



# RAIDER PRIDE

A State and National Award-Winning Publication

AUGUST 2023



## READY, SET, GO!

We welcomed our students with open arms as they embraced their first day of school and new beginnings at Seneca Valley. We wish all SV students a wonderful 2023-24 school year! For more first day photos, click [here](#) (or see page 2).

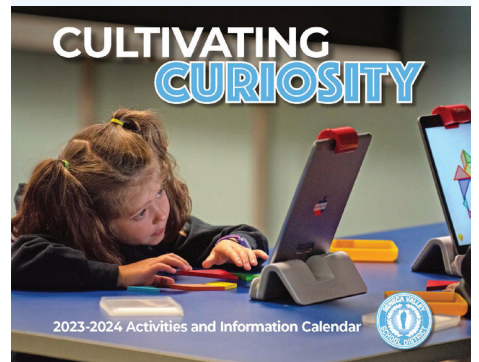


Photo Credit: Bill Paterson



## CULTIVATING CURIOSITY

If you're looking for an online version of the 2023-24 calendar, click [here](#).



### Media Notice

We wish to share good news of events and activities in our schools. If you do not want to have your child's name, photograph or other personal information appear in any media or district publication, please submit written documentation to your child's building principal. Thank you.

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### DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sept. 4 District Holiday, No School
- Sept. 11 School Board Meeting, Work Session, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 18 School Board Meeting, Regular Session, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 22 Hall of Fame Night at NexTier Stadium - Home Football Game vs. Mt. Lebanon, 7 p.m.

For more dates, visit: [www.svsd.net/WebCalendar](http://www.svsd.net/WebCalendar)

### SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



READY, SET, GO! (continued from page 1)

Photo Credit: Bill Paterson



# Seneca Valley SD 2023-24 Student/Teacher Calendar

**FINAL REVISION - APPROVED 4/2023**

August 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	IS	A80	19
20	A80	FD	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

11 Staff Days; 8 Student Days (10 w/A80)  
 Aug. 22 - First Student Day

September 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	H	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	A80	26	27	28	29	30

20 Days  
 Sept 25 - Yom Kippur (Act 80)

October 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	A80	28
29	30	31				

22 Staff Days

November 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	IS	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	H	H	H	25
26	H	28	29	30		

18 Staff Days; 17 Student Days  
 Nov. 10 - IS/Staff Clerical Day

December 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	H	H	H	H	H	30
31						

16 Days

January 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	H	H	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	IS	13
14	A80	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

21 Staff Days; 20 Student Days  
 Jan. 11 - End of First Semester  
 Jan. 12 - IS/Clerical Day

February 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	IS	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	SM	17
18	IS	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

20 Staff Days; 18 Student Days  
 February 19 - IS/Clerical Day

March 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	A80	16
17	SM	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	H	30
31						

19 Days

April 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	H	H	H	H	H	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

17 Days

May 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	A80	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	H	28	29	LD-S	31	

22 Days  
 May 30 - Last Day for Seniors (Grad. Day)

June 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	LD	IS	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

5 Staff Days; 4 Student Days  
 June 6 - Last Day for K-11 Students

191 Work Days for Teachers

**Snow (Emergency) Makeup Days:**  
 #1 - Feb. 16, 2024  
 #2 - March 18, 2024  
 #3 - Remote Learning  
 #4 - Remote Learning  
 #5 - Remote Learning

**District Local Holidays:**  
 Nov. 22, 2023  
 Nov. 27, 2023  
 Dec. 25, 2023  
 Jan. 1, 2024  
 April 1, 2024

**KEY**

- A80 - Act 80-Prof. Develop. Day (No school for students)
- H - Holiday (No school)
- IS - In-Service Day (No school for students)
- FD, LD & LD-S - First Student Day, Last Student Day & Last Day/Graduation Day for Seniors
- SM - Snow Makeup Day (this day becomes a holiday if no snow make-up days are needed)
- Remote Learning - Flexible Instructional Day/Students engage in remote learning from home

Please note all dates are subject to change



## BUILDING COMMUNITY

Seneca Valley's Welcome Back All-Staff Meeting was held on Aug. 21, with the message of "Building Community."

JROTC students gave the presentation of Colors, and staff listened attentively to remarks from Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Yvonne Dobrzanski, SV Education Association President and Ehrman Crest First Grade Teacher, and Ms. Kathy Whittle, School Board President.

The district extends a heart-felt thank you to Eckles Construction, Rhoads Orthodontics, Fun-Fore-All and Cranberry DQ Grill & Chill for sponsoring staff T-shirts.

Teachers, administrators and staff are very excited for a wonderful school year ahead! ■





## SV ADJUSTS POLICY FOR DEVICE USE IN SCHOOL

Seneca Valley welcomes and encourages students and staff to utilize technology as a supplemental resource for learning (when appropriate and in a positive manner). However, it has become evident that use of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices have become more of a deterrent to the overall successful engagement of academics while in school. Additionally, [scientific studies confirm that cell phone and social media use among adolescents is addictive and negatively impacts their wellbeing.](#)

As part of our mission, we will continue to enhance the teaching of responsible digital citizenship at every grade level. Additionally, staff in each building are regularly reviewing and editing the curriculum as well as capitalizing on opportunities to reach more students regarding appropriate and safe use of personal communication devices.

All District parents/guardians and staff were also encouraged to join us in this important effort by attending an FBI/Police presentation this past spring on the “Dangers of Tech,” and to take part in a [ThoughtExchange where we collected their input](#) – along with our students in grades 5-12 – on smartphones/devices in the school environment.

District officials took an important additional step when, in April 2023, the [Seneca Valley School Board unanimously agreed to join a multi-district lawsuit](#) to hold social media platforms accountable for the direct targeting of adolescents through algorithms, which has caused detrimental effects to mental health. The District also seeks accountability by these platforms anytime their own policies and community standards are violated but not addressed when identified by school officials. These points and others were made when the [Seneca Valley School Board first passed a resolution in October 2022](#), highlighting the need for additional safeguards to protect our children online.

Lastly, we supplemented the topic and supported building-level learning with the development of a Superintendent Advisory

Committee of Personal Technology. This group of stakeholders, which included parents, teachers, support staff and administrators, met in the 2022-23 school year to discuss their growing concerns and the potential safeguards needed to address the increased use and dependency of teens and cell phones/social media.

The natural next step after these collective efforts is to act on student use of cell phone/personal electronic device during the school day. Therefore, the School Board approved a policy update earlier this month that includes changes to the procedures and consequences regarding device use while in school ([Policy #237](#)). **This will take effect in August with the 2023-24 school year.**

### Student Use of SmartPhone/Personal Electronic Devices - Expectations and Boundaries:

Student smartphones or other personal electronic communication devices (“devices”) may come to school but **must** be stowed on your person and out of sight or stored in a locker or backpack. Teachers will have the discretion to utilize a storage system for devices for students to store their devices in the classroom. These items may not be used unless there is an emergency or at the teachers’ discretion for instructional purposes. **The use of any electronic device is strictly prohibited in bathrooms and locker rooms.** Because students have such a wide developmental range, grades K-12, appropriate building-level rules have been developed and are as follows:

- For grades K-6, devices or smart watches **may not be used** in the cafeteria during lunch, in the hallways or other non-instructional areas.
- For grades 7-8, devices or smart watches **may be used** in the cafeteria during lunch, but may not be used in the hallways or other non-instructional areas.
- For grades 9-12, devices or smart watches **may be used** in the cafeteria during lunch, in the hallways and in other non-instructional areas.
- For extracurricular activities, device or smart watch use is discouraged but will



be left to the discretion of the coach or sponsor.

### Consequences:

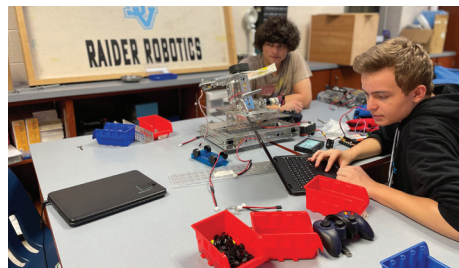
The following expectations, grades K-12, will be provided in the student handbook and the SV Portal to which students and parents will sign-off on prior to the beginning of the school year. Information may also be provided during “welcome back” assemblies to students and parents/guardians. Teachers will also include information in their individual classroom plans/procedures:

- **First offense** – Devices will be sent to the main office for student to pick up at the end of the school day. The parent/guardian will be notified.
- **Second offense** - Devices will be sent to the main office for student to pick up at the end of the school day. The parent/guardian will be notified. Additionally, students will be seen in the main office to review the policy and will lose their device for one school day.
- **Third offense** – Parent/Guardian will be required to pick up the device from the main office. Additional discipline may be assigned and can result in consequences which range from detention to in-school suspension at the secondary (grades 7-12) level, and lunch detention to in-school suspension at the elementary (grades K-6) level.
- **Each subsequent offense or refusal to surrender personal device** – This will result in parent pick up of the device and a review of the policy with the student. Progressive discipline will take place at this level and depend on the scope and number of policy violations. ■



## SUMMER FUN AT SENECA VALLEY

SV Summer Camps not only gave students the opportunity to “hang out” but they also provided a wide range of hands-on activities, arts and crafts, academic concepts, culinary creations, recreational activities and more. ■



## OFF TO 'BOT' CAMP!

Students who participated in FIRST Lego League “Training Camp” enjoyed a summer of building, programming and coding fun! FIRST Lego League gives students real-world, problem-solving experience that promotes critical thinking and design skills. ■





## NEW TO THE SV CREW

Seneca Valley welcomed nearly 50 new educators to the District for the 2023-24 school year!

These new-to-SV educators attended the annual SV New Teacher Induction Program Aug. 15-16, where they learned more about Seneca Valley, met several colleagues and administrators and attended various training sessions. ■



We welcome these new teachers to the Seneca Valley Family for the 2023-24 school year!

### **Connoquenessing Valley Elementary**

School Anyah Booker – Grade 2

Jayna Johnston – Psychologist

Jennifer Guidice – Learning Support

Kimberly Padovani – Learning Support

### **Rowan Elementary School**

Carly Magnotta – Instruction and Intervention

Rebecca Bosley - Psychologist

### **Ehrman Crest Elementary School**

Camryn Camp – Grade 2

Carolyn Cox – Multiple Supports

Dalashay Williams – Grade 2

Lora Grasso – Health and Physical Education

### **Ehrman Crest Middle School**

Ashley Simpson – Grade 6

Abigail Trithart – Grade 6

Megan Davis – Learning Support

### **Ehrman Crest Elem./Middle School**

Kevin Holman – S.T.E.P

### **Ehrman Crest Elem./Haine Elem. School**

Taylor Barum – Speech and Language

### **Haine Elementary School**

Lisa Brown - ESL

Susan Werner – Grade 1

Taylor Marsinetti – Grade 4

Angela Reaves - CIRC

Ashley Salman – Health and Physical Education

Sarah Barone – Grade 2

Kristen McClintock - ESL

### **Haine Elem./Haine Middle School**

Leah Carlin – Learning Support

### **Haine Middle School**

Ari Zahavi – Grade 6

Shannon Perry – Grade 6

Katherine Peterson – S.T.E.P

### **Intermediate High School**

Emily Cramer – German

Marissa Bitonti - Mathematics

Zachary Maisner – Industrial Technology

Todd Pesavento - Industrial Technology

### **Senior High School**

Bria Giovannelli – Learning Support

Maria Miller – Social Studies

Jennifer Curry - English

### **Long-Term Substitutes:**

#### **Rowan Elementary School**

Julie Camp – Grade 4

#### **Haine Elementary School**

Angela Rebovich – Grade 4

#### **Senior High School**

Connor Watkins – English

#### **Intermediate High School**

Dyanna Boosel - English

#### **Ehrman Crest Middle School**

Erin Burkhart – Grade 5 ■



## WELCOME TO SV!

### *District welcomes new Business Manager and Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities*

During Seneca Valley's School Board Meeting in May, board members approved the appointment of Mr. Eddie Kurtz as an Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities.



Mr. Kurtz comes to Seneca Valley from Avonworth School District (ASD), where he has been serving for the past seven years in the Athletics and Buildings and Grounds departments. While at ASD, Mr. Kurtz also served as an assistant football coach for the middle school and varsity teams, assistant wrestling coach and girls' soccer strength and conditioning coach.

A resident of Pittsburgh, Mr. Kurtz grew up in the North Hills area and attended Clarion University of Pennsylvania where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Sports Management.

Mr. Kurtz has held many leadership roles in athletics including the 2013 Scout-Team Player of the Year for Clarion University Football and is dedicated to guiding and supporting future student athletes and the programs they participate in.

"We are excited to welcome Eddie Kurtz as Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities," said Ms. Heather Lewis, Director of Athletics and Activities. "We were extremely fortunate to have a number of quality applicants for our position. Throughout the interview process, Eddie's energy, passion and commitment to the student experience stood out to the committee. Eddie's prior experiences have positioned him to meet with great success in this role. We look forward to his contributions in helping each of our students, coaches and sponsors excel."

"I've always been well aware of Seneca Valley's impressive academics, championship level athletic programs and second to none facilities," stated Mr. Kurtz. "When I learned of the position, it presented me with an opportunity to utilize the knowledge and skills I have gained over the years. My goal is to help Seneca Valley's student athletes experience the same excitement and enjoyment that I had while being a student athlete at the high school and collegiate level."

Mr. Kurtz joins Ms. Lewis and Mr. Nii Sowa-Doku, Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities.

At Seneca Valley's School Board Meeting on Monday, June 12, Board Members approved the appointment of Ms. Dana Kirk as Seneca Valley School District's Business Manager.

A resident of Allison Park, Ms. Kirk is coming to Seneca Valley from the Pine-Richland School District where she has worked for 20 years in various financial roles, including 10 years as Pine Richland's Director of Financial & Operational Services. She also has five years of experience as an auditor for Maher Duessel in Pittsburgh.



"Ms. Kirk comes with a wealth of knowledge about school finance, school funding, capital improvements and school construction," said Superintendent Dr. Tracy Vitale. "We are fortunate that she chose Seneca Valley as the next step in her career, and we feel she will be a welcome addition to our team."

Ms. Kirk's extensive business experience at Pine-Richland includes oversight of financial reporting and processing, payroll and benefits administration, facilities department, construction, renovation projects, food service management agreement and contracted transportation agreement. Other successes include:

- Utilizing a comprehensive multi-year model for budget preparation and long-term financial planning.
- Preparing an annual financial report, general fund budget (including detailed personnel budget), ten-year capital funding plan, official statements for bond issues and refunding transactions.
- Implementing new software programs which integrated payroll, human resources, benefits, financial accounting, purchasing, fixed asset management and miscellaneous billing (two conversions).
- Managing multiple variable rate swap financing transactions and monitoring compliance and cash flow.
- Developing construction project cost model for significant capital projects.
- Implementing a just-in time supply ordering system through cooperative purchasing.
- Developing a comprehensive fiscal year-end audit documentation process for electronic workpapers.
- Establishing a procurement card system to provide for flexibility in payment of transactions and developing internal control procedures and guidelines accordingly.
- Continuously assessing and revising internal controls within the business office to comply with governmental auditing standards.
- Developing and evaluating various service proposals/bids including banking services, managing underwriter, contracted transportation, audit services, liquid propane gas, and food service.
- Drafting and revising various school board policies.

"I am truly looking forward to working with the administrative team at Seneca Valley School District and to serve the students and families in the community," said Ms. Kirk. "I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to function in the role of Business Manager and to assist with the school district's growth and future planning."

Ms. Kirk earned a bachelor's degree in accounting with a minor in management from Pennsylvania State University. She currently serves as a board of trustee on the Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium and the Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust. She also currently serves as the treasurer for the Allegheny North Tax Collection Committee.

Ms. Kirk will be working with Ms. Lynn Burtner, the district's current business manager, to transition into the role fully when Ms. Burtner retires in December 2023 after 14.5 years with the District. ■



## A NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) recently earned recognition at the National Schools to Watch Conference held in Washington, D.C.

This year, RGMS was one of only 10 exemplary Middle Grades Schools in Pennsylvania to be named a 2023 PA Don Eichhorn Schools: “Schools to Watch” (PA STW) as part of a recognition program developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

Ms. Trisha Butschle, RGMS Assistant Principal, attended the professional learning conference which featured three keynote speakers and several learning opportunities for continued growth in middle level education, focusing on programs to enhance student learning and developments. ■



## SV COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT AWARDED IN NSPRA, PENSPRA PUBLICATIONS CONTESTS

The Seneca Valley communications department earned a combined total of 15 awards in the National School Public Relations Association’s (NSPRA) 2022 Publications and Digital Media Contest and in the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association’s (PenSPRA) “Excellence in Education Communications” 2022 Contest.



Seneca Valley earned five awards in NSPRA’s Contest. They received two Awards of Excellence for the *SV Raider Pride* E-Newsletter and the 2022 SV Annual Report, “Inspire. Connect. Excel.” Additionally, the communications department received two Awards of Merit for the 2022-23 Activities and Information Calendar, “Celebrating the Arts: A World of Color” and their teacher appreciation video, “A Work of Heart.” Lastly, they were awarded an Honorable Mention for the Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School Booklet.

NSPRA’s Publications and Digital Media Awards recognize outstanding education publications and marketing/informational materials (print and electronic), video/TV/radio programs, social media and websites.

In PenSPRA’s Contest, the Seneca Valley communications department earned 10 awards. They received an Award of Excellence for the *SV Raider Pride* E-Newsletter. They also received five Awards of Honor for their “Voices” Podcast, their teacher appreciation video, “A Work of Heart,” a video for Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, and social media campaigns for “#ILedThePledge” and “#SVEhrmanCrest.” Lastly, they received four Awards of Merit for the 2022-23 Activities and Information Calendar, “Celebrating the Arts: A World of Color,” the 2022 SV Annual Report, “Inspire. Connect. Excel.,” the Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School Booklet and the “24th Annual Senior Holiday Event” video.

PenSPRA was chartered in 1969 and, much like NSPRA, is an organization of school public relations professionals whose goal is to improve educational communication and support student achievement through systematic, proactive and responsible public relations programs. Both organizations annually sponsor separate Excellence In Education Communications Contests. Entries are accepted in a number of categories to reflect the scope of work often undertaken by communications professionals.

The communications department coordinated and developed these award-winning publications for the Seneca Valley School District. ■



## MARCHING BAND TRADITION SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF FALL SEASON!

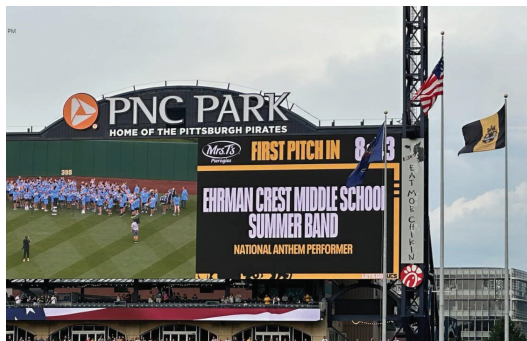
The Seneca Valley Band Boosters hosted the annual Marching Band “Pie Festival” on Thursday, Aug. 18. This event kicks off the fall season with the premier performance of the SV Raider Marching Band. As a special addition, the band invited members of the Haine and Ehrman Crest Middle School Summer Bands to perform the National Anthem alongside the full Marching Band on the field. Under the direction of Mrs. Tracy Glass and Mrs. Kelly Levere, over 100 young band students performed. A full crowd was present to witness this cherished fall event and enjoy the band’s first performance of the season. The 2023 Halftime Show is entitled “The King of Pop” and features the music of Michael Jackson. If you have not attended the SV Band “Pie Festival” before, you are missing a fantastic evening with friends, family, pie and music! ■





## SV MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND MEMBERS SHINE AT PNC PARK

This summer, members of both the Haine and Ehrman Crest Middle School bands performed the National Anthem at PNC Park prior to a Pirates game! They rehearsed outside the stadium then made their way to the field for an unforgettable experience they'll always remember. ■



## A HEARTFELT HOMECOMING PERFORMANCE

Seneca Valley '03 graduate and professional opera singer, Michael Pegher, made a homecoming visit to his former school, Connoquenessing Valley Elementary (CVE) to provide a surprise performance for teachers and staff members, including retired teacher Susan Dinger, Mr. Pegher's music teacher at CVE.

Mr. Pegher has lived in Germany for over 10 years where he performed in ensembles at the Staatstheater (State Theater) in Darmstadt and different opera houses throughout Germany. While visiting CVE, Mr. Pegher noted how the school looks as welcoming as he remembered it years ago. His love for CVE, the teachers and many opportunities presented to him were all evident in his speech to staff and in his performance. He ended the performance with a big hug from Ms. Dinger and a special song he learned from her, one that he still enjoys singing today.

"I was very excited to surprise staff members with this performance and to welcome Ms. Dinger back to CVE to listen to a former student," said Mrs. DeeAnn Graham, Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School Principal.

While visiting CVE, Mr. Pegher sang pieces like 'The Impossible Dream' which ties into CVE's mantra of Lead. Love. Learn. ■







## BUILDING COMMUNITY

At the official opening of school for teachers this year, I had the privilege to watch an incredible video put together by our Communications Department highlighting a summer Classrooms Without Borders trip for some of our faculty. The message for each of us was about building communities and eradicating hate. As I listened to my colleagues' stories, I began thinking of how their shared experiences relate to the world of athletics and activities and it dawned on me: teams. As Director of Athletics & Activities, my world centers around teams – not just sport teams, but teams in the arts, activities and clubs. As much as we think of a football team and all its moving parts, so, too, do I think of our award-winning Raider Marching Band as a team of moving parts. We are not privileged to awe-inspiring musical and theatrical performances without teamwork. The Video and Tabletop Games clubs in Ryan Gloyer Middle School allow students from the Cougars, Condors and Lions to build connections through shared interests. As the video played on, our purpose became clearer

and clearer – what we do in Athletics & Activities is provide so many students the opportunity for community connections through common interests. We provide opportunities for leaders to emerge organically; we get to witness personal growth and team accomplishments through dedicated work and sacrifice. We witness joy in its purest form, and we guide through unimaginable heartbreak in defeat. Through every trial and tribulation, as teammates, we show up for one another. What better lesson to learn in life than showing up for one another? As I look ahead to the 2023-24 school year my goal is simple: for each student who comes through our department, it is my hope they learn the value of being the absolute best teammate they can be – not just in school, but in life. For #SVRaiderNation, in celebration of all our differences, it is my hope we can all show up and be the best Raider teammate for one another. Building community – that is what we do in Athletics & Activities. ■

## NEW IN 2023-24 STUDENT ATHLETICS PASSES

In collaboration with the Student-Athlete Leadership Team (S.A.L.T.), the Seneca Valley Athletics Department is pleased to offer a year-long student athletic pass for all Raider sports home contests on our campus for the 2023-24 school year.

The pass will be \$50 and will entitle the name holder - who presents the Athletics pass along with valid ID (SV ID, License) - to free entry for our regular season home contests.

Any Seneca Valley student in grades K-12 is eligible to purchase a 2023-24 annual student athletic pass.

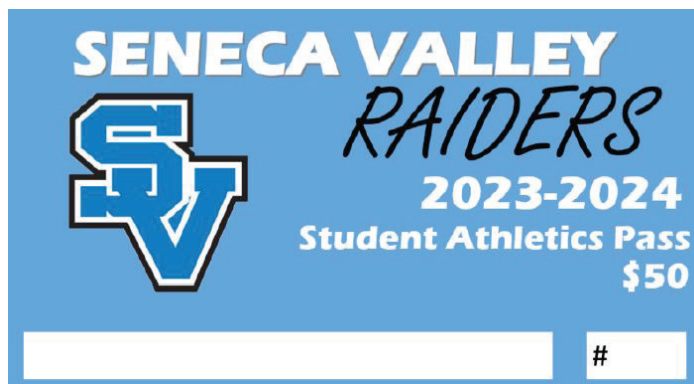
Passes may be purchased in the Athletic Office located in the lobby of the Senior High School. Passes are available for sale from 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Passes may be purchased with a **check made payable to S.V.S.D. or with cash**. No credit cards accepted.

### Terms of Use for Annual Student Athletics Pass

1. The pass entitles bearer for one student paid admission to any regular season SV home athletic contest.
2. Must be presented with SV Student ID.
3. Only valid for regular season SV home games.
4. Pass does not allow for reentry into venue.
5. Lost passes will not be replaced.
6. Passes are non-transferable.
7. Pass is not accepted at any WPIAL and/or PIAA playoff contest hosted on our campus.

### Special Event Nights

- Sept. 15, 2023: Veterans Recognition Night, Home Football vs Pine-Richland



- Sept. 21, 2023: Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Senior High School
- Sept. 22, 2023: Hall of Fame Recognition & Youth Night, Home Football vs Mt. Lebanon
- Sept. 29, 2023: Senior Night, Home Football vs Butler
- Oct. 5, 2023: Homecoming Carnival & Parade, Secondary Campus
- Oct. 6, 2023: Homecoming Night, Home Football vs Hempfield
- Oct. 27, 2023: Pink Night Game, Home Football vs North Allegheny ■

## TRAILBLAZING TALENT

Mimi Skowronski, a rising seventh grader at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS), is paving the way for girls sports.

Last month, Miss Skowronski was welcomed to KDKA's Talk Pittsburgh show to share her experience competing on a national level in wrestling and playing football for Seneca Valley.

Read more at [KD Kids Club: Mimi Skowronski - CBS Pittsburgh \(cbsnews.com\)](https://www.kdids.com) ■



## SAVE THE DATE!

Seneca Valley Alumni will return to their “home turf” to be recognized for their outstanding athletic achievements made during their time as students at the 2023 Seneca Valley Sports Hall of Fame (HOF) Induction Ceremony.

This year’s 2023 Induction Class includes Conor Barrett ('08), Patty Brain Cekella ('86), Alexandria Karika ('12), Brooke Gilliland Klatt ('97), Anthony Laslavic ('98), and Ryan Vilella ('13).

The SV Sports HOF committee will be honoring these inductees the weekend of Sept. 21-22.

The Induction Ceremony will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 21, in the senior

high school (SHS) auditorium and is free for all to attend. This ceremony will be preceded by a dinner at 6 p.m. (doors open at 5:30 p.m.) in the SHS cafeteria. Dinner tickets can be purchased [here](#). Tickets MUST BE purchased by Wednesday, Sept. 6.

Inductees will also be recognized at the football game at NexTier Stadium on Friday, Sept. 22.

All are welcome to attend and recognize these inductees for their contribution to Seneca Valley Raider athletics!

For more information, please contact Wayne Roccia at 724-816-0698 or via email at [wroccia@zoominternet.net](mailto:wroccia@zoominternet.net). ■



# VOICES

A podcast from the Seneca Valley School District

Want to hear directly from the voices at Seneca Valley on the most current topics and updates? Join us in listening to Voices, a podcast brought to you by the Seneca Valley School District.

**Check out our latest podcast featuring SV athletics & activities. Listen as Ms. Heather Lewis, Athletics & Activities Director discusses highlights from last year and what's new for the 2023-24 school year. Be sure to subscribe to SV Voices and listen online [here](#).**



## Voices, a Podcast from the Seneca Valley School District

Want to hear directly from the voices at Seneca Valley on the most current topics and updates? Join us in listening to Voices, a podcast brought to you by the Seneca Valley School District. This podcast interviews guests who share an inside look at what is happening at SV.



## GIFT OF HOPE GOLF CLASSIC SCORES RECORD PROFIT

The Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) hosted its 11th annual Gift of Hope Golf Classic presented by Batavia Performing Arts Studio at Cranberry Highlands earlier this month and brought in more than **\$56,000!** Proceeds from this incredible event benefit students and staff and allow the SVF to continue its mission of providing the “Gift of Hope and Promise of Excellence” to Seneca Valley School District.

The sun was shining as clubs were swinging! Team MPLX took 1st place, with Team Swartz coming in second.

However, the biggest winner of the day was Ms. Heather Lewis as she was recognized by the Tri-State Section of the PGA for her dedication and hard work as the District’s Athletics and Activities Director. Congratulations, Ms. Lewis!

Thank you to the following sponsors for their generosity and leading the way to this success. We are also grateful for our extraordinary hole and advertising sponsors, as well as those businesses, alumni and community members who donated raffle prizes and the volunteers who made the day possible. The full list of our generous donors, as well as a pictures from the event, can be found here: [www.svsd.net/golfclassic](http://www.svsd.net/golfclassic).

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From left to right: SV '19 Alumna and Asst. Tournament Director, Lexi Tofanelli; Heather Lewis, SV Athletics and Activities Director; and David Wright, Executive Director, Tri-State Section PGA



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## SV BOARD MEMBER RECEIVES PSBA RECOGNITION

Susan Harrison, a member of the Seneca Valley School Board, recently received recognition for her dedicated service to the District. She was presented a certificate adding her to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) Honor roll of School Board Service.

Ms. Harrison is about to reach her eighth year of service and is completing her second, four-year term on the board.

Since 1983, PSBA has been recognizing school board members who earn "honor roll" status upon completing eight years of service and then again at every four-year increment.

"Ms. Harrison is an ethical, principled member with a deep desire to serve her community," said Ms. Kathy Whittle, Board President. "She believes in the value of our public schools and local control of public education for the benefit of all students. I am very pleased to recognize her for being a part of this rich legacy of school director service, and I thank her for her time, expertise and energy."



**Pictured L to R: Ms. Kathy Whittle, Board President, Ms. Susan Harrison and Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent**

PSBA's Senior Director of Member Outreach, Becky Dussinger states, "School directors today have a more challenging job than ever before in our complex society. As unpaid volunteers, they give generously of their time all year long to help guide the education of our children. The Honor Roll is the association's way of thanking these dedicated leaders, who are committed to the success of our public schools and the students they serve." ■

## THIN MINTS, TAGALONGS, SAMOAS, OH MY!

Top cookie sellers in local Girl Scout troops this year from Seneca Valley include:

Olivia Little - 844 boxes sold

Clara Infield - 658 boxes sold

Violet Alabran - 654 boxes sold

Abigail Cardinal - 650 boxes sold

Earlier this summer, the budding entrepreneurs attended the super seller event hosted by Girl Scouts of Western PA at the Antonelli Event Center in Irwin. The girls had an amazing time with live "island" music and dancing. These successful sellers plan on repeating their efforts next year! ■



**Pictured from left: Abigail from Girl Scout Troop 52821, Clara from Girl Scout Troop 26767 and Olivia from Girl Scout Troop 52840.**

## MARCHING WITH HONOR

This summer, Seneca Valley Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) participated in the Zelenople Fourth of July Parade. Members of the battalion and color guard did a great job representing our community and country. ■





## THE DOCTOR IS IN

Bridget Miller, Ehrman Crest Middle School Assistant Principal, successfully completed her doctorate in Leadership and Administration this past month from Point Park University. "I am excited to use my newly acquired knowledge to better lead our students and staff on their educational journeys," said Dr. Miller. "One of my proudest moments was when a graduating senior,



who is very dear to me, told me I inspired her to get her doctorate, too." ■

## IT'S HOW HE ROLLS

Reid Moon, former SV bus driver and Board Member,, was recently recognized on national news in an "On the Road" with Steve Hartman segment which highlighted the bond he formed with students, including many couples he married. That's right, Mr. Moon has officiated the weddings of at least 20 former Seneca Valley students who once rode his bus and became one of "his kids." Over 60 of



his former riders and their families gathered for a reunion and shared Mr. Moon's impactful lesson of 'love and respect' and of course, one last memorable bus ride. Watch the full program [here](#). ■

## MEET AND GREET

Members of the District Leadership Team took part in collaborative efforts over the summer, including meeting with municipal department leaders at Cranberry Township (pictured bottom left) and with Dr. Parag Batavia, parent and local entrepreneur (pictured bottom right).

Cranberry Township department heads met with their counterparts at SV to update each other on current projects and planning for the 23-24 school year. They also took some time to brainstorm for ways in which the two entities can work together for the benefit of all in our schools and community.



Dr. Parag Batavia, who is the founder and president of Neya Systems, LLC, an unmanned systems development company near Pittsburgh, stopped by to share his wisdom about the STEM industry and impart his advice on how to best prepare students for the workforce/life after SV. Dr. Batavia has 15 years of experience in robotics technology development, technical leadership, program administration, and financial and operations management, and is currently an adjunct professor at Carnegie Mellon University. ■



## SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The School Board approved the following meeting dates (all meetings begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted):

### Work Sessions

\*Sept. 11 (note the later date due to the holiday)

Oct. 2

Nov. 6

\*Dec. 4 – Reorganization Meeting (begins at 5 p.m.; this is the only December Meeting)

### Regular (Action) Meetings

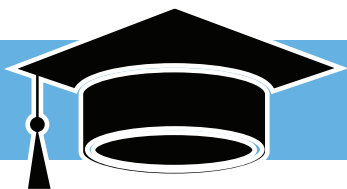
\*Sept. 18 (note the later date due to the holiday)

Oct. 9

Nov. 13

\*Meeting change





**Shane Raible, SV '18**, is currently working as a firmware engineer in San Diego, California. We asked him to catch us up on what he is doing and how Seneca Valley influenced his life and career.

**Q: Catch us up. Tell us what you're doing today:**

A: After completing internships with Microsoft, Intel, Samsung, Qualcomm and Aspinity, I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and moved to San Diego to work as a firmware engineer at Qualcomm in the Wireless R&D group (and to enjoy California!).

**Q: Please share with us some information about your family.**

A: I have two brothers, Nic and Adam, that also graduated from Seneca Valley in 2017 and 2021.

**Q: What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?**

A: I've driven cross-country three times (so far).

**Q: How did Seneca Valley help you become the person you are today, both personally and professionally?**

A: Personally, there are so many great people in the district and nothing helped me become the person I am today more than them. Professionally, the STEM classes (and teachers) laid a great foundation for first-year engineering classes at my university. I felt like I had a leg up on some of the other students with topics I was exposed to at SV, like programming classes, which did a better job of teaching programming than a lot of the intro classes at my university. The Leadership and Career Development class was a huge help – the lessons on interviewing and resume building really stuck as I began applying and interviewing for positions in my field.

**Q: What do you think makes Seneca Valley such a special place to learn and grow?**

A: The teachers and school community make SV a special place to learn and grow. I met many of my closest friends at Seneca, and the teachers made it an



enjoyable place to learn. Their enthusiasm for their subjects made even the classes I wasn't that interested in very enjoyable. Teachers would go out of their way to create opportunities and foster interest in their subjects. For programming courses, Mrs. Koegler went out of her way to find opportunities outside of class for us to learn through programming competitions. She also got us involved in an app proposal competition at Penn State, where we got to travel and pitch our idea like a startup in front of venture capitalists (VCs), which was a different set of skills to learn for a programming class.

**Q: Who was your favorite teacher/coach/SV staff member?**

A: That's a hard one! I went to Seneca for K-12 and could name at least one "favorite" from every year, so I can't really say. Just like my previous answer, it was awesome having so many great teachers and I consider myself very lucky for having that experience. We also had some awesome lunch ladies and bus drivers.

**Q: What is one of your favorite memories from your time at Seneca Valley? We'd encourage you to recall a moment or event that had a particularly strong influence on your life.**

A: My second and third-grade teacher, Mrs. Lintelman, organized a camping trip for the whole class to wrap up our time together at Camp Lintelman, which was her cabin-themed classroom complete with a tent and a reading tub. To top it off, she mailed us all pictures and work from our time in her class right before graduation, which was an awesome way to remember it.

**Q: If you had one message for students,**



**what would it be?**

A: Enthusiasm is key. My best memories of classes were all from teachers that enjoyed teaching the subjects they taught.

**Q: What do you wish other people knew about Seneca Valley?**

A: More people should know that Seneca Valley offers many different paths for students to take for the career path that suits them best. ■





## VAPING TOOLKIT/DRUG TESTING

Seneca Valley now has at-home vaping toolkits available for parent/guardian purchase at the District Administration Offices (124 Seneca School Rd., Harmony) at \$10 per kit, cash or check (made out to SVSD). You can also buy them online at \$15 per kit: [Prevention Programs - CANDLE, Inc. \(candleinc.org\)](https://www.candleinc.org).

Additionally, if you have a child in grades 7-12 who is not in the random drug testing pool due to parking, activities or athletic participation, you can still place them in the random pool at any time during the school year. This voluntary testing is available through your child's school office. Please note that should your student test positive to the voluntary test, that information will be provided to you for immediate action with assistance by the District.

### 3 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA AND VAPING

We all would love for kids not to smoke now or in the future. The reality is that some high school students, middle school students, and even some younger kids vape using e-cigarettes.

Many parents are convinced that their child has never used such devices, nor ever will. How could they? Hasn't it been drilled into their heads how bad smoking is for people?

Many teens have said they indeed use e-cigarettes, and their parents are unaware of this.

A survey of parents provides some [interesting data about parents' beliefs when it comes to their children and vaping](#). Here are a few of the findings:

1. 4 out of 5 parents believe their children are clear on the risks of vaping.
2. Nearly Half of the parents report that they think they would definitely know if their child was vaping.
3. Most parents do not think their children vape.

[In reality, many young people do not know about the risks of vaping](#). Several investigations have shown this to be the case. For example, studies find that many youth believe that water vapor is inhaled when vaping and yet it is actually an aerosol mist. This aerosol is loaded with microscopic particles that damage lung parenchyma.

The fact that nearly half of parents think they would definitely know if their child was vaping is a testament to our wishful thinking. Plenty of teens have strong relationships with their parents but still hide the fact that they vape from them.

One reason vaping can go under one's radar is that the fruity scent of vaping can be mistaken for gum or candy, if it is smelled at all.

So now, let's relate this to social media and productive conversation topics we can have with our children or students.



1. Social media has contributed to the current vaping epidemic. In [Screenagers Under The Influence](#), we see the ways social media contributed, including how companies like JUUL paid influencers to do posts with their products without saying they were being paid. There are many other examples as well.
2. Social media can help people change behaviors by tapping into the power of accountability. In this way, social media can help people quit vaping.
3. Social media can be a significant trigger to wanting to vape. Many adolescents say that when they are on social media, they see others vaping, making them want to do the same.

Questions to get the conversation started:

1. Do you think social media has influenced your views or attitudes toward vaping? How so?
2. Have you ever seen anyone vaping on social media or in real life? How did it make you feel?
3. Do you think it is important for companies to disclose when they are paying influencers to promote their products on social media? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever seen someone use social media as a tool to help them change an unwanted behavior?

Article provided by [Screenagers](#) ■





- Teacher Nominations - WTAE-TV is launching a Teacher of the Month recognition program for the 2023-24 school year. Each month, from September through May, a teacher will be selected from the many deserving submissions that they receive. The selected Teacher of the Month will receive a \$1000 credit to donorschoose.org, a crowd-sourcing page for classroom project/program funding. In addition, Pittsburgh's Action News 4 will feature that teacher and their story (and possibly a surprise school visit) during a news broadcast, as well as social media. Nomination information can be found at [www.wtae.com](http://www.wtae.com).
- The FBI Pittsburgh has opened applications for the 2023 FBI Teen Academy. To apply, visit: [Pittsburgh Teen Academy Application 2023 – FBI](#)
- All students in Pennsylvania public schools, including Seneca Valley, will once again have access to **free breakfast for the 2023-24 school year**, regardless of family income. Encourage your student(s) to stop for a full breakfast or various grab-and-go items. And new for the 2023-24 school year, families who qualify for reduced meals will now be able to receive lunch for free. If you think you qualify, please apply to receive this benefit and return it to the Seneca Valley Administration Office with attention to Faye Nelson. We encourage you to fill out a Free & Reduced-Price School Meals Application as many programs are connected to your child(ren)'s eligibility. Applications can be found at [www.svsd.net/FreandReduced](http://www.svsd.net/FreandReduced).



- SV Backpack Flyers - Flyers are updated frequently and feature information on student and community events/activities, including Cranberry Township's upcoming Puppy Plunge and Pumpkin Festival. Learn more at [Backpack Flyers / Backpack Flyers \(svsd.net\)](#).
- Healthy habits - SV's Health Services Department would like to remind everyone to eat well, sleep well, stay hydrated and wash hands frequently. Additionally, they ask that you please stay home or keep your child home when sick, and for 24 hours after fever is gone without medication or 24 hours without vomiting/diarrhea. Thank you!
- Seneca Valley residents 62 years of age or older are invited to apply to become a member of the Seneca Valley School District Gold Card Club. Membership entitles card holders to attend home athletic events, music, dramatic and other school productions. To apply for a gold card, please visit [Parents/Community / Gold Card Club \(svsd.net\)](#).
- Reality Tour is an accessible substance prevention program that delivers information to get parent and child on the same page.
  - [Substance Abuse Prevention for Parents - CANDLE, Inc. \(candleinc.org\)](#)
- [Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!](#)
- [Drive for SV! Sign-up bonuses are now being offered.](#)
- Join the SV Team! [Watch here](#) or visit [www.svsd.net/HumanResources](http://www.svsd.net/HumanResources) to learn more and apply.
- Visit [Niche](#) to view SV rankings ■

## FYI

### Back-to-School Resources

Welcome back, students! Taking the time to adjust to school schedules is an important step toward creating healthy habits. August is National Wellness Month, providing an opportunity to focus on self-care and fostering a positive mindset.

The Seneca Valley School District is committed to supporting and growing the whole child. In addition to academics, we understand that students have a wide variety of mental wellness and support needs. In many cases, support provided through district programs are able to meet the needs of our students.

Our school psychologists, school counselors, behavioral specialists, school administrators, and Youth Education Support Services (YESS) teams in each building support students' well-being. School counselors provide academic,

social/emotional and career services for our students. It is their goal to enhance the learning process and create a culture of college and career readiness for all.

Sometimes additional support beyond those provided by school staff are

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices.

The 988 Lifeline team is here for you at any time – day or night. Call, text, or chat and get the emotional support you need. ■

beneficial. Our school staff can provide referrals to appropriate resources.

To learn more, see additional information below. For a list of mental health services available for Seneca Valley students, click [here](#).





care solace.

# It's okay to ask for help

Care Solace connects students, staff, and their families to care. **At no cost to you, Care Solace will quickly and confidentially find available mental health and substance use providers matched to your needs.**

Find the right help at the right time.

## 24/7/365 Multilingual support

A multilingual team is available 24/7/365 to help you understand options, call providers on your behalf, and schedule an appointment.

## Care regardless of insurance

Connect to care with any coverage including Medicaid, Medicare, and sliding scale options for those without insurance.

## Easy access to care

Use Care Match, the self-serve website, to find a provider or services on your own.

Please note: Care Solace is not an emergency response service or mental health services provider. In the event of a life threatening emergency, call 9-1-1 or the National Suicide Hotline 9-8-8.

Call (888) 515-0595  
or go to  
[caresolace.com/](https://caresolace.com/)





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- Nurse Practitioners
- Nurses



## General Support

- Interpreters
- Guides
- Data Entry & Much More!



## Butler, PA

November 11-12, 2023

Butler Intermediate High

551 Fairgrounds Rd.

Butler, PA 16001

*"To prevent pain and alleviate suffering by providing free, quality healthcare to those in need."*

*- RAM's Mission*

**FOR MORE INFO: [RAMUSA.ORG](http://RAMUSA.ORG) | 865.579.1530**





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- \* Before and after school program!
- \* Operates 7:00 - 9:00AM or 3:45 - 6:00PM
- \* Specifically designed for Seneca Valley families
- \* Starts First Day of School - August 22, 2023
- \* Students play games, work on homework, make new friends, & more!
- \* Visit [cranberrytownship.org/kidsclub](http://cranberrytownship.org/kidsclub) to learn more



• CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP •  
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**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**9:00AM-10:30AM**

**11:00AM-12:30PM**

**PRE-REGISTRATION AND CURRENT RABIES  
VACCINATION DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED**



**REGISTER  
ONLINE**

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