

TYNOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE TYRONE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



HOME OF THE GOLDEN EAGLES

TAHS GRADUATE AND PSU PROFESSOR TO DELIVER 2025 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Dr. Joseph Houck, a 2004 Tyrone graduate, has been selected as the Commencement Speaker for the Tyrone Area High School Class of 2025. He grew up in Seven Stars and is the eldest son of Brian and Patty (Getz) Houck, both of whom also graduated from TAHS in 1979 and 1978, respectively. His younger brother, Aaron, graduated from TAHS in 2006.

While a high school student, Joe distinguished himself academically, becoming a member of the National Honor Society and graduating with highest honors. He also thrived in the fine arts, performing in spring musicals and playing in marching, concert, and jazz bands, culminating in his selection for Region III Band in 2004. Kris Laird, a current member of the School Board, served as the band director at TAHS while Joe was a student. He remarked, "As a student in the Tyrone Band program, Joe exemplified hard work, dedication, teamwork and character—all traits that he carried into his education and career—earning him the accolades and recognition for his accomplishments and contributions. It was no surprise to me to see he was selected as the 2025 Commencement Speaker, and I am proud to have had the opportunity to play a small role in his time at Tyrone High School."

After graduating in 2004, Joe enrolled at Juniata College, focusing on chemistry. He graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, complemented by a secondary emphasis in Education. During his time at Juniata, he engaged in various undergraduate research initiatives, including the synthesis of derivatives of the antibacterial agent triclosan and the exploration of innovative metal complexes involving pyrazole N-oxides. Additionally, he worked for Science in Motion, an outreach program that provides laboratory supplies and equipment to local schools. His summers were spent conducting undergraduate research at both the University of Virginia and Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic.

Joe returned to the University of Virginia for graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. in Chemistry. His research focused on medicinal chemistry, where he integrated organic synthesis with pharmacology to create compounds that inhibit sphingosine kinases, proteins crucial for cell growth and implicated in cancer progression.

After earning his doctorate in 2013, he took on a teaching role in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Maryland, College Park. There, he taught lectures for Organic Chemistry I and II, as well as General Bioanalytical Chemistry Lab courses. In recognition of his commitment to enhancing student success, he was named an Elevate Fellow in 2015, tasked with redesigning the laboratory course to boost student engagement and implement electronic laboratory notebooks. His teaching excellence was acknowledged by the University of Maryland College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences in 2015 when he received the Dean's Outstanding Lecturer Award.

Joe and his wife, Emma, decided to return to the area after the birth of their first child, to be closer to family. In the Fall of 2016, he accepted a position at The Pennsylvania State University, where he currently serves as an Associate Teaching Professor and Assistant Department Head for Undergraduate Curriculum in the Chemistry Department. He has taught general and organic

chemistry courses on campus and developed online materials for general chemistry lecture and lab offered at Penn State's World Campus. His research interests are in chemical education and how the grading method in a course impacts learning outcomes, student motivation, and attitudes. With the help of a recently-awarded Opportunity Grant from the Office of Faculty Affairs, Joe hopes to publish results in the coming months.

At Penn State, Joe received a Teaching Innovation Award in 2022 to introduce specifications grading in

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Joseph Houck, Ph.D.
TAHS Class of 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Another school year in the books! As the 2024-25 school year closes, we reflect on the last 12 months and the ways in which we continue to change. Each year brings a sense of accomplishment, and we pause to reflect on this; however, the pause is only momentary because our return for a new year is only three, short months away and there is much to prepare in that time. As the school year concludes, we rest easy knowing that students have made progress and relationships have been fostered.

In this issue, we feature our commencement speaker, Dr. Joseph Houck, TAHS Class of 2004, and welcome him back to TAHS to celebrate a milestone for the Class of 2025. Our tradition of inviting alumni speakers to address the graduating classes is one that we are proud to continue, and we hope that this practice provides our seniors with the confidence to know that they have been provided with a solid foundation on which to succeed.

We also honor four retirees for their dedicated and loyal service to the Tyrone Area School District. These staff members have touched the lives of so many and we wish them all of the best in their retirement! Although we will replace the positions that these staff members fill, we can never replace the stories and memories that we have for each of these individuals.

I would like to thank the Tyrone community for the support of our students and staff. We have much for which to be proud and without your involvement and commitment, we could not provide such a successful educational program. Looking ahead, I am excited about the many possibilities for another productive year in 2025-26.

I hope that you find the contents of this publication interesting and informative. If you have comments or questions regarding any of this material or suggestions for future articles, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 814-684-0710, Extension 4137 or email sjwoomer@tyrone.k12.pa.us.



Leslie Estep
Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNIZES STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE



Alivia Anderson, Senior Class Student Board Representative and Rose Black, School Board President.

During the Regular Session meeting in May, the Tyrone Area School Board recognized Senior Alivia Anderson for her contributions to the monthly school board meetings over the last two years. She served as Junior Class Student Board Representative in 2023-24 and Senior Class Student Board Representative in 2024-25.

Thank you, Alivia!

WHO'S NEW AT TASD

- Samuel Grieco—Crew Custodian
- Chris Owlett—Groundskeeper
- Reilly Ronan—Jr. High Assistant Softball Coach
- Matthew Sharer—Varsity Assistant Softball Coach
- Andrew Waite—Crew Custodian
- Jason Wilson—Varsity Assistant Football Coach



TYRONE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT Board of Education

- Rose A. Black, President William D. Lash, Vice President
- Brian L. Bressler, James R. Brokenshire
- Cathy L. Harlow, Heidi J. Howard
- Kris E. Laird, Jeffery S. Long, Gunter Volders

Administration

- Leslie A. Estep, **Superintendent of Schools**
- Kristen N. Pinter, **Director of Curriculum & Instruction PreK-12**
- Faith M. Swanson, **Business Administrator**
- Travis M. Crowell, **Director of Physical Plant/Transportation**
- Jessica L. Anderson, **Director of Special Education**
- Kourtney L. Klock, **School Psychologist**
- Chad E. Packer, **High School Principal**
- Shane M. Cowher, **Middle School Principal**
- Kristin N. Musselman, **Elementary School Principal**
- Ashton E. Shultz, **Assistant Elementary School Principal**
- Glen R. Drager, **Director of Technology**

Deans of Students

- Jessica L. Black-ES, Amy N. Fleck-MS, Lucas D. Rhoades-HS

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Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TyroneASD>

It is the policy of the Tyrone Area School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504, and Title VI. Please direct questions about this policy to Leslie Estep, Superintendent of Schools, at 814.684.0710, Extension 4123.

www.tyrone.k12.pa.us

Commencement Speaker continued from cover

organic chemistry and to integrate biological concepts into the curriculum. His teaching excellence has been recognized with several awards, including the 2021 Priestley Teaching Prize from the Chemistry Department and the 2022 C.I. Noll Award for Teaching Excellence from the Eberly College of Science.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, from 2019-2023 Joe served as a college mentor for the United States National Chemistry Olympiad, based in Washington, D.C. In this role, he organized lectures, laboratory sessions, and both practical and theoretical exams to select the top four students to represent the USA at the International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO). He traveled with the team to Paris, France in 2019 and Zurich, Switzerland in 2023. (For three years the IChO was held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) He is also an active volunteer in the American Chemical Society, contributing to the Central Pennsylvania Local Section, the Middle Atlantic Region Board, and the National Younger Chemists Committee.

In 2023, Joe was recognized by Juniata College with the Young Alumni Achievement Award, which honors individuals who have excelled in their careers within the first 15 years after college graduation.

Joe resides in Pennsylvania Furnace with his wife of 14 years, Emma, and their four children, Lewis, Caroline, Grant, and Laurel, who are nine, seven, four, and one year old, respectively. During his time in graduate school, Joe took up running as a hobby and successfully completed a half-marathon in 2023. He enjoys board games, hiking, biking, and chauffeuring his kids to their various activities. Additionally, he is an active member and Sunday School teacher at State College Alliance Church, and when given the opportunity, he plays his French horn.

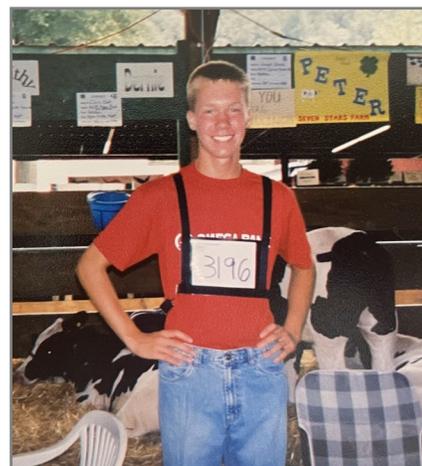


The Houck Family
Front (left to right): Grant, Caroline
Back: Lewis, Emma, Joe, and Laurel



Photo left: While a student at TAHS, Joe Houck excelled in the music program, participating in marching, concert, and jazz bands. He secured a seat in District VI Band in both 2003 and 2004, and also in Region III Band in 2004. Taken from the 2004 Eagle Yearbook, this photo captures Joe proudly displaying his band uniform, along with his trumpet, French horn, and mellophone.

Photo right: In addition to his academic and musical interests, Joe Houck was an active member of the Warriors Mark 4-H Club for nine years during his youth. In this image, he stands ready to show dairy beef at the Huntingdon County Fair.



50 YEAR FLASHBACK TAHS CLASS OF 1975



The members of the Tyrone Area High School Class of 1975 will reunite in mid-September to celebrate their 50th graduation anniversary. The following activities are planned:

- **Friday, September 19:** A tour of TAHS at 3:15 p.m. followed by a gathering at Reservoir Park, Pavilion #1, at 4:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, September 20:** A visit to the Tyrone Historical Society (Railroad Museum) at 2:30 p.m. and an evening of dinner, music, and socializing at the Bull Pen starting at 4:30 p.m.

For more details, please visit the T ASD website at www.tyrone.k12.pa.us, click on the "About Us" tab and select "Alumni."

If you wish to share class reunion details on the T ASD website, please send the information to cjblaska@tyrone.k12.pa.us.

The photo on the left, taken from the 1975 Eagle Yearbook, features the Senior Class Officers. In the front row (from left to right) are Mark Westley, Jody Wertz, Betsy Fasick, and Christel Barr. In the back row are Irvin Fink and Rebecca Yon.

TAMS/HS STUDENTS ADVANCE IN COMPETITIONS

At the time of this publication, the following students from Tyrone Area Middle/High School have advanced to state and/or national competitions during the 2024-25 school year—WAY TO GO!

ACADEMICS

Eagle Eye

- ✦ Kaylee Ettaro
- ✦ Dylan Ewing
- ✦ Carter Gwinn
- ✦ Landon Hamer
- ✦ Logan Harpster
- ✦ Makayla Howard
- ✦ Amara Jackson
- ✦ Olivia McMonagle
- Anna Myers
- ✦ Genevieve Naylor
- ✦ Carlie Nowlin
- ✦ Brayden Parsons
- ✦ Shiloh Price
- ✦ Billy Rudden
- Logan Rumberger
- ✦ Cooper Spicer
- ✦ Ben Walk
- ✦ Tyler Weston

Future Farmers of America

- ✦ Tyke Beck
- ✦ Paige Carper
- ✦ Andrew Escala

- Logan Harpster
- Lydia Meredith
- Logan Rumberger
- Clark Tuskovich

Future Farmers of America

- ✦ Aubrey Biter
- Caleb Biter
- John Eaken
- ✦ Cassidy Fleck
- ✦ Maverick Fleck*
- Janice Gilliland
- Gracie Graham
- Logan Harpster
- Nevaeh Hollabaugh
- ✦ Ryleigh Holmes
- ✦ Nora Hoy
- ✦ Paige Hoy
- Carlie Nowlin
- Reilly Rawlings
- ✦ Catie Sklenar
- Wyatt Walls
- ✦ Frances Weaver
- ✦ Remington Weaver*
- Bailey Woomer

- Sarah Zimmerman
- ✦ Tyrone Area FFA Chapter
- Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center**
- ✦ Alex Thompson
- Voice of Democracy**
- Nora Hoy

THE ARTS

Indoor Percussion

- Cooper Beck
- Makayla Briggs
- Raife Carroll
- Jackson Conrad
- Hannah Gabel
- Hunter Harpster
- Cole Hunter
- Evan Laird
- Logan Markel
- Reagan Markel
- Aden Miller
- Bentley Miller
- Riley Miller
- Judah Myers

- Rachel Pedersen
- Elijah Richardson
- Paige Riggelman
- Amberlyn Sherwin
- Alexander Sklenar
- Jesse Stewart
- Isaac Weber
- Lily Whited
- Cliff Wilson
- Emma Witkamp
- Peyton Wray

Indoor Guard

- Emma Connelly
- Jordyn Deck
- Piper DeStefano
- Cyrah Dively
- Lacie Geissinger
- Alexis Martinez
- Jaycilee Wance
- Raelynn Wance
- Miles Weber
- Lily Whited

ATHLETICS

Swimming

- ✦ Lucas Bonsell

Track and Field

- Alex Brumbaugh
- Sarah Chichester
- Aiden Detwiler
- Braleigh Flick
- Alayna Greene
- Seth Hoover
- Alyssa Houck
- Drew Irons
- Claire Lehman
- Kylee Nelson
- Dante Novak
- Tytus Novak
- Nicole Ramsey
- Logan Rumberger
- Tommy Sutt
- Caleb Whitby
- Lola Woomer
- Taylor Wrye

Wrestling

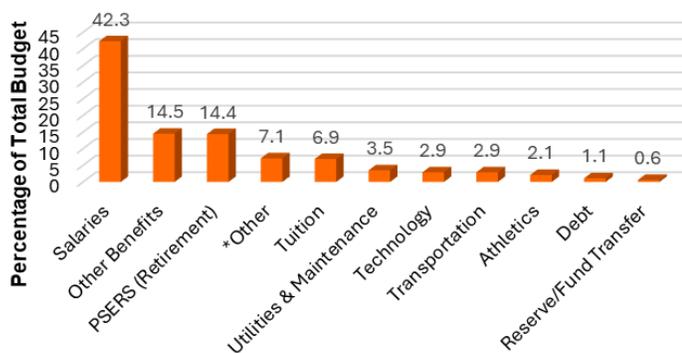
- Kyle Scott

✦ *National Competition*

*2024 Graduate

TASD 2025-26 PROPOSED BUDGET

2025-26 Budget Breakdown



*Other: Supplies, Equipment, IU Services, Field Trips, Professional Services, Etc.

2025-2026 Proposed Budget Facts

- Revenues total \$29,421,285
- Budgeted revenues represent an increase of 4.05% from 2024-25
- Expenditures total \$31,228,650
- Budgeted expenditures represent an increase of 6.95% from 2024-25
- Use of Fund Balance—\$1,807,364
- Millage rates proposed to increase to Act 1 Index of 5.6% for the 2025-26 year

FREE MEALS FOR CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER

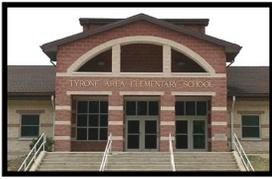


Once again this summer, the Tyrone Area School District will partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide free, healthy meals to children. There are no income or registration requirements. Meals are available to any child 18 and under. If you have questions or would like more information, please call 814-684-4240, Extension 3727.

Monday through Friday
June 4 – August 8
(Closed July 4)
Breakfast: 8:30 am – 9:30 am
Lunch: 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Tyrone Area Elementary School / 601 Clay Avenue
 Enter through cafeteria lobby at rear of building
 (No registration required)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS



TAES

At the Elementary School, students and staff members are busy wrapping up their learning for the 2024-2025 school year. Recently, all third and fourth graders completed their PSSA assessments and PreK through fourth grade students demonstrated their learning on end of year district assessments. In addition to testing, teachers and students are celebrating the end of another year with Fitness Friday walks around our campus and special classroom events and guest speakers. Our elementary students recently spent time learning from a former Tyrone student, Christine Andrews, as she read her recently published book and discussed the process of being an author.

In the final weeks of the school year, many grade levels will embark on field trips and all students will participate in the upcoming schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) end of year carnival. Additionally, our third and fourth graders are busy preparing to run, throw and jump at our annual Track and Field Day at the end of the month. Excited chatter in anticipation of these events can be heard throughout the hallways and cafeteria as the dates of these activities gets closer.

We know May is a very busy time of year, but also very fun and rewarding! Our students have made so many academic gains and shown so much personal growth in a year's time. We are so proud of them! We know that the families within our school community have spent many evenings and weekends assisting students as they completed assignments and prepared for upcoming assessments. We are so thankful for the dedication and commitment to our Elementary Golden Eagles!



TAMS

Spring is marked by a variety of learning activities for students at the middle school level, including field trips, projects, and a variety of fun events.

In March, sixth grade students visited the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center to learn about their program offerings. High school students from each career and technical program demonstrated aspects of their trade for our students. In April, seventh grade students took a trip to the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, where a park ranger explained the significance of September 11, 2001. Eighth grade students had the opportunity to attend education day at the Altoona Curve. In addition to trips, students worked on a variety of science projects. Mr. Whitting's science classes built rockets out of two liter soda bottles. Sixth grade science students discussed conserving our environment for Earth Day and decorated paper bags to donate to a local grocery store. Prior to Easter break, an instructional coach from Max Teaching visited our school to demonstrate engaging literacy strategies. He then spent an in-service day with our faculty training them on how to implement these strategies.

Middle school students will finish the year with many fun, interactive activities in May. Awards ceremonies will be held for students who have achieved very high levels of academic success. A carnival will be held for all students to enjoy. Finally, fifth and sixth grade students will compete in track and field days after Memorial Day to round out the school year.



TAHS

On April 16, 2025, Tyrone's ninth through twelfth grade students participated in another very successful Community Service Day. This event, which began in 2016, has been held every spring with the exception of 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The event is organized so that the students participate in community service clean-up projects in the morning, followed by an afternoon Spring Fling celebration with activities for the students to enjoy back at the High School, serving as a reward for their hard work. Ninth graders concentrated on cleaning up around the Tyrone Area School District campus, while students in grades 10-12 ventured into the community clean-up projects at locations such as Reservoir Park, the borough roller hockey rink, City Hotel Park, First Responders Park, Railroad Park, Park

Avenue Playground, the Municipal Building, and Grandview Cemetery. Their tasks included sweeping sidewalks, picking up litter, raking leaves, cleaning the cemetery, spreading mulch at two of the parks, cleaning borough police cars and general cleanup of the downtown area. Additionally, the annual Senior Safety Program Mock Crash and Mock Trial took place in April. This event took place in the back parking lot of the high school, with our local fire companies, AMED, the county coroner, local and state police all in attendance. The program provided seniors with a realistic view of a staged car accident, where fire departments conducted a mock rescue and AMED demonstrated emergency medical treatment. The coroner and police shared insights on the dangers of reckless and impaired driving, while a mock trial was also held to illustrate the legal ramifications of driving under the influence. Furthermore, the Tyrone Area High School Drama Club presented this year's production of *The Addams Family the Musical: School Edition* in April. The production received notable attention, with several cast members nominated for ISAAC Awards in five different categories. The ISAACs are sponsored by the Altoona Community Theatre to encourage and support excellence in high school musical theatre.

TASD BIDS A FOND FAREWELL TO RETIREES



Robert "Bub" Dick
TASD Chief School
Police Officer
23 Years of Service

By Shiloh Price, TAHS 9th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

For the past 23 years, the safety of students and staff at Tyrone Area High School has rested on the shoulders of a man so well-known and beloved by the school community that, just like an A-list celebrity, most students and staff members know him by just one name: Bub.

TAHS School Resource Officer Robert "Bub" Dick

was born and raised in Tyrone and graduated from Tyrone Area High School in 1981. A three-sport athlete, he played football, baseball, and track. Bub earned his famous nickname as a child because his father was also named Robert, so to avoid confusion, the younger Robert became "Bub," and the name stuck.

One of Bub's high school football teammates was Tyrone High School English Teacher Steve Everhart, who calls Bub one of the most reliable people he has ever met. "Bub was my strongest offensive lineman when we played football together. Our Offensive Line Coach Jim Butler summed up Bub as an athlete, but also as a police officer and friend, in this way: "If you ask Bub to run full-speed into a stone wall and knock it down, he'll knock it down. Then he'll get up, ignore his wounds, and ask, 'Was that good enough?'" Everhart said. "There are few people you can count on 100%— but Bub is one of them."

Bub knew from a young age that he wanted to be a police officer. "I thought it would be a good job, and I always wanted to help people," he said. After high school, he worked at Nelson House, a home for disabled adults in Spruce Creek, and Palamino's Pizza in Tyrone, while attending the police academy. Bub graduated from the IUP Police Academy in 1982 and fulfilled his childhood dream by becoming a Tyrone Borough Police Officer. He spent two years as a borough police officer but left law enforcement in 1984 for a job at the Tyrone paper mill, where the pay, benefits, and opportunities for advancement were better. "I liked my job as a police officer in Tyrone, but I needed to take care of my family, so I took a job at the mill," Bub said. At the mill, he worked his way up to foreman. But in 2002, when Bub saw an opportunity to return to law enforcement as a School Resource Officer at Tyrone Area High School, he applied right away.

"During the 1990s, the District worked collaboratively with the Tyrone Borough Police Department and an independent security firm to have police officers work within the District. However, this was mainly to provide security at after-school events. In the fall of 2000, in conjunction with a Safe Schools grant, the District hired its own police officers to be present in the schools during the school day. There was one police chief hired, with an additional part-time officer. Bub was appointed as a school police officer in the fall of 2002," said Tyrone Area School District Superintendent Leslie Estep.

"In an era when trust in public institutions is at an all-time low, and police officers are too often seen in a negative light, Officer Bub is the absolute ideal of what a law enforcement officer should be," said Tyrone Social Studies Teacher Todd Cammarata. "He has always been here to protect the students and staff and does not hesitate to do so when necessary, but I don't think he ever saw that as his only duty. Officer Bub never demanded respect from students just because of his badge, but instead earned it through kindness, inclusiveness, and a genuine concern for others."

As a trained police officer charged with upholding the law, Officer Bub is always prepared to do whatever it takes to keep students and staff safe. Standing six feet tall, with a deep, commanding voice and a strong physique, Bub certainly looks the part of an enforcer. "I remember meeting him when I was given my first tour of the school," said Special Education Teacher Staci Greenleaf. "I was intimidated by him at first, but once I got to know him, I realized how kind-hearted he was."

According to Bub, subduing or arresting students is his least favorite part of the job, but when necessary, students and staff know he'll act swiftly and professionally. "One of Officer Bub's most respected traits is his ability to move on from a situation without holding grudges. "Regardless of whatever situation occurred the day before, each day Officer Bub started with a fresh new start," TAHS Dean of Students Lucas Rhoades said.

Officer Bub also supervises a staff of about 15 part-time security guards and school crossing guards, who all speak highly of him as a colleague and supervisor. "Bub is a get-it-done guy. He is quick to respond, has a very honorable character, and is one of our best friends. He is a great guy with a great sense of humor. He is the type of guy where if you don't like him, something is wrong with you, not him," Crossing Guard Steve Hanczar said.

What makes Officer Bub such an outstanding school resource officer is his commitment to being a mentor and positive role model in the school. Tyrone alum and current substitute teacher Katrina Patton, a 2012 graduate, has had the unique perspective of knowing Bub as both a student and a colleague. "Transitioning from student to substitute teacher, Officer Bub has always been a constant at Tyrone. He starts every day by greeting each student and staff member by holding the door open, holding his fist out to bump, and having a big smile ready to wish them a great day. That will be the biggest thing missed, at least by me, is beginning every school day with that. He is someone you can talk to about anything, and he will always tell you, 'Just take it one day at a time,'" Patton said.

Tyrone Sophomore Madean Moore shared how Officer Bub helped her through a difficult time. "I was having such a rough day. I was crying and hyperventilating and had no idea who to talk to, so I went for a walk. Bub saw me in the hallway and asked me what was wrong. I told him that life was rough recently," Moore said. "He helped me realize that no matter what was happening in life, I had people in school that I could talk to and depend on. Every



Deborah Estright
TAES Music Teacher
15 Years of Service

By Amara Jackson, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

While some stumble upon teaching by pure accident, Tyrone Elementary School Music Teacher Debbie Estright said teaching was her calling in life. “My mom was a teacher, so seeing how much she loved her job made me want to teach as well. I have always loved music and singing and came from a very musical family,

so it seemed like a natural choice for me to share my love of music as a music teacher,” Estright said. She will retire at the end of this school year with 38 years of teaching experience and has been a valued member of the Tyrone Area School District family since 2010.

In addition to being a music teacher, Estright has also been a dedicated member of the Allegheny Chorale, and its conductor since 2015, when she took over for another former T ASD teacher, Laura Harris. Fellow T ASD Music Teacher Brittany Hall remarked on how much of a difference Estright has made to the community through her leadership in the Allegheny Chorale. “As the conductor of the Allegheny Chorale, she uses her gifts to allow adults to keep singing long after their time at school is done. She believes that music is for everyone in our community, and she shares the joy of music with everyone from ages pre-K

through adulthood. Through her example as a teacher, performer, and conductor, she demonstrates to all that music is a gift to be enjoyed throughout an entire lifetime,” Hall said.

When asked about the mark Estright had left on her students, Hall only had good things to say. “Mrs. Estright teaches music with passion and joy. Her students love her class and leave with smiles on their faces. She teaches with the philosophy that music is for every child, and she works hard to ensure that every student is included, welcomed, and respected,” said Hall.

Colleague Robert Drager said that one thing everyone knows and loves about Mrs. Estright is her involvement in the Christmas and spring music assemblies. “She works to organize the elementary school’s holiday and spring concerts, which bring the entire school together for song and seasonal music. These concerts are highlights of the school year,” Drager said.

After 15 years of working for TAES, she has decided to enjoy her retirement by traveling with her husband, spending more time with family, finding more time to read, and giving back to the community by doing some volunteer work. While Estright is looking forward to her retirement, she fondly looks back at her time at Tyrone. “I will miss the connections I have made through teaching. Connections with students, most especially, as well as connections I have made with my colleagues at the Elementary School. Every day, I am truly grateful that I get to share my love of music with my students,” Estright said.

Estright wishes to leave her colleagues with some words of wisdom. “Every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day, so look for the good.”

Robert Dick Retirement continued from page 6

single day after that, Bub checked on me and made sure I was thinking positively, feeling good, and safe.”

One thing Officer Bub does exceptionally well is make students feel like they belong without even saying a word. For more than 20 years, every Tyrone student has known the routine: Bub stands in the lobby or outside the school each morning, greeting everyone he sees with his signature fist bump. “I never really ever talked to him, but I knew him,” Junior Nate Erikson said. “Just being able to walk in the door every morning, with him greeting me and everyone else with a fist bump, was just awesome.”

At a time when inclusion is sometimes unfairly cast in a negative light, Officer Bub embodies it every day. “Officer Bub went out of his way every single day to meet students with special needs at the cafeteria with a fist bump and casual conversation. If they were late, he would joke with them and get everyone laughing. He sure knew how to put a smile on their face and make every single student feel appreciated and known in Tyrone,” said Tyrone High School Special Education Teacher Shannon Davis. Bub never shows favorites among the students and treats everyone with the same respect and humility. “One of my favorite things about Officer Bub is how *seen* he made me feel. He was nice when no one else was, and he was always there to support the kids of Tyrone. He cares about every student, no matter their background, and he never fails to make the whole school laugh,” Sophomore Sophia Witkamp said.

In 2008, he even stepped out of his comfort zone to join the Tyrone Drama Club as Officer Krupke in *West Side Story*. “While Bub never blinked an eye when performing his daily duties and always seemed comfortable with what was expected of him, this musical almost did him in,” said former Social Studies Teacher Cummins McNitt. “I’ve never seen him as nervous as he was on those two nights. Backstage, he paced and doubted himself—but when he stepped onto the stage and the audience erupted in applause, all that slipped away. He became the star he was destined to be.”

Officer Bub was also the subject of one of *Eagle Eye’s* first April Fools’ Day stories, which claimed he was a former professional wrestler who nearly made it big in a match against Hulk Hogan. “I still, to this day, have people who think that story was real,” Bub said with a laugh.

As he heads into retirement, Bub hopes his successor will continue to lead with kindness, serve as a role model, and build relationships with students and staff. He says he’ll miss the school that has felt like one big family to him, and he’s grateful for all the support he’s received over the years. “I have no regrets,” Bub said.

Bub says he plans to spend more time with his wife and stepdaughter in Tyrone, enjoying some well-earned porch sitting with his two rescue dogs. Retirement will also give him the chance to visit his stepson and grandchildren in Asheville, North Carolina, and his son and soon-to-be daughter-in-law in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Rhonda Hocutt
T ASD Student Assistance
Program Coordinator
23 Years of Service

By Aidan Luther, TAHS 9th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

Rhonda Hocutt has served in a critical behind-the-scenes role as the Tyrone Student Assistance Program (SAP) Coordinator, helping thousands of Tyrone students in need. While her face is not as recognizable to students as many of their teachers, Hocutt has been the important link between students in need and support services from the school and outside

agencies. After 22 years of serving the T ASD community, Hocutt will retire at the end of the 2024-25 school year.

The Student Assistance Program is a voluntary intervention program that helps students and families in need. The program provides access to professional counselors and support for any student in the Tyrone Area School District. "Working in SAP is a real eye-opener," said Hocutt, "There are so many kids with so many needs. The fact that I may have had an impact on the lives of some of these kids is humbling."

Hocutt said that when she first took the job, she had a young child at home and was looking for a part-time job. "Before I came to Tyrone, I taught post-secondary education at the GACTC and liked being in the schools. The SAP Coordinator position met both those needs for me."

Students can be referred to the SAP by anyone in the school community—teachers, staff, parents, or peers.

When a concern for a student is brought to her attention, Hocutt works collaboratively with the SAP team at all three Tyrone schools to match the student and/or family to the services they need. "Ms. Hocutt has made my job easier by adding counselors to support students in their struggles," said TAHS Guidance Counselor Nicole Taneyhill.

Taneyhill said that the guidance counselors are responsible for approximately 300 students each, so when a student is processing grief or loss, or is experiencing a significant family issue, it may be beneficial for that student to have a counselor to meet with on a regularly scheduled basis. Hocutt's job is to make arrangements for students to meet with a therapist on a longer-term basis. She is especially good at matching students with the right people and doing everything she can to reduce the red tape of bureaucracy when dealing with private and public agencies.

Middle School Counselor Matt Kimberlin has nothing but praise for Hocutt's work and dedication. "Mrs. Hocutt has taken on a large responsibility that takes the weight off so many staff members," Kimberlin said. "Truly, we are scrambling, knowing her time with us is limited and worried that we won't be able to replace her and the quality job she has done for so many years."

Hocutt said she already has plans for what she will do after she retires. "I plan to spend more time with my son, daughter-in-law, and two grandkids who live in New Hampshire," Hocutt said. She also said that she and her husband will travel. They have already scheduled a Viking River Cruise on the Danube River starting in Budapest, Hungary, and ending in Passau, Germany.



Jolene Umholtz
T ASD Speech and
Language Pathologist
5 Years of Service

By Kaylee Ettaro, TAHS 11th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

Speech therapist Jolene Umholtz will retire at the end of the 2024-25 school year with 38 years of experience.

Umholtz is a Tyrone Area High School alumna who spent most of her career as a speech therapist in the Altoona Area School District. She returned to her roots in 2020, and for the last five years, she has

worked with students at Tyrone Area Elementary School.

Umholtz assists students with speech delays or who need extra help with speaking and pronunciation. With 38 years of experience as a speech therapist, Umholtz said she has learned so much from teachers and has been blessed to work with them for many years. "One of the many lessons I have learned is the importance of working as a team," Umholtz said.

Tyrone Preschool Teacher Lillian Miller has worked with Umholtz for the past few years to help her students with speech and language difficulties. "Jolene is so full of knowledge and always available to answer any questions I have about our shared students or speech in general. Working with her has been a pleasure, and I will miss seeing her every day," Miller said.

Umholtz said she loves her students and enjoys working with them to improve their communication skills. "Jolene has always been a good team player. She truly cares about everyone that she comes in contact with," Preschool Teacher Amber Creamer said.

Umholtz said she is looking forward to retirement; most of all, she is excited to have more time to visit her family. Umholtz and her husband, Rich, have two children, Seth and Paige, who are also TAHS alumni.

While it will be hard to say goodbye to the students and staff, Umholtz said that it is the right time for her. "For years, my colleagues who were retiring would tell me, 'You just know' when it is time. My husband and I are empty nesters and miss our children who live in Virginia and Florida. I wanted to be able to visit them any time I wanted and stay as long as I wanted. Retirement gives me that option," Umholtz said.



Congratulations TAHS Class of 2025!

"The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's determination." ~Tommy Lasorda

