

Greetings! I hope this update finds you doing well and looking forward to a great Friday night of football and elementary pride night (thanks to SOS)! Millstream Career Center will also be out at the game tonight supporting local students and offering a glimpse of what they provide to our county. We'll also be welcoming the 1968 Class Reunion tonight!

Report Card

I'll get right to it – as I'm sure you've seen, the Courier has reported our District Report Card. My intentions of this special update are not to provide excuses – I don't like how we fared any better than the next person. However, I do want to provide explanation and context to ensure a fuller understanding of what we're doing, where we rank, and what you should be taking away from the Report Card.

As I've discussed in previous weekly updates, numerous legislators and even one gubernatorial candidate has publicly stated that the Report Cards do not measure what matters. Unfortunately, because they measure, they matter – they are one piece of an accountability system developed by the state. While I agree with these legislators that we should find better ways to measure our students on an equitable basis we are stuck with what we have until that changes.

With that in mind, if we take the Report Card at face value – that it is a measure developed by the state to compare schools' progress – then we should also view the Report Card as the state intended – by "Similar District Typologies". What does that mean? The state utilizes geographic factors, along with population density, demographic factors, and socioeconomic factors to arrive at our 20 most similar districts. This list is available at ODE:

(http://webapp2.ode.state.oh.us/similar_districts/Similar_Districts.asp). None of the Hancock County Schools are listed in comparison with us – in fact, Ada in Hardin County is the nearest school district (and is only our 20th most similar district). Schools such as Old Fort (our most similar district), North Central Local (Williams County), and Southeastern Local (Clark County) are in our top 5 most similar districts as defined by the Ohio Department of Education. When our Report Card statistics are measured against similar districts it demonstrates us comparing better with our cohorts. There are certainly areas in which we need to improve – and we will never shy away from that, but we should be measured more equitably.

I know that many might say that while ODE provides us with "Similar District Typologies" it is simply normal, human thought to compare to our neighbors. While the District Report Card is one of those measures, it is not the best because it combines variables that differ in each of our buildings. Instead, it is more accurate to look at our individual building scores. At the Elementary level, our "C" score for K-3 Literacy was 2nd out of 7th in rural Hancock County schools. Our revamped Gifted Program at the Elementary level demonstrated improvement in scoring 116.429 out of a possible 120 for Performance Index Scores. In Math, our Elementary met or exceeded all the Annual Measurable Objectives for all sub-group areas.

At the High School level progress has also been made – the overall grade for the building is a "C", which ranks 4th out of 8 high schools in the county. Don't forget that while the state says the Report Cards are intended to be easy to understand, they also say that a "C" indicates schools are doing exactly what they should be doing – not subpar, not mediocre – it means they are doing what the state wants them

to do. Most believe that description fits an “A” or a “B”...making the Report Card a bit less understandable and user-friendly.

Our High School achievement grade is ranked 3rd of 8, while our Progress grade is tied for 2nd out of 8. Most interestingly, our Prepared for Success Grade (how well we are preparing kids for career or college) is tied for 7th out of 8. A “C” is the highest Prepared for Success in Hancock County and there are only 2 of those. Everyone else in the county received either a “D” or an “F” in this area. If I would point to one reason that I do not believe the Report Card is an accurate measure it would be this area. According to the state measure, only 2 schools in our county are preparing their kids for career or college. Northwest Ohio is generally held to provide a top-tier education and prepare students well for the next level by any account. The overwhelming majority of our students go to college and do well – the problem is that many of them do not go to State Colleges and the data from Private Colleges is not relayed to the state – thus, providing a skewed number. Even for those who do not go to college, our local programs such as FFA and FCCLA, along with our Robotics Course, and our Millstream Career Center provide outstanding job skills and placement. If you look at past graduates from our school they are doing well as productive members of society – the best measure of whether they are prepared for the success.

I would close in continuing the last sentence above – think of your own experiences either as a CR grad or those of your children. I believe our students receive a sound education from caring teachers and that they go into the world prepared with skills to succeed in career, college, and life in general. While we do not shy away from accountability, and understand that the Report Card is part of that, your experiences and those of your children are the best measure of how we are doing.