

# Southmoreland School District

High Quality Learning For All

Boardroom News

March 2024



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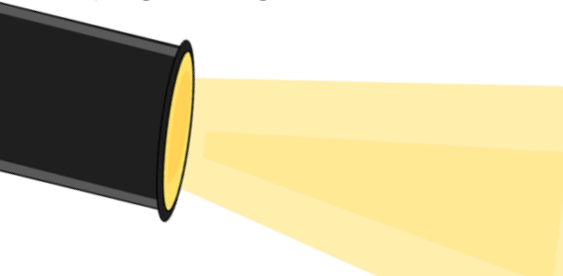


# BOARDROOM NEWS



## SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATION

- ◆ Scottie Spotlight - A beautiful presentation was given by Nicole Pruchnic about the return of the Rachel's Challenge program for grades 3-8 at SES & SMS, see below
- ◆ Revamped Hiring Process was recommended going forward
- ◆ Current Grants List



### Meet Rachel Joy Scott

- Rachel Joy Scott was born in Denver, Colorado in August 1981.
- She was the middle of five children
- Her middle name described her perfectly; JOY!
- Rachel was energized by people. She learned the power of simple compliments and acts of kindness at a very early age.
- In high school, Rachel had a plan that no one knew about-not even her parents. She deliberately and secretly reached out to certain groups of students and treated them with empathy and kindness at her school as her own "experiment". She wrote about it in her diary. Rachel wrote,

*"I want to reach out to those with special needs because they are often overlooked. I want to reach out to those who are new in school because they don't have any friends yet. And I want to reach out to those who are picked on or put down by others."*



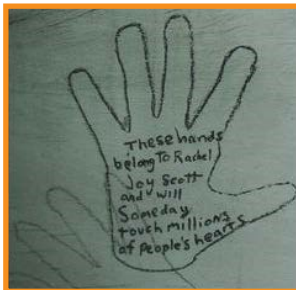
***"I had my ups and downs. I fell a few times, but I did not give up. Don't give up."***

- Rachel didn't just write about being kind to others, she decided to live a life by her own words.
- Rachel had a theory;

***"I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion, then it will start a chain reaction of the same. People will never know how far a little kindness can go."***

- She had no idea that her simple words and acts of kindness would one day help prevent bullying, save teens from self-harm and suicide, and even deter gun violence in schools, but they are doing just that.

- Rachel was a normal teenager who experienced the same struggles we all face. She understood the power of peer pressure, but she also knew how important it was to love and be true to yourself. This understanding helped her to appreciate those around her even though they were different than her. By taking the time to look deeper to those around her, she saw the relatedness we all share rather than what is only on the surface.
- Rachel saw the uniqueness in us all and the importance of being comfortable in your own skin. It is about self respect, and when you respect yourself, it's easier to respect others.
- Rachel believed that this kind of positive mental health could prevent future tragedies that happen in schools like the one that took her own life at the age of 17 in the first school shooting-Columbine Tragedy





## SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATION-Cont'd

- ◆ Scottie Spotlight - Rachel's Challenge, see below



### Rachel's Challenge-The Program to Stop Bullying, Self Harm, & School Violence

- Rachel's Challenge ,in all its forms, is a preventative program that emphasizes the importance of building meaningful connections and relationships between students, faculty, and staff. In today's world, building and maintaining that connection is critical and needs to be simple, flexible, and sustainable.
- The premise behind this is that when students feel safe and that they belong, they become more connected to each other and the world around them. When they feel connected, they are less likely to hurt themselves or others and more likely to achieve academically, socially, and emotionally.



**Belief:**  
Isolation is the Problem.  
Connection is the Solution.

- Rachel's Challenge is intended to help put an end to bullying, self-harm, and school violence.
- It has proven that creating a positive school culture, leads to safer schools, and emotionally resilient students.
- The program is based partly on the life and writings of Rachel Joy Scott and demonstrates how to build a school environment that is a safe and happy place for all students and staff

### What the Program Includes

- A Live Speaker for students grades 3-8; Two different age appropriate presentations
- For Grades 3-6; Rachel's Story
- For Grades 7-8; Rachel's Challenge
- Training for select up to 10 Staff Members & 90 Students at SMS
- A Live Speaker Evening Event for Our Community

### What the Programs Focuses On:

Teaching Kids Skills That Help Them Deal With A World That Is Forever Changing. Skills such as:

- Empathy
- Self-Confidence
- Decision-Making
- Resilience

### Rachel's Challenge Programs Promotes 5 Key Elements of Social & Emotional Learning:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Responsible Decision-Making
4. Relationship Skills
5. Social Awareness

### Rachel's Challenge Promotes Five Challenges to our Students

1. Look for the Best in Others
2. Dream Big
3. Choose Positive Influences
4. Speak with Kindness
5. Start a Chain Reaction



### Benefits

- When a student is connected they are less likely to hurt themselves or others.
- Teachers who spend time connecting with their students and helping their students connect with each other ultimately buy back teaching time that would otherwise have to be spent on classroom management.
- Students in this type of environment with supporting emotional education are free to learn.
- Rachel's story, and all of these programs, are designed to promote a safe and connected culture; which leads to improved academic performance.

Come join us as a community, and let's make this challenge together!!!

**May 7th**  
**@ 6:30pm**  
**SHS**  
**Auditorium**



## SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATION-Cont'd

- ◆ Current Grants List-Southmoreland School District was awarded the PA Breakfast Expansion Grant for SPC in the amount of \$6,215.20
- ◆ Current Grants List-Southmoreland School District was the only Westmoreland County school to be awarded the BSCA Stronger Connection Grant for \$550,000 to be used for Comprehensive Mental Health, Mental Health Space/Suites & Programs.

# GRANTS

Grant Name	Submitted By	Date Submitted	Amount	Submitted Expenditures
Fall 2022 The United Way	Heitchue		\$2,000	Transition activities for students & families coming to kindergarten for the 23-24 school year.
December 2023 The United Way	Heitchue			Transition activities for students & families coming to kindergarten for the 24-25 school year.
2022-2023 Title I Consolidated App	Clara	June 2022	\$425,688	Salary and benefits for Title I teachers
2022-2023 Title II App	Clara	June 2022	\$58,460	Salary and benefits for Class Size Reduction teacher
2022-2023 Title IV	Clara	June 2022	\$33,861	Master Track, Technology, eSports and Student Union
2022-2023 PCCD SS MH	Clara/Colebank	June 2022	\$258,002	School Police Officer salary and benefits; training for faculty; gates for admin wing; cameras and lighting upgrades; jumblocks; social worker (M 2); school psychologist services (Key Solutions)
2022 UDL Grant	Clara/Kuchar Long	July 2022	\$10,000	UDL Conference for TK; UDL books; UDL materials
2022-2023 Ready to Learn Grant	Clara	December 2022	\$357,264	Maintain full day kindergarten/Salaries and benefits for K -1 faculty
Project Lead the Way Implementation	Klugh	2023	\$10,000	SMS STEM
2023-2024 Title I Consolidated App	Clara	June 2023	\$689,166	Salary and benefits for Title I teachers
2023-2024 Ready to Learn Grant	Clara	December 2023	\$357,264	Maintain full day kindergarten/Salaries and benefits for K -1 faculty
BSCA Stronger Connection Grant	Boone	December 2023	\$750,000	Comprehensive Mental Health Services (Contracted through Innersight Solutions - - Counselors and Social Worker); Updated Mental Health Suites in Each Building; Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports Programming K-12
DCED - Tennis Court Replacement	Colebank	August 2023	Borough Applied	Application on behalf of the Scottdale Borough, but the district is involved
School Violence Prevention Program	Colebank	August 2023		
NFL Grassroots Grant	Colebank	January 2024	\$250,000	Turf for Russ Grimm Field
Project Lead the Way Expansion	Klugh	2024	\$10,000	SMS STEM
RK Mellon STEM+C	Klugh	2024	\$20,000	District-level support for STEM
Scott Electric	Colebank	February 2024	\$21,000	SPC Generator Replacement
COVID ARPA Project	Pritts/Colebank			Bleacher replacement
PCCD #1	Clara	February 2024	\$123,546.00	School Psychologist Salary \$70K
PCCD #2	Clara	February 2024	\$450,000	PA/Phone System (DES quote: \$11,724.00) All Buildings/Bells & PA System, Upgrade Surveillance System, E3 (Will replace MERP), Radios - \$1,939/Radio, Radios - \$1,939/Radio, Ladders, iPads - \$400/iPad - 4 for Security (one for each building), Grinders, Physical Threat Assessment, Sound System (GYM), Bleachers
PCCD #3	Clara	February 2024	\$40,228.08	New Security Officer, Insurance Buyout
PA Helps Grant	Redinger	Spring 2024	\$25,000	School Psychology Intern
PA Breakfast Expansion Grant/SPC	Malavite	Spring 2024	\$6,215.20	Expanding the School Breakfast Program at SPC

Updated March 15, 2024



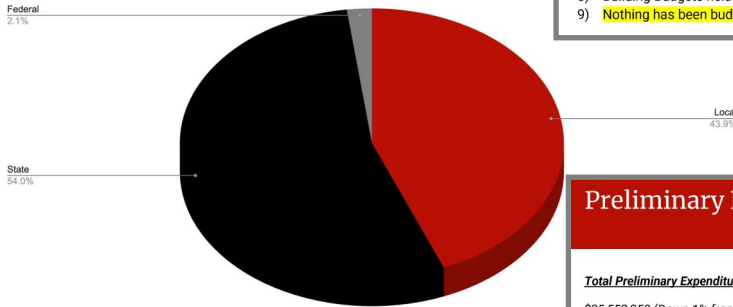


## BUSINESS MANAGER/TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR INFORMATION

The following reports were posted for Board and public view:

- ◆ Activity and Cyber Charter reports are posted online in BoardDocs
- ◆ 2024-2025 Budget Presentation #2-See below

### Proposed Revenues



### Items Currently In Budget

- 1) Same staffing as 23/24 School Year (without ESSER Funded Intervention Positions)
- 2) \$200,000 for Curriculum Resources
- 3) \$109,000 for Technology Refresh of 1-to-1 Devices
- 4) 15% Increase for Medical Benefits
- 5) 5% Increase in CWCTC expenses
- 6) Reduced Transportation by \$10,221.00
- 7) Reduced Purchased Services by \$103,400 due to trend
- 8) Building Budgets held flat for **3rd year in a row**
- 9) **Nothing has been budgeted for Capital Expenses**

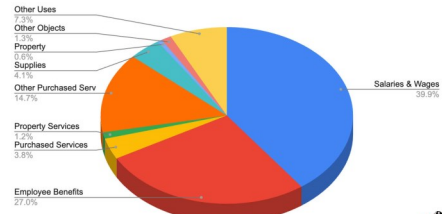


### Preliminary Expenditures from February Presentation

**Total Preliminary Expenditures:**

\$35,552,250 (Down 1% from 2023/2024 School Year)

- 67% of Expenditures - Salaries & Wages/Employee Benefits
- 7.31% of Expenditures - Debt Services
- 1% of Expenditures - Curriculum Resources & Technology



"HIGH QUALITY LEARNING FOR ALL"



### Bottom Line Using 23/24 Local and Federal Revenues and Proposed 24/25 State Revenues

Expenditures: \$35,552,250.00

Revenues: \$35,328,301.05

Local: \$15,504,985.00

State: \$19,084,016.05

Federal: \$739,300.00

Expenditures	\$35,552,250.00
Revenues	\$35,328,301.05
<b>Proposed Beginning Deficit</b>	<b>\$223,948.93</b>

### Unknowns

- 2 Contracts Being Negotiated Currently
- Cyber Charter Funding Reform (This could save the district approximately \$300,000)
- Adequacy Funding Related to the Funding Commission's Work Due to the Recent Court Ruling Stating the State is Underfunding Schools (This could add up to \$829,829.00 to our State Revenues)
- Medical Insurance Rates - Will not be released until end of March (Currently Budgeted at a 15% Increase)

**Keep In Mind:  
The 2024/2025 Preliminary Budget Does Not Include Any Expenditures for Capital Improvements!!!!**



### **SOLICITOR’S INFORMATION**

Mr. Lucas was asked to explain the updates made to Policy #006. There was a discussion on how to add items to the agenda.

### **CWCTC REPORT**

It was reported about the wonderful career fair they had and a new student “Open House” event coming up on May 20th.

### **WIU REPORT**

Last meeting was on February 27th. There were discussions on the future location of Clairview School, Safety & Security mobile units, training costs, & buildings & grounds with maintenance & custodians needs. They talked about the evaluation team used for the early childhood program for children from birth—3 years old that service over 1,650 kids. They also had a budget presentation and discussions on a fund balance policy, PLAY, and committee meetings including the Student Services Committee.

### **PSBA LEGISLATIVE LIAISON REPORT**

There is no report this month.

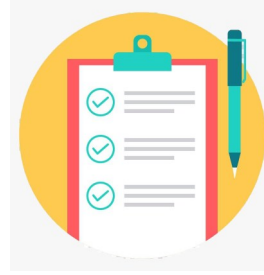
### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Building, Grounds and Safety**

There was no meeting this month. The chiller would be addressed later in the meeting. Next meeting will be April 17, 2024.

#### **Finance, District Operations, Transportation**

Last meeting was March 5th. Reference was made to the budget presentation Ms. Mondock showed during her report. Next meeting will be April 2, 2024.



### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Personnel, Policy, Academics**

None at this time. Next meeting will be April 23, 2024.

#### **Non-Academic, Athletics, Extra-Curricular**

None at this time. Next meeting will be April 2, 2024.

#### **School Safety & Security**

None at this time. Next meeting will be April 11, 2024.

### **SCHOOL BOARD**

#### **The following motions were approved:**

- ◆ Meeting Minutes—February 20, 2024 & February 29, 2024.
- ◆ Resolution AMERICA250PA was approved that was established in 2018 to plan, encourage, develop and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, Pennsylvania’s integral role in that event, and the impact of its people on the nation’s past, present, and future.

### **POLICIES**

There were no policies approved this month.





## STUDENT REPORTS

Student representatives to the Board Nolan Blaze & Faith Tarr presented the following:

- ◆ Southmoreland students participated with 16 other school districts in the Senator for a Day Seminar for Future Leaders hosted by Senator Pat Stefano. This seminar gives students an opportunity to take on the role of Senators to see how the legislative process works. Students are divided into Senate committees to discuss bills, take positions on legislation, draft laws, and meet in full session to present, debate, and vote on the legislation drafted by the various committees. Rather than reading about the process, they get to be a part of it - helping shape the policies and laws that affect their lives. Thank you to all of the panelists and to Senator Stefano for hosting this event.
- ◆ Forty-four members of Southmoreland Interact Club, an organization sponsored by the Scottsdale Rotary, dedicated a day to volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, inspired by Junior Reece Gunderson's experience in Thailand. Together, they tackled tasks like hanging drywall, digging drains, and priming rooms for painting. Their efforts not only contributed to the community but also fostered teamwork, empathy, and a sense of global citizenship among the students. Through this hands-on experience, they learned the value of service and the impact of making a difference, both locally and internationally.
- ◆ Congratulations to junior Faith Garstecki, who not only won at the local level but also clinched second place at the district level in the prestigious Voice of Democracy competition. Faith's success demonstrates her exceptional talent and dedication, showcased through her speech crafted as part of an assignment in Advanced Placement Language and Composition. Faith represented our school community with pride on the national stage.
- ◆ On March 12 Ms. Farrell and Mrs. Humelsine took several special education students to the Westmoreland County YOUTH CONFERENCE. The conference focused on student independence, adulting living skills, community resources, employment opportunities, and transportation options.





## STUDENT REPORTS-Cont'd

Student representatives to the Board Nolan Blaze & Faith Tarr presented the following:

- ◆ On March 13 Mrs. Redinger and Ms. Humelsine took several special education students to a WISS job shadowing opportunity.
- ◆ On March 15 Ms. Farrell began Community Based Instruction - CBI with her students. CBI's will include sites such as Brillharts Hardware, Walmart, etc. Community-Based Instruction (CBI) is an approach to teaching functional skills to special education students in a natural setting. It involves taking students out of the school setting and into the community to teach them real-life skills that will help them live more independent. Community-based instruction trips push our students out into the greater community, these trips, however, are not field trips. Just to clarify, a CBI trip has fewer students, aligns with a student's IEP goals by way of supporting their transition plan, and typically targets a well-defined objective. A field trip on the other hand is more about fun, connecting to the current curriculum, and tends to have larger groups. Both have a purpose for students, but a CBI trip is a functional way to practice life skills.
- ◆ Congratulations to Senior Choral students Nolan Blaze and Christopher Headley on their outstanding performance in the PMEA Region 1 Choral Festival held at Mars High School March 6 - 8. Dr. Hannah Karr, originally from Ireland, currently on the faculty of Kutztown University was the Guest Conductor. It was an amazing honor and opportunity for these talented Tenors! Nolan finished 1st chair in the Tenor 2 section and advances on to the State festival that will be held at the Erie Bayfront Convention Center April 18-20. Nolan is the first Southmoreland choral student to qualify for the State Festival all three years of high school. Congratulations to Nolan and Chris!
- ◆ On March 4, twenty-two students attended the Westmoreland Interscholastic Reading Team Competition at Seton Hill University. The reading team read thirty books in preparation for this quiz-style competition against twenty-seven teams from around Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties. In total, our reading team traveled home with four round ribbons after winning against Greensburg Central Catholic, Penn Hills, Franklin Regional, and Penns Manor.







## PERSONNEL

The following motions were approved:

- ◆ Personnel Log-See below
- ◆ Psychology Intern-A grant-funded School Psychology Intern Position for the 24/25 school year at no cost to the district.
- ◆ Uncompensated Leave-One leave
- ◆ FMLA Leave-One leave
- ◆ Extended School Year (ESY) Pay Rates
  - => Teacher: \$45.00/hr
  - => Paraprofessional: \$23.61/hr
- ◆ Early Retirement Incentive Program-ERIP 2024-For more detailed information please see the attachment on BoardDocs under this motion F.6.

### Personnel Resignations-Sorry to see you go!

- ◆ Tonya Ripple - Cafeteria Worker
- ◆ Susan Johnson - Head Varsity Cheer Coach

### New Hires-A very warm welcome to the following!

- ◆ Roxanne Hanning - Administrative Assistant/Payroll
- ◆ Chelsea Passaga - FT Paraprofessional PCA at SPC



### Bus/Van Drivers - Quest

- ◆ None this month





## EDUCATION

The following items were approved this month:

- ◆ Comprehensive Plan 2024-2027
- ◆ Student Discipline Agreement(s) Qty. 4
- ◆ Agriculture & Youth Grant Field Trip
- ◆ Student Service Agreements for Adelphoi
- ◆ SES and SPC Title I Plans 2023-2024
- ◆ Extended School Year (ESY) Schedule ———>
- ◆ Renewal of K-5 Math Curriculum - My Math for 3 years



### ESY Schedule

#### **SES Dates & Time:**

June 24, 2024 to June 27, 2024  
July 8, 2024 to July 18, 2024

#### **SMS & SHS Dates & Time:**

July 8, 2024 to July 25, 2024

#### **Times for Teachers:**

8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

#### **Times for Students:**

9:00 AM to Noon

## FINANCE

All of the following Motions were approved:

- ◆ Monthly Board Treasurers' Report
- ◆ General Fund Board Summary Report
- ◆ Fund Accounting, Capital Fund and Food Service Check Summary Listing
- ◆ Dental & Vision rates for 2024-2025
- ◆ Budget Transfer to Buildings and Grounds
- ◆ Transfer Unassigned Fund Balance to Assigned Fund Balance



## BUILDINGS/GROUNDS

- ◆ Playground Equipment - Accessibility additions to the playground equipment for SPC and SES paid through ESSER III funds
- ◆ SHS Chiller Repair



## ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES

No new items approved this month.



# Let's go Scotties!

Next Board meeting is scheduled  
for April 16, 2024