

# North Schuylkill



District Newsletter

February 2016

Welcome to the 2nd Edition of North Schuylkill's District Newsletter! The District Newsletter is designed to provide ongoing information across the District, allowing staff and the community to develop an awareness, of the great things that are happening. In hopes of increasing communication, the District Newsletter will be published a few times a year.

## School Performance Profile (SPP)

As many of you are aware, we set a very aggressive goal last year to hit an 80 on our SPP score. This is our School Performance Profile Score, or grade, from the state.

I believe we worked very hard as a District to try to reach this goal. Our score last year was 71.5 which ranked us in the middle of the schools in our county. Blue Mountain was the top ranked school last year.

The State released the scores (for secondary schools only) in November 2015. All elementary schools will not receive a score until October 2016.

Due to increased rigor and higher expectations, most schools were projected to decrease – and in fact many did. After all of our hard work and focus we were hoping to increase our score knowing it would very difficult to hit 80. We were also looking to improve our ranking among county schools.

At this time it is with great excitement that I announce we not only achieved our goal, but also surpassed it, scoring an **82.9**.

Additionally, we are now the **top ranked** academic school in our county. We are #1. Congratulations Spartans!

The Jr./Sr. High School's logo is "greater than" this year - because we will not stop at 82.9!

If you would like to view state wide SPP scores, visit the link below:

Proud to be a Spartan!  
Dr. Robert Ackell

## Areas we will continue to focus on:

- Developing positive school climate and relationships between students and teachers
- Hiring the best, highly qualified teachers
- Being committed to the ongoing development and coordination of curriculum and instruction, using research-based instructional programs, aligned with the Pennsylvania Department of Education standards
- Maximizing teaching and learning with the purchase of programs, materials, resources, and technology
- Providing professional development opportunities that are aligned to District goals, teacher needs, and the ever-changing diverse needs of our students

## What does (SPP) School Performance Profile mean?

The purpose of the Pennsylvania's School Performance Profile (SPP) is to comprehensively assess the academic performance of each school across the commonwealth. Each district receives an academic performance score based on a variety of academic performance indicators.

## Other School District SPP Scores in Area:

North Schuylkill	(82.9)
Blue Mountain	(82.1)
Williams Valley	(82.0)
Tri-Valley	(75.8)
Pine Grove	(75.0)
Pottsville	(73.2)
Schuylkill Haven	(71.8)
Tamaqua	(65.2)
Shenandoah	(60.0)
Mount Carmel	(57.5)
Mahanoy Area	(56.1)
Shamokin	(51.1)

## In This Issue

- Budget at a Glance
- BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)
- Caring for Our Kids
- Comprehensive Plan
- Contact Information
- Dual Enrollment
- Inclement Weather
- PA Core Standards
- Renovations
- School Board
- School Performance Profile
- Spring Testing Dates
- Standards Based Report Cards
- Test Taking Tips for Parents

## Test Taking Tips for Parents

The following tips will provide suggestions for parents on how to approach test taking with their children:

- Mark down test dates on your calendar so you and your child are aware of dates
- Keep a positive attitude about tests
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep the night before the test
- Ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast
- Make sure your child gets up early enough so that he/she is on time for school
- Play an active role in your child's education. If you notice your child is struggling in a certain area throughout the year, consult with his or her teacher to identify strategies and resources that may be helpful

## Reminder—Standards Based Report Cards

As many of you know, students in grades K-3 have a standards based report card. This type of report emphasizes “learning” over “earning”. Each quarter provides students multiple opportunities to practice, attain, and demonstrate proficiency on the PA Standards and the North Schuylkill School performance goals. The following is the key used when describing the performance of a standard.

Academic Scale	
4	Exceeding the Standard
3	Meeting the Standard
2	Partially Achieving the Standard
1	Not Meeting the Standard

When many of us were in school, grading was about sorting students and assigning a letter grade to indicate where you fell on a bell curve. Learning was usually measured by the amount of information that you were able to memorize and then recite for a weekly test.

We understand this may be a new way of thinking for many however, today, grading and assessing has evolved into instructional practices that help encourage students to become lifelong learners who **engage** in a continuous process of inquiry.

Our goal as a District for every student in grades K-12, is to **use grades** to get a clear understanding of what students need to improve upon to meet the standards, communicate what students should know at each grade level, and to provide teachers with critical feedback to adjust their instruction so students can grow and meet the standards.

## What do the PA Core Standards Mean?

The PA Core Standards also provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to provide to help them show growth. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

The standards are informed by the highest, most effective models from states across the country and countries around the world, and provide appropriate benchmarks for all students.

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 educational careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in workforce training programs.

The standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable, and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Requires content to be taught at a much greater depth with **less** emphasis on the memorization of facts
- Align with the NSSD curriculum maps
- Assure that students are learning to the rigorous, high quality standards as other students in Pennsylvania

Source: <http://www.corestandards.org>



## Spring Testing Dates

PSSA Tests:

**Grade 3** April 13—May 1

**Grade 4** April 13—May 1

**Grade 5** April 13—May 1

**Grade 6** April 13—May 1

**Grade 7** April 13—May 1

**Grade 8** April 13—May 1



Keystone Exams:

**ELA** May 16—May 27

**Algebra I** May 16—May 27

**Biology** May 16—May 27



# NSSD School Budget at a Glance

## Budget Comparison



	2014-2015 Actual	2014-2015 Budget	2015-2016 Budget
Revenue Local Sources	12,117,997.00	11,243,896.00	11,296,677.00
Revenue State Sources	13,939,844.00	13,847,238.00	14,823,899.00
Revenue Federal Sources	557,574.00	502,000.00	537,000.00
Revenue Other Financing	0.00	8,000.00	0.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>26,615,415.00</b>	<b>25,601,134.00</b>	<b>26,657,576.00</b>
Education—Regular Programs	11,527,985.00	11,622,469.00	12,095,208.00
Education—Special Programs	3,978,328.00	3,964,606.00	4,067,815.00
Vocational Education	552,922.00	540,282.00	594,561.00
<i>Other Instructional Programs</i>	291,334.00	191,837.00	193,837.00
Pupil Support Services	879,559.00	833,118.00	873,118.00
Instructional Support Services	577,946.00	634,317.00	665,417.00
Administration Support Services	1,593,614.00	1,476,466.00	1,542,566.00
Pupil Health Services	528,090.00	530,746.00	582,746.00
Business Support Services	332,197.00	336,150.00	348,150.00
Operation and Maint of Plant	1,769,596.00	1,979,910.00	1,984,910.00
Student Transportation	1,418,322.00	1,576,212.00	1,522,212.00
Central Support Services	391,545.00	431,040.00	421,040.00
Other Support Services	0.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
Student Activities	578,648.00	164,280.00	164,280.00
Community Services	30,574.00	41,815.00	41,815.00
Existing Building Improve	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
Debt Service	1,287,955.00	1,287,955.00	1,256,329.00
Fund Transfers	0.00	325,000.00	350,000.00
Budgetary Reserve	0	100,000.00	100,000.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>25,738,615.00</b>	<b>26,059,203.00</b>	<b>26,827,004.00</b>

## Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment, referred to as concurrent enrollment in the School Code is intended to encourage a broader range of students to experience postsecondary coursework while still in the supportive environment of their high school. The Pennsylvania Dual Enrollment Program allows school districts to partner with eligible postsecondary partners to offer high school juniors and seniors the chance to earn credit while completing their high school requirements. The NSSD Dual Enrollment Policy is also posted on our website under the district tab.

### Process

Students shall request to meet with their assigned guidance counselor to discuss the proposed course and number of credits sought.

Parental notification and signed consent is required.

### Details

The number of credits and weight assigned to course work taken through an alternative delivery method shall be predetermined by the building principal and guidance counselor as part of the approval process before coursework is begun.

Each dual enrollment course is equal to (1.5) credits that will count towards High School graduation. Each dual enrollment course will carry a 1.10 weight and will be calculated into the student's grade point average and class rank.

Grades earned in approved courses count toward a student's grade point average, class rank, honor roll and eligibility for athletic and extracurricular activities.



### Eligibility

Eligibility for student participation in a dual enrollment program will be based on the following criteria:

1. Students have satisfactorily completed the appropriate units of credit for his/her grade level and continues to make satisfactory progress within current grade level.
2. Students must have completed their Sophomore Year of high school. Students may take dual enrollment courses during the summer preceding their Senior Year. Summer courses will not count towards credit for student graduation requirements.
3. Students must maintain a secondary school grade point average of ninety percent (90%).
4. Students must meet District attendance criteria.
5. The course must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.
6. The course is not offered in the student's high school curriculum.
7. Students are permitted to take 2 dual enrollment courses per semester their Junior or Senior Year.
8. Students assume the responsibility for all tuition and fees, textbooks, and transportation.
9. If a student withdraws from the course, student will receive a failing grade and be recorded on the student's academic record (transcript).

Please contact your guidance counselor for more information.

## Caring for Our Kids

Since the beginning of the school year, during times of need for our Spartan families, students, staff, and our community raised **over \$15,000.00** during our dress down days.

We thank you for your charitable donations and continued support.



# NSSD Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is a written document that sets the direction for the District for three years. It is driven by an action plan composed of global, District Wide goals that reflect a Mission Statement.

The Plan provides direction for how the District will work to meet and exceed the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and outlines the programs and services available for our students.

- Our current plan comes to the end of its' three year implementation cycle in June of 2017.
- As a Phase Two School District, we are required to rewrite a new three year plan and submit it to PDE by November 2016.
- Our team consists of representatives of parents, students, teachers, community members, support staff, and administrators.

The North Schuylkill School District Comprehensive Planning Committee met in September and January. District goals were discussed and sub committees with chairs were created.

**Comprehensive Strategic Plan**

**Subcommittees**

- Mission and Vision
- Student Services
- Student Achievement
- Professional Education Plan
- Special Education Plan
- Technology Plan
- Facilities
- Extra-Curricular Activities

Challenge tradition. Champion innovation.

## North Schuylkill's School Board



### North Schuylkill School District Board Members:

**Standing Left to Right:** Thomas Fletcher, Dr. Robert Ackell (Superintendent), Michael A. O'Pake (Solicitor), Douglas Gressens, Glenn Weist, Edward Balkiewicz.

**Sitting Left to Right:** Merri Lynn Craig (Board Secretary), Suzanne O'Neill, Roy Green (Vice President), Charles Hepler (President), Maryanne Woodward (Treasurer), Janine Simms.

## Inclement Weather Reminder

As soon as a decision is made to close school, have a late start or have an early dismissal, information will be disseminated to students, parents, and staff using the Blackboard Connect System, the e-mail/telephone messaging service. Closing, late start, and early dismissal announcements will also be broadcasted on local television and radio stations. The following stations will air the message: WNEP, WBRE, and T102.

As always, any updates and information will also be available on the NSSD website, Twitter, and Facebook.

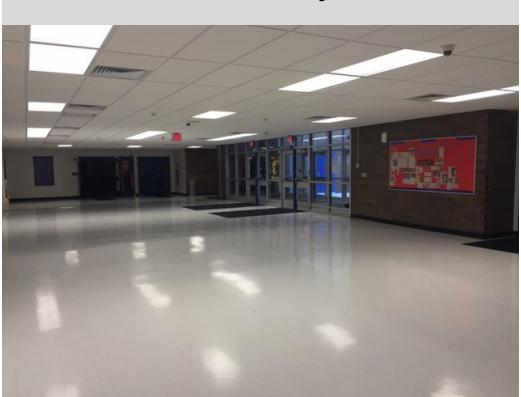


## Renovations To Be Proud Of!

It is amazing how much progress was made in a few months. Below are just a few pictures. In the last issue of the NS District Newsletter, we provided pictures of renovations that were in progress. Below are pictures of completed projects. Please visit [www.northschuylkill.net](http://www.northschuylkill.net) to view more pictures and to stay in touch with the great things that are happening in our schools.

\*\*Pool rentals will be available late Spring/early Summer. Please check the NS Website for updates.

**JSHS Lobby**



**JSHS Sidewalks and Parking Lot**



**JSHS Classroom**



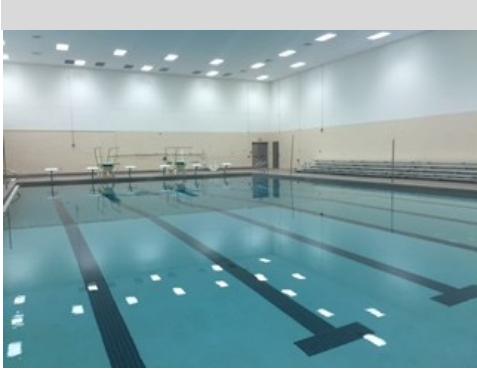
**JSHS Classroom**



**JSHS Large Group Instruction Room**



**JSHS Pool**



**JSHS Library**



**JSHS Conference Room**



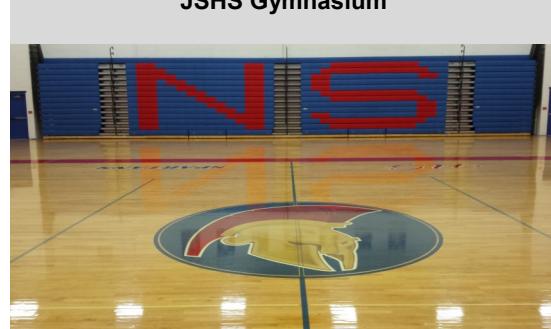
**NSE Landscaping**



**JSHS Computer Lab**



**JSHS Gymnasium**



## BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

Technology based learning and assessment systems will be pivotal in improving student learning and generating data that can be used to continuously improve the educational system at all levels. Technology will help us execute collaborative teaching strategies combined with professional learning that better prepare and enhance educator's competencies and expertise over the course of their careers. BYOD can help the North Schuylkill School District reach the goals set in our National Plan.

We recently adopted a new BYOD Policy. This policy allows students to use the device (laptop, iPad, phone, etc.) they are most familiar with, individually complete work, access technology as a whole class and increase learning opportunities. To better prepare for this transition, the new WIFI system will soon be accessible to all.

Also, along the lines of technology upgrades, every teacher now has a new laptop to use in the classroom during instruction. All of the laptop and iPad carts for students have been serviced in both buildings as well. We will continue to add to the numbers of available carts in the coming school year. We have created a 5 year technology plan that will ensure a continuous cycle of upgrades.

We are very excited to be considering online textbook options as well. Last year we purchased a new Math series for grades 6-12 that has an online component and we are now reviewing textbooks for English Language Arts Grades 6-12 and Social Studies Grades K-8. The possibilities of incorporating technology with education are endless and is certainly something that will enhance the existing curriculum.

We will be opening our wireless network to students in the Spring of 2016. Stay tuned for more information.

### District Contact:

Please feel free to contact the NSSD at any time!

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### North Schuylkill School District

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Ashland, PA 17921

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



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