

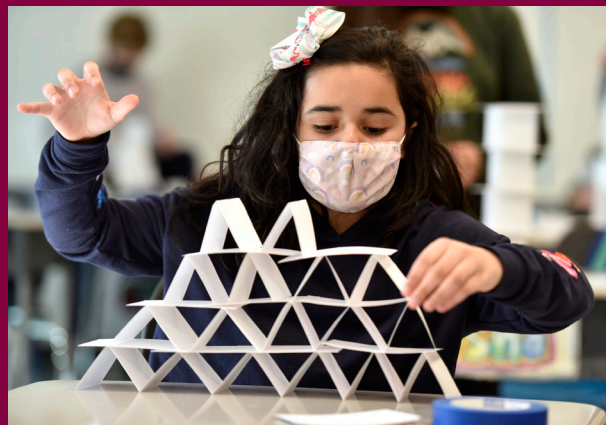


State High commencement was held at Memorial Field June 5, 2021.



**To Prepare Students for Lifelong Success
Through Excellence in Education**

The Year in Review



Annual Report

2020-2021

Our District

Situated in the heart of Pennsylvania, the State College Area School District serves a vibrant, growing community that combines a college town, suburban neighborhoods, farmland and countryside. As the area's fourth largest employer, SCASD draws its students from a 150-square mile attendance area encompassing the Borough of State College and five surrounding townships.

Across eight elementary schools, two middle schools, a high school and the alternative Delta Program for middle and high school levels, our district annually serves an enrollment of about 6,800. Each year, our faculty and staff dedicate themselves to providing the best possible academic experiences for students — from an innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program for grades K-5 to the middle school introductory foreign language classes to the diverse array of high school courses that include AP, Advanced, International Baccalaureate and Career and Technical Center opportunities. Our art, library and music departments districtwide excel in their fields; in fact, over the past decade the district has perennially received the Best Communities for Music Education Award. At the high school alone, students can choose from 75 clubs and activities, including 22 musical ensembles and 30 athletic teams.

Within this dynamic environment, our teachers and students shine. SCASD routinely garners awards for teaching, and district schools annually are highly ranked in state and national lists for instruction and learning opportunities. Four State High students in the past decade have been named U.S. Presidential Scholars, a rare honor, and each class typically includes National Merit Scholarship finalists.

Additionally, we take pride in our special education services, K-12 counseling department, mental health supports, intervention and learning enrichment programs, and individualized education plans to accommodate all student needs. Our district is fully committed to promoting responsive instruction and equity, inclusivity and restorative practices so that all students, faculty and staff feel welcome and supported. In everything we do, we strive to meet the objectives spelled out by our Four Pillars and fulfill our core mission: To prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education.



A Mount Nittany Elementary student uses a Chromebook while working on an assignment in class.

Demographics

American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2%
Asian	8.4%
Black	2.7%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Hispanic	3.8%
White	78.1%
2 or More Races	6.7%

Four Pillars

The district's instructional focus, or road map, is based on four pillars, its prime objectives:

- » Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration
- » Responsive Teaching and Learning
- » High Expectations for All
- » Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

Directory

www.scasd.org

Elementary Schools

Corl Street Elementary

235 Corl Street
State College, PA, 16801
Dr. Kelly Mark, principal
814-231-1185
Enrollment: 235

Easterly Parkway Elementary

234 Easterly Parkway
State College, PA, 16801
Danielle Yoder, principal
814-231-1170
Enrollment: 303

Delta Middle Level

653 Westerly Parkway
State College, PA, 16801
Dr. Jon Downs, director
814-231-1000
Enrollment: 120

State College Area High School

650 Westerly Parkway
State College, PA, 16801
Curtis Johnson, principal
814-231-1111
Enrollment: 2,203

Delta Program

653 Westerly Parkway
State College, PA, 16801
Dr. Jon Downs, director
814-231-1000
Enrollment: 158

Virtual Academy

653 Westerly Parkway
State College, PA, 16801
Danielle Yoder, K-5 director
Dr. Jon Downs, 6-12 director
814-231-1002

Ferguson Township Elementary

215 West Pine Grove Road
Pine Grove Mills, PA, 16868
Shelly Buckholtz, principal
814-231-4119
Enrollment: 305

Gray's Woods Elementary

160 Brackenbourne Drive
Port Matilda, PA, 16870
Dr. Kristen Dewitt, principal
814-235-6100
Enrollment: 387

Mount Nittany Elementary

700 Brandywine Drive
State College, PA, 16801
Mark Feldman, principal
814-272-5970
Enrollment: 393

Mount Nittany Middle School

656 Brandywine Drive
State College, PA, 16801
Brian Ishler, principal
814-272-4050
Enrollment: 698

Park Forest Elementary

2181 School Drive
State College, PA, 16803
Jonathan Klingeman, interim principal
814-231-5010
Enrollment: 461

Radio Park Elementary

800 West Cherry Lane
State College, PA, 16803
Deirdre Bauer, interim principal
814-231-4115
Enrollment: 361

Spring Creek Elementary

217 Scholl Street
State College, PA, 16801
Dr. Todd Dishong, principal
814-231-5026
Enrollment: 353

Park Forest Middle School

2180 School Drive
State College, PA, 16803
Dr. Karen Wiser, principal
814-237-5301
Enrollment: 735

Middle Schools

High Schools



581 students were in the class of 2021.

Quick Facts

- » 1,862 Individuals employed
- » 660 Teachers
- » 6,717 Students
- » 4th Largest Centre County employer
- » Average elementary class size: 20
- » Average grades 6-8 class size: 23
- » Average years teaching: 15
- » National Merit: 13 finalists
- » Teachers with PhDs: 14
- » 14th best district in Pennsylvania out of 496: Niche.com
- » \$155 million in total expenses
- » 96.7% 5-year cohort graduation rate

Finance

Historically, SCASD schools have benefited from strong community support for public education and consistent revenue streams from a stable economy centered around Penn State. For the 2020-2021 school year, the district did not increase the real estate tax rate due to the economic impact of COVID-19 on the local community. This was the first time in 13 years that the district had not increased real estate taxes. In its sixth year, the district's Supplemental Property Tax Rebate Program issued 258 rebates totaling \$85,300. Additionally, each approved district homestead and farmstead received approximately \$110 in property tax relief.

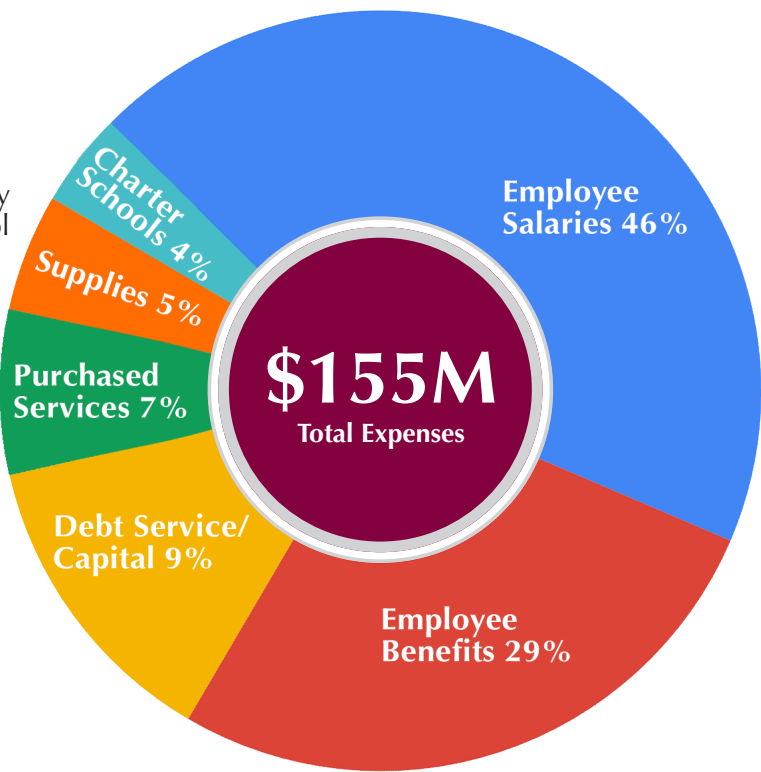
88%
of the budget is used directly to support student learning.

Expenses in 2020-2021 were \$3.6 million less than 2019-2020. This decrease primarily stemmed from a reduction in the transfers to the Capital Projects and Capital Reserve funds by approximately \$1,480,000 and \$3,080,000, respectively, intended to offset revenue reductions. Increases in expenses related to personnel-related costs and required COVID-19 measures such as building maintenance, rental spaces and supplies/equipment.

Revenue Sources

Local: \$133,927,009: **79%**
State: \$29,871,141: **18%**
Federal: \$5,067,965: **3%**

The district's Pennsylvania State Employees Retirement System payments continued to rise because of increases in salaries and the state-mandated contribution rate. Debt service included payments on the \$85 million high school referendum borrowing and additional financing for the remainder of the high school project, Memorial Field renovation and three elementary school projects with new playgrounds. The district continued setting aside resources for funding these expenditures as part of a long-term capital plan.



Charter School Expenses

The district's payment of \$5.9 million to charter schools for 308 students represented 4 percent of the budget. The amount was based on a state formula calculated using the district's actual per capita costs. While the district funds charters as required, it maintains no financial, academic or operational supervision, nor evaluative authority over them.



Payments to charter schools rose from \$3.6 million in 2011 to \$5.9 million in 2021, while enrollment over that span fell from 312 to 308. During 2020-2021, charter enrollment dropped by 17, compared to the prior year.

Centre County School Tax Comparison

District	Mills	Median Assessed Value	Real Estate Tax	Earned Income Tax*	Total Tax
SCASD	46.0875	\$72,885	\$3,359	\$588	\$3,947
Bellefonte	50.2131	\$46,735	\$2,347	\$650	\$2,997
Bald Eagle	58.9800	\$35,025	\$2,066	\$1,269	\$3,335
Penns Valley	48.0995	\$44,653	\$2,148	\$805	\$2,953

*EIT Based on Centre County median income of \$61,921

COVID-19 Pandemic

During the year, the district followed a health and safety plan formed over the summer of 2020. Among other mitigation protocols, the plan mandated masks and physical distancing inside buildings, during outdoor recess and on district transportation. Students could receive mask exemptions for documented medical reasons.

Families could choose in-person learning, synchronous remote learning or the district's Virtual Academy. In-person middle and high school students, divided into two groups by their last names, alternated in-person and synchronous remote days in order for schools to adhere to physical distance protocols. The district delayed the start of school to Aug. 26-28, depending on the grade level and learning option, to allow for more time to launch the hybrid format.

Due to rising COVID-19 cases, SCASD shifted to districtwide remote learning Sept. 8-25. It did



State High students were masked and physically distanced while in school.

the same for an initial two weeks after Thanksgiving break because of the impact of COVID-19-related staff absences, and as a precaution in anticipation of increased cases after holiday gatherings and travel. Instructional support centers were set up for special education students. However, the increasing COVID-19 spread prompted the district to remain in remote learning through Jan. 8.

Once vaccines started being distributed in stages, SCASD initially provided families and employees with information about local availability. Then it collaborated with Centre Volunteers in Medicine to hold vaccination clinics for staff and residents and, starting in April, students ages 16 and over. In May, students ages 12-15 became eligible.



For her commitment to feeding students and their families during the pandemic, Director of Food Services Megan Schaper was recognized as the 2020-2021 Pennsylvania Director by the School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania.

Led by Schaper, the district's food services operations built

upon its success from the previous spring, preparing and distributing 1,135,833 free meals throughout the school year via weekly distributions to families and in schools. By the summer of 2021, food services had served 1,439,199 meals since March 2020, including 980,218 through the weekly Meals for Home distribution.

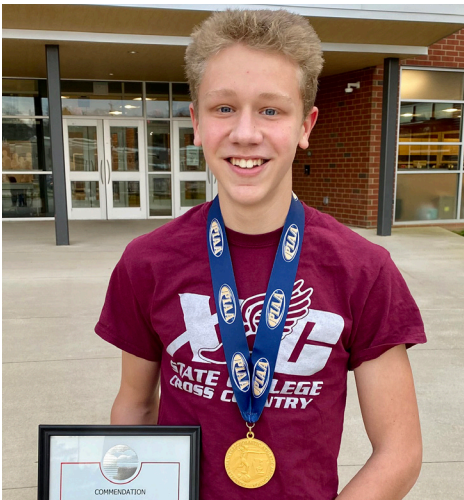
Awards & Recognitions



The State College Area High School Boy's Track and Field team won the PIAA State Championship June 3, 2021.

Athletics

Brady Bigger was named the 2020-2021 Gatorade Pennsylvania Boys Cross Country Player of the Year, the first State High cross country runner to receive the award and only the second Gatorade player of the year in school history. He won a state championship, making him the first State High boy to win a state title in the sport in 44 years.



Jade Castro won a silver medal in the 100 Backstroke at the 2021 PIAA swimming championships.

Music



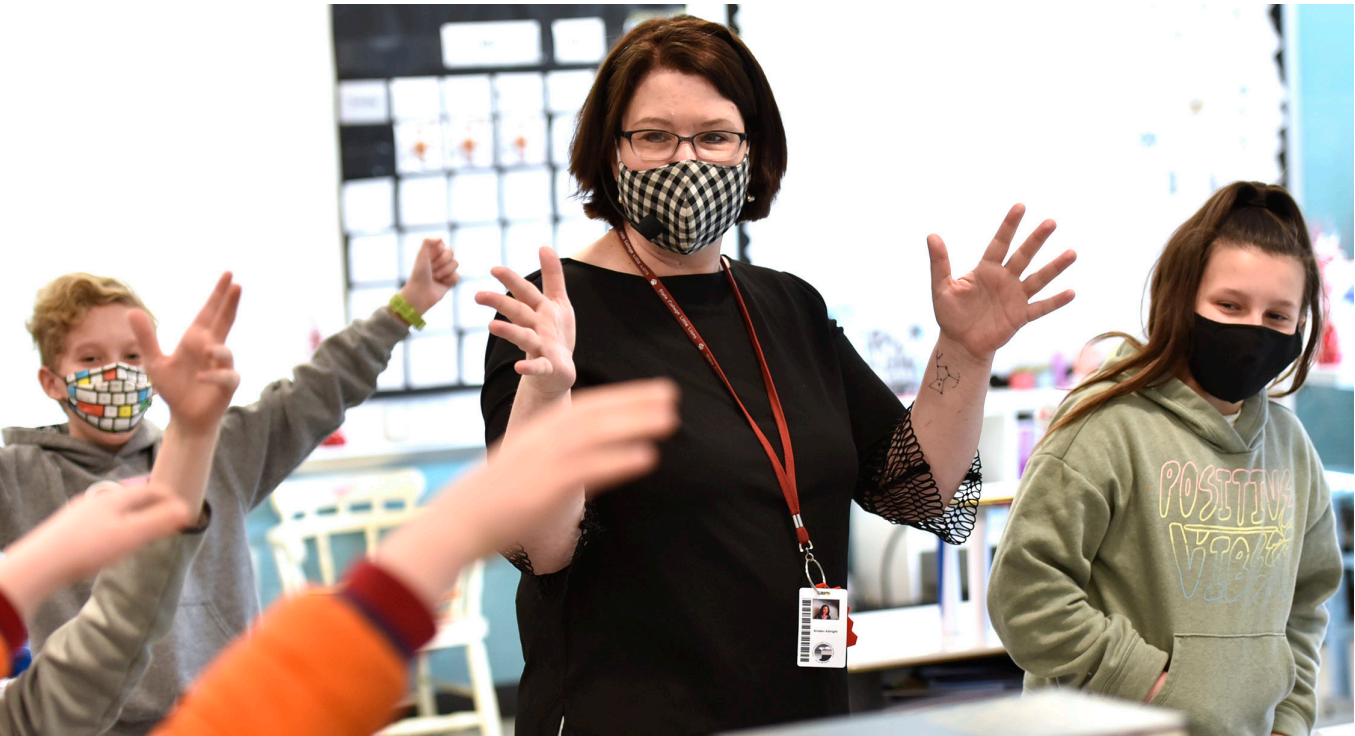
The district was named as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation for the 17th time.

Arts

The New York Times special section *Coming of Age*, which collected teenagers' perspectives on life during the pandemic, included a painting (below) and statement by State High student Waverly Huang. It was one of 30 artistic pieces selected from 5,500 entries. Huang also won a High Merit Award for her digital painting *Give and Take* in Celebrating Art's Fall 2021 collection.



Faculty & Staff



Kristen Albright (above), a STEM teacher at Corl Street and Radio Park, was named the Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology Teacher of the Year.

Park Forest Middle School social studies teacher Chris Felsmann was named a State College Magazine Teacher of the Year.



Academics

PFMS's Technology Student Association chapter claimed nine state champions at the 43rd Annual PA Technology Student Association Competition, winning firsts in the career prep, children's stories, community service video, essays on technology, inventions and innovations, leadership strategies, mass production, medical technology and video game design categories.

Park Forest Elementary's Vivian Petrich wrote and illustrated a book titled *A Salt Shaker named Pepper*, winning the WQED Writers Contest for all second-graders.



PFMS students Natalie Branstetter, Harper House, Isabelle McSweeney, Sienna Sullivan and Margo Wykoff helped take firsts in the mass production, leadership strategies and medical technology categories at the virtual National Technology Student Association competitions.



The State High Quiz Bowl team of Ananya Tadigadapa, Darren Chen, Prithvi Narayanan and Elijah Adu placed second in the Greater Pennsylvania Quiz Bowl Virtual Tournament. PFMS seventh and eighth graders won the Fall 2020 3-2-1 competition. MNMS placed first in the 2021 Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl Tournament in the eighth grade division.



PFMS twins Aaron and Aidan Le finished first and second, respectively, in the Pennsylvania State Mathcounts Competition. Aaron placed 20th at the national competition, the highest ever national ranking for a SCASD student, while Aidan placed 68th.

A district team of Jake Levan, Leslie Powers and Sae'Awzha Williams won the PennDOT District 2 Innovations Challenge, identifying potential new funding to help remedy the state's transportation revenue shortfalls.

State High student Leslie Powers placed second in the Dream-Learn-Pitch competition run by the Pennsylvania-based nonprofit Brighter Financial Futures.

Park Forest Middle School Quiz Masters sixth graders won the America Answers Fall competition for fifth/sixth grade.

Student Engagement K-8

At the elementary level, students receive language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and STEM instruction. Language arts focuses on reading and writing, with differentiated instruction at each individual student's reading level. Mathematics utilizes structured investigation, exploration, workplace games to practice learned skills, and independent practice experiences to ensure mastery of concepts. The updated science curriculum uses Next Generation Science Standards to focus on developing in-depth understanding of science through collaboration, inquiry and problem-solving.

Middle level students in grades 6-8 are introduced to French, Spanish or German while taking a rigorous blend of English, mathematics, science, social studies, art and general music courses. Social studies provides civics and economics instruction. Academic Literacy courses help students build critical thinking skills to analyze texts as well as develop extensive reading and metacognitive conversations through inquiry-based learning. In 2021, the library department expanded the annual #StateHighReads effort to K-8 students with the #SCASDReads initiative focused on Appalachian Trail books.

As our students join their classrooms at the start of each year, our teachers work to create a positive learning environment where students collaborate and support each other. We teach

Growing all Learners

SCASD's commitment to all students is reflected in our district-wide Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment results. In addition, the district uses several other assessments to evaluate students' performance in order to continually adapt instruction.

In 2020-2021, within each of the elementary and middle school



Mount Nittany Elementary School librarian Dustin Brackbill talks with students about Lit Fest. The annual event promotes literacy across all grade levels using several mini-sessions in a conference style format.

how to get along, share, deal with conflict, follow rules and be good citizens. All of our teachers and staff have been trained in the Restorative Practices approach, which emphasizes repairing relationships when handling conflict.

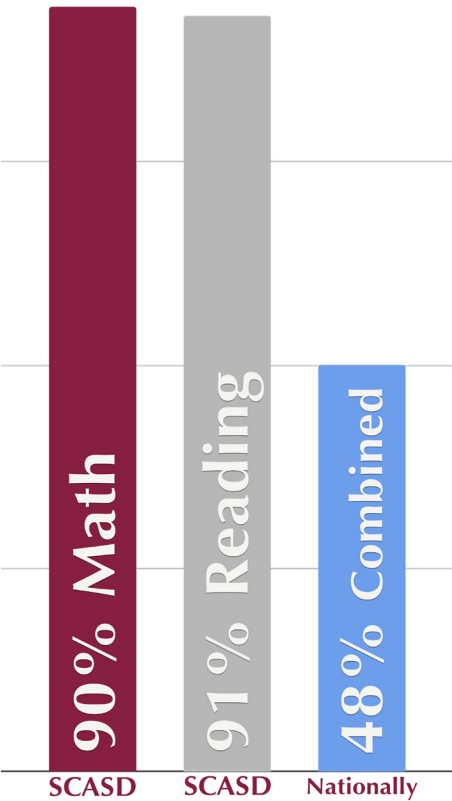
Classroom community is important to our elementary and middle school programs, and teachers work hard to sustain the positive communities they build with their students throughout the year. We know that social and emotional learning is key to supporting academic learning, which is why we prioritize promoting positive learning environments.

quartiles, students demonstrated an average of a year or more worth of growth in math and reading.

Right: Students in grades 2-8 performed at the 90th percentile nationally for math and at the 91st percentile for reading, compared to the national average of the 48th percentile for both.

Elementary Curriculum

Weekly library, health and physical education, art, STEM, and music classes.



Secondary Learning 9-12

State College Area High School provides challenging academic courses, comprehensive vocational/technical programs, and diverse extracurricular activities. Niche.com ranks it 16th out of 675 high schools in the state. SAT scores annually surpass state and national averages, ranking in the top 5 percent of schools statewide, and athletic teams, music ensembles and clubs consistently garner honors. The 2021 graduating class of 581 had 257 Faculty Scholars (GPA of 4.00 or 3.75 unweighted).

During 2020-2021, nearly 63 percent of students took rigorous courses, compared to the statewide average of 58 percent. Learning also occurred outside classrooms. Dozens of students received off-campus enrichment opportunities beyond the scope of the traditional curriculum, including Learning Enrichment, Advanced Option, independent study, research, lab experiences, Penn State courses, mentorships and internships.

State High consistently places graduates in the nation's top universities and colleges. From the Class of 2021, 350 were accepted at Penn State.

SAT Scores	Reading and Writing	Math
State High	615	618
State Average	566	557
National Average	533	528



State High had 13 National Merit Scholarship finalists.

581 Graduates

» 83% Attended college



Valedictorian:
Kueyoung Kim
Salutatorian:
Darren Chen

State High

- » 2,361 Total students 9-12
- » 96.7% 5-year cohort graduation rate
- » 75 Activities and clubs
- » 22 Bands, orchestras, choirs, string ensembles and rock ensembles
- » 30 Athletic teams
- » 88 Advanced Placement and advanced courses
- » 17 International Baccalaureate World Campus courses
- » 14 Career and Technical Center programs

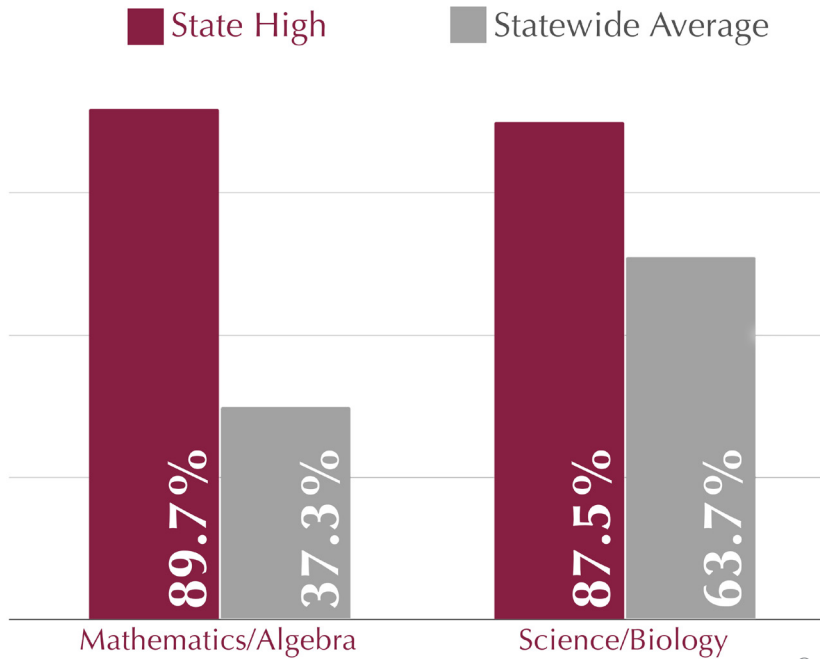
Advanced Placement

1,024 AP tests were taken with a maximum score of 5

- 83% Scored a 3 or higher
- 190 AP Scholars with an average score of 4.00

The Keystone Exams

State High students annually outperform the state average on the Keystone Exams. The chart below shows a comparison of State High students vs. the PA state average for Keystone test scores in 2020-2021. Note: English language arts/literature is not shown due to insufficient testers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Facilities



In the early fall, SCASD completed the final phase of a Memorial Field renovation project that began updating the district’s main outdoor facility in 2013. At a cost of about \$14 million, the last phase updated the historic stadium by building new home bleachers, locker rooms, a training room, a classroom, enhanced ADA accessibility, updated restrooms, redesigned entrances, an expanded pressbox, two concession plazas, a

concourse linking the home and away sides, and improved emergency access to the field.

An Oct. 9 football game began competition, but due to pandemic stadium capacity restrictions, the game was not open to the general public. It was livestreamed to the community and also shown at the North Athletic Field on the high school campus.

Playgrounds

Starting in the fall of 2020, students at Corl Street, Radio Park and Spring Creek elementary schools enjoyed new nature-based playgrounds.

Blending traditional and nature-based options, along with surfaces that provide greater accessibility for all students, the innovative designs were completed at an average cost of approximately \$320,000. Eventually, they will serve as templates for updating all of the district’s elementary and middle school playgrounds.

Playground features include log mounds, grass mounds, embankment slides, rope tree climbers, log scrambles, swing sets built with logs and obstacle courses, though designs vary in some respects due to site



differences. The debut models received glowing reviews.

“I love the new playground,” Radio Park student Benjamin Herickhoff said. “There are so many fun things to do.”



Board of Directors

- Gretchen Brandt
 - Dr. Dan Duffy
 - Laurel Zydney
 - Amber Concepcion, President
 - Dr. Amy Bader, Vice President
 - David Hutchinson
 - Lori Bedell
 - Jim Leous
 - Scott Fozard
- Pictured left to right*

Email: all-board@scasd.org



Administration

- Dr. Robert J. O'Donnell
Superintendent of Schools
- Vernon Bock
Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education
- Randy Brown
Finance and Operations Officer/
Open Records Officer

- Linda Pierce
Director of Human Resources
- Dr. Will Stout
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education



Curtis Johnson was promoted from State High principal to assistant superintendent of secondary education in June of 2021.

Directors

- Deirdre Bauer, Director of Curriculum K-5
- Dr. Seria Chatters, Director of Equity and Inclusivity
- Justin Hetrick, Director of Technology
- Jonathan Klingeman, Director of Gifted, Learning Enrichment, and Title 1 Services
- Jeanne Knouse, Director of Student Services
- Christine Merritt, Director of Curriculum 6-12

- Dr. Ben Mordan, Director of the CTC
- Edward Poprik, Director of Physical Plant
- Chris Rosenblum, Director of Communications
- Heather Pringle, Director of Special Education
- Megan Schaper, Director of Food Services
- Van Swauger, Director of Transportation
- Chris Weakland, Director of Athletics

Registration

The district’s registration office is open year-round to accept new students. Each spring, we host registration events for the next school year, including kindergarten. For the latest information please call our office at 814-231-1017 or visit our registration website. We look forward to welcoming your child.

www.scasd.org/Registration



The annual report is a product of the SCASD Communications Department and produced by Chris Rosenblum and Nabil Mark.





Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all students and employees were required to mask and physical distance while in schools.



2020-2021 Annual Report

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