

# around the VALLEY

FALL 2019



929 lakeshore drive  
leesportPA 19533-8631

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME to our new teachers and staff



Front row, left to right: **Superintendent Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski**, **Mrs. Katharine Koch**, Elementary School Reading Specialist; **Mrs. Jenny Miller**, 7th Grade Learning Support; **Mrs. Paige Figueroa**, High School English; **Miss Alexis Grimm**, 1st Grade; **Miss Danielle Fritz**, 2nd Grade; and **Miss Danielle Smyre**, School Psychologist.

Second row, left to right: **Mrs. Jonni Miller**, High School Chemistry; **Mr. Erik Johanson**, High School Technology Education; **Mr. Greg Drake**, High School Biology; **Mrs. Melissa Hottenstein**, Elementary School Speech Therapist; **Mr. Taylor Grim**, High School Physical Education; and **Miss Caitlin Robinson**, Kindergarten. Missing from picture: **Mrs. Amanda Hix**, 5th Grade Language Arts.

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## SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

929 Lakeshore Drive  
Leesport PA 19533-8631

### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski**  
Superintendent

**Mr. Michael T. Mitchell, Jr.**  
High School Principal

**Mrs. Melissa Kelchner**  
High School Assistant Principal

**Mr. Joshua Kuehner**  
Middle School Principal

**Mrs. Courtney Maguire**  
Assistant Middle School Principal

**Mr. Jeremy L. Crills**  
Elementary School Principal

**Mrs. Melissa A. Rhoads**  
Assistant Elementary School Principal

**Mrs. Dawn Harris**  
Director, Special Education & Pupil Services

**TBD**  
Director of Teaching and Learning

**Mr. Michael Billman**  
Director, Information Technology

**Mr. Brian D. Feick**  
Business Manager

**Mrs. Changming Wang**  
Assistant Business Manager

**Mr. Casey Blankenbiller**  
Director, Buildings & Grounds

**Miss Stephanie L. Deibler**  
Athletic Director

**Ms. Robin Brightbill**  
Director of Human Resources

**Mrs. Diane Kaag**  
Food Service Director

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Kevin Raudenbush, President

Mr. George H. Mertz, III, Vice President

Mrs. Linda R. Lash, Secretary

Mr. Paul L. Bendigo

Mr. Robert M. Dempsey

Mrs. Nicoleen M. Kleffel

Dr. Jay R. Melvin

Mr. G. Dane Miller

Mr. Alfonso F. Rossi

### BOARD MEETINGS

Committees generally meet the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Board meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the high school's LeRoy K. Seip 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



### Profile of an SVSD Graduate

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! It is always nice to have time to refresh over the summer and to anticipate a new beginning. When thinking about new beginnings, I am reminded of Stephen Covey, the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, who wrote that one effective habit was to "begin with the end in mind." As we begin our school year, we plan for our students' outcomes and programs, and ultimately we plan for what we want our students to achieve by the end of the year.

In the larger picture of education, we should also look to begin and continue our students' education with the end of their school careers in mind. We must consider what skills, knowledge and dispositions we want an SVSD graduate to have. How do we plan so that our curricular and extracurricular programs ensure that graduates are ready for the challenges of 21st century life, work and citizenship, no matter what path they choose after high school?

To that end, we have started a process in which we examine the qualities that we, a larger school community, want our graduates to have. This project, entitled "Profile of an SVSD Graduate," will be ongoing throughout the school year.

The "Profile of a Graduate" (or similarly, the "Portrait of a Graduate") project is a nationwide endeavor that many other schools throughout the country have joined. The product from these discussions will be a tangible document that specifies cognitive, personal and interpersonal competencies that our students should have. Other schools' profiles have included qualities such as critical thinking, literacy in a variety of content areas, communication, global citizenship, judgment, decision making and many others. By prioritizing goals for teaching and learning, students, parents, faculty and staff can align their collective efforts.

We will be asking for input on this project from all of our stakeholder groups: School Board of Directors, administrators, faculty and staff, families, students and community members. You will be asked to participate in surveys and focus groups. Information regarding this process will be sent by emails or other mass communications and will be posted on the school district website at [www.schuylkillvalley.org](http://www.schuylkillvalley.org). Please refer to those sources in order to participate and provide your input on the project.

Thank you for your support of the Schuylkill Valley School District and best wishes for a great school year!

*Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski*  
Superintendent



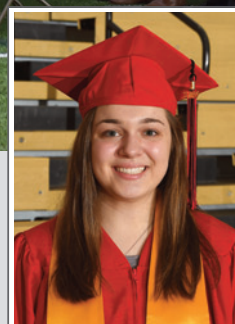


# 2019 COMMENCEMENT



Photo courtesy of Purdon Photography

Commencement exercises for the members of the Schuylkill Valley High School Class of 2019 were held on June 7 at the high school stadium. **Lily Whitmoyer**, daughter of **Jeffrey and Cydney Whitmoyer**, Leesport, was the valedictorian. **Katelyn VanderSleen**, daughter of **Marcel and Deborah VanderSleen**, Mohrsville, was the salutatorian. We congratulate all of our graduates and wish them well in their future endeavors!



**Valedictorian  
Lily Whitmoyer**



**Salutatorian  
Katelyn VanderSleen**

Front row, left to right: Macy Zimmerman, Salutatorian Katelyn VanderSleen, Elliott Davila, Tristian Kucera, Valedictorian Lily Whitmoyer, Charanya Birabaharan.  
Second row, left to right: Molly Weidner, Alexis Szymczyk, Meghan Cook, Emily VanderSleen, Taylor Romberger, Riley Pontician, Dorothy Davidheiser  
Third row, left to right: Zachary Myers, Andre Rivera, William Stevenson, Scott Horning, Tyler Perry  
Fourth row, left to right: Elizabeth Heffner, Rosaly Diaz de la Rosa, Kahlee Perera







## Technology Innovation

The high school Technology and Engineering Education Department was awarded an SVSD Technology Innovation Grant to assist in the development and implementation of the VEX Robotics EDR STEM Lab program as part of the high school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiative. **Mr. Matt Cullen**, Technology and Engineering Education Department Chairperson, created the proposal to enhance the Design, Engineering and Robotics Tech Lab with new VEX EDR Robotics equipment. The new STEM robotics equipment and STEM Lab online curriculum will be used for Technology and Engineering/STEM courses, activity day programs, after-school programs, community outreach programs, and the SVHS Panther Robotics team. Six VEX EDR robotics stations with new V5 wireless control system, software for coding, tools for modifications and assembly, and online curriculum and activities were purchased with the grant funding provided by the school district.

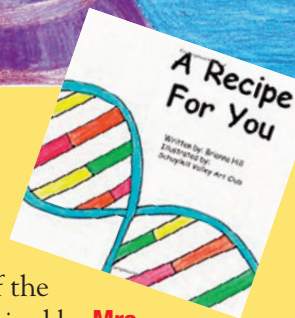
Through teamwork and collaboration with **Mr. Michael Billman**, Director of Instruction and Information Technology Department, **Mrs. Melissa Kelchner**, Director of Teaching and Learning, and **Mr. Michael Mitchell**, high school principal, the high school STEM initiative is moving forward to meet the needs of our students, staff, and community. The initiative will reinforce the development of 21st century skills for future success beyond our K-12 programs. The future of our students depends on what we provide and implement to meet the needs of our ever-changing local, national and global community. It is critical that we continue to focus on our STEM initiative district-wide by seeking support from our most valuable resources: local businesses, community members, families, SV Board of Directors, administration, staff and students. Please contact Mr. Cullen at [mcullen@schuylkillvalley.org](mailto:mcullen@schuylkillvalley.org) if you are interested in assisting with our K-12 STEM Initiative.



## ALUMNISPOTLIGHT



**Ms. Brianna Hill**, SV Class of 2015, has published her first book, *A Recipe For You*, with illustrations by members of the middle school art club, advised by **Mrs. Ronda Lee Seymour**. Ms. Hill recently obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Genetic Engineering at Cedar Crest College and is currently a Ph.D. student in the Genetics, Genomics, and Cancer Biology program at Thomas Jefferson University. Her book covers a broad range of genetics concepts in an easy-to-understand way, and is geared for elementary school students. The book is available in paperback and eBook on Amazon.



congratulations on your

# RETIREMENT

Our best wishes to the following faculty and staff, who retired this year. Thank you for your dedication to the Schuylkill Valley School District. For everything you have given, we are truly grateful.

**Mrs. Carol Adams**

Fifth Grade Teacher, 11 years

**Mr. Joseph Ambrose**

High School Business Education Teacher, 33 years

**Mrs. Wendy Boarder**

District Business Manager, 33 years

**Mrs. Bethany Carlson**

Elementary School Reading Paraprofessional, 15 years

**Mrs. Jackie Fogelman**

High School Secretary, 32 years

**Mr. William Gampe**

High School Biology Teacher, 32 years

**Mrs. Janice Garipoli**

Middle School Special Education Paraprofessional, 20 years

**Mr. Jerry Hussman**

High School Head Custodian, 26 years

**Mr. Stephen Karnoval**

Middle School Custodian, 17 years

**Mrs. Jaclyn Kunkle**

High School Attendance Secretary, 21 years

**Ms. Lori Messner**

Elementary School Reading Specialist, 31 years

**Mrs. Cathy Overman**

Middle School English Teacher, 34 years

**Mrs. Marcia Seaman**

High School Guidance Secretary, 17 years

**Mr. Dave Smith**

High School Chemistry Teacher, 39 years

**Mr. Craig Strunk**

Director of Buildings and Grounds, 30 years

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**Dr. Connor Feeney**, SV Class of 2013, received his doctor of physical therapy degree from Lebanon Valley College in May. Dr. Feeney was a member of the Honor Society, football and track teams at SV. He also performed in the fall play while a student at SV and continued in theatre while at Lebanon Valley.



**Ms. Katie Kemmerer**, SV Class of 2014 and Penn State alumna, has been hired as an executive support coordinator with the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs. In her role with the Chiefs, she will be working with outreach and volunteer events. At Schuylkill Valley, Ms. Kemmerer was a football manager with head coach **Mr. Jeffrey Chillot** for three seasons. Time spent in co-curricular activities in high school really can pay off!

### PRIDE OF SV PREVIEW

We are proud to announce this year's inductees for the Pride of SV Awards, which will be presented at a luncheon on Saturday, October 5:

**Mr. Derek Gaul**

**Mr. Nate Giorgio**

**Mrs. Allyson McKechnie**

**Mr. Terry McKechnie**

**Mr. Adam Moerder**

**Mrs. Nikki (Lykens) Yogi**

**ALUMNI** – If you know a former student who would like to receive emailed copies of the SV District newsletter, please send their email address to [svdistrictnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:svdistrictnewsletter@gmail.com).

### ALUMNI MARCHING BAND FORMING

Come on, join the band! SV Class of 1998 alumna, **Mrs. Jackie Tobias Boyer**, invites all former members of the Schuylkill Valley marching band and band front to join a Schuylkill Valley / Hamburg Area High School Alumni Marching Band. Please contact Mrs. Boyer at 610-468-2513 (call/text) or through the SVHS & HAHS Joint Alumni Marching Band Facebook group page and leave your name, number and, if you were in the band, what instrument you played, or if you were in the band front. You're never too old to march!



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## Students Shine in Events for Four Diamonds Foundation

In May, the PYEA held two fundraising events at the high school for the Four Diamonds Foundation, an organization that assists families confronting pediatric cancer. On May 21, the school's second annual Powder Puff flag football game between junior and senior girls was held under the lights at Panther Stadium. **Skye Renninger** struck first on a run for the juniors, but the seniors responded with a pass from QB **Macy Zimmerman** to **Mikayla Davis** for the score. The second senior touchdown was another air attack, but this time **Emily Sellers** threw it to WR **Ashleigh DeAcosta**. The juniors kept attacking, but the seniors sealed the victory with three minutes left on a rushing touchdown by **Sydney Himmelberger**.  
*Photos courtesy of Mrs. Kim Stricker.*



On Friday, May 24, the PYEA sponsored its third annual Mini-THON at the high school. Modeled after Penn State's THON event, the evening was filled with activities including fanny pack decorating, Zumba, dodgeball, GaGa, Minute-To-Win-It games, a lip-sync contest, a rave and, to end the night, a performance by the SV house band, The Holistics. All of the proceeds from both events, plus the funds raised at last fall's Gold Out game, totaled \$6,386 and were donated to the Four Diamonds Fund of Penn State Children's Hospital. This brings PYEA's three-year total donation to \$20,716. Special thanks to Good Life Financial for sponsoring the fanny packs, and to Overhead Door, 1847 Financial, SVEA, SVABC and Chicco USA for their support.

## Senior Banquet Awards

At the Senior Banquet Awards held in May, the following students were recognized as Outstanding Seniors for their academic, athletic and co-curricular achievements:

District III Academic All Star Award – **Molly Weidner** and **Lily Whitmoyer**

District III Sportsmanship Awards – **Mikayla Davis** and **Zachary Myers**

Outstanding Music Award – **William Stevenson**

Outstanding Senior Athletes – **Sydney Himmelberger** and **Shane Newell**

Outstanding Commitment Award – **Lily Whitmoyer**



Elementary students arriving on the first day of classes, August 26, 2019.



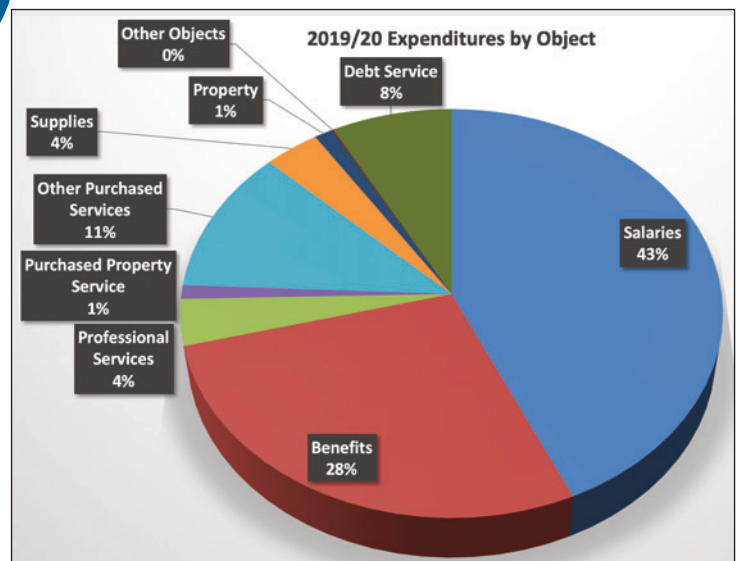
## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 2019

### 2019–2020 School District Budget

In June, the Schuylkill Valley Board of Directors unanimously approved a budget of \$40,500,000 for the 2019-2020 school year. This budget includes a 0.75 mill, or 2.8%, real estate tax increase, which means that the tax on a property assessed at \$100,000 will increase \$75 to \$2,782 annually. This is the first time in five years that the district has increased taxes, a move reflected in large part by a 10% rise in special education expenses over two years, according to Business Manager **Mr. Brian D. Feick**. Other cost drivers include contributions to the state teachers' retirement fund (PSERS) and increases in health insurance costs and salaries. Part of the \$638,884 shortfall that resulted in the tax increase was due to the Board's decision to eliminate the per capita tax, which accounts for \$75,749. According to Mr. Feick, the budget includes no curricular program cuts and a retirement incentive designed to prevent an increase next year.

For more information on the school district's budget, please visit the Administration/Business Office page of our website at [www.schuylkillvalley.org](http://www.schuylkillvalley.org).

**SVSD  
Revenue:**  
Local 74.74%  
State 23.42%  
Federal 0.83%



The 2019-2020 budget has total expenditures of \$40,500,000, which is an increase of \$1,539,122 over 2018-2019 expenditures.



# FUTURE PLANS

(Student reported data in April 2019)

**McKenna Adam**  
Undecided

**Bailey Ammons**  
University of the Arts

**Steven Arentz**  
Thaddeus Stevens  
College of Technology

**Emily Arndt**  
RACC

**Stephen Bair**  
HACC

**Leonard Bastien-Vilbrun**  
Community College

**P. Thomas Becker III**  
George Washington  
University

**Bridgette Bennett**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Ethan Bering**  
RACC

**Nicollas Bernhart**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Charanya Birabakaran**  
University of Pittsburgh

**Kasy Boltz**  
Employment

**Cort Borelli**  
University of the Arts

**Logan Borkey**  
Penn State University

**Anna Brzostek**  
Employment

**Ravin Buehrer**  
Shippensburg University

**Joshua Calancea**  
Employment

**Aaron Calancea**  
Employment

**Justin Cale**  
Kutztown University

**Sydney Campbell**  
Penn State University

**Gabriella Canova**  
Kutztown University

**Nick Care**  
Undecided

**Sandra Castaneda**  
RACC

**Alayna Cerankowski**  
PA College of  
Health Sciences

**Sydney Ciervo**  
Temple University

**Meghan Cook**  
Susquehanna University

**Madison Culpepper**  
RACC

**Dorothy Davidheiser**  
Reading Hospital  
School of Health  
Sciences

**Elliott Davila**  
Clarion University

**Mikayla Davis**  
Penn State University

**Ashleigh DeAcosta**  
Undecided

**Rosaly Diaz De La Rosa**  
Albright College

**Jordan Donly**  
University of Audio  
Media Production

**Abigail Douglas**  
RACC

**Nick Dubon**  
Penn State University

**Carly Eckenroth**  
Employment

**Gavin Edgerton**  
US Army

**Kristopher Eustace**  
Kutztown University

**Lexi Feltenberger**  
Employment

**Sally Francis**  
Penn State University

**Dristen Fritz**  
Employment

**Dalton Geiger**  
Kutztown University

**Anikin Glassmire**  
Slippery Rock  
University

**Emily Griesemer**  
Messiah College

**Daniel Guydik**  
Penn State Berks  
Campus

**Angela Guydik**  
Elizabethtown College

**Brian Hamm**  
Employment

**Natalie Hamm**  
Bloomsburg University

**Liz Heffner**  
Temple University

**Andy Hernandez**  
RACC

**Adrian Hernandez**  
Employment

**Javier Hernandez**  
Central Penn College

**Makayla Hess**  
Kutztown University

**Sydney Himmelberger**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Colton Hoffman**  
Thaddeus Stevens  
College of Technology

**Scott Horning**  
Penn State University

**Thomas Hummel**  
BCTC

**Luke Innis**  
Millersville University

**Taylor James**  
Employment

**Tanner Jerdan**  
BCTC

**Olivia Jones**  
Kutztown University

**Katie Kalous**  
RACC

**Al-Nure Karim**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Kaley Kauffman**  
RACC

**Madison Kepner**  
DeSales University

**Dylan King**  
Employment

**Mike Kirk**  
Employment

**Alexis Kowalski**  
PA College of  
Health Sciences

**Tristian Kucera**  
Gettysburg College

**Haley Leshner**  
Employment

**Brendan Livinghouse**  
Shippensburg University

**Bristol Long**  
Arcadia University

**Tehinnah Louis**  
Reading Hospital School  
of Health Sciences

**Jack Lynam**  
Alvernia University

**Matthew Maggiaro**  
Indiana University of  
Pennsylvania

**Owen Manwiller**  
Reading Hospital School  
of Health Sciences

**Isabel Martin**  
RACC

**Kellyn McGinley**  
York College

**Nick Miele**  
U.S. Navy

**Rachael Miller**  
Berks Technical Institute

**Liz Miller**  
Kutztown University

**Seth Mohn**  
Employment

**Zachary Myers**  
Penn State University

**Starr Neidlinger**  
Kutztown University

**Shane Newell**  
Delaware Valley University

**John Oldt**  
York College

**Emily Orth**  
Kutztown University

**Jayden Ortiz**  
RACC

**Ethan Paey**  
Northampton Community  
College

**Kahlee Perera**  
Lehigh University

**Tyler Perry**  
Penn State Berks Campus

**Jay Poland**  
West Chester University

**Riley Pontician**  
West Chester University

**Kathryn Prutzman**  
Temple University

**Joe Quigley**  
Penn State Berks Campus

**Nathan Rautzhan**  
Delaware Valley University

**Allyson Rea**  
Temple University

**Hannah Riggins**  
Kutztown University

**Andre Rivera**  
Kutztown University

**Alyssa Robinson**  
West Chester University

**Taylor Romberger**  
Kutztown University

**Ivey Rost**  
Penn State  
Altoona Campus

**Kadie Runkle**  
Lancaster Bible College

**Sheily Salas**  
Penn State Berks Campus

**Arlenys Sanchez**  
Penn State Berks Campus

**Isha Sannoh**  
Berks Technical Institute

**Brianna Schoen**  
US Marines

**Sam Schreffler**  
California State University

**Emily Sellers**  
Albright College

**Jessica Shomo**  
PA College of  
Health Sciences

**Tyler Siglin**  
Hood University

**Clayton Spencer**  
Millersville University

**Jessica Stacey**  
Reading Hospital School  
of Health Sciences

**Zachary Stein**  
Kutztown University

**Tyler Steiner**  
Employment

**William Stevenson**  
American University

**Jasmine Stoudt**  
Chatham University

**Jenna Strause**  
Shippensburg University

**Jakob Strausser**  
Reading Hospital School  
of Health Sciences

**Cheyenne Strunk**  
Delaware Valley  
University

**Alexis Szymczyk**  
Penn State University

**Megan Torok**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Eliza Tripp**  
Employment

**Gaven Ulrich**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Neishla Valentin**  
Penn State  
Berks Campus

**Emily VanderSleen**  
Ithaca College

**Katelyn VanderSleen**  
Franklin and  
Marshall College

**Isabel Velgara-Gadzouris**  
Employment

**Brandon Wayman**  
RACC

**Molly Weidner**  
Gettysburg College

**Molly Wenzel**  
Lancaster Bible College

**Lily Whitmoyer**  
Penn State University

**James Wiley**  
Kutztown University

**Vito Zazo**  
Kutztown University

**Kendra Zimmerman**  
University of  
South Alabama

**Macy Zimmerman**  
Penn State University





**schuylkill valley**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

NONPROFIT ORG  
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Reading, PA  
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## HOMECOMING

October 4, 2019 | 7:00 p.m.  
SV High School

## SUPPORTING OUR DEPLOYED ALUMNI

If you know of an SV graduate serving overseas in the military, please contact **Mrs. Christine Wysocki**, Middle School Language Arts teacher, at [cwysocki@schuylkillvalley.org](mailto:cwysocki@schuylkillvalley.org). The middle school Panther Pride Club would like to send your service member a care package!

## 2019-20 Athletic Pass

The 2019-2020 Athletic Pass Order Form is now available to print from our website: [www.schuylkillvalley.org](http://www.schuylkillvalley.org) > Athletics > Ath Dept Info > Find "Ticket Prices and Information" in the dropdown box, then scroll down to "Click Here" to order season passes.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SV Elementary School + Middle School PTO

October 4, 2019	ESPTO Panther Prowl
October 9-18	ESPTO Book Fair
October 15	No Cook Day at Dino's Wings and Things
October 15-25	Fall Spiritwear Sale
October 19	ESPTO Craft Fair, ES Café/Gym, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
November 8	ESPTO Fall Festival at school
November 12	ESPTO Meeting, ES Café, 6:30 p.m.
November 20	No Cook Day at Isaac's Restaurant in Spring Township
December 3	MSPTO Meeting, MS Auditorium, 6:30 p.m.
December 3	ESPTO Holiday Shop Preview and Cookies with Santa, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
December 10	ESPTO Meeting and Spiritwear Pickup, ES Café, 6:30 p.m.
December 15	No Cook Day at Panera