

# The Spartan



## High School Musical sees record attendance



Outstanding costumes, cast, and set design made this year's musical, *The Addams Family*, a smash hit and crowd favorite! The musical, performed by Sparta Spotlight Players, was led by director Skyler Erickson, music director Camie Schneider, and pit orchestra director Andrew Nicholson. A cast of 40, along with 15 stagehands, and a 12 piece orchestra, made up of student, alumni, and community members, put forth tremendous effort for a great performance. New this year was reserved seating to allow people to pick their own seats and not feel rushed to get into the theatre. Additionally, tickets were still available to be purchased at the door. Over 2,000 tickets were purchased in advance contributing to total sales of over 4,000 tickets.

Auditions were held in April, with a Musical Camp in July, followed by 8 weeks of rehearsals. This show provided students with the opportunity to create the famous characters of the Addams Family. It allowed them to come up with their ancestor characters, what their back story was, and how they moved, especially while being dead. The famous story sold itself, however the quality of production sold it even more. The many hours put into the costumes, make-up, music, and set was all worth it for the 7 shows that were performed and we can't wait to see what The Sparta Spotlight Players do next year!



## Veterans Day assemblies make return to SASD

For the first time since November 2019, SASD welcomed our traditional Veterans Day assemblies district-wide.

The celebrations included:

All school flag raising ceremony at Southside Early Learning Center; COL Steve Messenger, FMC Garrison Commander as

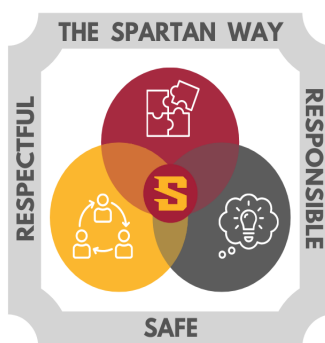


guest speaker at Sparta High School; SGT Alexandra Audetat as guest speaker at Herrman Elementary; Lieutenant COL Steven Nachowicz and School Counselor as guest speaker at Sparta Montessori; and Fort McCoy Senior Public Affairs Specialist and Navy Reserve Public Affairs Officer Chris Hanson as guest speaker at Meadowview Middle School. All assemblies also featured choir and band performances or music class performances for guests and community members.

## Portrait of a Spartan

The mission of our District is to educate all students academically, socially, and emotionally to inspire curiosity and resilience. The Portrait of a Spartan expands this mission to our entire community as we are all Spartans. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the Portrait are extremely important to ensure our community continues to move forward in a positive direction. Technical skills in the workplace, two and four year colleges, technical colleges, apprenticeships, and in the military are important, and can be taught/learned through training. However, employers, military, and colleges are looking for well rounded individuals who are aware of how their actions affect themselves and others.

Being a good, collaborative co-worker who can build positive relationships will enhance the mission of any organization. Our school district is no different as we are looking to teach the whole child the knowledge, skills and dispositions to prepare our students for the next step in their journey.



## Portrait of a Spartan

### KNOWLEDGE

- Connections
- Relevance
- Self-Awareness

### SKILLS

- Collaboration
- Problem Solving
- Relationships

### DISPOSITIONS

- Curiosity
- Perseverance
- Social Awareness

## SAILS Food Forest begins to take shape

SAILS Charter School was awarded \$12,100 in funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to build a Food Forest. The Food Forest will provide a hands-on learning area for growing, maintaining, and harvesting plants. Students and staff are responsible for implementing the Food Forest to produce a yield of heirloom fruits and vegetables that may be used in a variety of ways in school and throughout the community. Students broke ground for the Food Forest, located at Maplewood, in October.

The SAILS Community Food Forest will be implemented in four phases and is led by instructor, Mr. Lebakken. To help participate in the project, contact [communications@sparta.org](mailto:communications@sparta.org).

# School Wordplay

In some ways, the school day has remained the same over the years, however, there are also phrases, departments, or acronyms that are new or have expanded over the years to support the school day. Sparta Area School District (SASD) is fortunate to have some outstanding departments in our district that are doing impressive things everyday and our school day could not go on without them. In this issue, some common titles and departments are explained in further detail and with some impressive stats.

## Student Supports

For any Sparta Area School District family who is facing a difficult time, our Student Services team is here to help! Please see your student's School Counselor or Principal if your family could benefit from help with food/meals, hats, boots, coats, school supplies, or mental health resources/support.

## Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a proactive approach to discipline that maximizes academic engagement and achievement for all students. It's how we teach students our expectations for behavior and a means to acknowledge students demonstrating those behaviors. Students and staff of the Sparta Area School District promote "The Spartan Way" which includes the principles of being Respectful, Responsible, and Safe. The Spartan Way is the foundation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), our district-wide positive behavior program.



## English Language Learners (ELL)

Occasionally students enroll into the Sparta Area School District with limited English skills. In addition to Spanish, we have had students whose primary language is Mixteco, Hmong, Mandarin, German, Latvian, and others. These situations provide some communication challenges in the classroom which has resulted in our English Language Learner (ELL) Program growing. The Sparta Area School District is fortunate to have a strong team of English Language Learner staff members that support more than 220 students each year. If you are bilingual and are able to occasionally assist with translating needs please contact 608-366-3400.



## What I Need (WIN)

Our WIN program (What I Need) offers morning and afternoon programming to approximately 295 students at Southside Early Learning Center, Herrman Elementary School, Sparta Montessori, and Meadowview Middle School. WIN is open to all students who are in grades Pre-K-8 whether they attend SASD, the local private schools, or are homeschooled.

This year, Herrman was awarded a grant for \$100,000 which has opened opportunities to travel to the Kickapoo Valley Reserve several times as well as offer introductory camps for a variety of sports and arts.



## Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Sparta Area School District is a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that empowers educators to work collaboratively to achieve better results for all of the students we serve. PLCs are in direct alignment with the mission and vision of our district. Our district uses Wednesday afternoon early release time for instructional teams to meet and plan. These meetings focus on student learning and allow teachers to work collaboratively in order to impact classroom practices that lead to better results for their students, teams, and their school. Teachers analyze Wisconsin state standards to determine mastery, plan lessons and assessments that are aligned to the standard, as well as curriculum implementation and teaching strategies.



The time on Wednesday allows teachers to do a deep dive into the data they have collected, and have discussions of best practices and next steps in instruction. The teachers use information from lessons and assessments to guide next steps in learning, as well as plan structured reteach, extra practice, and extension activities.

This year, each elective teacher has developed a shared definition of the components of a Portrait of a Spartan. They have clarified how students show mastery and defined ways students can demonstrate these skills. In November, teachers met to look at vertical alignment and discussed the essential standards being taught at their grade level and the district-wide progression of standards. This process helps teachers ensure that standards are aligned across grade levels.



## Nutrition Services

School lunches look much different than they did in the past. Students are provided multiple entree options where previously it was just one. They are also offered fresh salad, fruit, and vegetables. An emphasis has been placed on serving whole grains, reduced sodium, and low-fat productions.

The SASD Nutrition Services Department has 24 dedicated employees including a full-time nutrition secretary and nutrition supervisor that serve approximately 56,750 breakfast and lunch meals per month. Staff strive to get students through the meal line in approximately 8-12 minutes depending on the grade and age level. In addition, the Nutrition Department is contracted to provide meals to Sparta Head Start and Sparta St. John's Lutheran School.



## Southwest Transportation

SASD contracted with Southwest Transportation in 2019. Southwest has a team of 65 staff, averaging over 3,000 miles per day, and serving more than 2,000 SASD students!

Check out Southwest's app called BusWhere to get real time updates on when your child's bus will be at your pick up or drop off location. Visit [spartan.org](http://spartan.org) under the "Families" tab for more info.

Also be sure to follow Southwest on Facebook!

# SASD Finance/Programs

## SASD Technology Department

Five team members make up the SASD Technology Department and they are proud to provide a district owned private fiber network that supports all students and staff and connects all SASD buildings together.

The Technology Department manages an astounding 3,600 mobile devices (iPads), 250 projectors, 100 Promethean Boards, and 300 wireless access points. Students and staff are also able to utilize over 700 iPad apps.



## School Tax Levy

The SASD School Tax Levy is made up of the (1) Revenue Limit Tax Levy, (2) Referendum-Approved Debt Levy, and (3) Community Service Levy.

(1) Sets the maximum amount that the District is able to levy for general operations

(2) Pays down the outstanding balance of the debt, which may include both the required principal and interest payments as well as any debt defeasance. Debt defeasance is beneficial because it reduces the amount of debt outstanding, saves on future interest costs, and increases State Equalization Aid.

(3) Accounts for activities such as adult education, community recreation programs, and other programs which are not elementary and secondary educational programs but have the primary function of serving the community. SASD provides the following Community Service programs, which are open to all (age-appropriate) individuals within the community (residents): The Parenting Place, WIN After School Program, Middle School Co-Curriculars, Adult Education, and Community Recreation.

## Reading your tax bill

The Mill Rate is set by the District and determines the AVERAGE tax per \$1,000 of property Equalized Value, based on the Total School Levy. The Mill Rate is NOT published on the tax bill but it can be calculated. (See chart)

On your tax bill, the % Tax Change does NOT equal the change in the Mill Rate. This is because the % Tax Change is also affected by the (1) Fair Market Value, (2) Assessed Value, and the (3) School Levy Tax Credit.

(1) The Equalized Value is calculated by the Wis. Dept. of Revenue and is equal to the Fair Market Value PLUS adjustments for agriculture, forest, and undeveloped land. It is used by the District to distribute the School Tax Levy among the 14 municipalities we serve.

(2) Calculated by an assessor and is used by the municipality (SASD has 14 different municipalities) to distribute the tax burden among the property owners.

(3) Distributed to municipalities from the State. The school levy credit, first dollar credit, and lottery credit (which are applied to the School Tax Levy) are distributed to municipalities after districts certify their School Tax Levy. Also on your bill, the Total Additional Taxes represents the TOTAL voter approved levy that is IN ADDITION to the Revenue Limit Levy. It does NOT represent a change in taxes as compared to the prior year.

## 2023 Spartan Roundup

Our 2023 Spartan Roundup is the time to:

Get your FREE developmental screening for any child with a birth date between Sept. 1, 2018 and March 31, 2020.



Enroll your child in Pre-Kindergarten for the 2023-2024 school year at Southside Early Learning Center or Sparta Montessori. Children who will be 4 years old before September 1, 2023 are eligible to enroll.

Learn more by visiting [www.bit.ly/spartanprek](http://www.bit.ly/spartanprek)

## Calculate Your Mill Rate

$$\begin{array}{c} \boxed{\text{SASD Net Tax}} + \boxed{\text{School Levy Credit}} \\ \hline \boxed{\text{Fair Market Value}} \end{array}$$

## Message from the Superintendent

This is a very exciting time for the Sparta Area School District for many reasons; not only are we heading into the holiday season and winter break but our students and staff are working hard in and out of the classroom. In the classroom, our students continue to learn and grow in multiple ways. Our winter concert season is wrapping up while our winter co-curricular activities are beginning. As I go through our buildings, I am very proud of the energy and enthusiasm that our students bring with them each day. Our staff consistently demonstrates perseverance and patience as they guide all of our students along their educational journey.



The holiday season is a time of kindness. Many thanks to all of our community members who are very generous with their time, talents, and resources. I would like to ask you to show your kindness in ways that take only a few moments and carry no financial cost. Say hello, please and thank you, share a smile, offer an affirming compliment, demonstrate patience, allow someone to skip you in the checkout line, hold the door open for the person behind you and wish someone a good day. These small acts of kindness go a long way and you never know how one, small act can make someone else's day better!

As we meteorologically move into the winter season, please remember to be safe on the roads and give buses even more room as they make their stops. Families, for any school closure, delay, and early dismissal, please have plans ready to put into action in case of winter weather or other types of emergencies.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Sparta Area School District! I wish you all a safe holiday season and a happy 2023. Go Spartans!!!

Sam Russ

SASD Superintendent

### School report card overview

The Wisconsin Department of Instruction has recently released the state report cards and there are several points to celebrate. While the DPI report card provides a large view scale of the district, it is composed of many smaller parts to obtain the overall score. According to the report card, all of our schools meet or exceed state expectations. The Sparta Area School district score rose 5 points from last year to this year; from 60.7 points to 65.7 points. Our growth score for 21-22 was 63.2 points which is 10.5 points higher than the previous year and is the same or higher than 38.5% of the schools in Wisconsin. An even bigger celebration is our target group, which is a student population that comprises the lowest 25% of students from the previous year, and compares how they grew last year. In this group, we are the same or higher than 54.4% of the schools in Wisconsin, which is an increase of 32.4% from the prior year. We are very proud of our teachers to be able to double the growth factor for this student population.

A continued academic focus for our teachers is working in the professional learning communities (PLCs) on curriculum and teaching strategies. Over the past few years, we have been focusing on closing gaps in students' learning due to COVID, ensuring all students have the essential standards in each grade level at proficiency before they move on. It is our belief, and research would state, that high growth is the precursor to improved achievement scores. We are seeing the growth, we anxiously await for the achievement to follow while continuing to educate our students academically, emotionally, and socially to inspire curiosity and resilience.

We will **DESIGN** and **DELIVER** the best educational journey for **ALL** and remain **#Spartanproud!**

### Upcoming Events

#### Spartan Round Up

Monday, February 13, 2023

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

#### SVLA Registration

Spring Semester open for applications until

December 31, 2022

visit [www.spartan.org](http://www.spartan.org)

for more information

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Watch for our next issue in March!