

Healthy Heart, Healthy Mind

What the Latest Nutrition Guidelines Mean for Our School Meals

While the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** are advisory, the school meal standards based on them are mandatory for districts participating in the National School Lunch Program. The guidelines are updated every five years using the latest nutrition science.

The newly released 2025-2030 guidelines emphasize nutrient-dense foods – including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats – while limiting added sugars and highly processed foods to support long-term and heart health.

Although these updates will shape future school meal policies, changes take time. The USDA must first translate the guidelines into specific regulations and allow for public comment before implementation.

Recent updates already underway include:

- New limits on added sugars in breakfast and weekly menus
- Continued emphasis on whole grains, vegetables, and lean proteins
- The option to offer whole milk alongside lower-fat varieties, increasing student choice

These efforts reflect our “Healthy Heart, Healthy Minds” commitment to nourishing students with balanced meals that support energy, growth, and learning. We will continue to share updates as standards evolve.



A Quick Note on Heart-Healthy Eating at Home

As both a registered dietitian and your school nutrition director, I encourage families to focus on variety and balance. Simple heart-healthy habits include:

- Filling half the plate with fruits and vegetables
- Choosing whole grains when possible
- Including lean proteins such as poultry, beans, fish, and nuts
- Limiting sugary drinks

Small, but consistent habits can make a lasting difference for individuals.

We will continue monitoring updates to school meal standards and will keep our families informed.

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Mustang ROUNDUP

Volume 41 ✦ Number 2 ✦ February 2026

INSIDE...



Getting to Know the New High School Principal

Dear South Western Family,

My name is Christopher Kasian. I am thrilled to lead such a great team of teachers, students, and families as the South Western High School Principal. South Western embodies the importance of family, tradition, culture, hard work, and personal responsibility. It is the perfect place to lead our youth, who will make a positive impact on the world.

My mission as an educator is to encourage students and teachers to think, smile, dream, and strive to be their very best. The vision I have is a high school where students and staff will be accepted, appreciated, and held accountable for high expectations academically and behaviorally. As the principal of South Western High School, I will be available to support students, staff, and the community.

My teaching journey began at Luzerne County Community College

and Bloomsburg University where I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education/English. At Lehigh University I obtained an ESL teaching certificate. I also earned my Master's Degree from Wilkes University in Educational Leadership. During the first 12 years of my teaching career I taught middle and high school English and ESL in the Philadelphia, Hazleton, and Panther Valley School Districts. My family and I then moved to Dillsburg. I was an ESL teacher at Central Dauphin East High School and Summer School Principal for four years. The last two years,

I served as the 12th and 9th grade Principal at East High. Prior to arriving at South Western High School, I served as the Principal of West Perry High School for three years. In addition to teaching, I coached bas-



ketball, football, baseball, and track for 13 years as a head and assistant coach from the youth to high school level. I officiated PIAA basketball and baseball for six years.

For four years, I also volunteered as a Good News Club teacher for elementary students as well as teaching adult men in prison.



In my free time I enjoy being with my wife, Jessie, and our three boys, Timothy (9), Benjamin (6), and Daniel (3). We raise chickens and are avid gardeners. My older boys and I love to train and run in 5Ks. I love being outdoors during all seasons and reading a good book. Additionally, I enjoy fishing, riding bikes, and exercising.

It is a dream come true to be the South Western High School Principal. I am excited to be a part of the Mustang family.

**Once a Mustang, Always a Mustang.
Good. Better. Best!**

South Western High School Proudly Presents

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S Cinderella Enchanted Edition

March 12th, 13th, 14th @ 7PM

Tickets on Sale Now

\$12 in Advance

\$15 at the Door

For More Information Visit:

<https://swhsdrama.weebly.com/>



SCAN FOR TICKETS

...School Meals

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Most importantly, our commitment remains the same: providing nutritious, balanced meals each day to fuel learning and the life-long health of our Mustangs!

Harvest of the Month | Family Newsletter

You can find informative newsletters, like the one below, on our district website.

Harvest of the Month | Family Newsletter Potatoes



The potato plant produces flowers from which inedible fruits grow. The part of the plant referred to as the potato grows underground, is known as a tuber, and serves as a nutrient store for the plant.

Three thousand varieties of potatoes are grown in the United States, but only 100 are grown regularly. Potatoes are broken into four basic categories: russet, long white, round white, and round red. Each type of potato has its own unique color, taste, shape, and texture. Most potatoes have white flesh but they are also available with purple and pink flesh.

Did you know?

In October 1995,
The potato is the
The potato is the

Selection

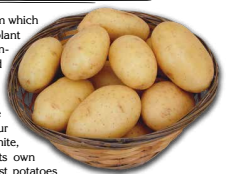
Look for potatoes that are
mold, cuts or bruises, sprouts

Storage

Store potatoes in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place, ideally between 45-55°F. Do not store potatoes in the refrigerator because refrigerator temperatures can cause the starch in potatoes to convert to sugar, resulting in a sweeter taste and darkening during cooking. Do not wash potatoes prior to storing. Moisture will encourage sprouting so a dry storage area is ideal for potatoes. Store away from onions as the onions may cause the potatoes to spoil. Potatoes will keep for 1 to 3 weeks.



or running water and scrubbed with a clean vegetable brush before cooking. Peeling can remove the hard-to-clean outer surface, but is not necessary.
Potatoes which cause potatoes to turn green and have
to light or extreme cold or warm temperatures for
a toxic substance. If green discoloration is noticed
green area.
uncooked develop a pinkish or brownish discolor-
in the food reacting with oxygen in the air. Potatoes
it and do not need to be discarded. The color usually



only milk products.

green coloring, wrinkled skin,



KLK School of Welding and Theory

(Adult Education Class – a look back at the fall session)



This course provides comprehensive instruction in industry-standard welding and cutting principles, with a primary focus on practical, hands-on application. Tailored to accommodate participants ranging from beginners to advanced practitioners, the curriculum offers a customizable experience where learners select specific welding processes based on their professional objectives.

The program encompasses essential safety protocols, theoretical foundations, and advanced techniques across several core processes, including:

- Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW)
- Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW)
- Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (TIG/GTAW)
- Oxyacetylene and Plasma Cutting



development aligns with both student aptitude and specific occupational requirements.

This course meets on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6-8:30 PM for 16 weeks. Watch for the next available session.



South Western Students



Training is personalized to the individual's current proficiency, ensuring that positional skill development aligns with both student aptitude and specific occupational requirements.

Taking a Look at Young Healthy Hearts and Healthy Minds

In our four South Western elementary schools, fostering Healthy Hearts and Healthy Minds is fundamental to how we educate our students. We believe that cultivating physical wellness, emotional health, and community responsibility are essential for student success and are therefore integrated into a winter of engaging and impactful programs across the district.

We are building *Healthy Hearts* directly through the actions of our Physical Education departments. By hosting the annual Jump Rope for Heart/Kids Heart Challenge to benefit the American Heart Association, we provide a vital educational opportunity for students to



Mr. Kress's students are learning jump rope skills. These are students from Mrs. Lightner's first-grade class at Baresville.



learn about heart health and the critical role exercise plays in keeping the body healthy. Students are mastering diverse styles of rope jumping, including long roping, Chinese jump rope, and short rope; learning complex routines and patterns.

A key focus is on team building, as the activities require holders and jump-

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Emory H. Markle Middle School – Learning With A Giving Heart

At Emory H. Markle Middle School (EHMMS), community service is more than a lesson; it is a living commitment that our students demonstrate every day through meaningful action in the greater South Western community. This year, our students

developing valuable skills but also making a tangible difference in the lives of others.

Together, these efforts reflect the heart of EHMMS: where our students begin to understand that even small actions, when multiplied by many caring hands, can create a lasting and positive impact on the South Western community.



have shown what is possible when compassion meets teamwork. During the Feed-a-Friend Marathon, students rallied together to support local families in need, raising an impressive \$1,358 and collecting 344 cans of food. *Their enthusiasm and generosity even earned them the opportunity to celebrate memorably by turning their principal, Dr. Wes Winters, into a live ice cream sundae.*

Beyond the fun, the event had a powerful impact: while representing the middle school during the community radio power hour, our students helped contribute to a total of over 14,000 cans of food donated to support neighbors facing food insecurity.

That spirit of giving continues to grow through the school's thriving Aquaponics Program. Through the dedication of our Aquaponics Club, students are learning sustainable growing practices while directly supporting families in our district. This year alone, students have donated 440 ounces of fresh lettuce – equivalent to 170 heads grown in our lab – to the York County Mobile Food Pantry, which serves students and families within our community. By combining hands-on learning with purposeful service, EHMMS students are not only



ADULT VOLLEYBALL

Open Volleyball is Back!

Spike, set, and serve your way through the week!
Open Volleyball returns every Wednesday starting February 4 through May 20 (only on school nights).

Time: 7:30 PM-9:30 PM

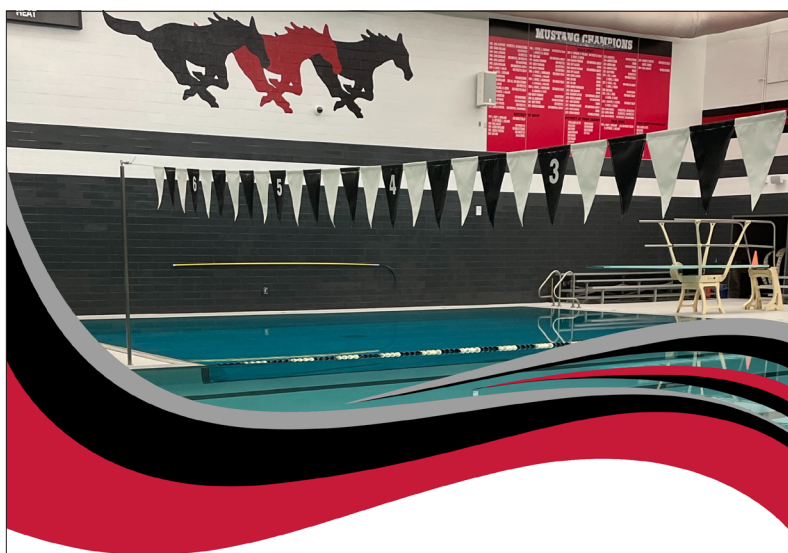
Cost: \$2.00 per person (pay at the door)

No registration needed – just show up and play!

Location: EHMMS Gym

Come join the fun – everyone is welcome!





COMMUNITY SWIM

2025 - 2026

Monday & Wednesday
09.29.25 - 05.20.26
(when school is in session)
7 pm to 8:30 pm



\$2 for individuals
\$5 for families of 3 or more
EHMMS Natatorium
225 Bowman Road Hanover PA
No pre-registration required

For more information contact amy_gobrecht@southwesternsd.org

...Young Hearts and Minds

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ers to collaborate effectively. Furthermore, the physical education curriculum is teaching valuable lifetime exercise activities through units on basketball, focusing on dribbling and ball handling, and volleyball, with an emphasis on bumping and hand striking. Students are encouraged to raise funds for the American Heart Association and are recognized with prizes for their efforts.

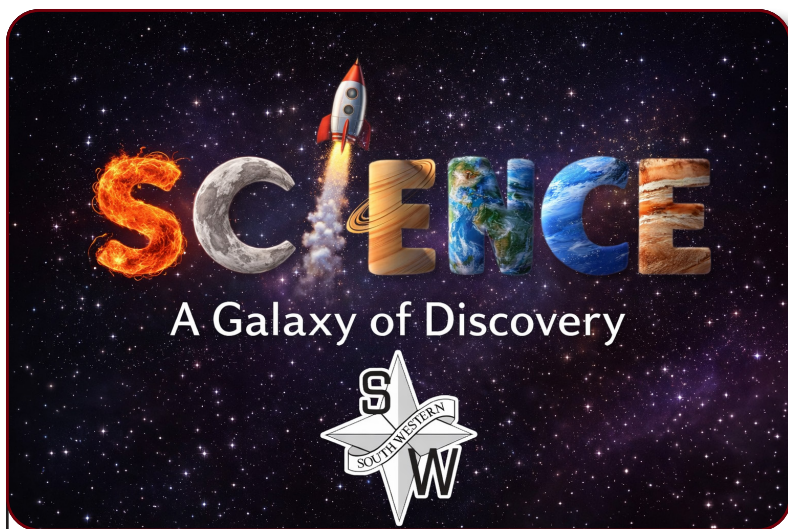
Complementing our *Healthy Hearts*, our elementary cafeteria staff members are working diligently to ensure all students receive the highest quality breakfast and lunch possible. To support lifelong wellness, the majority of the food served across our district is whole-grain based, along with fresh fruits and vegetables. Student favorites like strawberries, grapes, and broccoli are served daily. We believe that lunchtime should be both nutritious and joyful. Students can look forward to Pizza Day every Friday, and our staff creates special dining experiences by serving creatively shaped foods to make the meal memorable. This focus on student care and community extends to the serving line, which reinforces Healthy Minds when building staff members jump behind the line to help serve lunch, demonstrating dedication to our students in many different ways. Finally, as a tip for encouraging healthy habits at home: sometimes a simple, enthusiastic “Did you take your fruit?” is all it takes to ensure a balanced plate.



During November and December, our four schools focused on serving our neighbors by hosting highly successful Feed-A-Friend drives to collect food for the community. All four elementary schools—Baresville, Park Hills, Manheim, and West Manheim—showed tremendous generosity, collecting thousands of items to benefit those in need.

In November, some elementary schools also recognized Children’s Grief Awareness Month, where students, with parent permission, decorated a butterfly sun catcher in memory of a special person. Parents were also provided with essential resources to support their child through grief and loss.

Keeping Healthy Hearts in mind, our elementary-wide Kindness Week promoted positive character traits and community action by initiating a school-wide collection of aluminum soda, soup, and other beverage tabs. The week also featured engaging spirit days, including Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff. Our South Western Elementary schools are focused on building a strong foundation for healthy hearts and healthy minds for every student.



Save the Date to join us for our Elementary Family Science Night on **Friday, May 8, 2026 from 6-8 PM at Park Hills Elementary School.**

This free, district-wide event is open to all families and invites children to explore the exciting world of science through hands-on activities, demonstrations, crafts, and more. This year’s theme, *Science: A Galaxy of Discovery*, promises an evening of curiosity, creativity, and learning for the whole family.

Tiler is Ready to Promote Heathy Minds (and Hearts)

Meet Tiler: Newest Member of our South Western High School Community

Creating a school environment where students feel safe, supported, and connected is essential to both well-being and learning. When students know they are cared for, they are better able to engage, build positive relationships, and succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Our high school continues to look for meaningful ways to support our students and strengthen our school community as a whole.

Effective as of Monday, February 9th, we were excited to welcome Tiler, a yellow Labrador retriever trained through Susquehanna Service Dogs, to the South Western High School learning environment. Tiler (*pronounced Tyler*) is a certified



facility dog who will work alongside trained staff members to support student well-being, engagement, and positive school climate.

Facility dogs are specially trained to provide comfort, encourage social-emotional learning, and help create a calm and welcoming environment for students and staff. Tiler will be part of our student support system, particularly during times of increased stress, and will always be supervised while following established school procedures and expectations.

This addition builds on the district's continued commitment to creating safe, supportive learning environments for all students. With Reed, the facility dog at the middle school already making a positive impact, welcoming Tiler to the high school allows us to expand these supports and further promote connection, care, and student well-being across our school community.



Emory H. Markle Middle School Theater Club is excited to bring

NIGHT AT THE WAX MUSEUM

by Craig Sodaro to the middle school stage.

March 6, 2026 at 7 PM and March 7, 2026 at 2 PM

Advanced Tickets are on sale now for \$5.00.

<https://www.vancoevents.com/us/DOSY>

Tickets will also be available at the door for \$8.00. (*cash only*)

Calendar...

February 25

- School Board Meeting, 6:30 PM

March 2

- SW Education Foundation Meeting, 7:30 AM

March 6, 7

- EHMMS Theater Club –
Night at the Wax Museum
6th at 7 PM and 7th at 2 PM

March 11

- School Board Planning Meeting, 6:30 PM

March 12, 13, 14

- HS Spring Musical
Cinderella (Enchanted Edition), 7 PM

March 13

- Schools Closed (K-12)
- Offices Open
(*Snow Makeup Day*)

March 16

- Schools Closed (K-12)
- Teacher Inservice
- Offices Open

March 25

- School Board Meeting, 6:30 PM

March 27

- HS Music In Our Schools Month Concert, 7 PM

April 1

- Early Dismissal (K-12)
Elementary 11:15 AM
Secondary 12:15 PM
- Professional Development

April 2

- Schools Closed (K-12)
- Offices Closed
(*Snow Makeup Day*)

April 3, 6

- Schools Closed (K-12)
- Offices Closed

April 8

- School Board Planning Meeting, 6:30 PM

April 22

- School Board Meeting, 6:30 PM