



## **Comprehensive Needs Assessment Summary Symons Elementary School 2025-2026**

### **District Demographic Data**

The city of Milan was founded in 1831 and is located in the Southeastern Michigan Counties of Washtenaw and Monroe. The city has a total of 3.4 square miles with 75% of its residents living in Washtenaw County and 25% of its residents living in Monroe County. Located between the cultural and commercial hubs of Ann Arbor, MI and Toledo, OH, Milan has both rural and industrial areas. The population of the City of Milan is around 6,000, which inhabit just over 2,500 households. Milan Area Schools includes the entire City of Milan as well as parts of the following townships: Augusta, Pittsfield, Saline, York, Exeter, London, and Milan. These townships are also split between Washtenaw County and Monroe County. The residents of the City of Milan have varied educational experiences with approximately 37% of the population earning a bachelor's degree or beyond. The median household income in Milan is just over \$93,000, with a poverty rate of 9.4% (8.2% rate for residents aged 18 or under). \*Data listed above gathered online through the U.S. Census Bureau and MiSchoolData

The racial makeup of the student population is 83% White, 7% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Two or More Races, 3% African American, and 1% Asian. Our student population is also: 81% At-Risk, 38% Economically Disadvantaged, 17% Students with Disabilities, and 2% English Language Learners.

Milan Area Schools has four school buildings: Paddock Elementary School, Symons Elementary School, Milan Middle School, and Milan High School. The district proudly operates a schools-of-choice program and consistently receives enrollments from more than 20 districts from Washtenaw County and four contiguous counties. Milan Area Schools recognizes a net increase of 233 students when considering non-resident students attending Milan vs. resident students attending elsewhere. The District offers an exceptional educational program to over 1,800 students in Preschool through Twelfth grade. Milan Area Schools employs 353 staff with 97 serving in the capacity of direct instructional staff. The instructional staff is considered 100% Highly Qualified, with a beneficial mixture of veteran teachers and teachers new to the profession, averaging over 11 years of service.

### **School Demographic Data**

At Symons Elementary School, we have a total of 354 students and 33 staff members providing direct student instruction and support. Of our 354 students, 46.9% are female students and 53.1% are male students. The percentage of students with disabilities in our building is 17%. Our student population is 86% White, 6% Hispanic, 5% African American, and less than 1% each of American Indian, Alaska Native, or Asian. Our free and reduced lunch rate for the 2025-2026 school year is 43%, and 85% of our students qualify for At-Risk services.

### **Staff Perceptions**

Staff survey results reflect a strong commitment to student support and caring relationships across the school. All staff (100%) reported that students have a trusted adult they can turn to for academic or personal support, and that teachers genuinely care about students. These results suggest a shared sense of responsibility for student well-being. At the same time, staff feedback points to areas for continued attention, including consistency of discipline practices and student behavior.

### **Parental Perceptions**

Parent and guardian survey results indicate a welcoming school community with strong family–school connections. Families reported high levels of satisfaction with communication and accessibility, with 98% indicating they can easily contact teachers and staff and 97% describing the school as welcoming. Families also expressed confidence that teachers care about students, staff treat students with respect, and the school is clean and well-maintained (92%). Feedback related to bullying prevention, peer interactions, discipline consistency, and communication about academic progress suggests opportunities to build greater clarity and consistency in expectations and strengthen proactive communication with families.

### **Student Perceptions**

Our students reported that they enjoy school and feel safe and supported. They stated they have someone to talk to when they have a problem and can receive help when needed. They also described feeling that their teachers had high expectations for learning and that they understood what was expected of them at school.

### **Student Achievement**

NWEA achievement data from the 2024–2025 school year show consistent academic growth in both reading and mathematics, with particularly strong gains in mathematics. Overall, all students increased an average of 12 RIT points in reading and 19 RIT points in mathematics from fall to spring. Students who are Economically Disadvantaged demonstrated comparable progress, with gains of 12 points in reading and 16 points in mathematics, while students receiving Special Education services showed positive growth, particularly in mathematics (+16 RIT), though reading growth was more modest (+9 RIT). Growth patterns were similar across gender. At the grade level, second and third grade students met or exceeded expected growth in both content areas, while fourth grade students demonstrated stronger gains in mathematics than reading. Spring scores across most grade levels were at or near national norms, suggesting that Tier 1 instructional practices are supporting student learning, while also highlighting the need for continued attention to reading growth.

Fall 2025 NWEA Reading achievement data provide additional context for current instructional needs. While median performance in grades 3 and 4 was at or above the 60th percentile, a substantial proportion of students across grades 2–4 entered the year performing below the 41st percentile in reading, particularly in grade 2. This distribution highlights the importance of continued focus on Tier 1 literacy instruction, early identification of student needs, and consistent instructional practices to support all learners as the school builds on prior-year growth.

**In response to our assessment and perception data from the previous school year, the following items represent new or reinforced improvement initiatives.**

- **Tier 1 Literacy Instruction:** Adoption of the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum, supported by ongoing professional development, to ensure consistent, research-based literacy instruction aligned to the Science of Reading.

- **Instructional Support and Monitoring:** Differentiated instructional coaching and a renewed focus on formalized reading progress monitoring to inform instruction and guide student support.
- **Social-Emotional and Inclusive Supports:** Implementation of the TRAIL SEL program, a Peer-to-Peer program to support social skill development and inclusion, and a resource room to support students with moderate cognitive disabilities.

### **School Systems Review**

Milan Area Schools conducts Internal Reviews on an annual basis in each school building. The review process is modeled after the AdvancED Accreditation Review process, whereby the host school shares a comprehensive presentation reviewing academic and perception data along with data-based plans for the upcoming school year. The visiting team, including administrators and teachers from the three other district buildings, receive the presentation, conduct classroom visits, interview a student panel, review artifacts in the building, and then summarize their experience.

The visiting team for the most recent review, completed in November 2025, identified the following highlights at Symons Elementary School:

- Student belonging was evident
- Students are excited to be here!
- Joy is evident in each hallway
- Shared leadership is in place and impacting culture and instruction
- Student-centered, students are clearly at the center of everything
- Focus on attendance and how it impacts culture and academics
- Intentional planning and clear alignment in practice
- Growth mindset and focus on the future
- This school and its leaders have done their homework to impact change

### **Comprehensive Needs Assessment Determinations**

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment, which serves as the culminating report of the annual, cyclical district improvement process, identified the following instructional strategies aligned to district-wide goals established by Milan Area Schools. These strategies prioritize strong Tier 1 instruction as the primary lever for improving student outcomes, with targeted interventions provided to support students who require additional assistance.

1. **MAS Mathematics Goal:** Reduce the gap in NWEA Mathematics RIT scores and PSAT/SAT Math by at least 25% from Fall to Spring between the all-student average and Students with Disabilities and also Economically Disadvantaged Students.
  - **Symons Mathematics Strategy:** Symons Elementary will continue to strengthen Tier 1 mathematics instruction through consistent, standards-aligned classroom practices that promote student reasoning and engagement. In addition to providing targeted individualized and small-group intervention using the Bridges Intervention Program as a resource, the Mathematics Interventionist will model instructional strategies and collaborate with classroom teachers to support the implementation of Building Thinking Classrooms practices. These efforts will strengthen Tier 1 instruction by increasing opportunities for problem-solving, student discourse, and mathematical thinking. Interventions will remain aligned to core instruction and informed by ongoing progress monitoring to address identified skill gaps and support equitable student growth.

2. **MAS Reading Goal:** Reduce the gap in NWEA Mathematics RIT scores and PSAT/SAT Math by at least 25% from Fall to Spring between the all-student average and Students with Disabilities and also Economically Disadvantaged Students.
- **Symons Reading Strategy:** Symons Elementary will prioritize high-quality Tier 1 literacy instruction through the adoption and implementation of the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum, which is aligned to the Science of Reading and designed to build foundational skills, vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension. Ongoing professional development, instructional coaching, and a renewed focus on formalized progress monitoring in reading will support consistent implementation across classrooms.
  - For students identified as at-risk, Reading Interventionists will provide targeted, intensive support using research-based programs and strategies, including ISME Morphology, UFLI, SIPPS, phoneme-grapheme mapping, Wilson programs (Just Words, Fluency), intensive phonological awareness instruction, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Orton-Gillingham-based approaches, and Tools4Reading. These interventions will be delivered through small-group or individualized instruction and aligned to Tier 1 instruction to accelerate student progress.