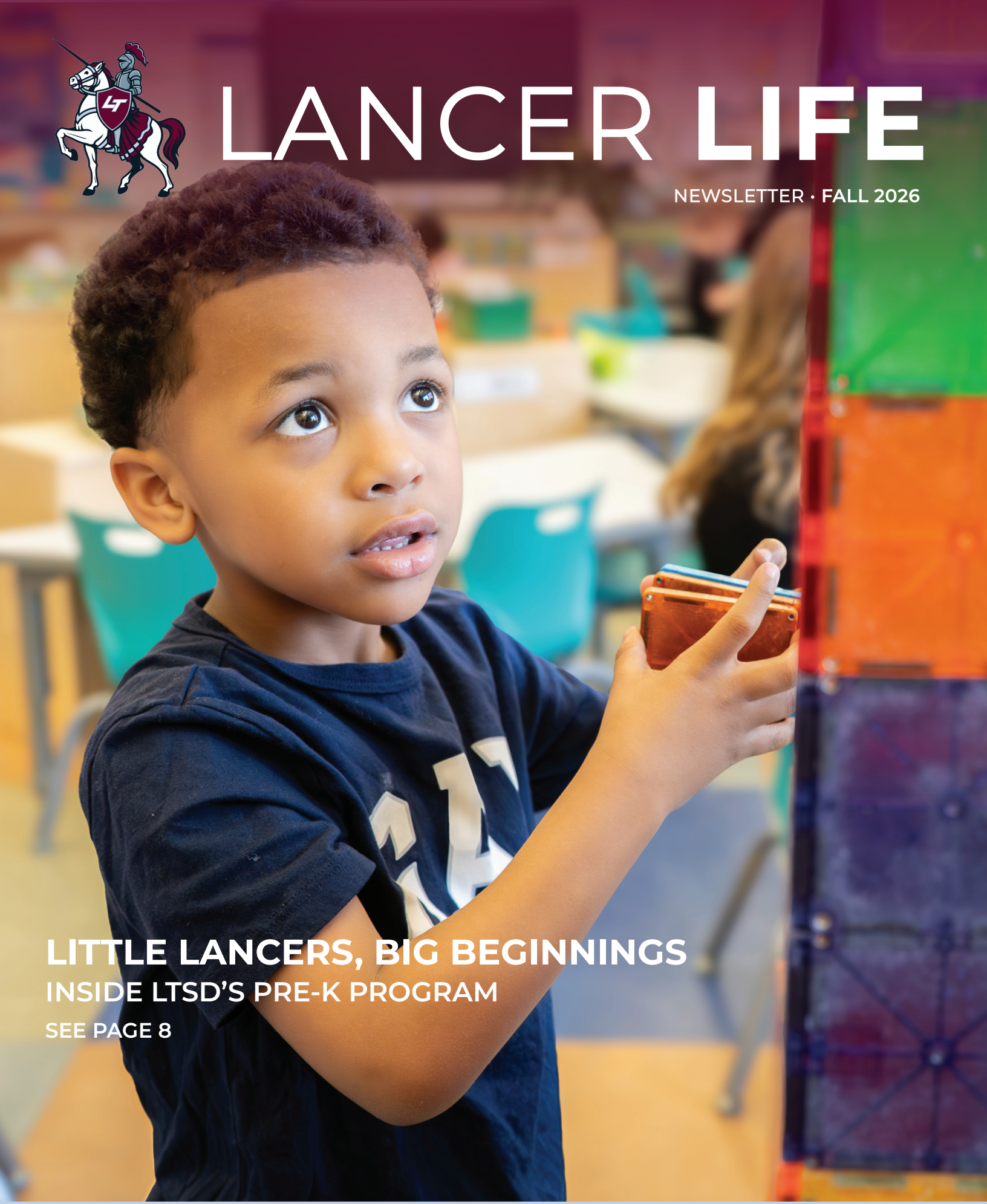
LANCER LIFE

NEWSLETTER • FALL 2026



LITTLE LANCERS, BIG BEGINNINGS

INSIDE LTSD'S PRE-K PROGRAM

SEE PAGE 8

5 NEW FACES, NEW ROLES **6** 'PROJECT LEAD THE WAY' **7** SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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2026 BOARD MEETINGS
November 4
December 2 (REORGANIZATION MEETING)

Meeting dates for 2027 will be approved during the Dec. 2 school board meeting.

All meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the board room at the District Service Center, 1605 Four Mile Dr., unless otherwise advertised.

Loyalsock Township School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or limited English proficiency in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504. For information regarding civil rights, grievances, procedures, or services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and useable by handicapped persons, contact 570-326-6508.

loyalsocklancers.org

ON THE COVER
Husain Butler, a 2026 Pre-K graduate, builds a tower during his play-based exploration time in Jackie Puckey's classroom last spring.



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

The start of a school year is always a time of new beginnings. It is a time to welcome new faces, embrace new ideas, and build upon the strong foundation that makes Loyalsock a special place to learn and grow.

Our students and staff have settled into a new rhythm of learning, and this issue of Lancer Life captures many of the new beginnings that have shaped the start of this school year. From new teachers and administrative roles to new curriculum, programs, and opportunities, our Lancers are embracing the experiences that make each year intentional.

Together, these stories provide a glimpse into those experiences that are taking place across our schools each day.

There are also the familiar beginnings that mark the start of every school year: new friendships, new classrooms, and, for some of our youngest learners, their very first steps into a school. Together, these moments remind us that learning is a journey filled with opportunities for discovery.

As we move into the heart of the school year, I am grateful for the dedication of our teachers and staff, the partnership of our families, and the support of our community. Together, we create an environment where our students can learn with confidence.

Sincerely,

Brooke Beiter

Brooke Beiter, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

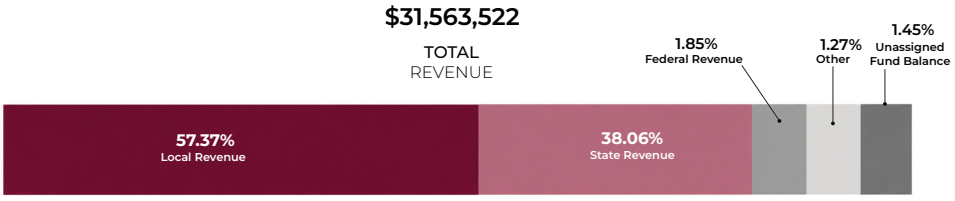


OPENING DAY • Loyalsock Township School District faculty and staff gathered for opening day Aug. 25.

THE 2026-27 DISTRICT BUDGET

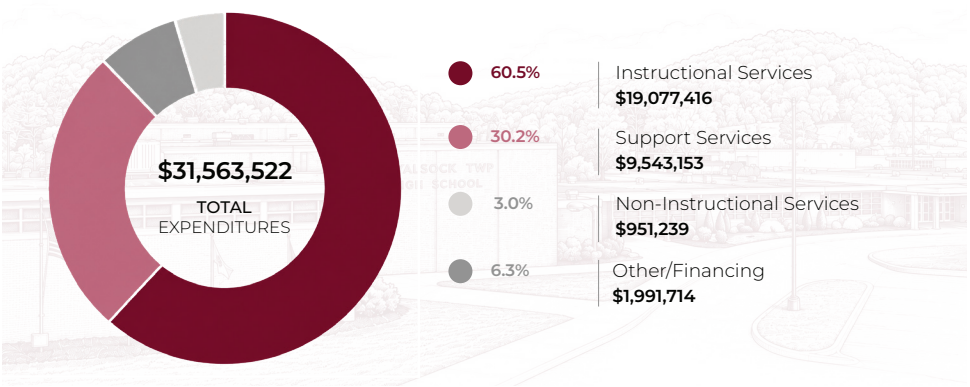
The 2026-27 **$31,563,522 operating budget** was approved on June 9, 2026, with a 4.82% tax increase, supporting about 1,560 students across three schools.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



Local Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue	Other	Unassigned Fund Balance
$18,109,000	**$12,011,572**	**$584,500**	**$400,000**	**$458,450**

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

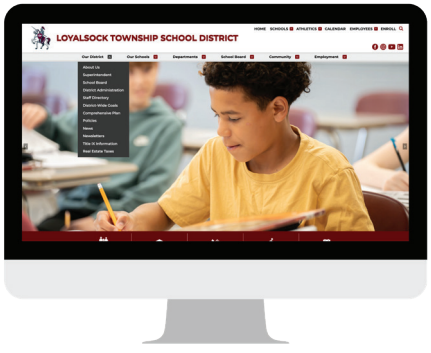


DISTRICT WEBSITE REFRESH: A NEW LOOK, WITH MORE WORK AHEAD

The Loyalsock Township School District launched a refreshed website over the summer, giving families and community members a cleaner, more organized way to find information.

The refresh included updated navigation, reorganized content and improvements to key areas of the site, with a focus on making information easier to find and use.

While the refreshed site is now live, the work continues. The district is reviewing pages across schools, departments and programs, updating content and identifying



additional ways to improve the experience for visitors. **The website remains a work in progress, with more updates and improvements to come.**

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE COMING TO SCHICK

A new after-school care option is coming to Donald E. Schick Elementary School this fall.

Loyalsock Township School District is partnering with Champions, an experienced provider of before- and after-school programs, to offer care for Schick students.

The program will provide a supervised place for students to spend time after school, with opportunities for homework help, enrichment activities, play and socialization. Students will have a structured setting to work on schoolwork, participate in activities and spend time with peers while families finish their workday.

The program will provide a convenient option for after-school care right at Schick Elementary, eliminating the need for students to travel to another location after dismissal.

"As a working mother myself, I know how important it is to have child care you can trust," said Superintendent Dr. Brooke Beiter. "Knowing your child is safe, supported, and engaged while you're finishing your workday provides peace of mind."

The program is expected to launch in November, pending final approval. Additional information about enrollment, hours and program details will be shared with families as it becomes available.

CHAMPIONS®

STUDENT-LED PROJECT ADDS SPACE FORCE TO LTHS MILITARY FLAG DISPLAY

Loyalsock Township High School's military flag display now represents all six branches of the U.S. armed forces, thanks to the initiative of junior Gia Biacchi.

After noticing the U.S. Space Force was the only branch missing from the display, Biacchi made it the focus of a 100-hour service project inspired by last spring's Hugh O'Brien Youth (HOBY) Leadership Conference.

Her effort culminated with a dedication ceremony on Aug. 31, attended by the student body, members of the Korean War Veterans of Lycoming County and representatives from the other five military branches. The LTHS band performed during the ceremony.

Although rain prevented the flag from being raised as planned that afternoon, the ceremony marked the completion of Biacchi's project. The Space Force flag was donated by Jung Martial Arts Family Center, a veteran-owned business.

"I'm fortunate to come to a school that supports student initiatives," Biacchi said.

Secondary Principal Richard Cummings said the project continues a tradition of students helping establish and maintain the school's military flag display.

"It is only fitting that the students continue this tradition to keep our military flag display updated," he said.

Staff Sgt. Conner Bentley, a U.S. Air and Space Force recruiter, told students the new flag represents both the history being made today and the possibilities that await their generation. He noted that the Space Force did not exist when many of their parents and teachers were in high school, and encouraged students to consider the opportunities ahead in areas such as cyber operations, intelligence, engineering and space systems.



Secondary Principal Richard Cummings congratulates junior Gia Biacchi beneath the raised Space Force flag along the west lawn of the LTHS campus.

"Today, Loyalsock Township High School is doing more than finishing a flag display," Bentley said. "You're recognizing history while it's still being written."

WELCOME BACK, LANCERS

From welcoming our newest Little Lancers to bringing students, families and the community together at Meet the Lancers Night, the start of the 2026-27 school year was busy across the district as the school year officially kicked off Aug. 31.

















NEW SCHOOL YEAR BRINGS NEW FACES, NEW ROLES ACROSS LTSD

The start of the 2026-27 school year brought several new faces and new roles to the Loyalsock Township School District as educators and administrators.

Four new faculty members joined the district this fall: **Grace Andrews**, business and computer information technology teacher at Loyalsock Township High School; **Rebecca Hatchell**, social studies teacher at LTHS; **Caleb McCombie**, STEM teacher at Loyalsock Township Middle School; and **Heather McCaslin**, long-term substitute special education teacher at LTMS.

The district's new faculty induction program provides mentoring and professional development throughout their first year, helping new educators become familiar with LTSD and supporting their continued growth in the classroom.

Several members of the district team also stepped into new roles: **Devin Way** joined LTSD this summer as assistant principal at Donald E. Schick Elementary School, while **Dr. Rachelle Ackerman** transitioned to supervisor of curriculum and instruction PK-12. **Dayne Waller** assumed the newly created role of principal of teaching and learning for grades 6-12. **Marc Walter** and **Megan Renninger** began their first years as principals of LTMS and Schick Elementary, respectively.


ACKERMAN


RENNINGER


WALLER


WALTER


WAY

The changes extend into the classroom as well, with **Vanessa Gresh** and **Jaime Smith** moving into third- and first-grade teaching positions at Schick, while **Brandon Mulaski** and **Jamie Thomas** began new social studies assignments at LTHS and LTMS.

LTHS SENIOR EARNS PERFECT SCORE ON CIVICS ASSESSMENT

Loyalsock Township High School senior Owen Bennett earned a perfect score of 100% on the Pennsylvania civics assessment administered at the conclusion of his civics course last school year.

Bennett was the only one of 100 district students who completed the assessment to earn a perfect score.

He was recognized with a Certificate of Achievement from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and honored by retired LTHS social studies teacher Kirk Bower and principals Stephen Hafele and Richard Cummings.



A HELPING HAND • Community partners helped Lancer students start the school year prepared. WeCare at Sycamore donated 75 school supply bags to Donald E. Schick Elementary, while GIANT Food Stores provided supplies to Loyalsock Township Middle School. Their support helped ensure students had some of the essentials they need.



‘PROJECT LEAD THE WAY’: STRENGTHENING THE PATH TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

What if students could begin exploring how engineers, designers and problem-solvers approach the challenges of the real world — before they ever reach high school?

As part of the district’s ongoing commitment to preparing students for college, careers and life beyond the classroom, Loyalsock Township Middle School has introduced Project Lead the Way Gateway, a new program that brings a focused STEM experience to all students in grades 6-8.

The program gives students opportunities to explore engineering, technology, problem-solving and design while building skills that will serve them in the grades ahead and future careers.

For students, however, the experience is about doing: identifying problems, developing ideas, testing solutions, working with others and learning from what doesn’t work the first time.

“The class was created intentionally to give students meaningful exposure to engineering, problem-solving and technology in order to expand and complement the core curriculum already in place,” said PK-12 Curriculum Supervisor Dr. Rachelle Ackerman.

Ackerman added that the course emphasizes collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking and engineering design. As part of the related arts nine-week rotation, the course is available to every middle school student — not just those who elect to take it.

In the classroom, those skills come to life through hands-on challenges. One recent project challenged teams to design, build and test an ankle-foot brace for a hypothetical patient with cerebral palsy using everyday materials. Students developed their own designs, tested prototypes, evaluated their results and presented their work.

“We are training students to identify problems, generate an idea, test it, most likely fail in some way, and improve,” said STEM teacher Caleb McCombie.

The experience is already extending beyond the classroom. After completing the brace project, one student redesigned her prototype at home and brought it back to school to show McCombie.

Looking ahead, the program will expand next year with Energy and Environment for seventh- and eighth-grade students, while sixth graders continue with Design and Modeling. In the third year, eighth graders will add Building for the Future.



Students Addison Eck, left, and Michael Balmer work together to build and test an ankle-foot brace.

CAREER **CONNECTION**

Loyalsock Township School District was well represented at LycoCTC’s Aug. 26 ribbon-cutting ceremony, celebrating the completion of its renovation and expansion project to now include diesel technology and welding. School board members and district administrators joined the celebration of the exciting investment in career and technical education and the opportunities it provides for 70 Lancers.















MORE THAN A PRESENCE: SCHOOL POLICE OFFICERS HELP KEEP LANCERS SAFE

Above left are School Police Officers Derek Hartman, Tim Pohlig, Mike Knight, also the district's Act 55 School Safety & Security Coordinator, and Paul McGee. Above are SPOs Bret Myers, left, and David Podgorney.

Loyalsock Township School District's six School Police Officers (SPOs) provide more than a visible security presence. They are familiar faces who work each day to build relationships, identify potential concerns and help create a safe environment for students and staff.

The district's SPOs — Derek Hartman, Mike Knight, Paul McGee, Bret Myers, David Podgorney and Tim Pohlig — work closely with administrators, staff and local emergency responders. Knight also serves as the district's Act 55 School Safety & Security Coordinator, helping coordinate the district's safety and security efforts.

"Being present in our schools every day allows us to build relationships with students and staff and become people they know and trust," Knight said. "A big part of our job is being proactive — identifying concerns, addressing them early and making sure our schools are prepared for whatever situations may arise."

Much of that work happens behind the scenes. SPOs monitor school buildings and grounds, participate in emergency planning and drills, communicate with district personnel, and coordinate with local law enforcement and emergency responders. Their role extends well beyond responding to an incident.

That preparation is supported by multiple layers of security throughout the district, including 243 security cameras, controlled main entrances with camera identification, electronic key-fob access, two-way radios and the Raptor visitor management system.

Students and staff also participate in annual emergency preparedness training, while schools conduct monthly evacuation drills and regular lockdown/intruder, bus evacuation and weather drills. During a lockdown, students and staff are trained in the "Locks, Lights Out, Stay Out of Sight" protocol and receive annual instruction in "Run, Hide, Fight" principles for an active threat.

> **"A big part of our job is being proactive** — identifying concerns, addressing them early and making sure our schools are **prepared for whatever situations may arise."**
>
> *— Mike Knight, Act 55 School Safety & Security Coordinator*

Together, trained personnel, established procedures, technology and partnerships with local law enforcement create a layered approach to school safety — one designed not only to respond when something happens, but to help prevent concerns and keep Loyalsock schools safe, secure and welcoming every day.

Located under Departments on the district website, the School Safety & Security page is becoming a central resource for families, with emergency guides, preparedness information, safety procedures and more. New resources will continue to be added over time.



Little Lancers, BIG BEGINNINGS

For some of Loyalsock's youngest learners, the journey to kindergarten begins a little earlier. Little Lancer Pre-K Counts gives 4-year-olds a place to learn, play, build confidence and become part of the school community, making kindergarten feel less like a new beginning and more like the next step.

When Kelsey Johnson's family moved to Pennsylvania, her daughter, Lydia, was already approaching a major milestone: kindergarten.

They were new to the area and new to Loyalsock Township School District. With kindergarten on the horizon, enrolling Lydia in Little Lancer Pre-K at Donald E. Schick Elementary School quickly became an obvious choice.

"We loved that the program is set out to provide a great foundation of many skills," Johnson said.

There was another benefit, too, one that would become especially apparent the following fall. Lydia would not simply be entering kindergarten at Schick; she would already be considered a Little Lancer.

She would know the building, the teachers and the routines. She would already understand what it means to be part of the school community.

A PLACE TO BELONG

Little Lancer Pre-K Counts began at LTSD in 2022 and is now in its fifth year.

From their first day, Pre-K students are full members of the Schick Elementary community. They participate in specials such as art, music, physical education and library, take part in schoolwide activities and become familiar with the routines and rhythms of school.

For a 4-year-old, that familiarity can make a difference.

"When she started kindergarten, she already knew the school and teachers so well," Johnson said. "She already knew what to expect in the day-to-day and knew her way around the building, including the lunchroom and dismissal procedures with ease."

The academic foundations matter, too. Students build early literacy and math skills, strengthen motor development and gain the attention and instructional focus needed to follow multi-step directions.

But kindergarten readiness is about more than knowing letters and numbers.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

It is also learning how to share. How to take turns. How to communicate with classmates. How to express frustration and work through a disagreement. Those skills are practiced every day.

Jackie Puckey, Little Lancer Pre-K

teacher, balances academic instruction with play-based exploration, social-emotional learning and opportunities for children to make choices. Even simple play becomes an opportunity to practice skills that will serve students well in the years ahead.

"While learning and working on academic skills are an important part of our program, a significant portion of the day is devoted to play-based exploration," Puckey said.

Little Lancer Pre-K is a federally funded program for eligible 4-year-olds designed to provide a strong social and academic foundation for their educational journey.

Students use The Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies, a research-based, whole-child approach that weaves literacy, math, science, the arts and social-emotional development throughout the school day, according to Dr. Rachelle Ackerman, PK-12 curriculum supervisor.

Behind that work is an intentional focus on helping children become comfortable not only with learning, but with being learners.

"Student confidence is one of the most noticeable areas of growth we see," Puckey said.

Johnson saw that growth in Lydia. She noticed academic progress, but also something less easily measured: confidence and critical thinking.

"Whether your child is ready for a head start or needs that extra push, the Little Lancer program does a great job meeting your students where they are as they prepare for their journey at Schick," Johnson said.

Another parent, Olivia Liddic, saw a similar transformation in her son, Callum.

After a few weeks adjusting to the new schedule, Callum began to thrive in the structure of the school day. Liddic was surprised by how much he retained, including how to write his name, recognize letters and numbers, and even begin adding.

Just as important, he already knew the "big school."



> **"Student confidence** is one of the most **noticeable areas of growth** we see."
>
> *— Jackie Puckey, Pre-K teacher, Schick Elementary*

ALREADY A LITTLE LANCER

Liddic, who attended Loyalsock herself, said the familiarity offered reassurance for both Callum and her family.

The first day of kindergarten, then, wasn't really a beginning at all; it was the next step.

"We put our full trust in Loyalsock's Pre-K as it felt like our safest option, and we were not wrong," Liddic said. "Communication is great, care for children is phenomenal, and the educational environment and content are the best I have seen."

Pre-K and kindergarten teachers also collaborate through professional development, activities, field trips and planning, creating a natural connection between the two programs, Ackerman said.

Johnson saw that connection firsthand. Lydia entered kindergarten with a familiarity that allowed her to focus less on figuring out where she belonged and more on the learning and relationships happening around her.

Looking back, Johnson describes the Pre-K experience simply: "The perfect way to prepare for kindergarten."

For Puckey, some of the most rewarding moments come in smaller ways: the sudden "aha" when something a child has been working toward finally clicks. A connection is made, a skill is recognized and the child proudly points it out.

The moments may look small, but they are the start of something bigger: confidence, curiosity, independence and the ability to learn, work and play alongside others.

Those small moments are where a school career begins. ■

> **"The perfect way to prepare for kindergarten."**
>
> *— Kelsey Johnson, parent*



At right, Maajid Anderson looks through toy binoculars during a recent play-based exploration. Above, Pre-K students practice sharing and working together.

REPLAY

LANCER ATHLETICS

Lancer Athletics has a fresh look this year, with Dylan Casale beginning his first full year as athletic and activities director and five new head coaches.

CHEER

Stephanie Corter brings more than 20 years of varsity coaching experience to the program. The Lancers also earned "Most Spirited" honors at Pine Forest Cheer Camp this summer.

CROSS-COUNTRY

Evan Laudenslager helped restore the team's original Canfield Island course with former Loyalsock coaches.

FOOTBALL

Justin Van Fleet began his 15th season — the longest tenure among current Lancer head coaches.

GOLF

Jackson DeVol leads both the boys and girls programs. The girls added a PIAA District IV Team Championship runner-up finish.

BOYS SOCCER

Seven seniors provide leadership for a program facing strong District IV competition.

GIRLS SOCCER

Peter Ruhl returns to Loyalsock to lead the girls program after previously coaching the boys.

GIRLS TENNIS

The Lancers build on last season's second-place District IV finish.

VOLLEYBALL

Beth Rohrer leads a young program building on last season's District IV silver medal.

FROM THE VAULT

Our Throwback Thursdays on our social media channels this summer took us through the decades, yielding a combined total of **143,484 views** from a community that clearly loves a good trip down memory lane. Here, we're bringing a few of those images together for a look at the people, places and moments we featured.



1960s

LEARNING TOGETHER

Classrooms were filled with students, stacks of textbooks and plenty of handwritten notes, but the focus was the same: a commitment to learning.



1970s

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Just like today, clubs and organizations gave Loyalsock students in the '70s a chance to get involved, explore interests and connect with classmates. And yes, that's Taylor Swift's dad, Scott, in the top left, who graduated in 1970.



1980s

THE LANCER SPIRIT

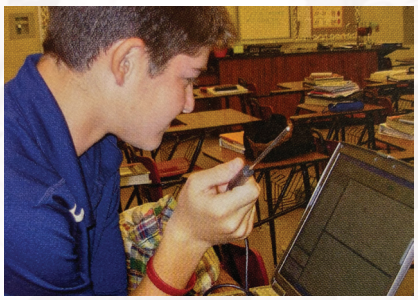
From the marching band to packed stadiums, the 1980s were a time of big hair and even bigger Lancer pride. Music, athletics and school traditions brought the community together then as they do now.



1990s

MAKING CONNECTIONS

From beepers to the internet, the '90s marked a period of change in education, as new technology began making its way into the classroom, preparing a generation of students for a more interconnected world.



2000s

CARRYING IT FORWARD

A new millennium. A new era. The 2000s brought advancing technology, renovated spaces at LTHS and a brand-new middle school, helping equip a new generation of Lancers for the 21st century.

THE LANCER FOUNDATION AWARDS $2,300 IN GRANTS

The Lancer Foundation awarded $2,300 through its first grant round for the 2026-27 school year, funding three projects at Loyalsock Township High School and Donald E. Schick Elementary School.







At LTHS, Modern Language teachers Noelia Huertas and Madison DiCamillo will use their grant for Exploring Hispanic Culture Through Food, a series of lessons that connect Spanish language and cultural learning with hands-on cooking experiences in the school's Food Lab.

At Schick Elementary, fifth-grade teacher Alanna Van Fleet received funding for a Traveling Trunk that will be used alongside Rosa Parks: My Story to explore the Civil Rights Movement through primary sources, artifacts and media.

The foundation also awarded a grant for the fifth-grade Classroom Care Kit Initiative, which will provide students with basic hygiene and wellness supplies to keep in their classroom cubbies. The project is being developed in partnership with River Valley Health, allowing the team to provide approximately 150-200 care kits.

The grants support hands-on learning and student wellness, while providing teachers with additional resources to enhance classroom experiences.

NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW GOALS FOR THE LANCER FOUNDATION



MUSHENO



FRISCO

The Lancer Foundation began the new school year with Todd Musheno as president and Lauren Frisco continuing as vice president.

Musheno is a partner with The Hartman Group and a 2005 graduate of LTHS. He and his wife, Katie, also a 2005 graduate, have two daughters currently enrolled in LTSD.

Frisco, a district paraprofessional, will continue serving as vice president. Kory Datres '05 will serve as treasurer, and Molly Garczynski as secretary.

Under its new leadership, the foundation is focused on rebuilding and strengthening its presence in the LTSD community. The board approved a new set of goals to guide that work, with an emphasis on community awareness, partnerships and expanded support for students and schools.

"I'm excited to begin this next chapter for the foundation and find new ways to support our students, schools and community," Musheno said.

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Lancer Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit and proud LTSD affiliate, dedicated to expanding opportunities for every Lancer. Since 1992, the foundation has partnered with alumni, families, businesses and community members to support innovative programs and experiences that enrich academics, music, the arts, athletics, and student life. **For more information or to learn about more ways to give, visit loyalsocklancers.org/thelancerfoundation.**



THE LANCER FOUNDATION

The Lancer Foundation
1605 Four Mile Dr. • Williamsport, PA 17701
Phone: 570-326-6508 ext. 1015
loyalsocklancers.org/thelancerfoundation
The Lancer Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is the official gift-receiving entity for LTSD.

LANCER LIFE

NEWSLETTER · FALL 2026

LOYALSOCK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Williamsport, PA 17701

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- THE LANCER FOUNDATION



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
Eighth-graders put teamwork, perseverance and problem-solving into action during their recent annual trip to Camp Susque.

Important Dates & Upcoming Events

OCTOBER	
Oct. 27	LTMS/Schick “Spooktacular” Concert | 7 p.m.
NOVEMBER	
Nov. 2	End of First Marking Period
Nov. 4	School Board Meeting | 7 p.m.
Nov. 13-15	LTHS Drama Production, “Enter the Body”
Nov. 23-24	Parent-Teacher Conferences (NO SCHOOL)
Nov. 25-30	Thanksgiving Break
DECEMBER	
Dec. 2	School Board Reorganization Meeting | 7 p.m.
Dec. 14	4th-/5th-Grade Choir Holiday Concert | 7 p.m.
Dec. 15	6th-Grade Band/Choir Holiday Concert | 7 p.m.
Dec. 16	LTHS Band/Choir Holiday Concert | 7 p.m.
Dec. 17	4th-Grade Band Informance | 6 p.m.
Dec. 17	5th-Grade Band/LTMS Jazz Concert | 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	7th-/8th-Grade Band/Choir Holiday Concert | 7 p.m.
Dec. 23	Early Dismissal
Dec. 24-31	Winter Break
JANUARY	
Jan. 1	Winter Break
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (NO SCHOOL)
Jan. 22	End of Second Marking Period/First Semester
Jan. 25	Clerical Day (NO SCHOOL)