



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dennis Furton

Dear Spring Lake Parents and Community Members,

The results of our recent parent survey have given us valuable insights into what you value most about our district. I'm pleased to share that respondents overwhelmingly identified our teachers as Spring Lake's greatest strength. This comes as no surprise to those of us who witness their dedication, expertise, and passion every day.

Our commitment to maintaining appropriate class sizes ranked as the second highest valued attribute among parents. This is particularly gratifying as we've worked diligently to create learning environments where each student receives the individual attention they deserve while still benefiting from diverse perspectives and collaborative opportunities. These findings perfectly align with our district's philosophy: "Big enough to challenge, small enough to care." Our teachers embody this balance, pushing students to reach their full potential while ensuring no child feels overlooked or left behind. They create classrooms where academic rigor coexists with personal connection – where students are challenged to excel and supported every step of the way.

As we continue through the school year, we remain committed to supporting our exceptional educators and preserving the class sizes that allow them to work their magic. We recognize that behind every successful student is a teacher who believed in them, inspired them, and gave them the tools to succeed.

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in the survey. Your feedback guides our priorities and helps us build on our strengths while addressing areas for growth. At Spring Lake, we believe that being "small enough to care" means listening to our community and working together to provide the best possible education for our children.



BOND UPDATE

Exciting progress continues at Spring Lake High School! Here are the construction project updates:

Secure Entry Vestibule & Offices

- Elevator Installed – Enhancing accessibility for all
- Mechanical Tie-Ins & HVAC – System integration is underway
- Painting Progress – Priming and the first coat are complete

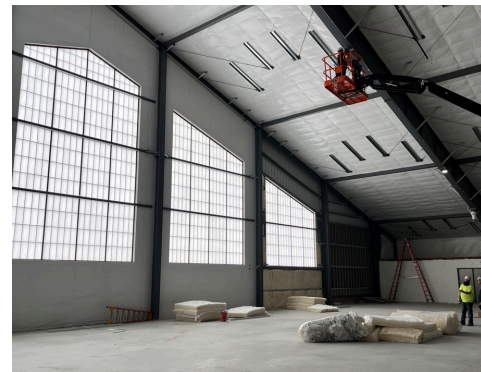
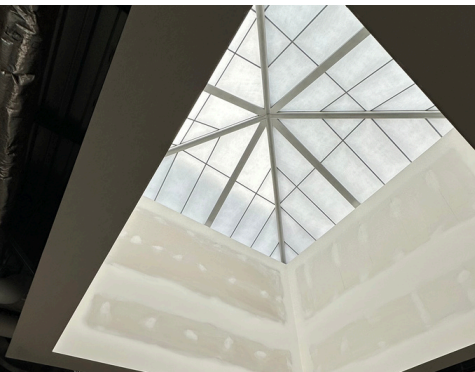
Laker Athletic Center

- Track Concrete – Pouring started the first week of March
- Painting – Continuing through mid-March
- Bathroom Tile – Installation starts mid-March
- Spring Site Work – Concrete and mechanical unit installation planned
- Ongoing Work – Mechanical, electrical, fire protection, and tech systems are in progress

Each milestone brings us closer to a safer, more efficient learning environment. Thank you for your ongoing support!



Mr. Truszkowski (band teacher), Mrs. Isard (parent), and Brady Hill (student) were the first to tour the facility.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Q: We just made an addendum to the budget. What are the main reasons this is needed?

A: Spring Lake, like virtually all public schools in Michigan, amends its budget at least once during the school year. Typically, we amend the budget in January and again in June. As required by law, our original budget is set prior to July 1 each year. As this occurs before we know our enrollment, and often before we know the level of funding from the State, adjustments are needed to line up expected revenues and expenditures to mid-year projections.

Q: The budget shows a deficit at the end of the year. Is there reason for concern? Can you allay any fears that the community could have about the expected deficit?

A: Annual deficits do occur at times in school and government budgets. Spring Lake has come off several years of surplus budgets after Covid-related funding from the State and Federal governments. As that funding has ended, combined with per pupil funding not increasing and enrollment falling slightly short of the June projection, we are needing to use some of the fund balance (reserves) that have grown over the past few years.

The Value of DIT

Kate Drake

Spring Lake Schools' strategic plan goal two names a key priority: collaborative systems at all levels to meet or exceed goals for student growth and achievement.

Over the last year, we've held a tenacious focus around an emerging District Implementation Team (DIT). Composed of principals, directors, psychologists and Superintendent Furton, this group meets monthly to discuss ways to improve SLPS' learning and behavior, as well as sustain a system of multiple levels of instruction and intervention.

DIT work requires data sources to evaluate the productivity of district efforts, while working to resolve barriers/concerns and acknowledging celebrations. Facilitation is guided by OAISD resources, of which we're grateful to have shaped a path. Two subcommittees have derived via the DIT: a "tier one behavioral team" which supports positive behavior for all K-12 students, and an "advanced tiers taskforce" that focuses on in-addition-to behavioral and academic needs.

While still early in our DIT walk, this systems-focused group has dedicated themselves to a collaborative effort which serves students. Working to secure common district elements, such as some consistent documentation across school buildings, will support SLPS stakeholders and provide greater clarity.



Two Spring Votes

Special Education Millage Through ISD

On May 6, voters in our region will consider a Special Education Millage Proposal. This proposal would impact funding for special education services across all schools in Ottawa County.

Key points:

- Special education services are legally mandated
- Michigan requires support from birth to age 26
- The proposal will affect funding for these crucial services
- If millage is not passed, Spring Lake will need to fund services from its own budget

For more information on what this proposal would fund, how it affects local schools, and its financial impact on taxpayers, please visit <https://www.oaisd.org/about-us/millage>

Non-Homestead Millage

As in years past, it's time to ask voters to consider the renewal of the non-homestead millage. A non-homestead millage is a tax on businesses, rental properties, and vacation homes—not primary residences. It helps fund our daily operations. Voters periodically renew it to maintain school funding. This is not a tax increase but a renewal ensuring essential resources for students and teachers continue.

Your engagement in these millages is crucial for our community's educational future.



School Building Highlights Winter 2025

High School

- High school students recently participated in Junior Achievement Finance Park, gaining real-world financial literacy skills

Alternative Education

- Students explored careers in the foundry industry with Foundry in a Box. The group shared insights on job opportunities, required training, and the skills needed for long-term success in the field.

Middle & Intermediate Schools

- The Unified Sports Basketball Game was a huge success, bringing inclusivity and teamwork to the forefront. It was a day of great school spirit.

Holmes Elementary

- Holmes has transformed its school store into a HEART Smart Store, where students use PBIS HEART Smart tickets to purchase snacks, small toys, and fun rewards like mechanical animal rides, lunch with Mrs. Smits, and more. Moving this away from a cash system has allowed greater participation at the school store.

Jeffers Elementary

- Jeffers showcased its strong community support by responding swiftly to a medical emergency, proving how critical immediate aid and layered support systems can be. From emergency response to ongoing academic assistance, Jeffers continues to prioritize care and well-being for all students.

From the Voice of a Teacher

Mrs. Tanya Mey

This is my 8th school year being part of SLPS and each year I feel blessed to be a staff member, parent and community member in Spring Lake. My relationships with coworkers, students and parents make my job meaningful and rewarding. As a speech-language pathologist I have the opportunity to work with various age groups at Jeffers and students with a variety of skills, which is where my passion of inclusion, acceptance and belonging stems from.

This winter trimester was definitely busy and overwhelming at times, but it was all for a good cause! With the help of all of our Unified Champion School staff leaders, Spring Lake got to host its first Cool School Polar Plunge fundraiser event for Special Olympics Michigan. Through this fundraiser Spring Lake staff and students were able to raise over \$53,000 to give back to Special Olympics Michigan.

In Fall 2023, Jeffers, Holmes, Intermediate and Middle School all became Unified Champion Schools--a school that uses sports and other activities to promote social inclusion for students with and without intellectual disabilities. Being able to give back to such an amazing cause has been fun, educational and inclusive for the district.

Creating an inclusive environment in our district where all are welcome and feel they belong is a strong passion of mine. This was a great way to break up the long winter and do something fun for a good cause. I'm incredibly grateful to be part of such a generous and inclusive district and community.

Mrs. Mey
takes the
Polar Plunge!



STUDENT SPORTS HIGHLIGHT

A Laker Legacy: Three Generations of GVSU Football

For Carson Hein, playing football at Grand Valley State University isn't just a dream—it's a family tradition. The Spring Lake High School senior, Class of 2025, recently committed to GVSU, following in the footsteps of his father, Aaron Hein, and grandfather, Jim Schaap (SLHS Class of 1970). Their deep-rooted connection to Laker football now spans three generations.

Carson's love for the game began at an early age, attending GVSU football games and envisioning himself on the field. As he developed his skills, his dedication and work ethic stood out, earning him the opportunity to continue his football career at the next level. His commitment is especially meaningful for his family, as his late grandfather was a devoted GVSU fan.

While Carson is proud to carry on the tradition, he's determined to make his own impact on and off the field. His story is one of perseverance, family pride, and chasing dreams—one that resonates far beyond football. Want to hear about the lessons passed down through generations, the challenges Carson overcame, and what's next for him at GVSU?

Read the full story on our website! Scan the code!



Top 5 Athletic Highlights Winter 2025

1. Braelyn Flemming: Four-Time All-State & 3rd in State
 - Senior wrestler Braelyn Flemming shines for Spring Lake at Ford Field
2. Boys Swim & Dive: 4th in State Ranking
 - For the first time in five years, the Boys Swim & Dive team earned such a high ranking
3. Girls Basketball: District Champions & Regional Finalists
 - The Girls Basketball team reach the regional finals for the second year in a row
4. Boys Basketball: District Champions
 - The Boys Basketball team battled through tough competition to win the district championship.
5. Bowling: 2nd Place in League
 - In only its second season, the Bowling team finished as league runner-up, an impressive accomplishment for the young program.

Honorable Mention: Powerlifting State Qualifiers--Several Spring Lake powerlifters qualified for the state competition.





FROM THE ARTS DEPARTMENT

High School

- Set building for *Annie* has begun two months earlier. The students have learned and accomplished so much since adding a set building emphasis. They have improved handling of tools, increasing competence AND confidence. The show is May 1-3. Mark your calendars!
- The High School and Middle School Choirs performed their Scones and Tones Concert/Fundraiser in December featuring some festive choral music, soloists, and great support from our community.
- The entire group of bands earned straight 1s at festival in February, continuing their journey of excellence among area bands.

Middle School

- Over 60 6th, 7th, and 8th graders worked together both on stage and behind the scenes on their winter production of *Beauty and the Beast, Jr.*

Intermediate School

- Over 50 5th and 6th grade choir members sang the National Anthem for a Muskegon Lumberjacks hockey game.
- Over 70 Honors Choir students sang carols for the Spring Lake Sparkle in December, bringing joy to any local shoppers.

Jeffers Elementary

- Over 70 Jeffers Honors Choir students sang carols for the Spring Lake Sparkle in December and performed for the community at our district Vocal Arts Concert in February.

Holmes Elementary

- First graders worked in teams to learn about rhythm in music and art by creating a percussion instrument and playing original rhythms on their instrument. Cooperation and creativity at work!

VOCAL ARTS CELEBRATION

The Spring Lake Public Schools Vocal Arts Celebration was a heartwarming event that highlighted the talent, collaboration, and mentorship within our district. The evening was more than just a concert; it was a testament to the power of community and the importance of nurturing creativity at all ages.

One of the most special aspects of the celebration was the connection between older and younger students. The seasoned performers served as mentors and role models, guiding and inspiring the younger singers as they found their own voices. This evening underscored the district's commitment to fostering growth and leadership.

It was an unforgettable night of music, learning, and celebration—a true reflection of what makes Spring Lake Public Schools exceptional.



CLASS NOTES

1990s

- **AUTUMN QUIGG (BOTBYL) '96** is a Digital Marketing Specialist at Chrispy Media Group in Grand Rapids

2000s

- **HOLLY BARNETT '04** is a former middle school teacher at GHAPS and now, a teller at LMCU; lives in Fruitport; married **JON BARNETT '05** in 2008; two children, Jayden (2011) & Chase (2013)
- **ASHLEY EVELETH '04** is a School Counselor at Thornapple Kellogg Middle School; lives in Wyoming, Michigan; married **MATTHEW GADDIS '04** in 2017; two children, Grover (2019) & Hawk (2022)
- **REBECCA NASH '04** is a yacht stewardess
- **LYNDSAY RANDALL '04** is a nurse practitioner at DaVita; lives in North Muskegon
- **SHAWN HOLMES '07** is a Correction Deputy at Van Buren County Sheriff and a firefighter at Decatur Hamilton Fire Department; lives in Decatur; married to **AUTUMN LEWIS '08**; three children, Devin (2008), Joshua (2013), & Jaxon (2021)
- **JESSICA MASTBERGEN (DOOM) '07** is a scheduling manager at Csnip
- **JULIA MELVIN (KROLL) '08** is the owner and head baker of The Blissful Bird, LLC; lives in Twin Lake; married Robert Melvin in 2016; three children, Davyon (2019), Lorraine (2022), Lila (2023)
- **KATHERINE MERRIOTT (SCHULTZ) '08** is the new mother of Kylie (2024)
- **MCHALE SMITH '09** is the new father of Irene (2025)

2010s

- **ALEX ASHCRAFT (SPINNER) '11** is co-owner with her husband, Brad, at Mia's Village Eats (formally Mama Mia's) and celebrated one year of being open in February
- **KRISTIN CRAIG (START) '11** married Caleb Craig in 2024 and is expecting a baby boy this month
- **ALYSSA LABEAN (GOERICKE) '14** is a high school English teacher at Montague High School; married Brandon LaBean in 2024
- **MADDISON ELDRED (NOVAKOSKI) '15** reports that Devon is a medical student at MSU and graduates in 2025 to begin residency
- **LYNNAE STRAIT '15** now lives in New York City
- **MARISA BINION (STROEBE) '17** graduated from University of West Florida with an MHA in 2024; married Joshua Binion in 2025
- **ARIANNA KRALJIC '19** is a GVSU Social Work Infant Mental Health Intern at HealthWest

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Non-Resident Application Window: May 7 - 28

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