SOUTHMORELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Data Presentation

August 12, 2021

“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” *--Winston Churchill*

- Southmoreland School District has a tradition of strong academic achievement. Since its inception in 1966, Southmoreland has provided the educational foundation for people living in our district who have taken that learning and used it to make their area, region, state, country, and the world a better place.
- In years past, determining what “success” is has been debated. Is it the number of students attending four year schools? Is it SAT scores? Is it the number of students immediately employed in the country’s workforce?
- In the past twenty years, accountability through state assessments has been considered a primary measure for school and district level success. And while it is not the only data point one can consider, because it is a federal requirement to test students annually, the data is normative and comparable.

The History of Accountability in Schools

- The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2001 and was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, is the name for the most recent update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The NCLB law—which grew out of concern that the American education system was no longer internationally competitive—significantly increased the federal role in holding schools responsible for the academic progress of all students. And it put a special focus on ensuring that states and schools boost the performance of certain groups of students, such as English-language learners, students in special education, and poor and minority children, whose achievement, on average, trails their peers. States did not have to comply with the new requirements, but if they didn't, they risked losing federal Title I money.

--Education Week, April 10, 2015

The History of Accountability in Schools

- The Every Student Succeeds Act, signed into law Dec. 10, 2015, limited much of the federal government's big footprint in education policy, on everything from testing and teacher quality to low-performing schools, giving new leeway to states to call the shots.
- That's a big change from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which ESSA replaced and updated.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act took full effect in the 2017-18 school year.

--Education Week, March 31, 2016

Key Differences in ESSA

- Accountability Plans
- States still have to submit accountability plans to the Education Department. These new ESSA plans will start in the 2017-18 school year. The names of peer-reviewers have to be made public. A state can get a hearing if the department turns down its plan.
- Accountability Goals
- States can pick their own goals, both a big long-term goal, and smaller, interim goals. These goals must address: proficiency on tests, English-language proficiency, and graduation rates.
- Goals have to set an expectation that all groups that are furthest behind close gaps in achievement and graduation rates.

Key Differences in ESSA

- *Elementary and Middle Schools*
- States need to incorporate at least four indicators into their accountability systems. The menu includes three academic indicators: proficiency on state tests, English-language proficiency, plus some other academic factor that can be broken out by subgroup, which could be growth on state tests.
- States are required to add at least one additional indicator of a very different kind. Possibilities include: student engagement, educator engagement, access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate/safety, or whatever else the state thinks makes sense.
- States have to figure in participation rates on state tests. (Schools with less than 95 percent participation are supposed to have that included, somehow.) But participation rate is a stand-alone factor, not a separate indicator on its own.
- *High Schools*
- High schools will be judged by basically the same set of indicators, except that graduation rates will have to be part of the mix. They could take the place of a second academic indicator.
- *Weighing the Indicators*
- It will be up to the states to decide how much the individual indicators will count, although the academic factors (tests, graduation rates, etc.) will have to count “much” more as a group than the indicators that get at students’ opportunity to learn and post-secondary readiness.
- Low-Performing Schools
- States have to identify and intervene in the bottom 5 percent of performers. These schools have to be identified at least once every three years.

PSSA and Keystone Testing

- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)
- The annual Pennsylvania System School Assessment is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment which provides students, parents, educators and citizens with an understanding of student and school performance related to the attainment of proficiency of the academic standards. These standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels. School districts possess the freedom to design curriculum and instruction to ensure that students meet or exceed the standards' expectations.
- Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8 is assessed in English Language Arts and Math. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 4 and 8 is assessed in science.
- Individual student scores, provided only to their respective schools, can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional educational opportunities, and school scores provide information to schools and districts for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning.
- In compliance with §4.51(a)(4) of the PA School Code the State Board of Education approved, "specific criteria for advanced, proficient, basic and below basic levels of performance.“

--Pennsylvania Department of Education

PSSA and Keystone Testing

- The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Literature, English Composition, Biology, Chemistry, U.S. History, World History, and Civics and Government. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, Keystone Exams in the following subjects were developed by the Department and made available for use by school districts, AVTSs and charter schools, including cyber charter schools:
- Algebra I
- Literature
- Biology
- The Keystone Exams are one component of Pennsylvania's statewide high school graduation requirements. Keystone Exams will help school districts guide students toward meeting state standards.

--Pennsylvania Department of Education

Data Comparisons

- The ***Pittsburgh Business Times*** collects and organizes the data for districts across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The PBT then sorts the data by performance, taking into consideration PSSA and Keystone scores as well as economically disadvantaged percentages.
- Each spring, the PBT issues their School Rankings which are based upon those data sets and factors.
- Here is the 2021 Keystone Performance set, for example:
- https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2021/05/18/pbt-decade-ranking-top-keystone-exams.html

The Data Set

- Because there were no PSSA or Keystone tests given during the 2019-2020 school year, the PBT chose instead to do a comparison of performances across the decade, beginning in 2010 and ending in 2019.
- This means that the performance is not indicative of one year's work, but rather a look at how districts fared over a much longer sample size.
- Larger sample sizes mean less standard deviations—meaning, more accuracy and more reflective of the performances.

Ranking Categories

- SWPA Honor Roll—this is a ranking of districts in the Southwest region of Pennsylvania only.
- Commonwealth Honor Roll—this is a ranking of districts in the state of Pennsylvania.
- Overachiever Rank—this ranking considers economically disadvanted percentages as well as academic performance,
- Budget Ranking—this data reflects the highest to the lowest budget amounts in the Commonwealth for the 2020-2021 school year.

SWPA Honor Roll

- Southmoreland School District ranked #26 out of 102 districts in the region (in the top 25% for districts in Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette, Beaver and Washington counties).
- In Westmoreland County, Southmoreland is ranked #5, behind Franklin Regional, Penn-Trafford, Norwin and Greater Latrobe.

Honor Roll Rank Decade (2010-2019 tests)	School District	County	Rank 2020 2017-2019 tests	Rank 2011 2008-2011 tests	Budget 2020-2021	Enrollment 2020-2021
10	Franklin Regional	Westmoreland	9	8	$61,639,456	3,299
12	Penn-Trafford	Westmoreland	12	12	$58,093,468	3,848
17	Norwin	Westmoreland	15	10	$76,937,521	5,117
21	Greater Latrobe	Westmoreland	22	14	$57,085,874	3,571
26	Southmoreland	Westmoreland	34	41	$31,717,948	1,825
27	Ligonier Valley	Westmoreland	48	21	$32,737,043	1,426
28	Hempfield Area	Westmoreland	27	31	$97,673,325	5,333
33	Kiski Area	Westmoreland	51	28	$62,863,000	3,461
36	Greensburg Salem	Westmoreland	53	22	$46,242,414	2,612
46	Belle Vernon Area	Westmoreland	47	60	$38,072,850	2,330
48	Derry Area	Westmoreland	49	49	$38,396,252	1,837
54	Burrell	Westmoreland	54	50	$32,140,050	1,787
65	Yough	Westmoreland	64	67	$33,442,315	1,809
67	Mount Pleasant Area	Westmoreland	69	59	$34,664,671	1,941
86	Jeannette City	Westmoreland	82	82	$19,900,768	983
94	New Kensington-Arnold	Westmoreland	94	85	$39,028,941	1,878
98	Monessen City	Westmoreland	99	81	$16,544,614	751

Commonwealth Honor Roll

- Southmoreland School District ranked #94 out of 502 districts in the region (in the top 20% for districts in the Commonwealth).
- In Westmoreland County, Southmoreland is ranked #5, behind Franklin Regional, Penn-Trafford, Norwin and Greater Latrobe.

Statewide Honor Roll Rank Decade	School district	County	Statewide Honor Roll Rank 2020	Statewide Honor Roll Rank 2011	Local Honor Roll Rank Decade
32	Franklin Regional	Westmoreland	28	20	10
41	Penn-Trafford	Westmoreland	39	38	12
53	Norwin	Westmoreland	45	32	17
63	Greater Latrobe	Westmoreland	67	43	21
94	Southmoreland	Westmoreland	136	156	26
104	Ligonier Valley	Westmoreland	207	71	27
105	Hempfield Area	Westmoreland	102	116	28
139	Kiski Area	Westmoreland	217	105	33
147	Greensburg Salem	Westmoreland	220	77	36
186	Belle Vernon Area	Westmoreland	200	239	46
197	Derry Area	Westmoreland	203	185	48
240	Burrell	Westmoreland	223	192	54
298	Yough	Westmoreland	300	301	65
326	Mount Pleasant Area	Westmoreland	345	236	67
432	Jeannette City	Westmoreland	424	400	86
469	New Kensington-Arnold	Westmoreland	470	408	94
476	Monessen City	Westmoreland	483	399	98

Overachiever Ranking

- Southmoreland ranks #2 in the decade across the region.
- In Westmoreland and Fayette counties, respectively, Southmoreland is ranked #1 at “punching above their weight”, as the PBT describes it.

Overachiever Rank Decade	School district	County	Honor Roll Rank Decade	Rank % disadv.	% econ. disadv. 2020-21	Overachiever Rank 2020
2	Southmoreland	Westmoreland	26	76	53.90%	3
7	Kiski Area	Westmoreland	33	73	52.00%	23
9	Greensburg Salem	Westmoreland	36	44	38.20%	29
15	Greater Latrobe	Westmoreland	21	38	35.80%	16
19	Derry Area	Westmoreland	48	52	43.50%	30
22	Norwin	Westmoreland	17	15	21.20%	17
24	Ligonier Valley	Westmoreland	27	43	37.90%	68
34	Belle Vernon Area	Westmoreland	46	50	42.60%	45
36	Yough	Westmoreland	65	69	50.90%	42
41	Hempfield Area	Westmoreland	28	28	29.10%	44
48	Penn-Trafford	Westmoreland	12	13	18.60%	47
62	Franklin Regional	Westmoreland	10	10	16.00%	61
64	Jeannette City	Westmoreland	86	84	63.00%	51
82	Monessen City	Westmoreland	98	93	67.40%	94
85	Mount Pleasant Area	Westmoreland	67	57	44.90%	83
94	Burrell	Westmoreland	54	39	36.20%	84
102	New Kensington-Arnold	Westmoreland	94	96	69.60%	102

Overachiever Rank Decade	School district	County	Honor Roll Rank Decade	Rank % disadv.	% econ. disadv. 2020-21	Overachiever Rank 2020
2	Southmoreland	Westmoreland	26	76	53.90%	3
3	Uniontown Area	Fayette	78	103	91.70%	4
20	Brownsville Area	Fayette	95	78	56.30%	18
58	Frazier	Fayette	61	53	44.20%	86
67	Connellsville Area	Fayette	82	79	56.40%	55
95	Albert Gallatin Area	Fayette	88	70	51.30%	80
97	Laurel Highlands	Fayette	81	83	61.60%	89

Budget Data

- Southmoreland ranked #68 in the region with a budget of $31.718 million in 2020-2021.
- Among the districts Southmoreland (#26 on the SWPA Honor Roll) outperformed despite a lower budget and similarly situated in terms of demographics, geographic location and population size (SSD enrollment=1825 students):

District	Budget 2020-2021	SWPA Honor Roll Ranking	Enrollment
Yough	33.442 million	#65	1809
Derry Area	38.396 million	#49	1837
Greensburg Salem	46.242 million	#36	2612
Mount Pleasant Area	34.665 million	#67	1941
Burrell	32.140 million	#54	1781
Elizabeth Forward	44.992 million	#41	2291
Belle Vernon	38.073 million	#46	2330

Growth means…

- The value-added (or growth) information analyzes available data from previous years (looking back) to help districts, schools, and teachers evaluate how much groups of students have gained academically in a school year by answering questions such as: Is our instructional program working for all students? At all grades? In all subjects? PVAAS value-added (or growth) reporting is available in the grades and subjects/courses assessed in Pennsylvania's statewide assessment system. This includes reporting for math and ELA (grades 4-8), science (grades 4 and 8), and Keystone content areas (Algebra I, Literature, and Biology).

2019 PVAAS MATH Grades 4-8

Subject	Year,	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement	Student Count
PSSA Math 4-8	2019	4	Well Below	-4.88	-4.7	1.0	53.5 48.8	144
		5	Well Below	-5.64	-5.0	0.9	56.1 51.1	150
		6	Well Above	4.39	3.9	0.9	54.6 58.5	152
		7	Well Below	-5.92	-5.6	0.9	62.2 56.6	129
		8	Meets	-0.40	-0.4	0.9	57.3 56.9	138
		Across Grades	Well Below	-5.73	-2.4	0.4	56.7 54.4	713

3 Year PVAAS Math Grades 4-8

Subject	Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
3-Year Average / 2-Year Average	4	Well Below	-4.93	-2.7	0.5	56.4 53.7	445
	5	Well Below	-3.89	-2.1	0.5	56.0 53.9	420
	6	Well Above	12.68	6.7	0.5	54.0 60.8	430
	7	Well Below	-8.31	-4.5	0.5	62.1 57.6	395
	8	Well Above	7.34	4.1	0.6	57.7 61.7	387
	Across Grades	Above	1.64	0.3	0.2	57.3 57.6	2077

2019 PVAAS ELA Grades 4-8

Subject	Year,	Grade	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement		Student Count
PSSA English Language Arts 4-8	2019	4	Well Below	-6.97	-7.3	1.0	56.1 48.8	144
		5	Well Below	-2.48	-2.4	1.0	53.3 50.9	150
		6	Well Above	6.33	6.1	1.0	53.2 59.3	152
		7	Well Below	-4.09	-4.2	1.0	58.9 54.7	129
		8	Meets	-0.49	-0.5	1.0	55.0 54.5	138
		Across Grades	Well Below	-3.73	-1.7	0.4	55.3 53.6	713

3 Year PVAAS ELA Grades 4-8

Subject	Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
3-Year Average / 2-Year Average	4	Well Below	-4.15	-2.5	0.6	55.6 53.1	445
	5	Well Below	-3.01	-1.8	0.6	54.4 52.6	419
	6	Well Above	9.04	5.2	0.6	53.1 58.3	430
	7	Well Below	-4.93	-2.9	0.6	58.2 55.3	394
	8	Above	1.32	0.8	0.6	55.2 56.0	388
	Across Grades	Below	-1.20	-0.2	0.2	55.3 55.1	2076

2019 PVAAS Science Grades 4 and 8

Subject		Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
PSSA Science 4,8	2019	4	Meets	0.58	4.7	8.0	1460.3 1465.3	143
		8	Well Below	-2.93	-23.1	7.9	1392.2 1366.6	132

3 Year PVAAS Science Grades 4-8

Subject	Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
3-Year Average / 2-Year Average	4	Well Above	5.20	23.5	4.5	1456.3 1481.5	442
	8	Well Below	-2.73	-12.4	4.5	1380.0 1365.7	376

2019 and 3 Year PVAAS Keystone Algebra I

Subject		Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
Keystone Algebra I	2019	N/A	Well Below	-5.42	-11.6	2.1	1521.8 1509.6	164
	3-Year Average / 2-Year Average	N/A	Well Below	-4.29	-5.3	1.2	1517.9 1512.3	478

2019 and 3 Year PVAAS Keystone Biology

Subject		Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
Keystone Biology	2019	N/A	Well Below	-6.36	-12.6	2.0	1526.3 1513.2	175
	3-Year Average / 2-Year Average	N/A	Well Below	-11.83	-15.1	1.3	1524.8 1509.1	442

2019 and 3 Year PVAAS Keystone

Subject		Year	Grade	Growth Color Indicator	Growth Index	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Achievement
Keystone Literature	2019	N/A	Meets	0.71	1.6	2.3	1523.9 1525.6	153
	3-Year Average / 2-Year Average	N/A	Below	-1.40	-1.8	1.3	1524.6 1522.5	434

What does this mean?

- We are achieving in most grades and subjects at a significant level.
- Growth, meaning improvement over the year and then through the years, is an area of concern.
- How will we address the growth issue?
- Using a nationally recognized and normed benchmarking system like NWEA MAPS, we can track student growth over the year, and not just after it as we see with one time, late spring testing.
- Principals and teams will work together in curriculum meetings to discuss instruction, data and growth so that the data we collect formatively through the year is used to make adjustments now and not the following year.