

SLS is a Protective Factor

Written by SLS Executive Director, Dawn Flood, LMSW, CPC

Student Leadership Services (SLS) can serve as a powerful protective factor for students by creating meaningful connections, strengthening student voice, and helping students develop a sense of belonging and purpose within their school community. When students are given opportunities to lead, support one another, and actively contribute to their school environment, they build positive relationships with peers and trusted adults. These relationships can help students feel seen, valued, and connected which are critical protective factors when students are facing stress, isolation, conflict, or other challenges. SLS also provides students with positive alternatives and opportunities to develop leadership, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Rather than simply responding to problems after they occur, SLS helps create a school culture where students are empowered to recognize concerns, support their peers, and become part of the solution. In this way, SLS is more than a student program. It can be part of a broader prevention strategy that strengthens the protective factors that help students thrive through connection, belonging, purpose, positive peer relationships, trusted adults, leadership, and a sense of responsibility to their community.



What to expect at Conference 2027:

- Peer-led workshops on substance use, mental health, community connection healthy relationships, safe driving, and more!
- Keynote sessions and leadership training for students and advisors.
- A statewide network of chapters showcasing their projects.
- An optional Pre-Conference Day on March 5, 2027.
- A weekend of student-led engagement and protective factors at its best!

Beloved Conference Traditions:

The Conference is as much a celebration as it is a training. Returning chapters look forward to the traditions that make it the highlight of the SLS year:

- The SAB “Conference Hosts”
- The “Big” Dance.
- SLS The Musical.
- The Door Decoration Contest.
- The SLS Mascots Happy and Perky.
- Awards and celebrations recognizing standout students, advisors, and chapters.
- The All-Conference group photo.
- Lifelong Friends.



Student Leadership Services Inc.
Innovative. Inclusive. Validated.

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Attention!!
Please share
this newsletter
with student
leaders within
your school!
Thank you!

I CANNOT BELIEVE THE NEW
WEBSITE! YOU NEED TO CHECK IT
OUT! [HTTPS://SLSTODAY.ORG/](https://slstoday.org/)



Meet Myah (above), a dedicated student leader who has served on the SLS State Student Advisory Board for three years. As a senior at Brighton High School, she has been an integral member of the Board for three consecutive years. Her career aspiration is to join the Law Enforcement K9 Unit. She draws inspiration from her aunt, whom she admires greatly. Myah has a special affinity for sea turtles, appreciating their carefree nature and ability to swim freely. In her leisure time, she enjoys competitive snowboarding. During the summer months, she relishes lying outside, soaking up the sun, and observing birds. Written by Mackenzie Burns, Clarenceville HS.

Please continue to check the Conference website as details are released.
<https://slstoday.org/conference-2027>



Meet Kaley (above), a junior at Taylor High School and a second-year member of the Student Advisory Board (SAB). When asked about her daily routine, she identified as a nocturnal individual. Kaley holds her parents in high regard, particularly her mother. She shared a sentiment common among Michiganders, expressing that being stranded in northern Michigan during winter would be a challenging experience. Her preferred summer activity is swimming, which can leave individuals with prune like skin. Lastly, she begins her day with a simple yet intentional act: sitting up. Written by Marvin Mills, Marion Jr/Sr HS.

Makenzie (left), a junior at Clarenceville High School, is a new member of the SAB. If she were to travel back in time within a thousand years, she would attend Beethoven’s inaugural concert. Her oral hygiene routine includes using mint toothpaste. She aspires to visit Oregon with Britney Broskee, dressed in a Met Gala-inspired ball gown. She will be celebrating her birthday at the SLS Conference on March 5! Written by Myah Randolph, Brighton HS.



Meet Marvin, a dedicated member of the SLS State Student Advisory Board, now serving his fourth year. Notably, Marvin has been an integral part of the 38th, 39th, 40th, and currently, the 41st SAB. Interestingly, Marvin has shared some unique aspects about himself, as described by Kaley Long from Taylor HS. One fascinating trait is his aversion to sunlight. When asked to describe himself in three words, Marvin chose intelligent, compassionate, and kind. His favorite movie quote is, “Why is it the people who can’t take advice that always insist on giving it?” from Casino Royale. Marvin also enjoys the classic joke “Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side!” Lastly, he has a self-admitted reliance on energy drinks, which he hopes to overcome soon (as he knows Dawn is not happy about this)!



Federal, State, and/or County Funding has been provided through the Oakland Community Health Network Substance Use Disorder Services and MDHHS/SUGE to support **partial** project costs.



Thank you SLS Supporters, Sponsors, and Partners!

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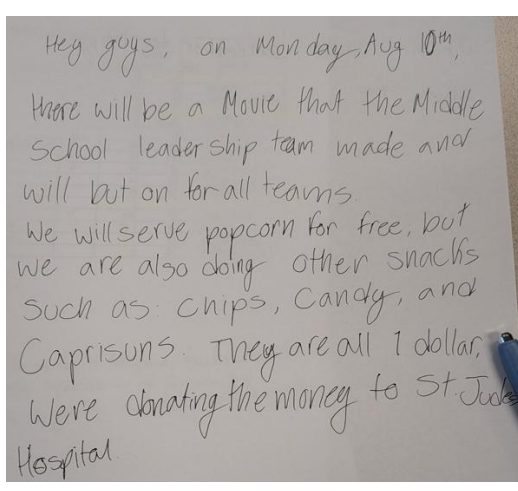
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Students Leading Students, a program of Student Leadership Services, Inc. (SLS), is an assets-based school and community-based program implemented throughout Michigan. SLS aims to increase skills that protect students from anxiety, stress, and self-defeating behaviors. SLS trains students in skills that decrease alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and other drug use (ATOD) among middle and high-school students. SLS strategies empower and equip youth leaders with knowledge, life skills, and resources to design and implement youth development, mental health, and drug prevention programming. SLS supports local chapters by training adult advisors, and training student chapter leaders. SLS hosts student-led conferences, provides materials that correlate activities with research, provides grants, and disseminates evidence-based research and strategies about preventing teen ATOD use and other self-destructive actions. SLS creates participatory experiences for youth. To bring SLS to your school, anywhere in Michigan including small towns, Mackinaw Island, and the UP, contact dmf@SLStoday.org or call 248-706-0757.

2025-2026 SLS Impact:

- 2,232 4th-12th grade students directly impacted.
- 22,320 students indirectly impacted (1 trained SLS student impacts 10 others).
- 32 schools.
- 15 counties.

Wow! Thank you to the more than 50 donors, sponsors, and benefactors who make this possible!



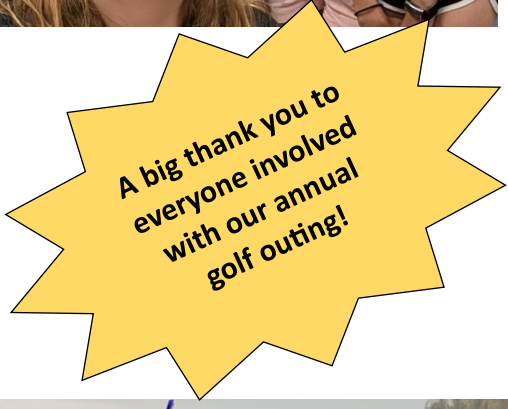
SLS is an inclusive organization that supports all student-led groups that support the SLS mission.

Pictured above, below, and to the right: The Boys and Girls Club of Troy SLS Student creators of the movie “Summer Camp Gone Wrong!” This innovative project showcases student’s creative and cinematic skills, while fostering essential life skills such as decision making, teamwork, communication, and social interaction.



Welcome to SLS Michael Betman!

Michael (pictured to the right) joined the SLS team in August 2026, bringing with him an impressive 40 years of experience in education. During his career with Royal Oak Schools, he served as a sixth-grade teacher, middle school counselor, and middle school coach. In addition, Michael also spent more than 25 years as an adjunct counselor at Oakland Community College. He holds a master’s degree in School Counseling from Oakland University. Michael is no stranger to SLS as he has served as STAND Advisor for SLS’ Middle School student-led program in the past. We are excited to welcome Michael to the SLS team and look forward to the experience and expertise he brings to SLS!



Creativity Needed!

Help us in our hunt for student created music, poems, stories, posters, and other artistic outlets. We are looking for artistic expression that represent SLS. There is an opportunity to win a scholarship and have your IDEA sent to all Michigan schools (2,500). Reach out to Dawn with your work or any ideas at dmf@slstoday.org.



For education, information, and inspiration, stay connected with SLS.
www.SLStoday.org
1150 Scott Lake Rd
Waterford, MI 48328
248-706-0757

Did You Know?!?

SLS is the only Michigan-developed, student-led program with proven outcomes and national validation!



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