



# The Spartan Spirit

LEARNING • SERVING • LEADING

*One Interaction at a Time*

February 2026 | Volume 1, Issue 1

## DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

### Full-Day Kindergarten: "More Time to Shine!"



Excitement is building as we prepare for the Class of 2039! The Southern Lehigh School District is thrilled to introduce Full-Day Kindergarten starting with the 2026-2027 school year. Registration officially opened on February 1, 2026, and as of February 20, we have received a total of **137 applications** (89 submitted and 48 started).

**Program Benefits & Planning:** This expansion offers our youngest learners significantly increased time for academics, including robust literacy and mathematics blocks, as well as enhanced participation in special area classes. A core focus is providing abundant opportunities for critical social-emotional learning through engaging, play-based activities.

The administration is actively finalizing logistics. Staff will soon visit Penridge School District's kindergarten classrooms to observe best practices. Furthermore, families with approved registrations will receive formal building assignments and screening information by **February 27, 2026**. Student screenings are currently slated for May 1, June 8, and July 1 or 15. Liberty Bell and Hopewell Elementary are also preparing to launch a special "Welcome Series" for incoming families!

[Learn more about our Full Day Kindergarten program by visiting our District Website](#)

#### Did You Know?

To prepare for next year, our High School manufacturing class is creating mock-up wooden furniture stands for the new kindergarten classrooms, fostering a spirit of collaboration across grade levels.

#### Spartan Fun Fact

Did you know that Southern Lehigh High School was established in 1955? That means the Spartans have been building a proud legacy in our community for over 70 years.

## Artificial Intelligence Steering Committees

The district has officially launched Elementary and Secondary AI Steering Committees, pulling together diverse expertise. These teams will meet throughout the spring and summer to finalize a district-wide AI vision and create clear academic integrity guardrails for both students and staff.

## Spartan Academy & Virtual Learning

The district continues to offer a robust virtual option through the Spartan Academy. Unlike external cyber charters, Spartan Academy students remain Southern Lehigh Spartans—eligible for all co-curricular activities, athletics, and a Southern Lehigh diploma. This internal program offers a cost-effective, high-quality education while keeping students connected to our community.

## Global Language Update

The Board has approved a contract with Kreyco to provide Mandarin instruction at the High School, addressing a short-term staffing gap. This ensures our students will continue to receive consistent, high-quality instruction in this highly specialized content area.

## STEM & Student Success

Congratulations to the **First Lego League (FLL)** teams! The "Ancient Pickles" (Team C) won the Breakthrough Award at regionals and recently traveled to Hershey, PA for the STATE level competition.

## 2026-2027 School Calendar



The Administration, in collaboration with SLEA leadership, has presented a draft calendar for the 2026-2027 school year. Key features include:

- **Start Date:** August 24, 2026
- **End Date:** June 4, 2027
- **Instruction:** 3 built-in snow days included.
- **Winter Break:** A two-week break aligning with LCTI.

## Grade 3 Transition

Preparations continue for the 3rd-grade transition to the Intermediate School (JPLIS). A recent Town Hall provided families with updates on scheduling and playground plans. Library staff are currently curating the book collection to ensure age-appropriate resources are ready for our students. To ensure comprehensive oversight, administration has scheduled a walkthrough at JPLIS to systematically monitor interior projects and evaluate exterior enhancements, specifically focusing on drop-off/pick-up traffic patterns.

## Middle School Milestones

Our Middle School students are hitting impressive academic benchmarks! Recently, SLMS hosted "Growth Parties" to celebrate 327 students—over 70% of the student body—who have already achieved over 60 points of academic progress in just the first half of the year. The momentum continues as SLMS prepares to host the Eastern PA MathCounts competition, welcoming 16 area teams. Good luck to our mathematicians!

# ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

## When our students win, we win!

Celebrating a historic winter season for our Spartans.



### Champions on the Field and Court:

- **Rifle Team:** Secured the League Championship title!
- **Basketball:** Both teams earned spots in the playoffs! Boys faced Athens Area in the District XI Quarterfinals on Feb 20, while Girls advanced to the District XI Semifinals against Pottsville on Feb 25.
- **Wrestling:** Boys competed at Districts (Feb 20-21), and our Girls program celebrated a major milestone with 3 student-athletes qualifying for Regionals at Quakertown on Feb 22.
- **Swimming & Track:** Swimmers competed in Districts at Parkland (Feb 20-21) and Winter Track gears up for State Championships at Penn State on March 1.
- **Cheerleading:** Represented Southern Lehigh on the national stage, making it to the second day of Nationals in Florida.

### Service in Action:

A special recognition goes to the **SLHS Swim & Dive Team**. Beyond their winning records, the team raised nearly **\$7,000** to offset student food services debt within our district. This is a remarkable example of "Serving and Leading."

### Spotlight on the Arts: Little Shop of Horrors

You are cordially invited to attend the Southern Lehigh High School spring musical, *Little Shop of Horrors*. We are hosting a special **Senior Citizen Night** on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. The evening begins with a complimentary dinner served at 5:00 p.m. in the High School Cafeteria, followed by the performance at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium.

### General Admission Showtimes:

Wednesday, March 4 through Saturday, March 7 @ 7:00 pm; Sunday, March 8 @ 2:00 pm.

**if you would like to purchase tickets or have any questions please contact:**  
[southernlehighHStheater@gmail.com](mailto:southernlehighHStheater@gmail.com)

## 🏆 March Athletic Events & Spring Sports Kickoff

Spring sports are right around the corner! Get ready to support our Spartans as they kick off their new seasons. Highlights for the month of March include the start of **Baseball, Softball, Boys & Girls Lacrosse, Track & Field, and Boys Tennis.**

- **March 2:** Official Spring Practices Begin
- **Mid-March:** Pre-Season Scrimmages
- **Late March:** Regular Season Opening Games
- **April 16:** Brian Neefe Field Dedication (*Save the Date!*)

Because spring weather can cause sudden schedule changes, we encourage all fans to view the live, up-to-the-minute daily calendar and get tickets by visiting the Southern Lehigh High School Athletic website.

*Tip: Click "Login / Create Fan Account" on the athletics site to receive instant alerts for your favorite teams!*

## Clubs Expansion:

The district is finalizing an agreement to establish **10 additional clubs and activities** based on student interest surveys. This is in addition to the more than **90 clubs and activities** offered at Southern Lehigh High School. The expansion aims to engage more students and foster new passions. More information can be found on the Southern Lehigh High School website.



2025-2026 PIAA Class 4A Football State Champions!

# BOARD & COMMUNITY UPDATES

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## Celebrating Public Schools, Educators, and School Resource Officers

In honor of National Public Schools Week, we want to highlight the incredible dedication of our staff. A special shout-out goes to **Mr. Matt Greenawald**, who was recently recognized at Lehigh University during their "Educators Who Make a Difference" celebration!

This month we also celebrated **National School Resource Officers' Week** by recognizing the exemplary work of Officer Borso and Officer Litz. Their proactive support and integration into our school culture provide an invaluable layer of mentorship and security. SLMS students shared their gratitude through daily announcements, an "Orange" Spirit Day, and a special "Bites for Officer Borso" initiative where students shared their favorite healthy snacks with him.

## Policy Review Progress



The Board continues its diligent review of district policies. Policies 000, 001, 002, and 007 have moved forward from First Read, while Policy 011 and 004 are scheduled for future review in March. Board meeting dates, agendas, and policies can be found in the School Board section of the district website.

## Important Upcoming Dates



- **February 28:** PJAS Regional Competition
- **March 9:** School Board Meeting (6:30 PM) - *Featuring a detailed presentation on Full-Day Kindergarten master scheduling, curriculum, facilities, and staffing.*
- **March 23:** School Board Meeting (6:30 PM) - *Regular Action Meeting*

## Southern Lehigh School District

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[www.slsd.org](http://www.slsd.org) | [slspartanpride.org](http://slspartanpride.org)

*Southern Lehigh School District shall not discriminate in their educational programs, activities or employment practices.*