


IN Fox Chapel Area

FOX CHAPEL AREA'S
MAIRI COOPER
NAMED
PENNSYLVANIA'S

2015
Teacher
of the Year


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FOX CHAPEL AREA

School News



Fox Chapel Area School District

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

FCASD Friends,

Coming out of the long cold winter, the spring season in a school district is an exciting and energetic place to be. From the joyful sounds of children on the playground at recess, to the crack of a bat on the baseball field, the sounds of spring are finally arriving.

Inside the schools, spring is also a time of continued hard work. Keystone Exams and PSSAs are in full gear as children from grades three through twelve are “put to the test” in the areas of mathematics, reading/language arts, writing, and science. Our support staff, teachers, and administrators have worked diligently during the school year assessing each individual student’s growth and monitoring instructional programs that best fit the individual student’s needs. After-school programs have been developed and implemented to help those students who need that extra boost in math and reading. Instructional programs are being analyzed on a continuous basis to make sure they are implemented with fidelity and are making a difference in our children’s achievement levels.

Our district is also providing other valuable opportunities for our students. We continue to offer art and music programs that are second-to-none and a wide variety of athletic options for our students to choose from. There are also after-school clubs and service organizations that our students participate in on a regular basis.

It’s hard to believe that I have been with Fox Chapel Area School District for an entire year. What a great school district! Our staff, School Board, and community’s passion, hard work, dedication, and belief in our children are the foundations upon which our success is built.

My wife and I feel fortunate to be part of such a great community. Thanks to the community and parents for all your support this school year. Our district is moving to greater heights, and with your continued advocacy and involvement, we are striving to be the best public school district in Pennsylvania and the nation.

Best always,
Gene Freeman



*“Our district is moving to
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Moments after she is announced as Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year, Mairi Cooper hugs Fox Chapel Area High School senior Eli Ziff at ceremonies in Harrisburg.

PA TEACHER OF THE YEAR SAYS TEACHING TEENAGERS IS HER DESTINY

Mairi Cooper only intended to work for a year when she was hired at Fox Chapel Area as a music teacher and to oversee the district's strings program – just a week before school started in 2001. She had been a professional violinist for 10 years and had taught at the college level after she completed bachelor's and master's degrees in violin performance at the Eastman School of Music. She saw Fox Chapel Area High School as a good temporary position that provided health care benefits while she completed her doctoral dissertation. "That changed within two weeks," Ms. Cooper said, as she came to realize that teaching high school students was her destiny. She had found that she had a passion for teaching teenagers, "who have the idealism of youth and the intelligence of adults."

Fourteen years later, Ms. Cooper, who teaches Advanced Placement Music Theory, orchestra, piano, and world music; directs the high school orchestra; and chairs the high school's music department, traveled to Hershey as one of 13 finalists in Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year program. Just moments before she was announced as the 2015 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year on December 8, Fox Chapel Area High School senior Eli Ziff introduced his teacher, saying, "Ms. Cooper is not my Teacher of the Year, she is my teacher of a lifetime."

Eli said that every student should have a teacher like Ms. Cooper – an influential adult who surpasses just being a teacher. She became that special role model for him following the death of his father during the summer before his sophomore year. Ms. Cooper sent him an email message, and her support didn't end there. Once school started in the fall and throughout his junior and senior years as well, Eli said that Ms. Cooper would sit and talk with him and encourage him to follow in his father's footsteps. "All the while, Ms. Cooper was supportive during the low times, and she has been there for my greatest successes," he said. Additionally, she has taught him that it's important to open up to others, how to become a responsible man, and to ask for help.

"She has taught me to ask teachers, friends, family, and her when I need help so that I would realize that life isn't a journey I need to take alone."

Eli, who has participated in orchestra every semester except one throughout high school, described his orchestra teacher as more like a conductor. "We are not just learning for a grade, but for the betterment of the music and the betterment of ourselves."

At this point in her career at Fox Chapel Area High School, Ms. Cooper said, "The culture of my class is

well-established. The students know that it's not *my* orchestra; it's *our* orchestra. It's not *my* class; It's *our* class."

She added, "Music is a practice in critical thinking. It is constantly demanding. It's a joint effort all of the time." Ms. Cooper also said that she is tough on her students, not just related to their music. "I ask a lot of them as people."

She said she learned these same lessons beginning early in life. Her parents were her first role models and teachers. Both were college professors who insisted that she and her brother work to their potential, be members of good standing in the community, and be home at six. "We talked around the kitchen table where I learned what it meant to be a good human being," Ms. Cooper said.

Beginning at age three and until she was 14, Patience Berg was her violin teacher in rural Indiana. Ms. Cooper said, "She was the epitome of caring." She later studied under Zvi Zeitlin in college, where she learned more about music, but other lessons as well. "He taught me the discipline of teaching." She added, "Mr. Zeitlin had very high standards for his students."

During her career at Fox Chapel Area she has had ample opportunity to apply lessons learned from her own mentors to become a role model for not only her students, but other teachers as well. Ms. Cooper has coordinated professional development opportunities and curriculum for music staff and string teachers throughout the district, and mentored a new high school choir director and middle school orchestra director, as well as string teachers in other school districts. She has also developed curriculum for the high school's music department; developed two new music courses, the history of rock and roll and world music; and coordinated continuity in the orchestra curriculum throughout the district.

While Ms. Cooper continues to perform in several ensembles, was pivotal in the high school's special accreditation in music education, and has received individual teaching awards from the American String Teachers' Association and Yale University, she is most proud of the accomplishments of her students. Over the past few years, members of the high school orchestra



Mairi Cooper, Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year, was honored by the Fox Chapel Area School Board and introduced by her student, senior Eli Ziff.

have performed for Maestros Manfred Honeck and Gianandrea Noseda from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; helped create and participate in "great works" programs (Grand Salons); and performed outside of the school district at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal, and Symphony Hall in Chicago.

Ms. Cooper is also quick to praise the other finalists in the Teacher of the Year program, as well as her colleagues who inspire her. "This is truly a noble profession and I am honored and overwhelmed that you have asked me to represent you," she said when she accepted her award. "I would not be the teacher I am if not at Fox Chapel Area. It is truly an amazing place to work."

She acknowledged the school administration and her colleagues at all six schools. "I teach with some amazing teachers."

The Teacher of the Year program is cosponsored by the Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National State Teacher of the Year. Teachers are nominated by students, parents, colleagues, or community members. As Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year, Ms. Cooper will represent what is best in teaching and education and will travel across the commonwealth. Later this year she will be Pennsylvania's nominee for the National Teacher of the Year award.

Fox Chapel Area School District Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D., said, "Mairi is a teacher that defies gravity. When you think she has lifted her students to the highest degree, she inspires them to go even higher."



Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year and Fox Chapel Area High School Orchestra Director Mairi Cooper is presented with the Keystone Award of Excellence and the 2015 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year award by David Volkman, Ed.D., then special assistant to the acting secretary of education.



BACKPACKS FOR HUNGER SUPPLIES WEEKEND FOOD



Kerr Elementary School school counselor Sue Douglas, librarian Kathryn Hoel, and MAPS social services liaison Ed Hanna pack grocery bags with food for the coming weekend.

Students from two of the district's elementary schools, who may have gone hungry otherwise, now have food on weekends, thanks to the efforts of the Kerr and Hartwood school communities. Backpacks for Hunger is a program initiated locally at Kerr Elementary by school counselor Sue Douglas during the 2013-2014 school year. Hartwood Elementary piggybacked on the idea, starting the program this school year under the direction of school counselor Janet Fazzini.

Ms. Douglas said she wanted to provide food for students at Kerr because, "I knew that some of our students had the need, just to supplement what may be at home." She began by researching programs on the Internet, and by calling two other North Hills area school districts that have similar programs. Her online research led her to a website which provided a toolkit to help start Backpacks for Hunger in the Kerr community. Kerr and Hartwood currently have a total of 74 students who receive food in their backpacks each weekend.

The food, that is packed and distributed by staff members and other volunteers, usually includes two servings of fruit, two snacks, two lunches, two breakfasts, one protein, and a shelf-stable milk. Typical foods are macaroni and

cheese, oatmeal, soup, pudding, tuna, fruit, and assorted snacks. The approximate cost is \$6-\$7 per backpack per week, and no district funds are used for the program. Everything is donated or paid for through grants. Items and monies at both schools – including cash, gift cards, and food contributions – have been donated by staff members, school families and the PTO/PTA, Girl Scouts, community organizations, and even retired district teachers. At Hartwood, a parent has been providing fresh fruit every week. Additionally, Fairview Elementary School held a food drive during the holidays that benefitted Backpacks for Hunger at both schools, in addition to benefitting the local food bank. The East End Food Co-op recently donated \$3,500 to Kerr Elementary

Dorseyville Middle School started the Backpacks for Hunger program in mid-February. The program is coordinated by Dorseyville Middle School Assistant Principal Patricia Clark. Dorseyville currently has 26 students who receive food each Friday in their backpacks. The program at the middle school is funded through an interfaith ministries group and the food is also obtained through community donations and the DMS staff.



Hartwood school counselor Janet Fazzini puts food in a locker in a student's backpack.

through a "round-up" campaign in which customers can round up their total food bill to support a cause.

Pointing to three large boxes of nonperishable food on her office floor, Ms. Douglas said they were donated by a recent retiree. She acknowledged that the support from the entire community is integral to the program. "There's no way this program could survive without the support of the staff, administration, families, and community." She also said that both Hartwood and Kerr schools have "Wish Lists" posted on Amazon (search "Kerr Backpack for Hunger" and "Hartwood Backpack for Hunger").

Both Ms. Douglas and Mrs. Fazzini were quick to point out that there are various

reasons why people might need extra assistance once in a while. "There's a time in all of our lives when we could use some help," Mrs. Fazzini said. "I just think people sometimes need a leg up."

Ms. Douglas added, "Some of our families struggle. Maybe this will free up money for something else they might need."

According to Mrs. Fazzini, there are lessons for the students to learn from the program as well. "I think this program helps to model the school community as being filled with people who think of the whole child, not just academics. That's our goal. We want the students, parents, and families to know, 'We really do care about you.'"

Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area Commits \$10,000 to Backpacks for Hunger

The Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area has designated the Backpacks for Hunger programs at Hartwood and Kerr elementary schools as the lead beneficiaries of the 2015 fundraiser. The program, which provides supplemental food for students over weekends, will receive at least \$10,000 from the Rotary in the coming year, local Rotary President George Dull, Ph.D., announced.

Dr. Dull, on behalf of the Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area, presented a \$1,000 check to help fund the backpack program to Kerr counselor Sue Douglas and Hartwood counselor Janet Fazzini in December.

"This is a program initiated at the schools to fill a need that staff members saw firsthand every week," Dr. Dull said. "Most of the students participating in the program receive a subsidized or free lunch at school and it's important that there is adequate food at home during the weekends."

Dr. Dull said that his organization has always supported worthwhile charities. As a retired Fox Chapel Area school counselor, he became aware of the Backpacks for Hunger program through his affiliation with the school district. He then presented the idea of supporting the cause to his fellow Rotarians.

"They were very excited to participate in the program," he said. "A lot of them were shocked to realize that there were students in the Fox Chapel Area who would go home on the weekends and not have enough food. It's nice to be able to help local families in a meaningful way."

"We are really grateful for the Rotary's generosity for the Backpacks for Hunger program," Mrs. Fazzini said. "Their donation will supply food for many of our students in need."

Dr. Dull said the Backpacks for Hunger program will be the focus of the Rotary Club's May 18 Charity Golf Classic. In 2014 the Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area raised and distributed \$20,000 for both local and international charities. The local club has also applied for a grant from Rotary District 7300 to support the Backpacks for Hunger program.

"The Rotary is really pleased and proud to participate in this program and we hope it can be expanded," Dr. Dull said.

The Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area Charity Golf Classic will be held May 18, 2015. Anyone interested in finding out more about the Rotary Club and the annual golf outing can visit the group's website at <http://portal.clubrunner.ca/4994/>.



George Dull, Ph.D., President of the Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area, presents a \$1,000 check to school counselors Sue Douglas, left, and Janet Fazzini for the local Backpacks for Hunger program that they initiated at Kerr and Hartwood elementaries.



JANUARY 2015 EARLY GRADUATION

Fox Chapel Area High School's first graduating Class of 2015 participated in an informal ceremony January 15, 2015, to celebrate their special accomplishment.

"This is an amazing opportunity for these students," Senior/Lead Principal Michael Hower stated during the ceremony. He also noted that the informality of the program, unlike the more formal June graduation, enables the students to share with others their plans for the future. Students in the class of 2015 plan to further their education and work, among other things. As the students' names were called they shared their plans for the future.

Mr. Hower noted that being an early graduate is very difficult in that students do in three and a half years what it normally takes four years to do. "They have my admiration, respect, and congratulations," he said.

Assistant Superintendent David McCommons, Ed.D., congratulated not only the students, but their parents and families for their role in seeing that the students got where they are today.

"I'm proud of you, and I hope you feel that same sense of pride being a part of the Fox Chapel Area School District." Dr. McCommons also urged the students to continue their determination and perseverance.

Program Principal Daniel Lentz, Ph.D., reminded the students that it was four short years ago that they were visiting the high school for move-up day. "Your future is ahead of you. You have made great strides and growth over the last few years," he told them.



The early graduating class accepts congratulatory applause from family and friends.

Assistant Principal John McGee told the students they had touched his life and noted that he had gotten to know some of them quite well. Assistant Principal Rebecca Cunningham, Ed.D., reminded the students of how much they had grown and matured. "I'm excited for where you are going and for where you are now," she said.

Many of the students took the time to thank their family members and their teachers for their unwavering support throughout the years.

Mr. Hower concluded the ceremony by reminding the students how large the high school probably seemed to them when they arrived four years ago. Now the school seems different to them. "The school might seem smaller now, but the world just got a lot bigger," he told them.

The early graduates included: Lea Bobeck, Garret Briskin, Melanie Claus, Robert Crawford, Patrick Cullinan, Anthony Curti, Zachary Keim, Acella Lee, Mariah Mangis, Bridget Markel, Dustin McQuade, David Rice, and Tyler Zacharias.



The Fox Chapel Area High School first graduating Class of 2015.



Some of the early grads pose for a selfie with their friends following the ceremony.

ANIMAL FRIENDS DOGS PROVIDE STRESS-THERAPY FOR STUDENTS

A visit with therapy dogs during the high stress of final exams proved to be very popular with Fox Chapel Area High School students.

High school senior Sophie Roe, the chairperson of the community outreach committee of student government, helped with the January 14 event. "With the Keystone Exams and the finals, we thought bringing in the pets would be a good way to help with the stress," she said.

Senior Gabby Kyle noted, "I had a really tough first and second period and I just love the dogs!" She visited the pets after having just completed two presentations and a test. "It made me happy. They are so cute."



Senior James Musser confirmed by saying that the dogs made him smile. "I had two finals today and I needed a little bit of positivity to make my day better."

Students enjoyed petting and interacting with the dogs, and many took photos and selfies with the pets.

The dogs were brought to the high school by Animal Friends volunteers and all are official therapy dogs.

Barb Young, the Animal Friends therapeutic services assistant, explained that the dogs were brought by their owners and that they all have completed six weeks of intensive classes. She was pleased that the dogs' visit seemed to impact the students.

"The kids come in with big smiles on their faces and a few of the kids have said, 'Now I can just relax,'" Mrs. Young noted.

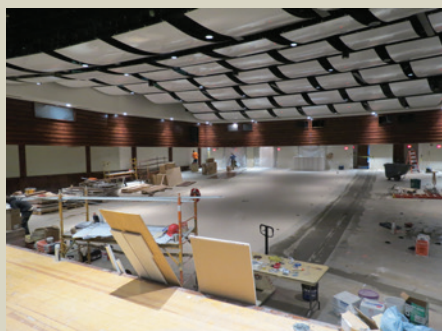
School counselor and student government community outreach coordinator Rachel Machen arranged the event, which also included an animal supply drive. The visit from the therapy dogs raised awareness and support for the community service activity. In the end, more than 500 donations of pet food, toys, treats, towels, and blankets were collected and donated to Animal Friends.



AUDITORIUM OPENS FOR MUSICAL

Cafeteria Work Begins; Main Entrance Closed

The Fox Chapel Area High School Spring Musical "Kiss Me, Kate" was the opening event for the newly renovated auditorium. The photo on the left below shows the auditorium as it looked in the beginning of February. The photo features the newly installed acoustic tiles on the ceiling and the new dark wooden paneling. The photo in the middle shows the completed renovation of the auditorium only three-weeks later!



Cafeteria renovations have now begun and the cafeteria booths have been removed. The cafeteria is still providing hot meals, but the main eating area is now in the auxiliary gym. See photo, below, right.

Additionally, the front entrance renovation has begun and the main entrance of the school is now closed. The high school main office has been relocated to the upper D wing (the social studies hall).





Cohosts Erik Swart and Sara (Tabis) Crowe in an image captured from video from the very first (1990) telethon.

ALL-SCHOOL TELETHON CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

“Cancer Ends with FC” Theme of Event that Raised More than \$42,000

Twenty-five years ago, Sara (Tabis) Crowe and Erik Swart (both in the class of 1991) were among the hosts of the first-ever Fox Chapel Area High School Telethon. Sara remembers that she and Erik were the final cohosts of the day.

“We were just hoping that students would put their extra lunch money into the fishbowl,” Sara said. Erik remembered the excitement that day and that he said to Sara, “We have to have fun. It’s the holidays. Let’s just have a blast.” He added, “And we did.” Students were lining up out the door to make their contributions. “Everyone just wanted to be a part of this,” Sara said.

That telethon was broadcast live during lunch periods only at the high school, and the students raised \$850 that was contributed to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. It wasn’t until several years later that the telethon could be broadcast to the other schools, and all six schools in the district began to participate in what has become an annual fundraising event held on the last day before winter

break. Over the past 25 years, the telethon’s popularity has snowballed and Fox Chapel Area students have raised more than \$628,000 for various local and regional charities. The 2014 telethon, held on December 23, raised \$42,579 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) of Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia Chapter.

Both Sara and Erik appeared on this year’s silver anniversary telethon via video feed to share their memories and to wish the students good luck. Sara, currently the human resource director for HR Source, Inc., said, “The success of the telethon is because of teachers like Ms. [Jill] Tabis and Mr. [Doug] Martin who really want to give their students a unique experience that they can’t get anywhere else but Fox Chapel.” Erik, who has worked at Comedy Central for 12 years, also wished the students well and demonstrated his loyalty to his alma mater by showing off his “Foxes” athletic shorts that he wore for his telethon appearance.

Students at all six schools sponsored fundraising activities to contribute to the overall total on this year's telethon day. At the high school, marketing/management students chose this year's theme, Cancer Ends with FC. They planned and coordinated fundraising activities and events during December including a Penguins ticket raffle; bagel, hot chocolate, and Rita's Ice sales; and a prom ticket raffle. Events on telethon day included a balloon pop, cornhole game, hot dog sale, pie in the face, and holiday photos with Santa and friends. Several of the high school's clubs and organizations also conducted their own fundraising activities and presented their contributions during the telethon.

In between live segments at the high school, there were prerecorded presentations produced by the high school television production students featuring Fairview, Hartwood, Kerr, and O'Hara elementary students. Elementary students and staff described their own fundraising activities including dollar days, spirit days (such as crazy dress-up day), and carnivals, and groups sang holiday songs. Dorseyville Middle School students created their own videos that were run live during the telethon. The public was also invited to call in their donations, make them online, or drop them off at any district school.

Mr. Martin, whose TV students have been producing the telethon since its inception, said he never expected it to become such a popular and successful event. "I think the telethon gained momentum because it was for a charity that the students selected and they wanted to see the charity benefit from their efforts."



➤ (Top) Alumnus Erik Swart made an appearance via video feed to celebrate the 25th annual telethon.

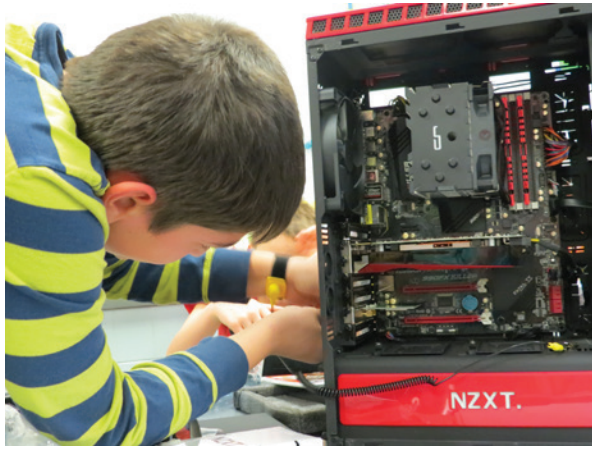
(Middle) High school marketing/management students present a check to the telethon hosts.

(Bottom) Marketing/management students tabulate donations during the telethon.



DMS STUDENTS PURSUE THEIR PERSONAL INTERESTS DURING GENIUS HOUR

Projects Promote, Support, and Model Creative and Innovative Thinking



- (Top) A seventh grade student builds a computer from the ground up during Genius Hour.
- (Middle) The student crosses his fingers as he boots his computer up for the very first time.
- (Bottom) The student celebrates after realizing his computer is going to boot up. In the upcoming weeks he will be busy installing the operating system, drivers, and software.

Two eighth grade girls work on games that they hope will help people with cerebral palsy. A seventh grader crosses his fingers as he tries to boot up his newly built computer. A sixth grade girl prepares flyers to promote a clothing drive at school that she hopes will provide used clothing to help those in need.

It's all part of Genius Hour, a new program that happens on most Fridays at Dorseyville Middle School. Principal Jonathan Nauhaus introduced the concept last summer, and teachers serve as mentors to the students. According to DMS teacher Peggy Perdue, students were asked to choose something they felt passionate about, something they wanted to explore, as well as to be creative and take an idea and develop it into a project. Students submitted their proposals on Google Docs. The only other requirements are that students must keep a log and update it weekly, conduct research, and make a presentation. Projects are, for the most part, individual, although students are allowed to work in small groups. Projects can last for several months or up to three years (through eighth grade). Some of the students are designing and conducting fundraisers for worthy causes and many of the students are working on service projects.

According to one of the Genius Hour teacher coordinators, Jessica Painter, "The students have been given a voice in what they want to study and they have not disappointed."

Mrs. Perdue is enthusiastic about the new program. "I think Genius Hour is a good idea. It gives students some time and freedom to explore a topic they are interested in instead of focusing on the regular curriculum."

Each student has a unique reason for choosing what he or she is working on. Eighth graders Regan Hill and Cara Himmel have been testing how games can help young people with cerebral palsy. The project is especially important because Cara says, "I have cerebral palsy." She explains how in one game, "Regan calls out what hand I should catch [a ball] with and then throw it back." They hope that the exercise will help her strengthen her right side, and in turn, help other young people with cerebral palsy.

In the auditorium, approximately 20 students are passionate about working with animals and pets including seventh graders Isabella Lagazzi and Ben Mabon, who are learning about pet therapy so they can teach Isabella's five-year-old golden retriever to obey commands. "She has to obey so she can help," Isabella says. Interestingly, Isabella and her family moved to Fox Chapel Area from Chile less than two years ago, so the dog is "bilingual." Ben has discovered, "She likes Spanish better than English." Isabella says, "She's good with people." Ben adds that the next step will be to take the dog into different classrooms to visit. The two hope that if the dog interacts well with different students, they will be able

to find a trainer to prepare the dog to become a therapy dog that visits patients in hospitals.

In another classroom, sixth grader Rachel Chang has an older brother and younger sister who both had to spend time in an intensive care unit. Claire Ellermeyer's mother works at Magee Women's Hospital of UPMC. "I told her, 'Mom, we're going to do something with Magee! Yay!'" Rachel and Claire are working together to gather fabrics and materials to make quilts and fleece blankets. Even with infant warmers, "some babies are cold and the fleece will keep them nice and warm," Claire explains. She and Rachel have been contacting fabric stores seeking donations to make their blankets.

Mrs. Perdue says she uses project-based learning in the classroom extensively, and she likes that "Genius Hour models the real world as students decide on what they are doing, create a plan, follow through with the plan, and then present



Four girls work together on a project to gather items to be distributed to the homeless in Pittsburgh. A baked goods exchange (a donation of food or clothing for the treats) will be held at a local church and synagogue. The four students hope to go along for the distribution of food and clothing to find out more about the homeless and to try to better understand their situations.

it to others. They learn valuable skills such as time management, documentation, communication, and how to present their findings." She adds, "Many of the projects students are working on benefit others in addition to the student."

The 12 students, including both boys and girls in all three grades, in Mrs. Perdue's group are all working on community service projects. Eighth grader Grace Wiegand had observed that the residents in a long-term care home seemed to be depressed. She

did research to determine if this is a common occurrence or just an observation she made. She then created 54 handmade valentines that she hopes will make the residents smile. "I hope their days are brightened by the notes and that they enjoy their time there and that it makes it seem a little bit more like home," Grace says. She will do her presentation after the activities coordinator at the long-term care residence emails her to let her know the residents' reactions. She plans to continue the project throughout the rest of the school year.



Teacher Caryn Campbell brought her dog as part of the Animal Friends Therapists visit.



One student makes phone calls to fabric stores, while another does research for the project online.

DMS Teachers Guide Genius Hour Projects

Dorseyville Middle School teachers play a major role serving as mentors of the students as part of Genius Hour. According to Jessica Painter, one of three DMS teacher coordinators (the others are Mary Jo Montgomery and Joe Eisel) for the Genius Hour, the teachers "jumped headfirst" into Google's concept when Principal Jonathan Nauhaus introduced it last summer to the staff. The teachers had

the opportunity to choose the kind of projects they would be involved in. According to Mrs. Painter, "Many teachers chose something they were knowledgeable in, but others chose topics they were curious about – just as the students did."

Some of the Genius Hour projects include: designing and building a robotic hand, learning second and third languages, building a model of the city

of Pittsburgh from recycled materials, conducting bake sales and clothing drives for various organizations and charities, making art kits to be distributed to children, making and selling dog treats for animal charities, producing a video of magic tricks to be shown to hospital patients, organizing a hockey clinic and softball clinic for kids, and creating a video time capsule featuring the students and staff of DMS.



LEGISLATIVE Q&A ADDRESSES EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Funding Formulas, Changes in Property Tax Key Topics

Funding for public education, shortfalls in the school pension fund, and special education funding formulas are among major issues of concern to the Fox Chapel Area community. Residents were invited to meet their state legislators at a special forum sponsored by the school district. Fox Chapel Area School District resident Maureen Porter, Ph.D., a tenured associate professor within the administrative and policy studies department at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, served as the moderator and presented prepared questions to each legislator. Approximately 100 people attended the widely-publicized forum held in December at Fox Chapel Area High School.

Students in Jennifer Klein's Advanced Placement U.S. Government class introduced the participating legislators to the audience. Senator Randy Vulakovich-R (40th Pennsylvania Senatorial District, representing Aspinwall, Blawnox, and Fox Chapel boroughs and Indiana and O'Hara townships), along with representatives Dom Costa-D (21st Pennsylvania House Legislative District representing Sharpsburg and Aspinwall boroughs and part of O'Hara Township) and Hal English-R (30th Pennsylvania House Legislative District representing Fox Chapel Borough and part of O'Hara Township) were present and addressed each of the questions presented by Dr. Porter.

When it comes to the possibility of property tax elimination, none of the three legislators expressed optimism. However, all three agreed that they would favor some sort of moratorium on increases for senior citizen property owners.

Representative Costa told attendees that it would be very difficult to eliminate property taxes. "I don't see property tax being eliminated. When

I first took office, I thought it would be a great idea to eliminate property tax. The problem with that is property tax is truly the only sure revenue." He further explained that when the economy is good, the revenue from sales tax increases. But when the economy is bad, sales tax revenue drops. "The only sure-fire number you have to keep a level playing field is your property tax." Representative Costa added, however, "There may be ways of bringing it down for somebody 65 or older living in a residence."

Senator Vulakovich said the concept of the elimination of local property tax is very popular. He estimates that 70-75 percent would be in favor of eliminating the tax. "I'd love to have property tax elimination," he stated. But he explained the difficulty in an alternative revenue plan is the fact that the majority of state revenues come from personal income tax and sales tax. He said that \$3.4 billion would be raised per one percent increase in personal income tax. On sales tax, a one percent increase would raise \$1.4 billion. "You need approximately \$9 billion to eliminate residential property tax across the board," Senator Vulakovich said.

Senator Vulakovich also expressed that he "would like to see, at the very least, a freeze on property taxes for senior citizen property owners once they hit the age of 65." He suggested that casino money might be able to fund such a property tax freeze.

Representative English said that he has been a homeowner/taxpayer for the past 25 years, and that discussion about property taxes has been



ongoing for more than 40 years. "Our property values are tied, in large part, to the school district... It's a relationship that helps hold your property values because of the school district." He added, however, that when property values are escalated all around them, senior citizens' property taxes also rise. "That's a very challenging problem for the seniors... There needs to be some partial freeze."

Another topic of great interest is the current state pension/retirement system. Legislators were asked for their ideas on how to make the system affordable for districts and taxpayers and still have it be sustainable for future retirees in the public system.

Senator Vulakovich described it as a "\$50 billion problem." He said the teachers would need to agree to a different benefit distribution system. He also suggested the possibility of going to a defined contribution system, known as a 401K, for new members. But that solution also produces problems. He continued, "In a few years, there will be few, if any schools that can afford this."

Representative Costa assured those in attendance, "We keep working on it. We definitely have to do something."

Another question addressed the state of public schools and the larger issues facing public education. All three representatives agreed that the schools in their regions are good.

Senator Vulakovich said, "I'm pretty proud of our public schools."

"In the 30th district, we have great schools, parents, and communities," Representative English stated. "However, I have a duty to the entire commonwealth. We have a lot of work to do; it's tied to funding."

Another question addressed special education mandates from the state and federal levels and their impact on school district budgets. The formula for funding special education was also discussed.

Representative English said that the special education commission has taken testimony from stakeholders in an effort to make the funding formula more fair and balanced. He is concerned that there are different layers of special education needs. Some students take an incredible amount of time and effort which translates into more money. There are others that require less time and effort. His goal is to find a truer measure of what is really happening in each school district.

Representative Costa agreed and said, "Funding needs to be disbursed in a fairer manner," and that mandates must be funded.

During the forum, attendees were also invited to submit additional questions and the list of questions was distributed to the legislators. The entire forum can be viewed on the district's website at www.fcasd.edu, and search for "Legislative Forum."

The forum was initiated by Fox Chapel Area School District Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D., who wanted to provide a way for the public to connect with the state legislators. "It is very important for us to forge relationships as we tackle and address education-related issues," he said.

Other Pennsylvania legislators who represent the Fox Chapel Area School District include: Wayne Fontana-D (42nd Senatorial District representing Sharpsburg Borough), Anthony DeLuca-D (32nd House Legislative District representing Blawnox Borough and part of O'Hara Township), and Frank Dermody-D (33rd House Legislative District representing Indiana Township).



Students Gain Insight into the Legislature & Educational Issues

Students in Jennifer Klein's Advanced Placement U.S. Government class gained valuable insight from their state legislators and played an important role in making the legislative forum possible. Twenty-six students participated in the forum by preparing biographies on each of the local legislators, introducing them to the audience, serving as timekeepers, collecting written questions from members of the audience, and working at a table containing information from the League of Women Voters.

"It was really great to see partisanship forgotten for a few hours in order to have a really significant conversation occur about an issue that affects so many people, including myself and my classmates," said senior Greta Altmeyer.

Sanders Bennett, also a senior, added, "I felt lucky to have experienced a true legislative forum. It gave me a new perspective of what government is like, and I have a renewed interest."

The students were impressed that all three legislators directed comments to them, encouraging them to get involved in the political process. Senior Jeremy Witchel said, "Honestly, when I first walked through those doors I didn't know what to expect, but as the night went on I realized that I had the power to directly ask about the next phase of Pennsylvania education."

"The Pennsylvania legislators were so encouraging throughout, telling us that our opinion mattered, and the final statements concluded with how easy it is to get involved in the government at a local or state level," senior Sophia Brooks remarked.

According to Mrs. Klein, "The forum led to a lively class discussion the following day regarding the legislators' responses, the future of public education, and the variety of questions that were asked."





HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HONOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS

The members of the Fox Chapel Area School Board were recognized by representatives of the high school student government and administration in honor of School Director Recognition Month.

Fox Chapel Area High School senior class president Zachary Kiehn told the Board that he did not grow up in the Fox Chapel Area and that he



Members of the high school student government presented gifts to each of the School Board members.

had lived in a few different places, including overseas, prior to coming to the district. "I can honestly say that Fox Chapel is the best school district that I've ever been a part of," he told the Board, pointing out that this includes academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities.

Student body president, senior Leah Eckman, echoed Zachary's comments to the Board, saying that she feels very fortunate to live here. "I love Fox Chapel and I think it's a great place. Thank you for making it a great place to come to school everyday."

Fox Chapel Area High School Senior/Lead Principal Michael Hower told the Board members that he realizes that being on the Board can be a "thankless job" and that they devote many hours to school business. "It's very gratifying to be able to take a moment to say thank you because your work does make a difference in the students' lives," he said.



A member of the Fox Chapel Area High School Student Government addressed the School Board on January 12, 2015, in honor of School Director Recognition Month.

School Director Recognition Month is held each January. It was started by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association in an effort to recognize the time and commitment that School Board members devote to their schools and communities.

SCHOOL BOARD REORGANIZATION MEETING

The Fox Chapel Area Board of School Directors held its annual reorganization meeting in December 2014. Nancy B. Foster was re-elected president, Terry L. Wirginis was re-elected vice president, and Sandra M. Garbisch was re-elected assistant secretary.

The Board also set the following meeting schedule for 2015:

Agenda Study Sessions

April 13 (Fox Chapel Area High School – April 13 is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting); May 4 (Dorseyville Middle School); June 8 (O'Hara Elementary School); August 17 (Fox Chapel Area High School – August 17 is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting); September 14 (Fox Chapel Area High School – September 14 is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting); October 5 (Hartwood Elementary School); November 2 (Kerr Elementary School); and December 1 (Fox Chapel Area High School – Tuesday, December 1, is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting).

Regular Business Meetings

April 13 (April 13 is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting); May 11; June 15; August 17 (August 17 is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting); September 14 (September 14 is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting); October 12; November 9; and December 1 (Tuesday, December 1, is a combined agenda study session and regular business meeting). All regular business meetings are held at Fox Chapel Area High School.

The School Board's annual reorganization meeting will be held Tuesday, December 1, immediately following the December combined agenda study session and regular business meeting at Fox Chapel Area High School.

All Board meetings are held on Mondays (unless otherwise noted) at 7 p.m.

Additionally, Treasurer Charles R. Burke Jr., Robert Mauro, Somer Obernauer Jr., Lisa M. Rutkowski, Eric C. Schmidt, and Joel R. Weinstein are also members of the Fox Chapel Area Board of School Directors.

MIRANDA SIMON BECOMES MOST PROLIFIC FEMALE DIVER IN SCHOOL HISTORY



Miranda Simon worked very hard all summer to make sure her senior year on the Foxes' diving team was her best one yet. After all, in each of the two previous seasons she qualified for the WPIAL championships at the very first meet, so her bucket list included repeating those feats. She probably didn't

imagine, however, that the 2014-2015 season would take off quite like it did.

During the first meet this season, Miranda not only qualified for the WPIAL championship again, she shattered a 21-year-old Fox Chapel Area High School record (set by Alicia Jaynes in 1993) for female divers. Her score of 261.90 points on the 1-meter springboard easily surpassed the decades old record by more than 25 points.

"When I broke the record, I was so excited," says the National Honor Society member whose weighted GPA is 4.28. "It was a dream of mine to do that. Then I remember thinking, 'It's my record to break now and I have to continue to work hard to beat myself.'"

The most prolific female diver in school history did just that a total of three times! The second occasion was at a Woodland Hills meet when she scored 274.7 points, and she surpassed it again with 277.9 points against Hampton High School. She broke all three records within only five weeks.

"The third time, my immediate thought was 'Wow! I've come so far,'" says Miranda. "My scores are about 100 points better now than they were when I was a freshman." Remarkably, Miranda only began diving competitively in her freshman year.

Part of her improvement strategy incorporates visualization. "Before each dive, I get on the end of the board, move my head around to loosen it up, close my eyes, and then visualize what I want to do," she says of her pre-dive ritual. "In my mind, I see myself diving a perfect 10, and they say if you can see it, you will be better able to do it."

Besides working on the mental component of the sport, Miranda has trained for thousands of hours to perfect the five skills judges look at: starting position, approach, takeoff, flight, and entry. Her typical practice schedule during the high school season includes two-and-a-half hours of practice a day, six days a week. She's also a member of the Pitt Aquatic Club where Foxes' diving coach Vernon Yenick serves as an assistant coach. She spends her summers practicing with the club five hours a day, six days a week, getting high-level instruction from the University of Pittsburgh diving coaches. Miranda travels with the group to meets in New Jersey, New York, and Orlando, Florida, where she often competes against the best divers in the country, including Olympic hopefuls.

"It's all about loving what you do," says the diving team captain who plans to major in government or public policy in college.

"I'm happy to be doing what I love and it's what makes me want to work so hard. Now, my goals are just to do better each meet and I'd like to place at states."

Just a few weeks ago, Miranda qualified for the PIAA championship again when she won the bronze medal at the WPIAL championship. Last year, Miranda earned the silver medal at WPIALs and finished in 13th place at the PIAA championship. This is the third year that she has advanced to the PIAA meet.

To qualify for the WPIAL championship, divers must attain a cumulative score of at least 180 points during a regular season meet and perform six dives – one voluntary dive (which is chosen by the WPIAL and is considered an easier dive) and five optional dives that are more difficult but within the individual diver's ability. A 1-10 point system is used and there is a degree of difficulty minimum, with the more difficult dives having the potential to earn higher scores.

"Miranda is smart, driven, and not afraid to try new things," says Coach Yenick, whose previous pupils have included a diver from Emory University who became the NCAA Division III champion. "She is an overachiever in both academics and diving and her work ethic is top-notch. Miranda is absolutely one of the best high school divers I've coached, and it's been a joy to coach her."

College coaches are also impressed with Miranda. She has received interest from Division I schools Georgetown, George Washington, American, Bucknell, and New York universities, as well as Kenyon College.

For now, Miranda's college decision will have to wait. She's focused on the PIAA championship in mid-March. If her early success is a barometer of what's to come, Miranda has the potential to achieve all of her aspirations and then some.



PHOTO COURTESY TOWN AND COUNTRY STUDIO



QUITE FRANKLY, LONGTIME FOX CHAPEL AREA TEACHER & COACH UNDENIABLY ONE OF THE BEST

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that in nearly four decades of service, high school wrestling coach and art teacher Ron Frank has left an indelible mark on the Fox Chapel Area School District. He most likely will minimize his personal impact, but the fact remains he has put his heart and soul into teaching both disciplines. As a tireless promoter of the sport of wrestling, he has made so many selfless contributions that he's been inducted into just about every prestigious wrestling hall of fame in Pennsylvania.

When asked about his many achievements, the old-school, hard-driven father of three grown sons takes little credit for himself, but is quite adept at deflecting the conversation to praise others. For instance, he will speak proudly about his alumni wrestlers' success after their athletic careers are over. He'll give profuse credit to his coaching staff, especially longtime assistants Bob Siar, a former PIAA champion and celebrated WPIAL wrestler with only three losses in as many years at Shaler Area High School, and former Foxes' standout Michael Frank, a section champ and collegiate Eastern Regional Conference champ, who wrestled in the 2004 NCAA championships. Or, he will praise the hundreds of people who volunteer for the annual Allegheny County Wrestling Tournament he and Mr. Siar founded 14 years ago, which is recognized as one of the largest and best-run events of its kind in Pennsylvania.

"I recruit very good people," he says matter-of-factly of his accomplishments. "It can overcome a lot of shortcomings, but hopefully, nobody ever outworks me."

There's not too much chance of that happening, says his son Michael, a fifth grade teacher at Fairview Elementary School and the high school's head baseball coach.

"He has a tireless work ethic," he says of his father, who also coached football for 25 years and baseball for 20 years. "He has impacted more people's lives than anyone I've ever known. He's started so many important activities and projects and it's because he loves what he does. He never rests. Never."

According to Fox Chapel Area High School wrestler, junior Andrew Kopco, Coach Frank pushes his students to be not just better at the sport of wrestling, but better people. "He's one of the best coaches I've ever had. He really cares about you as a person," Andrew says. "In high school, you go in a boy, and you leave a man. I'm a better person just because he coached me."

"Ron Frank is the cornerstone of Fox Chapel wrestling," adds Joseph Bursick, who has coached against him for the past 21 years and is the varsity wrestling coach for Hampton High School. "He has deep roots in the sport in Section 3-AAA, Allegheny County, the WPIAL, and the PIAA. He is an ambassador for the sport and has given thousands and thousands of hours of his time to help young athletes succeed in and out of the wrestling room."



He truly is a class act and the Fox Chapel Area School District is lucky to have a guy so dedicated to the sport of wrestling.”

What’s ironic is that Coach Frank was a latecomer to the sport and only participated begrudgingly in his senior year at Central Catholic High School.

“I had no intention of doing it whatsoever,” says the man who now is recognized as one of the most successful wrestling coaches in Western Pennsylvania. But when his football coach, who doubled as the wrestling coach, told him he was going to wrestle heavyweight for the team, he recalls, “You didn’t say no.”

So it must have been destiny when, in 1976 as a young teacher at Dorseyville Middle School, he was recruited back into the sport, first as an assistant and head coach there, and then as head coach of the high school program beginning in 1980.

Coach Frank’s first undertaking when he became wrestling coach was becoming immersed in the sport. Because he didn’t have much personal experience, he organized camps with college coaches and Olympic wrestlers serving as clinicians. Despite his vast knowledge today, Coach Frank continues to seek out learning opportunities for himself and his wrestlers.

It was this thirst for knowledge that evolved into an enduring passion for wrestling and ultimately led to his coaching success. Known for having quality teams that are well-coached, prepared, and wrestle tough, Coach Frank hit a personal milestone at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 season with his 380th career victory. He now ranks fifth on the WPIAL wrestling coaches all-time winning list, tied with legendary North Allegheny coach, the late Gus DeAugustino.

One reason Coach Frank was drawn to wrestling and has stayed with it all of these years is because of the unique lessons it teaches.

“Wrestling is a very tough sport emotionally and physically and very hard and demanding,” explains the man whose opposing coaches say they seldom hear a negative word coming from him during competitions. “Each kid is on his own, no excuses. They can’t blame their performance on anyone else and I think that’s important to help them set goals and improve. It’s also great preparation for life to learn how to overcome odds. It’s part of the whole educational process of teaching kids how to be good adults and how to set goals for themselves through incremental steps. It’s the same thing in class. I’m always trying to help the kids improve and I take as much pride in seeing them make a great piece of jewelry as I do when I see wrestlers succeed after hard work.”

He also has enormous pride and then some for the sons he and his wife, Maureen, raised. Although they never pushed sports, Patrick, Michael, and Timothy all were outstanding athletes in their day and among them participated in football, baseball, wrestling, cross country, and diving at Fox Chapel Area High School. In addition to their “day jobs,” all three have remained active in athletics in some capacity.

No matter whether Ron Frank is in the role of father, teacher, coach, Fox Chapel Educators Association officer and chief negotiator, or Fox Chapel Area Schools Sports Hall of Fame board member, he is respected for his consistency as a committed, hard-working, straight-shooting, caring, and fair-minded man. The many good things he’s done for youth, sports, and the community are legendary, even though he will never concede to it. Most likely, he will instead spew off a list of those who are more deserving of that lofty title – and then tell you why.

Long-Tenured Wrestling Coach’s Achievements

Most people think of Western Pennsylvania as fertile recruiting ground for football, but ask wrestling fans and they will set you straight: Historically, Western Pennsylvania has been one of the leading areas of the country to produce top-notch wrestling talent. Coach Ron Frank’s contributions and his promotion of the sport certainly have played a role in that reputation.

His countless awards and accomplishments include but are not limited to:

- Inductee, Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame for Lifetime Service to Wrestling (Displayed in Stillwater, Oklahoma)
- Inductee, Southwestern Pennsylvania Wrestling Hall of Fame
- Inductee, Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association (PWCA) Hall of Fame
- President of the WPIAL Coaches Association
- Member, Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association Executive Board
- Earned his 380th career win this season, ranking him fifth on the all-time WPIAL coaches list, tied with legendary coach Gus DeAugustino
- Co-founder, annual Allegheny County Wrestling Tournament, one of the largest and best-run high school wrestling competitions in Pennsylvania that drew 36 schools and showcased almost 700 bouts this year
- A founder and board member of the Fox Chapel Area Schools Sports Hall of Fame
- 10-year volunteer committee member, Dapper Dan Wrestling Classic
- Past or current positions on the board of directors or as a committee member of nearly a dozen other organizations
- Fox Chapel Area Education Association (FCEA) officer and chief negotiator for 27 years

**Ron Frank wishes to thank Bob Siar (his assistant coach); Gil Damico (retired athletic director); Michael O’Brien (current athletic director); Darlene Whelan and Paul Glagola (longtime wrestling volunteers and parents of former students); Patty Norkus (now retired and a longtime coworker and former FCEA officer); Lisa Lang (current FCEA President); and his wife Maureen and their three sons, Patrick, Michael, and Timothy. Mr. Frank says without their support these accomplishments would not have been possible.*



FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2014-2015 FACTS & FIGURES

2014-2015 STUDENT ENROLLMENT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (K-GRADE 5)

Fairview Elementary School	356
Hartwood Elementary School	331
Kerr Elementary School	410
O'Hara Elementary School	729
Total Elementary Enrollment	1,826

SECONDARY SCHOOLS (GRADES 6-12)

Dorseyville Middle School (6-8)	995
Fox Chapel Area High School (9-12)	1,419
Total Secondary Enrollment	2,414
Total District Enrollment	4,240

CLASS OF 2014

The total number of Fox Chapel Area High School graduates in the class of 2014 was 325. The percentages of 2014 graduates entering some type of postsecondary education were as follows:

Four-Year Colleges	239 or 73.5%
Two-Year Colleges	50 or 15.4%
Total Continuing Education	289 or 88.9%

AVERAGE SAT SCORES

	Critical Reading	Math	Writing
Class of 2014	568	583	569
Class of 2013	567	578	561
Class of 2012	554	573	549
Class of 2011	567	577	563
Class of 2010	565	581	560

A total of 256 members (79 percent) of the Class of 2014 took the SAT during their junior or senior year. The national average scores for all 2014 graduates taking the test were 497 in critical reading, 513 in math, and 487 in writing.

2014 PSSA SCORES

School	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
Dorseyville Middle School (Grades 6-8)	87%	89%	93%	80%
Fairview Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	98%	92%	98%	100%
Hartwood Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	84%	77%	80%	96%
Kerr Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	82%	79%	81%	85%
O'Hara Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	93%	88%	87%	95%

% = Percent Scoring Advanced or Proficient

Note: The PSSA tests are administered to students in grades three-eight in math and reading. Students in grades five and eight also take the writing tests. Science tests are only administered to students in grade four and eight. Students are rated as Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic.

2014 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE (SPP)

	Academic Score
Fairview Elementary School	94.0
Hartwood Elementary School	92.0
Kerr Elementary School	80.0
O'Hara Elementary School	81.7
Dorseyville Middle School	90.2
Fox Chapel Area High School	93.2

Note: The Pennsylvania Accountability System now provides a School Performance Profile for each school. Schools receive a score on a scale of 1-100. Scores include academic achievement, academic growth, closing the academic achievement gap, attendance, promotion rate, graduation rate, and the percent of students scoring Advanced on assessments.

2014 KEYSTONE EXAM SCORES

	Literature	Algebra I	Biology
Grade 11	90%	89%	81%

% = Percent Scoring Advanced or Proficient

Note: Keystone Examinations are administered at the time a student completes the course. For accountability purposes, scores are banked until 11th grade.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF STATISTICS

NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Elementary	175
Secondary	228
Total	403

MASTER'S DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT

Elementary	66%
Secondary	74%

AVERAGE YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Elementary	16 Years
Secondary	18 Years

THE COMMUNITY

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) representing a wide range of social, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The schools provide a comprehensive array of educational opportunities to serve the needs of this diverse population and to meet the high expectations of its residents. The district encompasses an area of about 36 square miles with approximately 30,000 residents.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Fox Chapel Area School District is a nationally recognized, award-winning school district that produces high achievement in students, with a motivated and professional faculty and an involved and caring administration. There are six schools in the district.

VISION

The Fox Chapel Area School District will be recognized as one of the top-performing public school districts in the nation. Toward that end we will:

- Challenge each student to reach his/her maximum potential level of achievement.
- Provide scholarly experiences that deepen understanding, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration.
- Provide an environment that promotes inclusiveness and embraces diversity.
- Foster a culture that encourages student involvement in the community and raises awareness of civic responsibilities.
- Build relationships with postsecondary institutions, businesses, and industry to create and sustain programs that prepare students to excel beyond high school.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Fox Chapel Area School District exists to maximize student learning, achievement, and development.

CORE VALUES

Respect – Responsibility – Integrity

2015-2016 Fox Chapel Area School District Calendar

August 2015				
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	<i>I</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>P</i>	<i>FC</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>P</i>
24	25	26	27	28
<i>P</i>				
31				

September 2015				
	<i>FC</i>			(3)
<i>X</i>	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	(7)
				(12)
14	15	16	17	18
	<i>E+</i>	<i>X</i>		(16)
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

October 2015				
				(21)
			1	2
				(26)
5	6	7	8	9
		<i>E+</i>		(31)
12	13	14	15	16
				(36)
19	20	21	22	23
				(41)
26	27	28	29	30

November 2015				
				<i>E/C</i> (46)
2	3	4	5	6
				(51)
9	10	11	12	13
				(56)
16	17	18	19	20
<i>E+</i>	<i>E+</i>	<i>E</i> (59)	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
23	24	25	26	27
<i>X</i>				
30				

December 2015				
				(63)
	1	2	3	4
				(68)
7	8	9	10	11
				(73)
14	15	16	17	18
		(76)	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
21	22	23	24	25
<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	
28	29	30	31	

January 2016				
				<i>X</i>
				1
				(81)
4	5	6	7	8
				(86)
11	12	13	14	15
<i>P</i>			(89)	<i>FC</i>
18	19	20	21	22
				(94)
25	26	27	28	29

February 2016				
				(99)
1	2	3	4	5
				(104)
8	9	10	11	12
<i>P</i>				(108)
15	16	17	18	19
				(113)
22	23	24	25	26
29				

March 2016				
				(118)
	1	2	3	4
				(123)
7	8	9	10	11
				<i>E</i> (128)
14	15	16	17	18
<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

April 2016				
				<i>E/C</i> (133)
				1
				(138)
4	5	6	7	8
				(143)
11	12	13	14	15
				(148)
18	19	20	21	22
				(153)
25	26	27	28	29

May 2016				
				(158)
2	3	4	5	6
				(163)
9	10	11	12	13
				(168)
16	17	18	19	20
		<i>K E</i>		(173)
23	24	25	26	27
<i>X</i>				
30	31			

June 2016				
				(177)
		1	2	3
				<i>E/C</i> (182)
6	7	8	9	10
<i>P</i>	<i>FC</i>	<i>C/P</i>		
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

1st Grading Period – November 6 – 46 days
 2nd Grading Period – January 21 – 43 days
 3rd Grading Period – April 1 – 44 days
 4th Grading Period – June 10 – 49 days

Conference Days
 ½ Days Nov. 23, 24, 25
 Evenings: Nov. 23, 24 (3 hours each)

June 10 – Last Day K-12 = 182 Days
 (unless makeup days are required)

June 15 – Last Day Professional Staff
 = 195 Days

(unless makeup days are required)

I New Teacher Induction Day
C Clerical Day
FC Full Clerical Day
 (No School for Students)
P Professional Development Day
 (No School for students)
E Elem/Sec Early Dismissal
X Holiday/Break/No School
 + Act 80 Day
K Kennywood Day

First Semester	
8/19-21	New Teacher Induction Days
8/24	Professional Development Day
8/25	Full Clerical Day
8/26-31	Professional Development Days
9/1	Full Clerical Day
9/2	First Day Students
9/7	Labor Day
9/22	Elementary/Secondary Early Dismissal
9/23	Yom Kippur
10/14	Elementary/Secondary Early Dismissal
11/6	Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Clerical Day
11/23-25	Elementary/Secondary Early Dismissals
11/26-30	Thanksgiving Break
12/24-1/1	Winter Break
1/18	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday & Professional Development Day
1/22	Full Clerical Day

Second Semester	
2/15	Presidents' Day & Professional Development Day
3/18	Elementary/Secondary Early Dismissal
3/21-25	Spring Break
4/1	Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Clerical Day
5/25	Kennywood Day & Early Dismissal
5/30	Memorial Day
6/10	Last Day K-12 Students
	Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Clerical Day
	182 Days (unless makeup days are required)
6/12	Commencement
6/13	Professional Development Day
6/14	Full Clerical Day
6/15	Clerical/Professional Development Day
	195 Days (unless makeup days are required)

April 11-May 6 shaded areas indicate PSSA testing windows. January 6-20 and May 16-27 indicate Keystone Exams testing windows. Refer to the FCASD website (www.fcasd.edu) for specific grades tested in each time frame. **Makeup days (if necessary): June 13, 14, 15, 2015**





FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Administration

611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/963-9600
www.fcasd.edu
Superintendent: Gene Freeman, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent:
David P. McCommons, Ed.D.
Director of Business Affairs:
L. Douglas McCausland

District Resource Staff

Director of Secondary Education and Instruction:
Matthew J. Harris, Ed.D.
Director of Elementary Education and Instruction:
Ashley L. Nestor
Director of Special Education and Pupil Services:
Lonnie Carey, Ed.D.
Coordinator of Federal Programs and Student
Achievement: Alicia Gismondi
Coordinator of Educational Technology:
Scott W. Hand
Director of Ancillary Services: Daniel Breikreutz
Director of Athletics & Activities: Michael O'Brien
Coordinator of Communications: Bonnie Berzonski

FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOLS

Fairview Elementary School

738 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/963-9315
Principal: Rebecca A. Stephan

Hartwood Elementary School

3730 Saxonburg Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/767-5396
Principal: Rachel K. Fischbaugh

Kerr Elementary School

341 Kittanning Pike
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
412/781-4105
Principal: Paul S. Noro, Ed.D.

O'Hara Elementary School

115 Cabin Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/963-0333
Principal: Michael E. Rowe, Ed.D.
Assistant Principal: Aaron C. Rea

Dorseyville Middle School

3732 Saxonburg Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/767-5343
Principal: Jonathan T. Nauhaus
Assistant Principal: Patricia A. Clark
Assistant Principal:
James Phillip Prager Jr.

Fox Chapel Area High School

611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/967-2430
Senior/Lead Principal:
Michael H. Hower
Program Principal:
Daniel E. Lentz, Ph.D.
Assistant Principal – Senior Program:
John J. McGee
Assistant Principal –
Intermediate Program:
Rebecca J. Cunningham, Ed.D.

For the latest information on school activities and weather-related delays and cancellations, call the Fox Chapel Area School District 24-Hour Information Line at 412/967-2500 or visit the website at www.fcasd.edu.

The athletic events calendar can be found on the Fox Chapel Area School District website at www.fcasd.edu or visit www.highschoolsports.net.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The Fox Chapel Area School District is an equal rights and opportunity school district. The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, or handicap/disability. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

Additional information pertaining to civil rights, school district policies, and grievance procedures can be obtained by contacting the compliance officers listed below between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. This notice is available from the compliance officers in large print, on audiotape, and in Braille.

Title IX: David P. McCommons, Ed.D.
(412/967-2456)
Section 504 and ADA: Lonnie Carey, Ed.D.
(412/967-2435)
Address: Fox Chapel Area School District
611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

PHOTO COURTESY TOWN AND COUNTRY STUDIO



Front Row (left to right):
Sandra M. Garbisch, Assistant Secretary (2015 - Region II); Charles R. Burke Jr., Treasurer (2017 - Region III); Nancy B. Foster, President (2015 - Region III); Gene Freeman, Ed.D., Superintendent; and Terry L. Wirginis, Vice President (2015 - Region II).

Row 2 (left to right):
Eric C. Schmidt (2015 - Region I); Robert Mauro (2017 - Region II);
Somer Obernauer Jr. (2015 - Region I); Lisa M. Rutkowski (2015 - Region I); and
Joel R. Weinstein (2017 - Region III).

Row 3 (left to right):
David P. McCommons, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent; Paul J. Giuffre, Esq., Solicitor;
and L. Douglas McCausland, Board Secretary.

Region I covers all of Sharpsburg Borough and Wards 2, 3, and 4 of O'Hara Township; Region II covers Districts 2, 4, and 5 of Fox Chapel Borough and all of Indiana Township; and Region III covers all of Aspinwall Borough, Blawnox Borough, Wards 1 and 5 of O'Hara Township, and Districts 1 and 3 of Fox Chapel Borough.

School Board regular business meetings are usually scheduled for the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. and are held at the high school. The public is invited to attend.