



The new high school opened January 8, 2018.



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

# The Year in Review



**Annual Report**

# 2017-2018



# Superintendent's Note

Thank you for your interest and strong support of State College Area School District schools. The district serves a diverse community united in a commitment to striving for excellence in education. The value of a SCASD education goes beyond high test scores and extraordinary acceptance rates at post-secondary institutions. A SCASD education is about engaging the whole student — fostering relationships, promoting growth, and encouraging exploration in order to develop skills for life. This includes experiences within our broad array of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular programs.

The citizens of tomorrow will live in a society that will no doubt be very different from our own. Therefore, our mission of preparing students for lifelong success remains critically important.

We're proud of what we offer and invite you to call a school for a personal tour. In the months and years ahead, we look forward to having your family be a part of our community.

Dr. Robert J. O'Donnell, Superintendent of Schools



**First Grade Tree Planting:** In an annual tradition, first-graders from each school in the district plant a tree representing their class. Bringing it full circle, each student is accompanied by a senior who took part when they were in first grade.

## Four Pillars

The district's instructional focus, or road map, is based on the 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

## Demographics

Pacific: .08%	Multi-Racial: 5.77%
Native American: .19%	Asian: 8.02%
African American: 2.75%	Caucasian: 79.7%
Hispanic: 3.49%	

English Language Learner: 3.6%
Special Education: 10.58%
Economically Disadvantaged: 20.4%
Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP): 1.6%



# Our District



Situated in the heart of Pennsylvania, the State College Area School District is a reflection of the thriving community it serves. The school district draws its students from a 150-mile attendance area, Centre County's Centre Region, encompassing the Borough of State College and five surrounding townships.

For the district, 2017-2018 was a momentous year. In the fall, the district adopted a new five-year strategic plan in which the five goals included closing individual achievement and opportunity gaps. On Jan. 8, the new State College Area High School opened for classes while construction continued toward an August 2019 completion date. Also during the year, the Board of School Directors approved plans for three elementary school renovation projects — Corl Street, Radio Park and Spring Creek, the replacement for Lemont/Houserville — and construction began.

Another change was new student days for the fall of 2018. Elementary school days were extended with earlier start times to include more learning opportunities and allow a weekly STEM class. The secondary schools shifted to later starts and dismissals to better aligned with adolescent sleep patterns.

Throughout our district, instruction continued to be provided with a teacher-to-student ratio developmentally appropriate to the needs of students and based on the nature of the courses. In recent years, SCASD has celebrated having local, state and national teachers of the year, and district schools annually are ranked high 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 historically includes National Merit Scholarship finalists.

**Above:** Teachers in our district participate in a innovative program called the Pennsylvania Math Initiative, a Penn State-based program that helps improve K-5 mathematics instruction. Started in 2013, PMI offers a workshop series taught through a partnership between the Penn State College of Education and the Penn State Department of Mathematics, engaging teachers in learning activities and discussions.

## Quick Facts

- » **1,826 People employed**
- » **643 Teachers**
- » **6,787 Students**
- » **585 State High graduates**
- » **4th Largest employer in Centre County**
- » **Average elementary class size: 20**
- » **Average grades 6-8 class size: 23**
- » **Average teaching years experience: 16**
- » **National Merit Finalists: 9**
- » **Teachers with PhDs: 15**
- » **16th best school district in Pennsylvania: Niche.com**

## Elementary Schools

### Corl Street Elementary

235 Corl Street  
State College, PA 16801  
Charlotte Zmyslo, principal  
814-231-1185  
Enrollment: 236

### Gray's Woods Elementary

160 Brackenbourne Drive  
Port Matilda, PA 16870  
Dr. Kristen Dewitt, principal  
814-235-6100  
Enrollment: 442

### Mount Nittany Elementary

700 Brandywine Drive  
State College, PA 16801  
Mark Feldman, principal  
814-272-5970  
Enrollment: 356

### Easterly Parkway Elementary

234 Easterly Parkway  
State College, PA 16801  
Michael Maclay, principal  
Zac Wynkoop, interim principal  
814-231-1170, Enrollment: 322

### Houserville Elementary (3-5)

217 Scholl Street  
State College, PA 16801  
Dr. Todd Dishong, principal  
814-231-5026  
Enrollment: 164

### Park Forest Elementary

2181 School Drive  
State College, PA 16803  
Tom Weed, principal  
814-231-5010  
Enrollment: 505

### Ferguson Township Elementary

215 West Pine Grove Road  
Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868  
Shelly Buckholtz, principal  
814-231-4119  
Enrollment: 354

### Lemont Elementary (K-2)

675 Elmwood Street  
Lemont, PA 16801  
Dr. Todd Dishong, principal  
814-231-5034  
Enrollment: 169

### Radio Park Elementary

800 West Cherry Lane  
State College, PA 16803  
Zac Wynkoop, principal  
814-231-4115  
Enrollment: 350

## Middle Schools

### Delta Middle Level (5-8)

154 West Nittany Avenue  
State College, PA 16801  
Dr. Jon Downs, director  
814-231-1000, Enrollment: 102

### Mount Nittany Middle School

656 Brandywine Drive  
State College, PA 16801  
Brian Ishler, principal  
814-272-4050, Enrollment: 725

### Park Forest Middle School

2180 School Drive  
State College, PA 16803  
Dr. Karen Wiser, principal  
814-237-5301, Enrollment: 750

## High Schools

### State College Area High School

650 Westerly Parkway  
State College, PA 16801  
Curtis Johnson, principal  
814-231-5020, Enrollment: 2,134

### Delta Program

154 West Nittany Avenue  
State College, PA 16801  
Dr. Jon Downs, director  
814-231-1000, Enrollment: 159

### State College Virtual School

154 West Nittany Avenue  
State College, PA 16801  
Dr. Jon Downs, director  
814-231-1002, Enrollment: 18



Historic Memorial Field, Central Office and The Fairmount building, right, home to The Delta Program.





## State High Move-in

On Jan. 8, 2018, State High students took a short walk to mark a huge step. To commemorate the long-awaited move into the emerging new high school, they left a morning pep rally in the North Building gym and crossed Westerly Parkway en masse to the building — a river of backpacks that opened another era in school history.

“Having that entire student body of over 2,100 kids walk across the street and enter this incredible new space, all together as one school, was a pretty amazing moment,” Associate Principal Kathy Pechtold said.

The buzz continued as students oriented themselves to their fresh surroundings. Little Lion Ambassadors Club members and teachers helped their classmates navigate the building. Just to reach the morning took a monumental effort. Over the winter break, custodial staff members packed and moved equipment and scores of boxes. Teachers spent long days setting up classrooms, and construction workers and district employees toiled through the final weekend for the big day.

The procession punctuated the end of the project’s first phase as construction continued toward an expected August 2019 completion.

## New Student Day

On Dec. 18, 2017, the SCASD Board of Directors approved changes to the school days. The elementary school day was extended with an earlier 8:10 a.m. start, and the secondary day shifted to a later 8:40 a.m. start to better align with adolescent sleep patterns documented by sleep research. The elementary day provided time for additional core learning and a fifth weekly special period. A majority of surveyed parents preferred a STEM course for the special, and the district began to create a problem-based curriculum with the help of the Boston Museum of Science.

## Lemont/Houserville Elementary School

The U.S. Department of Education designated Lemont/Houserville a National Blue Ribbon School, placing it among 342 schools so honored for their academic excellence or progress in closing achievement gaps. The joint K-5 school held a commemorative ceremony, and Principal Todd Dishong accepted a flag and plaque at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.





# Student Performance K-8

Our elementary and middle school students continue to excel from robust curricula and high-quality instruction. They're held to high academic and behavioral standards in an atmosphere that emphasizes respect for self and others, celebrates diversity, and provides a nurturing environment with active parent involvement. English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science units offer stimulating opportunities for exploration, with the math curriculum in particular emphasizing a balanced approach between foundational knowledge and productive reasoning.

On the 2018 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests, the district registered a nearly 72 percent proficiency rate on all subjects for students in grades 3-8, placing it 16th in the state. Beyond the PSSA, the district uses multiple assessments to monitor student growth closely, drawing on real-



Mount Nittany Elementary kindergarten teacher Marcie Rockey was recognized as a *State College Magazine* Teacher of the Year for 2018.

time learning information to meet individual needs.

One of our district's main pillars calls for responsive teaching, out of which stems our commitment to

academic growth at all levels. We also strive for educational equity, as demonstrated by our One to One Technology Initiative, which equips every student in the district with a Chromebook.

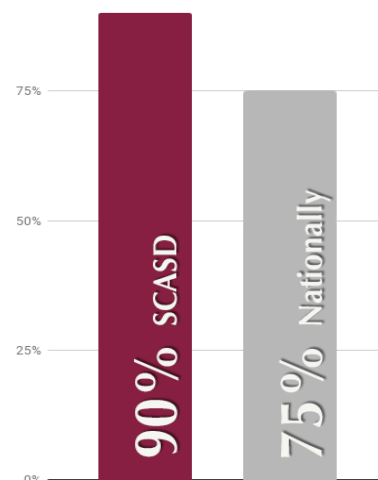
## Growing as Learners

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is an adaptive test that measures students' achievement and growth in grades 1-8. The district considers MAP data to be a valuable resource for evaluating student performance during the school year so that instruction can be adapted as needed.

MAP assessments are administered at three points of the year —

beginning, middle and end. Academic growth as measured by MAP has improved across the board over the past three years. In 2017-2018, 61 percent of elementary and middle level students made a year's worth or more of academic growth, following 59 percent the year before and 57 percent in 2015-2016.

**Right:** Students performing at or above average in reading and math on the MAP assessment.



## Focused on Opportunity

The district's emphasis on closing the achievement gap is having a significant impact. Growth of all quartiles of students is improving above the national average.

Of the bottom tenth of our students based on MAP data, 78 percent made a year's worth or more of academic growth in 2017-2018. Meanwhile, our top tenth also excelled, with 60 percent of the students making similar growth. For both groups, the national norm was 50 percent.

### MAP Assessment Data

51% of SCASD students perform in the top 25% of the nation compared to only 25% of students nationally.



# Secondary Learning 9-12

State College Area High School provides challenging academic courses, comprehensive vocational/technical programs, and diverse extra-curricular activities. Niche.com ranks it 16th out of 656 public 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 2018 graduating class of 585 had 202 Faculty Scholars (GPA of 4.00 or 3.75 unweighted).

Learning also occurs outside classrooms. In 2017-2018, more than 30 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, internships and private lessons/experiences.

The district applied to International Baccalaureate for authorization to offer the Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme for State High juniors and seniors, starting in the 2019-2020 school year. IB provides rigorous, globally-focused curricula used by schools worldwide.

## Profile of State High

- » 24 National AP Scholars
- » 61 Activities and clubs
- » 19 Bands, orchestras, choirs, string ensembles and rock ensembles
- » 30 Athletic teams
- » 77 Advanced Placement and advanced courses
- » 62.4% of students took rigorous courses of study (statewide average 49.2%)
- » 11 Students accepted PSU Schreyer Honors College

### SAT Scores

### Reading and Writing

### Math

SCASD

599

601

State Average

547

539

SCASD ranks 23rd in the state out of 705 high schools for SAT scores

### Advanced Placement

985 AP tests were taken with a maximum score of 5:

85% Scored a 3 or higher

31% Scored a 5



Fernando Del Castillo was the 2018 valedictorian (Princeton University), and Lily Zhang was the salutatorian (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). State High's five-year cohort graduation rate was 96.4 percent, compared to a statewide average of 89.3 percent.

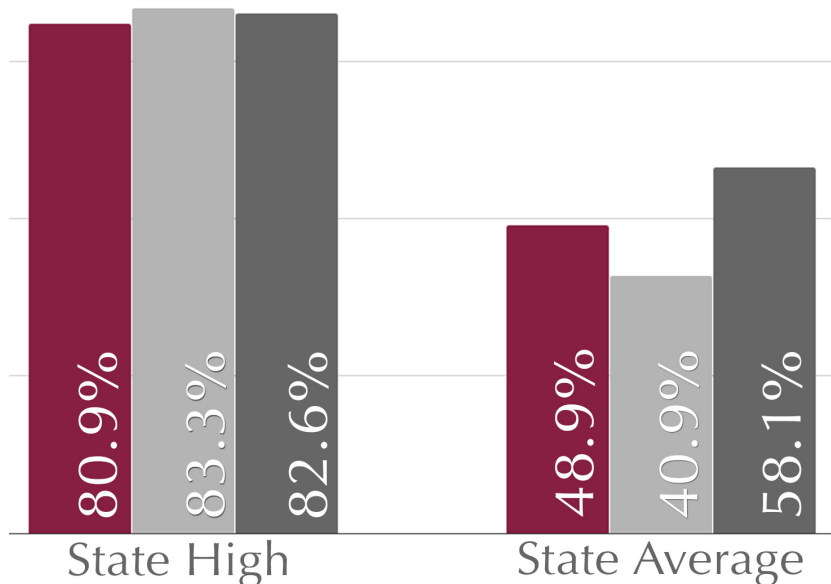
## 585 Graduates

- » 79% Attended college
- » 10.7% Entered the workforce
- » 5.9% Joined the military
- » 347 Students accepted to Penn State

## The Keystone Exams

State College Area High School students consistently outperform the state average on the Keystone Exams. The chart below shows a comparison of State High students vs. the Pennsylvania state average for Keystone test scores.

■ Biology ■ Algebra I ■ Literature



# The Delta Program



Since 1993, when the district's 19-year-old alternative school was renamed, the Delta Program has been a community-oriented, democratic school fostering choice, voice and diversity of thought to develop engaged citizens and inspired leaders.

Delta's democratic nature shines through the Advisory Council, consisting of parents, teachers, and students representing their "clumps," communities within

Delta, joining together to make school-wide decisions.

Delta's curriculum includes 16 advanced courses; however, students also may take State High classes or create independent contracts. They also must complete 30 hours of community service per year and a graduation project. During 2017-2018, enrollments were 159 and 102, respectively, for the high school and middle school levels. Highlights included

**Above:** Delta Middle English teacher David Rockower was chosen for the 2018-2020 cohort of Heinemann Fellows, along with 10 other educators selected from more than 400 applicants nationally. He also won the National Council of Teachers of English Outstanding Middle Level Educator in the English Language Arts Award.

organizing a State College mayoral candidate debate and being honored by The Forum on Black Affairs at Penn State for promoting racial and cultural understanding.

## Career and Technical Center (CTC)

Taught by experts in their fields, CTC courses at State High offer career exploration opportunities and preparation for post-secondary programs or workforce employment. Job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, work for credit and school enterprises such as the Roar Store give many students work-based learning experiences.

During 2017-2018, the CTC

received more than 2,000 course requests for a wide array of course offerings. The CTC also began seeking approval for Oracle Academy certification courses for computer programming, which are expected to be approved in 2018-2019. On average, about 85 percent of students take at least one CTC course in a school year.

### 2017-2018 CTC Course Offerings:

- » Accounting and finance
- » Agricultural science
- » Architectural drafting and design
- » Automotive technology
- » Building construction
- » Culinary arts
- » Cisco Networking Academy
- » Diversified occupations
- » Early childhood education
- » Engineering
- » Health professions
- » Marketing
- » Supply chain management



# Educational Strategic Plan

On Nov. 27, 2017, the SCASD Board of Directors approved the 2018-2023 Educational Strategic Plan, titled "Our Commitment to Every Student, Every Day: Framework to Impact Student Learning," capping a year of work by a 72-member steering committee

and the district administration. For each of five Goals for Student Success, the report outlines strategies and measures reinforcing the district's four core pillars, including a "Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work."

## Roots of Life

For nine years, as part of the district's Learning Enrichment Program, the Roots of Life Performing Arts Ensemble has delivered mesmerizing displays of entertainment and enlightenment. Students from elementary to high school come together to embrace West African dance and drumming, broaden horizons and form lasting bonds.

They rehearse on Saturdays, sometimes with guest artists such as Atlanta-based dancer Terrie Ajile Axam and Penn State students, for shows that include appearances



at Penn State's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Banquet and at other schools. They also present community drumming workshops.

Led by Debra Daggs, a district gifted support/learning enrichment teacher, and Kikora Franklin, a Penn

State associate professor of theatre/dance, the 2017-2018 ensemble comprised 25 students of varied performing experience, melded into a creative force. Their show for the year, "A Dream Conceived In Truth Can Never Die," celebrated historical African-Americans through dance.



On April 19, State High continued a tradition with a festive send-off for its contingent for the Special Olympics Centre County Annual Gery Ryan Track Meet. Students lined the hallway leading to the front door, applauding the athletes and giving out high-fives. Outside, the procession passed marching band

musicians, cheerleaders and baton-twirling majorettes, who ignored chilly rain to honor their classmates. "It's all about the inclusive nature of State High," special education teacher Jacob Reeder said. "We celebrate every success and every opportunity for each student."

## Director of Equity and Inclusivity

Dr. Seria Chatters became the district's first director of equity and inclusivity, hired to start in 2018 to guide the district toward meeting the goals of its school climate/inclusive excellence policy and develop programs and processes that promote diversity and inclusion.





# Awards & Recognitions

# The Arts

State High student Drew Spielvogel was named a 2018 National Young Arts Foundation Merit winner.

**The** He was among the 757 student artists from 47 states honored for their literary, visual, design or performing arts achievements.



State High student Emily Hu became the high school champion during the Pennsylvania State Chess Federation's scholastic championships in Gettysburg, qualifying her for the U.S. Chess Federation's national tournament.



# World Languages

State High student Paulina Tabachnikova recorded a perfect score on the 2018 National Latin Exam, a feat matched by only 526 students out of 14,000 from 24 countries.



State High Thespians Morgan Higgins and John Michael Rosenblum (pictured above) won for best featured dancer in the spring musical, "Once Upon a Mattress." Higgins won for best featured dancer or dancer. Will Fecko was named runner-up for best featured dancer. Rosenblum and Spencer Perry were the runner-up for best ensemble.

State High students Brady Bigger, Darren Chen, Brooke Person, Ananya Tadigadapa and Alexandra Yao earned gold awards for scoring in the 95th percentile or above at their respective levels on the Spanish National Exam. In addition, students earned a total of 7 silver, 11 bronze, and 33 honorable mentions. Chen, Person and Tadigadapa also received regional first place awards.



State High students Iris Li, Natalie Parkinson and Daniel Xu earned gold awards for scoring in the 95th percentile and above on the National French Exam.

## Math

# Math

The Mount Nittany Middle School Mathcounts team of Zach Cheslock, Daniel Miller, Tony Tzolov and Jenny Yu repeated as state champions. By placing second in the written competition and third overall individually, Tzolov qualified for the state team at the national competition.







Meadow Lane Photography

e) received Isaac Awards for their  
actress in a leading role and Rosenblum  
actor or actress in a featured role, and he,

## Technology

State High Technology Students Association chapter members Pete Lauer, Jason Lee and Tejas Wein won the Technology Bowl at the TSA state competition. First places also went to Jeanette Felmlee-Gardener and James Hanagan (structural design & engineering), Petr Esakov (computer systems troubleshooting), and Albert Zhang (Technology Bowl-written).

At the TSA state competition, the Park Forest Middle School team of Daniel Salva, Dean Brannen and Evan Marcinkevage took first in System Control Technology.



Albert Zhang

## Science

State High's Baxter Hostetler, was among 26 students from 13 states selected for the prestigious Appalachian Regional Commission and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory 2018 Summer STEM Programs.



Baxter Hostetler

Gray's Woods Elementary students Luke Bradbury, Natalie Branstetter, Isaac Oppermann, Theo Oppermann and Sara Rotthoff placed second out of 80 teams in the Technical Challenge portion of the international Destination Imagination (DI) Global Finals tournament, where teams solve STEAM-based (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) challenges.



Destination Imagination

## CTC

Career and Technical Center Health Professions and Sports Therapy and Exercise Science program students won eight gold medals at the HOSA Pennsylvania State Leadership Conference: Ellie Kim (nutrition), Supriya Kumar (dental terminology), Jessica Irwin (sports medicine), Britney Peachey (pathophysiology), Jesse Torbic (physical therapy), Roshni Raj (transcultural health care), Raylene Reed (pharmacology) and Joelle Rush (nurse assisting).



HOSA

State High DECA chapter member Tejas Wein placed in the top 10 in retail marketing at the 2018 DECA International Career Development Conference after finishing first at the DECA state conference.



DECA

## Faculty

Agricultural Science teacher Paul Heasley, class of 1975, was chosen as the 2017 Distinguished Alumnus by the State College Area High School Alumni Association and honored before the Homecoming Parade.



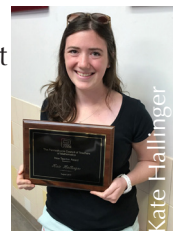
Paul Heasley

Park Forest Elementary School received a Student Group Award from The Forum on Black Affairs at Penn State for promoting racial and cultural understanding.



Park Forest

Kate Hallinger, who teaches fourth grade at Radio Park, received the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of Mathematics New Teacher Award.



Kate Hallinger

Mount Nittany Elementary School was one of 23 schools recognized at the state Positive Behavior Support Implementers Forum for implementing its School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program at the highest level, Tier 3 with fidelity.



# Excellence in Education



PDS intern Kaliyah Mitchell leads a hands-on addition activity during mathematics instruction at Lemont Elementary School.

The Professional Development School program, a 20-year partnership between the district and the Penn State College of Education, received the prestigious Exemplary PDS Achievement Award from the National Association for Professional Development Schools. Three other schools were

similarly honored. In contrast to traditional student teaching, the PDS program selects 70 to 80 seniors and pairs them with mentor teachers for intensive, year-long classroom internships. Interns fully collaborate with teachers while taking pedagogical courses and completing inquiry projects.

The State College Area School District knew it had a winner in Dr. Jessica Dirsmith, a district school psychologist. Then it became official.

Dirsmith garnered the prestigious School Psychologist of the Year Award for Pennsylvania, bestowed by the Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania in recognition of her work as a practitioner, a university-level advisor and teacher, and an advocate for her profession.

"I can say without hesitation that I have selected the right career for me," she said. "I love what I do. I am proud of what I do."



**"I love what I do. I am proud of what I do."**

Director of Special Education Sharon Salter called Dirsmith, who works with the Delta, Reclaiming

Individual Talent (RIT) and Hearts programs, "a leader within our school psychology department."

"She is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to legal and ethical case law," Salter said. "Jess always has the reference and research article to support our efforts as a department. She is a problem solver and often reminds us of our role and purpose in SCASD."

**Did you know**

54 percent of SCASD teachers have post-secondary degrees and 15 have PhDs.







Photo by David Beyerle

Esther Seeland led the girls' 4x800M relay team into the Penn Relays Championship of America race for the first time since 1985.

## Celebrating Shared Success

The tradition of athletic excellence continued with another year full of individual and team accomplishments.

At the state outdoor track championship, Esther Seeland and Taylor Givens turned in gold medal performances, winning the 800-meter run and long jump, respectively. Seeland also won the state indoor 800-meter title. The girls' indoor and outdoor track teams each finished second in the state. For the boys' track and field team, Cohen Russell won a silver medal in the 100-meter run.

Also winning state silver medals were wrestler Cole Urbas, at 197 pounds, and swimmer Matt Brownstead in the 50-meter freestyle.

Volleyball players Leah Henderson and Jess Irwin earned first-team all-state honors.

With 10 wins, the football team finished in the top eight in the state, falling to eventual state champion Pine-Richland.

The boys' soccer team and girls' lacrosse team claimed their first Mid-Penn Conference Commonwealth Division championships, with the lacrosse team advancing to a top eight state finish. Girls' cross country, boys' cross country, basketball, girls' indoor track, girls' outdoor track and field, boys' indoor track and boys' swimming also won conference titles, as well as District 6 titles. Other team district titles went to girls' volleyball (seventh consecutive), girls' soccer

(10th consecutive), football (fourth consecutive), baseball (second consecutive), girls' basketball and girls' swimming.

Tennis player Nick Vanden won a district singles title, and the year's highlights included Ryan Franks breaking the boys' lacrosse season scoring record.

In addition to the high school athletic program, the district offered interscholastic sports at the middle level and intramural sports for elementary students.



Photo by Steve Benner

Senior basketball player Drew Friberg rose to second in all-time scoring at State High with 1,610 points, and was a first-team all-state selection as well as a Mr. Pennsylvania Basketball Award finalist.

# Music Education

For the 14th year, and fifth consecutive, the district was named one of the National Association of Music Merchants Best Communities for Music Education in 2018.

At the Williamsburg Heritage Festival, a three-day adjudication festival in Williamsburg, Va., that drew schools from New York, New Jersey and PA., 122 State High band, orchestra and choir students were a resounding success, garnering three premier awards. The Master Singers won the Choral Award for top overall choir, the Jazz Band garnered the Instrumental Award for top overall instrumental ensemble, and State High received the Adjudicator's Award for top overall program.

"The results are a product of work begun a decade ago by our elementary and middle school colleagues," Director of Choirs Erik Clayton said. "Without the incredible work at the elementary and middle levels, this work we do at the high school cannot happen."



## Singing Her Praises

Patti Begg is an elementary school vocal music teacher, so one might assume she spends her days in a music room. She prefers another term.

"If I had to call this room anything," she said, gesturing to her Park Forest classroom, "I would call it the listening room."

Under her tutelage, Begg's students at Park Forest and Gray's Woods elementary schools sharpen their ears. They learn to listen carefully, to identify rhythmic

Other State High groups adjudicated at the festival were Only Men Allowed (the men's choir), the Cecilian Singers (the women's choir), the Symphonic Band, the String Orchestra and the Rock Ensemble.



Mount Nittany Middle School ensembles turned in outstanding performances at the Music in Parks adjudication festival at Kutztown University. The 7th/8th Grade Orchestra, 8th Grade Orchestra, Clef Hangers choir, Symphonic Band and Jazz Band I received the highest possible rating of Superior, and Clef Hangers earned the Overall Middle Level Choir Award.

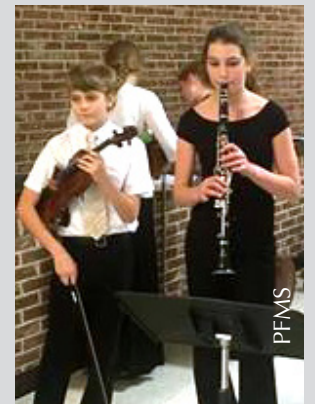
The Park Forest Middle School Jazz Band played at the Penn State Jazz Festival and the State College Jazz Festival, performing for and working with professional jazz musicians serving as clinicians. At the State College festival, the band earned a rating of excellent and received awards of distinction for its trumpet and saxophone sections, and for soloists Markus Polka and Ben Abel.

At the elementary level, the district continued the long-running Partners in Music program in which Penn State School of Music faculty and students conduct fifth-graders through a series of workshops culminating in a concert.

patterns and sing them, to fully engage their brains with the joys of hearing and making music. "I feel like I'm a voice-builder," Begg said. "I can take kids and teach them what to do with their voice so they can have a singing voice. Not everybody is going to be a musician. But they are going to be, hopefully, music consumers."

Her approach, fine-tuned over 35 years, struck a chord with Penn State music education faculty members. They chose her for the 2018 Penn State School of Music Outstanding Alumni Music Educator Award, the school's highest music education honor, for making a difference to children and families through music education.

During December, both middle school orchestras carried out a fundraiser dubbed Practice-A-Thon. While practicing for their winter concerts, the students collected donations raising \$1,648 from 13,533 minutes practiced to support the Hearts for Homeless charity.





# Special Education

For students with disabilities, the district provided a full range of service and support options, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing services, audiologist services, counseling and family training.

At State High, students took the Wild Dream Team life skills class or belonged to the Best Buddies club, which fosters friendships between students with disabilities and their peers. In its 15th year, the LifeLink PSU program provided students

ages 18-21 opportunities to interact with college student mentors and cultivate academic growth, social development and independence.

**Special Education supports 714 students with varying disabilities.**

- » 61 Teachers
- » 10 Psychologists
- » 9 Speech Therapists
- » 4 Occupational Therapists
- » 1 Physical Therapist

For grades K-3, the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) program helped at-risk populations

with reading, and may expand to include behavioral interventions.

The district's Integrated Mental Health (IMH) program, a collaboration between our Pupil Services and a variety of community agencies, provided individual counseling during school for students experiencing mental health and behavioral challenges. Two full-time Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) specialists supported school teams and students experiencing significant behavioral challenges.



## Read 180

It was just another day for Wyatt Angeli — until the surprise party with live music. Gray's Woods Elementary School celebrated the fifth-grader being one of 15 National 180 Student Award winners honored for their progress in the READ 180 reading intervention program. The district expanded the Read 180/System 44 program for closing reading gaps and achieving grade-level proficiency to include fourth and fifth grades, and also offered the Math 180 program at the middle level.

# Gifted and Learning Enrichment

The district provides challenging learning opportunities for all students that build on their individual strengths and optimize their abilities. Gifted and Learning Enrichment services, in concert with the district's core program, ensure that the district supports the development of advanced learners to achieve their fullest potential.

Plans to improve our universal screening began by reviewing needs and possible additions. Screening was used to evaluate students in grades 2, 4 and 6 who may be gifted to determine recommendations

for a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE), which assesses their eligibility and need for gifted services and specially designed instruction. The district also offered LE experiences to elementary students who scored in the top 10 percent of assessments. Enrichment courses developed higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills through exposure to content, methods and instructional techniques.

In our middle schools, academic Quiz Bowl, the Geography Bee, and the K'Nex Challenge were examples

of teacher-supported enrichment activities that challenged students beyond the regular curriculum.

At the high school level, the Learning Enrichment program flexibly met the needs of over 400 students with different interests, skills, and educational goals. They worked with teachers to explore opportunities that enhance learning through various avenues. Many students also participated in Learning Enrichment ARTsmART, an extension of LE for students with interests or gifts in music, visual and/or performing arts.

# Community Education

In its fifth year, the Community Education Extended Learning (CEEL) program continued to grow. In January, the program expanded to Lemont Elementary School to serve students who had previously been at the Mount Nittany Elementary CEEL program. CEEL provides learning experiences, including art, languages and STEM, and recreational opportunities before and after school for a nominal cost.

The Community Education office also oversaw the In-Car Driver Education, Summer Camp Offerings and Volunteers in Public Schools.

## Enrollments

- » CEEL - 638 (515 in 2016-2017)
- » In-Car Driver Education - 187
- » Summer camps - 1133
- » Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) Tutoring Center - 166

**Right:** CEEL was voted Best Place for After School Activities and received a Gold Medal in State College Magazine's "Best of" issue.



## Education Foundation

Led by Executive Director Paul Olivett and its Board of Directors, the foundation raised \$179,640 in total revenue in its third year — a more than four-fold increase from the previous year. The foundation paid \$11,830 in expenses while the district provided \$90,892 in operational funding.

Through its fundraising, the foundation continued its mission to enhance the educational opportunities of district students by providing financial support for innovative learning experiences. The first annual Maroon and Gray

Society Banquet, held in May to honor the society's inaugural class of distinguished district alumni and



Entertainment during the Maroon and Gray Society Banquet.

employees, generated \$57,500 toward the purchase of new State High Marching Band uniforms.

Additionally, corporate donations via the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)

program contributed \$60,000 toward two designated beneficiaries: The Oracle Academy certification program and the elementary STEM program. The foundation launched the Student Opportunities Grant Program with an initial \$19,000, inviting faculty and staff to apply for funding innovative and impactful projects in 2018-2019. The established Student Activities

Fund and Cahir Journalism Scholarships disbursed \$8,000 and \$5,000, respectively, to support student programming.



# Facilities



## State High Project

After the Jan. 8 move-in to the four new State High classroom units, the North Building demolition began in preparation for constructing a new student parking lot, athletic field and Delta Program building on the north campus.

Work continued on completing the rest of State High, including the media center, the counseling suite, and the performing arts and athletic wings, progressing toward an expected final completion in August 2019. The new cafeteria food court opened on April 4 to rave reviews, and an April 7 open house of the school for the community drew a large turnout.

## Elementary School Projects

On Nov. 8, 2017, following months of design planning informed by community input, the SCASD Board of Directors approved bids for addition/renovation projects at Corl Street and Radio Park and a new K-5 school called Spring Creek at the Houserville site to update the district's oldest elementary schools. Large portions of Corl Street and Radio Park will be new construction.



The Radio Park and Spring Creek projects received, respectively, \$1,960,000 and \$1,875,000 in state grants, saving money for the district.

Each of the buildings will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold-certified for sustainable practices such as solar arrays and efficient utilities. Additional features will include dedicated large group instruction (LGI) spaces, several small group instruction (SGI) rooms and improved multi-purpose rooms.

## Total School Costs

Corl Street:	\$18,743,153
Radio Park:	\$25,410,748
Spring Creek:	\$20,648,668

## Memorial Field

On March 3, 2018, the SCASD Board of Directors approved construction documents for the Memorial Field renovation project but also voted to defer the bidding by six to 12 months. The board

approved the recommended delay so that the district could focus on advancing the high school and elementary school projects.

At an estimated cost of approximately \$11 million, the project's final phase will build new home bleachers, adding locker

rooms underneath, and create a spectator plaza on the site of the Nittany Avenue Building. Plans also call for redesigned entrances, new walkways linking the western and eastern bleachers, and improved restrooms and concession stands. The western bleachers for visiting fans were renovated in 2013.

# 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. After two years with large tax increases due to the high school referendum debt, the SCASD Board of Directors passed the lowest tax increase in the last 10 years at 1.55 percent.

## Revenue Sources

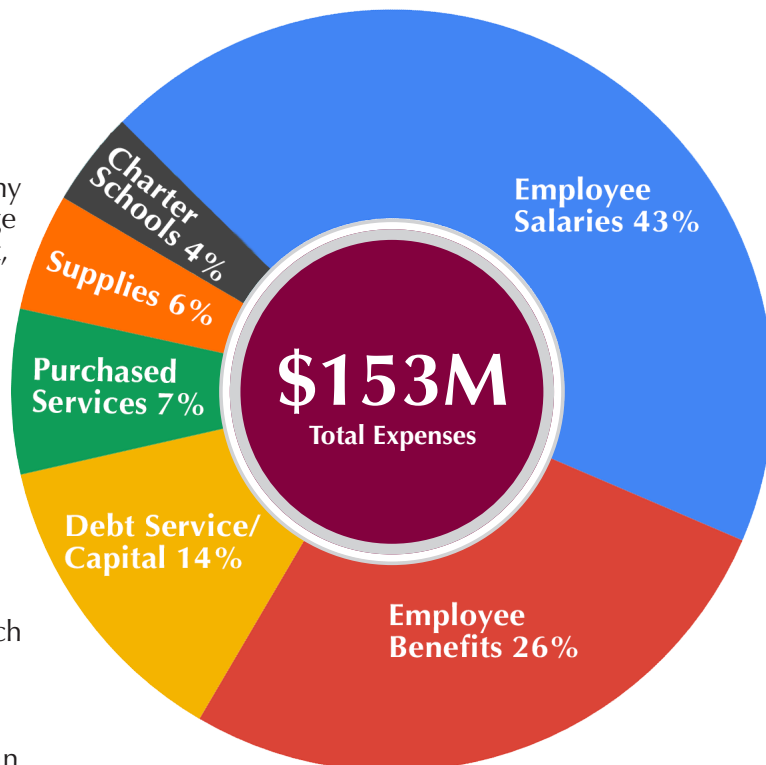
**Local:** \$124,215,478: **81%**  
**State:** \$27,351,253: **18%**  
**Federal:** \$1,593,040: **1%**

In its third year, the district's Supplemental Property Tax Rebate Program issued 280

rebates for a total of \$88,266 out of a \$100,000 budget. Additionally, approximately \$109 in property tax relief went to each approved homestead and farmstead in the district.

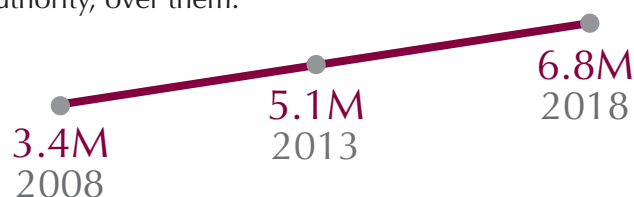
Permanent additions which increased costs in 2017-2018 were a psychologist, an elementary principal, an Information Technology programmer, the development of the International Baccalaureate Programmes, and a curriculum in both online and hybrid formats in response to instructional program changes. The district's Pennsylvania State Employees Retirement System (PSERS) expenses continued to rise because of an increase in the state-mandated contribution rate.

Prior to 2017-2018, the district made debt payments on the \$85 million borrowed due to the high school referendum. Debt service payments for the remaining cost of the high school project began in 2017-2018 while those for three elementary school projects will start in 2018-2019. During 2017-2018, the district continued setting aside resources to fund these expenditures as part of a long-term capital plan. Over the year, the capital reserve fund balance increased from \$54 million to \$63 million.



## Charter School Expenses

The district's required payment of \$6.8 million to charter schools for 432 students represented 4 percent of the budget. The amount paid is based on a state formula, which is calculated using the district's actual per capita costs. While the district funds charters, as required by state law, it maintains no financial, academic or operational supervision, nor evaluative authority, over them.



During the 10-year period from 2008 to 2018, payments to charter schools rose from 3.4 million in 2008 to 6.8 million in 2018. During the same time period, enrollment went from 309 to 412 students.

## Centre County Tax Comparison

District	Mills	Median Assessed Value	Real Estate Tax	Earned Income Tax*	Total Tax
SCASD	44.1468	71,400	3,152.08	536.43	3,688.51
Bellefonte	48.9694	45,860	2,245.74	592.89	2,838.63
Bald Eagle	56.4800	35,225	1,989.51	1,157.55	3,157.06
Penns Valley	46.6986	45,415	2,120.82	734.06	2,854.88

\*EIT Based on Centre County Median Income of \$56,466



# Board of Directors

**Amber Concepcion**, President  
**Jim Leous**, Vice President

**Dr. Amy Bader**  
**Gretchen Brandt**  
**Dr. Dan Duffy**  
**Scott Fozard**  
**David Hutchinson**  
**Laurel Zydney**

**Penni Fishbaine**,  
Retired, Nov. 2017  
**Lori Bedell**,  
Elected, Nov. 2017

Email: [all-board@scasd.org](mailto: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



After 14 years on the SCASD board, David Hutchinson became president-elect of the Pennsylvania School Board Association beginning Jan. 1, 2018.

## Directors

**Deirdre Bauer**, Director of Curriculum K-5

**Dr. Jon Downs**, Director of Educational Alternatives

**Jonathan Klingeman**, Director of Gifted, Learning  
Enrichment, and Title 1 Services

**Jeanne Knouse**, Director of Student Services

**Jacquelyn Martin**, Director of Curriculum 6-12

**Dr. Sharon Perry**, Director of the Career and  
Technical Center

**Edward Poprik**, Director of Physical Plant

**Chris Rosenblum**, Director of Communications

**Dr. Sharon Salter**, Director of Special Education

**Megan Schaper**, Director of Food Services

**Nicole Steele**, Director of Technology

**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](http://www.scasd.org/Registration)



240 Villa Crest Drive  
State College, PA., 16801  
814-231-1011  
[www.scasd.org](http://www.scasd.org)







Hearing Support Teacher Amy Lawrence uses sign language to work with students who have been diagnosed with hearing loss.  
**Below:** The Class of 2018 consisted of 585 graduates.



2017-2018

**State College Area School District**  
240 Villa Crest Drive  
State College, PA., 16801  
814.231.1011  
[www.scasd.org](http://www.scasd.org)