



1516 Sycamore Street  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Bethlehem Area School District Students Win Gold at SkillsUSA State Championships, Advance to Nationals**

Bethlehem, PA, April 15, 2026—Two students from the Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School (BAVTS) earned gold medals at the SkillsUSA State Championships and will advance to compete at the national level this June.

**Emily Feijoo**, a Freedom High School student in the BAVTS Esthetics Program, captured first place in the Esthetics Competition. Her model for the event was Rashell Castillo, a Liberty High School student in the Esthetics Program.

**Cole Stefano**, a Freedom High School student in the BAVTS Automotive Technology Program, earned first place in the Marine Service Technology Competition.

Both students previously won gold medals at the SkillsUSA PA District 11 Championships in February before advancing to the state competition.

“We are incredibly proud of Emily and Cole for their outstanding achievements,” said Dr. Jack Silva, BASD Superintendent. “Their success reflects the dedication of our students, instructors, and the high-quality career and technical education opportunities available through BAVTS.”

The gold medalists will now represent Pennsylvania at the 2026 SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference (NLSC) in Atlanta, Georgia, June 1–5. The event brings together more than 19,000 attendees, including students, instructors, industry partners, government officials, and administrators. A highlight of the conference is the SkillsUSA Championships, where more than 6,500 state champions compete for national gold, silver, and bronze medals in 114 skilled and leadership competitions.

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**For interview opportunities and more information, please contact:**

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***About the Bethlehem Area School District***

The Bethlehem Area School District is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest school district in Pennsylvania serving nearly 13,000 culturally and economically diverse students in 22 community-based schools. The district serves five municipalities: City of Bethlehem, Bethlehem Township, Hanover Township, Freemansburg, and Fountain Hill. The district enjoys numerous community partnerships with universities, businesses, and arts providers that extend the schools' rich curricular and co-curricular offerings.