



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dennis Furton

Dear Laker Parents and Community Members,

Each spring brings a familiar rhythm to our schools. The days grow longer, spring sports fill our fields, concerts and performances take the stage, and across the district there's a quiet realization that the school year is entering its final stretch. For our graduating seniors, these months carry a particular weight—they represent the final chapter of a journey that began more than a decade ago.

I sometimes find myself thinking about what school looked like when the Class of 2026 first walked into kindergarten, many of them at Holmes or Jeffers. At that time, classroom technology was far more limited, students rotated through computer labs instead of carrying devices in their backpacks, and concepts like virtual learning or artificial intelligence were barely part of the conversation.

Their journey through Spring Lake Public Schools has unfolded during a period of remarkable change in education and in the world around them. Yet the most important parts of school have remained constant. Great teachers, supportive classmates, and a community that cares deeply about its students continue to define the experience.

Over the next few months, our seniors will take part in many “lasts” before one very meaningful “first” as graduates of Spring Lake High School. We are proud of the young adults they have become and grateful to have been part of their story—**big enough to challenge, small enough to care.**



CURRICULUM UPDATE

KATE DRAKE

Harvard Professor R. Elmore famously applied a “theory of action” to school improvement when he argued for a direct link between principals’ actions and student learning. The notion of a “principal as a lead learner” provides a platform for building administrators to serve much more than managers; this crew impacts many, emphasizes a culture of professional development and models the learning process. Elmore summarized: if principals engage in learning, the environment/educators will become increasingly skillful and thus, student learning will grow.

As we continue developing our professional learning community, leaders are also embracing the idea of instructional leadership. District professional development has centered around essential standards and evolved to common formative assessments (CFAs). In turn, principals are intentionally, actively learning monthly about the tenets of formative assessments. CFAs are collaborative, team-designed tools to measure learning during the instructional process - an assessment “for” learning, not “of” learning. This data provides feedback to teachers about what learners need next.

With principals learning about CFAs, we are learning the work, by doing the work. Having greater understanding of the topic allows leaders to more effectively facilitate and coach staff around best practices. Leaning into this mentality requires vulnerability and a growth mindset, allowing Spring Lake Schools to prioritize what is most important for an educational community - collective learning for all.



OPERATIONS UPDATE

LIZ BOEVE

You may notice some dust and heavy machinery around the high school, but these short-term "messes" are paving the way for incredible campus additions.

- Athletics: We are expanding to the east of our current tennis courts to add four new courts. To offset the footprint, a significant amount of new parking is being added south of the front entry. Behind the school, construction is officially underway on the new Hickman (baseball) Field.
- Academics: Inside the building, the transformed Media Center and collaboration space will be fully complete and ready for students the moment they return from Spring Break.
- District-Wide: Perhaps most excitingly, every school in the district is receiving a brand-new outdoor learning space, giving our teachers and students fresh air and flexible environments to utilize starting next school year.

Thank you for your patience as we build a better environment for our Lakers!

A Message from our Fitness & Aquatic Center

As we prepare for a busy summer season, there's a lot of exciting activity happening at the Spring Lake Fitness and Aquatic Center.

Summer season starts with our amazing staff! The FAC is proud to employ over 30 student employees who are a critical part of our team. For many of them, this is their first job experience. We take that responsibility seriously and are proud to provide a workplace where students can build confidence, learn teamwork and responsibility, as well as develop real-world skills that will carry them into college, the workforce, and beyond. We're excited to share that we recently welcomed five new Spring Lake student employees to the FAC team.

Do you know a student who is looking for a great place to work? Check out the slfac.com website for more information on upcoming opportunities.

As we prepare for the summer and new hires, FAC trains new staff members to support both summer and year-round programs. Our team will soon begin American Red Cross lifeguard certification and youth swim lesson instructor training to ensure we are fully prepared for a safe and successful summer around the water in West Michigan.

Now is the perfect time to ask, "Is my family ready for summer fun and fitness?" The FAC is the perfect place to build the strength and the confidence to enjoy it. Try the weight room, walk the indoor track, enjoy the pools, join an exercise class, or start with a personal training session. All Spring Lake District residents receive a 20% discount on membership dues.

Kick off your summer **STRONG** at the FAC!



Spring Vote

Spring Lake Schools will have a Non-Homestead Millage Renewal on the May 5, 2026 ballot. This proposal asks to continue the 18-mill levy on commercial, business, rental, and second-home properties.

Why is this on the ballot? To receive full funding from the State, the District must levy 18 mills locally on non-homestead property. This revenue—roughly \$5.1 million—represents 12.6% of our operating budget and covers daily costs like textbooks, utilities, and other operational items.

Will my taxes go up? No. This renewal does not affect primary homeowners.

Your Vote Matters: Whether you vote in person on May 5 or via absentee ballot, your participation provides the District with vital feedback.

Words Have Power

In Mr. Pantoja and Mrs. Crawford's AP English Language classes, words are doing more than just earning grades—they are earning grants. Thanks to the Spring Lake Schools Foundation, each class was awarded \$250 in real funds to donate to a nonprofit of their choice.

Students didn't just write essays; they researched local organizations and delivered high-stakes persuasive presentations to convince their peers where the money was needed most. This "smart design" bridges the gap between the classroom and the community, giving students an authentic platform to practice the argumentative skills required for the AP exam. It's a powerful reminder that when student voice meets real-world purpose, the learning becomes unforgettable.



School Building Highlights Winter 2026

High School

- Beyond our exceptional sports, our Concert and Symphonic bands earned straight 1s at festival—boosted by clinics with guest artists Julian Bliss and Trey Harris—and Quiz Bowl is officially bound for State!

Alternative Education

- Our students are showing incredible momentum with 105 full credits completed and four new graduates already celebrated. Beyond academics, students prioritized safety by earning "Stop the Bleed" certifications and completing CPR and AED training.

Middle & Intermediate Schools

- "Read the Laker Way" kicked off at the IS with guest speakers and a focus on responsibility and respect. Meanwhile, history was made at Band Festival: all four groups (7th, 8th, Concert, and Symphonic) earned straight 1s and All A's—a decade-long streak of excellence few districts can match.

Holmes Elementary

- Our PBIS "Play Day" transformed the cafeteria into a hub of high-fives to celebrate positive behavior. We also launched "Readers Go for the Gold" with an electric torch-lighting ceremony, fueling a schoolwide Olympic-sized passion for March is Reading Month.

Jeffers Elementary

- Student Council representatives are stepping up as "HEART Smart" leaders. From guiding building tours and leading assemblies to reviewing school climate data with Dr. Dewitt, these students are proving to be phenomenal advocates and role models for the Jeffers community.



From the Voice of a Teacher

Ms. Kelli Adrian

Your middle school years are truly some of the hardest years of your life. As I make my way through year six of both my teaching career and my time at Spring Lake, I have been reflecting on where I started this journey six years ago and where I am today. Over these past six years, I have seen students experience moments of incredible success as well as devastating heartbreak. I have listened to students discuss challenges they have had to face—some that even adults struggle to comprehend. And yet, I have still been able to celebrate students' achievements, no matter how great or small. These range from small victories, such as a struggling student turning in all of their homework on time, to larger accomplishments, like the Middle School MathCounts Team making it to the state competition.

Like many others, this past winter trimester was challenging, to say the least. The dark days and busy schedules of the winter and holiday season can make this time of year difficult. However, I have been fortunate enough to work with some truly amazing teachers. The staff at the middle school have been diligent and intentional about building connections and cultivating a sense of community. From secret staff spirit days to PayDay PLCs at our various local watering holes, we have created a space where we support one another and lift each other up. This encouragement from my fellow staff members, along with our incredible administrators, has helped shift the winter blues into a manageable—and at times even fun—trimester.



SPORTS HIGHLIGHT

Hall of Fame Numbers, Laker Impact: Celebrating Coach Bill Core

In the world of Michigan high school athletics, a coaching career is often measured by the longevity of its influence and the strength of its numbers. By any metric, Coach Bill Core has set the gold standard. Following 30 storied varsity seasons, Coach Core has officially been inducted into the Michigan High School Softball Coaches Association (MHSSCA) Hall of Fame—a crowning achievement for a career defined by excellence and Laker pride.

The statistics alone tell a powerful story of competitive dominance. Coach Core retired with an incredible 642–374 record, leading his teams to 14 conference championships, 10 district titles, and 3 regional championships. Under his leadership, the Spring Lake softball program became one of the most respected in the state, synonymous with consistency and a relentless work ethic.

However, for those who played for him, the "Hall of Fame" label isn't just about the trophies; it's about the people he shaped. Coach Core mentored 21 collegiate athletes and 11 All-State players, including 2012 Miss Softball winner Evie Uithoven (Lorimer). "What a legend," Uithoven shared, reflecting on the milestone. "Thank you for being a great role model and an endless advocate for me and all the players who played for you."

That advocacy was the secret to his success. Former player Cassidy Hazekamp noted that his rare gift was balancing high expectations with deep personal support. "He knows how to challenge you and hold you accountable, while still making you feel completely valued," she said. "He believed in us as players even when we didn't believe in ourselves."

From the numerous Coach of the Year honors to this final Hall of Fame induction, Bill Core has left an indelible mark on our community. Congratulations, Coach, on a well-earned legacy!

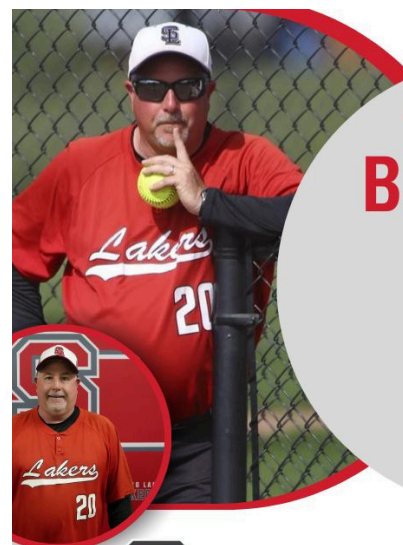
Top 5 Winter Athletic Highlights

Our Laker athletes are rewriting the history books. Here are the top five moments from an unforgettable winter season:

1. **Swim & Dive Makes History:** For the first time as OK Conference members, the Boys Swim and Dive team captured the conference title and placed 4th overall at the State Finals.
2. **Girls Basketball Dynasty:** Consistency is the name of the game for our Lakers, who secured their third consecutive District Championship.
3. **Wrestling Reclaims the Throne:** After a 13-year wait, the wrestling team is back on top as conference champions, led by Trevor Christner's 3rd-place State finish.
4. **Bowling's Rapid Rise:** In just their third year, both Boys and Girls teams took second in the league, with senior Hudson Case qualifying for individual State Finals.
5. **Powerlifting Strength:** The program sent six athletes to the state meet, returning with an impressive silver medalist.

Honorable Mention: Hockey's OT Thriller

A gritty, shorthanded overtime victory against Jenison sent the Lakers to the Regional Semifinals in the most heart-stopping win of the year.



CONGRATULATIONS

BILL CORE
MHSSCA
HALL OF
FAME



SPRING LAKE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SPRING LAKE BANDS ACHIEVE PERFECTION

At the recent district band festival, the musicians of Spring Lake Public Schools achieved something truly remarkable. It is a rare feat for a single ensemble to earn a "Straight 1" rating, but this year, every single Laker ensemble—from our 7th and 8th graders to our High School Concert and Symphonic bands—walked away with the highest possible marks.

The groups didn't just earn "1s" for their overall performance; they secured "All As" across every adjudicated category. In the world of competitive music, this represents a literal perfect score.

This level of excellence is no accident. It is the result of relentless discipline, hours of rehearsal, and the steady leadership of our directors. By mastering complex technical passages and demonstrating profound musicality under pressure, our students have set the bar at the very top. Congratulations to our Laker bands for a historic and flawless performance!



FROM THE ARTS DEPARTMENT

High School

- The HS arts are thriving, with 90 students completing ceramics portfolios and AP artists filling display cases with their investigations. While we look forward to renovated art rooms this fall, our musicians are coming off a successful "Scones and Tones" fundraiser and preparing for their landmark performance at Carnegie Hall this April.

Middle School

- Over 60 students in grades 6–8 recently brought Cinderella Jr. to life. Despite the January snow, the cast and crew delivered four successful performances, proving that teamwork and theater can brighten even the coldest winter days.

Intermediate School

- Our IS students are exploring the digital frontier, working with new tools to understand their vast potential and their limitations. This hands-on approach builds the critical thinking skills necessary for responsible, modern digital citizenship.

Jeffers Elementary

- Third graders hosted a multi-disciplinary museum in the commons, merging Art, STEM, and research. Students created watercolor portraits and 3D-printed sculptures of historical figures, even adding interactive audio buttons to share their findings with visiting families.

Holmes Elementary

- In a special tradition held once every five years, Holmes students hosted the "Arts Feast." Every K–4 student contributed to a massive, collaborative display of a grand feast table—a beautiful masterpiece welcoming everyone to the table.

CLASS NOTES

1980s

- **DAVID VANDERHOFF** is retired from the Jacksonville Sheriff Office; resides in Jacksonville, FL; married to Carolyn Vanderhoff

1990s

- **ALLISON FOSTER '96** is an Assistant Branch Manager at LMCU; reminds Class of 1996 “Thirty on the 30th” is scheduled for July 30th. Look for more details soon!
- **AUTUMN QUIGG (BOTBYL) '96** is the Marketing Manager for Advantage Fleet and Vehicle Alliance Group in Coopersville

2000s

- **NICOLE CLEMENTSHAW (GARDNER) '00** is the Deputy Drain Commissioner for Mecosta County; now lives in Reed City; married Matthew Clementshaw in 2016; has six children and a grandson
- **MITCHEL TENNYSON '05** works at Orchard Market; lives in Spring Lake
- **ANNA ROORDA (PITNEY) '07** is a Farmhand at Sandhill Preservation Center in Calamus, Iowa; has two sons, Isaac (8) & Matthew (7)
- **STEFANIE PICKFORD (PELLEGROM) '08** is a new parent of Griffin Pickford born January 23rd, 2026

2010s

- **EMILY ALDRICH (BENCH) '11** is a nurse practitioner at LifeCircles PACE; a new parent of Ellie (third child) born 2/14/2026
- **GEORGIANA “GEORGIE” MEJIA (KLEM) '12** is working in career advising and employer relations for Career Services at St. Mary’s College; lives in Niles; got married in 2021
- **ELLEN BOEZAART '14** is a retail clerk at Meijer for going on 12 years in April!
- **ARIANNA KRALJIC '19** is an Associate Therapist at Unity Counseling; lives in Norton Shores; married Samuel Bayes in 2025; graduated with a Masters in Social Work in April 2025; bought a house this past December

2020s

- **MAKAYLA MINNAAR '20** is engaged to Jake Johnson (class of 2019) on December 16, 2025

Laker Alum? Update Us Now



Follow Our Story



Spring Lake Public Schools



@slps_lakers



@slps_lakers



springlakeschools.org

Support Spring Lake Schools? Spring Lake Schools Foundation



Support Enrollment--Share Today!



SPRING LAKE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Big Enough to Challenge, Small Enough to Care



K-4
SMALL
CLASS
SIZES



5-8
MULTIPLE
EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES



9-12
HIGH LEVEL &
VARIED
ACADEMICS

START ENROLLMENT NOW!

Non-Resident Application Window: May 7 - 28

www.springlakeschools.org



SPRING LAKE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS