

# Spring!

April 2018

Spring is here: the days are longer, the grass is greening, daffodils are getting ready to open, and the Tigers are playing. This is a great time to make sure your kids spend some time outside playing, riding bikes, drawing with sidewalk chalk, and observing the seasonal changes. Make sure that your child is reading *everyday* for *at least* 20 minutes -- this includes being read to, so you can make it a family event!



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

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## Comprehensive Support and Intervention

For the 2016-2017 school year, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) changed its accountability system to assess every school in Michigan by proficiency and growth results from the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP), along with English Learner progress, School Quality/ School Success information, and assessment participation. Schools performing in the bottom 5% across the state are identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools. On March 30, 2018, the MDE released the names of CSI schools for the current year. Southwest Detroit Community School has been identified by MDE as a CSI school.

As a CSI school, SWDCS will be required to develop and implement a Partnership Agreement with MDE. The Partnership Agreement will put additional resources in place to drive improvement and increase self-accountability. In the coming weeks, we will work together to identify the specific needs of SWDCS, craft a plan to address these needs, and secure the support and commitment of our school board, our authorizer (Grand Valley State University), and the MDE. Parents and community members will receive more information about how they can support the Partnership Agreement once the plan has been finalized and approved.

If you are interested in reading more about Michigan's school accountability system you can find information at [www.michigan.gov/mde-accountability](http://www.michigan.gov/mde-accountability) with specific information about SWDCS' performance available at <https://www.mischooldata.org/ParentDashboard>.

The SWDCS Board, administration and staff are committed to your child(ren) receiving the highest academic experience possible which is why the management company was changed a year

and a half ago and a three year strategic plan was completed in late fall. We will continue to work together as a team, with all stakeholders, to achieve academic success. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

## Enrollment

Several of our grades are fully enrolled, but we have openings in other grades. Please refer your family, friends, and neighbors to our school for the 2017-2018 school year! We have extended office hours for interested families to enroll on Friday, April 13, 2018 until 5:30pm and Monday, April 16, 2018 until 6:00pm.



## M-STEP

The Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) is a standardized, online assessment that is administered to students once a year throughout the state of Michigan. All students in 3rd through 8th grade take tests in Math and English Language Arts.

Students in 5th and 8th grade also take assessments in Science and Socials Studies.

Please avoid scheduling appointments or planned absences during testing times. You can help your child by ensuring that s/he is well-rested and has had a good breakfast on testing day. Students need to arrive on time to school by 8:30am everyday, but especially on testing days. Testing will be taking place from approximately 9am through 11am on the following days:

### **Fifth Grade & Eighth Grade:**

April 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 26; May 1, 2, 3

### **Sixth Grade & Seventh Grade::**

May 7, 8, 9, 10

### **Third Grade:**

May 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

### **Fourth Grade:**

May 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

If you would like to learn more about the M-STEP, please visit [www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep).

## School Safety

In the wake of the tragedy in Florida, there is a trend of threats toward schools across America and recently, schools in Detroit. I want to take this opportunity to share what we are doing at SWDCS to support the safety and emotional well-being of our children, families, and staff.

Our main goal at SWDCS is keeping our students safe – both physically and emotionally. During daily Morning Meetings, we build and strengthen positive relationships with our students -- we consider this an essential step towards maintaining a safe school environment. Close, trusting relationships allow students to feel comfortable and know what is right, like reporting suspicious activity or reporting unsafe behaviors to staff, parents or other trusted adults.

Throughout the year we have scheduled fire, tornado, and lockdown drills to familiarize students and staff with the process of what to do during various safety situations. We have age-appropriate conversations about safety scenarios and provide students with age-appropriate instructions to keep students physically and emotionally safe. Along with this, please remind your children that all

drills must be taken very seriously as it is the best way to ensure we are prepared in the event of an emergency.

The following protocols are in place to support a safe environment and we appreciate your support in maintaining them:

- All exterior doors are always locked throughout the school day
- All parents/visitors must report to the main office using only the front main door.
- If a parent/guardian needs to talk with a teacher, please call the school to set up an appointment or report to the main office using only the front main door. If a teacher is unavailable, our office staff will take a message for you.
- All staff and volunteers have complete background checks on file.
- Parents/visitors should never let other people in the building when entering or exiting, even if you are attempting to be courteous, please let the door close behind you and let that visitor buzz the doorbell.
- Parents/visitors should never go to a classroom without checking-in with the office first.
- In the event of a threat or safety emergency, we immediately contact the Detroit Police Department and act upon their expert recommendations.

You can access more information about talking to your children about school violence through the National Association of School Psychologists:

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers> If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

## SWDCS Parent Group

The mission of the parent group is to build community and support the staff and one another, for the good of our children. If you would like to get involved, please come to the next Principal Coffee/Parent Group Meeting on Friday April 27th at 8:45am. Another way to participate is by contributing to the Parent-Prepared Teacher Appreciation Lunch on Wednesday, May 9th. Please contact Sandra Gonzalez through the main office or Rachael Sanowski (248-220-6841) about preparing a dish and/or serving it to teachers on May 9th.

## Musical Performances

Come out and celebrate Earth Day with Southwest Detroit Community School on Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. Kindergarten and second grade students will be performing musical selections celebrating our earth. There will be performances at 9:30am and 10:10am at Southwest Detroit Community School in the Gymnasium. Admission is free! Please come out to see all that our students have been working on!





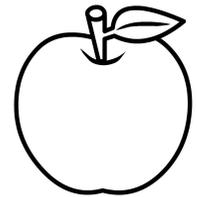
## Soccer

SWDCS' spring soccer program is up and running! Practices are on the following days:

| K-2nd<br>Grade      | 3rd/4th<br>Grades       | 5th Grade                | 6th-8th<br>Grades   |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Mondays 3:45p-5:30p | Tuesdays<br>3:45p-5:30p | Thursdays<br>3:45p-5:30p | Fridays 3:45p-5:30p |

## Nutrition Facts

Good nutrition promotes overall physical health and helps students perform academically. Here are some important points for a nutritious meal or healthy snack for young children:



- at least 50% of your child's meal should be fruits and vegetables
- children should drink water or milk (fat-free or 1% low-fat) instead of sugary drinks like juice and soda
- food should be served in kid-size portions (avoid over feeding your child)
- half of their grains should be from whole grains

For more nutrition and health information, visit [www.beactivekids.org](http://www.beactivekids.org)



## Michigan Opera Theatre Summer Programming

This summer the Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) will be running two different educational programs during the month of July. Students who participate will use dance, song, and movement in either the performance of a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta or the students' own original production.

For more information or to register, contact the MOT at 313-237-3429 or visit [michiganopera.org/learning/opera-education/](http://michiganopera.org/learning/opera-education/)

## Handicap Parking Spaces

Please do not park in the handicap spaces in our school's parking lot unless you have handicap permit. We have students that rely on those spaces and multiple visitors that also use them.

## Garden Resources for Families

For over a decade, the Garden Resource Program (GRP) has supported family, community, school, and market gardens in Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck. Participants in the Garden Resource Program receive resources for their vegetable gardens, including seeds and Detroit grown transplants and become part of a growing network of gardeners and advocates working to promote urban



agriculture within a thriving local food system. Applications to join the program are available in the main office or can be accessed at [detroitagriculture.net](http://detroitagriculture.net).



## Recycling Bin

You may have noticed the new recycling dumpster in the parking lot of SWDCS. The container is specifically for paper, and we encourage our families to bring their recycling from home and add it to the bin. The school does receive money for the amount of paper by weight, so every bit helps! All types of paper are accepted, but please no brown paper or cardboard, metal, plastic, etc.

Embrace. Educate. Empower.