

# PANTHER PRIDE: 50 REASONS WE'RE PROUD TO BE PANTHERS

Spring Lake Park Schools is proud of its students, staff, parents, families and supportive communities of Blaine, Spring Lake Park and Fridley. Our list is much larger, but here's a few reasons why we are proud to be Panthers!

1. We are a true 1:1 technology district, with a goal to improve student engagement, personalize student learning and provide equitable technical access for all.
2. We have the Minnesota Legislature and Minnesota Department of Education's first-ever Innovation Zone designation - along with Farmington Area Schools - to encourage the development of new, innovative ways to deliver education more effectively.
3. Panther athletics continue to succeed as a new member of the Northwest Suburban Conference and have competed at the state level in dance, football, swimming, hockey, golf and more.
4. The Lighthouse School provides an enriched learning environment for gifted and insatiable learners ages 6-18. Lighthouse is aligned around inquiry-based complex learning and collaboration under the guidance of staff members.
5. Every teacher is engaged in professional learning and development to better personalize instruction for each student, in each classroom and in each school in the district.
6. Westwood Middle School provides a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program for students in grades 6-8.
7. The community-based Panther Foundation has given over \$750,000 to our schools in the form of grant awards and funding of special projects.
8. The district created a College and Career Readiness Continuum to deepen efforts to create college readiness and the academic, life, and career skills crucial for student success.
9. During spring 2015, we conducted several "innovation days" to redesign learning spaces to better meet the needs of students and teachers. Teams of students, teachers and principals worked together with architects to envision how spaces can be redesigned.
10. Woodcrest Elementary Spanish Immersion is a K-5 school and is a model immersion program regularly hosting districts beginning their own immersion programs.
11. To reinforce the importance of college readiness, Westwood Middle School takes all 8th graders on an annual college visit to the University of Minnesota.
12. The Panther Pantry was recognized by the Minnesota School Counselors Association (MSCA) with the 2015 Wellstone-MSCA Legacy Award. The Panther Pantry began in 2013 and provides food, toiletries and other necessities to district families in need.
13. Opportunities in Emergency Care (OEC) program academic teams placed 1st - 9th in the 2015 Emergency Care State Competition.
14. The district's "Make Your MARK" initiative strives to promote and provide a world-class welcoming environment and customer service experience for parents and the community.
15. Teachers across the district collaborate weekly in Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams focused on student outcomes, assessments, instruction and results.
16. "The VOICE," a high school peer education theater group, received an award for promoting mental health awareness in Anoka County.
17. Each spring, dozens of Spring Lake Park High School students receive academic awards and honors at our annual high school awards night. Many students receive academic scholarships to attend colleges and universities throughout the nation.
18. The district recently redesigned its Educational Services department to more effectively support teachers and schools in their work with students.
19. We established the Community Facilities Design Team in March 2015 to assist us with future facility planning. More than 70 staff members, parents, students and community members are serving on the team.
20. Starting with the 2015-2016 school year, high school students will be able to attend home athletic events for free, with the exception of dance and hockey, as a way to further boost student participation and engagement.
21. For the past two years, Spring Lake Park High School's theater department received outstanding marks from the Hennepin Theater Trust's SpotLight Musical Theatre Program, which recognizes the extraordinary achievements and process of developing young artists.
22. After battling melanoma, sixth grader Graham Trocke-Fowler started to raise money for childhood cancer research. He has raised \$50,000 in the last three years and was recognized by President Obama at the White House in spring 2015.
23. The Spring Lake Park Parent Academy is a 7-week program designed to build a bridge between home and school, and create stronger partnerships with our families.



24. In their first year as a team, the all-freshmen Science Olympiad team at Spring Lake Park High School placed fifth at the regional tournament to advance to the state tournament.
25. As a junior, senior Mitch Raihle received first place in the 2015 Class A State Diving Tournament and was also named an All American Diver by the National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association.
26. Individual and teams of teachers implemented five innovative prototypes to enhance communication between parents and teachers during the 2014-2015 school year. These teacher-designed prototypes emphasized alternatives to the traditional conference structure.
27. Each year, administration develops a District Operational Plan (DOP) to identify projects that are aligned to the initiatives in the strategic plan. This type of planning allows the district to have a long-term view while continually assessing its work.
28. First-year coach Tia Bont led the Pantherettes Dance Team to their 11th straight state tournament appearance. The team received two first-place finishes in jazz during the season.
29. All preschool-12th grade students participate in learning experiences that foster higher-order thinking, substantive conversations and connections to the world beyond the classroom.
30. Our student enrollment continues to grow. In the past 10 years, enrollment has increased by about 1,100 students and is projected to grow by at least another 1,000 students in the next 10 years.
31. One of many new initiatives implemented last school year was the district's teacher learning and evaluation system. The system enhances the collaboration of teachers, coaches and principals, and ensures ongoing support for teachers as they work to improve student learning.
32. The district is blending innovative ideas with best practice research to sustain progress for successful students, and accelerate the learning of struggling students.
33. The district is one of a select few to be honored as an Apple Distinguished Program for demonstrating best practices of visionary leadership, innovative teaching and learning, ongoing professional learning, compelling evidence of success and a flexible learning environment.
34. Our district is in solid financial condition and was one of only a few districts in the metro area not making budget reductions for 2015-2016.
35. Our district earned the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials – International for the eighth year in a row.
36. Eight students from the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) participated at state and three students went on to the national FCCLA conference.
37. 2015 graduate Zep Elkerton was awarded a Scholar of Distinction, Meritorious Performance, in Technical Theater, Stage Management and Sound. The award recognizes high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate outstanding knowledge, skills and creativity in theater arts.
38. Work is continuing on the design and phase-in of personalized learning plans for all students as a way to provide greater customized learning.
39. Seven Spring Lake Park High School seniors received \$16,000 scholarships from Wallin Education Partners. Over 450 students applied and 123 scholarships were awarded. The scholarship is based on college academic readiness as well as motivation and leadership.
40. Through purposeful design and masterful implementation, the incorporation of iDevices in the classrooms has truly transformed our learning environments into richer, more personalized and highly engaging settings. Teachers have developed rigorous, differentiated and inspiring learning experiences for all.
41. The district continues to increase its support of families by refining the grades 6-12 dean model and is planning to implement student/family advocate positions in 2015-2016 to support students and their families.
42. Innovation and doing things differently is an integral part of the district. Work is continuing to create a systemic culture of innovation among all district staff members through the implementation of design thinking processes and tools.
43. Our school community is supportive, vibrant and growing. The district's ongoing facilities study helps the district to plan for future facilities needs.
44. Our vision to have every student prepared for college is bold and aspirational. As a district, we are collectively committed to taking whatever actions are necessary every day to design engaging learning experiences for each student.
45. At Spring Lake Park High School, 15 Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered and more than 25% of students take at least one AP exam, each spring.
46. 2015 graduate Eliyas Hassen was one of only 1,000 students nationwide to be named a Gates Millennium Scholar. The scholarship pays tuition to any accredited four-year college in the United States.
47. Early Childhood Family Education classes help guide parents through their child's stages of development and build positive parent-child relationships.
48. Work continues on the district's world languages study, including identifying K-12 world language offerings. Implementation of the new offerings is planned for fall 2016.
49. Spring Lake Park Schools uses Schoology, an integrated learning management solution that helps track and improve student outcomes as well as enhance student engagement.
50. For more than 10 years, the Online Learning Program at Spring Lake Park High School has provided a positive experience for students interested in online education.



*We're using the hashtag #SLPPantherProud on Facebook and Twitter to talk about all the positive things going on in the district. Feel free to join the conversation!*

