

# Happy New Year!

January 2017

Here we are at the beginning of 2017. I am hopeful for the promise and possibility of a new year. Last year was full of change and upheaval for our school community, but I believe we are now heading in the right direction.



It was also a tumultuous year nationally, and the coming year promises to be full of change. Some of this change will no doubt be felt very acutely by our school community. I would like you to join me in committing to make our school a safe place free of harassment for all of our families: All are welcome here. All are safe here. This is a sanctuary.

We are not the only ones discussing the challenges that face our country. There is a national day of action being organized for January 19, 2017. SWDCS will join in solidarity not only with our larger school community, but schools throughout our city and across the nation on that day. More information will be forthcoming.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Donner".

Frank Donner  
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## Staffing Updates

In December our Middle School schedule and programming shifted slightly. Ms. Shelby Liebler left our school community to pursue another job opportunity. Please join me in thanking her for her service to our school and wishing her well in her new endeavor.

Mr. Saul Martinez took over Ms. Liebler's homeroom. Mr. Martinez is now offering Spanish instruction to all of our Middle School students. Offering foreign language instruction to our students has long been something we hoped to add to our programming. Mr. Martinez will differentiate his instruction for students with all levels of Spanish ability (including no prior experience and those who are conversationally fluent).

In place of the Spanish elective class that Mr. Martinez had been teaching, we are now offering a Drama elective taught by Mr. Conall Walsh. We are pleased that we were able to make these changes with existing staff members that are already a part of our school community.

## Enrollment for Next School Year

All current students need to complete re-enrollment paperwork in order to maintain their spot at our school for the 2017-2018 school year. This paperwork will be sent home next Tuesday, January 17, 2017. Return it as soon as possible. The re-enrollment period ends on February 24, 2017. Enrollments after this date will not be given re-enrollment preference and will become part of the general application pool.

## Testing

Our students take the NWEA Measures of Academic Practice (MAP) test each fall, winter, and spring. We are able to use the scores on this test to measure how much growth they have made over the course of the school year. Beginning next week the students will be taking the winter edition of the test. This will be our first opportunity to formally measure students' progress this school year. These results will be shared as part of Parent Teacher Conferences on February 8, 2017. NWEA MAP is a computer based test and it adapts to the student's level. It can be quite challenging. Students are only expected to be able to answer about half of the questions correctly -- and that's okay! That's how this particular test works.

Beginning early next month many of our students will be tested as part of the WIDA assessment. This assessment measures the reading, speaking, listening, and writing abilities of English Language Learners.

## Early Arrival

Please do not drop your student off at school until 8:00am. There are no staff members designated to supervise students before 8:00am. This is a time when staff members are planning, meeting, and preparing for their day.

## Dress Code

SWDCS' dress code consists of solid dark blue, light blue, or white collared shirts and dark blue, black, or khaki bottoms. Shoes should be mostly black or brown. In cool weather students are allowed to wear sweaters or sweatshirts that are dark blue or black with no hoods or writing on them.

## School Website

Our school website is up and running! Please head over to [www.swdcs.org](http://www.swdcs.org) to check it out. We are continuing to add content and will update it regularly.

## SWDCS Basketball

Southwest Detroit Community School is proud to announce our first competitive sports Basketball program in partnership with Detroit PAL . Students in 5th-8th grade are invited to try out for one of 10 spots on the team. Try-outs will take place next Tuesday, January 17th and

Wednesday, January 18th from 4pm until 5pm. Permission slips must be completed and returned in order to try out.

## 24 Hour Rule

Please remember if your child is sick, they need to be vomit/fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child returns to school any earlier, they will be sent down to the office and you will be called to come pick them up. This is for the safety and health of all students.

## Snow Days/ Emergency Building Closures

In the event of a snow-day or emergency closure our school name will appear on channels 2, 4, and 7, and will also be on the local radio stations. An automated text or phone call will be sent out to parents confirming the closure. In extreme cases in which we may close school in the middle of the day, parents will be contacted by phone. It is important that we have up to date phone numbers in your child's record so that we can reach you. If your contact information has changed since the beginning of school, please see Ms. Emma to update the information.

## Upcoming Events

There will be a Talent Show in February. Auditions will take place Tuesday, January 17th and Thursday, January 19th. Please complete the permission slip for the auditions if you would like your child to participate.

On Wednesday, January 18th there will be a Family Board Game Night at the school from 5:30pm until 7:00pm. On Wednesday, January 25th there will be a Family Fitness Night at the school from 5:30pm until 7:00pm.



*We are a joyful, inclusive family of learners who embrace education as a lifelong journey. As self-determined and productive people, we nurture our whole selves physically, mentally, emotionally, and artistically. We work in solidarity and love with our greater Southwest Detroit community. By critically and creatively participating in our world, we affect positive change and empower ourselves and each other to become the people we want to be. We are limitless!*

Embrace. Educate. Empower.