



The Spartan Spirit

LEARNING • SERVING • LEADING

One Interaction at a Time

JULY 2026 | VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Double Honors: Southern Lehigh Named St. Luke's "School of the Year" & Football Team Wins "Male Team of the Year"

The Southern Lehigh School District is immensely proud to announce two major regional recognitions awarded by St. Luke's University Health Network. Southern Lehigh has officially been named the **St. Luke's School of the Year for 2025-2026!** This distinction reflects the immense dedication, energy, and commitment poured into our academic and athletic programs by our student-athletes, coaching staff, faculty, and supportive community.

Adding to this celebration, the **Southern Lehigh Football Team** was selected as the **St. Luke's Male Team of the Year!** Congratulations to Head Coach Sams, his assistant coaches, and the entire team on this outstanding honor. These recognitions cap off an extraordinary year of Spartan pride, athletic achievement, and collective excellence across all buildings.

Milestone Reached: Final Screenings Complete for Full-Day Kindergarten Launch

On July 1, Hopewell Elementary and Liberty Bell Elementary completed their final Kindergarten Screening events of the summer season, welcoming 22 new families on the final day alone! With these foundational screenings complete, administrative teams are finalizing tours for incoming first- and second-grade transfer families. District leadership and staff are energized as we count down the final weeks to officially launching our historic, inaugural **Full-Day Kindergarten** program this fall!

Administrative Leadership & HR Personnel Growth

Human Resources and administrative teams have been working diligently through July to build an exceptional leadership and instructional team for the 2026-2027 school year:

- **JPLIS Assistant Principal:** We are thrilled to announce the appointment of **Mrs. Becky Kabala** as the new Assistant Principal at Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School. Mrs. Kabala has joined the administrative team to finalize building master schedules and prepare for student arrivals.
- **SLMS Principal Search:** Comprehensive first-round interviews were conducted with internal candidates alongside a diverse committee of stakeholders, including SLEA representatives. Final round interviews are nearing completion to ensure top leadership is in place before the first bell.
- **Key Support Roles Filled:** We officially welcome our new Middle School Lead Food Service Manager, Districtwide Plumber/HVAC Technician, and several new Instructional Assistants. Search committees are actively reviewing candidates for the Director of Business Services, additional Instructional Assistants, and Lunchroom Monitors.

Operational Excellence & Emergency Facility Mitigation

Behind the scenes, our custodial and maintenance staff have worked tirelessly all summer to ensure our buildings are spotless and operational.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

K-12 AI Steering Committee & Framework

On July 23, the combined K-12 Artificial Intelligence Steering Committee convened to finalize strategic plans for the 2026-2027 school year. Key deliverables include:

- **Ethics & Integrity:** Common guidelines for ethical AI usage for students and staff, modeled after top higher-education frameworks.
- **K-12 Literacy Progression:** Grade-appropriate tools including Seesaw AI and Common Sense Media.
- **Hybrid Professional Learning:** A comprehensive PD plan launching in August combining staff-led workshops and university partnerships.

Amplify Desmos K-5 Math Readiness

Targeted preparation for the new K-5 Amplify Desmos Math rollout continued through July. On July 7, elementary math instructional leaders completed an intensive Program Overview training. All teachers now have active summer demo accounts and direct access to pedagogical research. Monthly check-in sessions with our dedicated Customer Success Manager are locked in for the full academic year.

New Honors 8th Grade Science Course

On July 9, a district curriculum committee met to begin designing an accelerated **Honors 8th Grade Science** course leveraging Amplify Science. The curriculum introduces enhanced rigor, independent laboratory autonomy, and a capstone research project. Board approval is targeted for January 2027, with full launch in 2027-2028.

Elementary Social Studies Review

The K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Committee met July 13 to evaluate instructional materials. The team identified key priorities—addressing early civics gaps while streamlining geography redundancies—aiming for vendor sample evaluations and a final board recommendation by February 2027.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Successful Enterprise Financial Launch (CSIU)

Effective July 1, 2026, the district officially completed its financial migration to the **CSIU system**, successfully replacing legacy ALIO software. HR and Business Office teams executed the first full payroll run and initial bills list through CSIU with zero errors. Single Sign-On (SSO) integration for the CSIU employee portal is now live, modernizing financial transparency and personnel administration.

Infinite Campus & Transportation Integration

Centralization of district communications within Infinite Campus is advancing rapidly for August launch:

- **Traversa Bus Routing:** Transportation routes are being directly synced into Infinite Campus to provide families with seamless bus details without third-party app delays.
- **Digital First Day Forms:** Annual Verification forms are transitioning 100% digitally through the Campus Portal, launching in August with weekly automated reminders.
- **New Parent Onboarding:** Weekly registration guides are being distributed to incoming families for portal account setup.

SPARTAN SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School (JPLIS)

Campus Readiness & Logistics: The Facilities team completed walkthroughs monitoring classroom setups, library transformations, and main office structural modifications. **New playground apparatus and swing sets** were officially installed between July 15–17. Additionally, new bus lane striping has expanded staff parking, 3rd-grade classrooms are receiving new ceiling projectors to mirror K-2 environments, cafeteria Point-of-Sale (POS) hardware is installed, and new library furniture and acoustic wall panels are in place.

Southern Lehigh High School

Freshman / New Student Schedule Walk: SLHS is excited to invite all incoming 9th graders and new transfer students to the **Open Building Schedule Walk on Wednesday, August 19th, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM**. Students and parents can tour the building and locate classrooms prior to day one.

Facility Upgrades: Summer work is progressing on schedule. The gym roof replacement is nearing completion, while gym floor restoration is undergoing final sanding and custom artwork application. Upgrades to access control security, HVAC systems, and high-efficiency boilers are tracking for full completion by August 14-21.

Liberty Bell & Hopewell Elementary Schools

Full-Day Kindergarten Launch Preparation: Following final screening events, custodians and staff have assembled and arranged brand-new classroom furniture specifically acquired for Full-Day Kindergarten at Liberty Bell and Hopewell. Infrastructure teams have installed updated fire alarm systems and access control panels at Liberty Bell, running dual parallel systems to maintain 100% continuous safety until final inspection on September 14.

Southern Lehigh Middle School

Academic & Operational Readiness: SLMS is preparing for the return of students with upgraded access to security infrastructure and fire alarms. The building warmly welcomes its new Lead Food Service Manager following July interviews, while committee teams finalize the selection of the building's next Principal.

Unboxing Academic Excellence Across All Buildings!

A massive shout-out to our dedicated custodial, maintenance, and office staff who spent hundreds of hours in July unboxing, cataloging, inventorying, and distributing thousands of newly delivered textbooks, science kits, and Amplify Desmos instructional materials to classrooms across all four district campuses!

ATHLETICS & FINE ARTS



HALL OF FAME HONOR & SPARTAN ATHLETICS EXCELLENCE

Celebrating legendary coaching milestones and state-of-the-art facility additions.



Legendary Softball Coach Brian Neefe Inducted into District XI Hall of Fame

Southern Lehigh School District extends its heartiest congratulations to legendary former softball coach **Brian Neefe** on his selection for induction into the **District XI Hall of Fame**! Coach Neefe will be officially enshrined during the annual ceremony this October. This prestigious recognition celebrates Coach Neefe's decades of unyielding dedication, mentorship, and extraordinary championship legacy representing Southern Lehigh athletics. We are incredibly proud of his outstanding career!



Coach Sams Throws Ceremonial First Pitch at IronPigs Game

Spartan Pride was on full display at Coca-Cola Park! Head Football Coach Sams took the mound on Sunday afternoon to deliver a strike for the ceremonial first pitch at the Lehigh Valley IronPigs game. Athletic Director Matt Spengler was on hand to capture the moment as Coach Sams represented the Southern Lehigh community with precision and Spartan spirit!



2026 Varsity Football Season Passes & Ticketing Live

Get ready for Spartan Football! Online sales for 2026 Varsity Football Season Passes are officially open through **Hometown Ticketing** from July 21 through September 4.

- **Season Pass (Best Value):** Covers all 5 regular season home games with seamless digital entry.
- **Single Game Tickets:** Available online 6 days prior to each home contest.
- **Cash Gate:** A single cash-only ticket gate (\$7.00 per ticket) will operate behind the middle school. Visit the district website's Athletics Pass Page to reserve tickets.



High School Gymnasium Scoreboard Upgrades Installed

Next time you enter the Southern Lehigh High School Gymnasium, take a look at the walls—brand new, high-definition digital scoreboards have been officially mounted! Facilities teams are completing final wiring and software integration. These scoreboards will elevate the game-day experience for volleyball, basketball, and community events.



Fine Arts & Acoustic Enhancements

In addition to athletic upgrades, sound control and acoustic panels are being installed in spaces at JPLIS. These improvements ensure optimal environments for our school community.

BOARD & COMMUNITY UPDATES



Board Governance: Keystone Agenda & Policy Portal Integration Live

The Southern Lehigh School District has officially launched its new **Keystone Agenda portal** directly on the district website. All historical public agendas, board minutes, and supporting documentation previously housed in BoardDocs have been successfully migrated as PDFs.



Join the Spartan Team: Career Opportunities

Southern Lehigh School District is actively seeking talented, dedicated community members to join our school family for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year! We offer competitive compensation, comprehensive benefits, and a supportive environment dedicated to student success.

Visit our district Human Resources and Talent portal at www.slsd.org to view position descriptions and submit an online application.



Important Dates & Back-to-School Calendar

- **August 10:** SLSD School Board Meeting (6:30 PM, SLHS Media Center)
- **August 19:** SLHS Freshman & New Student Open Building Walk (6:00 – 7:30 PM)
- **August 19:** Operational Readiness Target for Teacher In-Service Return
- **August 24:** SLSD School Board Meeting (6:30 PM, SLHS Media Center)
- **Late August:** Infinite Campus Traversa Bus Portal & Annual Verification Launch

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www.slsd.org | slspartanpride.org

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