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# Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
**Department of Education**  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

## **Student Services Report**

**Friday, January 06, 2012**

**(Last Approved: Tuesday, January 20, 2009)**

**Entity:** Southern Lehigh SD

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Center Valley, PA 18034-9703

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## **Educational Community**

Southern Lehigh School District provides an educational program known for its excellence and forward-looking perspective, which is sensitive to the changing needs of its students. The community, faculty, parents and students have joined together in striving to maintain and enhance that excellence.

Southern Lehigh School District will educate all students to develop twenty-first century skills required to become life-long learners and productive members of an ever-changing world.

### Our Community

Located one hour north of Philadelphia, and two hours west of New York, the Lehigh Valley nestles in the rolling hills of Pennsylvania. A mixture of urban quality and collegiate excellence, surrounded by rural serenity and beauty, the Valley offers residents a wide range of opportunities and life experiences.

The focal point of Lehigh Valley is the mid-sized, dual-city complex of Allentown and Bethlehem, having a population of over 100,000. Bethlehem, originally an 18th century Moravian community, still reflects the historic significance of the area's heritage, as shown in its gothic German architecture. Allentown, rapidly becoming known as one of the country's progressive high-tech centers, also is the home of several outstanding private colleges and universities, which is part of a larger consortium including Muhlenberg, Cedar Crest, Lafayette, Moravian, and Lehigh University. DeSales University, a private four-year liberal arts college, is located in the district. There are also four schools in the state university system within 35 miles of Southern Lehigh.

New shopping malls, growing light industry, nationally recognized art museums and cultural programs, and rambling parks provide an ideal urban setting for area inhabitants. And yet, a five-minute drive in any direction brings a person out into the beautiful rolling countryside of fields and forests. Unspoiled by modern progress, the Valley reflects the purity and benefits of living in a naturalistic setting. Low mountains, forests and verdant fields provide the population with extensive recreational activities, self-contained within the Valley.

Southern Lehigh School District lies on the southern edge of the Lehigh Valley. Its 48 square miles includes the borough of Coopersburg (population 2,574) and the rural townships of Upper Saucon (population 14,570) and Lower Milford (population 3,860). The District, made up of three elementary schools (K-3), one intermediate school (4-6), one middle school (7-8), and one high school (9-12), plays a significant role in the community. The schools encourage parents and residents to participate in many diversified ways -- from classroom visitations and open houses to working on community projects. Schools and the community make a concerted effort to work closely together to provide children with multifaceted opportunities. Student enrollment currently stands at approximately 3100.

As the community reflects its values in its strong support of quality education for its children, the school district in turn serves the community in providing the vehicle for this educational excellence.

Southern Lehigh has participated in the Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Consortium since 1998. Students are involved in a career guidance program. By eighth grade, students have explored career clusters - Arts and Humanities; Business/Communication Technology; Engineering/Industrial Technology; or Health Sciences/Human Services and either the Traditional or Technical pathway within the cluster. The District has offered dual enrollment opportunities since 2004 and continues to expand opportunities in dual enrollment each year. Courses delivered through distance learning, dual enrollment, both on our campus and at local colleges

and universities, and Independent Study allows our students to pursue their career goals in elective courses that a school of our size could otherwise not offer. Our 2010-11 AYP has been met for the District. Our results show a 95.6% graduation rate, a 95.5% attendance rate, an average participation rate for grades 3-12 of 99.3% Math and 99.1% in Reading. Results show proficiency rates of 84.1% in Math and 84.2% in Reading, averaged for grades 3-12.

The strengths of our school district are:

- Consistent high performance in test scores
- Students and teachers are engaged and interested in their school experiences
- A variety of educational opportunities being utilized including dual-enrollment, on-line language instruction, on-line recovery courses, career and technical education, independent study, critical language offerings
- Required courses to meet Career Education and Work standards
- Participation in Lehigh County Pathways, High Schools that Work, and other career focused activities
- Partnerships with community groups, higher education and business groups
- Supportive, involved, and educationally-minded parents and community
- Technology resources available

Our needs include:

- Continual improvement in academic proficiency as demonstrated in the PSSA exam scores in Reading, Math, Science and local assessments
- Initiating improvement plans in academic proficiency as demonstrated by new Keystone graduation exams in Reading, Math, Science, and Writing
- Continual improvement in proficiency on college placement exams
- More opportunities for personalized career counseling and courses to support career goals (including dual-enrollment, job-shadowing and internships)
- More professional development activities designed for ubiquitous technology use in learning, differentiation of instruction and strategies to increase rigor, relevance, and relationships leading to student success
- More opportunities for 21st century learning
- A greater understanding of our changing technology-infused global society and the role each plays to contribute as an informed citizen

## **Mission**

**Educating today's learner...for tomorrow's opportunities.**

## **Vision**

In the pursuit of excellence, the Southern Lehigh School District has created a culture of innovation and creativity empowering students for a brighter future in a global society. The Southern Lehigh School District vision is one where:

- The District strives to meet the needs of all students.
- Our programs provide challenging, relevant learning experiences for the community of learners.
- Students are actively engaged in learning twenty-first century skills including:
  - Core subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> century themes
  - Learning and innovation skills

- Information, media and technology skills
  - Life and career skills
- Relationships, rigor, and relevance are the keystones of our competency/ standards based programs
- Data-informed decision-making guides our path to continuous improvement.
- Communications among our community of learners is open and engaging.
- Students are offered opportunity and choice in learning.
- We collaborate with parents and partners in pre-K-20 institutions, businesses, and community organizations, on a local, regional, national, and global level.
- Teachers and administrators are dedicated to high expectations for themselves and their students, and model the skills they inspire students to achieve.

## Shared Values

We believe:

- Education is a fundamental partnership among individuals, home, school, and the community.
- All people can learn.
- High expectations promote high achievement.
- Environment impacts upon learning.
- Society benefits when people act responsibly and respectfully.
- Continuous improvement is achieved by promoting and managing change effectively.
- The commitment of resources to public education provides long-term benefits to society.

## Strategic Planning Process

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to set and achieve specific goals in order to continue transforming the organization to provide the highest quality learning opportunities for our students as well as strive for an environment in which all employees can be successful. Critical to the planning process is facilitating a shared purpose or alignment. Alignment is the process of reaching mutual understanding about common goals. It gives shared meaning to the work of the School District, thereby enabling successful accomplishment of the goals of the organization.

The steps of the process are to review our mission statement, develop a vision for the future of the District, define our values, and set measurable goals to achieve the mission, vision, and practice the values.

The final product will be a road map of the next six (6) years for Southern Lehigh which revolves around our plan, *An Eye to the Future...The Re-creation of Southern Lehigh School District*. Since the PA Department of Education has now developed an electronic strategic planning tool, we will have much greater flexibility in revising our plan based on future needs as well as truly maintaining our plan as a living document which guides our work.

The process includes the utilization of a Steering Committee made up of Board members, administration, teachers, parents, students, and community members. The Steering Committee serves the purpose of reviewing the entire Strategic Plan to insure all pieces are in alignment with the mission, vision, and shared values of the District. The Steering Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to review the recommendations from the subcommittees and district administration.

**Steering Committee Members:**

- Joseph Liberati, Superintendent
- Corinne Gunkle, School Board Member
- Patti Mohr, School Board Member
- Leah Christman, Assistant Superintendent
- Kristen Lewis, Director of Elementary Education
- Joan Takacs, Director of Secondary Education
- Scot Engler, Director of Special Education
- Christine Siegfried, High School Principal
- Edward Donahue, Middle School Principal
- Nathan Davidson, Middle School Assistant Principal
- Ken Jordan, Technology Coordinator
- Lori Limpar, Elementary Principal
- Carol Mickley, Elementary Principal
- Mary Farris, Intermediate School Principal
- Debbie Galle, Administrative Assistant
- Bonnie Organski, SLEA Association President / Teacher
- Patricia Smiley, SLEA Association Officer / Teacher
- Karen Ryan, SLEA Association Officer / Teacher
- Robert Fluck, Teacher
- Kathryn Brink, Student
- Marie Arnold, Parent

### Strategic Planning Structure

1. Steering Committee (Administration, Managers, Board Representatives, Parents, Students, and Staff)

2. Internal Coordinators (Leah Christman, Kristen Lewis)

3. Six Sub Committees:

- **Curriculum and Assessment**, which includes Board Representatives, Parents, Community/Business Representatives, Students, and Staff (Kristen Lewis, Joan Takacs-co-chairs)
- **Staff Induction**, which includes Act 48 Committee members (Mary Farris, chair)
- **Professional Development**, which includes Act 48 Committee members (Carol Mickley, Robert Fluck- co-chairs)
- **Special Education**, which includes Special Education Task Force members (Scot Engler-chair)
- **Educational Technologies**, which includes Technology Council members (Ken Jordan-chair)
- **Student Services** which includes staff and community support personnel (Lori Limpar, Bill Kennedy - co-chairs)

### Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Bergey, Todd	Director of Support Services	Administrator	Superintendent
Kennedy, Bill	District Human Resources Administrator	Administrator	Superintendent
McLaughlin,	School Resource Officer	Community	Superintendent

## Current Student Services

Service/Resource	Description
Buxmont Academy	An alternative school dedicated to providing a quality education program to children and teens with a history of behavioral problems.
Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit	The IU provides school based partial hospitalization programs for students who have significant mental health needs. The IU also provides psychiatric services to the district in the form of psychiatric evaluations for specific students. These evaluations are critical in allowing staff to meet the needs of specific students. The IU also provides alternative education at Lehigh Learning and Adjustment School (LLAS). This program is for those identified students who have difficulty in a large public school setting. The IU also provides an educational component for those students who are placed by the police in to the Detention Center. This may be anywhere from two weeks to three months depending upon the situation. This provides the consistency of an education while the student may be in the Detention Center.
Children and Youth Services of Lehigh County	County agency to assist District with keeping students safe in school and at home.
Clarity Service Group	Behavior Analyst and Functional Behavioral Assessment Services
District services including SAP. Psychologists, School Counselors and Special Needs Department	Services are described in Action Plann section of report.
Kidspace Acute Partial Hospitalization Program	This program is for all school age students whose mental health needs are significant, but who do not need hospitalization. Most students who attend here are here for three to six weeks. Many times, students will come out of a psychiatric hospitalization setting to Kidspace to help them stabilize prior to returning to school. Kidspace then collaborates with the school counselors in order to transition the students back to the school program.
Kidspace Hospital and Lehigh Valley Hospital, Muhlenberg	These hospitals provide in-patient psychiatric services for students who have significant mental health issues that require short-term hospitalization. The hospitals also collaborate with the schools to help transition the students back to school.
Lehigh Carbon Community College	Dual enrollment and PA Academy college courses are offered to students at greatly reduced tuition costs.
Lehigh Career and Technical Institute	LCTI provides full and half-day programs for District students in grades 9-12. The LCTI programs coordinate with our career guidance and electronic career portfolio process.
Lehigh Learning Academy	An alternative school dedicated to providing a quality education program to children and teens with a history of behavioral problems.
Lehigh Valley Drug and Alcohol Intake Unit/Adolescent Central Intake Unit	This agency provides services to students who are experiencing substance abuse and mental health concerns and have been identified through the Student Assistance Program (SAP).

Library Resources	Resources included OPAC Web Access, eLibrary, SIRS Knowledge Source, World Book Online Reference Center.
Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Lehigh County	This is a county agency, which provides many services to those students and families with identified mental health needs as well as to those students who are identified with mental retardation.
Safety Security Services	CLIU #21 coordinates a regional Safety and Security Task Force as well as training to assist Districts in crisis preparedness and crisis intervention services.
Title I, II and Title IV	Federally funded programs that provide academic remediation and intervention and safe and drug free school services to students and professional development for teachers.
Transitions Adolescent Acute Partial Hospitalization Program	Transitions provides intensive, short-term partial hospitalization programs for those adolescents whose mental health needs are significant, but who do not require hospitalization. Most students who attend here are here for three to six weeks. Many times, students will come out of a psychiatric hospitalization setting to Transitions to help them stabilize prior to returning to school. Transitions collaborates with the school counselors in order to transition the students back to the school program.
Upper Saucon Police Department	A full-time School Resource Officer is provided to the school district in partnership with the local police department.

## Needs Assessment

### Reflections

There are currently no reflections selected for this section.

Southern Lehigh School District has found that communication continues to be an area of focus, both within the district and with the community. We recognize the importance of positive communication to improve programs and services. In providing information about our programs we understand that all recommendations must be considered against many variables, yet value input from all stakeholders.

In order to identify needs a variety of strategies are used. Parent meetings with school administrators, teachers, and Board members; surveys; focus groups and invitations to serve on District committees are all standard within the District. Staff members are encouraged to serve on community-based organizational Boards, and communications via e-mail, feedback forms on our website, and phone calls are encouraged and welcomed. Our guidance counselors review communication strategies on an annual basis and continually seek to improve communications through parent information meetings and electronic communications. We have implemented a new electronic communication system that allows e-mail and phone messages to be sent to all or targeted students and parents. We are also implementing a new monthly electronic newsletter on our website that will feature issues related to student services.

The Strategic Planning Process represents one example of the inclusion of representation from all stakeholder groups coming together to plan for continuous improvement. Representatives of all groups were encouraged to communicate with their members and to bring concerns and needs to the committee in order to plan for our future. In addition, various surveys were completed and the results captured the voice of all groups. The data collected in these varying manners represent ideas turned into action plans. As a result, *Improved Communications* continues to be a focus and one of our overarching goals for this strategic plan.

## **Action Plan**

There are currently no activities selected for this plan report.

## **Narratives**

### **Developmental Services**

The District offers a comprehensive developmental program K - 12. The District employs five full-time certified school counselors to support our student population- three at the High School and two at the Middle School. In addition, the district employs five full-time school psychologists, 1 assigned to each building. The counselors meet on a regular basis with the students. These sessions deal with a range of topics designed to address student needs at each age level. Other major activities include:

- Orientations for all students
- Academic counseling
- Monitoring of student academic performance and progress
- Career development
- Rtl/IST process

The District employs three full-time certified school nurses and five full-time health paraprofessionals to provide comprehensive nursing services to the students and staff. This includes specified screenings such as height, weight, body mass index (BMI), vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening. Developmental health services also coordinate with the district wellness policy.

### **Diagnostic, Intervention and Referral Services**

An integrated approach is utilized to perform diagnostic and intervention strategies to help each individual student succeed in the school program. Team decisions are made regarding student placement in programs such as enrichment/gifted, special education, and referral to additional support systems such as Rtl, student assistance program, and community support services.

At the High School and Middle School, the school psychologist provides many services to the students including weekly small group counseling sessions, individual counseling, consulting with families, teachers, administration, and students regarding behavioral issues. In addition, they work with outside agencies to meet the needs of the student when necessary, along with testing and evaluation as needed. They are members of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) team.

At the Middle School level, there are two counselors who work with the students, staff, and parents in various ways. Students receive services through individual counseling, groups and classroom lessons focusing on issues such as: conflict resolution, bullying, family problems, social skills, study skills and anything else which may interfere with academic success. The Middle School counselors also serve on the SAP and IST teams and provide resources for outside services.

At the High School level, there are three counselors who work with students and staff in various ways. They work with students in helping them choose their appropriate career path and make sure that the students have chosen the appropriate courses in order to help them achieve their goal. The counselors are also instrumental in collaborating with outside agencies that assist our students during many difficult crises. The counselors are assigned students alphabetically by the



first letter of the student's last name. Thus, the counselor works with a particular student the entire four years at the high school. This helps the counselor, student, and the student's family, create a collaborative working relationship for the student's high school years.

There is also a behavior specialist at the high school who is assigned to the Emotional Support Classroom. That behavior specialist is an integral member of the SAP team as well as works with the school counselors, school psychologist, school resource officer, and administration to support students.

At the High School level, the testing program, scholarship aid, individual counseling, job placement, follow-up studies and personal or social adjustment are among the many aspects of the counseling program. Each month the counselors work with students in grades 9 — 12 to discuss orientation, school involvement, course selection, schedule changes, and graduation credit monitoring. In addition, they offer assistance with PSAT, SAT, dual enrollment opportunities, post high school plans, the college application process, financial aid, and Governor School opportunities. The counselors also offer evening presentations for parents regarding college planning, financial aid, transitions, IEP and 504 meetings. The counselors spend time individually with students to counsel when needed.

The Instructional Support Team (IST) is a pre-referral intervention mechanism that is currently in place in grades K through 5. The District employs two full-time IST teachers and one half-time teacher to support at-risk students at the elementary level. The IST assists classroom teachers and parents with helping students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, or social skill problems. A team trained in providing interventions works together to find ways to help the at-risk student achieve success in school prior to making a referral for special education placement consideration. The core of the IST process is the belief that all students can learn and that all students are important. Parental involvement in the IST process is viewed as critical to the success of the intervention plan. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in all phases of the IST process.

The Southern Lehigh School District is currently using the Response-to-Intervention model (Rtl), a comprehensive, multi-tiered intervention strategy to enable early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk, as an alternative eligibility model for special education services in the Reauthorization of IDEA 2004 or IDIEA. Rtl encourages districts to provide well-designed, proactive interventions for students with needs through data based models and systematic, research based instructional opportunities. This model differs from the traditional disparity model in several ways, but most importantly has the potential to benefit students at earlier stages of needs and often can remediate skill difficulties successfully without unnecessary special education identification or development of more significant learning problems.

## **Consultation and Coordination Services**

The District works cooperatively within and among agencies and service providers to meet the needs of all students. For identified students, a case manager is assigned to help with coordination of services. The district strives to establish relationships with various agencies and organizations to meet the needs of our students and families. Some of these are mental health agencies, law enforcement, institutions of higher education, private providers, and Career Link to name a few. Training for instructional staff on services provided and available for students occurs on an ongoing basis and provides information on how agencies can aid the teacher in the instructional process to benefit all students.

## **Student Assistance Program**

## **Student Assistance Program (SAP)**

The SAP Team is composed of a group of specially trained school staff and community agency liaisons that work together to remove possible barriers to student success and learning. These may include but are not limited to:

- Divorce, separation and family issues
- Stressful situations and life pressures
- Death and grief issues
- Absence of coping skills due to poor communication, a low self-image
- Alcohol or drug use or experimentation
- Depression or other mental health problems

It is the parents' rights to be involved in all phases of the student assistance program. The SAP Team is designed to assist students and parents by making in-school resources available and providing information about community resources. The SAP Team does not provide therapy or implement disciplinary consequences.

Anyone who is concerned with a student and has observed any of the preceding barriers can refer that student to any team member or faculty member.

Referrals can also be made anonymously at a drop box located in the main office or library. Examples include:

- Staff members may notice a decline in school performance, (attendance, grades, conduct) which may indicate that a student is experiencing difficulty. These behavior changes are reported to a SAP team member.
- Self-referrals are accepted. Students may seek information or help by contacting SAP team members.
- Peers who are concerned about a friend's problems are encouraged to discuss these concerns with a SAP team member.
- Family members are encouraged to communicate with the SAP team for information or assistance.

The SAP Team collects observable information about the student's performance and behavior from a variety of sources: teachers, counselors, nurses, administrators and other staff members as needed. Parental notification, involvement and contact are required and necessary.

The team analyzes this information, along with input from the student and parent, in order to determine the best course of action for the student.

Support services available to the student include: educational support groups, individual counseling, and referral to other school professional and/or referral to outside agencies.

All of the information is confidential and separate from the students' school file.

## **Communication**

The Southern Lehigh School District uses a variety of tools to inform stakeholders about the current and planned educational opportunities and services for students:

Website - [www.slsd.org](http://www.slsd.org) - the District, each department, and each building has an assigned staff member to update the site with School Handbooks, documents, newsletters, upcoming events such as Back to School Night, Registration for SAT and College Information Night, parent meeting dates (this includes PTA), as well as other academic and extra-curricular programs. All Board Policies are currently posted on the website in order to inform stakeholders of adopted policies governing our schools.

Power School Student Information System- Parents and students at the high school and middle school levels have the availability to access student grades and academic information electronically.

Newsletters - each building principal sends home newsletters on a regular basis updating the community of school accomplishments as well as upcoming events.

Morning TV Show - the High School (WSOL) and the Middle School (Studio 22) both have morning announcements that inform the students of upcoming events both academic and extra curricular, remind students of the procedures ranging from scheduling courses to gathering college application materials and communicate services such as SAP and National Honor Society tutoring. The Middle School also has their show as a live streaming video for the community to view.

District Calendar of Events - each year, an activity calendar is mailed to the all members of the community. This information is also available on the school website with information and details updated throughout the year.

Communication Alert System- the District uses an electronic communication system that is able to send important messages to staff members and families via phone, text, and e-mail messages. This system is used for emergency alerts and to communicate important upcoming school events and information.

Nurses - each year the nursing department from each building mails home BMI, physical requirements, various health concerns and immunization information. In addition, the nurse utilizes the website to communicate the same information and also post documents for parents to download.

## **Assurance for the Collection, Maintenance, and Dissemination of Student Records**

- By checking each of the boxes below, the local education agency assures compliance with the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Chapter 12 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE (electronic mail may be directed to [ra-chapter12@state.pa.us](mailto:ra-chapter12@state.pa.us)).

The Local Education Agency (LEA) assures the following:

- The LEA has a local plan, including policies and procedures, in place for the collection, maintenance, and dissemination of student records in compliance with § 12.31(a) and § 12.32
- The plan shall be maintained in compliance with § 12.31(b) and made available to PDE in compliance with § 12.31(c)

## **Assurance for the Operation of Student Services and Programs**

- By checking each of the boxes below, the local education agency assures compliance with the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Chapter 12 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE (electronic mail may be directed to ra-chapter12@state.pa.us).

The Local Education Agency (LEA) assures that there are local policies and procedures in place that address:

- Free Education and Attendance (in compliance with § 12.1)
- School Rules (in compliance with § 12.3)
- Discrimination (in compliance with § 12.4)
- Corporal Punishment (in compliance with § 12.5)
- Exclusion from School, Classes, Hearings (in compliance with § 12.6, § 12.7, § 12.8)
- Freedom of Expression (in compliance with § 12.9)
- Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance (in compliance with § 12.10)
- Hair and Dress (in compliance with § 12.11)
- Confidential Communications (in compliance with § 12.12)
- Searches (in compliance with § 12.14)
- Emergency Care and Administration of Medication and Treatment (in compliance with 35 P.S. § § 780-101—780-144)
- The LEA acknowledges that the above policies shall be maintained locally and be made available to the public upon request. The policies are not to be submitted to the Commonwealth except upon specific request by PDE.

In addition, the LEA assures the following:

- The Student Services Report complies with § 12.41(b), § 12.41(c), and § 12.42 (consistent with the Early Intervention Services System Act (11 P.S. § § 875-101—875-503))
- Consistent with § 445 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C.A. § 1232h), parents or guardians are informed regarding individual survey student assessments and provided a process for refusal to participate (in compliance with § 12.41(d))
- Persons delivering student services shall be specifically licensed or certified as required by statute or regulation (in compliance with § 12.41(e))

## Supporting Documents

### Supporting Documents - Attachment

- Wellness policy