



MESSAGE FROM THE
SUPERINTENDENT
Dennis Furton

Dear Spring Lake Families and Community Members,

I've shared before that the end of this school year marks the end of a chapter for my family – my wife and I will officially be “empty nesters” as our youngest heads off to college. Having experienced a strangely muted COVID graduation with our first, I have a new appreciation for all of the events our District, parents, and community formulate to wrap around these young men and women. The past few weeks have been wonderful and have caused me to reflect a bit on the impact that our teachers have had on my children.

In my job I get to know our staff as their colleague and superintendent – we do important work together. I get to see their expertise, passion, and empathy up close, through a unique lens. But, just like many of you, I have also gotten to see them through the perspective of being a parent. And while I've worked with amazing teachers in other districts, there is something about Spring Lake that is special and not to be taken for granted.

Maybe you feel the same. If so, I ask you to consider nominating one of our teachers to be the 2025-2026 Michigan Teacher of the Year. The form can be accessed through the QR code below.

I cannot wait to introduce all of the excellent new staff we have hired – you're going to love them! In addition, bond work has started on the fieldhouse and new administrative offices at SLHS. Finally, within a few months we'll have a new 5-year strategic plan to share with our community – importantly, it promises to support the right work for our students. Great things are happening at Spring Lake Public Schools.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer!



BOND UPDATE

The roof project at the high school continues as expected and on time.

Damaged drain rings have been removed and reinforced. The drain bowl was cleaned and abraded down to bare metal. All new coats and sealants were then put in place. By the fall, we'll have the roofing completed.

Additionally, we just had our ground breaking at the LAC (Laker Athletic Center). School Board members and school administrators scooped the ceremonious first shovel of dirt.

Funds for the projects were generated by a \$49.8 million bond, which voters passed in May of 2023. The bond and its associated projects were designed with focuses on student safety and well-being, operational efficiency and infrastructure upgrades, future-ready learning environments, and student arts and athletics facilities.

“While the building is well maintained...there are some things that, over the past 23 years, have outlived their life expectancy,” said Liz Boeve, Director of Operations for SLPS. “It’s time for the high school to receive those updates.” Districtwide, infrastructure updates will occur mainly in the classrooms. However, the roof, bathrooms, auditorium, HVAC, and various lighting projects will be upgraded with the goal of reducing maintenance costs and enhancing efficiency for the district.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

In this edition, we want to share with you how our auditors look at our findings and how we are categorized within the state and federally.

DID YOU KNOW?

For at least seven years, our annual audits have come with the best markings, meeting the highest possible standard to be listed on the audits. What you'll see on our records is as follows:

- “Unmodified Opinion” -- this indicates that the auditors find our financial statements “present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities...”
- “Low Risk Auditee” -- because of our consistency over the years, this indicates that Spring Lake Public Schools has maintained the best possible rating related to state and federal funding

We are also happy to report that Spring Lake Public Schools, because of its smart use of ESSER funds (money offered to sustain time through COVID), is able to add staff, keep salaries competitive, and strike the necessary balance to provide the best education possible to our students.

From The Curriculum Director **Kate Drake**

From my seat as the new Director of Curriculum for Spring Lake Public Schools (a role I have valued tremendously), it has been a year full of appreciation and learning: appreciation for all staff who work hard to grow students in their field and learning about the varied opportunities that a Director of Curriculum has to help support our team. Even so, in my first year, accomplishments have come with the help of others. Some highlights:

- iReady (a system we use to gain data on student reading achievement) shows schoolwide K-8 growth from fall to spring
- Curriculum reviews for world languages and math - with new math books ordered for every high school math course
- Both intermediate and middle schools have taken on the work of an organized positive behavior system - "The Laker Way"

As a final note as we head off to summer: reading is an essential part of summer! Camps, being outside and the arts are important, but please be sure to mix in a good book. What are you reading this summer?



Life-Saving Efforts at Jeffers Elementary

On Monday, March 10, just as Jeffers Elementary students were entering the doors, a student collapsed. Several staff jumped in with their training to do what they do best: take care of their children.

In Tinley's case, Jeffers staff saved her life from what turned out to be ventricular fibrillation (V-fib). She has since returned to school.



Scan the QR code for the full story as reported by WZZM.



H.E.A.R.T. Smart Earns Assembly Fun

Spring Lake Public Schools uses H.E.A.R.T. Smart to promote positive behavior, keep positivity the focus of student intervention.

Because Holmes students were so great all year, Holmes Parent Club brought in Gavin Hubner, professional yo-yo entertainer, to wow and inspire the students with his amazing talent. He shared his story and used examples from his quest to be an elite yo-yo entertainer while also weaving in Holmes' words of the month and H.E.A.R.T. Smart terminology.



Scan the QR code to see one of Gavin's full shows.



School Building Highlights Winter 2024

High School

- This May, 217 students graduated and collectively earned over \$3,000,000 in scholarships for college, military, and vocational training

Alternative Education

- Every alternative education senior graduated, creating a 100% graduation rate with two earning scholarships or grants to continue their education at college or in the trades

Middle School

- The middle school participated in a spirit week in conjunction with May being Mental Health Awareness Month. This helped students become more knowledgeable in the hopes to reduce the stigma surrounding the topic

Intermediate School

- Fifth Grade went to YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin for the 22nd year
- There were 29 (14 girls and 15 boys) 6th Grade students participating on the SLMS track team

Holmes

- Holmes hosted its 18th annual bocce ball & rocket launch day for all students, staff, and families to enjoy

Jeffers Elementary

- Jeffers Elementary created an April marathon challenge where students could run the track (5x = 1 mile) at recess to finish a marathon in a month; over 80 students accomplished this task

From the Voice of a Teacher Mrs. Jettner

I can still vividly remember the day. I walked out of my education class at GVSU and headed to the payphone. I called my home phone to check in and see and if there were any messages on the answering machine. There was one--from Jeffers Elementary.

With a million butterflies in my stomach and a racing heart, I eagerly called back and was offered the opportunity to become a special education teacher with Spring Lake Schools.

This was a day 30 years ago that changed my life. It has been an absolute honor to spend my entire teaching career in one district. I have had the joy of not only teaching students with special needs but also kindergarten, 1st grade, Developmental Kindergarten and I can't leave out the entire year of remote kindergarten. I reflect back on all the lessons taught, the curriculum and the numerous meetings and committees over these years. However, what stands out the most are the relationships that were made along the way. The hours, days and months spent in a room with these tiny humans, witnessing their excitement when the concept just clicked. Hearing their stories, feeling their laughter and having the gift of guiding them to find their love and passion for learning.

Creating relationships with families and working together as a team to support their children to grow and flourish is something I will always treasure.

This work could never have happened without the support and friendships of my colleagues. And now it is time to pass the torch along. One of my favorite sayings to my families over the years has been, "the days seem long but the years sure do fly by." Stay present for all the small moments along the way.

Thank you, Spring Lake!



A DREAM SPRING MACY SUBKA

Freshman Macy Subka, a spring athlete who plays two sports, has left an indelible mark on the season. Her outstanding performances have not only garnered state-wide attention but also set new standards for excellence.

Track and Field Glory

Macy's prowess on the track has been nothing short of extraordinary. At the state championships, she secured an impressive 5th place finish in the 300m hurdles, showcasing her speed, agility, and determination. But that's not all—Macy's contribution extended beyond individual events. As a key member of the 4x400m relay team, she, with her teammates, broke their own school record. Her commitment to training and her unwavering spirit have inspired her teammates and coaches alike.

Soccer Sensation

Macy's talents aren't confined to the track. Macy has been called up to the varsity soccer team for the tournament run after a successful JV season. Her lightning-fast footwork, strategic play, and ability to read the game caught the attention of the coaches. Macy got some varsity playing time in the District semifinal, earning herself a well-deserved medal.

Her dedication to both sports exemplifies the true spirit of a Spring Lake student-athlete. Macy stated, "To have so much success as a freshman makes me feel even more excited for the next season and inspires me to work harder to get even better. I want to thank my coaches for all of their guidance and flexibility with me being a dual sport athlete having to balance all my practices, games, and school."

Macy Subka's spring season has been a dream come true. As we cheer her on, we know that Macy's story is just beginning. Congratulations, Macy, and may your star continue to rise!

Macy Subka on the podium with her teammates
L to R: Meghan Guczwa, Kyla Meyers, Macy Subka, &
Cora Parker



Top 5 Athletic Highlights Spring 2024

1. State Runners up! Girls 4x400m relay team of Cora Parker, Macy Subka, Kyla Meyers, and Meghan Guczwa broke the school record and finished runners up in the state. Subka also earned all-state recognition in the 300m hurdles placing 5th and breaking the school record. Jackson Gee broke his own school record in the 200m dash this season
2. Girls Tennis finished runner-up in the Regional and returned to States for first time in 6 years. The team finished 12th out of 21 at the state championship
3. Girls Soccer won Districts and is ranked #1 in the state of Michigan at Division 2
4. Boys Baseball earns back-to-back District championships for the first time since 2008-2009
5. Boys and Girls Lacrosse teams both achieve a Top 10 ranking throughout their season

Honorable Mention:

Crew results from the Michigan Scholastic Rowing State Championships:

- Ally Kucks and Megan Witte placed 6th in Varsity Women's Pair
- Brennan Manzer and Dominic McGrath placed 7th in Men's Varsity Double
- Dominic McGrath placed 10th in Men's Varsity Single



FROM THE ARTS DEPARTMENT

High School

- AP Art students traveled to East Kentwood to view their AP Art show, meet their students and hear about their sustained investigations (Picture: Top Left)
- Multi-media students wrapped up self-portraits using Encaustic Painting methods
- Ava Davidson made the All-State Honors Choir as just one of 65 students chosen from around the state to participate and appeared in *The Wind in the Willows* (left)

Middle School

- Ceramics students used "Raku" firing with some amazing projects
- Art 1 students finished self-portraits inspired by the artist Chuck Close
- The middle school choir ran arts-related games the last week for their Choir Olympics

Intermediate School

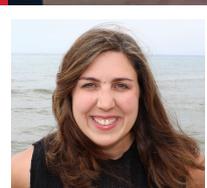
- This year, all 5th and 6th Grade students have performed "Music Of The Nations." They learned to sing in French, Portuguese, and the Bemba language from Zambia, as well as several selections in English, , promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation

Jeffers Elementary

- All Jeffers students ended the year with a project-based learning S.T.E.A.M. (STEM + Art) project. Check out their projects from the year at tinyurl.com/JeffersArtsonia.
- Through the Musical Explorers program from Carnegie Hall, Jeffers Elementary students embarked on a rich cultural journey to explore the musical traditions of Asia, Africa, North America, South America, and Europe

Holmes Elementary

- The 3rd graders presented "Michigan, Our Michigan," combining what they have learned in music and in social studies. The performance of this shows has been a Holmes tradition for over 20 years



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT



ERIN CRAIG (WHIPKEY) '01

Erin A. Craig '01 is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *House of Salt and Sorrows*.

After getting her B.F.A. from the University of Michigan, in Theatre Design and Production, she stage managed tragic operas with hunchbacks, séances, and murderous clowns, then decided she wanted to write books that were just as spooky.

An avid reader, decent quilter, rabid basketball fan, and collector of typewriters, brass figurines, and sparkly shoes, Erin makes her home in West Michigan with her husband and daughter.

CLASS NOTES

1970s

- **VICTORIA GARDNER '76** is a Community-Based Instructor at UNR-Nevada; lives in Las Vegas and has for the past 23 years

2000s

- **MITCHEL TENNYSON SER '05** works at Orchard Market in Spring Lake; living in Grand Haven at Gracious Grounds
- **KATY KRIEGER (GRZYB) '07** married Brian Krieger, Jr. on March 30, 2024
- **STEFANIE PICKFORD (PELLEGROM) '08** is a new parent of Wyatt Pickford (Born May 9, 2024) who joins big brother, Colton (4)

2010s

- **JOSH LUCKSTED '10** is a Philanthropy Officer at Grand Valley State University
- **JAREN MILLER '11** is a Licensed Professional Geologist working for CDM Smith, frequently working with the EPA
- **BRENDON REAP '11** is a Senior Process Engineer at Relativity Space, 3D Printing Rockets
- **ELINOR MAROD (ADAMS) '13** is the owner of Lilo's Flower Garden; lives in Grand Haven on her flower farm; married **JEFFREY MAROD '13** on September 4, 2021
- **JEFF MAROD II '13** is the Production Manager at Grand Armory Brewing; married **ELINOR ADAMS '13** on September 4, 2021
- **CAILIN BLODGETT '14** is an IT Systems Engineer at K Group Companies
- **ELLEN BOEZAART '14** is a General Merchandise clerk at Meijer, Inc.
- **SHELBY KISER '14** is a therapist at The Truism Center; lives in Grand Rapids; married Chris Schertenlieb on November 7, 2020
- **TYLER STRANDBERG '16** is a service advisor at Tri City Auto Repair; lives in Spring Lake; married **ANJA HOCHHUTH '17** on July 24, 2021; his child, Magdalena, was born April 22, 2020

2020s

- **KEVIN LOSEE '20** just graduated from Brown University and will be getting his Master's Degree at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor
- **MAKAYLA MINNAAR '20** is a pursuing her Master's Degree at Saint Mary's College
- **ALEXIS KOTRCH '21** has a Research Internship at the National Weather Center

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