

July 22, 2021

SLSD Parents/Guardians and Staff,

This is a mid-summer update on the activities of the Southern Lehigh School District. Our excellent staff and administration continue to diligently prepare for what we hope is a normal opening to the 2021-2022 school year. While it seems like yesterday that we were saying goodbye to our students for the summer, we are inching closer and closer to returning in the fall as the calendar shifts toward the conclusion of July. We cannot wait to welcome our students back and continue to remain optimistic that the coming school year will represent as close to a return to pre-pandemic experiences for our students, staff, and surrounding community as possible. Outlined below are some important dates and updates to ongoing happenings since our last update on June 28.

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative (DEI) with Dr. Joseph Allen** - Dr. Allen's commissioned [report](#) on DEI was reviewed by the administration team. At our August 9, 2021 School Board Meeting, I am going to recommend to the School Board that the incoming superintendent should be taking the lead with this work. As we all know, DEI initiatives involve important and complex issues to be considered by school districts. Dr. Allen's work with the district is concluded. For a variety of reasons, I believe it is in the best interest of our district and school community to allow our new superintendent to thoughtfully re-assess and lead this important work.
- **Important 2021-2022 Dates** - Please note the following important dates for the start of the school year. More specific details will be shared by building level administration.
 - **Transition & New Student Orientation** - August 26th
 - **First Student Day of School** - August 30th
 - **Parent/Guardian Open House** - Dates and times available via the following [link](#).
- **Administrative Staffing Update**
 - **Hopewell Principal Update** - Please join me in welcoming Dr. Lynn Chromiak as the Principal at Hopewell. Dr. Chromiak transitions into this role having served as the Assistant Principal at JPLIS. Prior to this role, she served as an Interim Assistant Principal, Reading Specialist, 4th Grade Teacher, and Special Education Teacher in the Nazareth Area School District. A copy of Dr. Chromiak's resume is available via the following [link](#).
 - **JPLIS Assistant Principal** - Please join me in welcoming Mrs. Deanna Webb as the Assistant Principal at JPLIS. Mrs. Webb comes to JPLIS from the Bethlehem Area School District where she most recently served as an Emotional Support Teacher. Prior to that role, she served as an Interim Assistant Principal at Freedom High School and Learning Support Teacher in the Easton Area School District. A copy of Mrs. Webb's resume is available via the following [link](#).

- **SLHS Assistant Principal Update** - Please join me in welcoming Mr. Benjamin McConnell as an Assistant Principal at SLHS. Mr. McConnell comes to SLHS from the Allentown School District where he most recently served as Assistant Principal at Francis D. Raub Middle School, a position that he has held since 2013. Prior to this role, he served as a Social Studies Teacher at William Allen High School in the Allentown School District. A copy of Mr. McConnell's resume is available via the following [link](#).
- **Assistant to the Superintendent Update** - Please join me in formally welcoming Mr. Thomas Ruhf as the Assistant to the Superintendent. Mr. Ruhf transitioned into this role in March having previously served as the Pandemic Coordinator for the Southern Lehigh School District. Prior to this role, he served as the Assistant Principal, Gifted Coordinator, Social Studies Teacher at SLHS. A copy of Mr. Ruhf's resume is available via the following [link](#).
- **SLSD Summer Hiring Update** - The summer of 2021 is on pace to be one of the most active hiring periods in recent history for the SLSD. The Administration continues to progress through the recruiting and hiring proceedings in an effort to ensure that all of the necessary staff is in place for our first day with students on August 30th. To date, the SLSD has filled fifteen professional positions in an effort to replace staff who have either retired, resigned, or transferred into other positions within the SLSD. At this time, twelve additional vacancies are in the process of being filled. Thank you to all of the SLSD staff members who have spent time vetting candidates, participating on interview panels, and helping to ensure that the SLSD is able to secure the most qualified candidates for our team.
- **Federal Transportation Mask Order** - As a reminder, while masks are currently optional for all SLSD staff and students on SLSD property, school district sponsored transportation falls under the existing Federal Order which requires mask use while using public transportation services. As a result, all students and staff using SLSD transportation must wear a mask. The existing Federal Order can be found using the following [link](#).
- **2021-22 SLSD Budget** - An overview of the Southern Lehigh School District Budget including multiple budget presentations are available on the SLSD website. Please use the following [link](#) to access this information.
- **COVID-19 Vaccination Information** - The SLSD continues to encourage all families of eligible individuals (Ages 12+) to consult with their child's pediatrician to make an informed decision regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. As a reminder, the SLSD maintains the following [COVID-19 Vaccination Information](#) page on the District Website in an effort to support families and staff who are seeking regional opportunities for vaccination. Listed below are a series of educational resources from regional healthcare providers to support individuals who are seeking additional information about the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - [St. Luke's University Health Network - Wellness 101 Everything You Need to Know About Vaccines](#)
 - [Lehigh Valley Health Network - COVID-19 Mythbuster Series](#)
 - [CHOP - Talking About Vaccines with Dr. Paul Offit: COVID-19 Series](#)

- **Summer Facilities Update** - Each summer, the SLSD facilities maintenance staff engages in the significant operation to complete cleaning and maintenance work at each of the five school buildings that make up the Southern Lehigh School District. This work includes breaking down each classroom to clean the spaces, stripping floors and reapplying the necessary seals, painting, the completion of regularly scheduled testing and maintenance regimes, and other maintenance activities that would otherwise disrupt the typical operation of our school buildings while classes are in session. In addition to the typical summer work, the following work is being completed;
 - Renovation of the Baseball Field on the campus of SLHS
 - Replacing existing carpeted classroom floors with tile at SLHS
- **Blackboard Connect Rollover Update** - All families of students who are entering a new school building for the 2021-2022 school year need to login into the Blackboard Connect Portal and associate your child with his/her new school building. The SLSD completed the portal records update on Friday, July 16. We ask that all families transitioning to a new school building please login to the Blackboard Connect portal and associate your child with their new building after July 19. Directions for completing this can be found under the Parent tab of our website or by clicking [here](#). You will still receive all District level communication during the transition. If you have any questions or need support with this process please reach out at sapphire@slsd.org.
- **SLSD Technology Assistance** - As a reminder, the SLSD IT Department continues to support all students throughout the summer months via the remote help desk. Students can complete Digital Helpdesk Tickets and receive IT support for any technology related issues through that service. Additional information can be found using the following [link](#).
- **Spartan Academy Remote Learning Model** - Information about the SLSD Spartan Academy Remote Learning Model for the 2021-2022 school year can be found using the following [link](#). Staff from the EdOptions Academy completed a Spartan Academy Open House Program via Zoom for interested families. A digital archive of this presentation and a copy of the associated PowerPoint Presentation can be accessed via the following [link](#). Finally, any family interested in enrolling in the Spartan Academy for the Fall must complete the [Spartan Academy Enrollment Form](#) by August 13, 2021.
- **PIAA Fall Athletic Physicals** - Reminder, if you have a Fall Student Athlete who has not completed a PIAA Athletic Physical, the St. Luke's University Health Network will offer one additional opportunity to complete a FREE PIAA Athletic Physical at Coca-Cola Park on August 10th. More info including registration can be found using the following [link](#).

Wishing you all a relaxing and rejuvenating July and August leading to the opening of the school year.

Enthusiastically,

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