

# The Spartan



**S**ASD celebrated the opening of a renovated Memorial Field with a packed house on September 9th! More than 2,000 students and fans showed up to celebrate the first event under the lights. The game may not have had the ending Spartans had hoped for, but the excitement and the atmosphere will be remembered for many years to come.



The Sparta Area School District's Board of Education approved the renovation project with funding from the District's Capital Improvement Trust Fund, along with collaboration with the Sparta Gridiron Club, Sparta Soccer Club, and Sparta Dance Team. This project included a new 1,700-person grandstand, press box, sound system, LED lighting, scoreboard, turf field, and a raised plaza that overlooks the field. The project is still being finalized with enclosures under the bleachers and fencing as some of the remaining updates.

The Sparta Gridiron Club has graciously committed to fundraising \$350,000 of the project. If anyone is interested in supporting the project, please contact Bob Lydon at [rlydon617@gmail.com](mailto:rlydon617@gmail.com).

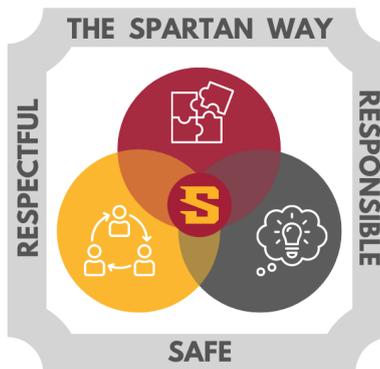


Spartans across the district returned to the classroom to kick off the 2022-23 school year. As in years past, ninth graders were the only attendees at the High School for the first day of school. This allows time for students to become familiar with the building and their schedules. All fifth through eighth grade students also started school on September 1.

This year, for the first day of school, elementary students visited and families had individual time slots to visit their school to become familiar with the building, and meet their teacher.

## Portrait of a Spartan

For the past several years, our district has been working on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that our graduates need to be successful. This summer, we changed our focus to not only establishing



## PORTRAIT OF A Spartan

- KNOWLEDGE**
  - Connections
  - Relevance
  - Self-Awareness
- SKILLS**
  - Collaboration
  - Problem Solving
  - Relationships
- DISPOSITIONS**
  - Curiosity
  - Perseverance
  - Social Awareness

what our graduates need, but what knowledge, skills, and dispositions we feel ALL students, family members, and community members should have, regardless of age or role in the community. We strongly feel that the "Portrait of a Spartan" can be taught at any level and class, and can be reinforced throughout the community.

## Joel Konze Best Day Ever Fundraiser Continues

Sunday, September 11, marked the 10th Annual Joel Konze Best Day Ever run/walk. Joel was a Sparta Graduate and employee who was famous for the words "Best Day Ever" when asked how his day was going. Joel passed away in a car accident, but his legacy lives on through many at SASD.

Attendees choose between a 5K or 10K route to raise money for a scholarship in Joel's name. The Scholarship goes to students planning to attend a two or four year college with preference given to students involved in cross country and/or wrestling. In ten years the scholarship has awarded 9 Sparta students with a \$500 scholarship.



Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year from the Department of Instructional Services. As we begin this year, our staff is working hard at building relationships with students. A relationship between the teacher and student is crucial for student success. Relationships help students to feel safe enough to take risks in the classroom. Teachers can also use students' interests as an entry into the content.

In addition, teachers are working on developing a curriculum to meet the needs of our students in Sparta. They are examining the Wisconsin State Standards and determining which are essential for our students. Teachers are modifying their instruction and developing assessments that focus on these standards. As part of a continual improvement process, staff revisits each unit to determine what went well and what needs to be changed the next time.

Great things are happening across the district in classrooms, on sports fields, and on the stage. I'm looking forward to a fabulous school year!

**Kyla Manske, Director of Instructional Services**



Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! The Student Services Department has been focusing on meeting the needs of each student within the Sparta Area School District. The key to this is ensuring strong relationships with each student and family.

If your child is in need of additional support within the school setting to be successful academically, emotionally, or socially, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's school counselor. If you suspect your child may have a disability that requires special education services, you can reach out directly to the Student Services Department at 608-366-3400 to be connected with a School Psychologist within your child's building. I am looking forward to a wonderful 2022-2023 school year!

**Amber Kulig, Director of Student Services**

With a tradition that started in 1996 and has more than 60 recipients, 3 Sparta High School Graduates were inducted into the Athletic Wall of Fame during the Half Time ceremony on September 23, 2022. The recipients are displayed in the hallway at Sparta High School. This year's inductees were John Leehy, John Roddick, and Matt Tourdot.



### John Leehy, Graduated 1983

High School Participation and Accomplishments:

WIAA state Tennis qualifier: 1983 (doubles); WIAA Tennis sectional qualifier: 1981, 1982; South Central Tennis Conference Champion: 1983 (singles), 1982 (doubles); 3X Team MVP; Varsity letters earned: 4; Team captain: 2 years



### John Roddick, Graduated 2015

High School Participation and Accomplishments:

12 Varsity Letters (Cross Country, Wrestling, Track & Field); 3X Cross Country State Qualifier (2013 qualified as individual and with team, 2014 as individual); 4X All Conference Cross Country; 2X All State Cross Country Scholar Athlete; 6X Wrestling State Qualifier (4 Individual & 2 Team) 3X State Place Winner; 4X Wrestling All Conference, once in Track; Career Leader in Wrestling Wins for SHS with 172-42 record; SHS Male Athlete of the Year: 2014-15; 2015 WIAA Scholar Athlete



### Matt Tourdot, Graduated 2010

High School Participation and Accomplishments:

Lettered 4 years in wrestling, 3 in football, and 2 in Tennis; 2010 Wrestling State Champion with 50-0 record; 2009 3rd place State Winner; All conference in football 2008, 2009, 1st team all-district WFC; All conference in Tennis 2009; Career leader in wrestling pins

## Sparta Weekend Backpack Food Program Makes Strong Return

The Sparta Weekend Backpack Food Program is up and running! The program was created to help serve families who have food insecurity over the weekends.

Families receive one bag of food per week that includes canned fruits and vegetables, protein items, grains, and breakfast items. Last school year, the program helped 2,810 families and packed 3,008 bags of food.

Families with children attending Herrman, Montessori, or Southside may contact the school secretary to participate.

If you wish to donate food items or monetary donations, please contact Cindy Thesing at: [cthesing@spartan.org](mailto:cthesing@spartan.org) or 608-366-3400.



## Board Meetings Streamed and Recorded

In August, the Board of Education voted unanimously to stream and record board meetings starting in September, as part of a continued effort to increase transparency with our community. Regularly scheduled Committee of the Whole and Board of Education meetings are being archived with closed captioning and Spanish translation. These recordings, along with Board of Education agendas and minutes, can all be found by visiting our website at [www.spartan.org](http://www.spartan.org) under the "Board" tab or on YouTube (videos only) by searching "SASD Boardroom." Beginning in November, all Board of Education Meetings will take place at 6 pm on the second and fourth Monday of the month.

# School Finance 101



## What is an Annual Meeting?

SASD's Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 11, at 7:00 p.m. in Meadowview Middle School's Cafetorium (1225 N. Water Street). We are welcoming and encouraging all to attend, but only electors (individuals who are eligible to vote in school district elections) who live in SASD's boundaries will be allowed to vote. Upon entering the meeting, we will be asking those in attendance to provide their name, mailing address, and verify if they are an elector in SASD.

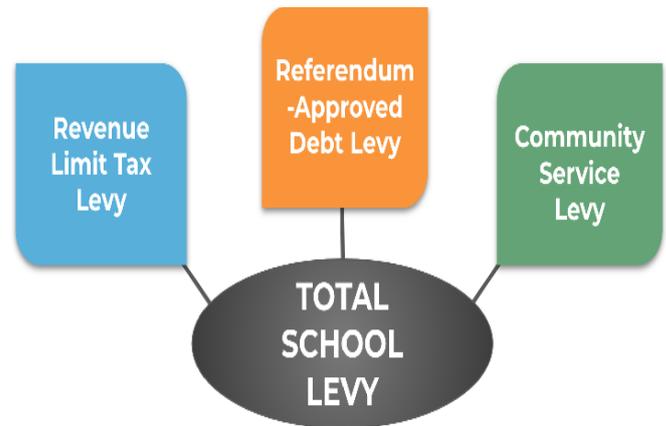
By state law, this required meeting provides district residents with an opportunity to give feedback to the school district in many areas, including but not limited to: transportation, nutrition services, budget, taxing for the operation of the school district (mill rate), and setting Board of Education compensation.

**Leah Hauser**, *Director of Business Services*

## What goes into a Mill Rate?

SASD operates on an annual budget of \$43M, with approximately 75% of this budget being set by the state-imposed Revenue Limit. The Revenue Limit, set by the State, determines the maximum amount of Operating Revenue that may be raised through a combination of State Equalization Aid and the Revenue Limit Tax Levy.

The State provides State Equalization Aid to support the operations of public school districts, and identifies how much of the Revenue Limit must be raised through the local Tax Levy. This Aid is intended to equalize, across the state, the amount of local property taxes that are paid to school districts. Districts with low Equalized Value receive more State Equalization Aid than districts with high Equalized Value. SASD is positively aided, meaning we receive a large portion of our Revenue Limit through State Aid. In SASD, State Aid makes up nearly 85% of our Revenue Limit, or approximately \$27M.



The Total School Property Tax Levy is made up of the Revenue Limit Tax Levy, Referendum-Approved Debt Levy, and Community Service Levy. The Revenue Limit Tax Levy is for all of the costs to educate all of our students, including most daily operations. The largest expense for operations is employee salaries and benefits. The Referendum-Approved Debt Levy is for the debt payments associated with the district's facilities referendum. The Community Service Levy is for programming that plays an important role in providing valuable resources to all members of the community. In SASD, this includes financial support of the Parenting Place, WIN (What I Need) after-school program, and Middle School athletics and activities.

## How is the Mill Rate calculated?

The Mill Rate determines the AVERAGE tax per \$1,000 of property value, based on the Total School Levy.



## How does the Mill Rate affect my tax bill?

Although the Mill Rate is consistent across municipalities, the tax impact (amount and percentage change) will vary on each property tax bill.

School districts certify their School Levy based on Equalized Value. This is because assessment ratios differ by municipality (SASD serves 14 different municipalities).

The school levy credit, first dollar credit, and lottery credit (which are applied to the School Levy) are distributed to municipalities after districts certify their School Levy.



## Message from the Superintendent

As we start a great school year for the Sparta Area School District (SASD) and my first as Superintendent, SASD will carry on our mission to educate all students academically, emotionally, and socially to inspire curiosity and resilience, and bring alive our vision of designing and delivering the best educational journey for all. I am pleased with how the start of the school year has gone, and I continue my first mission of establishing trust and building collaborative relationships with our various stakeholders throughout the district. Our goal as a district is to build a culture and climate where students and staff are excited to come to school with their confidence growing throughout the year.



Our district offers a lot of opportunities, possibilities, and partnerships with families, community, and businesses. I am confident that with strong communication and collaboration, we can not only see our students flourish, but our entire community. As the new Superintendent, I would like to hear from all of our community members and stakeholders on what they feel are our District's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. I will be having more listening and learning sessions for community members to share their thoughts, and please feel free to contact me via email or phone with your ideas and/or questions. My goal is to be transparent and proactive as much as possible, and strong communication is essential.

Thank you for continuing to support our students and the SASD. I am proud to be a part of this community that cares deeply about our youth and is committed to seeing them have the best educational journey possible. I hope this mailing shares some of the positive happenings and outcomes of our district, and shows how we are meeting the needs of our students and making a difference in the communities we serve.

Go Spartans!

**Sam Russ**, SASD Superintendent, 608-366-3400, [sruss@spartan.org](mailto:sruss@spartan.org)

## Kick off to a New School Year

We are off to a positive start to the 22-23 school year. Throughout the summer, our staff participated in professional development activities that focused on strengthening positive relationships, defining/affirming essential standards, assessments, and best instructional practices. Our buildings hosted open houses and other activities, which gave students and families the opportunity to feel comfortable prior to the start of school. This year the focus in all of our buildings is building strong relationships with students and families. We believe that is the most important part of increasing a student's academic, social, and emotional learning.



## Upcoming Events

### Annual Meeting

Join us for our Annual Meeting scheduled on October 11. The meeting will take place at Meadowview Middle School at 7 pm.

### The Adams Family Musical

November 11-12, @ 7 pm  
November 13, @ 2 pm  
November 17-19, @ 7 pm  
November 21, @ 2 pm

### Veterans Day Celebrations

Times vary across the district. If you are interested in attending an assembly, please contact [communications@spartan.org](mailto:communications@spartan.org).



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

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Local Postal Customer

Watch for our next issue in December!