

*STEELTON-HIGHSPIRE
SCHOOL DISTRICT*

**COMMUNITY
TRANSFORMATION &
STADIUM REVITALIZATION
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2025 TO 2030**

Prepared By :

**Steelton-Highspire School District
In Partnership with the Roller Nation
Foundation (Est. 2022) & On Hill
Development LLC**

Date: 06/25/2025

Location: Steelton, Pennsylvania



Steelton-Highspire School District Community Profile

History:

Since its inception in the late 19th century, the Steelton-Highspire School District has served as a cornerstone of education and civic engagement. Once powered by thriving steel mills, the community now stands at a pivotal point of renewal and transformation.

Mission Statement:

To empower all students to reach their full potential by providing a high-quality, inclusive education in a safe and nurturing environment.

Steelton-Highspire School District Snapshot

✓ Enrollment Overview

- Total Students: 1,473 (K-12)
- Promotion Rate: 98.04%
- Low-Income Students: 78.9%
- English Learners (EL): 10.5% (155 students)
- Immigrant Students: 73

📊 Student Demographics

- Black / African American: 50.1%
- Hispanic / Latino: 28.2%
- White: 9.6%
- Multiracial: 11.3%
- Asian: 0.3%
- American Indian / Alaska Native: 0.4%

🗣️ Language & Cultural Diversity

- Top Home Languages: Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Nepali, Haitian Creole
- Economically Disadvantaged EL Students: 61%
- Rising demand for culturally responsive education & wraparound services

♀️♂️ Gender Distribution

- Elementary (PK-6): Female 51.2% | Male 48.8%
- High School (7-12): Female 49.0% | Male 51.0%



"As Superintendent, I am proud to stand alongside our educators, families, and community leaders in advancing this transformational vision for Steelton-Highspire.

This plan is not just about facilities—it's about creating equitable access, supporting the whole child, and preparing our students for real-world success. We are building more than a stadium. We are building futures. By investing in academic enrichment, workforce readiness, wellness, and community empowerment, we are ensuring that every student has the tools to thrive in school and in life. This is a defining moment for our district—and a chance to turn vision into legacy."

WILLIE SLADE, SUPERINTENDENT
STEELTON-HIGHSPIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT



"As an alum and Athletic Director of Steelton-Highspire, I've seen how athletics shape our students into leaders. Our legacy includes state titles, college scholarships, and alumni reaching the NFL and beyond. But our facilities no longer reflect that legacy. This project is more than a stadium upgrade—it's about restoring pride, building opportunity, and preparing our youth for life beyond the field. The new complex will serve not only athletes, but the entire community. Now is the time to invest in our future and preserve the tradition that makes Steel-High special."

ANDREW ERBY SR., ATHLETIC DIRECTOR & FOOTBALL COACH
STEELTON HIGHSPIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT

What's At Stake

Generational Consequences of Financial & Infrastructure Distress

Steeltown-Highspire faces a pivotal moment. Years of financial hardship and infrastructural decline have left lasting impacts on student outcomes, community pride, and economic growth. Without intentional reinvestment, these challenges will continue to echo across generations. The following key risks illustrate what is truly at stake if meaningful action is not taken:

1.

Lost Opportunities Without Investment

Without a functional stadium and multipurpose center, the district is unable to host home games, community-wide gatherings, or revenue-generating events that foster school spirit and stimulate local economic activity.

2.

Impact on Equity and Access

Students from historically marginalized backgrounds face compounding barriers when basic educational, athletic, and wellness facilities are lacking—widening the equity gap in academic achievement, physical health, and mental well-being.

3.

Enrollment and Retention Risks

Outdated infrastructure and limited program offerings diminish the district's ability to retain students and attract new families. This impacts public perception and contributes to declining enrollment, which reduces school funding.

4.

Economic Development Connection

Modern school-community hubs contribute to neighborhood revitalization and job growth. Without this investment, Steeltown and Highspire risk falling behind neighboring areas that are actively modernizing their educational and civic environments.

5.

Community Fragmentation

The absence of centralized, welcoming space weakens social cohesion among students, families, and neighbors. The stadium—once a proud symbol of unity—now sits underutilized, missing its role as a center of purpose, connection, and community pride.

Financial Distress: The Urgency for Equitable Investment

Steeltown is navigating chronic financial distress—marked by limited tax revenue, outdated facilities, and high concentrations of poverty. Nearly 79% of students are from low-income households, and the district serves a growing multilingual and immigrant population in need of wraparound supports. These conditions severely constrain the district's capacity to invest in modern educational spaces, health services, and youth programming. Without targeted capital investment and strategic partnerships, financial hardship will continue to limit opportunities and drive long-term disinvestment.

The proposed Career, Education & Wellness Center is not just a project—it is an essential step toward restoring dignity, access, and generational opportunity for the Steeltown community.

Why Facilities Matter: The Learning Environment & Student Success

"Students in updated, well-maintained facilities score up to 10% higher on standardized tests compared to peers in outdated buildings."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION / 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL FUND

"A positive school environment—including safe, functional athletic and wellness spaces—improves student attendance, behavior, and overall academic performance."

NATIONAL CENTER FOR SAFE & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

"Quality school facilities reduce dropout rates and increase college attendance, particularly for students from low-income communities."

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY CENTER

Athletics: A Legacy Worth Preserving

Steelton and Highspire are two historic boroughs in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, just south of Harrisburg along the Susquehanna River. Once thriving industrial towns, both communities share deep roots in steel production, manufacturing, and blue-collar resilience. Steelton, home to the former Bethlehem Steel Mill, attracted diverse immigrant populations, and today remains a culturally rich and proud community.

Over the decades, economic shifts have left both boroughs facing persistent challenges—aging infrastructure, limited economic opportunity, and high poverty rates. Nearly 80% of students in the district come from economically disadvantaged households. Despite these hardships, the community remains tightly woven, with schools serving as vital hubs for support, engagement, and opportunity.

Steelton-Highspire School District holds one of the most celebrated athletic legacies in Pennsylvania—and indeed the nation. Known affectionately as the “Rollers,” the district’s football program began in 1894 and has since achieved 844 wins, the third-highest total among all U.S. high schools. With 1,358 games played, Steel-High ranks #1 nationally for total games. This enduring tradition of excellence spans 18 league championships, 17 District 3 titles, and five PIAA State Championships—including recent back-to-back wins in 2022 and 2023, led by Coach Andrew.

In addition to team success, the Rollers have produced 49 First Team All-State players, three High School All-Americans, and 32 Big 33 Classic participants, including 1978 MVP Jeff Ogden. Notably, Alex Erby, the 2023 High School All-American and National Offensive Player of the Year, shattered the Pennsylvania all-time passing records for yards and touchdowns. At the college level, Steel-High boasts 13 All-American alumni, such as Jordan Hill (Penn State), who went on to play in the NFL.

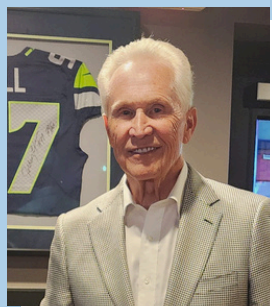
Behind these players are generations of legendary coaches—from Joe Shevock, the architect of the 1948 #1 ranked team, to Rob Deibler, whose era brought home multiple District and State titles, to Andrew Erby, a former All-State Roller himself, now a three-time State Champion coach and community visionary. Yet today, despite its legendary past and current success, Steelton-Highspire’s athletic infrastructure stands in stark contrast to its reputation.

The current football stadium—built in 1918—is in disrepair. The turf field has outlived its lifespan, the track is unusable, and the grandstand is no longer safe for spectators.

As a result, the district is forced to hold home games at offsite locations, stripping students of the chance to play on their own field and denying the community the shared pride and economic vitality of hometown events.

“What we want to do is elevate anything and everything that’s ever been done in Steelton before. This is a generational change... It’s personal with all of us.”

DAVID SULLIVAN
STEELTON ALUMNUS &
PROJECT AMBASSADOR



“Cottage Hill was my field of dreams. I learned everything I needed to learn up there. This project is about waking up all those ghosts on Cottage Hill. This is about legacy. It’s about leaving an imprint in this community that will last for a lifetime. Steelton people –we’re prideful. That Roller pride is what takes us through everything. All we need is a chance. And we’ve got a chance to do something special.”

TROY DRAYTON
NFL VETERAN & STEELTON
ALUMNUS



Current and Future Athletic Programs

From Friday night lights to state titles, Roller athletics have long been the heart of community pride and youth opportunity. Now, with a renewed investment in its stadium and facilities, Steelton-Highspire is poised to honor that legacy—and launch the next chapter of greatness.

Steelton-Highspire School District currently offers a range of athletic programs that support student growth, leadership, and community pride. Boys sports include football, basketball, baseball, wrestling, and track and field. Girls sports include volleyball, basketball, softball, and track and field. These programs have long served as pillars of opportunity—developing student-athletes who have gone on to earn scholarships, compete at the collegiate and professional levels, and serve as community role models.

Beyond competitive athletics, the field itself is a shared community resource. It is regularly used by the marching band and cheerleaders, as well as for youth football games, cheerleading, and co-ed flag football leagues. It also serves as the site for gym class field days, physical fitness testing, and is a welcoming space for college athletes returning home to train and stay connected to their roots. These activities reflect the field's importance as both a cultural and physical gathering place for generations of Rollers.

As part of the district's 2025-2030 Strategic Framework, there is a clear commitment to expanding athletic opportunities that reflect the interests, cultures, and needs of our student population. Future program development will explore sports such as soccer, tennis, cheerleading, esports, and unified sports, with a focus on increasing participation among female students, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. These efforts will be informed by student voice, community feedback, and equity-centered planning—ensuring that every student sees themselves represented and supported in athletics at Steel-High.



Executive Summary

The Steelton-Highspire School District, in partnership with the Roller Foundation and On Hill Development LLC, is advancing a bold, multi-phase plan to transform its stadium into a Community Education, Career, Health & Wellness Hub—while also revitalizing the athletic facilities into a state-of-the-art complex that honors the district's deep-rooted legacy in sports.

This project unifies education, career development, health services, and athletic excellence in one modernized location to better serve students, families, and the broader community. It will be executed in thoughtfully phased components to meet funding guidelines and ensure long-term sustainability.

Vision

To transform the stadium into a legacy hub that empowers youth, promotes family wellness, and builds pathways to economic mobility.

Mission

To empower all students to reach their full potential by providing a high-quality, inclusive education in a safe and nurturing environment.

PLAN OVERVIEW - PHASES

Strategic Direction Phase I:

Synthetic Turf Field Upgrade

- Replace the outdated field surface and lighting system.
- Install comprehensive stormwater management infrastructure (inlet/outlet systems, subsurface drainage).
- Shift field placement to allow space for a six-lane PIAA-compliant track

Strategic Direction Phase II:

Track Construction & Stadium Facilities

- Demolish and replace the historic 1918 bleacher structure.
- Construct ADA-accessible grandstands, a new press box, classrooms, a kitchen, and public restrooms.

Strategic Direction Phase III:

Career, Education & Wellness Center (Within Stadium Complex)

Key Zones

Locker Rooms & Offices:

Updated athletic and staff spaces to support school and community use.

Childcare Center:

On-site care for families enrolled in programs.

Career Wing:

Career lab, interview suites, and certification spaces for trades and entrepreneurship.

Education Wing:

STEM lab, tutoring, digital learning, and family lounge.

Health & Wellness Zone:

Fitness studio, nutrition kitchen, counseling, and wellness hub.

Community Spaces:

Multi-use arena, meeting rooms, farmers market, and outdoor activity space.

Parking:

Safe, accessible, and expanded parking areas to accommodate school events, community programs, and athletic competitions, including ADA-compliant spaces and designated drop-off zones.

Programming

Career & Workforce Development:

Clubs, bootcamps, and certifications for students and young adults.

Adult Learning:

ESL, digital literacy, and career reskilling.

Health & Community Engagement:

Health fairs, wellness events, and nonprofit-led programming.

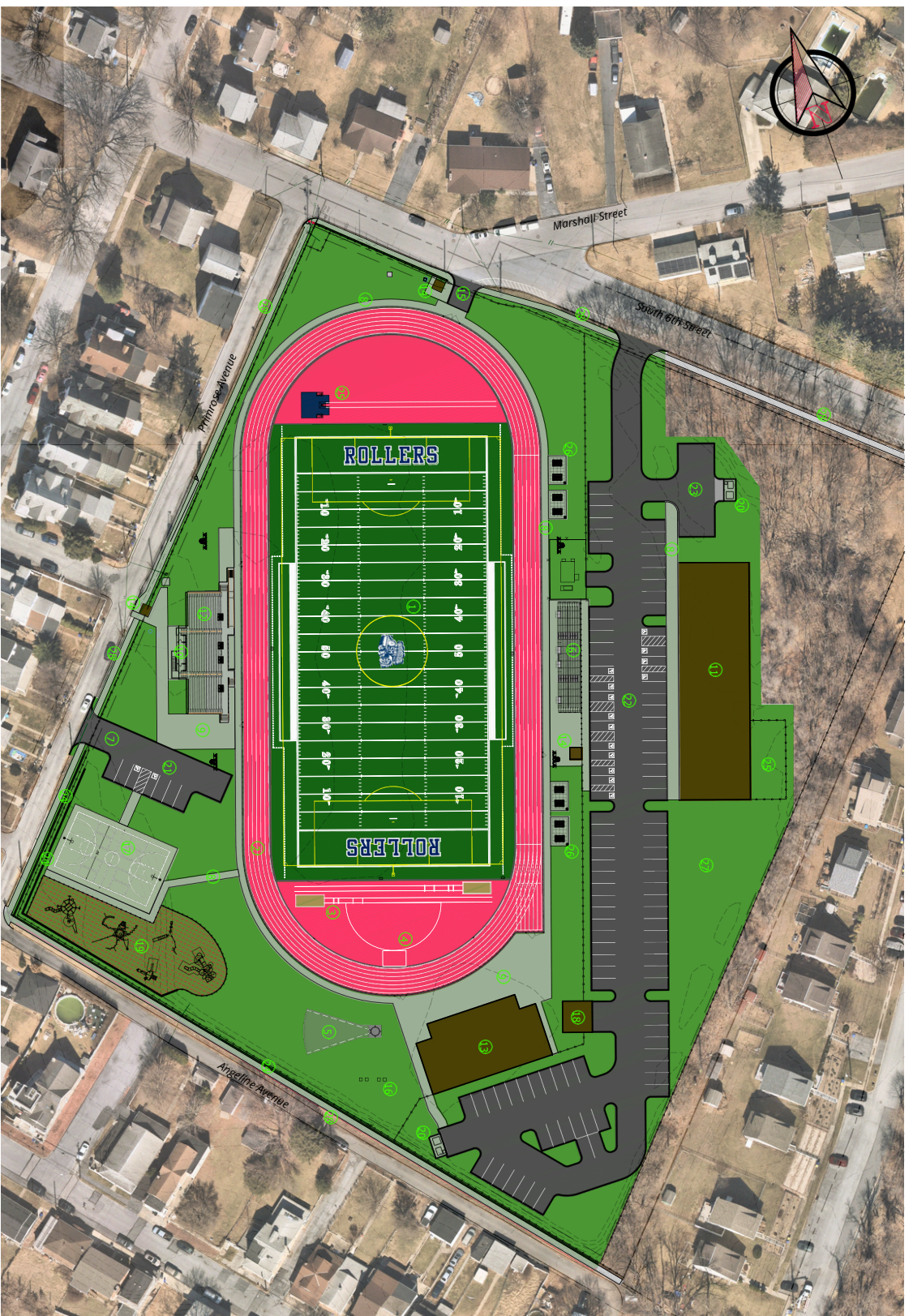
Alumni & Volunteers:

Mentorship, workshops, and service opportunities to build intergenerational pride and support.



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- 1 NEW SYNTHETIC TURF ATHLETIC FIELD
- 2 NEW 6-LANE 400-M TRACK
- 3 PROPOSED LONG TRIPLE JUMP
- 4 PROPOSED HIGH JUMP
- 5 PROPOSED SHOT PUT AREA
- 6 PROPOSED 500+ SEAT BLEACHERS
- 7 LIMITED ACCESS DRIVEWAY
- 8 PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY
- 9 PROPOSED CONCOURSE
- 10 PROPOSED PRESS BOX
- 11 PROPOSED 2-STORY COMMUNITY BUILDING
- 12 12,000-SQ-FOOT PRINT
- 13 PROPOSED 815+ SEAT GRANDSTAND
- 14 EXISTING SUPPORT BUILDING TO BE RENOVATED
- 15 PROPOSED TICKET BOOTH
- 16 EMERGENCY/MAINTENANCE DRIVEWAY
- 17 PROPOSED SCOREBOARD
- 18 PROPOSED BASKETBALL/ICEBALL COURT
- 19 PROPOSED MAINTENANCE BUILDING
- 20 PROPOSED PLAYGROUND
- 21 PROPOSED DIMSTER PAD
- 22 PROPOSED PARKING AREA (7-PS)
- 23 PROPOSED PARKING AREA (107-PS)
- 24 PROPOSED FOOD TRUCK COURT
- 25 PROPOSED RETAINING WALL
- 26 PROPOSED OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AREA FOR DANCE FACILITY
- 27 PROPOSED AUXILIARY PRACTICE AREA
- 28 PROPOSED PERIMETER SIDEWALK



Current and Potential Community Partners

The Steelton-Highspire School District is building a powerful coalition of current and emerging partners to ensure the long-term success of the Career, Education, Health & Wellness Center. Among the district's active collaborators are nonprofit organizations such as True Colors, Neighboring Academy, and All You Can Inc., which provide youth development, mentoring, and family services. Higher education institutions—including Harrisburg University, HACC, Penn State Harrisburg, Messiah, Shippensburg, and Millersville—are supporting dual enrollment, college readiness, and career pathway programming. Health and mental health partners such as Hamilton Health Center, UPMC, Essence of Community, PA Counseling, Effective School Solutions (ESS), Laurel Life, and Byrnes Health Education Center are delivering critical wellness and counseling services that align with the center's wraparound model.

Additionally, the district is actively exploring partnerships with regional employers and industry leaders such as Cliff Steel, McClure Company, NRG Controls, Heim, Hoffman Ford, UPS, and Phoenix Contact to expand career exposure, internships, and workforce development pipelines. Faith-based and civic institutions like the Salvation Army and Catherine Hershey School offer opportunities for community outreach and volunteer engagement. A growing alumni and athletic network—including high-profile supporters like Jordan Hill, Troy Drayton, and David Sullivan—is emerging as a driving force in mentorship, funding, and legacy-building. Together, these current and potential partners form a foundation for sustainable, community-wide impact.

Funding Strategy

To bring this bold vision to life, Steelton-Highspire School District will pursue a diverse and sustainable funding strategy that draws from both public and private sources. Key funding channels include support from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), including the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP), Community Matters, and the Local Share Account (LSA).

The district will also seek support from Dauphin County funds, including county-level grant programs and capital support for community development and youth-focused infrastructure. The goal is to strategically integrate these diverse funding sources into one holistic, community-centered project—ensuring alignment, sustainability, and maximum impact.

Additional public investment will be pursued through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which are vital to addressing infrastructure, wellness, and equity in underserved communities. At the state and federal levels, the district will also apply for education and workforce development grants, as well as funding for health and wellness programming. Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program will be leveraged to encourage corporate investment in academic enrichment and career readiness initiatives.

Private philanthropic partnerships will play a key role, including grants from foundations aligned with youth development, community revitalization, and educational equity. The district will actively seek corporate sponsorships and naming rights agreements that reinforce long-term partnerships and visibility. Finally, community-based strategies—such as special events, grassroots fundraising campaigns, and engagement from the Ambassador Fundraising Team—will generate additional capital and promote local ownership and pride in the project.



Legacy Impact

Youth Opportunity

This project will provide Steelton-Highspire students with access to state-of-the-art athletic facilities, career readiness programs, mentorship, and wellness resources. It will expand pathways to technology training and careers in high-demand trades through certification programs and hands-on learning. From skills development to scholarships, students will be equipped to thrive both in school and beyond.

Family Empowerment

Through access to career development, adult learning, digital literacy, and health services, families will gain meaningful pathways to economic mobility and personal growth. The revitalized stadium will serve as more than a sports venue—it will become a vibrant hub offering childcare, intergenerational support, and summer programs that strengthen families and promote stability year-round.

Community Growth

By transforming a legacy asset into a multifunctional hub, the district will catalyze new partnerships, attract investment, and foster workforce development. The revitalized campus will serve as an anchor for local revitalization and civic pride.

Cultural Pride

This plan honors the rich heritage of Steelton and Highspire—communities built on grit, diversity, and unity. By restoring facilities and expanding opportunities, the district ensures that tradition is not only preserved, but amplified for future generations.

Operations & Funding Sustainability Plan

Strategic Oversight

An Executive Director will oversee operations, grant compliance, and financial management, supported by Program Managers and On Hill Development.

Diverse Funding Sources

Sustainability will build on secured funds (DCED, RACP, LSA) and expand through grants, foundations (e.g., PNC, M&T), and earned revenue from rentals, programs, and naming rights.

Tax Incentives & Corporate Giving

The district will utilize EITC and NAP programs to attract corporate donations and long-term investment.

Partner-Driven Services

Community-based organizations will co-deliver programs such as childcare, career training, and mental health, optimizing resources and reach.

Ongoing Fundraising & Engagement

The Ambassador Fundraising Team will lead donor outreach, events, and campaigns to secure flexible funding and sustain momentum.

The Purpose

The purpose of the strategic framework is to provide a clear, actionable roadmap for the development and implementation of the Steelton Career, Education & Wellness Center. It outlines the project's vision, core components, and phased development plan while aligning stakeholder priorities, community needs, and funding strategies. This framework serves as a unifying document that communicates our goals to potential partners, funders, and policymakers, ensuring that all efforts are coordinated and impactful.

By establishing defined objectives, timelines, and areas for collaboration, the strategic framework positions the project for long-term sustainability, measurable outcomes, and transformational community impact.

Steelton Highspire Leadership & Governance

Team M

Superintendent: Willie Slade
Athletic Director: Andrew Erby

Highspire Borough Leadership

Mayor Von E. Hess
Mayor, Borough of Highspire

School Board of Directors

Micheal Wanner (School Board President)
Ashley Ward-McMullen (School Board Vice President)
Calvin Johnson (School Board Treasurer)
Jenna Condran (Board Member)
Nicholas Conjar Jr. (Board Member)
Joyce Culpepper (Board Member)
Casey Hamilton (Board Member)
Christie Hamilton (Board Member)
Michael Pilsitz (Board Member)

Highspire Borough Council Leadership

Michael Anderson (Council President)
Mark Accorsi (Vice President)
Carolee Roman (Council Member)
Dorothy Matesevac (Council Member)
A. Kay Sutch (Council Member)
Robert Sutch (Council Member)
Tyler Thatcher (Council Member)

Steelton Borough Leadership

Mayor Ciera Dent
Mayor, Borough of Steelton

Steelton Borough Council Leadership

Vanessa K. Bowers (Council President)
Natashia Woods (Vice President)
Denae House (Chair Pro Tem)
Michael A. Segina (Council Member)
Julianna Paoletti (Council Member)
Willie Slade (Council Member)
Vanessa Jenkins (Council Member)



Roller Nation Foundation, established in 2022, supports the students, teachers, and administration of the Steelton-Highspire School District. With generous donor support, we have established an Adopt-A-Classroom Fund (specific to teachers' projects), funds for each of the sports at SHSD, a theatre fund, and many more. The Foundation believes that all children deserve fair and equitable access to education, as well as the extracurricular activities and opportunities that are provided. For more information, please visit www.rollereducationfoundation.org.

Legacy Leaders

Steelton-Highspire's Legacy Leaders are more than alumni—they are champions of the district's past, present, and future. These individuals, including David Sullivan, Troy Drayton, and Jordan Hill, have gone on to achieve remarkable success in sports, business, and community leadership. As proud Rollers, they are now giving back by serving as financial supporters, public advocates, and strategic advisors for this transformational project.

Their involvement goes beyond donations. Legacy Leaders help tell the story of what it means to grow up on Cottage Hill—how the lessons learned on the field translate into leadership, resilience, and purpose. They use their platforms to raise awareness, engage alumni, and attract the funding and partnerships necessary to bring this vision to life. They're also committed to mentoring the next generation, showing students that greatness can be achieved regardless of zip code—and that they are part of something much bigger than themselves.

As Troy Drayton shared, "This is about legacy. It's about leaving an imprint in this community that will last for a lifetime." David Sullivan echoed that sentiment, adding, "We're not just athletes—we're businesspeople, coaches, and community contributors." Together, these leaders reflect the pride, grit, and unity that define the Roller spirit—and they are helping to ensure that Steelton-Highspire's next chapter is just as powerful as its storied past.



DAVID
SULLIVAN



JORDAN
HILL



TROY
DRAYTON

Ways to Give:

Invest in Legacy. Empower the Future.

The transformation of Steelton-Highspire's historic stadium into a Community Education, Career, Health & Wellness Hub is more than a facilities upgrade—it's an investment in students, families, and the future of an entire community. Your support helps turn vision into reality and ensures that every child has access to the resources they need to succeed.

Donate Today

Make a one-time or recurring gift through the **Roller Nation Foundation**. Contributions support capital improvements, student programming, wellness services, and long-term sustainability. Donations can be made online at:



www.rollernationfoundation.org



Learn more at: www.shsd.k12.pa.us

Naming Opportunities

Leave a lasting legacy by sponsoring facilities within the new complex—locker rooms, classrooms, wellness suites, or the main field. Custom naming rights are available for major donors and corporate partners.

Corporate & Foundation Partnerships

Join a growing network of industry and philanthropic leaders who are investing in equity, workforce development, and community resilience. Opportunities include grant partnerships, capital campaigns, and employee engagement initiatives.

In-Kind Support

Contribute materials, equipment, or professional services to help bring this vision to life. In-kind gifts help reduce project costs while directly impacting the quality of our facilities and programs.

Alumni & Ambassador Circle

Join fellow alumni, athletes, and advocates who are giving back to preserve the Roller legacy. Become a mentor, sponsor a student, or support athletic and academic programming that carries forward our community's pride.

Planned Giving & Endowments

Create a lasting impact by including Steelton-Highspire in your estate planning. Planned gifts and endowment contributions sustain this work for generations to come.

Let's Build This – Together

To learn more or to make your contribution, please contact:

Willie Slade
Superintendent
717-704-3803
wslade@shsd.k12.pa.us

Coach Andrew Erby Sr.
Athletic Director & Head Football Coach
717-343-1692
aerby@shsd.k12.pa.us

Make checks payable to:

Roller Nation Foundation
Steelton-Highspire School District
250 Reynders Avenue,
Steelton, PA 17113

***Together, we preserve
our legacy and ignite
the future.***