

# **2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN**

SPRINGFIELD LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Mahoning County, Ohio

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the Springfield Local School District, dedicated to education, is to offer the opportunity to all students in reaching their maximum potential in academic, social, emotional, and physical development, by providing dynamic programs in a safe environment, delivered by dedicated staff, in partnership with caring families and an involved community leading us into our future.

## **PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC PLAN**

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to provide a roadmap for the District's operations with the desire to reinvigorate the community in its involvement with, and relationship to, the District. Implementation of this Strategic Plan will ensure resources are allocated in a manner consistent with the desires of the community, applicable law and with fiscal responsibility. The Strategic Plan encompasses the stated desires of the community, District staff, and statutory requirements of both Federal and State governments as they currently exist and funding realities facing the District.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be flexible to provide this and future Boards with the ability to adapt to changing situations. Additionally, it is anticipated that future Boards will undertake a similar process to ensure the Strategic Plan as set forth in this document continues to reflect the desired goals of this community and to modify this Strategic Plan as may be required or desired.

## **HISTORY OF SPRINGFIELD LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Petersburg had the first school, a log cabin, built in 1802 and converted to a school in 1805. The school was started by local citizens who supported the school privately. By 1825, the state legislature passed a new school code and the education system in the township progressed, as it did throughout Ohio. Log cabin schools were replaced by quintessential one-room schoolhouses. Eventually, 10 such schools were erected in Springfield Township, including one to replace the log school in Petersburg. Many of those structures remain in use today as private homes and businesses.

Petersburg led the way again in 1854, when a frame school was built. The two rooms on the first floor were first through eighth grade classes with a 3-year high school on the top floor. In 1917, the district was awarded a full 4-year high school charter and became known as Springfield Township High School.

Eventually, there were school buildings in each of the three areas of Springfield Township: In 1923 a new high school was constructed in Petersburg, the New Middletown Elementary in 1923, and the New Springfield Elementary in 1927. Additions were built at each school in the early to mid 1950's to accommodate an increase in enrollment. Also, in the mid 1950's Ohio changed school designations, eliminating "Township" schools, thereby creating the Springfield Local School District. In late 1967 an intermediate school was constructed to accommodate more

growth in the community. It was located just south of New Middletown on State Route 170 and housed grades 5-8. Student population in the District peaked in the mid seventies at about 1,850.

Springfield Local School District implemented a 1% income tax in the 1980s. This tax was created to provide a more equitable funding method for the community beyond property taxes. It was designed to include all residents, particularly to account for our farming community and others with lower property value relative to income. The income tax helps fund the district by approximately 25% of the total budget and together with property taxes, this 1% income tax helps make up a significant portion of the school's budget. Additionally, the district is committed to working within the budget dictated by the 1% income tax, and as such, has not asked for additional operating funds since its initial passage. In 1991, construction of a new intermediate school for grades 5-8 was completed. The former intermediate building was converted to become the high school grades 9-12. The elementary school in New Middletown was renovated/expanded to house grades K-4 for the entire District, and renamed Springfield Elementary. The high school building in Petersburg and the elementary building in New Springfield were closed.

In 2012, many renovations were done to the high school building to provide updated security and more appropriate labs for the upper level programs, as well as, new facilities for the choir and band, and an additional lecture hall. At the same time, a much-needed addition was added to house the Board of Education offices. After a successful campaign by the Community for Springfield Pride to raise the needed local share for a K-4 elementary building, construction began on the new elementary building in conjunction with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission in 2014. The 52,323 square foot K-4 building was built on the original Sipe Farm which the district had previously purchased in 1990. This site allowed for all three buildings to be conveniently located on one campus. The state-of-the-art elementary building opened in the fall of 2015, and welcomed the first classes of all-day, every day, Kindergarten in the district. The former elementary building in the Village of New Middletown was razed and the property was being maintained by the district for school and community use until 2024, when the property was sold to the Village.

In March 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic occurred, and Springfield Local Schools closed as a direct order from Governor Mike DeWine as of March 16, 2020 at the end of the school day. Class instruction continued online until the end of the school year. Following all safety protocols, the cafeteria staff provided “to-go” lunches for students that could be picked up outside. Pursuant to all health mandates at the time, a graduation ceremony was held in the highschool parking lot, with each graduate in their own vehicle, properly spaced. School buildings did not reopen for learning until the fall of 2020. The COVID-19 shutdown marked an unprecedented disruption to teaching and learning in our district and across Ohio. The sudden shift to remote and/or at home instruction challenged students, families, and staff academically, socially, and emotionally, while also exposing inequities in access to technology, learning supports, and essential services. The long-term ramifications on our school community included learning gaps, increased mental health needs and staffing needs. At the same time, the experience strengthened our capacity for innovation, flexibility, and collaboration, informing our commitment to rebuilding, supporting the whole child, and ensuring continuity of learning in the face of future challenges.

## **DISTRICT PERFORMANCE**

The district has strengthened its academic focus through intentional leadership and programmatic improvements designed to increase student performance. Beginning in 2023, the District implemented a district leadership team and building leadership teams to create greater alignment, accountability, and data-informed decision-making across all buildings. The addition and expansion of career counseling services, along with STEM, Robotics, Culinary and Building Trades programming, provide students with clear pathways to college and careers while increasing engagement and real-world learning opportunities. Together, these initiatives have elevated instructional quality, broadened access to rigorous and relevant coursework, and supported measurable gains in academic achievement.

Numerous teachers within the district have received special honors in receiving the following: Master Teacher Status, Outstanding Educator awards, Advisor awards, Outstanding Student Teacher awards, National Board Certification, the Martha Holden Jennings Scholar Award, Junior Achievement awards, Mahoning Valley Teacher of the Year, as well as, other awards and acclamations. Additionally, our football coach was inducted into the Quad-County Football Coaches Hall of Fame (2025) and was named the OPSA All-Northeast Inland District Coach of the Year (2025)

Springfield Local Schools Athletic Department offers a variety of OHSA Sanctioned team sports in addition to a few individual sports to accommodate the interests of Springfield Local School's students. Our coaches have earned numerous credentials in order to lead those sports as well as educate themselves through various professional development opportunities. In Grades 7 and 8, students can choose from Football, Volleyball, Cross Country, Basketball, Track & Field and Cheer. At the High School students may select Football, Volleyball, Cross Country, Golf, Girls Soccer, Basketball, Track & Field, Baseball, Softball and Cheer. We have also offered our student-athletes an opportunity to participate in Swimming/Diving and Wrestling. Springfield Local Schools is a member of the Mahoning Valley Athletic Conference Scarlet Division along with 7 other schools, Jackson Milton, Lowellville, McDonald, Mineral Ridge, Sebring, Waterloo and Western Reserve to make up a traditional 8 team league. Our conference also provides an opportunity to allow our students in grades 4-6 to compete in an Intramural Basketball League. Our coaches and student-athletes conduct numerous youth/instructional camps to our elementary-aged students such as Football Camp, Basketball Camp, Volleyball Camp, Softball Camp, Baseball Camp, Soccer Camp and Cheer Camp. Our athletic facilities continue to adapt to the ever changing world of sports to offer our student-athletes the most up-to-date technology and equipment as well as provide a fan-friendly/comfortable environment for our community. In 2002, the district invested in expanding the athletic facilities with the construction of a new stadium and turf project. This reflects a long-standing commitment to student opportunity, safety, and community pride. These improvements provided modern, durable spaces that support multiple athletic programs, reduce maintenance and weather-related disruptions, and allow for increased use by students and greater community. The project positioned the district to host regional events, such as regional football playoff games and regional track meets. The educational components of participation in interscholastic athletic programs make it unique. The

Springfield Local Athletic Department provides participants in interscholastic athletic programs a well-rounded experience that includes participation in a multitude of extracurricular activities.

The district has expanded extracurricular opportunities by supporting the addition of a trap shooting team affiliated with the Ohio State High School Clay Target League and competing under the Springfield Local School District name. While the program operates independently from the district's athletic department, it provides students with a safe, structured environment to develop discipline, responsibility, and sportsmanship. This offering broadens student participation by engaging learners who may not be involved in traditional athletics, promotes teamwork and focus, and strengthens community partnerships while upholding high standards for safety and accountability.

In non-athletic extracurricular activities, the District has produced numerous spelling bee champions, one of which competed at the National Spelling Bee competition, numerous state qualifier speech team participants, National History Day qualifiers, numerous recipients of awards in county and other art show contests. In addition to outstanding football game halftime shows and numerous other community event appearances, the High School Concert Band has competed in the Ohio Educators' Music Association Contest competitions, repeatedly being awarded excellent and superior ratings. The district continues to show significant growth and recognition in the fine arts, reflecting a strong commitment to extracurricular excellence and student creativity. Several students have been selected for the Ohio Music Education Association All-State Choir, demonstrating outstanding musical achievement at the state level. Our band and auxiliary programs have earned recognition at the annual Mahoning County Canfield Fair, highlighting the dedication and talent of both students and staff. Additionally, the theater department has presented multiple sold-out performances, showcasing high-quality productions and strong community engagement. Together, these accomplishments underscore the arts as a vital component of a well-rounded education and a key contributor to student confidence, collaboration, and success.

## **FACILITIES**

The district maintains one elementary, one intermediate and one high school. As shown below, the age of these facilities varies.

|                      |                                                                                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High School:         | Constructed as an Intermediate School in 1967<br>Converted to a High School in 1990 |
| Intermediate School: | Constructed in 1990                                                                 |
| Elementary School:   | Constructed in 2015                                                                 |
| Board Offices        | Constructed in 2012                                                                 |
| Stadium              | Constructed in 2002                                                                 |
| Track                | Resurfaced in 2018                                                                  |
| Turf                 | Added in 2023                                                                       |

In 2025, the district enhanced school safety by implementing the BluePoint Alert Solutions emergency response and notification system in all district buildings. This system provides administrators with the ability to initiate immediate alerts to first responders and staff during emergency situations, significantly reducing response times and improving coordination. The addition of this technology strengthens overall security in each of the buildings, supports a proactive approach to crisis management, and reinforces the district's commitment to providing safe, secure learning environments for students, staff, and visitors.

## **ENROLLMENT**

As with most school districts within Northeast Ohio, enrollment has been generally declining for years. The following chart identifies enrollment within the district by building.

|       | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 | 25-26 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| K-4   | 367   | 370   | 344   | 358   |
| 5-8   | 268   | 266   | 277   | 265   |
| 9-12  | 287   | 271   | 265   | 278   |
| Total | 922   | 907   | 886   | 901   |

## **STAFFING**

The number of district employees has varied. The following chart identifies staffing within the district over the last four years.

|                           | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 | 25-26 |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Teachers                  | 67    | 68    | 68    | 68    |
| Educational Aides**       | 3     | 3     | 3     | 6     |
| Bus Drivers               | 7     | 7.75  | 8     | 8     |
| Cooks                     | 7     | 7     | 7     | 7     |
| Custodians                | 9     | 9     | 9     | 9     |
| Secretaries               | 5     | 5     | 5     | 5     |
| Certified Administration* | 6     | 6     | 7     | 7     |

|                           |     |        |     |     |
|---------------------------|-----|--------|-----|-----|
| Classified Administration | 5   | 5      | 5   | 5   |
| Total                     | 109 | 110.75 | 112 | 115 |

\*In 24-25 and 25-26 the number of certified administrators increased because we hired the nurse directly instead of as a purchased service through the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio.

\*\*In 25-26 the number of educational aides increased because we directly hired 3 educational aides instead of as a purchased service through the Council of Governance. The Council of Governance provides personnel and pre-employment services to its member school districts and business entities. After it was determined that the positions were more long-term, Springfield hired them directly.

## **FINANCE AND BUDGET**

The Board of Education and Administration regularly reviews financial forecasts and compares projected revenues to actual results to ensure resources remain aligned with educational priorities, operational needs and long-term financial stability. While these evolving changes present planning challenges, the district remains committed to transparency, thoughtful fiscal management and strong stewardship of the community.

Overall, the district is financially strong. The district relies heavily upon income taxes and property taxes for operation. Income tax revenue make up 26% of our operating budget, while property tax makes up 40%. Tax revenue, along with the district's cash balance, has provided the district with the necessary funds to meet its operating expenses without seeking additional levy dollars, and will continue to do so for the next three fiscal years, with commitment to fiscal responsibility without seeking additional funding from our community. The school district's income tax was renewed for a period of five years, beginning January 2025 and ending December 2029. The district will continue to ask for income tax renewals as a means to limit and control the growth on property taxes through operating levies.

The following figures represent the previous four years of the district's local budget.

|                                   | 2022           | 2023           | 2024           | 2025           |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| General Property Tax              | 3,485,691      | 3,594,933      | 4,034,235      | 4,560,812      |
| Public Utility Personal Property  | 624,180        | 1,199,808      | 639,915        | 783,924        |
| Income Tax                        | 2,434,766      | 2,841,074      | 2,750,695      | 3,107,842      |
| Unrestricted Grants in Aid        | 4,054,124      | 3,936,220      | 3,906,660      | 3,956,317      |
| Restricted Grants in aid          | 114,414        | 264,864        | 344,894        | 327,087        |
| State Share of Local Property Tax | 530,078        | 528,841        | 593,986        | 663,455        |
| All Other Operating Revenue       | <u>237,055</u> | <u>374,384</u> | <u>578,682</u> | <u>707,176</u> |
| Total                             | 11,480,308     | 12,740,124     | 12,849,067     | 14,106,613     |

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

The creation and implementation of a strategic plan was considered by the Board of Education beginning in early 2010. The Board reviewed prior plans of the district. The Board determined that an attempt to complete a strategic plan could not be limited by the input of the Board members alone and therefore, chose to actively solicit input from the local community and District staff, without limiting the input received. The Board concluded that a written strategic plan was an essential tool in ensuring the future viability of the district, encompassing the needs and desires of the community and ensuring fiscal responsibility to the district taxpayers while providing the best education experience to district students.

As part of this continuously evolving process, the Board of Education reviewed & revised the previous Strategic Plan. Beginning in 2017, the Board of Education held a series of public meetings that were not well attended. The Board of Education then contracted with the Ohio School Boards Association to create a survey that was sent out to students, staff, parents, and community residents. This allowed the Board of Education to get a feel for the pulse of all the stakeholders who completed this tool. Based on all of the feedback received, the Board of Education prepared a strategic plan in 2018.

The district remains committed to the strategic planning process that began in 2010, was thoughtfully updated in 2017, and continues to guide decision-making today. This ongoing effort reflects a dedication to continuous improvement, responsiveness to changing student and community needs, and long-term sustainability. By regularly reviewing and refining the plan, the district ensures alignment between its vision, goals, and actions while maintaining a clear focus on student success and fiscal responsibility.

To guide long-term planning and responsible stewardship of district resources, a comprehensive facilities assessment and feasibility study was completed in the spring of 2025 by bshm Architects of Youngstown, Ohio. This study evaluated the condition, capacity, and functionality of district buildings and infrastructure, while also examining options for renovations, additions, and potential new construction. The findings provide data-driven insights to support informed decision-making, align facilities with current and future educational needs, and ensure learning environments are safe, efficient, and supportive of student success.

During the Spring of 2026, the district engaged students, staff, families, and community members throughout the strategic planning process by providing multiple opportunities to participate and share feedback. Over a six-month period, the district gathered input through community meetings, electronic surveys, stakeholder feedback, and the review of relevant data. This information helped identify priorities, shape goals, and ensure the strategic plan reflects the needs and priorities of the district and community.

## **FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS**

*Academic Excellence, Security, Fiscal Stability and Facility Improvements* are the four main goals of the Springfield Local Schools' Strategic Plan. To achieve these goals, the Board will establish objectives for each goal.

## **I. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

The Board of Education intends to maintain high academic achievement by providing an environment for students to achieve their maximum educational potential with a challenging, standards-based curriculum.

### **A. Curriculum and Instruction**

- a. Develop and implement a rigorous, inclusive, and forward-thinking curriculum that is vertically aligned across all grade levels (K–12), grounded in high academic standards, and responsive to the diverse needs, interests, and aspirations of all students.
- b. Ensure consistent use of evidence-based instructional practices, integration of critical thinking, creativity, and real-world skills, and regular review cycles to adapt curriculum and instructional practices based on student performance data and emerging research.
- c. Develop and implement a comprehensive, balanced assessment system that is aligned with curriculum and instructional practices across all grade levels—including formative, interim, and summative measures—to accurately monitor student learning, inform instruction, and support timely interventions.
- d. Excellence will continue with a research based, collaborative multidisciplinary approach to education provided by a highly qualified professional staff in a safe environment.

### **B. Graduates**

- a. Provide students with access to the variety of diploma pathways in accordance with Ohio requirements, ensuring each student can pursue a course of study that aligns with their strengths, interests and post secondary goals.
- b. Provide students the academic tools needed to succeed in either career readiness or higher education endeavors after graduation through the implementation of a career counseling program supported through the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio
- c. Expand partnerships with universities to provide students increased access to College Credit Plus courses, enabling early college credit and rigorous academic opportunities.
- d. Ensure that every graduate from Springfield Local High School is a well-rounded learner, capable of critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration and contributing positively to their community.

### **C. Technology**

- a. Technology is ever changing and the district will work to keep current with innovations that enhance curriculum and instruction as finances permit.
- b. Develop Artificial Intelligence (AI) policies and administrative guidelines for staff and student use of AI

- c. Develop AI-literate students who can responsibly, ethically and effectively use AI tools to enhance learning, creatively and problem solving.
- d. Support and encourage educators in the adoption of the latest evidence-based instructional technologies to enhance teaching effectiveness, advance students' learning and cultivate creativity and critical thinking.
- e. Develop students' digital citizenship competencies by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to practice responsible, ethical and safe online behavior in various online environments.

#### D. Fine Arts Education

- a. Maintain and improve K-12 fine arts offerings, as fine arts education is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skills.
- b. Encourage increased participation of students in choir, drama and band and do not restrict the number of students who can safely participate.
- c. Explore opportunities to increase art offerings K-12
- d. Enter music, drama and art competitions to showcase individual and group talent

## II. SAFETY and SECURITY

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring a safe, secure and supportive environment that prioritizes the physical and emotional well-being of all students, empowering them to reach their full potential as well-rounded individuals both academically and personally.

#### A. School Safety

- a. Employ School Resource Officers to foster positive relationships, support a welcoming school climate and promote campus safety.
- b. Explore evidence-based safety technologies to strengthen protection and preparedness across the district facilities.
- c. Maintain a comprehensive emergency and informational notification system to ensure clear, timely communication with families.
- d. Maintain the anonymous Ohio Safe tipline

#### B. Emergency Preparedness

- a. Partner with the local law enforcement departments in designing emergency plans
- b. Maintain School Safety Committee to ensure all safety and emergency plans are up to date and accurate
- c. Complete all state-mandated regular and annual safety drills and reports.
- d. Ensure the availability and proper maintenance of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in all district facilities to enhance emergency preparedness

#### C. School Environment

- a. Establish a district-wide Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS) framework that fosters positive behavior and supports a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.
  - b. Increase the availability of school-based mental health resources, partnerships and prevention programs to ensure timely support for students' social, emotional and behavioral needs.
  - c. Foster a safe, supportive and collaborative learning environment that enhances students well-being, academic success and positive relationships among students, staff and families.
- D. Cybersecurity
- a. Establish and maintain a comprehensive cybersecurity program that safeguards district systems, data, and user privacy.
  - b. Implement layered security measures, continuous monitoring, and regular risk assessments to prevent, detect, and respond to threats.
  - c. Promote a culture of cybersecurity awareness through ongoing training for staff and students.
  - d. Ensure compliance with relevant laws (Ohio HB96) and best practices, and maintain clear protocols for incident response and recovery to minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

### **III. FISCAL STABILITY**

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining fiscal stability by responsibly managing resources, ensuring transparency and making strategic financial decisions that support student achievement and the long-term stability of the district.

- A. Maintain the 1% income tax
- B. Implement fiscally conservative policies that balance financial responsibility with the ongoing investment in programs, facilities and initiatives that enhance students' learning and well-being.
  - a. Fund programs and staff development through external funding sources whenever possible.
  - b. Review staffing levels annually in all departments to reflect funding as well as enrollment trends.
  - c. Review existing contracts, investments and policies to ensure maximum value and alignment with current best practices
  - d. Investigate opportunities to continue to share services in an effort to reduce costs.
- C. Investigate opportunities for new funding sources and/or savings such as grants, discounts, private donations, rebates and consortium pricing
- D. Engage with law makers to encourage the return to the Fair School Funding Plan and other initiatives that bring State dollars into public schools.

#### **IV. FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

The Board of Education is committed to providing safe, well-maintained and forward-thinking facilities that support student learning, staff effectiveness and community pride. Through thoughtful planning, responsible stewardship and ongoing, regular assessments, the Board will prioritize facility improvements that align with the strategic goals.

- A. Prioritize and address building repairs identified in the facility assessment in conjunction with the Feasibility Committee to ensure all school facilities remain safe, functional and supportive of high-quality teaching and learning
  - a. Replace back up generator at the Intermediate School/High School to ensure reliable emergency power, enhance building safety and maintain continuity of operations during power outages.
  - b. Explore the relocation of the main waterlines and electrical power boxes at the Intermediate School/High School to improve safety, accessibility and operational efficiency.
  - c. Maintain and upgrade technology infrastructure including network systems, hardware and connectivity to ensure reliable and secure access to digital learning tools and operational systems across all buildings.
- B. Develop a facility/grounds maintenance and improvement plan that identifies, prioritizes and addresses necessary repairs, landscaping, drainage, paving, fencing and outdoor facility needs to ensure a safe, well-maintained and welcoming campus environment for students, staff and community members.
  - a. Conduct ongoing assessments of all district parking lots, including lighting, to identify surface deterioration, drainage and traffic flow concerns, and safety hazards, and develop a phased plan for sealing, resurfacing, restriping, lighting improvements, and preventative maintenance to extend the life of these areas and improve safety.
  - b. Support a proactive grounds care program that includes routine lawn maintenance, seasonal landscaping enhancements, and regular assessment of tree health to preserve safety, appearance and long-term environmental health of the district property, including lake management
- C. Maintain athletic fields of play (track, turf field, practice fields, indoor gymnasiums) and supporting infrastructure through regular inspections, safety checks, and ongoing maintenance, while exploring potential enhancements and improvements to ensure safe, high-quality, durable, and competitive surfaces for all student-athletes and community use.
- D. Assess the feasibility of using current school real property to create a cross country course.