

IN

An IN Community Magazine

Fox Chapel Area

**2019-2020
FOX CHAPEL
AREA SCHOOL
DISTRICT
STATE OF
THE SCHOOLS**

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FALL 2020
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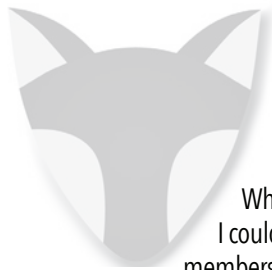
FOX CHAPEL AREA

State of the Schools



Fox Chapel Area School District

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fox Chapel Area Community,

While it's been an unconventional start to my role as superintendent of the Fox Chapel Area School District, to say the least, I couldn't be happier to be here. In just a few months at the helm of the school district, I've seen the myriad ways that the members of our school community come together to help, support, and rally for one another. As a nearly 20-year resident of the school district, this certainly was not a surprise to me, but it was so encouraging and inspiring to see it through a different lens.

I want to take another opportunity to thank the efforts of the district's Return-to-School Coalition, which numbered more than 100 people and included parents, faculty and staff, School Board members, medical professionals, and other representatives from our community. Because of their hard work and expertise, we were safely able to resume classes for more than 4,000 students on time.

I also want to recognize the many community groups, such as Volunteers of America/All of Us Care, Backpack for Hunger, Fox Families Care, the Sharpsburg Family Worship Center, Roots of Faith, and other local organizations, that have mobilized and reached out to ensure that our students and their families have food, school supplies, and other necessary items during this time.

A community most often is defined by geographical boundaries, but it's abundantly clear that it's more than that here. The essence of our community is the generosity and selflessness of our neighbors. It's the togetherness that we forge when faced with adversity and uncertainty. It's the great pride that we have in our neighborhoods and our schools.

Please know how much I respect these ideals and the high standards that you've come to expect. The achievements and recognitions on the following pages are a testament to the hard work and diligence that are synonymous with Fox Chapel Area. I look forward to the challenge of leading this school district and forging a future of which we all can be proud.

Sincerely,

Mary Catherine Reljac, Ed.D.
Superintendent





HIGHLIGHTS

- Fox Chapel Area High School earned reaccreditation by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CES), a worldwide leader in accreditation and continuous school improvement. Accreditation is a multifaceted evaluation process that schools use to demonstrate they are meeting a defined set of research-based performance standards. The accreditation process, which the high school undertakes every seven years, begins with a self-study that is conducted by the school and requires input from school leaders, teachers, parents, and students. Following the self-study, a team of volunteer educators from Middle States member schools conducts an on-site peer review visit to observe school operations and interview various stakeholders.

- The MSA-CES recognized Fox Chapel Area High School for its Programs of Distinction in Music, School Counseling, and the Visual Arts. The Middle States Programs of Distinction initiative provides external validation of an accredited school's accomplishments in specific areas of expertise and enables schools to take accreditation to the next level. Fox Chapel Area High School first received Programs of Distinction in Music and School Counseling in 2012, and in the Visual Arts in 2015.



- 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 2020 rankings, the Fox Chapel Area School District placed among the best school districts in the country on Niche's "2020 Best School Districts" list. Fox Chapel Area also received its fifth consecutive



overall A+ grade, was ranked one of the top 10 school districts in Pennsylvania, and placed in the top 10 school districts in the state in the category of 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, Best Places to Teach, and Safest School Districts.

- Each year, the Pittsburgh Business Times publishes its Regional School Report Card. In 2020, the Fox Chapel Area School District ranked No. 2 in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and No. 5 in the state. The annual Pittsburgh Business Times Honor Roll ranks the school districts in the region and the state based on scores from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams.

- Kerr Elementary School was named a Pennsylvania Department of Education Title I Distinguished School for the 2019-2020 school year. The designation was based on Kerr Elementary students' state assessment results from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. Kerr Elementary was one of 94 schools to receive the designation in Pennsylvania out of a total of approximately 1,800 schools that use Title I funds to support educational programs.

•A total of 26 high school seniors were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program. Paige Asbury, Amelia Bothe, Hanna Chen, J. Oliver Choo, Hazel Cline, Claire Fenton, Rajeev Godse, Noah Hertzman, Christiana Paljug, Sina Shaikh, Jake Sperry, Felix Veser, and Aaron Wu were named 2020 National Merit Finalists, and Oskar Ernharth was named a Semifinalist. The following 12 students were Commended: Jackson Boychuk, Rachel Ferris, Evan Gu, Abigail Miller, Zeynep Ozkaya, Leda Perdriel-Arons, Anzu Sekikawa, David Shin, Shane Susnak, Ameya Velankar, William Wang, and Michael Weiss.



•Fox Chapel Area High School senior Gwendolyn Davison won a national Gold Medal in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards of 2020. Gwendolyn won for her short

story, "Blown in by the Hot Winds." More than 110,000 students submitted nearly 320,000 works of art and writing to the 2020 Scholastic Awards. Only 3,000 works received a national medal, which means Gwendolyn's short story was in the top 1% of all submissions. Prior to being named a national winner, Gwendolyn won a Gold Key in the Pittsburgh Regional Scholastic Writing Awards 2020 competition sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project.

•High school junior Amulya Garimella was named a winner of a 2020 National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing. She is one of 40 young women chosen from across the nation, and one of only two winners from Pennsylvania. The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing recognizes high school students in grades 9-12 for their aptitude and aspirations in technology and computing as demonstrated by their computing experience, computing-related activities, leadership experience, tenacity in the face of barriers to access, and plans for postsecondary education. More than 4,700 students applied for the award from high schools representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and



all U.S. overseas military bases. Forty were named winners, and 360 received honorable mentions.

•Fox Chapel Area High School eighth-grader Adhitya Thirumala was named among the Top 300 middle school innovators in the 2020 Broadcom MASTERS – the nation's premier science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) competition for middle school students. The program seeks to inspire young scientists, engineers, and innovators to solve key challenges of the 21st century.



The Top 300 students (including 15 from Pennsylvania) were selected from 3,476 applicants from 34 states and Puerto Rico. Adhitya was chosen based on his project, "Developing an Early Screening Application to Detect Lung Abnormalities Using Machine Learning." The Broadcom MASTERS is a program of the Society for Science & the Public, and MASTERS stands for Math, Applied Science, Technology and Engineering for Rising Stars.

FOX CHAPEL AREA QUICKLY ADAPTS TO FULLY ONLINE LEARNING

When it became a possibility that the Fox Chapel Area School District would have to transition to a fully online learning model amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Megan Collett, Ed.D., the district's executive director of instructional and innovative leadership, quickly began working on a plan. Her primary task – figuring out how to transition more than 4,000 students from in-person instruction to virtual learning.

"We had to be successful. There wasn't a question about that," Dr. Collett says. "From a technology standpoint, immediate action was necessary to ensure the continuity of education for our students."

The last day of in-person instruction for Fox Chapel Area students was March 12. Just days later, they and their teachers already were engaging in fully remote learning, putting Fox Chapel Area as one of the first school districts, if not the first, to make the switch, and to do it rather seamlessly, Dr. Collett says.

"The closures in March initiated an unprecedented time for U.S. education and for the Fox Chapel Area School District," says Matthew Harris, Ed.D., the district's executive director of secondary education and instruction. "As a district, the administrative team really stepped up to the new challenge and met in a series of sessions to design instruction and learning that would work remotely. Key to this approach at the secondary level, was experience with our secondary online learning system, Schoology. Even though this platform already was in use, our secondary teachers really stepped up and embraced the new ways of teaching."

The task, however, was a bit more challenging for elementary personnel.

"At the elementary level, the administrative team developed a completely new approach using Google Classroom as the learning management system. Teachers and students had never used a system like this before in this capacity," says Ashley Constantine, Ed.D., Fox Chapel Area's executive director of elementary education and



instruction. "The elementary teachers and students demonstrated the most incredible professionalism and creativity and flexibility to make the approach successful."

Despite new methods of learning, students performed well and continued to thrive.

"I was astonished by the ways my students learned virtually," says Shannon Frick, who teaches second grade at O'Hara Elementary School. "Of course, I would have loved to have them in my classroom face to face if things were normal."

"First-graders are pretty resilient people," says Lisa Bellinotti, a first-grade teacher at Hartwood Elementary School. "After a few bumps



the first week, we settled into a new routine in which these little people were able to continue to thrive and learn and grow. The closing actually allowed me to get to know my students and families on a much more personal level. We became very, very close with all of the emails, texts, and live meets. In fact, we became each other's cheerleaders! As scary and stressful as it was at times, we got into a routine, and there was a coziness about this new way of teaching and learning. Everyone was so kind and supportive of each other!"

Of course, parents and guardians continued to be an integral part of the learning process, helping to reinforce lessons during fully online learning and assisting with projects to give students a break from the increased screen time.

"We worked hard to share ideas, such as creating games on the driveway or practicing spelling words on the window with a wipe-off marker," Mrs. Bellinotti says. "I taught science during the closure, and the kids participated just as enthusiastically as though we were in school. For our life science unit, I planted several plants at my house so that we could record the growth, but I also had students planting potatoes, celery, basil, carrots, flowers, and more from their homes. They were brimming over with excitement and enthusiasm. Their enthusiasm for school and life, even during a pandemic, makes teaching fun!"

When the 2020-2021 school year began in August, the district offered three instructional models: hybrid (two days of in-person instruction and three days of online learning per week), blended learning (fully online learning with both live instruction and self-paced learning), and asynchronous instruction (fully online learning with completely self-paced learning). The district's administrative team and faculty and staff were able to determine what elements of online learning were most successful during the spring and offer more live instruction at both the elementary and secondary levels to begin the new school year. "Since we offered online learning last spring, at the start of the school



year, I knew exactly what changes I wanted to make to have the most success in virtual learning," Mrs. Frick says. "I continued using Google Classroom and Google Meet, but made a few adjustments to better meet the needs of my students."

While the willingness of faculty, staff, students, and families to embrace a new way of teaching and learning was paramount to Fox Chapel Area's smooth transition to fully online learning, the greater school community also came together to ensure its success.

Dr. Collett says she is grateful for the expertise of the members of the Return-to-School Coalition convened by Superintendent Mary Catherine Reljac, Ed.D., which provided insight and advice on how the district could bolster its online learning for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

"Taking time to create a thoughtful, comprehensive plan was essential," Dr. Collett says. "We really had to dig in and view this paradigm shift from multiple perspectives. Having parents, guardians, and community members from specialized fields – as well as students, teachers, school counselors, nurses, and staff members sharing their perspectives, their questions, and their concerns – empowered us to create a comprehensive and top-tier educational plan."



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & AWARDS

Fox Chapel Area High School students continued to excel on standardized assessments and outscored their peers across the state and nation. This year, we are highlighting high school SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement (AP) exam scores. Please note that the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and the Keystone Exams were not administered in the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 SENIOR YEAR SAT MEAN SCORES

Fox Chapel Area	
ERW	617
Math	619

ERW = Evidence-Based Reading & Writing

A total of 255 members (75%) of the 339 students in the Class of 2020 took the SAT during their junior or senior year. Fox Chapel Area High School students have outscored the state and nation on the SAT in all subject areas for many years. The national average scores for all 2020 graduates taking the test were 531 in evidence-based reading and writing and 528 in math.

2020 ACT RESULTS

	Fox Chapel Area	Pennsylvania	Nation
English	26.9	23.3	20.1
Math	26.8	23.3	20.4
Reading	28.0	24.1	21.2
Science	26.7	23.2	20.6
Composite Score	27.2	23.6	20.7

A total of 81 high school students took the ACT during the 2019-2020 school year.

FOX CHAPEL AREA HIGH SCHOOL 2020 AP TEST RESULTS

Total AP Students	Total AP Tests Taken	Tests Scored 3+
342	685	610

The high school offered 26 Advanced Placement (AP) courses during the 2019-2020 school year, and many students take multiple courses. Success on an AP exam is defined as a score of 3 or higher, which represents the score point that research finds predictive of college success and college graduation. Nearly 93% of Fox Chapel Area students scored 3 or higher. In 2020, 67.8% of Pennsylvania AP students scored 3 or higher, and Fox Chapel Area students continue to outscore other students in the state. Global scores were not available at press time.



•A total of 139 Fox Chapel Area High School students were named Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars by the College Board for demonstrating college-level achievement on the AP examinations taken in May 2020. Seniors Jackson Boychuk, Hanna Chen, J. Oliver Choo, Gwendolyn Davison, Claire Fenton, Rajeev Godse, Noah Hertzman, Michael Mendelson, Min Robert Grant Nishikawa, Christiana Paljug, Aaron Santilli, Anzu Sekikawa, Sina Shaikh, Charles Smith, Jake Sperry, Shane Susnak, Ameya Velankar, Felix Vesper, and Aaron Wu; and juniors Anthony Nguyen, Mark Puthenpurayil, Vinisha Sant, Sanjay Seshan, and Vivian Shao qualified for the National AP Scholar award. Additionally, Sina Shaikh received an AP International Diploma, a globally recognized certificate awarded to students who display exceptional achievement across a variety of disciplines.



•High school senior Rajeev Godse was selected as a semifinalist in the 2020 class of the Coca-Cola Scholars Program. Rajeev was one of 1,928 high school seniors from across the nation, and one of 80 from Pennsylvania, to be chosen as a semifinalist from more than 93,000 applicants. Students are selected based on their academic excellence, leadership, and service demonstrated in school and community activities.

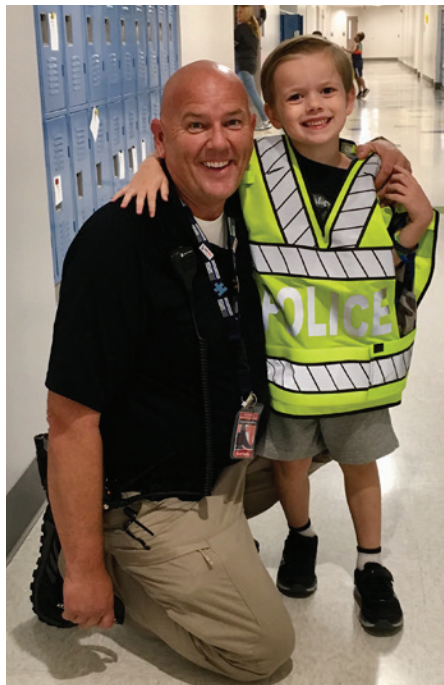


•High school seniors Hanna Chen, J. Oliver Choo, Rajeev Godse, Sina Shaikh, and Aaron Wu were named candidates in the 2020 United States Presidential Scholars Program. More than 4,500 students from across the U.S. were named candidates in this year's program. A total of 118 were from Pennsylvania. Inclusion in the Presidential Scholars Program is one of the nation's highest honors bestowed upon high school seniors. Students are selected for the program based on superior academic achievements and are then evaluated on their leadership qualities, strong character, and involvement in community and school activities.

•Fox Chapel Area High School's 2018-2019 literary arts magazine Tapestry was named a national first-place winner in the magazine portion of the 2019 American Scholastic Press Association's Annual Contest/Review for Scholastic Yearbooks, Magazines and Newspapers.



Continued on next page



•High school junior Vivian Shao was named an honorable mention winner of a 2020 National Center for Women & Information Technology Award for Aspirations in Computing. She is one of 360 young women chosen out of 4,700 applications from across the nation.

•A number of high school students placed in local and national forensic tournaments. Seniors Hanna Chen, Rajeev Godse, and Min Robert Grant Nishikawa; juniors Hannah Jahnke and Jackson Romero; sophomore Ian Mackey-Piccolo; and freshmen Dawson Krisky and Marie Romero qualified for the Catholic Forensic League Grand National Championship Tournament. Seniors J. Oliver Choo and Sina Shaikh finished in the top eight Public Forum Debate teams at the Beyond Resolved National Classic virtual forensic tournament. Additionally, seniors Hanna Chen and Rajeev Godse; juniors Hannah Jahnke and Jackson Romero; and sophomore Siddharth Yende qualified to participate in the state championship forensic tournament.



•Ten high school students placed at the 2020 Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Virtual State Leadership Conference. Sophomore Paris Wohlgemuth won fourth place and qualified to participate in the national conference. Other state place-winners were seniors Jackson Boychuk, Gunnar Loeffler, Michael Prato, and Aaron Santilli; juniors David Kronman, Isabella Liberto, and Zoey Zoschg; and sophomores Sydney Kennedy and Siddharth Yende. Additionally, as part of the virtual state leadership conference, five Fox Chapel Area High School students were inducted into the National Business Honor Society. Those students are senior Michael Prato and juniors Erin Doherty, Isabella Liberto, Zoey Zoschg, and Matthew Zytnick. Additionally, a total of 42 high school students placed at the FBLA Regional Leadership Conference and qualified for the state competition. Fox Chapel Area first-place regional winners were seniors Jackson Boychuk, Samantha Dockey, Blair Echnat, Gunnar Loeffler, Luke O'Connor, Michael Prato, and Aaron Santilli; juniors Arda Akinci, Erin Doherty, Zane Gavazzi, Nathaniel Lazzara, Isabella Liberto, and Vivian Shao; and sophomores Alicia Gu, Paris Wohlgemuth, and Siddharth Yende. Other state qualifiers included seniors Gavin Hitchens and Shane Susnak; juniors Kaya Akinci, Kent Baldauf, Elena Bradley, and Vinisha Sant; sophomores Carlie Barnett, Louise Coleman, Iona Clark, James Dockey, Russell Fenton, Elia Gillespie, Thomas Healy, Sydney Kennedy, Kaitlyn Legge, Nathaniel Mueller, Omar Shalaby, Ashish Subedi, Alex Zatman, and Ryan Zatman; and freshmen Christopher Ernharth, Molly McNaughton, Thomas Selwood, Sophie Shao, Daniel Uhl, and Mert Yanar.

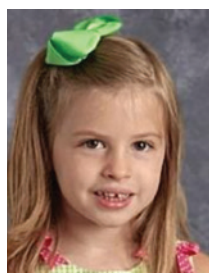


•A total of 21 high school students placed at Model United Nations (UN) conferences held throughout the year. Students winning first place were seniors Rajeev Godse, Noah Hertzman, Min Robert Grant Nishikawa, Zeynep Ozkaya, Aaron Santilli, Ameya Velankar, and Felix Vesper; juniors Cecilia Rike and Abigail Rickin-Marks; and sophomore Janise Kim.



•Six Fox Chapel Area High School students earned high marks on the 2020 National Latin Exam. A Summa Cum Laude Gold Medal award was earned by junior Ryan Kenyon. A Maxima Cum Laude Silver Medal award was earned by freshman Silas Owens. Magna Cum Laude Certificate awards were earned by junior Amulya Garimella and sophomore Aurora Sauereisen. Cum Laude certificates were earned by junior Divine Eyth and freshman Salvatore Smith.

•Five Fox Chapel Area High School and A.W. Beattie Career Center juniors were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. The Fox Chapel Area students are Isaiah Charapp (Culinary Arts), Matthew Ebel (Automotive Technology), Kevin Fornaser (Automotive Technology), Ashton Monroe (Culinary Arts), and Matthew Sheeler (Computer Systems Technology).



•Hartwood Elementary School kindergarten student Addison Munsch was named a finalist and received an honorable mention award in the 2020 PBS KIDS Writers Contest for her story, "The LEGO Engineer." Nearly 1,000 stories were received, and Addison was one of 27 students who were named finalists in the contest. The competition was open to students in kindergarten-grade five in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, and Delaware.

•Dorseyville Middle School eighth-grader Adhitya Thirumala qualified for the 2020 National Geographic GeoBee State Competition. The state GeoBee is open to students in grades four-eight who won the competition at their school level and then earned high marks on an online qualifying test, which was submitted to the National Geographic Society.

•Five Dorseyville Middle School students received honorable mentions as part of the 26th Annual Shakespeare Monologue & Scene Contest. Eighth-graders Eric Pil, Liviya Rubin, and Abraham White received honorable mentions in the Upper Division Monologue category. Seventh-graders Devon McDonald and Sophie Thorne received an honorable mention in the Lower Division Scene category. More than 1,000 students in grades 4-12 from 110 schools from across the greater Pittsburgh area participated.





STEM RECOGNITIONS

- Fox Chapel Area High School was ranked by Newsweek as one of the Top STEM High Schools in America for 2020. The top 5,000 schools were curated from STEM.org educational research, which used data from 2015-2019 to determine which schools best offer their students experiences in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Only 19 schools in Pennsylvania were chosen, and Fox Chapel Area High School was the only public school in the region to be selected.
- Twenty-six Fox Chapel Area students won first place at the 86th Annual Region 7 Meeting of the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS), and 18 students qualified for the state competition. Fox Chapel Area first-place winners were seniors Rajeev Godse and Ameya Velankar; juniors Amulya Garimella, Jackson Romero, Vinisha Sant, Sanjay Seshan, Dong Hyun Shin, and Nishi Thawani; sophomores Mona Gerges, Janise Kim, Zoe Lakkis, Theodor Urban, and Siddharth Yende; freshmen Arvind Seshan and Alina Stiger; eighth-graders Lakshanya Rajaganapathi and Jillian Stahl; and seventh-grader Rohit Velankar. First-place winners qualified for the state competition.
- Four Dorseyville Middle School students scored high on the American Mathematics Contest (AMC) 8 exam. Eighth-grader Joshua Brown placed first at DMS and scored in the top 5% nationally, earning him an "Honor Roll" certificate. Seventh-grader Zhana Neumann placed second at DMS, and eighth-grader Dylan Work and seventh-grader Jiei Masuda tied for third place at DMS. The AMC 8 is a multiple-choice examination in middle school mathematics designed to promote the development and enhancement of problem-solving skills.
- Four Fox Chapel Area High School freshmen placed in the regional CalcuSolve competition. The team of Elijah Conklin, Ananth Kashyap, Jonathan Li, and Ethan Tan won third place in the team competition for grades 9 and 10. Additionally, Jonathan placed third in the individual category of the competition. CalcuSolve is a competition that tests students' problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- A team of Dorseyville Middle School students placed third at the 2020 Western Pennsylvania Science Bowl Middle School Competition. The team included eighth-graders Shriya Krishnamurthy, Lakshanya Rajaganapathi, Parv Tahiliani, and Adhitya Thirumala, and seventh-grader Murugan Ayyanar. The Science Bowl was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy National Energy Technology Laboratory in South Park.

FINE ARTS & MUSIC RECOGNITIONS

- The Fox Chapel Area School District was named among the Best Communities for Music Education for the ninth year in a row by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation. This honor recognizes school districts' commitment to music education.

- High school juniors Amara Ostroff and Annabella Zgurzynski were named national Silver Medal winners in the Scholastic Art Awards of 2020 for their mosaic art and enameling projects, respectively.

- Thirty-four students won awards in the Pittsburgh Region of the Scholastic Art Awards 2020. The Gold Key winners were seniors Ethan Alfery, Macey Balk, Amelia Bothe, Nicolina Damian, Anzu Sekikawa, William Urso, and Yervant Yeterian; juniors Annabelle Cullen, Kristian Kerschbaumer, Jing McCann, Jocelyn Morningstar, Amara Ostroff, Annabella Zgurzynski, and Wenyu Zuo; sophomores Elia Gillespie, Sarah Giuffre, and Paloma Pelfrey; and freshman Monique Coutu. Gold Key winners qualified for national judging. Jing McCann was also selected as a best of show for her jewelry.

- The high school marching band won first place at the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association Championships. Earlier in the school year, the band won first place at a competition held at Moon Area High School.

- Several high school students were selected to perform with PMEA bands and choirs. Six were chosen by audition to perform with the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 1 Band East; five were selected to perform with the PMEA District 1 Honors Band; and one student was chosen for the PMEA District 1 Jazz Ensemble. Thirteen high school students were selected to perform with the 2020 PMEA District 1 Chorus, and 11 were chosen for the PMEA Region I Chorus.

- Fox Chapel Area High School senior pianist J. Oliver Choo won the Butler County Symphony Orchestra 2020 Young Artist Competition. The contest was open to high school students in grades 9-12 who resided within a 25-mile radius of Butler, or were a high school musician in a PMEA District 5 school.



SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY



- Fox Chapel Area School District students and staff held their 30th annual telethon in December 2019 and raised more than \$46,500. This brings the total amount of money raised by Fox Chapel Area students and staff to more than \$902,600 over the last 30 years for various local and regional charities. The telethon raised money for the Sharpsburg Community Library and involved students and staff from all six schools in the district.

- Fairview Elementary students and staff raised more than \$3,860 for Indiana Township's K-9, Ares, to support him in his retirement. Money was raised through three different fundraisers organized by the Fairview Elementary School Student Government. The fundraisers included Paws for a Cause, spirit week, and penny wars.

- Hartwood Elementary students and staff participated in penny wars and donated the proceeds to Indiana Township Police Officer Scott Palmer for the retirement of his K-9 officer, Ares, and the training of his new K-9, Toki. Additionally, the Hartwood students and staff organized a food drive for Thanksgiving and donated hundreds of dollars and three carloads of food to the Network of Hope Food Pantry in Allison Park.



- The Kerr Elementary School Student Council led many community service activities for students and staff. This included a collection of personal hygiene items for veterans at the H. John Heinz III Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Students and staff also participated in a Give-A-Gift Drive for Volunteers of America/All of Us Care in Sharpsburg, as well as a snowman decorating contest to raise funds for the Sharpsburg Community Library.

- The O'Hara Elementary School Student Council participated in World Kindness Day in November 2019 in memory of kindergarten student Annie Whittingham. As part of the



project, students painted kindness rocks and created a rock garden for the school. Additionally, second-grade students participated in a service project where they made blankets for animals at an animal shelter. Students also made Veterans Day cards for veterans, and thanksgiving baskets were donated to the local Backpack for Hunger organization to provide meals for needy families.

- The Dorseyville Middle School Student Council continued its leadership activities for students and staff to benefit the community. This included a turkey trot to raise money for gift cards for DMS families in need. The students also visited Angels 211, an assisted living facility in Sharpsburg, and played instruments and games, and spent time getting to know the residents. The students and staff also did a personal hygiene collection for the residents of Angels 211. Additionally, the students worked with World Vision, Meals on Wheels, and Reagan's Journey Lending Closet. The students and staff also supported Go Baby Go, a student club at Chatham University that modifies drivable toy cars to help children with mobility impairments. The efforts of the students and staff led to the donation of three adapted toy vehicles. The DMS fundraisers generated more than \$17,100 for local charities.

- Fox Chapel Area High School students and staff maintained their tradition of community service. Students and staff visited the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank to help pack food for those in need. The students also held three blood drives, created and delivered holiday cards for veterans, and decorated the H. John Heinz III Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and spread holiday cheer. Students and staff also held a schoolwide food drive to benefit pantries in Sharpsburg Borough and Indiana Township. A large undertaking of the Community Outreach Committee was collecting items for the Foxes Burrow, a place where high school students in need can go to get personal hygiene items, school supplies, and clothing. Additionally, high school orchestra students organized and performed virtual pop-up concerts for those who might be isolated during the pandemic quarantine. Their three pop-up concerts were aimed at thanking medical personnel, reading to children while incorporating orchestra music, and honoring veterans.



STAFF ACCOLADES

- Fox Chapel Area School District Deputy Superintendent David McCommons, Ed.D., was the recipient of the 2020 National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Chief Nicholas Derzis Safe School Leadership Award. The award recognizes individuals for their contributions and commitment to a school resource officer program, and who exemplify leadership, innovation, and dedication to taking proactive measures to enhance the safety of their school community. Dr. McCommons was instrumental in starting the district's first school police department.

- The district won national and state awards in publications contests for the 2018-2019 Fox Chapel Area School District State of the Schools; for the IN Fox Chapel Area community magazine spring 2019, summer 2019, and winter 2019 issues; for the video "A Car for Khaleesia"; and for the district's website in the 2020 National School Public Relations Association Publications and Digital Media Awards and in the 2019 Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association Excellence in Education Communications Contest. The entries were coordinated by Bonnie Berzonski, coordinator of communications, and Jill Leonard, community engagement specialist.

- Hartwood Elementary School third-grade teacher Brianna Amoscatto was named a 2020 All-Star Teacher. The award, presented by Chevron, Pirates Charities, and The Grable Foundation, recognizes teachers and honors them for making a significant difference in the lives of students.

- Fox Chapel Area School District instrumental music teacher Dennis Emert was selected as the 2020 recipient of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) James R. Stewart Distinguished Service Award. The award was created to recognize outstanding service to the PMEA, reflecting the dedication and commitment demonstrated by PMEA Past President Jim Stewart. Mr. Emert retired at the end of the school year.

- Elementary teacher Alison Francis, Ed.D., and high school science teacher Jessica Papariello were selected to serve on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's PA Academic Standards for Science and Technology, Environment and Ecology Content Committee. The committee reviews current research, national and state trends, and stakeholder data, and makes recommendations to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education.



- Fox Chapel Area High School social studies teacher Jennifer Klein was honored as part of the University of Pittsburgh and Pitt athletic department's Extra Yard for Teachers program, which rewards teachers across the country for making positive impacts in the community.

- Fox Chapel Area High School Program Principal John McGee, Ph.D., co-authored an article highlighting the school's Focus Program, which helps students who are at risk of dropping out of school. The article was titled, "Focus on Alternative Education: An Exploratory Case Study" and was published in the journal, "Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth."

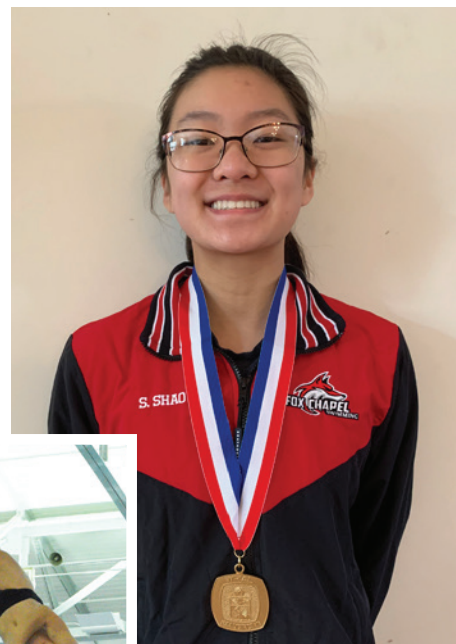
- The following employees attained 25 years of service with the Fox Chapel Area School District during the 2019-2020 school year:
Hartwood Elementary School – Stephanie Kurlej
Kerr Elementary School – Rebecca Cosentino
Dorseyville Middle School – Cara James and Frances Rago
Fox Chapel Area High School – Christine Andrews and Mark Matusiak



2019-2020 ATHLETIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The athletic teams had another great year as evidenced by their performances and the number of individuals and teams that represented the district at state and WPIAL events. A few facts about the 2019-2020 Fox Chapel Area athletic program include:

- A total of 833 boys and girls at the high school and 490 Dorseyville Middle School students participated on athletic teams.
- The boys golf team and the girls tennis team won state (PIAA) championships.
- Boys basketball, boys cross country, boys golf, girls golf, girls swimming and diving, and girls tennis had perfect section records and won their section titles.
- Sixteen of 18 interscholastic teams and/or individuals from those teams qualified for postseason competition, including boys cross country, football, boys golf, boys soccer, girls cross country, girls golf, girls soccer, girls tennis, boys basketball, girls basketball, gymnastics, boys indoor track, girls indoor track, boys swimming and diving, girls swimming and diving, and wrestling. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the eight spring sports teams were unable to compete.
- Individual state qualifiers were seniors Scott Bitar (boys golf); Charlotte James (girls tennis); seniors Christian Fitch, Brooke Krally, and Grace Sisson (cross country); seniors Christian Fitch, Abigail Kieffer, Madolyn Kieffer, Brooke Krally, and Grace Sisson, and sophomore Nele Frank (indoor track); seniors Grace Gackenbach and Leia Ross, junior Vivian Shao, sophomore Rei Sperry, and freshmen Talia Bugel and Sophie Shao (girls swimming); and junior David Manelis (boys diving).
- A total of 24 seniors were recruited and signed to play sports in college.
- All high school teams maintained an average 3.72 QPA.



Continued on next page



- Fox Chapel Area School District interscholastic strength and conditioning head coach and high school social studies teacher Brandon Peifer was named the 2020 State Coach of the Year by the National High School Strength Coaches Association. This award is given annually to high school strength and conditioning coaches in recognition of their coaching achievements and passion for the profession. Mr. Peifer was instrumental in developing the strength and conditioning program for students at Fox Chapel Area High School and Dorseyville Middle School.

- The Fox Chapel Area High School boys varsity golf team won the PIAA championship for the first time in school history, as well as the WPIAL Class AAA team championships and the WPIAL Class AAA Section 4 team title. The team members were seniors Scott Bitar, Amani D'Ambrosio, Jack Flanagan, Will Livingston, Matthew Mattioli, Brevin Urso, and Arnold Vento; junior Aidan Oehrle; and sophomores Owen Delaney and Zachary Paper. The team was not only undefeated in section play, but also in dual match play. Coach Bryan Deal was also named the PIAA boys golf coach of the year. Additionally, Scott Bitar was the WPIAL Class AAA individual champion, and Scott and Aidan Oehrle both qualified for the PIAA West Region Tournament. Scott Bitar also qualified for the PIAA individual championships. Also, the team placed fourth at the National High School Golf Association 2020 National Invitational at the Pinehurst Resort in South Carolina.



- The Fox Chapel Area High School girls varsity tennis team won the PIAA Class AAA team championship and the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 team title. The team members were seniors Charlotte James and Amanda Schilcher; juniors Molly Dean, Emily Fera (team manager), Alexandria Morton, and Paige Theoret; sophomores Baylin Bitar, Anna Ferris, Carissa Shepard, and Katherine Voigt; and freshmen Emilia Cody, Catherine Petrovich, and Diya Reddy. The team was undefeated in section play and was also the WPIAL Class AAA runner-up. Additionally, Charlotte won the WPIAL Class AAA singles championship for the first time in school history. She also qualified for the PIAA Class AAA singles championship, in which she was the runner-up. Coach Alex Slezak was also named the PIAA girls tennis coach of the year.

- Senior golfer Scott Bitar was named to the 2019 American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) Scholastic Junior All-America Team. Only 24 students in the nation were named to the team. The team consisted of 12 young men and 12 young women who demonstrated the ability to excel not only on the golf course, but also in the classroom and the community. To be eligible for the AJGA Scholastic Junior All-America Team, applicants must be high school juniors or seniors with a top finish in an AJGA open or invitational event.

•The Fox Chapel Area High School girls varsity golf team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 4 team title and was undefeated in the section. Additionally, sophomore Nina Busch placed second at the WPIAL Class AAA individual tournament and qualified for the PIAA West Region individual tournament.



•The high school boys cross country team captured the Division I, WPIAL Class AAA Section 4 team title and was undefeated. Additionally, seniors Christian Fitch, Brooke Krally, and Grace Sisson all qualified for the PIAA Class AAA Cross Country Championships, where Grace placed eighth and Christian placed 11th. This was Christian's fourth year in a row to medal at the state meet.

•Senior boys soccer player Zane Ingram was named to the Pennsylvania Soccer Coaches Association all-state team and was the WPIAL Class 4A Player of the Year.



•The high school girls swimming and diving team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 championship and was undefeated in its section. Additionally, seven members of the Fox Chapel Area High School girls swimming team qualified for the 2020 PIAA Class AAA Swimming and Diving Championships. Freshman Sophie Shao was named the WPIAL Class AAA champion in the 100 butterfly and qualified for the PIAA Swimming Championships, where she won another gold medal in the 100 butterfly. Sophie was also named to the all-state team. The other PIAA qualifiers were the 200 medley relay team of junior Vivian Shao, sophomore Rei Sperry, and freshmen Talia Bugel and Sophie Shao; the 400 free relay team of senior Grace Gackenbach, junior Vivian Shao, and freshmen Talia Bugel and Sophie Shao; and senior Leia Ross and freshman Talia Bugel both qualified as individuals in the 100 backstroke.



•The Fox Chapel Area High School boys varsity basketball team won the WPIAL Class 6A Section 3 championship. The team was undefeated in the section, and its regular season record was 21-1. This was the team's best record since 1977.

•Junior David Manelis won first place at the WPIAL Class AAA Diving Championships and qualified for the PIAA championships, during which he placed third.



•Six members of the Fox Chapel Area High School indoor track team qualified for the Pennsylvania Track & Field Coaches Association Indoor State Championships. Senior Christian Fitch qualified in the 3,000 meters, in which he placed fifth; senior Grace Sisson qualified in the mile; seniors Abigail Kieffer, Madolyn Kieffer, Brooke Krally, and Grace Sisson qualified in the distance medley relay; and sophomore Nele Frank qualified in the long jump.

•High school senior wrestler Alex Wecht was named the 160-pound WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 champion.

•High school seniors Eddie Farrell, Joshua Miller, Luke O'Connor and Alex Wecht were named to Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association all-state academic teams.

•High school senior Arnold Vento was named the "Most Positive Boys Multi-Sport Athlete" in the Western Pennsylvania Positive Athlete Program. He was on the golf, basketball, volleyball, and Unified Track teams.





A GRADUATION CEREMONY LIKE NONE BEFORE

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't stop the Fox Chapel Area School District from celebrating the members of the Class of 2020 and their impressive accomplishments. On June 7, 2020, the high school seniors had two options to receive their diplomas: a drive-thru option and an in-person individual graduation recognition ceremony. The drive-thru graduation was available for those who preferred to stay in their vehicles and receive their diplomas. The in-person option allowed for students to have their names announced, to receive their diplomas from a family member, and have a photo taken by a professional photographer at a custom photography station. Additionally, district staff members were on campus to cheer on the graduates as they commemorated their milestone.





CLASS OF 2020 COLLEGE CHOICES

Aims Community College • American University • Appalachian State University • Arizona State University (2) • Belmont University • Boston University (2) • Bucknell University (2) • California University of Pennsylvania (2) • Carnegie Mellon University (4) • Case Western Reserve University • Catholic University of America • Community College of Allegheny County – Allegheny Campus (29) • Community College of Allegheny County – Monroeville Boyce Campus • Community College of Allegheny County – North Campus • Chatham University (2) • Clarion University of Pennsylvania (2) • Clemson University (3) • Cleveland Institute of Music • College of Charleston • Colorado State University – Fort Collins • Columbia University • Cornell University (3) • Davidson College • Denison University (2) • Duquesne University (10) • Edinboro University (4) • Emory University • Florida Atlantic University • Franklin & Marshall College • Gannon University • George Washington University • Georgia Institute of Technology (2) • Hamilton College • Heidelberg University • Hobart and William Smith Colleges • Howard University • Indiana University of Pennsylvania (3) • Indiana University – Bloomington (2) • James Madison University (3) • John Carroll University (2) • Johnson & Wales University • La Roche College • Lehigh University • Lynn University • Marietta College • Maryland Institute College of Art • McGill University • Mercyhurst University • Miami University – Oxford • Michigan State University (3) • Morehouse College • New York University (2) • North Carolina State University • Northeastern University (2) • Oberlin College • Ohio State University • Ohio Wesleyan University • Pace University – New York City • Penn State Behrend • Penn State New Kensington • Pennsylvania State University (13) • Pittsburgh Career Institute • Pittsburgh Technical College • Point Park University • Purdue University • Reed College • Rice University • Robert Morris University (2) • Rochester Institute of Technology • Rosedale Technical College (2) • Saint Louis University (2) • Saint Vincent College • Santa Barbara City College • Santa Fe College • Savannah College of Art and Design • Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania (3) • Saint Francis University • Stanford University • Stony Brook University – New York • Syracuse University • Temple University (2) • Thiel College • Trinity College (2) • University of California – Santa Cruz • University of Central Florida • University of Dayton (5) • University of Delaware (2) • University of Kentucky • University of Louisville • University of Maryland – Baltimore County • University of Miami (4) • University of Michigan – Ann Arbor (8) • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2) • University of North Carolina School of the Arts • University of North Carolina – Wilmington (2) • University of Northwestern Ohio • University of Notre Dame (2) • University of Pennsylvania • University of Pittsburgh (42) • University of Pittsburgh – Greensburg (3) • University of Pittsburgh – Johnstown (5) • University of Rochester • University of Texas at Austin • University of Vermont • University of Wisconsin – Madison • University of South Carolina – Columbia • University of Tampa • University of Toronto • University of Valley Forge • University of Virginia • Vet Tech Institute • Virginia Tech (2) • West Liberty University • West Virginia University (2) • William & Mary • Worcester Polytechnic Institute

FOX CHAPEL AREA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2020

On June 7, 2020, a total of 339 seniors became the 59th class to graduate from Fox Chapel Area High School. Of these, 98 students had a 4.0 weighted quality point average (QPA) or above. Approximately 80% of the Class of 2020 are continuing their education, and 50% are enrolled in schools outside of Pennsylvania. Members of the Class of 2020 maintained the tradition of being accepted to the top colleges and universities across the nation.



Fox Chapel Area
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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