

SOUTHMORELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT



SCHOOL BOARD MEETING UPDATE - MAR 2025

BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Samuel Accipiter
John Eutsey
Catherine Fike
Duane Frund, President
Stephanie Geyer, Vice-President
Richard Grabiak
Nicole O'Rear
Scott Olsen
Brian Shipley

Dr. Jason A. Boone, Jr., Superintendent
Russell Lucas, Solicitor
Pamela Mondock, Business Manager/
Transportation Director/Treasurer
Lorie McTavish, Board Secretary



Contact Us :

Important Reminder:

*All Meeting Agendas and Minutes Can Be
Accessed From Our District Website!
Next Board meeting is scheduled for
April 15, 2025*



724-887-2010



2351 Route 981, Alverton, PA 15612



www.southmoreland.net

"Cultivating Lifelong Learners Ready For An Ever-Changing World"

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT



Scottie Spotlight -

- Dr. Boone highlighted the wonderful things going on in the District—see below.
- Dr. Boone talked about Computer Science Countywide Trainings and Next Steps, and how computer science is being used and taught in the schools, & aligned with standards.
- Mr. Frund thanked all involved in the school musical this year and what a great job they did.



USMC Reading Visit to SPC!!!

"We read a book about Chesty, the Marine Corps mascot. After the story, each student received a paw print tattoo—but one had a special X on it! The student with the X won a copy of the book about Chesty's adventures in the Corps, along with a mini stuffed Chesty to take home. To make it even more special, Miles wrote a message inside the book, sharing his pride as a Marine and encouraging the student to always work hard and never give up."



REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT -CONT'D



SMS Principal Mr. Klugh Publishes Article Highlighting Our Progress at the Middle School in *The Pennsylvania Administrator*

In the latest PA Principals magazine, Southmoreland Middle School Principal, Mr. Klugh, shares a powerful message on the importance of embracing relevance in education and empowering students beyond the classroom walls. 🚀

By stepping outside traditional learning spaces, students engage with the world, build critical skills, and develop a deeper understanding of their future possibilities. This transformative approach is shaping a school culture that prioritizes real-world experiences and lifelong learning.

Read more about his vision and how Southmoreland is leading the way!

Igniting Relevance: A Year of Transformation at Southmoreland Middle School

By James Klugh



The 2024-25 school year at Southmoreland Middle School (SMS) marks a pivotal chapter in its ongoing journey to redefine middle school education. Recently recognized as one of the Best Middle Schools in the country by U.S. News and World Report, SMS exemplifies a forward-thinking educational institution committed to excellence. At the heart of its mission lies a newly launched initiative centered on relevance – a principle designed to further enhance student learning and engagement. By consistently aligning educational practices with students' interests, real-world applications and future aspirations, SMS is cultivating a learning environment that fosters meaningful growth and inspires academic achievement.

A Culture Shift: Embracing Relevance

This singular guiding principle, relevance, was defined and referenced before the school year began. In June 2024, the first of two summer newsletters sent to SMS faculty and staff broadly defined relevance and established it as the central theme for the upcoming year. Subsequent correspondence and presentations further refined the implementation of efforts to create a more relevant learning experience for students. This approach helped generate buy-in by, in large part, softening the impact of anticipated instructional shifts in the years to come.

The importance of relevance in education is well-documented in research. Li and Xue (2023) highlighted that relevance is a key factor in driving student engagement. When students see connections between their learning and real-world applications, they are more motivated and likely to achieve better academic outcomes. SMS's approach to embedding relevance into the curriculum reflects these findings, creating an environment where students feel empowered and invested in their learning journey.

Developing Relevance Within the Curriculum

One of the most significant innovations at SMS is the introduction of "in Real Life" (IRL). This unique course equips students in grades six through eight with essential life skills, including, but not limited to, financial literacy, career exploration and entrepreneurship. By providing practical knowledge and real-world experiences, the school is preparing students for success beyond the classroom. To

wrap everything in a nice package, each grade level concludes the year with a culminating project that highlights these and many other relevant life skills. In more traditional courses, targeted professional development over the past two years has empowered teachers to create more relevant learning experiences for SMS students. This has led to significant shifts in science, mathematics and computer science courses.

The integration of STEELS (Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability) standards into the science curriculum engages students in hands-on experiments and projects that connect scientific concepts to real-world applications. The mathematics program emphasizes problem-solving and critical thinking. By implementing a "Building Thinking Mathematics" approach, the school develops students' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. The traditional computer science offerings were updated and refined through the introduction of Project Lead the Way modules, providing students with highly transferable problem-solving and technological skills.

As O'Neill and Short (2023) noted, aligning curricula with students' personal values and real-world applications fosters deeper engagement and skill development. The curriculum enhancements at SMS mirror these insights, offering students learning experiences that are meaningful and practical for their futures.



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See full article on next page.

Math Trends - 2022-24
and Stanford University

EDUCATION RECOVERY SCORECARD

Harvard University

The Education Recovery Scorecard provides a high resolution picture of academic recovery in 8,719 school districts with either math or reading achievement data across 43 states.

* The study looks at the trends across tested grade levels since 2022-2024.



* 130% above
PDE Average
* 425% above
County Average



* 186% above
PDE Average
* 287% above
County Average

Districts in Westmoreland County Districts in Westmoreland County



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REPORTS



SOLICITOR

None

BUSINESS MANAGER/ TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR



- Building Activity Fund Information was given
- Cyber Charter Expense Analysis was given
- Ms. Mondock is working on gathering information on revenues for the 2025-2026 Budget, keeping an eye on healthcare costs, and most likely an increase to the Homestead Farmstead Relief.
- Bond Presentation & Discussion - It was explained that the district isn't borrowing \$19,000,000, this is just the parameters the resolution needs to be written in to fit within a box/range. It is worded "not to exceed." There are protections within the bond document that limit the district to \$13,350,000 as a project deposit after the bonds are sold (Section 11.01). This just helps to open up the Bonds to be sold at a "good" time rather than on a set/fixed date. Mr. Ditka explained that he is here to make sure the District follows a process according to the Local Government Unit Debt Act. The district is looking to finance the \$13,350,000 GESA projects plus refinance the 2022 loans which have higher interest rates to potentially save \$117,000. The state requires this to be set up this way (to fit within a box) with a higher/not to exceed amount. Total amount to be borrowed/refinanced is only going to be the new \$13,350,000 + old 2022 \$4,050,000 (only if they can get a good interest rate) + closing costs.

REPORTS



REPORTS CONT'D

There were no reports for the following Committees until next meeting:

- CWCTC
- WIU
- Finance, District Operations, & Transportation
- Personnel, Policy, & Academics
- Non-Academic. Athletics, & Extra-Curricular
- School Safety & Security

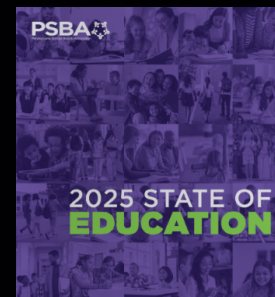


Building & Grounds: (O'Rear)

- Last Meeting - March 10, 2025
 - Agenda
 - Stadium Wall Project-Shell was uncovered, on hold for now, & getting estimates to proceed.
 - Russ Grimm Stadium Turf Replacement-Scheduled for June
 - Guaranteed Energy Savings Project Update
 - Boiler room flooded, hope to keep costs under \$10,000
- Next Meeting June 16, 2025

PSBA Liaison: (Eutsey)

- Talked about the state of education report -
 - [CLICK HERE](#) for full report



There was further discussion on Cyber Charter School costs. Dr. Boone has scheduled a meeting with Senator Pat Stefano and other district Superintendents to talk more about the Auditor Generals Report about Cyber Charter Schools rates.

PA state is the 5th highest state where the revenue is from local sources. There were discussions at PASBO about publicly educated students status changing to IEP's with higher costs/student rates being charged to public school districts.

REPORTS



STUDENT REPORTS- SELBY BELL

1. March Spirit and Scholar winners will be announced at the next board meeting.
2. Senator for a Day: Southmoreland students participated with other school districts in the Senator for a Day Seminar for Future Leaders hosted by Senator Pat Stefano. This seminar gives students an opportunity to take on the role of Senators to see how the legislative process works. Students are divided into Senate committees to discuss bills, take positions on legislation, draft laws, and meet in full session to present, debate, and vote on the legislation drafted by the various committees. Rather than reading about the process, they get to be a part of it - helping shape the policies and laws that affect their lives. Thank you to all of the panelists and to Senator Stefano for hosting this event!
3. World Affairs Institute Youth Changemakers: Southmoreland students Elizabeth Boone and Alexis Ohler participated in the 54th Annual World Affairs Institute's Youth Changemakers event at Carnegie Mellon University. Designed to engage young minds in critical thinking about global and local issues, the event featured interactive sessions, workshops, and discussion panels. Students explored topics of global significance, examined Pittsburgh's role in the international economy, and discussed what the city has to offer on a global stage. They also considered how youth can shape the region's future. A special thank you to the Scottdale Rotary for sponsoring this opportunity!
4. Interact Club Community Support: Over the past month, the Interact Club has collected nearly 300 pounds of spaghetti noodles to support the Rhodes Cancer Foundation Spaghetti Benefit and the Williams Spaghetti Benefit. This initiative brought together students and teachers in a meaningful effort to support former Southmoreland alumni facing health challenges.
5. Gifted Coalition Vocal & Dance Competition Winners: Congratulations to Ronae Berresford for earning 1st place and Caylin Raymond for earning 2nd place in the annual Gifted Coalition Vocal and Dance Competition held on Friday, March 14. Their hard work and talent shined in this prestigious event!
6. Student Council is in the process of planning the American Red Cross Blood Drive which will take place on April 15th at the high school. This is open to students age sixteen and older and staff within the district.

BOARD/POLICIES/ PERSONNEL



BOARD

The Board approved the following motions:

- 1. Meeting Minute(s)
 - February 18, 2025



POLICIES

The Board approved the following policies:

005	Organization	Recommended
202.1	Out of District Student Attendance of Full-Time Nonresident Employees	SSD New
308	Employment Contract/Board Resolution	Recommended
610	Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation	Recommended-Updated according to the Consumer Price Index Annually
611	Purchases Budgeted	
626	Policy-Attachment-Procurement	
823	Opioid Antagonist	Recommended

PERSONNEL

The following motions were approved:

- Musical Staff and Compensation-Additional Staff Needs
- The Board approved the creation of new professional teaching positions starting in the 2025-2026 SY per the SEA CBA Agreement - Pending Adequacy Grant Funding.
 - 1) Family and Consumer Sciences
 - 2) Media and Communications



PERSONNEL



PERSONNEL

Other approvals:

New Hires - Paraprofessionals (Per the Paraprofessionals Agreement with a 90 day probation period.)

a. Danica Johnson - \$20,720.00 effective February 26, 2025

New Hires - Cafeteria (Per the SEIU Agreement.)

a. Rachel Aller - SHS PT 3.5hrs at \$12.76 effective March 19, 2025

Supplementals (Per the SEA Agreement.)

a. Regis Kaufman - V Assistant Track Coach, \$2,000.00 (24-25 SY)

b. James King - V Assistant Baseball Coach, \$1,725.00 (24-25 SY)

c. Michael Thompson - MS Head Football Coach, \$4,300.00 (25-26 SY)

Volunteers

a. Louis Richards - Volunteer Football Coach (25-26 SY)

b. Scott Wood - Volunteer Football Coach (25-26 SY)

c. Ryan Bowser - Volunteer MS Football Coach (25-26 SY)

Leave

a. FMLA Leave - Employee #3248 effective 3/10/2025-6/16/2025





EDUCATION

The Board approved:

1. Student Discipline Agreement(s) - 2024-2025-04

2. Student Service Agreement(s)

The Meadows Psychiatric Center effective 2025-26, 2026-27, 2027-28

3. Private Industry Council/Pre-K Counts

4. Approval of New Courses-SMS



Advanced Physical Education

Confident Voices

Current Events

Exercise Science

Exploring the World of Drama

Focus & Flourish: Skills for Well-Being

From Page to Screen

Human Anatomy

Innovators' Lab: Exploring Science Through Hands-On Projects

Introductory Physical Education

Introduction to 3D Printing

Jazz Band

Literary Lens

Music Technology

Music Theory

On Broadway!

Percussion Ensemble

Personal Fitness

Poetry Unplugged

Scottie News Network

Scottie Town Piano Studio

Singing Sensations



FINANCE/BUILDINGS & GROUNDS/ATHLETICS



FINANCE

Board approved:

- Monthly Board Treasurers' Report
- General Fund Board Summary Report
- Fund Accounting, Capital Fund and Food Service Check Summary Listing
- General Obligation Bonds



BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Board approved:

- Wireless Districtwide Radios



ATHLETICS



No items for this month.