

IN

Fox Chapel Area

Fox Chapel Area School District 2016-2017 Proposed Final Budget

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SUMMER 2016
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School News



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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Friends,

There's no doubt about it. Students who are engaged in hands-on problem-solving demonstrate deeper learning – cultivating the critical thinking skills, creativity, mastery of content, and teamwork demanded in the real world.

Since I first became superintendent of the Fox Chapel Area School District, I have been impressed with how the school community is a trendsetter and educational innovator. You may have noticed over the last several months that our district has implemented a number of new programs and opportunities for our students. The Dream Lab at O'Hara Elementary School and the digital fabrication lab (FabLab) at the high school provide us with a glimpse of the future. Children as young as kindergarten are learning the basics of computer coding to find solutions to problems, and students at all grade levels are becoming "makers"

as they gain knowledge and real-world skills throughout the curriculum. Even our preschoolers and their parents who participate in the district-sponsored Creativity and Literacy Program are learning through creative play and making things. To help us continue to reshape how we teach our students, the Board of School Directors approved hiring a new director of instructional and innovative leadership.

As this IN Fox Chapel Area magazine is going to press, staff and families are preparing for the exciting Remake Learning Days set for locations across Pittsburgh. Our school district is becoming more active in the Remake Learning movement, which includes a professional network of educators and innovators dedicated to revitalizing and reimagining education and the way students learn. I am proud to say that several sites in our school district served as Remake Learning Days event sites.

Our tradition of excellence and continued innovative learning is made possible due to the unwavering support of the community who demand high expectations of the school district. Additionally, we are very fortunate to have a hard-working staff who constantly challenge themselves to ensure that all students achieve success; a diligent and forward-thinking Board of School Directors who always puts the needs of our students first; and a broad spectrum of community members who continually volunteer their time and expertise to advise the Board and school staff on important matters. We never underestimate their contributions – while other districts are cutting into viable programs due to financial concerns, we are able to continue to streamline resources, plan for the future, and grow new initiatives that will equip our students to compete on a national and international level.

Let me assure you, that although the school district is able to maintain and grow a high-quality education for all of our students, we continue to face financial challenges in our budget. Highlights of the 2016-2017 proposed final budget are included on the following pages. Once again, school boards are passing their budgets without knowing the exact amounts of state funding. Additionally, unfunded mandates from both the state and national governments continue to burden local schools. Districts around the commonwealth continue to look to the state legislature and federal government to seek relief from this huge burden.

Please know that the district remains committed to educating our students with the highest standards and rigor, while still maintaining fiscal responsibility. We will continue to look to the community as a partner with us in this great endeavor. It is a privilege.

Sincerely,

Gene Freeman, Ed.D.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2016-2017 PROPOSED FINAL BUDGET

The 2016-2017 Fox Chapel Area School District proposed final budget calls for budgetary expenditures of \$94,912,020. The increase in expenditures over the previous year's final budget is projected at \$2,173,166 or 2.3 percent. The proposed final millage rate for 2016-2017 is 18.9822 mills. This will be an increase of 0.3539 mills, or a 1.9 percent increase in millage rate. The allowable increase under Act 1, the Taxpayer Relief Act, for 2016-2017 is 2.4 percent. It is estimated that this increase will generate an additional \$1.1 million to fund the district. One mill will equal approximately \$3.3 million.

The School Board approved the 2016-2017 proposed final budget at its regular business meeting May 9, 2016. The Board will discuss the proposed final budget June 6 and June 13 during its meetings. The Board is expected to pass a final 2016-2017 budget at its meeting on June 13. Residents are invited to attend the Board meetings which will be held on June 6 in the O'Hara Elementary School auditorium and June 13 in the high school large group instruction room. Both meetings begin at 7 p.m.

The 2016-2017 proposed final budget reflects the following:

- Salary line items are expected to increase 1.8 percent from last year's budget. The district anticipates a reduction of overall professional staff by eight teachers due to retirements. Despite this reduction in staff, programs and services for students will remain at their current levels.
- Premium rate costs for medical insurance will increase by 2.25 percent, yet overall costs are projected to decrease by 0.018 percent. This decrease is the result of fewer employees being covered under district plans and a switch in medical programs being offered to a few employee groups.
- The school district's contribution rate paid to the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) will increase from 25.84 percent to 30.04 percent. The school district will be contributing \$13,474,001 to PSERS in 2016-2017, compared to \$9,332,761 in 2015-2016 – a 44.4 percent increase in cost to the district. The PSERS trustees determine the contribution rate increase annually.
- Equipment and computer purchases for the district are projected to cost \$2,290,053. This is a 26.3 percent increase. These items will allow the district to keep pace with a one-to-one technology initiative for Dorseyville Middle School students, purchase additional laptops for students at the high school, and to replace aging computers and laptops for staff.
- Transportation costs are increasing due to additional routes and busses needed to support routes for special education placements, as well as A.W. Beattie Career Center scheduling changes.
- Costs for English as a Second Language (ESL), special education services for physical therapy, and tuition for charter school and other outside agencies continue to rise. The estimated increase for these expenditures is \$570,125 or 15 percent.

The 2016-2017 proposed final budget is endorsed by the district's Resource Planning Committee, a group of residents with financial and management backgrounds that provide additional expertise to the School Board on financial matters.

PSERS and Future Challenges

The district will continue to face difficult budget years in the near future. It is estimated that under the current rate structure proposed for funding the state retirement system (PSERS), the district will pay out nearly \$71 million over the next seven years. These unprecedented increases – combined with the limitations on increasing tax rates imposed under Act 1 – have necessitated the district to prepare for shortfalls in the budget.

The district currently has committed fund balance reserves of \$12 million to cover the anticipated PSERS increases. The district will need to utilize \$2,027,659 of these funds in 2016-2017 to "bridge" the gap in funding for PSERS and will continue to use committed fund balance reserves until

TAXPAYER ESTIMATED REAL ESTATE TAX LIABILITY

The median home in the Fox Chapel Area School District in 2016 is assessed at \$207,700. The chart below depicts the estimated tax liability based on the school district millage rate of 18.9822 for the 2016 tax year using a home assessed at \$100,000; \$207,700 (median home); and \$400,000. The homestead exclusion is calculated in the change in tax liability.

		Median Home	
2015 Assessed Value	\$100,000.00	\$207,700.00	\$400,000.00
2015 Homestead Exclusion	(\$9,960.00)	(\$9,960.00)	(\$9,960.00)
2015 Net Assessed Value	\$90,040.00	\$197,740.00	\$390,040.00
2015 Millage Rate	18.6283	18.6283	18.6283
2015 Tax Liability	\$1,677.29	\$3,683.56	\$7,265.78
2016 Assessed Value	\$100,000.00	\$207,700.00	\$400,000.00
2016 Homestead Exclusion*	(\$9,878.00)	(\$9,878.00)	(\$9,878.00)
2016 Net Assessed Value*	\$90,122.00	\$197,822.00	\$390,122.00
2016 Millage Rate	18.9822	18.9822	18.9822
2016 Tax Liability*	\$1,710.71	\$3,755.10	\$7,405.37
Annual Increase	\$33.42	\$71.54	\$139.59
% Increase	1.99%	1.94%	1.92%
Monthly Increase	\$2.79	\$5.96	\$11.63

**This number is based upon the estimated distribution of gaming funds provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on May 9, 2016.*

- 1.) *These amounts can be reduced by two percent if paid in full during the discount period.*
- 2.) *Senior citizens may qualify for a property tax rebate program available through the state.*
- 3.) *The market value/assessed value will be reduced by \$9,878 for those homeowners in the Fox Chapel Area School District with an approved homestead exclusion.*

the tax rates can keep pace and fund these costs. The district continues to reduce payroll costs through attrition and by implementing new instructional and administrative strategies to make the district more efficient and cost effective.

In addition, the district is preparing for future capital improvements and maintains a reserve to help fund these capital projects. The district issued bonds during 2013 and currently has a remaining balance of \$14 million to fund ongoing renovations at the high school, as well as to pay for a portion of the renovations at the middle school. The Board and administration were able to achieve significant savings on the 2013 bond issue as a result of historically-low market interest rates.

By implementing sound financial strategies to manage expenditures and anticipate revenue shortfalls, the district's future financial health continues to be stronger than many in the commonwealth. However, the district continues to plan for future shortfalls through long-range budget forecasts.

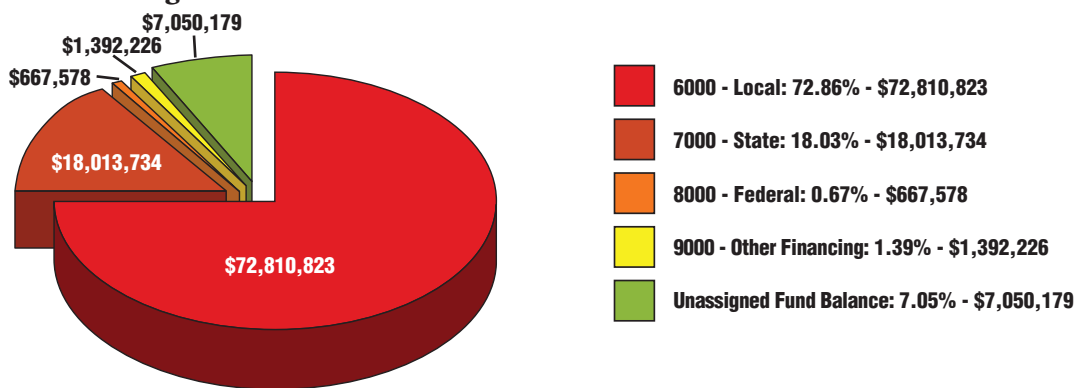
Gaming Funds Distribution*

On May 9, 2016, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provided the Fox Chapel Area School District with the amount of the district's share of gaming funds available for distribution. The proposed final budget includes a distribution of \$1,468,886. The method of distributing these funds, as prescribed by Act 1, the Taxpayer Relief Act, will be via the implementation of the homestead exclusion. Under this provision, any property in the school district that was approved by Allegheny County as a homestead will have the lesser of its taxable value, or an estimated \$9,878 of its taxable value, excluded for the purpose of calculating current school district real estate taxes for the 2016 tax year. The owners of the 7,848 properties in the district that qualified for the homestead exclusion will receive the equivalent of a \$187.51 reduction in their property taxes. Property owners who currently do not have an approved homestead exclusion will have the opportunity to apply again when the district sends out letters to those homeowners in December 2016.

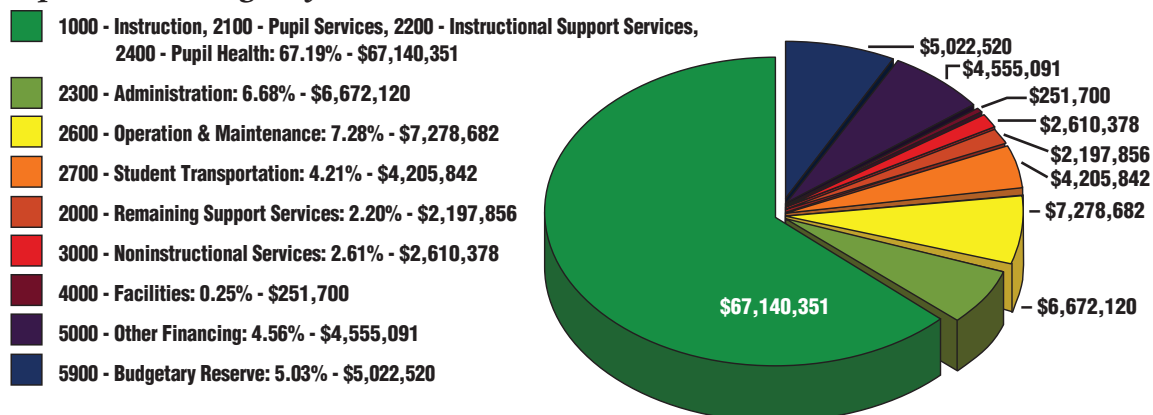
**Allegheny County has certified that there are 7,848 properties in the Fox Chapel Area School District that qualify for the homestead exclusion. If that number is adjusted by the county to include more or less properties, it could affect the amount of the final reduction.*

2016-2017 PROPOSED FINAL BUDGET REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

Revenues/Unassigned Fund Balance



Expenditures/Budgetary Reserve



PROPOSED FINAL BUDGET INSIGHT



REGULAR INSTRUCTION 1100

2016-2017.....	\$43,843,091
2015-2016.....	\$42,319,764
Increase of	\$1,523,327
% of change	3.60%
Cost per student.....	\$10,699
% of budget	46.19%

Includes:

Regular instructional program salaries and fringe benefits for teachers in addition to textbooks, district program contracts, supplies, and equipment.

Comments:

1. Includes salary and fringe benefit increases for professional staff members, as well as increased costs of retiree payouts due to retirements.
2. Includes the cost of workbooks and textbooks, software, and increased costs for repair and maintenance of equipment.
3. The cost for books and supplies increased by \$92,884, or 9.7 percent, to support new textbook adoptions.
4. An additional \$197,823 is required to cover the increasing cost of English as a Second Language (ESL) services to students in the district and laptop rentals for students enrolled in Waterfront Learning through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.



SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1200

2016-2017.....	\$12,117,835
2015-2016.....	\$12,165,992
Decrease of	-\$48,157
% of change.....	-0.40%
Cost per student.....	\$2,957
% of budget.....	12.77%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits for special education and gifted teachers and paraprofessionals. Services are mandated for life skills and learning, emotional, autistic, hearing, vision, orthopedic, and speech/language support, as well as gifted education. Also includes occupational and physical therapies, specialized materials, technology, purchased services, and tuition.

Comments:

1. The cost for services requested from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and other outside placements has been decreased based on anticipated needs of students.
2. Tuition costs for students placed in outside agencies is increasing by \$142,580 based on estimated enrollments and increasing tuition costs for charter schools.



ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION 1300 & 1400

2016-2017.....	\$1,651,820
2015-2016.....	\$1,447,944
Increase of.....	\$203,876
% of change.....	14.08%
Cost per student.....	\$403
% of budget.....	1.74%

Includes:

Vo-tech, homebound, Title I services, summer and Saturday classes, and support to nonpublic schools through federal grants.

Comments:

1. The increase is for costs associated with the additional summer instruction programs. These costs include associated staff wages, transportation, equipment, and supply needs based on estimated student enrollments.
2. Costs fluctuate annually based on the number of students who require services.



PUPIL SERVICES 2100

2016-2017.....	\$3,762,186
2015-2016.....	\$3,521,220
Increase of.....	\$240,966
% of change.....	6.84%
Cost per student.....	\$918
% of budget.....	3.96%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits for guidance counselors, district psychologists, a share of the administrative staff in charge of the program, and support staff. Supplies, services, and equipment to operate the program are also included.

Comments:

1. Includes increased costs for outside educational programs, testing materials, and test-scoring services.
2. The district will purchase additional data analysis software to be used in benchmarking student achievement.



INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES 2200

2016-2017.....	\$4,858,288
2015-2016.....	\$4,147,850
Increase of.....	\$710,438
% of change.....	17.13%
Cost per student.....	\$1,186
% of budget.....	5.12%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits for school librarians, curriculum coordinators, and support staff. Supplies, equipment, and purchased services for curriculum development, audio visual, library, educational television, technology, and computer-assisted instruction, as well as funds to support safety and security are also included.

Comments:

1. Includes costs for continued purchase of technology equipment, software, and supplies for the one-to-one technology initiative for students at the middle school, student laptop purchases at the high school, as well as replacement costs for classroom and staff equipment that is obsolete.
2. Curriculum and staff development travel and professional services costs are also included.



ADMINISTRATION 2300

2016-2017.....	\$6,672,120
2015-2016.....	\$6,303,548
Increase of.....	\$368,572
% of change.....	5.85%
Cost per student.....	\$1,628
% of budget.....	7.03%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits for district office staff, school principals, and clerical support staff. Expenditures for tax collection and legal services are also included.

Comments:

1. Includes cost of supplies and software related to the administrative offices, and additional staff development for administrative staff.
2. Includes costs for advertising and printing services.
3. Includes an increase in cost for support substitutes and playground/cafeteria aides.



PUPIL HEALTH 2400

2016-2017.....	\$907,131
2015-2016.....	\$862,366
Increase of.....	\$44,765
% of change.....	5.19%
Cost per student.....	\$221
% of budget.....	0.96%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits for the nursing staff and a clerk. Also includes the fees for doctor and dental exams and nursing services the district must provide for private and parochial schools. Supplies and equipment to operate the program are also included.

Comments:

1. Includes the cost of updating software for tracking medical histories and data for students.



BUSINESS/DATA SERVICES 2500 & 2800

2016-2017.....	\$2,065,039
2015-2016.....	\$2,238,846
Decrease of	-\$173,807
% of change	-7.76%
Cost per student.....	\$504
% of budget	2.17%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits of business/data office staff along with supplies, expenses, and purchased services to conduct the business and data processing functions of the district. Also includes expenditures for video, voice, data networking equipment, and districtwide duplicating equipment.

Comments:

1. Decrease was due to the removal of costs associated with the initial setup and training costs for a financial and human resources software management system being initiated in 2016-2017.
2. District printing and copying charges are allocated within this area.



OPERATION & MAINTENANCE 2600

2016-2017.....	\$7,278,682
2015-2016.....	\$7,253,796
Increase of.....	\$24,886
% of change.....	0.34%
Cost per student.....	\$1,776
% of budget.....	7.67%

Includes:

Salaries and fringe benefits for the custodial and maintenance staff plus utility costs, custodial supplies, and equipment. Services needed to maintain the district's physical plant are included, plus salaries and fringe benefits for those responsible for the coordination of the operation and maintenance of the district's facilities.

Comments:

1. There is an increase in the cost of maintenance and repair agreements.
2. There is an increase in utility costs for electricity.
3. There is an increase cost for supplies required to maintain buildings and grounds.



STUDENT TRANSPORTATION 2700

2016-2017.....	\$4,205,842
2015-2016.....	\$4,138,161
Increase of.....	\$67,681
% of change.....	1.64%
Cost per student.....	\$1,026
% of budget.....	4.43%

Includes:

The transportation contract with the bus contractor for all of the district's regular transportation including private, parochial, and special needs schools. Also includes transportation for state-mandated early intervention programs for prekindergarten-age children (this transportation is provided throughout the summer months, as well as during the school year).

Comments:

1. The cost of transportation is increasing due to the established contract agreement rates, the addition of routes for special education placements, and scheduling changes at A.W. Beattie requiring an additional bus route.



OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES 2900

2016-2017.....	\$132,817
2015-2016.....	\$153,000
Decrease of.....	-\$20,183
% of change.....	-13.19%
Cost per student.....	\$32
% of budget.....	0.14%

Includes:

The district's share of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) administrative budget and funds for districtwide safety services.

Comments:

1. The decrease is based on estimated costs for safety committee expenditures and costs for AIU services.



NONINSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES 3000

2016-2017.....	\$2,610,378
2015-2016.....	\$2,562,396
Increase of.....	\$47,982
% of change.....	1.87%
Cost per student.....	\$637
% of budget.....	2.75%

Includes:

Salaries and supplies for student activities and athletic programs, in addition to transportation and event management costs for these programs.

Comments:

1. The costs of supplemental contracts and officials' fees are increasing.
2. The costs for supplies, transportation services, new uniforms, and field/facility maintenance for interscholastic events are increasing.
3. Includes estimated increased costs for crossing guards.



FACILITIES 4000

2016-2017.....	\$251,700
2015-2016.....	\$255,764
Decrease of.....	-\$4,064
% of change.....	-1.59%
Cost per student.....	\$61
% of budget.....	0.27%

Includes:

Funds for site and building improvements.

Comments:

1. Costs include paving, painting, athletic facilities improvements, emergency lighting installation, ceiling tile replacements, and purchase of moveable storage cabinets.



OTHER FINANCING 5000

2016-2017.....	\$4,555,091
2015-2016.....	\$5,368,207
Decrease of.....	-\$813,116
% of change.....	-15.15%
Cost per student.....	\$1,112
% of budget.....	4.80%

Includes:

Debt service (mortgage) payments on building renovations, refunds of tax payments received in previous years, and financing for capital leases on computer equipment and printing/duplicating devices.

Comments:

1. The district issued new bonds for construction in 2013, but retired bonds for the 2010 issue in April 2016, and will be retiring bonds for the 2006 issue in September 2016.

Salary and fringe benefit costs are increased for all district personnel in all budget categories.

The 2016-2017 budget figures reflect the adjusted budget as a result of transfers that occurred throughout the school year.

CHILDHOOD CANCER SURVIVOR NATIONAL CONTEST WINNER

Helen Paulini Will be Mentored by Cancer Researcher

A diagnosis of cancer would be enough to stop anyone in their tracks. But a diagnosis of cancer at age one-and-a-half? And, yet another diagnosis at age five?

What would normally be a frightening experience for anyone is something that has motivated Fox Chapel Area High School sophomore Helen Paulini. A childhood cancer survivor, Helen was recently named a national winner in the newly established Emperor Science Award program. She will have the opportunity this summer to work alongside and be mentored by John Maris, M.D., a pediatric oncologist and co-head of the Pediatric Cancer Dream Team at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The research Helen will be a part of will focus on pediatric cancers, specifically the genes that cause neuroblastoma in children. She hopes that her part in the research may help other children who face a diagnosis similar to her own.

Helen's Cancer Journey

When Helen was still a baby, simple arm pain led to the revelation that she had synovial sarcoma, a cancer that affects the soft tissue, usually around joints. Shortly after her diagnosis, she had surgery to remove the tumor. But, when she was five-years-old, the unthinkable happened. During a regular follow-up appointment, the doctors discovered that the cancer had returned.

Synovial sarcomas are not often seen in young children, so her family was referred to a pediatric synovial sarcoma doctor in Boston. Her Pittsburgh doctors and the Boston doctors worked together to develop a treatment plan, and the family regularly traveled there, even staying there for extended periods of time, so that Helen could receive her treatments. She had a series of surgeries with radiation both before and after her operations. The extensive surgeries involved removing muscle and tendons from her lower arm and replacing them with a large muscle from her thigh. A hand surgeon then needed to repair her hand so that she would have normal movement. To this day, Helen continues to have regular follow-up appointments and scans. Last summer, Helen was thrilled to hit her 10-year milestone of being cancer free!

"I am grateful to the doctors and scientists responsible for the treatment of my childhood cancer who made and continue to make great contributions to the health of myself and many others," Helen said. "The opportunity to learn more and work with researchers doing these studies is especially meaningful to me."

The Emperor Science Award

Helen is one of only 100 winners nationwide of The Emperor Science Award that is open to high school students. According to Helen, "Seeing how difficult cancer is to treat got me interested in applying for the Emperor Science Award program, because it seemed like a great way to learn about cancer research, and give back and make a difference in helping others." The essay she wrote for the contest focused on the importance of medical research and her interest in the work of childhood cancer researchers. She also wrote about how her own experience with cancer made her want to learn more about the work of medical researchers, especially since their efforts have led to so many successful treatments.



"I especially appreciate all the people who work every day to contribute to the world. During my regular follow-up appointments at the hospital over the past 10 years, I've met lots of kids and teenagers who are really inspiring, as well as the doctors and nurses."

Yes, a cancer diagnosis is incredibly frightening. But with her positive nature, Helen has turned the experience around with her grateful attitude. "I especially appreciate all the people who work every day to contribute to the world. During my regular follow-up appointments at the hospital over the past 10 years, I've met lots of kids and teenagers who are really inspiring, as well as the doctors and nurses."

Helen knows she wants to attend college, but is not quite certain of her direct career path. She knows, "Whatever it is, I want to keep learning and help others in some way. I love art, filmmaking, math, and science so I want to keep exploring all of these areas."

According to Helen she is thrilled to have this rare opportunity to be a part of something so special. "I am really excited to see what it's all about and meet Dr. Maris and some of the people he works with. I'm so excited I received this award and get the chance to discover more!"

The Emperor Science Award program was made possible by founding donors Genentech, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Novartis and is an initiative designed to encourage high school students to explore careers in science, specifically cancer research and care, through a unique mentoring opportunity. The Emperor Science Award partners are Stand Up To Cancer and PBS LearningMedia.



A student stir fries chicken for a wrap sandwich.



An eighth-grade baker said he enjoyed selling the products at the café and pointed out that the Oreo cream pie, the cherry and blueberry pies, and the “dirty” brownies – a combination of brownie, crushed Oreo, and cookie dough – were selling well. He said that the Oreo cream pie was selling the best “because it looks the best.”

EIGHTH GRADE CAFÉ A HANDS-ON, REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Students Learn Cooking Skills, Entrepreneurship, and Cooperation

“I didn’t realize this was a full-out restaurant,” said Joanne Germanos as she was served at the eighth grade café. Her daughter, Chloe, had invited her to the lunch, held recently as the culminating event of the eighth grade café project taught as part of the family and consumer sciences classes.

According to family and consumer sciences teacher Joshua Duso, “The class teaches cooking skills but modernizes it.” He added that the idea of the 12-week course, “is to make it a real-world experience.”

Eighth graders first study meal planning and safety, leading up to the second section which is the entrepreneurship component. Students gain experience in running a food-related business and making a “profit.” The third component of the class exposes the students to the food industry and teaches them how to run a restaurant.

The students first completed an online restaurant rules process. Then they demonstrated skills they learned in the class, including the basics of cooking, entrepreneurship, food safety, and working together in cooperation to operate the café.

Mr. Duso said the class is well received by the students and commented, “Anytime they get to be on their feet and move



A student takes an order from Dorseyville Middle School teacher Erin Wetherill who stopped in for an early lunch.

around and be active, they enjoy what they’re doing.” He said the students had the opportunity to apply for positions in the restaurant including sous chef, line cook, prep cook, pantry chef, pastry chef, manager, host/hostess, cashier, expeditor, take-out order receiver, food runner, server, busser, and baker. Students looked at the job descriptions and picked out, based on their interests and personality types, the jobs they wanted.

Jacob Correnti, who worked at the wrap station, said being a chef was his first choice. “I cook a lot at home,” he said.

The students chose all of the menu items that were made at the various kitchen stations – subs, French bread pizza, and

wraps, as well as several salad entrées. Sides included soups, a small salad, and a fruit salad.

Chloe Germanos said of the experience, “It was fun. We learned a lot of team skills. You have to rely on others.”

Julia Cody, who often helps her dad in the kitchen, commented, “I never did anything this involved before.” Her dad, William, visited the restaurant specifically to eat the sandwich he said his daughter made for him. Julia added, “It’s fun. Kinda hectic sometimes.” She also said she likes the family and consumer sciences class. “It’s fun to do something this hands on. Usually you are sitting at a desk.”



Students who worked as expeditors assembled the food orders on trays so that they could be taken to guests at the café. Each lunch included a choice of entrée, a side, a drink, and a cookie.

Hannah Drum said she was “quite busy” working as a server. “Mainly you have to stay on top of things.” She pointed out that the soups were very popular that day, and for a period of time, the kitchen was out of potato soup.

Former Dorseyville Middle School teacher Luann Letterle, who retired last year, said the café project evolved out of the entrepreneur experience that has been part of the family and consumer sciences eighth grade curriculum. She came back to help Mr. Duso with the café. “The class flows nicely from entrepreneurship to this,” Mrs. Letterle stated.

Social studies teacher Dave Snyder, who along with some of his DMS colleagues ate lunch at the café, said “The kids do a fabulous job. For a lot of them, it’s the first time they cook. It’s interesting to see the kids enjoy cooking.”

Diners commented on how delicious the food truly was and that they appreciated how much time the students spent preparing it.

According to student hostess Maggie Dankis, “I liked that we got to do most of the work and that it’s a real-world experience.”

A group of Hartwood Elementary School staff walked across the parking lot to Dorseyville and enjoyed lunch at the café. First grade teacher Kristen Vergerio commented that it’s always nice to see her former students.

Eighth graders who were preparing to work later in the week were invited to the café on the first day. They said they enjoyed seeing the other half of their class working as the café staff.



Sixth graders learned about and grew vegetables in their hydroponic garden, one of the components of the technology unit taught by Mike Wolinsky. In a nod to the “buy local” movement, some of the produce used by eighth graders for their café project came from the “local” DMS hydroponic garden. Additionally, eighth graders created and designed menus under the direction of art teacher Cheryl Etters, that were used in the café as a part of the art unit.

It’s all part of the cross-curricular, project-based unified arts program. Middle school students at all three grade levels take unified arts. The sixth grade units include art, mobile devices, and technology education; the seventh grade units include art, health, information technology, and technology education; and art, family and consumer sciences, and technology education are offered in eighth grade.

FACS

CAFE

Sandwiches Menu Salads

<p>Italian Sub This baked hamper includes ham, salami, pepperoni, and provolone cheese, artichoke, tomatoes, and Italian dressing served on the side.</p> <p>French Cheese Steak Sub Shaved steak with melted mozzarella, onion, and peppers topped with provolone cheese. Lettuce, tomato, and mayo served on the side.</p> <p>French Bread Plate Creamy fried bread topped with olive sauce, provolone cheese and your choice of toppings. Available toppings include: pepperoni, green peppers, mushrooms, and/or onion.</p> <p>Chicken Caesar Wrap Take this salad “on the fly” - Grilled chicken, romaine lettuce, and Parmesan cheese served inside a wrap.</p> <p>Chicken Caesar Wrap Grilled chicken, fresh basil (grown here at DMS), mushrooms, tomatoes, and romaine lettuce with a balsamic vinaigrette dressing.</p> <p>Turkey Club Wrap Warm turkey, bacon, and Swiss cheese with lettuce and tomato, topped with ranch dressing.</p> <p>Tomato Salad Sub Fresh made tomato salad, lettuce, and tomato.</p>	<p>Chef Salad Ham, turkey, and provolone cheese with corn, green peppers, cucumbers, and a hard-boiled egg, served on a bed of DMS arugula & DMS lettuce.</p> <p>Shrimp Steak Salad Shrimp steak with lettuce, green peppers, cucumbers, and topped with tomatoes on a bed of DMS arugula & DMS lettuce.</p> <p>Salmon Bacon Salad Salmon, tomato, hard-boiled egg, and fresh cooked bacon, served with a warm bacon dressing.</p> <p>Chicken Caesar Salad Grilled chicken, romaine lettuce, and Parmesan cheese served with Caesar dressing.</p>
<p>Sides Potato Salad, Macaroni Salad, Fresh Salad</p> <p>Dressings Ranch, Italian, and Balsamic Vinaigrette</p> <p>Beverages Coke, Diet Coke, Lemonade, Bottled Water</p>	
<p>All meals are \$5</p> <p>Meals include a sandwich OR dinner salad plus a side, drink, and cookie. “Hold the meat” on any item to make it vegetarian.</p>	



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CHOSEN FOR PRESTIGIOUS HONORS AND AWARDS

Fox Chapel Area School District students continue to be recognized for their academic and artistic achievements. This spring, a number of high school students have received individual awards.

"I am amazed at the achievements of our young men and women who continue to raise the bar for our current and future students," said Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D. "It's so important for our students to apply for honors and awards to broaden their knowledge and experience and to demonstrate to others what they've learned."

The following is just a sampling of students' recent awards.



Students Win First Place at Taiwan International Science Fair

Senior Konrad Urban and junior Suvir Mirchandani were named first place winners in the Computer Science and Information Engineering category at the 2016 Taiwan International Science Fair. The title of their project was "Automated Illustration

of Text to Improve Semantic Comprehension." The pair developed a software system that converts natural language input into illustrations in order to improve communication with individuals who have language communication disorders.

The fair was held January 25-30 at the National Taiwan Science Education Center in Taipei, Taiwan. Nearly 500 students from 22 countries competed.



Elizabeth Kauma's national award-winning photograph, "Harmony in Solitude."

High School Sophomore Wins Art Award

Sophomore Elizabeth Kauma was named a national winner in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards of 2016. Elizabeth won an American Visions Medal for her

photograph entitled "Harmony in Solitude." This prestigious award designates her among the most talented young artists in the nation.

This year, nearly 320,000 works of art and writing were submitted by students in grades 7-12 through regional contests and only the top one percent were recognized at the national level. Artwork was judged at the national level by panels of professional artists.

Elizabeth, along with her teacher Amy Wickman, have been invited to attend national events in New York City where Elizabeth's photograph will be exhibited June 1-3. The national ceremony will be held at the world-famous Carnegie Hall.

Two Students Selected to Study in Germany

Sophomore Cassidy Carson and junior Emma Paulini have been awarded scholarships to study abroad in Germany. Both students will stay with host families and attend a gymnasium (a college-prep high school).



Cassidy has been selected to receive a Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship. She will spend her junior year of high school studying abroad in Germany for 10 months. Among the highlights, she, and the other students in the group, will travel to

Berlin where they will address the German Bundestag (the lower house of parliament). Cassidy is one of about 250 students from the United States selected to participate in this program for the 2016-2017 school year. Her home placement in Germany will be facilitated by the American Field Service (AFS) organization.

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange is for motivated high school students who want to experience a culture and learn a language through a full-immersion experience. Initiated in 1983, the program was created to strengthen ties between Germany and the United States through citizen diplomacy. The program was founded in celebration of the 300th year anniversary of the first German immigration to the United States.



Emma has been awarded an all-expenses-paid summer study trip to Germany. She was selected as a national winner after scoring in the 91st percentile on the Level IV 2016 National German Exam for High School Students. The exam is sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG). Emma is one of only 44 outstanding German students from across the nation chosen

to receive the award. As a part of the trip, Emma will travel to places of cultural and historical significance.

"This year's prize winners are some of the finest students in the U.S.," said Keith Cothrun, executive director of the AATG. "The prize is a great reward for excellence in learning German – and the best way to better get to know a fascinating language and culture through first-hand experiences living with a German family and attending school."

NEW ADMINISTRATOR TO ESTABLISH DISTRICT AS LEADER IN INNOVATION

“**M**egan Cicconi has so much energy and enthusiasm for innovation in public education,” said Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D., about the district’s newly appointed director of instructional and innovative leadership. “Her expertise is invaluable and she is very well-known and well-respected in the educational community. She also brings with her a lot of connections with educational and business leaders throughout the country.”

True to her title, Mrs. Cicconi has set out to establish the Fox Chapel Area School District as a regional and national leader in innovation, “Not by chasing the next shiny trend, but rather by strengthening current initiatives and seizing new opportunities that align with our vision and mission.” She has already discovered that the district is a trend-setter and innovator, rather than a follower.

One of her first goals pertains to computer science. Mrs. Cicconi explains that 71 percent of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) jobs are in computer science, and that the typical computer science major earns 40 percent more than other college graduates.

“When districts were eliminating computer science at the elementary level or decreasing elective options for students, Fox Chapel Area was strengthening its programs, infusing coding into primary classrooms, strengthening project-based learning opportunities for middle school students, and constructing a state-of-the-art digital fabrication lab at the high school,” Mrs. Cicconi said. “At Fox Chapel Area, innovative thinking doesn’t detract from core subject areas, it complements and strengthens them.”

Her goals include developing a “revolutionary” kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum in computer science; helping the district become the

only one in the state to provide free certified training in infusing coding into elementary and middle schools through the national organization Code.org®; and expanding and improving the computer science offerings in the middle and high schools.

Mrs. Cicconi said she has a genuine interest in learning and wanting to improve learning for all students and is quick to point out that innovation doesn’t just relate to technology. It can also refer to “creation, iteration, and in many cases, improvement.” She specifically notes that students’ oral vocabulary is one of the strongest predictors of academic achievement and life success. “While ‘oral vocabulary’ isn’t always synonymous with ‘innovation,’ it is in my book!” she said.

Project-based learning is another area of great interest to Mrs. Cicconi. She said a key to successful project-based learning is integrating content so that what the students are learning becomes

“At Fox Chapel Area, innovative thinking doesn’t detract from core subject areas, it complements and strengthens them.”

more representative of and can be related to the real world. “Project-based learning increases rigor, relevance, engagement, and learning. I look forward to strengthening and increasing these types of learning

experiences,” she said.

Mrs. Cicconi, who has collected numerous awards, honors, grants, and fellowships, has also written articles for many publications. Additionally, she has been invited to make presentations at many state, regional, and national conferences and also serves as a member of a number of state and regional foundations and committees.

Mrs. Cicconi began her career as an elementary school teacher in the Washington, D.C., area. She originally studied child psychology and decided to become a teacher while she was volunteering her junior year in the Washington, D.C., public schools. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in child psychology from The Catholic



University of America in Washington, D.C. She received her master of education in elementary education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and is currently a doctoral candidate in curriculum and instruction at IUP.

In 2010, she moved on to the Allegheny Valley School District where she first served as an instructional coach and then as the district’s education technology coordinator. From 2012-2016, she worked for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit serving as the director of instructional innovation, the curriculum and reading coordinator (part of the Reading Achievement Center), and a Center for Creativity team member. She officially began her job with the Fox Chapel Area School District March 1.

Mrs. Cicconi grew up in and currently lives in the New Kensington area. She and her husband, Dante, have a two-year-old daughter, Lucia. In her spare time, Mrs. Cicconi loves visiting museums and enjoys the arts. She also enjoys cooking and often has “Lucia in the kitchen with me while we recreate family dishes.”

Mrs. Cicconi encourages everyone to follow her on Twitter, “as I typically only tweet professionally and would love to keep everyone informed on innovation in Fox Chapel Area and the region!” Follow her on Twitter @megan_cicconi.



The Miró Quartet performed at Fox Chapel Area High School on March 14. Additionally, three string quartets and the ambassador orchestra from the high school performed and the members of the Miró Quartet led all of the students in masterclasses. The Miró also held Q & A sessions.

ORCHESTRA DEMONSTRATES MUSICAL TRANSCENDENCE

High School Program Chosen for National Award by Miró Quartet

It was an extraordinary gift! In celebration of their 20th anniversary and the release of their “Transcendence” album, the internationally-renowned Miró Quartet selected Fox Chapel Area High School’s orchestra program and orchestra teacher Mairi Cooper to receive the Transcendence Education Project award. Quartet members spent March 14 at the high school – leading masterclasses,

performing, and participating in question and answer sessions. Any student involved in the high school music program was invited to attend. Ninth grader Chloe Yofan, a violinist and member of one of the quartets, said of the experience, “It was crazy. First of all, they were so good.” She added, “I didn’t think anyone could play that well.”

Chloe said that her mother first told her about the contest sponsored by the Miró Quartet, whose members were seeking to recognize a program that demonstrated musical transcendence. Chloe then spoke with Ms. Cooper who encouraged her to apply for the award.

It was just five days before the application was due when Chloe met with a group of her orchestra friends to talk about the award. She and junior Francesco Fava, who is a member of her quartet, along with freshmen orchestra friends Leah Fetting and Arnav Gupta, got together at her house and in two days prepared the 30-second video. They said they wanted to recognize Ms. Cooper who has demonstrated “transcendence” by being a mentor and a music educator and winning the 2015 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Award. Chloe said they decided what piece to play on the first day and wrote a script of what they wanted to say, then her mother taped the quartet playing the piece on Chloe’s phone. The next day they recorded



Orchestra teacher Mairi Cooper conducts the ambassador orchestra in a performance before their masterclass with members of the Miró Quartet.

the speaking part, Chloe put it together using iMovie®, and they submitted it for the contest.

After they submitted the video, she showed it to Ms. Cooper. Chloe said that they also viewed the other application videos and said, “Everyone else was really professional.” She hadn’t quite expected that. Additionally, she said, “The schools were from Alaska and other cool places.”

However, a week later they found out that their orchestra program and Ms. Cooper had been selected to receive the award – a visit from the Miró Quartet. According to Miró Quartet founding member Joshua Gindele, “This educator really inspired all four of us – having transcended the limitations of what people think is possible within the public school system, and allowing students to transcend themselves. We cannot wait to meet her and her students in person.”

As a part of the visit, all of the students in the Fox Chapel Area High School music department had the opportunity to hear the Miró Quartet perform. Additionally, three string quartets and the ambassador orchestra from the high school performed and the members of the Miró Quartet led the orchestra students in masterclasses. The Miró also held Q & A sessions and ate lunch with the students.



Members of the Miró Quartet answered questions from the audience during a Q & A session.

Chloe and the other members of her quartet, including Francesco (viola), Ji-Yool Moon (cello), and Ziya Xu (violin) performed and participated in a masterclass. “Going in to it, I didn’t think we had that much more to do with it. I thought our piece was pretty ready,” Chloe said. “But after they worked with us, I realized how much more you can still do with a piece.” She mentioned that the quartet members taught them about presentation. “We weren’t looking at each other.” She said when the professional musicians took away their music stands, it forced them to interact with each other as they played.

When the Miró Quartet performed, “You could almost touch it,” Chloe said. “They were so together, so in tune with each other, both literally and figuratively. They were phenomenal.”

Chloe, who recently performed with her quartet at the Boyd Community Center grand opening event, said that now when her quartet works together, they think about what they learned. “We still look back on what they said and apply it to what we’re doing in orchestra.” She added, “We have more knowledge on how to work with the musical pieces now.”



Following the student quartet performances, the professional musicians conducted masterclasses.

The Fox Chapel Area High School Orchestra and teacher Mairi Cooper received a visit from the Miró Quartet as the winner of the Miró Transcendence Education Project. The quartet, based in Austin, Texas, held a contest in honor of their 20th anniversary season and the free release of their “Transcendence” album. The students entered the competition by submitting a 30-second video to the quartet’s Facebook page describing and showing how musical transcendence has played a part in their lives or the lives of someone they care about.

The Miró Quartet deeply believes in the power of music to ignite and bring together people of diverse backgrounds, as well as in its power to nurture the soul and educate the mind. The Miró Quartet is the resident string quartet at The University of Texas at Austin Butler School of Music.



The lunch group members of the Sharpsburg Class of 1948 include, from left to right, Barbara (Moore) Smith, Dorothy (Kramer) Monahan, Frank Montemurro, Loretta Montemurro (Frank's wife), Ann (Ierovante) D'Angelo, and Shirley (Gaghan) Kotchey.

SHARPSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI MEET REGULARLY FOR NEARLY 70 YEARS!

There were 54 graduates in the Class of 1948 – one of the larger graduating classes from Sharpsburg High School. Classmates have held reunions for milestone anniversaries at 10, 25, and 50 years, but a small group of them started meeting regularly years ago. At first, they met under the Kaufmann's clock in Pittsburgh and went out to dinner together several times a year. Then, more than 25 years ago, Dolly (Panza) Kronz, who passed away in 2014, started a new tradition of monthly lunch reunions. Now, nearly 70 years after graduation, a group of six still meet every month for lunch – weather permitting – to reminisce and celebrate what is going on in each of their lives.

Ann (Ierovante) D'Angelo, Phyllis (Turano) Koch, Shirley (Gaghan) Kotchey, and Dorothy (Kramer) Monahan were four of the original regular attendees. They said that at one time, as many as 14 former classmates would meet for lunch. Now it's Ann, Shirley, and Dorothy, along with other current regulars including Barbara (Moore) Smith and Frank Montemurro, and his wife, Loretta (the only non-Sharpsburg regular). Ann said her daughter calls them "the lunch bunch."

They all walk with canes now, except for Dorothy, "who led a sheltered life," Frank explains with a laugh. He and Dorothy are the only two members who still drive, so Dorothy picks up the other ladies for their meetings.

They go to local restaurants like The Village Inn in Verona, Walnut Grille in the Waterworks, and the Grant Bar in Millvale. According to Shirley, they "catch up" at the lunches – "We gossip," she laughs. The gatherings last an hour or two, depending on how much there is to talk about and how much time is left on the parking meter. They talk about their children and grandchildren. The only "business" conducted is deciding next month's location and date.

One might imagine that after all of these years, members of the group have lots of stories to tell. And they do.

Frank, the only man attending, said one time he arrived for the monthly reunion and saw the ladies were already seated. He told the hostess that he was with them. "They work for me," he told her.

Three of the reunion group have birthdays in October, November, and December, so one year Dolly took a birthday cake to a fall gathering to celebrate the birthdays. The restaurant made them pay 25 cents each for plates

to use for the cake. Needless to say, they did not return to that particular restaurant.

They told about how the Grant Bar has the best coconut cream pie – good liver and onions and turtle soup as well. Loretta says that she and Frank recently went there on a Saturday night and saw that everyone ordered their pie before their meal. They found out that's because longtime patrons know the restaurant may run out of the popular dessert.

Most members continued to live in or around the Fox Chapel area following their high school graduation, except for a stint in the Air Force for Frank. Barbara said that she lived in Apollo for a number



Ann (Ierovante) D'Angelo provided this photo from her class at the Sharpsburg Linden Avenue School. Barbara (Moore) Smith is the first person on the left in the front row, and Ann is beside her. The other elementary school in Sharpsburg was the Main Street School.

of years but moved back to Sharpsburg and has lived in the old Sharpsburg High School, now renovated into apartments, for about 16 years.

Frank pointed out that Ann and her husband, Vincent (also a Sharpsburg High School graduate and now deceased), were involved in the planning of the Grand Reunion that was held at the downtown convention center in 1988 to celebrate all of the graduates of



The Class of 1948 celebrates their 30th reunion. The second person on the left in the second row is Phyllis (Turano) Koch; Shirley (Gaghan) Kotchey is in the second row on the far right; Frank Montemurro is in the third row on the far right; and Ann (Ierovante) D'Angelo is the fourth person from the right in the third row.

Sharpsburg High School from 1920 through 1970. Sharpsburg closed after 1970 due to the merger with the Fox Chapel Area School District. More than 1,100 people attended the Saturday dinner dance, the get-acquainted evening the night before, and a family picnic on Sunday of the grand reunion weekend. Ann was largely responsible for the research that went into finding and contacting the Sharpsburg alumni for the reunion.

Members of the group all agreed that the merger with the Fox Chapel Area School District brought wonderful opportunities for Sharpsburg young people, but said that perhaps there may not be the same sense of closeness in a larger school district. They talked about how each September, one of the Sharpsburg alums from the class of 1949



The Class of 1948 at their 1959 reunion. Back row, far right, is Vincent D'Angelo, one of the original members of the group. To his left is Frank Montemurro. The sixth person from the left in the back row is Ann (Ierovante) D'Angelo.

organizes a memorial tribute to all of the grads from the years 1947-1950 at a local church. A member of each of the four classes stands up and reads off the names of all of the deceased from his or her class. After the gathering, they all have breakfast in the church basement.

As they continued to reminisce, Loretta said, "We're the oldest people here." The others piped in, "We're the oldest people anywhere!"

BIRTHDAY SURPRISE FOR CAFETERIA MONITOR

The day Phyllis McCune turned 90 she went to work in the high school cafeteria, just like any other day. But when she arrived, she was greeted with "SURPRISE!" shouted by several of her coworkers, along with a special birthday cake.

Responding to her look of genuine appreciation, someone exclaimed, "This is how special you are!" To which Phyllis replied, "Ha! I must be!"

A retired Fox Chapel Area nutrition center worker, Phyllis continues to work as a cafeteria monitor because, "It gets me up in the morning and gives me a purpose in life." She said she enjoys working in the cafeteria and that, "these kids are my life."

Many of the students greeted Phyllis with birthday wishes and signed a card. "All the kids love Phyllis," said Emma Dieffenbach, the high school dean of students.

Phyllis said that, since her family is gone, the surprise meant even more to her. "They're looking down and smiling," she said.





A reporter from the Fox Chapel Area High School Fox Tales newspaper interviewed the state legislators.

STATE LEGISLATORS MEET WITH NORTHERN AREA PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

On April 8, Fox Chapel Area High School hosted a meeting of the Northern Area Principals' Association with area lawmakers. Topics included the state budget, state testing, truancy, and the Every Student Succeeds Act. The group also discussed how legislators and educators can work together in the future on current and upcoming educational regulations. The directors of the Northern Area Principals' Association are Fox Chapel Area High School principals Daniel Lentz, Ph.D., and Rebecca Cunningham, Ed.D. The state legislators in attendance were representatives Dom Costa (D), Frank Dermody (D), and Hal English (R) and Senator Randy Vulakovich (R).

BOYS' TENNIS TEAM HAS PERFECT ENDING TO REGULAR SEASON

The Fox Chapel Area High School Boys' Varsity Tennis Team had a storybook ending to their season when they beat Peters Township High School, 3-2, and finished the year undefeated.

Under the mentorship of first-year coach Alex Slezak, the team was 6-0 in WPIAL Class AAA Section 3, and 13-0 overall. The last time the boys' tennis team won the section title was in 2009 and the team has not had an overall undefeated season in more than 10 years.

Among the season's highlights were freshman Jay Kashyap's undefeated record in doubles play and senior Sidd Rajupet and freshman Robby Shymansky both qualifying for the PIAA boys' tennis singles championship, which will be held at the end of May in Hershey.



Photo Courtesy Town and Country Studio

The team members also include seniors Lucas Fennell and Thomas Fennell, juniors Neil Bencherif and Jared Cohen, sophomores Karsten Lagerquist and Kurran Singh, and freshman Jared Nord.

STUDENTS SIGN TO PLAY SPORTS AT COLLEGIATE LEVEL

Fox Chapel Area High School student athletes recently signed and committed to Division I, II, and III colleges and universities. The students are: Mike Bove – Track – Duquesne University, Elayna Burdelski – Soccer – Chatham University, Zach Burkhart – Baseball – Virginia Wesleyan College, Lacey Cohen – Tennis – Slippery Rock University, Taylor Cohen – Soccer – St. Louis University, Maggie Coulson – Soccer – Johns Hopkins University, Emily Kiehn – Crew – Temple University, Levi McCrady – Lacrosse

– Brown University, Patrick Monteverde – Baseball – Virginia Wesleyan College, Samantha Olbrich – Softball – Wheeling Jesuit University, Jake Pilarski – Baseball – Virginia Wesleyan College, Jack Reese – Volleyball – University of Hawaii, Maia Russo – Soccer – Mercyhurst University, Veronica Sacco – Rowing – Mercyhurst University, Alexis Schwartz – Soccer – Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Cassie Shephard – Cheerleading – Duquesne University, Laurel Shymansky – Tennis – Duquesne University, Kayla Slovenec



Students from the Class of 2016 who signed to play sports in college.

– Basketball – St. Vincent College, Tommy Smith – Football – Allegheny College, Ana Spangenberg – Volleyball – Lehigh University, Nikki Stumpf – Lacrosse – Liberty University, Nicole Susi – Field Hockey – Seton Hill University, Brendon Urso – Basketball – Allegheny College, and Michael Zappala – Basketball – Washington and Jefferson College.

PIAA REALIGNMENT SIGNALS CHANGES

Five High School Sports Teams See Major Changes

During the fall, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and representatives from its member schools voted to expand the current classification system from four to six categories. The changes, made on the basis of student populations, will become effective beginning with the fall 2016 interscholastic sports season.



Girls' Basketball (Now 6A, previously 4A)
Realigned section opponents: Hempfield Area, Latrobe, Norwin, Penn Hills, and Penn-Trafford

Football (Now 5A, previously 4A)
Realigned section opponents: Baldwin, Chartiers Valley, Hampton, Moon, North Hills, Upper St. Clair, West Allegheny, and Woodland Hills

Softball (Now 6A, previously 4A)
Realigned section opponents: Allderdice, Hempfield Area, Latrobe, Norwin, and Penn Hills

For Fox Chapel Area High School, the changes will be most evident in baseball, boys' and girls' basketball, football, and softball. The greatest differences will be the elimination of section competitions against some of the region's largest schools such as North Allegheny and Seneca Valley. Coaches have the option to include former opponents as preseason or nonsection games or scrimmages.

Fox Chapel Area High School teams most affected include:

Baseball (Now 5A, previously 4A)
Realigned section opponents: Armstrong, Hampton, Kiski Area, Mars Area, North Hills, and Obama Academy

Boys' Basketball (Now 6A, previously 4A)
Realigned section opponents: Hempfield Area, Latrobe, Norwin, Penn Hills, Penn-Trafford, Plum, and Woodland Hills

Other sports at Fox Chapel Area High School changing classifications are boys' and girls' soccer (from 3A to 4A) and girls' volleyball (from 3A to 4A). The classifications of other sports have not changed.

"We see this as a good thing. The move better aligns like-sized schools and provides more teams opportunities to participate in postseason competitions and playoffs," said Michael O'Brien, director of athletics for the Fox Chapel Area School District. "I think we'll notice the biggest difference in our football program because they will begin playing more teams having roughly the same number of students to draw to their rosters. Even though the system will level the playing field in some respects, we certainly will continue to face off against some very talented teams with histories of great success."

TRACK & FIELD IMPROVEMENTS AT HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Facilities Will Be Closed During Renovations

The Fox Chapel Area High School track and football field will be closed to the public from May 16 until approximately August 10 due to renovations. The artificial turf and the track will be completely replaced during this time. Additionally, the track at Dorseyville Middle School will also be replaced and will be closed June 1 until approximately August 10.

The life expectancy of turf and track is about eight to ten years, and after so many years of use, the fibers and surfaces begin to break down. Fox Chapel Area High School's football field and track are near the end of their useable life cycle. Proper field

inspections and maintenance have been crucial in keeping the fields in proper playing condition.

The district has anticipated these projects and has money set aside through the ongoing capital projects fund. Additionally, revenues from ticket sales to athletic events help fund track and field improvements. The cost for the entire project, including installation, is expected to be approximately \$1.1 million.



The tracks at both schools and the turf field at the high school are used not only by student athletes, but also by physical education classes and community members throughout the year.



Assistant field hockey coach Abby Dorrance leads strength and conditioning stretches with her team as part of a pilot program to reduce the risk of ACL injuries.

Photo Courtesy Town and Country Studio

SAFETY IS FIRST PRIORITY FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

Fox Chapel Area School District Director of Athletics Michael O'Brien says there is no way to completely eliminate the risk of all sports injuries, but he is committed to ensuring a safe play environment for the 1,368 student athletes in grades seven through twelve who participate in interscholastic sports.

"I think parents, players, and the community can be assured we are doing everything we can to maintain a safe environment for our student athletes," explains Mr. O'Brien. "We work very closely with our coaches, players, and the district's sports medicine staff. In cases of concussed student athletes, we also work hand-in-hand with physicians and specialists from the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program who are leaders in their fields. We are very fortunate to have close access to health care facilities and services that are considered some of the best in the country."

Concussion Protocol Updated Based on Current Research

Michael "Micky" Collins, Ph.D., executive and clinical director of the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program (in which the Fox Chapel Area School District participates), is on a

mission. He wants to make more people aware of the many advances that have been made in the science of concussion and that the knowledge they have today is far more advanced than what was practiced even just a few years ago.



Emilia Ravski, D.O., and Fox Chapel Area certified head athletic trainer John Panos work with one of the high school's student athletes. The district is vigilant when it comes to sports injury prevention.

"That concussion is a manageable and treatable injury are the messaging points we need to share," he explains. "There is a lot of confusion right now about this injury. We need to demystify concussions for people. Concussion really is a pretty coherent injury – we can evaluate it, we can assess it, we can treat it. We can get kids back to play safely. Concussion doesn't have to be feared."

John Panos, Fox Chapel Area School District's certified head athletic trainer and assistant athletic director, works closely with Dr. Collins and his staff, as does Jennell Wolfe, the certified athletic trainer at Dorseyville Middle School. For many years, the district has utilized ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing), which was designed by concussion program experts and is the first of its kind to identify possible head injuries. Baseline tests measuring cognitive function and memory are administered to all student athletes in grades seven and nine and again in eleventh grade. If a head injury does occur and a concussion is suspected, the test is retaken. Post-injury results are compared with baseline

tests and the results are forwarded to the student athlete's personal physician; Matthew Schaffer, M.D., the district's medical director; and if the family is in agreement, experts from the concussion program at UPMC, who then offer recommendations for treatment and rehabilitation.

Mr. Panos often relies on the expertise of Vanessa Fazio Sumrok, Ph.D., a clinical neuropsychologist from the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program. "Our team is called upon to make recommendations with regard to the individualized management of head injuries," she says. "We've moved away from the thought that concussed individuals should have total rest, greatly reduced or no academic activity, and confinement to dark rooms. Advancements have exploded as far as treatment plans. For the vast majority of individuals, we're now moving toward rehabilitation that includes an active schedule, regular or perhaps modified school hours, and light physical activities with gradual and monitored participation as the individual shows signs of improvement."

Dr. Fazio Sumrok warns that some of the most serious injuries and longer-lasting effects are often due to consecutive injuries that go unreported and untreated. "This means players must be honest and pull themselves out of a game if they don't feel right. Early reporting and being honest about their symptoms is key to preventing long-term effects."

"Foxes Head Football Coach Tom Loughran and his staff are doing an excellent job of instilling safe practices," says Mr. Panos. "They have embraced the 'Heads Up' approach to tackling and blocking, which shifts the brunt of the force to the shoulders instead of using the head. I commend them on everything they are doing to protect their players."

Coach Loughran and Mr. O'Brien recently attended a seminar on concussions sponsored by the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program and the Pittsburgh Steelers. According to the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin told the seminar participants, "...player safety and concussions and head injuries are our generation's opportunity to not only safeguard the game, but be active participants in the evolution of the game."

Strength and Conditioning to Prevent Injuries

Timothy Schilcher, a strength and conditioning coach certified by the National Academy of Sports Medicine and owner of Myofitness Personal Training, often works with Fox Chapel Area High School athletes to help them reach their full physical potential in a safe and age-appropriate manner. Doing so not only helps them achieve their peak performance goals, it is also a way to help prevent injuries when participating in sports.

Young athletes tend to focus on certain muscle groups, but fail to equally train opposing muscles. According to Mr. Schilcher, one muscle group that is often overlooked are those in the neck – and that can be a big mistake. A respected scientific

study of more than 6,700 athletes conducted by Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and the Colorado School of Public Health, found that a stronger neck could reduce concussions if the player is anticipating the impact. The investigation also reported that girls in particular have a higher risk of concussions because of weaker necks and that for every one-pound increase in neck strength, the odds of concussion fell by five percent.

Another preventive effort introduced by the Foxes' athletic trainers is the ACL prevention protocol. The pilot program was introduced in the fall of 2015 to a select number of teams and featured eight uncomplicated exercises that coaches could easily integrate into their team practices and game-day warm-ups. The long-term goal is to reduce the risk of ACL injuries in two specific groups – female athletes who, because their body structures make them more prone to knee injuries than

their male counterparts, and athletes who compete in sports that require a great deal of pivoting, jumping, and quick directional changes.

Mr. Panos will continue to work with all teams to implement the ACL protocol in the upcoming 2016-2017 seasons. The Foxes' football coaching staff has already jump-started their participation by using the exercises in the offseason and will continue to do so once the new season begins.



Dr. Ravski, a primary care sports medicine fellow from UPMC and a team physician, evaluates a student athlete.

Safe Facilities and Equipment

"After every season, all equipment is sent to the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) to be assessed, professionally sanitized, and recertified," Mr. O'Brien says when explaining why equipment and facilities are such a critical component of any safe play program. "In addition, all practice and game-day surfaces and our athletic facilities are continually inspected and, if deficiencies are sighted, action is taken."

A New Mindset for Athletics

"We've started noticing a cultural change where people are understanding that wins and losses aren't always the most important part of the game," says Mr. O'Brien, who is a strong proponent of athletics as a way to teach lessons that benefit young athletes throughout their lives.

"I'm as competitive as anyone, and of course I want to have competitive teams," he adds. "And while we are proud of those teams and individual athletes who have achieved great success, we are equally as proud of all student athletes who put forth their very best effort, no matter what their athletic skill level. But it's also extremely rewarding to see our players exhibit good judgment when it comes to their own health and safety, and that of their teammates, especially when it entails voluntarily pulling themselves out of a game. Those decisions take a lot of maturity and indicate they really are listening to our awareness and safety messages."



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.
Director of Instructional and Innovative Leadership:
Megan Cicconi
Director of Federal Programs and Student
Achievement: Alicia Gismondi
Director of Educational Technology: Scott W. Hand
Director of Ancillary Services: Daniel Breitreutz
Director of Athletics: 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: To Be Determined

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., D.Ed.

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, Ph.D.
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 athletic website at www.fcasdathletics.org and click on "SCHEDULE STAR."

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 (2019 - Region II); Gene Freeman, Ed.D., Superintendent; and Nancy B. Foster, Vice President (2019 - Region III)

Row 2 (left to right): Lisa M. Rutkowski (2019 - Region I); Charles R. Burke Jr., Treasurer (2017 - Region III); Terry L. Wirginis, President (2019 - Region II); and Joel R. Weinstein (2017 - Region III)

Row 3 (left to right): Somer Obernauer Jr. (2017 - Region I); Dharmesh Vyas, M.D., Ph.D. (2017 - Region II); and Eric C. Schmidt (2019 - Region I)

Row 4 (left to right): L. Douglas McCausland, Board Secretary; Paul J. Giuffre, Esq., Solicitor; and David P. McCommons, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent

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.