Lower Dauphin School District

Spring 2023

Know Your Schools

Important Information for the Residents of Lower Dauphin School District

District works to improve school climate, culture

The mission of the district is to provide students with a safe and supportive environment, enabling them to engage in a quality education that empowers them to be successful in their next step in life.

Those words are the foundation of our school district. They matter.

In the past two months, the school board and administration have heard from some of our students and families that we are not living up to that promise because they do not feel safe or supported in our schools.

Because of that, the board and administration took immediate action to address these concerns. The administration met and reviewed all applicable policies to ensure that they addressed the concerns that were brought to the board's attention. The high school and middle school administration held assemblies for all students to reinforce those policies and the consequences for violating them.

Simply put, Lower Dauphin School District takes all incidents of discrimination and racially-motivated speech seriously. The district seeks to maintain a culture of respect towards others where everyone feels safe and supported. Derogatory and insensitive language undermines that culture and will not be tolerated. At no time is it acceptable for students, staff or visitors to use racial terms directed toward another person or privately among peers. Discriminatory and hateful

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Proposed budget will not increase property taxes

Lower Dauphin property owners will not see an increase in their taxes for the upcoming 2023-24 school year in a proposed budget given preliminary approval by the school board May 1.

The $77,210,000 budget would hold the line on taxes keep millage rate at 18.97, which means that a home with an assessed value of $100,000 would pay $1,897 in property taxes.

Superintendent Rob Schultz said the district will need to use $5,425,000 from its fund balance to supplement the district's revenue sources. Using that much from the fiscal reserves will leave $9,497,247 remaining in the district's rainy day fund.

The budget has been challenging with

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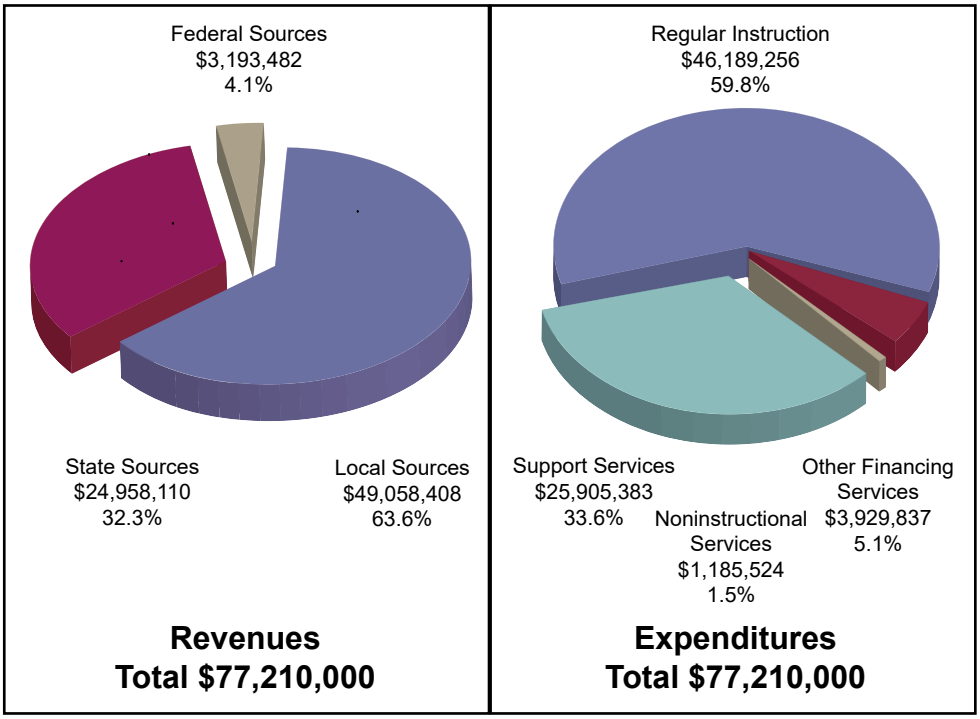

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School Climate: School Board moves to address concerns

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speech has no place in Lower Dauphin. This includes speech targeting race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, handicap/ disability, or political beliefs.

Within a month, the board hired a consultant to assist the district in creating a greater sense of equity, inclusion and belonging for all students in our schools.

Natural Inclination LLC and Dr. Amber Sessmos provided a detailed statement of work outlining three phases of work to be completed over the next several years. The first phase has already begun and will include Student Advisory Council meetings, Parent Advisory Council meetings and a detailed analysis of the school climate.

"Our planning committee felt Dr. Sessoms had a fantastic understanding of exactly what was needed to help heal our community," said Lynn Sassaman, school board president.

The board also hired a special investigating attorney to investigate responses, policies, and procedures regarding possible racism, bullying, and discrimination on the school district's campuses.

"We felt it was necessary to bring in an independent investigator so there is no bias," Mrs. Sassaman said. "The investigator will review the items brought forward and will also provide a resource to report new concerns.

"We have heard all the concerns from our students, parents and community. We want to ensure you they are being taken seriously. We have a great deal of confidence in our administrative team and we believe they are handling these situations correctly. There may have been situations that have not been handled correctly, that's what the investigator is being brought in to tell us. Where could we be doing things better? Where do we need to improve?

"As a district, we are committed to looking critically at ourselves and ensuring all of our schools provide a welcoming environment for every student in the district. We recognize that this is an ongoing process and are committed to the work it will take for all students to feel safe and supported in our school system."

Budget: Reserves will be needed to balance spending plan

(Continued from page 1)
revenue showing growth but still lagging behind the pace of expenditures. Local revenue sources, which include property taxes and earned income taxes, are budgeted to increase 5.98 percent or $2,461,873. The district receives the bulk of its revenue through property taxes and the property tax line is growing 3.5 percent from the previous year.

Other factors impacting the budget come on the expenditure side where the district continues to see increases in state-mandated tuition payments to charter schools and medical costs. Charter school tuition payments are projected to increase $150,000 for next year, resulting in a $2.3 million line item (for reference, costs for charter schools in 2019-2020 were $1.48 million). Medical benefits will total more than $7.8 million next year (for reference, costs for medical benefits were $5.4 million in the 2019-2020 school year).

Overall, the spending plan for next school year represents a 4.34 percent increase over the 2022-2023 budget.

Dr. Schultz resigns as superintendent effective June 2

The Lower Dauphin Board of School Directors unanimously accepted the resignation of Superintendent Rob Schultz at their April 3 meeting.

Dr. Robert Schultz

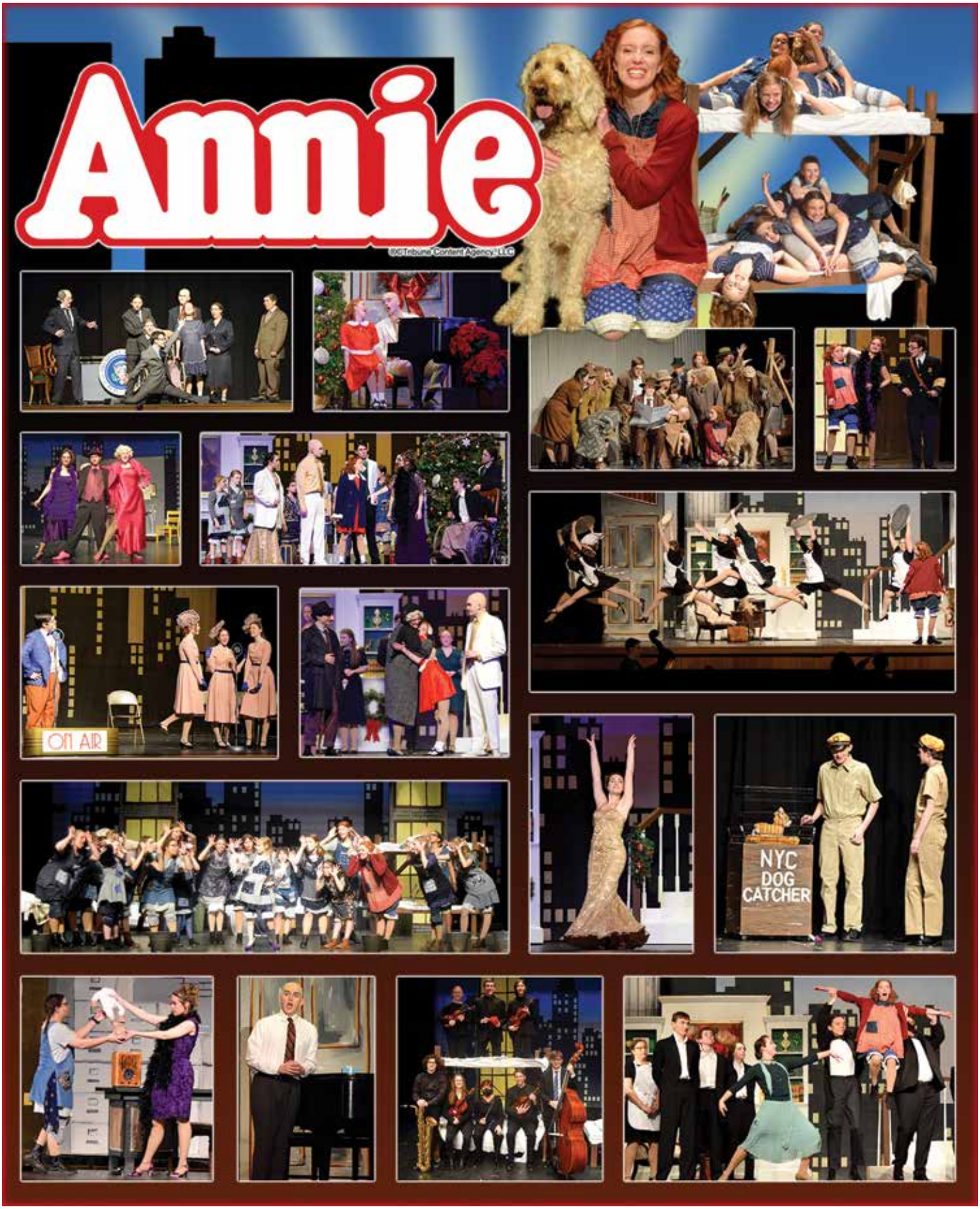
"It has been my honor to serve as the educational leader of Lower Dauphin for the past five years. As you may know, I have had the privilege of working in the Lower Dauphin School District for 17 of the 31 years of my career in education. Over those years, I have had the opportunity to work with outstanding educators and Board members who care about our students and community," Dr. Schultz said. "Lower Dauphin is a very special place that cares deeply about their school district. I am sure the School Board will appoint a Superintendent who will lead this district forward to continued success."

"The Board would like to express its appreciation to Dr. Robert Schultz for the leadership he has shown over the past five years as superintendent of the Lower Dauphin School District," said Board President Lynn Sassaman on behalf of the school board.

"We were thrilled when Rob came back to Lower Dauphin after his time in another district to assume the superintendent's role," she said.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, he demonstrated tremendous leadership as he guided our district and always put students first. His counsel and advice to the board as we worked together to navigate that unprecedented global crises were invaluable in keeping our students and staff safe while ensuring that our students continued to get a Lower Dauphin education.

"We wish Rob nothing but the best as he embarks on his next chapter."



Lower Dauphin High School presented 'Annie!' March 2-5, and played to packed houses each performance. The show was nominated for Best Musical, Best Dance Number, Best Actor (Aden Weigle) and Best Actress (Audrey Meyers) in the annual Apollo Awards. Seniors in the show included Aden, Audrey, TJ Fausnight, Livy Carter, Kayley Schell, Ashlyn O'Sick, Gabbi Pagano, Natalie Allman-Sheibley and Antonio Mardegain.

Lower Dauphin High School's Unified Bocce team poses with their hardware after winning the North Division and placing second in the league championships. At right, Bryan Desmond puts a ball in play during competition at the high school.

Unified Bocce team advances to regionals

Lower Dauphin High School's Unified Bocce team placed ninth at regionals after coming in first in the Mid-Penn Conference's North Division and second overall to Greencastle-Antrim High School at the league championships. This was the highest finish for a team in school history.

The Falcons' Unified Indoor Bocce team of Ethan Parker, Bryan Desmond, Sydney Laubach, Conner Roth, Morgan Sparks, Victoria Kutz, Taylor Korczynski and Avery Pollock competed in the regional championships at Penn State Schuylkill. The top two teams from regional competitions across the state advanced to the state championship games at the Giant Center in Hershey in March.

The squad is coached by special education teacher Monica Hockenbrock and physical education teacher Megan Etter. Lower Dauphin also fields a second team consisting of Ruslan Burden, Donavan Kann, Vivian Merry, Hannah McConnell, Trey Harper, Cam Lyons, Cali Mease and Grace Pankake.

By providing opportunities for students both with and without disabilities to participate in sports meaningfully and by engaging other students in the school community, Interscholastic Unified Sports (IUS) helps promote inclusion, acceptance and respect.

The Special Olympics Interscholastic Unified Sports program is supported by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and the Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Bridget Lawn wins state writing award

Lower Dauphin High School senior Bridget Lawn won first place and is the top writer in the state for the Broadcast Writing Category for the School Journalism Competition at the PSPA (Pennsylvania School Press Association) State Contest which was held at Penn State last month.

This is the first time that Lower Dauphin has won a state title at PSPA.

Bridget is the daughter of John and Jonette Lawn. She is a four-year member of the field hockey team, plays club field hockey in the community with PA Revolution and helps with LD field hockey's youth program. She is student executive of the Falcon Broadcast Channel. She is vice president and a three-year member of Student Council; vice president and a three-year member of the National Honor Society; president and a three-year member of the English Honor Society; a committee captain and four-year member of Mini-THON; and co-founder and a two-year member of the Ping Pong Club. Bridget is also a four-year member of Class Council and a three-year member of the History Honor Society.

She volunteers with Lower Dauphin Communities That Care in its Study Buddies program. She will attend the College of William and Mary where she will major in business and continue her field hockey career.

Carly Stephens, Jaime Gallick and Syler Campbell also participated in the PSPA competition.

Middle School STEM team is tops in Pennsylvania

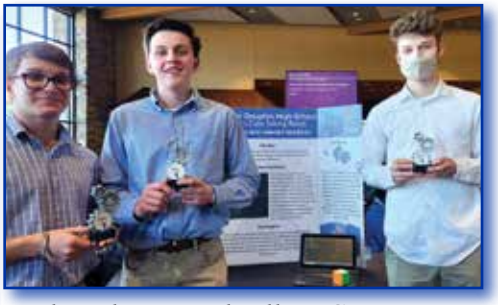
A team of four Lower Dauphin Middle School eighth-graders recently placed first in the state and 10th in the nation in a challenging academic competition.

The students, Christopher Brenneman, Thaddeus Shradley, Ethan Valentine and Jonah Lewis, were competing in the Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics, and Science competition.

The annual Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) competition challenged them to work as a team to solve real-world engineering challenges by applying their math and science knowledge in practical, creative ways. The one-day, three-part competition included:

- Design/Build—Teams design and build a solution to an engineering challenge, in this case a luggage-handling model using provided materials.
- Multiple Choice—Teams use math and science skills to solve real-world engineering challenges.
- Essay—Teams research and write an in-depth essay submitted electronically.

Christopher Brenneman, Thaddeus Shradley, Ethan Valentine, and Jonah Lewis competed in the TEAMs competition.



Brylee Klinger and Jyllian Garman (pictured at left) and Carter Lammando, Raphael Bastos and Tobias Waters won accolades at the Invention Convention.

High School teams win accolades at Invention Convention

Lower Dauphin High School had two teams win awards at the annual state Invention Convention held in conjunction with the PA Educational Technology Expo & Conference at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center Feb. 12-15.

Juniors Braylee Klinger and Jyllian Garman won third place for their Aquafilter. The prototype device filters stormwater runoff to remove phosphates and nitrates from water before it enters the water basin – phosphates and nitrates are a major source of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. They estimated that their device removes half of the phosphates and nitrates that pass through their filter. Braylee and Jyllian are students in Dr. Beth Kirman's STEM class at the high school.

Seniors Carter Lammando, Raphael Bastos and Tobias Waters earned a People's Choice Award for their Rubik's Cube Solving Robot. Their device scans the faces of a Rubik's Cube and runs through scenarios to create a solving solution for the user in text format out of 43 quintillion possible combinations.

Their project was selected from the PA Invention Convention to advance to the national convention in Dearborn, Mich. as one of the teams to represent the state. Carter, Raphael and Tobias are students in Mrs. Nancy Kiscadden's independent study computer science class.

Lower Dauphin High School hosted its annual Mini-THON from 7 p.m., March 17, to 7 a.m., March 18. The night featured dancing, fashion shows, sports, talent shows, the Mister Mini-THON pageant and lots of fun. The event also raised $140,738.46 for the Four Diamonds Fund at the Hershey Medical Center.

District welcomes new staffers to Lower Dauphin

Alaina Hess

LTS, Grade 5
East Hanover

Mrs. Hess will serve as a long-term substitute in fifth grade at East Hanover Elementary School. She was previously a long-term substitute at Nye Elementary School in the fall, and worked as a day-to-day substitute. She was a student teacher at South Hanover Elementary School as she earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education and teaching from the University of Phoenix.

Kayce Hoch

LTS, Grade 4
South Hanover

Miss Hoch will serve as a long-term substitute in fourth grade at South Hanover Elementary School. She earned her bachelor's degree in early childhood and special education from Misericordia University. Prior to coming to Lower Dauphin, she was an emotional support teacher at Susquenita Elementary School and a substitute at Wyoming Valley West School District.

Emily Hoffman

LTS, Grade 5
East Hanover

Miss Hoffman will serve as a long-term substitute in first grade at East Hanover Elementary School. She was previously a long-term substitute at South Hanover Elementary School, Pottsville High School and J.S. Clarke Elementary School. She holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Millersville University.

Logan Jones

Emotional Support
Middle School

Mr. Jones will serve as an emotional support teacher at the middle school. Prior to coming to Lower Dauphin, he was an emotional support teacher in the Middletown Area School District and a program coordinator and teacher at Yellow Breeches Educational Center. He earned his bachelor's degree from Messiah University and his master's degree in special education from Shippensburg University.

Christina Myers

Music
Middle School

Mrs. Myers will teach music at the middle school. Previously, she was employed as the senior music therapy leader at Penn State Health Children's Hospital. She also is adjunct faculty, music therapy supervisor at Elizabethtown College. She earned her master's degree in music therapy from Temple University and bachelor's degrees in music education and music from Lebanon Valley College.

Colette Saufley

LTS, Grade 3
South Hanover

Mrs. Saufley will serve as a long-term substitute in third grade at South Hanover Elementary School. She has a bachelor's degree in education from Bucknell University and a master's degree in reading from Bloomsburg University. She previously served as a district substitute in Lower Dauphin.

Lower Dauphin High School named 'Guard Friendly'

Lower Dauphin High School was among 58 public and private high schools which earned the 2022-23 Guard Friendly School designation from the Pennsylvania National Guard Associations.

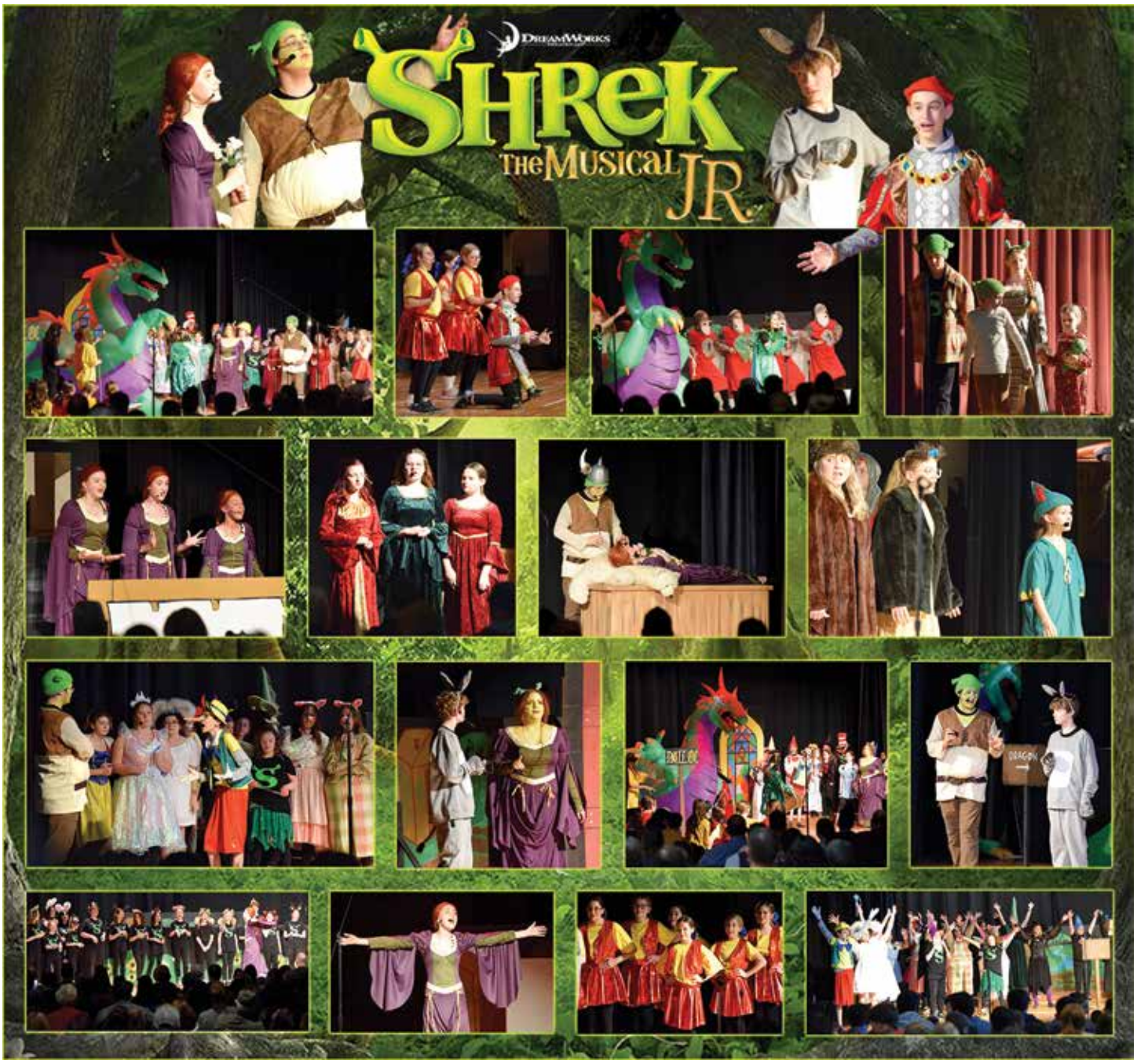
Launched under the leadership of Brig. Gen. George Schwartz (Ret.), the PNGAS Guard Friendly School program was designed to recognize high schools, colleges, universities and trade schools that meet or exceed a set of standards that support and promote the Pennsylvania National Guard, as well as the recruitment and retention of soldiers and airmen, and the pursuit of post-secondary degrees and certifications by members of the Pennsylvania Guard, veterans, spouses and military children.

"Our high school has a tremendous relationship with Staff Sergeant (Edward) Nolen and we're proud to accept this honor from the Pennsylvania National Guard Associations," said Principal Justin Hanula.

Staff Sgt. Nolen is a recruiter for the Pa. Army National Guard and is a fixture at school lunches and events.

"My relationship with the school has been incredible. The school is very open to allowing me the ability to help the faculty and students in many ways outside of recruiting," Staff Sgt. Nolen said. "Mr. Hanula and the staff are always very welcoming and show immense amounts of support towards the Army National Guard."

Among the best practices for which the high school was recognized was the annual "signing day" ceremony in which high school students who opt to enlist after graduation receive recognition and certificates from the school district.



Lower Dauphin Middle School presented 'Shrek, The Musical, Jr.' February 24-25. The cast featured close to 100 students with James Milic as Shrek, Levi Dickinson as Donkey, Addeline Jackson as Princess Fiona, Sophia Caugherty as Ogress Fiona, and Owen Hess as the villain Lord Farquad.

First Day of School for 2023-24 will be Monday, August 28, 2023

Two LD musicians earn spots in all-state ensembles

Seniors Aden Weigle and Joseph Goduto performed at the prestigious Pennsylvania Music Educators Association state conference in April.

Aden, a bass singer, performed in the All-State Honors Chorus. He earned his spot at states after auditioning successfully at a PMEA regional festival in February.

Aden Weigle

Joseph, a viola player, performed in the All-State Honors Orchestra. He earned his spot at states after successfully auditioning at a PMEA regional festival in March.

Joseph Goduto

Aden was one of four vocalists to perform at regionals. With him was senior Livy Carter, alto, and juniors Abigail Foran, soprano; Kaitlyn Hoffman, alto; and Nathan Wolfe, tenor. Earlier in the year they performed with seniors Audrey Meyers, alto; Abrianna Nissley, alto; and TJ Fausnight, tenor; at the PMEA District 7 honors festival.

Joseph performed at the regional festival with fellow senior Antonio Mardegain, string bass. The duo was also the lone Lower Dauphin representatives at the district band festival in January.

Senior Alex Raser, percussion, attended the PMEA regional band festival earning that spot after successfully auditioning at districts in February where Lower Dauphin had six others also attend. They included senior Brandon Davis, trumpet; junior Adrian Olweiler, clarinet; and freshmen Mia Pegher, oboe (first chair), and Micha Fox, horn. In addition, two musicians from Lower Dauphin Middle School were selected for the honors band – eighth-grader Savannah Ogle, clarinet, and seventh-grader Meredith Taylor, horn.

Weigle named to All-Eastern Choir

Lower Dauphin High School senior Aden Weigle was named to the National Association for Music Education's biennial All-Eastern Honors Choir.

His selection to the All-Eastern Honors Choir places his among the most musically talented high school students in the 13-state eastern region of the United States. The bass singer was selected after his outstanding audition at last year's Pennsylvania Music Educator Association's all-state choir festival. Aden was also named to the National Association for Music Education's All National Honors Choir last year.

The son of Kenneth and Melissa Weigle, he is a four-year member of the choir program and has participated in the musical and fall play every year. This year he was Cedric in "Puffs" and will be Warbucks in "Annie". He is also a member of the National Honor Society, National English Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, History Honor Society and Latin Language Honor Society. He plans to attend a four-year college or university and major in computer science and continue to participate in choral programs.

National Association for Music Education's All-Eastern Honors Choir will perform Sunday, April 16, at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, Rochester, N.Y. under the direction of Dr. Jason Max Ferdinand, director of choral activities at the University of Maryland.

Orchestra Director receives Citation of Excellence

Melody Cliff, orchestra director at Lower Dauphin Middle and High Schools, received a Citation of Excellence from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association at their annual conference in April.

Mrs. Melody Cliff conducting

Mrs. Cliff began her teaching career at Lower Dauphin in the 2008-09 school year as an elementary strings teacher before becoming orchestra director at the middle school and high school in 2011-12, replacing her former teacher, Marie Weber, who retired at the end of the 2011 school year.

"I have had the unique opportunity of observing this exceptional young woman through her tenure as a student and teacher in the Lower Dauphin School District," Mrs. Weber said in her nomination letter. "This young educator exudes an abundance of energy and optimism. All of her instructions and comments to the students are phrased in a positive and constructive way that result in an improvement in the ensemble. As a conductor, she expects the students to perform at the highest level that they are capable of and to have model rehearsal and concert decorum."

Mrs. Cliff was the recipient of the Pennsylvania-Delaware String Teachers Association's Outstanding New String/ Orchestra Teacher Award in 2010 and Outstanding Orchestra Director of the Year Award in 2018.

Left, Abby Nissley's Gold Key-winning painting "My Barefoot Brother" was nominated for an American Visions Award. Above, Lily Ditty's "Dermatillomania" won a Gold Key.

Two high school students win Scholastic Art Gold Keys

Two Lower Dauphin High School students received gold recognition in the Scholastic Art Awards competition.

Senior Abby Nissley won three Gold Keys and was nominated for an American Visions Award. Her painting "My Barefoot Brother" was one of five works regionally nominated for the American Visions Award for having a Gold Key work with an original authentic vision.

Her other Gold Key winners were for "Time to Walk My Sheep" (ceramics), and her art portfolio "These Shaped Me." She also won Silver Keys for "Family Portraits" (ceramics) and her painting "When I Milk The Cows."Abby earned honorable mention recognition for two additional paintings – "Lago di Garda" and "Pomegranates."

Senior Lily Ditty won three Gold Keys for her paintings "Dermatillomania," "The Garage," and "The Deer on the Right.".She also won a Silver Key for her "Chicken Dinner" painting and her art portfolio "Picking."

Senior Cami Barber won a Silver Key for her "Bendy and Wooby" and an honorable mention for "Sleepy Puppy." Junior Carolyn Clouser earned a Silver Key for her work "Domestic Imprisonment."

Ditty's artwork wins Best in Show, displayed at Capitol

Senior Lily Ditty's painting, "The Garage," was on display at the Capitol.

Lower Dauphin High School Senior Lily Ditty's painting "The Garage" was on display in the state Capitol for Youth Art Month this March.

The painting, which also won a Gold Key in the Scholastic Art Awards, was named "Best in Show" by the Pennsylvania Art Education Association as part of their Youth Art Month statewide art show for the month of March.

In addition to Lily's painting, Abigail Nissley's painting "Lago di Garda" (which won an honorable mention in the Scholastic Art Awards contest) and Cami Barber's work "Bendy and Wooby" (which won a Silver Key in the Scholastic Art Awards contest) were entered into the PAEA's art show.

The exhibit, with all 143 artworks, can be viewed via the following web link: https://tinyurl.com/yhb2f5s8

Coach Kreiser resigns after 45 years, Catalfano takes reins

Long-time Lower Dauphin High School varsity field hockey coach Linda Kreiser's resignation was approved with regret by the School Board at its March 13 meeting. Coach Kreiser became head coach in the 1978-79 season, going 9-2 and winning a conference title. The winning ways continued over the next 44 years with the Falcons earning seven state championships, 16 District 3 championships and more than 800 career victories.

"I am filled with extreme gratitude for the opportunity I was given 45 years ago to be the varsity head coach," she said in her resignation letter. "I learned over the years that the LDFH program is not about one person – it is about team, tradition, love and joy. I learned that from Miss Bea Hallman, who founded the program in 1963, who was my coach in high school. She was my mentor as a young athlete and she was there for me when I became a coach."

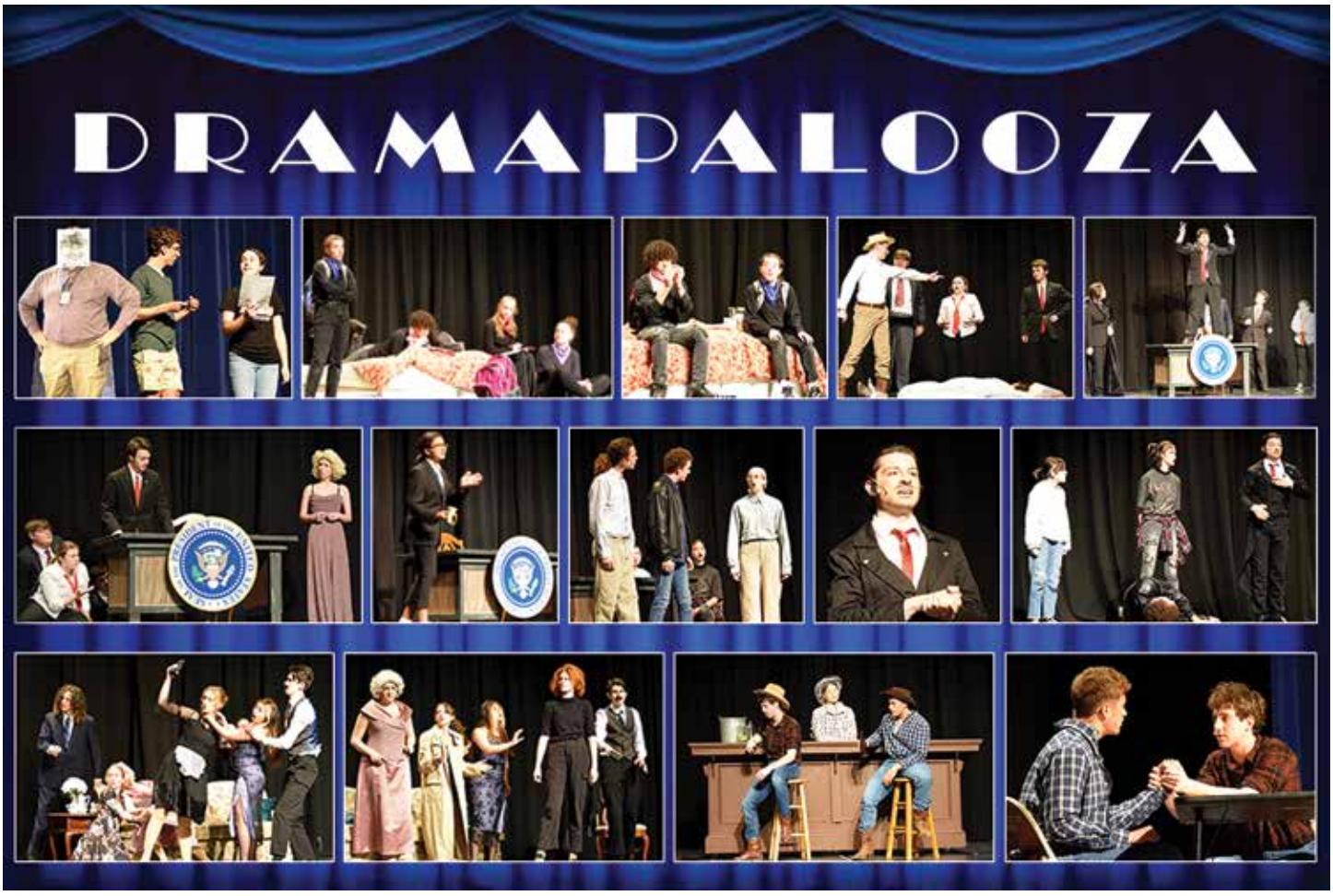
Next season, the field hockey program will celebrate its 60th year at Lower Dauphin. Coach Kreiser has been involved in 50 of those years as a player, junior high coach and varsity coach. She will to continue to be involved in the LDFH program as a volunteer coach.

Assistant Coach Erin Catalfano will take the helm of the program next season.

"It's hard to pick just a few words," Catalfano said. "It's an honor, it's very humbling. I'm just excited. I love that Coach Kreiser is still going to be a part of the staff, as a volunteer coach. It's awesome she's still going to be around. There is so much I can learn from her."

Linda Kreiser and Erin Catalfano pose with the PIAA trophy after the 2022 championships.

Catalfano, a 2004 LD grad, played goalie for the Falcons from 2000-2003. She returned to the program eight seasons later as a volunteer assistant, coaching that position for the varsity.



The high school hosted Dramapalooza 10 in April, featuring five one-act, student-directed plays.

Know Your Schools is published four times a year for the residents of Lower Dauphin School District.

District Office	566-5300
High School	566-5330
Middle School	566-5310
Conewago Elementary School	367-7233
East Hanover Elementary School	469-2686
Londonderry Elementary School	944-9462
Nye Elementary School	566-0300
South Hanover Elementary	566-2564
Informaline:	566-5320 or 944-1668

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Congratulations Class of 2023!