

# around the VALLEY

SUMMER 2015



929 lakeshore drive  
leesport, PA 19533-8631

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

## SV Graduates: Class of 2015



### GRADUATING WITH HONORS (left to right)

Row 1: (seated) Samantha Porter, Rebekah Rissmiller, Matt Longlott,  
Andrea Behler, Rachael Borden, Cydney Lawrence  
Row 2: Brianna Hill, Moriah Webb, Mallory Steffey, Leah  
Kellenberger, Morgann Henn, Natalie Toburen,  
Madeline McDevitt  
Row 3: Kyle Latshaw, Carter Yenser, Emily Hepner, Shantelly Peña,  
Grant Grubbs, Dustin Spatz

Commencement exercises for the 147 members of the SV Class of 2015 were held on Friday, June 5, 2015, at the high school stadium.

Valedictorian was **Andrea Behler**, daughter of Marlin and Linda Behler, Bern Township.

Salutatorian was **Matt J. Longlott**, son of Rick Longlott and Cindy Walls, Bern Township.

## Monday, August 31 is the first day of school!

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**SCHUYLKILL VALLEY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

929 Lakeshore Drive  
Leesport PA 19533-8631

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

**Warren F. Mata, Ed.D.**

Superintendent

**Mr. Patrick Sasse**

High School Principal

**Mrs. Maggie E. Drake**

High School Assistant Principal

**Mr. Michael T. Mitchell, Jr.**

Middle School Principal

**Mr. Jeremy L. Crills**

Assistant Middle School Principal

**Mrs. Melissa Kelchner**

Elementary School Principal

**Mrs. Melissa A. Rhoads**

Assistant Elementary School Principal

**Mr. Matthew Ammons**

Director, Special Education & Pupil Services

**Mr. Michael Billman**

Director, Information Technology

**Mrs. Wendy Boarder**

Business Manager

**Mrs. Changming Wang**

Assistant Business Manager

**Mr. Craig A. Strunk**

Director, Buildings & Grounds

**Miss Stephanie L. Deibler**

Athletic Director

**Ms. Peggy Romanies**

Coordinator, Human Resources

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Mr. David E. Moll, *President***

**Mr. Paul L. Bendigo, *Vice President***

**Mr. Kevin Raudenbush, *Secretary***

**Mr. Bryan D. Feeney**

**Mrs. Linda R. Lash**

**Dr. Jay R. Melvin**

**Mr. G. Dane Miller**

**Mr. Geoffrey P. Miller**

**Mrs. Ann Strause**

**BOARD MEETINGS**

Committees generally meet the third Monday of the month at 6:30 pm. Board meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 pm. High School LGI Room.

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Administration 610-916-0957

High School 610-926-1706

Middle School 610-926-7111

Elementary School 610-926-4165



superintendent's

**MESSAGE**

## Changing the Rules of the Game and Moving the Goal Posts after the Game: A Problem with State Testing?

Our school district, along with all of the other districts in the state, has been hit with a double-whammy this summer! For the first time, our students sat for state tests in which the rules (standards) were changed. In addition to changing the rules, several weeks after the testing period the State Board of Education decided to move the goal posts by raising the score that a child needs to pass the test. As a rationale, we were told that “the nature and structure of the PSSA [state test] has changed significantly this year to align to the PA Core Standards” (PSBA 7/2015).

### CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

About two years ago, schools learned that the state tests would be based on the new, more rigorous PA Core, Pennsylvania’s version of the national Common Core Standards. Although educators are not permitted to view the new test, teachers were encouraged to teach to these new standards. Instead of seeing the test, teachers were given examples of “content they should teach to best prepare their students for the PSSA” (*PDE Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content*).

A quick review of a few of these examples is startling. In a 3rd grade reading example, students are

asked to interpret a poem written at the reading level of a mature 7th grader. Similarly, another example asks 6th graders to respond to an editorial written at the 9th grade level. Adding to this problem, a look at the test blueprint shows that up to 30% of the new reading test items are for what PDE calls “psychometric use” and “field testing.” I don’t believe these items are not counted as part of the student’s score.

Without a doubt, PDE’s rollout of the PA Core testing is disheartening. I believe students are being unnecessarily frustrated by test items that are well beyond their grade level. I believe students are being asked to answer test questions for purposes other than to gauge their knowledge.

### MOVING THE GOAL POSTS AFTER THE GAME

On July 9, almost six weeks after the testing was completed, the State Board of Education announced that they had decided to “raise the bar,” something I think of as moving the goal post after the game is over. Specifically, school districts were informed that “the new scores are effective immediately and as applied to the 2015 round of testing recently completed, show large percentages of students reaching only basic and below basic achievement, especially in math” (PSBA 7/2015). For stu-



Best wishes to these five SV faculty members who retired in June after a combined 142 years of service! Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the Schuylkill Valley School District. We wish you all a very happy, restful, relaxing, and fulfilling retirement!

**Mr. J. Michael George**  
Middle School Teacher  
37 years

**Mrs. Mary Beth Harner**  
Middle School Librarian  
28 years

**Mrs. Melney Reich**  
Kindergarten Teacher  
20 years

**Mrs. Carmela Rudy**  
Second Grade Teacher  
27 years

**Mrs. Susan Wood**  
Fifth Grade Teacher  
30 years

congratulations on your  
**RETIREMENT**

MATH			READING		
2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
87% as 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders	89% as 4 <sup>th</sup> Graders	<b>43%</b> as 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	80% as 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders	77% as 4 <sup>th</sup> Graders	70% as 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders
88% as 6 <sup>th</sup> Graders	83% as 7 <sup>th</sup> Graders	<b>48%</b> as 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders	80% as 6 <sup>th</sup> Graders	83% as 7 <sup>th</sup> Graders	77% as 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders

dents in our district and throughout the state who find a sense of academic success and well-being from their performance on the state test, this “after the test” change in cut scores is heartless. For our teachers, whose evaluations are based on student test performance, this last-minute move seems unfair. I believe our state officials made a mistake that first hurts students and second demoralizes teachers.

### IN SUMMARY

This simply does not make sense. If the new standards are indeed more rigorous, the percentage of students passing the test would naturally be less. Why then was it necessary to raise the cut scores? Admittedly I don’t fully understand the motivations here, but perhaps the initial results of the new testing did not bear out the claims that the test would be more challenging and demanding. Perhaps the initial results showed too many students passing the state test?

No matter, obviously someone in Harrisburg thought the goal post needed to be moved.

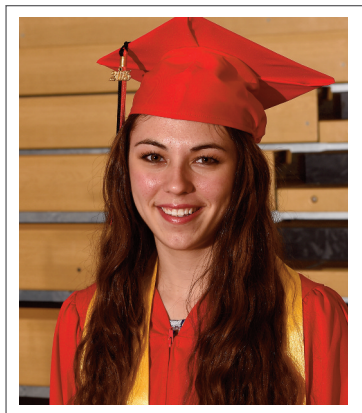
### AFTER THOUGHTS

I wholeheartedly believe in accountability to our community and in high academic standards for all of our students. Testing can be a useful tool in helping students improve. Currently, however, I believe the state testing system is flawed. We sacrifice too much time and effort in testing and in preparing for these tests.

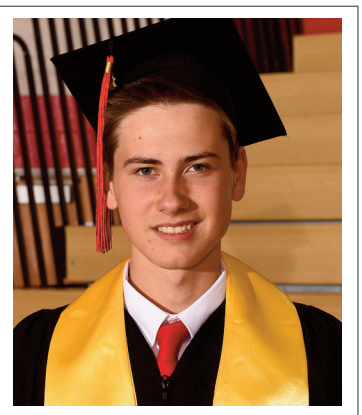
Finally, I have included a chart showing the three-year pass rate of two groups of SV students. The first row shows 3rd graders in 2013 as they move to 4th and 5th grade. The second row shows 6th graders as they move to 7th and 8th grade. The drop in math scores highlights the problem.

*Dr. Warren F. Mata*  
Superintendent





Valedictorian Andrea Behler



Salutatorian Matt Longlott

For a complete list of graduates and awards, visit our website.

Future plans of the Class of 2015 will be included in the next district newsletter.

## SV Graduates: Class of 2015

Continued from front cover

### Summa cum laude honors (4-year GPA 4.000 or higher):

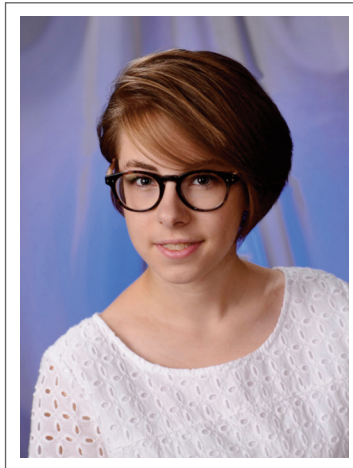
Andrea Behler  
Matt Longlott  
Carter Yenser  
Cydney Lawrence  
Emily Hepner  
Rebekah Rissmiller

### Magna cum laude honors (4-year GPA 3.750-3.999):

Leah Kellenberger	Brianna Hill
Mallory Steffey	Dustin Spatz
Moriah Webb	Samantha Porter
Shantelly Peña	Natalie Toburen
Rachael Borden	Madeline McDevitt
Morgann Henn	Grant Grubbs
Kyle Latshaw	

### Cum laude (4-year GPA 3.500-3.749):

Christopher Yeshulas	Edward Shuttleworth
Frank Melvin	David Brickey
Nathan Wiemann	Colby Geisinger
Joshua Giorgio	Allison Lash
Rebecca Hauser	Tabitha Schappell
Alexis Glassmire	Emily Johns
Tiffany Giannotti	



### Berks Best Winner!

**Mallory Steffey**, SV Class of 2015, captured the honor of being named Berks Best in the category of Communications sponsored by the *Reading Eagle*.

Mallory will attend Bucknell University to major in English. Among Mallory's many activities at SV, she especially enjoyed serving as editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, editor of the school's literary magazine, and stage manager in the fall play. Congratulations, Mallory!

## Berks Career & Technology Center Students High Scorers!



Ninety-four percent of the BCTC students from the Class of 2015 scored the highest possible score on their NOCTI examinations this spring. The NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute) exams are based on a job and task analysis process and are specific to a student's area of study at BCTC.

The NOCTI is the largest provider of industry-based credentials and partner industry certifications for career and technology education programs in the United States.

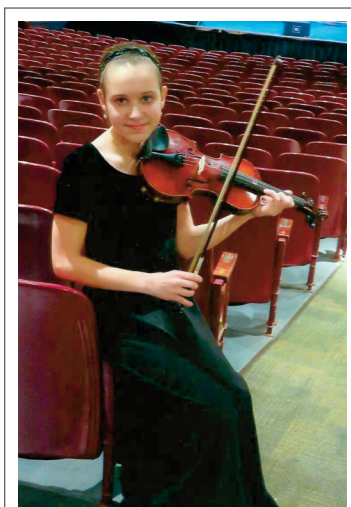
These 14 SV students were high achievers on the NOCTI (left to right): **Amanda Jacoby, Colton Chestnut, Cheyenne Suggs, Wyatt Haupt, Joshua Eschbach, Takota Hosier, Konnor Rank, Alyssia Matz, Ethan Heck, Shelby Strunk, Michael Frank, Kylie Myers, Trevor Snyder, and Alex Livenspire.**

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



### Musically Inclined

SV valedictorian and accomplished flutist **Andrea L. Behler** was the recipient of the Ringgold Band's \$1,000 scholarship this year. Andrea performed with the band at its Spring Anniversary Concert on March 29, 2015. Andrea is the principal flutist with the Reading Symphony Youth Orchestra. Andrea plans to continue her study of music at Temple University while majoring in international business.



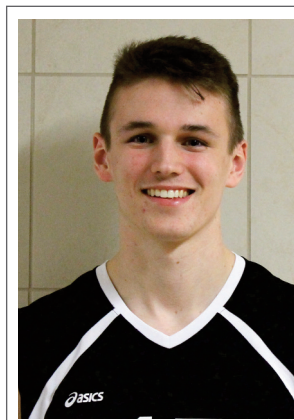
### Middle School Music Talent

SV Middle School student **Kaitlyn (Katie) Fies** is a member of the distinguished Reading Symphony Junior String Orchestra. Formed in 1999, the orchestra provides an opportunity for young talented string students of Berks County and surrounding areas to perform quality orchestral music with other outstanding string players. Katie was first introduced to the violin as an SV kindergartner through the district's violin program and has been playing ever since. In addition to the violin, Katie enjoys playing softball and singing.

### Full Ride

Congratulations to SV 2015 graduate Brianna Hill, the winner of Cedar Crest College's Scholarship Competition. Competing against 121 high school seniors, Brianna was tested on general knowledge of English, math, science, and humanities. As the winner, Brianna earned a full scholarship to the college.

At SV, Brianna was involved in performing arts, the literary magazine, Welfare of Animals Club, horseback riding, and TV Club. She plans to study Genetic Engineering at Cedar Crest College.



### All-American Team

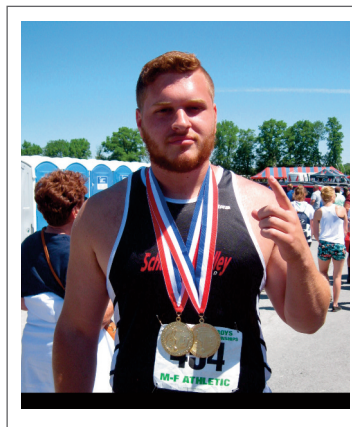
SV 2015 graduate **Frank Melvin** was named to the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) High School

Senior All-America team as a second-team selection. Frank, a two-time District 3-AA pick, was voted Berks Player of the Year and was a finalist in the 2015 All-Berks Players of the Year contest sponsored by the *Reading Eagle*. Frank had an impressive career total 1,114 kills during his four years at SV. He will be a preferred walk-on at Penn State University, College Park, in the fall where he plans to major in accounting and minor in information systems management.

### All-Berks Athlete of Year

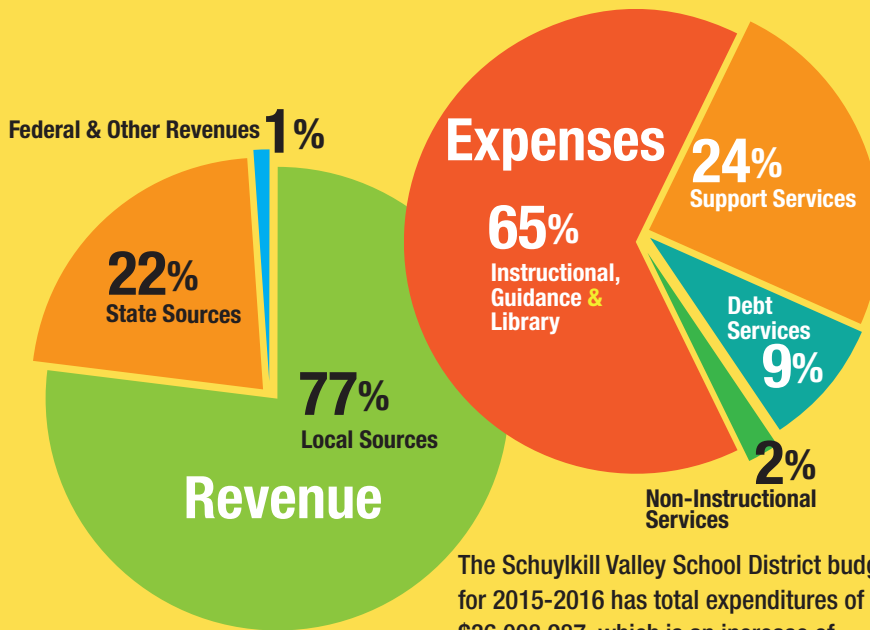
Congratulations to state champion **Joe Mundell**, a junior on the Schuylkill Valley boys track team this past season, for being the first Berks boy athlete in six years to win two gold medals at states in shot put and discus. Joe was named an

All-Berks Athlete of the Year for Spring 2015 by the *Reading Eagle*.





## 2015-2016 District Budget Passed with No Tax Increase



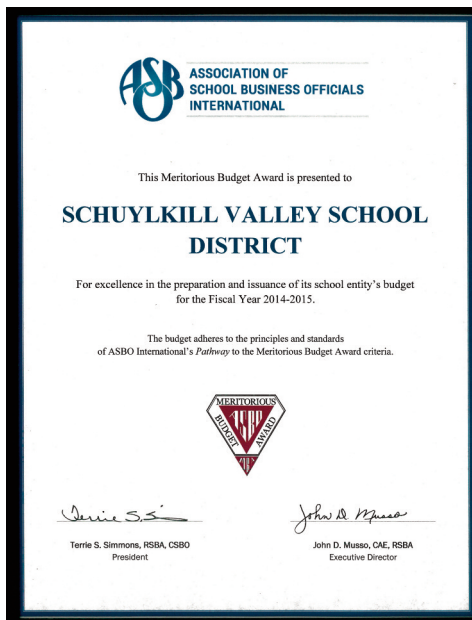
The Schuylkill Valley School District budget for 2015-2016 has total expenditures of \$36,008,987, which is an increase of \$1,080,508, or 3.09% over 2014-15 expenditures.

For the second consecutive year, the Schuylkill Valley School Board of Directors has passed a budget with no increase in taxes to homeowners and businesses thanks to the diligent efforts of school administrators, faculty, and staff. The millage rate remains the same at 26.79 mils for the third year in a row.

As a result of distribution of state gaming funds through Act 1 of 2006, school property taxes were reduced by \$152.84 this year for all property owners who qualified as homesteads and/or farmsteads.

For more information about the Schuylkill Valley School District budget, please visit [www.schuylkillvalley.org](http://www.schuylkillvalley.org) and click on Administration/Business Office.

## SV Business Office Receives Honor



We are proud to announce that the Schuylkill Valley School District Business Office was awarded the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International's Pathway to the MBA (Meritorious Budget Award) for excellence in budget presentation for the 2014-2015 budget year. Sponsored by Voya Financial Advisors, this distinguished national recognition is awarded annually to just 10-15 of the approximately 14,000 school districts in the nation for meeting or exceeding a rigorous review by professional auditors.

"SV Business Manager **Mrs. Wendy Boarder** and Assistant Business Manager **Mrs. Ming Wang** are to be commended for earning this award through their significant work and dedication in presenting a budget that is clear and precise," said Superintendent Dr. Warren Mata.

## COMING SOON:

**High School "Meet the Teacher Night"**  
Wednesday, September 9 – 6:30 p.m.

**Middle School Grades 6-8 "Meet the Teacher Night"**  
Thursday, September 3 – 7:00 p.m.

**Support the Schuylkill Valley Community Library!**

**RACE TO READ!**

Fourth Annual 5K and Kids Fun Run – Saturday, September 12, 2015

5K Run/Walk at 4 p.m.

Kids Fun Run at 5 p.m.

Visit [www.berks.lib.pa.us/ssv/](http://www.berks.lib.pa.us/ssv/) for more information.

## HELP WANTED

- Classroom aides – part-time and substitutes
- Cafeteria workers – part-time and substitutes

Visit our website for more information or call Human Resources at 610-916-5436.

**SCHUYLKILL  
VALLEY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**  
Leesport, PA

# ATHLETIC PASS order form

## 2015-2016

The cost of tickets for 2015-16 athletic contests remains **\$5.00 for adults** and **\$3.00 for students** and senior citizens. All spectators over the age of 5 are required to pay an admission fee for home events in the following high school sports:

**football, boys' + girls' soccer,  
boys' + girls' volleyball,  
boys' + girls' basketball,  
wrestling, swimming and other night events  
as they may be deemed necessary**

To encourage attendance by students, parents, family and friends at home athletic contests and to reduce the expense to those who regularly attend athletic events, athletic passes are sold at a substantial savings.

Senior citizens residing in the Schuylkill Valley School District are eligible to receive a free Senior Citizen Pass by coming to the Athletic Office from

8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during days when school is in session. A driver's license or other form of identification to verify a district residence will be required for this pass. **Free senior citizen passes will not be issued by mail.**

The **Family Athletic Pass** is valid for **2 adults and an unlimited number of children living at the same address**. When filling out the Athletic Pass Order Form for a family pass, please list each family member separately. Individual passes will be issued for each person in the family.

Athletic passes may be purchased by returning this order form to the High School Athletic Office. **Athletic passes will not be sold at home games.**

**Please note:** *This pass is not valid for BCIAA, District II or PIAA play-off games that are hosted on the Schuylkill Valley campus.*

### 2015-16 SCHUYLKILL VALLEY ATHLETIC PASSES

<input type="checkbox"/> Family Athletic Pass @ \$160 =	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Athletic Pass @ \$60 =	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Athletic Pass @ \$25 =	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen Pass (non-SV residents) @ \$25 =	<input type="text"/>

TOTAL AMOUNT OF ORDER:

Name/Names:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Address:

Phone:

**PLEASE LIST THE NAMES OF EACH INDIVIDUAL WHO SHOULD RECEIVE A PASS.**

Return this form, along with check payable to **Schuylkill Valley Athletics**, to:  
Schuylkill Valley High School, 929 Lakeshore Drive, Leesport, PA 19533.



**schuylkill valley**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Pride of Schuylkill Valley Award

The Pride of Schuylkill Valley Award Induction Committee proudly announces the individuals selected to receive this award this year based on impressive achievements since graduating from Schuylkill Valley or on behalf of the students on Schuylkill Valley. The inductees will be introduced at a pep rally and prior to the homecoming football game on **Friday, October 23, 2015**. The formal induction ceremony will take place at a luncheon the following day at the high school. This year's inductees are:

**Wayne Huey** – Class of 1962; PIAA Long Jump Champion; currently serves on the Board of Directors for Royal Bank of America.

**Robert “Bob” Jones** – 40-year career as teacher and advisor at SV; one of the founders of the Frost Bowl; the “Voice of Schuylkill Valley” sports since 1967; Chairman of the Social Studies department.

**Toby Lentz** – Class of 1995 Salutatorian; State Champion in swimming (100 meter breaststroke); All County and All State in swimming; ranked #1 in military rank at Naval Academy and #3 overall in his class.

**Stuart (Stu) Reese** – Class of 1973 Valedictorian and Class President; National Honor Society; 4 years – football and 4 years – gold; Chairman, President, and CEO of Massachusetts Mutual Financial.

**LeRoy Seip** – 1951 Ontelaunee High School graduate; 12 years - Schuylkill Valley Board of School Directors; high school baseball coach for 32 years at Muhlenberg HS; inducted in the Muhlenberg HS Hall of Fame; 30 years - Leesport Borough Council

**Lee Potteiger** – 1941 Ontelaunee High School graduate and veteran of the Normandy Invasion.

The Schuylkill Valley School District winter and spring issues of the district newsletter are available online at **[www.schuylkillvalley.org](http://www.schuylkillvalley.org)**. If you would like to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please call the Administration Center at 610-916-0957. The summer and fall issues are printed and mailed to our residents.