



**#FCProud**

***WELCOME TO THE  
FOX CHAPEL AREA  
SCHOOL DISTRICT!***



## ***A Message from the Fox Chapel Area School District***

Welcome to the Fox Chapel Area School District! This brochure includes an overview of our school district and the many accomplishments we have achieved as a community. As you look at the achievements of our students and the many things we accomplish together as the Fox Chapel Area community, you will see why we are #FCProud.

From the school district's inception in 1958, the community has continued to expect excellence from our students and the district. That tradition continues today and results in high standards, high expectations, and high performance. Our students demonstrate exemplary academic achievement in all subject areas and at all grade levels, and our students and staff receive national and international awards and recognition for their accomplishments. Each year our graduates are accepted into the top colleges and universities in the nation, including Ivy League schools and military academies.



Our facilities are designed to enhance learning at all levels. Our schools have been renovated and updated to not only incorporate state-of-the art computer science and technology labs and classrooms, but to make better use of educational space and increase the safety and security of our students and staff. Additionally, a brand new Kerr Elementary School opened in the fall of 2019.

For more detailed information about our school district, our programs, or any of our individual schools, please visit our website at [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu), or contact our communications office at 412/967-2410. Specific information for prospective residents is available on the website under "About Us" and "Prospective Residents." After you read about our district, we invite you to see for yourself what makes the Fox Chapel Area School District award-winning and a special place to live!



## ***The School District...***

The Fox Chapel Area School District is located in a dynamic, suburban community about 11 miles northeast of downtown Pittsburgh. The district includes six municipalities: the boroughs of Aspinwall, Blawnox, Fox Chapel, and Sharpsburg and the townships of Indiana and O'Hara. There are six schools housing a total of approximately 4,150 students: Fox Chapel Area High School; Dorseyville Middle School; and Fairview, Hartwood, Kerr, and O'Hara elementary schools. The district's population represents a wide range of social, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The schools provide a comprehensive array of educational opportunities to serve the needs of the diverse population and to meet the high expectations of its residents.



## Nationally-Recognized Schools...



*Courtesy Joshua Hoover, U.S. Department of Education*

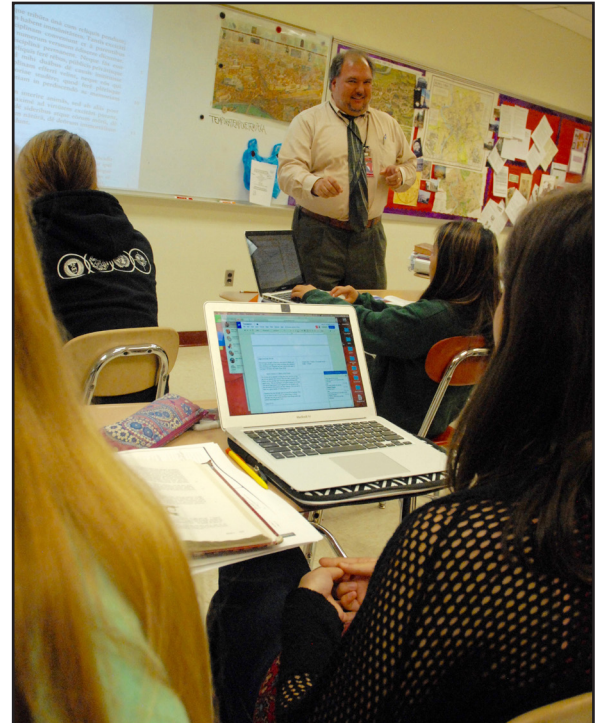
- Each of the Fox Chapel Area schools has been named a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. In 2016, Fairview Elementary School was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School for the second time. Fox Chapel Area High School also was twice named a national Blue Ribbon School.

- The district was honored by the College Board in 2017 with placement on the 7th Annual AP<sup>®</sup> District Honor Roll, a distinction for districts that show significant gains in student access and success on Advanced Placement courses and tests.

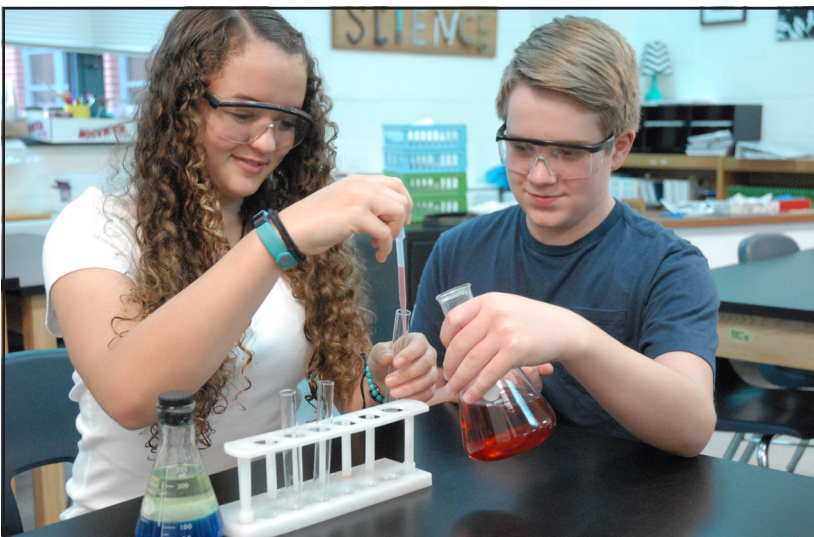
- In 2012, the high school was the first ever in the history of Middle States to receive a Program of Distinction designation in school counseling. Also in 2012, the high school was the first public school to receive the Program of Distinction credential in music. In 2015, the high school was the first school nationally and inter-nationally to be recognized as having a Program of Distinction in visual arts. The school received all three of these same designations again in 2019 from the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.

- Fox Chapel Area High School has been awarded Silver Medal rankings by U.S. News & World Report for more than a decade and has been ranked among the nation's top high schools by Newsweek. Additionally, the high school was named among the 2017 Washington Post's America's Most Challenging High Schools.

- Dorseyville Middle School was twice named a Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn Schools: Schools to Watch school.



- The district was one of 180 from across the nation to be named a 2022 AASA Learning 2025 Demonstration System to Watch. The district was recognized for providing a student-centered, equity-focused, and future-driven educational system that serves all learners, with specific attention to cognitive growth.







## ***High Performing Students & Highly Ranked District...***

Each year, the majority of the graduating class chooses to continue their education, and our graduates are accepted into the top colleges and universities across the nation. In 2022, nine Fox Chapel Area High School seniors were named National Merit Finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program and 13 were named Commended Students. Additionally, a total of 87 high school students received Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar with Distinction awards from the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP examinations taken in the spring of 2022. These AP Scholars earned an average score of 3.5 or higher on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more AP exams.



Fox Chapel Area students continue to receive national, state, and regional recognition for their accomplishments in academics, in particular in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); essay writing; music and the arts; athletics; and community service. The school district regularly has students qualify and win awards in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, as well as the Broadcom MASTERS® competition. Additionally, students have won scholarships to study overseas from the Youth Exchange and Study Abroad program and receive top recognition in the National Scholastic Art Awards.

The school district strives for constant academic improvement in our students and that is substantiated by standardized assessment scores.

—Over the last few years, the grades three-eight Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency has increased by approximately 6% in English Language Arts (ELA) and by 10% in math.

—The Fox Chapel Area Keystone Exam pass rates for 11th-graders have also all increased, and approximately 90% of students are passing the Algebra I, literature, and biology exams.

—The number of students performing at the Advanced level (grades three-eight) on the PSSA has increased by more than 7% in ELA and by almost 11% in math.

—Fox Chapel Area met or exceeded the standard for student academic growth in 80% of the reported categories each year when tests were given since 2015-2016.







Each year, the Pittsburgh Business Times publishes its Regional School Report Card. In 2022, the Fox Chapel Area School District ranked number two in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and third in the state. The eighth grade was ranked third, seventh grade was ranked fourth, and sixth grade was ranked fourth in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The district ranked number one for fifth-grade, fourth-grade, and the third-grade. The annual Pittsburgh Business



Times Guide to Southwestern Pennsylvania Schools ranks the school districts in the region and the state based on scores from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams. Fox Chapel Area has consistently ranked among the top-performing schools on the list since the rankings were first published in 2005. The average 15-year rank of the district is 5.93.

The Pittsburgh Business Times ranked Fox Chapel Area High School number three in Allegheny County based on 2019 SAT scores.



The district consistently receives an “A+ Overall Niche Grade” on niche.com and ranks among the top 10 school districts in the state in Niche rankings. In the 2022 rankings, the Fox Chapel Area School District ranked among the best school districts in the nation. Additionally, Fox Chapel Area received its seventh consecutive overall A+ grade, was ranked one of the top six school districts in Pennsylvania, and placed in the top 10 school districts in the state with the best teachers. Additionally, the district placed in the top 1% of school districts in the United States in the categories of Best School Districts, Districts with the Best Teachers, and Best Places to Teach.







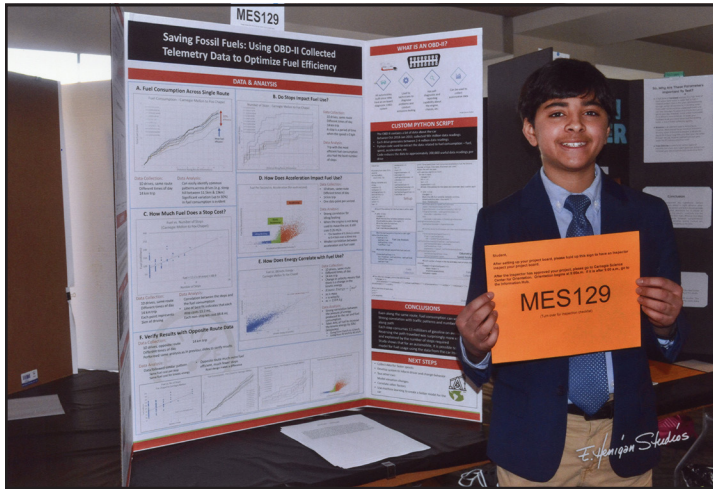
## ***Leader in Innovation & Technology...***

Opportunities abound for students to experience computer science, robotics, and digital fabrication projects designed to spark technological interest in even the youngest students.

The district infuses computer coding in computer science at all grade levels. Beginning in kindergarten, students participate in a variety of activities designed to develop their coding experience. Throughout the elementary years, students use the latest tools and software to build coding, robotics, and gaming skills. Middle school



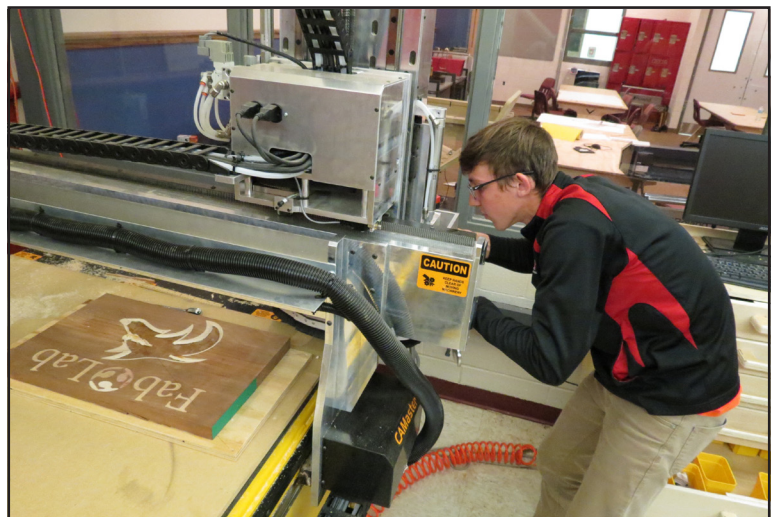
students experience elements of coding and robotics in their computer science and technology education courses, while the high school offers a wide variety of experiences in coding from full courses in computer science to coding in technology and engineering courses.



Students have access to an MIT-certified Fab Lab at the high school where they conceptualize and create using digital fabrication equipment as a part of the technology education curriculum and as a teaching tool for cross-curricular projects. A few years ago, thanks to a grant from The Grable Foundation, the high school students built a mobile Fab Lab in a “tiny house” which is taken on the road. Elementary students at all four buildings, as well as from other districts in the region, benefit as the

traveling lab allows them to experience authentic learning – planning and creating using high-tech 3-D printers, CNC machines, laser engravers, vinyl cutters, and computers.

Middle school students have a makerspace in their school, and students at all grade levels in the Fox Chapel Area School District have opportunities to use makerspaces. Recent renovations have included dedicated makerspaces for students to plan and create as a part of the curriculum.







In 2016, Fox Chapel Area was accepted into Digital Promise's League of Innovative Schools, one of only 19 new school districts nationwide selected that year by the league for their innovative learning and collaboration. The league specifically recognized the district for its comprehensive K-12 computer science curriculum with digital badging at the elementary level, the district's infusion of maker education and deeper learning concepts, and the various educational technology and research partnerships that have been developed with institutes of higher education and local entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the district was twice recognized for both its commitment to computer science and as a leader in maker education by the White House in 2016.







## ***Recognized for the Arts...***

The Fox Chapel Area community is committed to providing quality music and fine arts programs for all students. While many music and visual arts programs in public schools across the country continue to be cut due to budgetary constraints, arts programs are thriving in the district.



### ***Music Arts***

Students make music from the beginning of their elementary school experience. Kindergarten students receive music instruction once a week for 40 minutes, and students in grades one-five receive music instruction twice a week for 40 minutes. Beginning in third grade, students can begin to play a string instrument; in grade four, they can start a band instrument; and each school has a fourth- and fifth-grade chorus. That elementary foundation in music is built upon at the middle school level where students continue to have music instruction and can choose to participate in the band, chorus, and/or orchestra. During high school, students can elect to perform in any number of award-winning choirs, bands, orchestras, and/or music ensembles that are offered both as a part of the school curriculum and as an extracurricular experience. Each year, individual musicians as well as our school choirs, bands, orchestras, and ensembles receive recognition for their music performances.



### ***Visual Arts***

In addition to regularly scheduled art classes beginning in kindergarten and continuing in middle school, high school students can elect to take art classes in a variety of media including computer art, ceramics and fibers, drawing and painting, and jewelry and glass, as well as art history and advanced studio art and portfolio experiences. Approximately a third of Fox Chapel Area High School students participate in art classes, and there are numerous activities and clubs that provide even more opportunities. High school students are regularly recognized for their art, including being named gold and silver key winners in the prestigious annual National Scholastic Art program.







### *Community Gala*

The community held a gala in 2012, and a major portion of the proceeds was earmarked to offer even greater opportunities to enhance the exemplary music and fine arts programs offered in the district. Two noteworthy opportunities for students were made possible from the funds raised. First, an artist-in-residence project at the high school involved more than 100 students from all art media designing and creating huge mosaic murals that are on display at the high school. In 2017, an all-elementary guest music artist program involved every student at all four buildings and culminated in an evening community performance. Additionally, both an elementary choir piece and a band piece were commissioned to be written with gala funds.

The commitment to arts education and the quality of the music program is why the school district has been named among the Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation for more than a decade. Other noteworthy recognitions in music and the fine arts include the high school receiving Program of Distinction status in music in 2012 and 2019, and in visual arts in 2015 and 2019. These special accreditations are given by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.







## ***Noteworthy Accomplishments of Our Staff...***

The accomplishments of our students would not be possible without the exemplary staff members who deliver the instructional program. Every year, Fox Chapel Area administrators and teachers are chosen for leadership positions and are recognized by national, state, and regional organizations for their accomplishments. In the past few years, Alison Francis, formerly the facilitator of the district's Creativity and Literacy Program, was one of 10 first-place winners, and then one of 10 grand-prize winners of the Henry Ford Teacher Innovator Award for her work inspiring creativity, innovation, and problem solving. Mrs. Francis was also named the 2017 Carnegie Science Center's Elementary Educator of the Year. High school orchestra teacher Mairi Cooper, who was Pennsylvania's 2015 Teacher of the Year, was a recipient of the 2017 Carson Scholars Fund Power of Excellence Award. Other commendations have included the Outstanding Superintendent Award from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA), the 2012 PMEA District 1 Citation of Excellence, the 2011 Assistant Principal of the Year, the Yale Distinguished Music Educator Award, and the Disney Teacher Award.



## ***A Few More Facts...***



- The high school operates on a flexible block schedule configured with semester-long courses, similar to the college-semester format, with most major subjects offered five days per week, 80-minutes per class. Additional half-credit elective courses are offered two or three days per week for a semester.

- The elementary program features full-day kindergarten. This provides a more rigorous academic program and enables kindergarten students to be engaged in the same special area classes such as music, art, library, computer science, and physical education as the older elementary students.

- The district launched a Pre-Kindergarten program and a Spanish Immersion program (open to students from across the district) in the 2019-2020 school year at Kerr Elementary School.

- The Fox Chapel Area elementary schools have a world language program.

- The district sponsors the Western Pennsylvania Learning Academy that, in past, has included summer leadership programs and a theater camp, a college essay writing mentorship, and many other programs, as well as online summer courses. These are open to not only Fox Chapel Area students, but to all students from the greater Pittsburgh area. Additionally, the district offers a middle school and elementary Summer Learning Academy, as well as a Summer STEAM Camp for students entering grades one-nine.

- The district employs a safety and security coordinator, as well as its own police force, with a police officer assigned to every school building.





## ***The Future...***

The Fox Chapel Area community has maintained its commitment to a high-quality education for its children. Long before the present school district was created, early settlers built one-room school houses in Indiana and O'Hara townships, the first recorded in 1806. When the Fox Chapel Area School District was established in 1958, the first order of business was to construct a high school so that students could be educated within the school district boundaries. Since that time, schools have been constructed, updated, and renovated to meet changing curriculum and student needs. The latest major construction/renovation was completed at the high school in 2016. The project included a new natatorium, featuring an eight-lane pool; a new auditorium; an upgraded library/media center and commons area; a new atrium-style entrance; and a new



cafeteria, in addition to other improvements throughout the building. Renovations began in the summer of 2016 at Dorseyville Middle School and the summer of 2017 at Fairview and O'Hara elementary schools. Renovations at



all three schools included new office spaces and upgrades to improve the safety and security of students and staff, as well as mechanical upgrades. Additionally, makerspaces were added at Dorseyville Middle School and O'Hara Elementary, and common spaces were renovated. To make the entry and exit from Hartwood Elementary and Dorseyville Middle School safer and easier to navigate, an additional driveway was added. Dorseyville Middle School had upgrades to the gymnasium, the food lab, and the art classrooms. O'Hara Elementary received upgrades to the library, art rooms, and hallways; has three newer special education classrooms; and updated playground equipment. In the summer of 2018, Hartwood Elementary got a new secure vestibule to enhance safety.

Most recently, a new Kerr Elementary School was built and opened in the fall of 2019. Among other things, the new Kerr allows for the use of more advanced technologies designed to enhance student learning. It features a centrally-located collaboratory that includes a large area where students can gather together to work on projects and allows for research, collaboration, and planning. The cluster includes a makerspace, a computer science robotics lab/classroom, and a library.

Other features of the new Kerr includes a Pre-Kindergarten program to help students better prepare for school, and more open areas outside of the building designated for instructional purposes. The school also features a Spanish Immersion program that allows students to be taught in both English and Spanish. Research has shown that students who engage in a dual-immersion program outperform their peers in standardized assessments as well as other measures. Students from all four elementary schools have the opportunity to enroll in these programs.





**Fox Chapel Area**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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