more comfortable with them and incorporate them into our classrooms, we will create more opportunities for our students to learn and demonstrate them as they continue through our schools.

There is enormous pride in our tight-knit community, and we hope that our efforts to develop these eight dispositions in all of our students contribute to the "more" in Sycamore for generations to come. Go Spartans!



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PORTRAIT OF A SPARTAN INITIATIVE BY VISITING syc427.org/portraitofaspartan



MORE THAN A GAME: HOW ESPORTS IS EMPOWERING SYCAMORE STUDENTS

In the world of high school sports, a new contender is rising—one with headsets instead of helmets, controllers instead of cleats, and a digital arena where strategy and teamwork reign supreme. At Sycamore High School, eSports has evolved from a weekly virtual student gathering into a thriving, competitive club, fostering connection, confidence, and a sense of belonging among its members.

The idea for an eSports club came during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic when the district was teaching via remote learning. Students in Ms. Keca's class were invited to join Google Meet sessions on Fridays to hang out with one another and play video games. While not competitive at the time, Keca says that it existed as a safe space for her students to overcome feelings of disconnection.

"When it first started, we only had a few students in attendance because it was very casual, but it quickly grew to nearly a dozen students," Keca said. "It was clear there was a need for students to connect through their main passion—video games."

Upon returning to in-person learning, students continued to voice their desire to game together and turn their weekly informal hangouts into an official club.



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EMPOWERING ALL LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN THEIR WORLD

BIG SPARTANS, LITTLE SPARTANS: MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CONNECTS SYCAMORE STUDENTS

At the start of the 2024-25 school year, Sycamore Community School District 427 launched a new student mentorship program, Big Spartans, Little Spartans. This program strengthens connections between Sycamore High School and West Elementary School students. Big Spartans, Little Spartans was brought to life through the dedicated efforts of Emily Waller, West Elementary Principal; Molly Tucker, MTSS Coordinator; and Mollie Momenteller, Instructional Coach at Sycamore High School. This initiative fosters positive relationships across grade levels, with high school students serving as mentors to younger students.

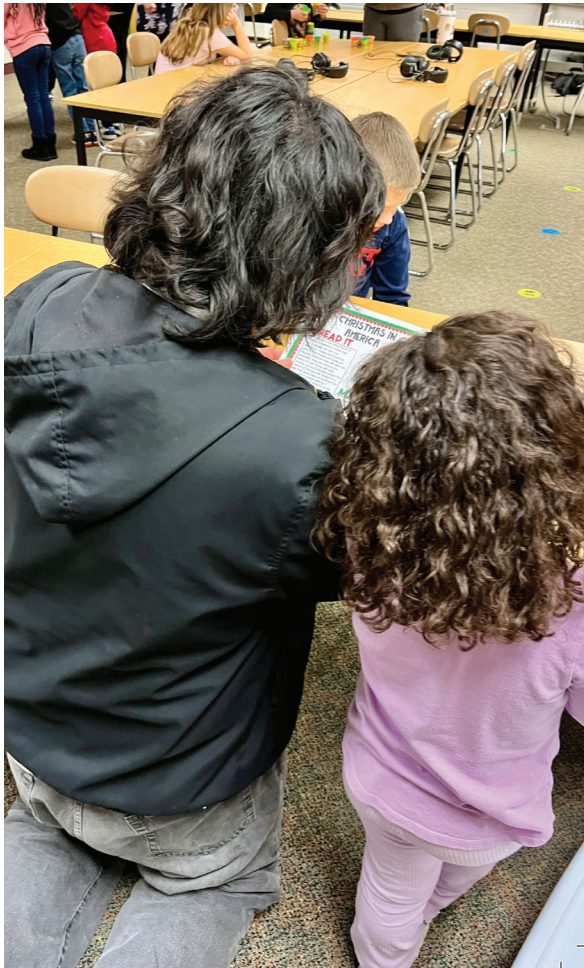
"Last school year, we visited a school in District 204 with a mentorship program that had great success," Tucker said. "We saw an opportunity to replicate that model, giving West students a high school role model and fostering a stronger school community."

Each week, high school mentors travel to West Elementary to spend time with their "Little Spartans." They collaborate on a variety of activities designed to build confidence, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The weekly visits have quickly become a highlight for students on both ends of the mentorship.

The idea for the program was inspired by a similar successful initiative observed in another district. Molly Tucker, the program's liaison, shared how the proximity between West Elementary and the high school made Sycamore an ideal candidate for such a program.



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BUILDING UPON THE FUTURE: FACILITY UPDATE

This past fall, our district created a public-facing Facility Plan, documenting all necessary and recommended facility work until 2030. The comprehensive plan addresses essential renovations, upgrades, and expansions across our schools to enhance learning environments and ensure our facilities support current and future educational needs.

A significant milestone in our district's journey involves our new District Administration Center at 1947 Bethany

Road, formerly the Nicor Building. The district acquired this facility as part of our long-term strategy to centralize district operations and offer the potential to relocate other departments. The projected move date will take place over Spring Break in March 2025. The new location supports our commitment to operational excellence and provides a welcoming and accessible environment for our staff and community members.

As we look to the future, we also prepare to honor our past. After close to 100 years of serving the district, our current Administration Center at 245 W. Exchange Street—previously known as Central School—will be closing its doors and listed for purchase. This beloved building has been a cornerstone of the Sycamore community, with countless memories

shared by generations of students, staff, and families. To allow the community to say goodbye to this landmark, we will host a Farewell Open House at 245 W. Exchange Street, where everyone is invited to gather and celebrate the history of Central School. Please keep an eye out for the scheduled date, which will be announced soon!

We are also reaching out to our community for contributions of photos and stories of Central School. If you have memories, images, or stories you would like to share, please connect with our Communications Department at communications@syc427.org or 815-899-8100. Your shared memories will help us preserve and celebrate this important chapter in our district's history as we transition into a new era.



SCAN TO READ OUR FACILITY PLAN syc427.co/Facility-Plan