



The Spartan Spirit

LEARNING • SERVING • LEADING

One Interaction at a Time

JUNE 2026 | VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT & LEADERSHIP

🌟 Monumental Milestones & Shared Vision Success

The culmination of this year was marked by several monumental milestones that would not have been possible without our shared vision. The Board's dedication and collaboration have successfully resulted in:

- **Key Central Office Appointments:** Filling two vital administrative roles, ensuring the district moves forward fully staffed, high performing, and completely aligned with our core mission.
- **Momentum on the Performing Arts Center:** Taking exciting, definitive steps forward to bring this long-awaited vision to fruition. Student achievement and the performing arts go hand in hand; through this project, we have a unique opportunity to provide our students with a world-class educational facility that will be a true game-changer for Southern Lehigh.
- **💰 Approval of the 2026–2027 Final Budget:** Securing a structurally sound, forward-looking fiscal plan that protects our programs and supports our community. The business office and administrative team continues to ensure that the district remains financially stable, structurally balanced, and exceptionally positioned to support our student-first mission.

🇺🇸 Federal Audit

Following three separate, rigorous federal audits this year—comprising a Fiscal audit, an intermediate school-level audit (JPLIS), and a district-wide evaluation of Titles I, II, and IV—Southern Lehigh has achieved a historic milestone in operational compliance. Thanks to a massive, coordinated effort and a highly collaborative partnership with Federal Programs Consultant Kim Walck and huge support of the administration and staff, the district has absolute operational confidence moving into the next fiscal period.

📅 Board Governance: Keystone Agenda Transition

SLSD will be transitioning from BoardDocs into Keystone Agenda. A dedicated link for Keystone Agenda will be added to our website. Community members will be able to search the public, non-login portion of the platform to easily view and access these archived Board Meeting agendas and other related PDFs.

❤️ HONORING SERVICE: RETIREES & NEW INDUCTEES

The Southern Lehigh School Community gathered for a spectacular End-of-the-Year Ceremony on June 9th to celebrate our incredible retirees as they embark on well-deserved new chapters. We honored their countless years of service and life-changing impact on generations of students. We also formally recognized and welcomed our new professional staff members who successfully completed their rigorous two-year long induction process.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & STRATEGIC PLANNING

Math Curriculum Implementation

Transitioning Kindergarten and select teachers from grades 1–5 officially began intensive **Amplify Desmos** Program Overview training. Educators explored the curriculum's core inquiry-based philosophy, interacted with digital platforms, and practiced utilizing tactile hands-on manipulatives.

Ahead of full implementation, Hopewell Elementary 2nd-grade teacher Angela Fulmer successfully trialed "Notice and Wonder" stories, resulting in robust, collaborative classroom discourse.

Summer Professional Academy

Southern Lehigh faculty and administrators are embarking on a robust menu of Summer Academy courses to prepare for the 2026–27 school year. Learning pathways will focus on AI-assisted platforms, advanced Humanities units (Arts & Letters), K–5 social studies reviews, middle school English Language Arts, and optional asynchronous safety training. All participation is systematically tracked via Frontline for Act 48 professional development credits.

AI Roadmap: "Defense then Offense"

The district's AI Steering Committee is working actively through the summer under a deliberate **"Defense then Offense"** philosophy. This framework ensures that strict data privacy, academic honesty, and staff software literacy are established as non-negotiable prerequisites before wider technology capabilities are introduced in the classroom.

The committee has organized into four specialized subcommittees anchored in the Brookings Institution's global framework of *Prosper, Prepare, and Protect*:

- **Protect:** Creating academic integrity policies guided by Board Policy 815.1, Middle States, and Lehigh University models.
- **Prepare:** Mapping K–12 AI literacy standards into the curriculum, and designing year-long staff PD courses.
- **Prosper:** Designing innovative classroom practices that equip students for future workplace demands.

Student Craftsmanship for Kindergarten

High school manufacturing and Tech Ed students engineered and fabricated ten custom **"Play-Based Learning" stands** using just a single sheet of plywood per stand. Following a strict technical design brief, student build crews performed precise routing, sanding, and safe water-based polyurethane coating. Five 30" stands were delivered to Hopewell and five 27" stands to Liberty Bell, complete with custom spare parts for long-term elementary durability.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN INFRASTRUCTURE INTEGRATION

To support the successful transition to Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) this fall, administrative and facilities teams finalized new safety protocols for Parent Pick-Up and Drop-Off at our elementary complexes. Essential logistical adjustments and physical driveway updates will be completed over the summer months to ensure a smooth, secure, and highly efficient traffic flow on the first day of school.

SPARTAN SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Hopewell Elementary: Courage & Transitions

During a recent building visit, Mrs. Pompella's class challenged administration to test their bravery in a hands-on crustacean science unit. Showing excellent scientific understanding, students used persuasive, evidence-based reasoning and cheered, "*You can do hard things!*" to inspire the visitor to successfully pick up a live crawfish! Additionally, Hopewell celebrated a successful 2nd-grade concert, hosted a transition tour of JPLIS, and welcomed 27 brand-new families to the building during the second official Kindergarten screening event.

Liberty Bell Elementary: Celebrations & Stage Performances

Liberty Bell wrapped up the year with several major milestones, including a high-energy Kindergarten performance and carnival, and an outdoor educational expedition to the Lehigh Valley Zoo for first graders. Second and third graders signed commemorative school pennants during transition visits to the Intermediate School, capped off with a Kona Ice celebration. Furthermore, the third grade delivered a spectacular production of *Aladdin*, and fifteen talented student singers represented the building at Coca-Cola Park to perform in a regional choral festival celebrating America's 250th birthday.

Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School: Milestone Memories

JPLIS hosted an incredibly high-energy transition week, utilizing outstanding student ambassadors to lead comprehensive tours for rising 3rd and 4th graders. The hallways were filled with district pride as the Class of 2026 returned to JPLIS for their traditional Senior Walkthrough. Beyond building transitions, fifth-grade students traveled to the Franklin Institute, sixth-grade students toured Ellis Island, and Mrs. Bauer and Ms. Ott's team emerged victorious, securing the annual 5th-grade tug-of-war championship trophy.

Southern Lehigh Middle School: Experiential Science & Honors

Eighth-grade students traveled to Dorney Park for an immersive science field trip, experiencing "G-forces" firsthand before returning to the classroom to design, calculate, and launch physical model rockets as part of their final physics assessments. SLMS also welcomed rising freshmen to the High School for a transition orientation facilitated by Spartan Ambassadors, hosted a spirited Field Day, and concluded the year with a formal Awards Ceremony recognizing academic excellence and collaboration.

INSIDE SCOOP COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

A huge thank you to the hundreds of Spartan families, administrators, and teachers who gathered at the Inside Scoop! Serving as guest ice cream scoopers, our elementary staff and community celebrated a phenomenal, growth-filled academic year in delicious style.

ATHLETICS, CO-CURRICULARS & CREATIVE ARTS

Historic Spring Season: District XI Domination!

Four District Championship Titles, Deep State Playoff Runs, and Unparalleled Character.

Championship Highlights & Postseason Results:

- **Softball:** Crowned **District XI 5A Champions!** The elite squad secured a stellar local victory and advanced to host a high-stakes PIAA State Championship opening-round home matchup.
- **Baseball:** Crowned **District XI 5A Champions!** The team captured the regional crown and hosted a thrilling opening-round PIAA State home game on the final day of the season.
- **Boys Volleyball:** Crowned **District XI 2A Champions!** Following their dominant regional title run, the Spartans successfully advanced deep into the prestigious PIAA State Quarterfinals.
- **Girls Lacrosse:** Crowned **District XI 2A Champions!** The powerhouse program defended its local legacy and advanced to secure a home field advantage in the PIAA State Tournament.
- **Track & Field Achievements:** The boys' elite 4x400 relay team capped an amazing spring, finishing **8th place in the entire state** at the highly competitive PIAA State Championships.

SkillsUSA National Medalist & CTE Success

The 2026 SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Representing Lehigh Career & Technical Institute (LCTI) and Southern Lehigh, student-competitor **Jestina N.** captured the prestigious **National Bronze Medal in Graphic Communications (Print Technology)**! We are incredibly proud of Jestina's hard work, technical expertise, and outstanding preparation.

In addition, LCTI student **Elizabeth "Lizzy" L.** (Automotive Technology) represented Southern Lehigh at a regional Workforce Board LV networking event at Coca-Cola Park, collaborating directly with local employers to advance representation in non-traditional career paths.

Middle School Volleyball

To streamline the structural pathway for student athletics, the Board revised Policy 123.2. Spring Middle School Boys Volleyball is now poised to become an officially recognized, district-sponsored PIAA sport for the 2026–2027 school year.

CHARACTER OVER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Athletic Director Matt Spengler and regional sports media recently highlighted our student-athletes' stellar sportsmanship. While championship trophies are remarkable, our teams proved the ultimate spirit of Southern Lehigh: even when they ran out of time in the state tournament, they never ran out of character, sportsmanship, or competitive will.

BOARD GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY OUTLOOK

Community Partnerships & Generous Donations

Southern Lehigh extends its sincere gratitude to the **Lehigh Valley Educators Credit Union (LVECU)** for their generous \$10,000 donation, bringing their total support to \$20,000 for this school year. These critical funds will be utilized to expand student access to co-curricular clubs (including Robotics, STEM Design, Reading Olympics, and Yearbook) and fund classroom resources.

We also celebrate the **JPLIS PTG** for their incredible donation of \$8,903.00, which will fund a professional eColor+ S2 36" Full Color Poster Printer (\$6,403.00) and provide \$2,500.00 to support the school's highly popular Hammock Garden student campaign.

Key Administrative & Policy Agreements

- **Federal Program Consultation Contract:** Renewed agreement with compliance expert Kim Walck to maintain excellent standing in future federal audits. Funded entirely through federal Title allocations (net-zero general fund impact).
- **Food Services Upgrades:** Utilizing dedicated food service revenues, the district approved essential equipment purchases including Vulcan convection ovens, a Tilting Skillet Braising Pan for the Middle School, and robust reverse osmosis water filtration systems at the High School, Middle School, JPLIS, and Liberty Bell to ensure long-term equipment durability.

SOUTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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