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Fox Tales

Quarterly



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Students and Graduates Named AP Scholars

A total of 206 current Fox Chapel Area High School students and 2025 graduates were named Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars by the College Board for demonstrating college-level achievement on the AP examinations taken in May 2025. The College Board recognizes three levels of achievement based on the number of courses and exams.



Occuring annually in May, Advanced Placement exams are administered by the College Board in 40 courses. Students have the opportunity to submit their exam scores to an institution of their choice for college credit.

The following graduates/students qualified for the AP Scholar with Distinction award by earning an average score of 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams: 2025 graduates Omar Al-bataineh, Ainsley Anderson, Murugan Ayyanar, Mikhail Bagrov, Katherine Banyas, David Black, Adelyn Bursick, Rebecca Chang, Isabella Cheatham, Milo Chiu, Malik Choset, Nicholas Clump, Ava Condron, Anna Delale O'Connor, Noelle Dick, Maya DiPasquale, Olivia Dugan, Reed Echnat, Claire Feczko, Brooke Fenton, Benjamin Fiedler, Gabrielle Generett, Tyler Goldstein, Gabriella Hample, Chase Hendren, Alaina Hershey, Owen Howell, Rayna Huang, Moonyoung Hwang, Etash Jhanji, Patton Johnson, Madeleine Jones, Nicole Kang, Alex Kim, Anna Kitner, Jonah Kline, Grace Kovach, Arnim Kuchhal, Joseph Kuhns, Charles Larsen, Weidi Li, Nathan Mackey, Devon McDonald, Noah Miller, Wyatt Muller, Zhana Neumann, Kyle Ong, Aidan Ortz, Pierce Osterholm, Sangyon Park, Hannah Parker, Rachel Pegher, Ava Persichetti, Francesco Pistella, Varnujah Rengaramanujam Kanagaraj, Josiah Rivera, Hyunoh Ro, Addison Rossi, Margaret Rusche, Varad Sant, Keegan Scanlon, Ezra Shensa, Caroline Slember, Paige Solomon, Sophie Thorne, Samuel Ummer, Rohit Velankar, Colette Walter, Mya Wilson, Caterina Wu, Timothy Ye, Owen Zaremby, Luca Zgurzynski, JinLiang Zhang, and Yuqi Zhou; and 2025-2026 seniors Maya Agarwal, Marin Airik, Arman Alborzi, Prachi Behal, Karsten Buchert, Xing Carlough, Catherine Conway, Michael Costello, Atia DiGioia, Laila Golla, Charles Hahl, Priscila Hayetian, Riley Hemingray, Aavree Hill, Vesta Homayoun, Zinta Jacob, Alan Jiang, Eloise Johnson, Ulyana Kubini, Joanna Li, Steven Li, Korra Littwin, Max Melocchi, Zehra Ozkaya, Joshua Shah, Mason Shelkey-Bray, Joseph Shin, Rodrigo Silva, Lorenzo Smiraglio, Theodore Tedesco, Nikolaj Vavpetic, Ryan Wang, Ian Wellman, Michael Winter, and Helen Xu.

The following graduates/students qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor award by earning an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams: 2025 graduates Milan Golla, Lindsay Gould, Madeline Grimsley, Natalie Hanlon, Francesca Iasella, Nathaniel Klamut, Blake Kuhn, Joshua Lowe, Sarah Michalak, Alina Minturn, Aniket Mohnot, Vanessa Perez Milano, Rebecca Poole, Alyssa Quackenbush, Caleb Shirk, Jane Stone, Gianna Tavolario, Luke Tsai, Asher White, and Altai Yumak; 2025-2026 seniors Alana Calig, Molly Classen, Greta Erdner, Mikayla Feder, Ori Goldin, Eduardo Guirola Diaz, Zelia Herald, Nora Kelley, Gavin Lynch, James Manges, Sabina Mantella, Eugenia Mettenburg, August Mierwald, Allison Milgrub, Dayna Mullan, Faye Muller, Sophia Nguansiri, Gabriel Nosik, Mira Owens, Sarah Rached, Zachary Rubin, Aspen Smouse, Emma Srodes, Emilia Sutkowski, Yash Tahiliani, Umayma Trebak, Joseph Weber, and Ava Weiner; and 2025-2026 juniors Nadre Digbohou and Leonidas Vandapel.

The following graduates/students qualified for the AP Scholar award by receiving scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams: 2025 graduates Claire Auffenberg, Matthew Begg, Emilia Boleng, Zoean Chittur, Everett Clanton, Alison Clark, Christian Dantey, Marina Dunham, Kennedy Murton, Melisa Pietz, Finnigan Saunders, Avery Schapira, Joseph Seifried, Aidan Stein, Maria Stiger, and Andrea Wang; 2025-2026 seniors Maeve Beresford, Maxwell Bruno, Victor Burkhardt, Anya Butler, Lily Cannon, Rocco Didomenico, Samantha Dinh, Elisabeth Hamilla, Keitaro Inada, Sophia Jacobs, Avery Jones, Warren Kerstetter, Daniel Kidane, Bailey Mack, Gavin Nguyen, Marilyn Pekarcik, Charlotte Rattner, Benjamin Sun, Robert Svenson, Elizabeth Thomas, Samuel Troutman, Anais Wang, and Elliott Willison; and 2025-2026 juniors Grant Fenton, Zhanyu Jiang, Rachel Kim, Oussama Lahham, Ayush Patel, Rayyan Saidi, and Param Thawani.

Advanced Placement exams are graded on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest. Most of the nation's four-year colleges and universities award credit and/or advanced placement for qualifying exam scores. Every year, AP examinations are offered in a wide variety of subject areas, each consisting of multiple choice and free-response (essay or problem-solving) questions.

Interested in taking an AP course? Browse FCAHS's offerings here: https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1695130513/fcasdedu/iyu2bt6ahscxt1inp8ye/APCoursesOffered.pdf

Students Named National Merit Semifinalists and Commended Students



The Fox Chapel Area High School National Merit Semifinalists for this year are, from left to right, Helen Xu, Alan Jiang, Yash Tahiliani, Eloise Johnson, Michael Costello, Gavin Lynch, Ulyana Kubini, Rodrigo Silva, Joanna Li, and Riley Hemingray.

Ten Fox Chapel Area High School seniors have been designated as National Merit Semifinalists and 17 have been named Commended Students in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program. The Semifinalists from Fox Chapel Area High School are Michael Costello, Riley Hemingray, Alan Jiang, Eloise Johnson, Ulyana Kubini, Joanna Li, Gavin Lynch, Rodrigo Silva, Yash Tahiliani, and Helen Xu. The Commended Students from Fox Chapel Area High School are Marin Airik, Arman Alborzi, Tobias Conklin, Greta Erdner, Laila Golla, Charles Hahl, Nora Kelley, Steven Li, James Manges, Max Melocchi, August Mierwald, Dayna Mullan, Zehra Ozkaya, Zachary Rubin, Joshua Shah, Joseph Shin, and Ian Wellman.



The National Merit Scholarhship was established in 1955 and has been continuously dedicated to supporting academically high-achieving high school students across the country.

All of these students were selected based on their 2024 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) scores. Each year, more than 1.3 million juniors complete the PSAT/NMSQT and are automatically entered in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Approximately 16,000 advance to become Semifinalists and about 34,000 are Commended. The Semifinalists represent less than one percent of the nation's high school seniors and the Commended Students scored in the top 5%. A Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT or ACT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. Semifinalists must also participate in school and community activities, demonstrate leadership abilities, and receive other awards and honors. The Commended Students are recognized for their exceptional academic promise.

The Semifinalists now have the opportunity to advance to the Finalist level and compete for some 6,930 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly $26 million to be offered in the spring of 2026.

Girls' Cross Country Wins Kiski Invitational

The Fox Chapel girls' cross country team won the Kiski Invitational after winning a tiebreaker over Shady Side Academy. The boys team placed second (out of 21 teams) with Michael Costello, Asher Eckel and Nolan Gwin placing in the top ten.

The top contenders from the girls' team were, from left to right: Marin Airik, Claire Loludice, Sydney Kimmons, Ella Shevchuk, Ceci Ressler, Maeve Sherry, Iris Minturn, Bridget Hemingray, and Brynn Gamblin.



Advice for Freshmen

By Laila Golla

The transition from middle school to FCAHS can be stressful and overwhelming; as a senior, I wanted to share some of my tips to break it down and hopefully make the transition process a little bit easier!

1. Build connections, especially with your QRT teachers! They are very valuable mentors to have as you navigate through the school — they are aware of the many opportunities, resources, and supports offered here! It's important to remember that their ability to help you depends on your willingness to have conversations and ask for guidance. Allow them to get to know you and your interests because the more you do so, the more you will succeed.



Fox Chapel Area High School is a big place compared to middle school, and that can make it intimidating.

2. Be yourself! I know it's easy to want to fit in, but that will make your overall experience in high school much more difficult. It is impossible to mask yourself all throughout classes and interactions, and trying to do so will interfere with your true happiness. Surround yourself with people who make you feel loved and worthy!

3. Get involved! I know it seems like everyone says this, but our school offers students so many clubs, teams, and opportunities for you to explore. Club Week is over, but you can always join clubs by reaching out to club leads or sponsors, plus there will be another club showcase in the spring semester. Part of what makes our school so special is its extracurricular opportunities that allow us to deepen our passions and interests, and I definitely recommend trying new things! You can always decide later that it's not for you!

4. Don't be afraid to take risks! It sounds cliche, but high school is a time to embrace new things, even if we don't know the results. It means taking a class that challenges you, joining a team or sport that you may not have played before, talking to new people at lunch, and stepping out of your comfort zone!

5. Know your resources! We have many supports at our school that I definitely urge all of us to know and leverage for our success. Visiting Mr. Morley's room for the Math Help Center, talking to your guidance counselors about what you need help with, and accessing the Foxes Burrow if you find yourself in need of supplies are just a couple of ways you can use your resources to strengthen your high school experience!

Marching Band Places First at Yough PIMBA Competition

The Fox Chapel Area High School Marching Band won first place in the Class AA division at the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association (PIMBA) competition held September 27, 2025, at Yough Senior High School. Additionally, the band also received awards for the highest music, general effect, and visual scores in its division. The theme of this year's show is "From the Ashes."

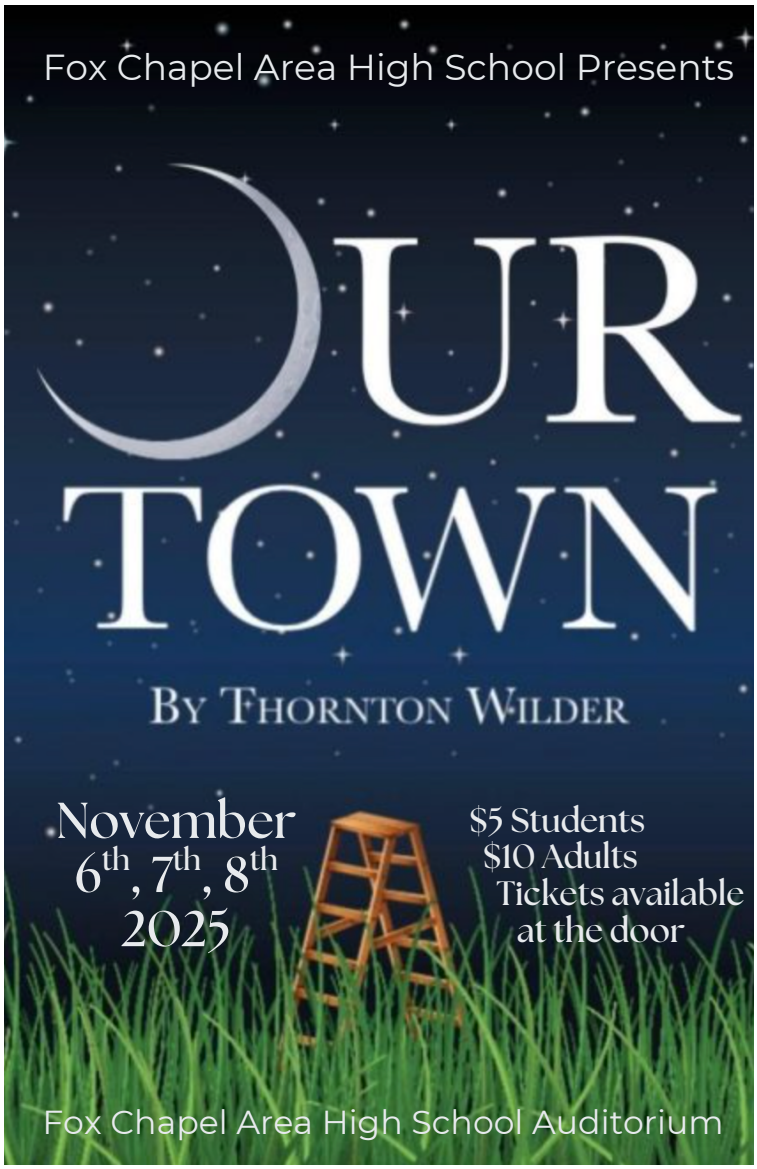
The band is under the student direction of drum majors senior Sophia Nugansiri and junior Nadre Digbohou, and band directors/teachers Daryl Lesnik, Evan Hertrick, Joshua Branker, and Karli Umholtz. The Fox Chapel Area High School Marching Band will be participating at the PIMBA competition at Mt. Lebanon High School on October 4, and at the PIMBA Championships October 18 at Deer Lakes High School.


Clarinet players freshman Julia Olivier, sophomores Theodore Ye and Patty Wesaratchakit, and senior Ava Weiner, perform at the PIMBA competition at Yough Senior High School September 27.

Our Town: One Not to Miss

By Giselle Silva

Every fall, Fox Chapel's drama department picks a theatrical play for our student body to perform on the stage. For the 2025 year, the selected play is "Our Town"! This famous selection by Thornton Wilder follows the community of Grover's Corners and the lives they live. It mainly follows the relationship of Emily and George, but no person is unaccounted for. Every act follows a different period of life. Daily Life establishes the relationships and circumstances in the lives of each and every town person, with a cast of characters that perfectly weigh each other out. Love and Marriage follows Emily and George out of school & about to get married, and the reactions of the townspeople to the joining of two lovebirds. The final act, Death and Eternity, closes with Emily's death and her realization of the importance and significance of life itself. This play does not use props and simply focuses on the story rather than the visuals. This may dissuade some from coming to see it, but the emotion of this play truly makes it more entertaining, even without props. The restraint from props truly allows the viewer to pay attention to what is happening before them, with full concentration on what the characters are saying. It demonstrates that even the simplest things can have deeper meaning if you pay attention carefully. The Fall Play is a smaller performance via cast than the spring musical, but it still has as much significance, with how hard the students participating work to put on this performance.



The Fox Chapel Area High School drama department has chosen Our Town as the Fall Play. Performances are in early November.

The director, Kristianne Joseph, said the following when asked about the play and this year's cast: "I think this cast is really great and thoughtful. They'll make us stop for a moment and take a look at the beauty in the everyday. This is what this play is: seeing the beauty in what we think is mundane and boring. It's actually beautiful, and how fortunate we are to be living and making a small difference." If you would like to purchase tickets, they are available at the door during our performances (November 6th, 7th, 8th). Tickets cost $5 for students and $10 for adults (cash preferred, check also available for payment). Come support your fellow students on the stage and see a play following the beauty and simplicity of life.

Six New Stars Enter the Orbit!

By Remi Goldstein

After a busy summer, Fox Chapel Area High School is welcoming six new stars to our solar system. These new staff members aren't just here to teach, but to make our school shine even brighter! To help everyone get to know them, we asked about their hobbies, favorite high school subjects, and a few fun facts. Here's your first look at the six newest stars orbiting Fox Chapel.



Mr. DeMarco has already made the gym sparkle with enthusiasm. Outside of school, he enjoys playing ultimate frisbee. Back in his own high school days, his favorite subject was gym, and his current go-to school snack is a banana. A fun fact? Check out Mr. DeMarco's collarbone to see that it's disconnected from the rest of his body!.



Mr. Lemansky brings a down-to-earth but inspiring energy to his math room. When he's not teaching, you can usually find him fishing! He says that if he weren't in the classroom, he'd be an electrical engineer. Students may be surprised to know that he collects sports trading cards. Like a shooting star, he will be an exciting new addition to our school for his year.



Ms. Mularski shines through her creativity in the gymnasium. Her favorite subject in high school was also gym, which explains why she's so excited to share it with students now. When asked about her guilty-pleasure snack, she laughed and admitted that it is Hot Cheetos. Outside of teaching phys-ed classes, she's often found playing football for the Pittsburgh Passion, proving there's more than one dimension to her orbit!



Ms. Crissman is a true burst of energy in the halls. We are so lucky to have her as our new counselor! She loves playing softball and baseball with her kids, and she enjoys all school subjects! If she wasn't a school counselor, she imagines herself as a florist! A fun fact about her? Her guilty-pleasure snack is Starbucks, she really loves it there. It's clear that she is already becoming well-known with her warm and friendly personality!



Ms. Boersma has quickly fit into the constellation of Fox Chapel. She admits their go-to classroom fuel is a big bag of pretzels and she enjoys cooking when she's not at school. Back in high school, she loved math, which may be why she connects so well with today's students in the math classroom. Fun fact: her favorite sports team is the Buffalo Bills!



Madame Turner says the best part of teaching so far has been connecting with students. When she was in college, she trained to be a bodybuilder! Her favorite subjects as a student were French as well as calculus and anatomy. That being said, her dream career outside of teaching would be a cardiothoracic surgeon. She also revealed that her guilty pleasure snack is nachos! Her orbit around Fox Chapel is already strong.

Together, these six teachers make up a brand-new constellation; one that's guaranteed to brighten our sky. Whether through their favorite hobbies, their classroom energy, or the small details that make them unique, each one adds something special to our universe. Welcome to the Fox Chapel solar system, New Stars. We can't wait to see how brightly you shine.

Superindetendent Receives Inagural Leadership Award

Fox Chapel Area School District's superintendent, Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac, has been named the recipient of the first-ever Reflective Leadership Award from Leading Now, a nationwide organization that supports superintendents in navigating political complexity and strengthening public trust. The award is given to a school leader who leads with clarity, purpose, and the courage to pause and go deeper.



FCASD Superintendent Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac

Penn State Fires Head Football Coach

By Matthew Bartolacci

James Franklin entered Penn State as the head coach in 2014, replacing Bill O'Brien. There were high hopes for the program to once again become dominant. In 2016, Franklin's third year in Happy Valley, he coached Penn State to an 11-3 season. This was the program's first ten-win season since 2009. There was new light for the program with the emergence of young stars like Saquon Barkley, Trace McSorley, Mike Gesicki, and Chris Godwin. Franklin continued to build up a football program that he wanted to be elite.

Penn State University's Athletics Logo

In 2024, Penn State featured one of the strongest rosters it had ever seen. They had the best running back duo in all of college football with Nick Singleton and Kaytron Allen alongside Drew Allar, Tyler Warren, Abdul Carter, and Kobe King. This team was believed to have Championship aspirations with the new 12-team College Football Playoff. They rolled through the regular season until they narrowly lost to Ohio State, continuing to fuel conversations, backed by stats, that James Franklin could not win games against highly ranked teams, which was backed by stats. The Nittany Lions made it to the Big Ten Championship game against an Oregon Ducks team loaded with potential NFL talent. A seemingly great opportunity for Franklin to shift the narrative around his failures against AP Top Ten and Top Five opponents. Penn State once again lost. The Nittany Lions made the playoffs and easily beat SMU and Boise State, two teams that slipped into the 12-team playoff in the final week. The Semifinal game was a whole different mountain to climb, with Penn State going against a very solid Notre Dame team. The game was a battle featuring big plays from both teams, particularly in the fourth quarter. Penn State had the ball late in the fourth quarter, and it looked like they were going to run the clock out with their running backs Allen and Singleton. Then, Allar was set to throw and made a careless pass over the middle intended for his receiver but Notre Dame cornerback Christian Gray intercepted it, leaving Notre Dame only a couple yards past one first down into field goal range. Riley Leonard was able to make a completion to wide receiver Jaden Greathouse that got them well into field goal range. With about ten seconds left, Mitch Jeter stepped up and put the last nail into the coffin of Penn State's season. The criticism of Allar's throw came on strong, but the feeling of unfinished business lingered, causing many draft-eligible juniors like Drew Allar, Nick Singleton, Kaytron Allen, and Dani Dennis-Sutton to return in chase of a national championship.



Coach James Franklin, pictured at a September press conference, was fired after the team's recent losses to Oregon, UCLA, and Northwestern.

Coming into the current season, expectations were high, and so was the pressure. The Nittany Lions rolled to a 3-0 start, but they faced a major test early this year. The Whiteout game against the number seven-ranked Oregon Ducks is a rematch of the Big Ten Championship from the 2024 season. This game was a battle for both teams. It took until the third quarter for the offenses to get going, but it was Oregon who started first, jumping to a 17-3 lead. Responding to the disappointing score, the student section rang out "Fire Franklin" chants. Penn State picked up their play and tied the game to send it to overtime. PSU extended it to double overtime, trailing by six after Oregon scored and got the two point conversion intercepted. A touchdown and two point conversion could have started to flip the strong media narrative on James Franklin and his struggles against AP Top 10 teams. But, on the first play for the offense, Allar dropped back, threw into double coverage, and then was intercepted by Oregon linebacker Dillon Thieneman. Happy Valley went silent, stunned by the loss. Franklin was left with a 4-21 record against AP top 10 teams, which is the third worst for a coach with at least 25 games since the AP poll began in 1936.

The following week, Penn State was upset by the winless UCLA Bruins. The next weekend, on October 11th, they played the Northwestern Wildcats. A game that seemingly should have been won, once again ended in heartbreak, dropping the Nittany Lions record to 3-3 on the season. Drew Allar also got injured, which was determined to keep him out for the rest of the season. Allar, being a senior, does not have any more eligibility, so this injury also ended his collegiate career.

Following three frustrating losses, on Sunday, October 12th, James Franklin was fired. As part of his contract, Penn State owes him a payout of almost $50 million, which is the second largest in NCAA Football history. Ultimately, they decided that the program was going too far into a bad place that they viewed it as worthy to eat the $50 million buyout, according to Dr. Patrick Kraft, the Penn State Athletic Director. This decision leaves Franklin with a legacy of always standing with his players, but also as one of the worst coaches against top ten opponents in college football history.

Limbs Without Limits: Prosthetics in the Present Age

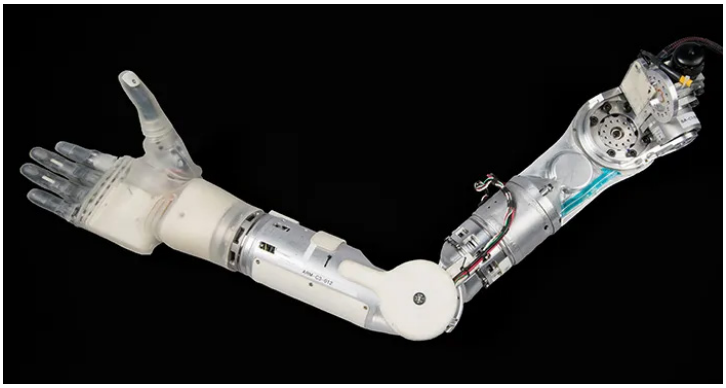
By Prachi Behal

The first prosthetic device ever made was a wooden toe in Egypt around 950–710 BC, created to help someone walk more naturally. Since then, prosthetic devices have undergone massive advancements, leading to innovations such as brain-controlled bionic arms like the LUKE Arm. With the development of new technologies such as 3D printing and artificial intelligence, prosthetic devices have advanced beyond our wildest expectations.



"The Cairo Toe" is, according to Smithsonian Magazine, likely the earliest example of a prosthetic device discovered to date. It is though to have belonged to the daughter of an ancient Egyptian priest.

Artificial intelligence allows prosthetic limbs to be controlled by an individual's brain. One example is COAPT, a system that uses a variety of sensors placed on the stump of an amputee's arm to capture commands sent from the brain. This exemplifies a positive use of AI, helping make devices more personalized and giving users greater control over their movements.



A prototype of the LUKE Arm prosthetic. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs the name standings for "Life Under Kinetic Evolution" and also serves as a reference to the Star Wars film franchise's character Luke Skywalker who was fitted with a fictional but similar prosthesis.

3D printing is also extremely useful in creating prosthetics. For example, the BionicHand uses 3D printing in its production and captures microelectric pulses to perform four basic hand movements. The implementation of 3D printing has also significantly reduced costs. A standard prosthetic hand can cost thousands of dollars; for instance, a typical myoelectric arm costs around $10,000, making it unaffordable for many individuals. In comparison, a 3D-printed prosthesis can cost as little as $50. On average, the cost can be reduced by up to 90% through 3D printing due to the use of different materials.

There have also been major advancements in amputee technology, such as a process called osseointegration, which allows direct skeletal attachment of prosthetic limbs through implants that integrate with bone tissue. One example is the OPRA (Osseointegrated Prostheses for Rehabilitation of Amputees) Implant System, currently the only FDA-approved osseointegration implant system for direct attachment of prosthetic limbs. The outcomes of this device have been highly positive, with a 92% success rate after five years and patients maintaining benefits even fifteen years post-operation. Its benefits include eliminating socket-related complications, increasing range of motion, simplifying the attachment and detachment process, improving comfort while sitting, and enhancing overall quality of life.



A computer-generated model showcases the FDA-approved OPRA Implant System by Integrum, a Swedish medical technology company.

Overall, prosthetic devices have undergone tremendous change since their introduction and now closely resemble real body parts. They are a widely useful innovation facilitating advancements that have transformed countless lives.

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Name, Image, and Likeness in College Football

By Grant Fenton

Starting in late August, "How can you not catch that!" is a common phrase that can be heard in living rooms across the country. While the average college football fan is not (and never was) capable of playing to the level of the athletes they scrutinize, they still feel comfortable letting players know how they feel when blunders are made. In the past, a common response to these criticisms was that the players under scrutiny were simply amateurs and should be treated as such. This was true, and there was not a strong counterargument until July 1st, 2021, when the NCAA implemented its new NIL policy, allowing players to profit from their name, image, and likeness. This was taken even further in July of 2025 when the House v. NCAA settlement resulted in Division I schools being allowed to pay players directly. These radical changes to the landscape of college sports were brought on by pressure from both former and current players. One of which was Ed O'bannan, who sued the NCAA for profiting off his image without any compensation for himself. Another example that put the idea of players making money into the public spotlight is Donald De La Haye, better known by his YouTube name "Deestroying", who lost his eligibility to play football for the University of Central Florida when he chose to continue running his monetized YouTube channel. The pressure became too much for the NCAA, ultimately resulting in the policy's implementation. Given that college sports have become increasingly popular for coaches, athletic directors, and universities, perhaps it makes sense to let the players get paid. If, however, we are to let college football players essentially become professionals in this new era, should they be treated as such? Additionally, what are the benefits and problems that come with this policy, and how does it change the future landscape of America's favorite Saturday entertainment?



The National Collegiate Athletic Association recently approved the right for player to profit from their name, image, and likeness (NIL).

Many high-profile football names think that paying players just makes sense. One such person is Colorado head coach Deion Sanders, who showed support for the new policy, saying, "We have been vocal in our conviction that student-athletes should be allowed to capture the value of the use of their name, image and likeness (NIL) — in other words, profit from the celebrity — for one simple reason: other students are allowed to." Sanders is not alone in this opinion, with support for NIL coming from coaches at other notable universities like Iowa, Florida State, and Oklahoma State. It is easy to see why. The NIL era has brought a myriad of benefits to college athletes as a whole, especially football players, as the money provides financial security for themselves and their families. One such example is D'Antre Robinson, a defensive lineman for the North Carolina Tar Heels, who purchased a house for his mother on Valentine's Day of 2024. Some view the old system as exploitative, and players making money off of their name the same way the universities do can be seen as fair compensation. Big names that draw highly profitable ticket and jersey sales include, Arch Manning, Carson Beck, and Jerimiah Smith. All are making millions in earnings through NIL, and it is reasonable to say that they are being fairly compensated based on the revenue they have generated for the universities.



University of Flordia (now UNC Chapel Hill) football player D'Antre Robinson shows his mom around her new house, purchased through NIL earnings.

While many support NIL, some coaches are concerned as to how it may affect the game long term. Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney was quoted saying, "I think there's going to be a complete blowup and restructuring of all of college athletics, especially football, and there needs to be." Another decorated coach, Nick Saban, spoke on the subject, as well, saying, "All the things that I believed in, for all these years, 50 years of coaching, no longer exist in college athletics." He also added, "You can do it in recruiting. I mean, if that's what we want college football to be, I don't know, and you can also get players to get in the transfer portal to see if they can get more some place else than they can get at your place." These concerns aren't unwarranted, as recruits and current players often shop around for the highest-paying opportunities. A prime example of this is UCLA quarterback Nico Iamaleava. Iamaleava was playing for the University of Tennessee, getting paid around two million dollars in NIL per year. He was unhappy with this, and pushed for a deal that would see him getting four

million per year. Negotiations stalled, and Iamaleava transferred to UCLA, where he ended up having to take a pay cut from his original earnings at Tennessee. Ironically, the previous UCLA quarterback transferred to Tennessee, where they currently (as of October 3rd) have a record of 4-1, while UCLA is 0-4. Another issue of NIL besides players going to whatever school will pay the most is the criticism that the athletes will face. The highest paid college athlete and quarterback of the Texas Longhorns, Arch Manning, has received plenty of criticism online for losing the opening game of the season to Ohio State. Texas has bounced back, improving to 3-1, yet the wins were unimpressive, coming against lower tier Division I programs. The quarterback was even booed by his own team's fans during a win against UTEP. When high payment is paired with poor performance, fans are left to wonder if being paid the best means that a player should be the best.



Nico Iamaleava, pictured here playing for UT Knoxville, transferred to UCLA admist stalled negotiations to gain more NIL earnings.

There is much uncertainty as to where the NIL era of college football will take us. From how coaches recruit players to the new lifestyles the top players live, the NIL era has brought many changes. Pandora's box has been opened, and no one knows exactly what will play out.

The FCA Way Explained

By Zehra Ozkaya

For years, Fox Chapel Area School District's core values were: respect, responsibility, and integrity. A few years ago, we implemented: polite, prompt, productive, and prepared. These values were engraved in our brains ever since we stepped onto some sort of district school. Whether it was in kindergarten at one of our four elementary schools, or it was just last year at the high school, each and every student knew what our district stood for. But even the best soft drink brands get rebranded — logos change and names are shortened. The FCA Way is Fox Chapel Area's new initiative to take the district to the next level. F, C, A. Fox, Chapel, Area. With a witty title and plentiful contents, our new core initiative is going to be the support system for our district's next chapter. Our positive and inclusive environment will skyrocket as we implement this initiative into our everyday routine.



The FCA Way is Fox Chapel Area High School's new positive behavior initative. It builds off the "Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity" as well as as "Prepared, Prompt, Polite, and Productive" of the past.

F: Focused

We are here to learn. Education is often looked at as a bore by students, the dreaded reason that our alarms are set to 6 a.m. and not 10 a.m on a sunny Monday morning. But education fuels our minds, gives us ammunition to reach any goal that we may have. In order to use this fuel, we must find it in ourselves, and that begins with focusing. Focusing in class, focusing when studying, focusing on collaborative projects, focusing is everywhere. With focus as a core value, our high school can prosper and bring its students success both in and out of the classroom.

C: Caring

Outside of the classroom, we are all people. With a district ranging from grades K-12, our schools are not only educating our students in core subjects, but also in critical social skills. Being caring has no bounds. Everyone should care about others, respect spaces, and be respectful no matter the circumstance. Implementing caring as a core value helps the district to show this to students on a daily basis and remind them that above all, we are also people who deserve to be surrounded by kindness.

A: Accountable

Taking responsibility for your actions is a vital step to being a better student and person. As a student, it is important to understand that sometimes you will not be using your full effort. It is at these moments when we need to reflect and realize what we could have done differently in order to produce a more favorable outcome. This could be studying more, asking more questions, or sleeping more, but the choice is yours. No one else is going to make decisions for us. It is up to all of us to step up and decide when it is time to take accountability in order to learn from and grow from our mistakes.

Opinion: Tylenol Babies Are the New Thalidomide Babies? Not Quite.

By Karsten Buchert

On September 21st, after creating hype for the announcement at the late conservative pundit Charlie Kirk's funeral, President Donald Trump made an official statement claiming that acetaminophen and specifically the name brand Tylenol are linked to autism spectrum disorder. Trump went on to advise against pregnant women taking the medicine and parents giving it to their young children. Also present at the meeting was health secretary Robert F. Kennedy, surgeon turned daytime TV pill pusher turned Senate candidate turned administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, Dr. Mehmet Oz; Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Martin Makary, and National Institutes of Health Director Dr. Jay Battacharya, who is on record claiming that the lockdown efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic "were the single biggest public health mistake we've ever made." The theory outlined during the September announcement is that expecting mothers taking Tylenol are putting their baby at risk of being on the autism spectrum. Should the Trump Administration's claims on Tylenol be trusted? The short and sweet answer is "no."



President Donald Trump speaks at the White House on September 21st. Behind him, from left to right, are Dr. Jay Battacharya, Dr. Martin Makary, Secretary of Health Robert F. Kennedy, and Dr. Mehmet Oz.



Trump's administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, Dr. Mehmet Oz, has advertised products with questionable claims on his television show, such as green coffee bean extract, a "magic weight-loss cure" according to Oz.

Let's lay out the facts here. There have been studies that cite the use of Tylenol during pregnancy as a possible risk factor for the expecting mother's baby developing autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Unlike some of the "results" of products Dr. Oz has advertised on his television show, such as green coffee bean extract apparently leading to individuals losing one pound per week just from taking the recommended dose, the claim is not fictitious. The issues lies in the rhetoric Trump and his top public health advisors, who (reminder) include the Weight-Loss Wizard of Oz and a man who swam in an amoeba-infested stream. The study that seems to be most relevant to the "autism announcement" was published in August by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The study's senior author, faculty dean and professor at Harvard's School of Public Health Andrea Baccarelli, has been open about his communication with Secretary Kennedy prior to the announcement. There is one key word though from this study that Baccarelli included in his statement to Kennedy, "association." In fact, later in the statement he clarifies that the association is still not officially confirmed and that it is only "strongest when acetaminophen is taken for four weeks or longer." That, albeit, is shorter than the safe dosage recommendation for the Magic Mehmet's green coffee bean extract: 90-1000mg per day for 12 weeks maximum.

Earlier medical publications on this issue also emphasize "association." A 2022 journal article by Duke University Professor of Biostatistics Maragatha Kuchibhatla is confident in the possible link between acetaminophen and ASD, but does not directly state that the drug causes the neurodevelopmental problem. Kuchibhatla focuses more on the potential effect of oxidative stress, which can be induced by high doses or prolonged use of acetaminophen, and its link to neurodivergency, specifically during a child's postnatal development. Furthermore, Yale associate professor Dr. Zeyan Liew, who has dedicated his work in academia to investigating "contributors to neurodevelopmental disorders," has highlighted the referenced studies' observational nature echoing that acetaminophen and autism is purely an association at this point. One quote sticks out in his statement on this issue: "it is premature to declare we know for sure what is causing autism."



The Trump Administration claims that acetaminophen (commonly known by the trademarked name Tylenol), is linked to autism in children.

In April, discount Wild Kratt brother Secretary Kennedy said he would determine "what has caused the

autism epidemic" by September, because the guy who had previously claimed that vaccines lead to autism can definitely be trusted with that goal. Speaking of said goal, his determination to "solve autism" is not new. Before the efforts that resulted in the link to acetaminophen, he had research performed on the effects of vaccines. It can be argued that September's announcement was purely to satisfy an arbitrary deadline, and check another box on the Trump Administration's to-do list. The announcement is no different than the Department of Homeland Security's attempts to satisfy first-year deportation goals aiming to accomplish Trump's campaign promise of "the largest deportation" in U.S. history. To meet that, the Department of Homeland Security will need to beat the crudely named 1954 Operation Wetback's 1.3 million undocumented immigrants. They are currently roughly on-par with the Obama Administration's peak year for removals, 2013, which saw 434,000 deportations. Some attempts by President Trump seem rather desperate. For instance, they have launched an app, CBP Home, for self-deportation. Customs and Border Protection will pay you $1000 and book you a free flight to any country of your choosing, as long as you can prove possession of a valid passport for that country. Trump's opening line in a March 2025 video introducing the app was "self-deport the easy way, or get deported the hard way, and that's not pleasant."



Mexican migrant workers board buses for deportation during the early 1950s.

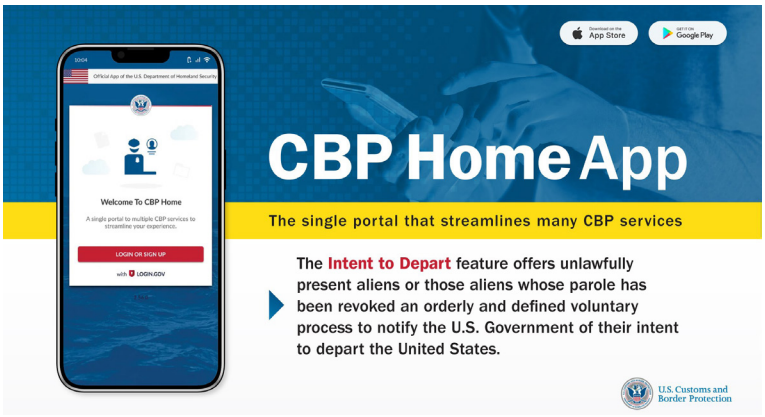
To recap, acetaminophen is not a new thalidomide, a sedative used during the late 1950s and early 60s that was linked to miscarriages and birth deformities. All advice on this issue given by the current administration and nation's government health experts should be taken with a grain of salt. In other words, only trust it to the degree that you would trust RFK telling you what streams are safe to take a dip in. The Health Department's advisory on Tylenol is nothing more than another "accomplishment" for the Trump Administration to tout. It's like the equivalent of a presentation a student rushes together at the last minute, then successfully presents purely by appearing confident. For reliable information on autism spectrum disorder, please refer to your trusted healthcare provider or organizations such as Autism Speaks, a charity organization that has been advocating for those with ASD since 2005 and aims to create "an inclusive world for all individuals with autism throughout their lifespan."



A package of Thalomid (trademarked name for thalidomide) capsules has multiple warnings advising pregnant women not to take the drug.



Secretary Kennedy swims in a D.C. area stream with "dangerously high" bacteria levels.



A Facebook post from U.S. Customs and Border Protection showcases the CBP Home smartphone app. The program allows people residing in the United States illegally to self-deport.

Autism Speaks is a non-profit organization that supports those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

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Physics of the Dolphin Kick: A Pro-Swimmer's Secret Weapon

By Arman Alborzi

France's Leon Marchand, the world-record holder in both IMs (400IM WR 4:02.50 in 2023; 200 IM WR 1:52.69 in 2025) and eight-time individual NCAA champion at Arizona State, has shown it again and again: races are won underwater. Virginia's Gretchen Walsh, meanwhile, lowered the women's 100m butterfly world record twice in one day in May and now holds it at 54.60 and owns nine individual NCAA titles (25 including relays), proving the same point from the women's side. In fact, she broke another world record as I was writing this article!



French swimmer Leon Marchand, a men's swimming world record holder in multiple areas, proves that races are won beneath the pool water's surface.



American Swimmer Gretchen Walsh is a consistent world record breaker in women's swimming. Her accomplishments also demonstrate that the most stellar swimming happens under the water.

What do the fastest swimmers have in common? A fast underwater dolphin kick. After every start and turn, swimmers can ride that underwater phase out to the maximum limit of 15 meters, a rule established due to the speed of underwater swimming.

Water is around 800x denser than air, so drag grows fast with speed. In simplest form, $F_D=1/2\rho C_D A v^2$ where v is speed, A frontal area, C_d a shape factor, and ρ water density. At the surface, there is an additional wave drag. When deep enough, the wave drag vanishes. Measurements and modeling show wave drag is minimized by 0.6-0.7 m depth. Work suggests wave drag can be the largest source of drag near the surface. Since drag increases with v^2, shedding wave drag underwater is the cleanest way to keep speed without wasting energy.

Marchand's and Walsh's underwater phases start off faster than their surface swimming, as they stay deep and streamlined as long as the 15m rule allows it. A 2022 systematic review concluded that at race-like speeds (>1.9m/s), a glide around 0.4 m deep yields a 14-18% drop in total underwater drag versus surface swimming, confirming that wave drag vanishes when deep enough.

Why the Dolphin Kick Works:

Think of the dolphin kick as a traveling body wave that ends at the feet, pushing you forward (shown below):



Two equations help. First, if each kick advances you a horizontal distance d_{kick} at a frequency *f*, then your average speed during the kick phase is $v = f * d_{kick}$. Second, is the Strouhal number, which is: $St = (f * A) / v$, with A the toe amplitude. Lower St means better efficiency (humans' typical range 0.59-0.88, far higher than dolphins/fish at 0.25-0.35). For the same speed v, a lower St means you're getting more distance per kick. For the same kick pattern *f* and Aa lower St means you're going faster, which is why swimmers manipulate frequency and amplitude to keep thrust high. The sweet spot is a combination of a big enough amplitude and a high frequency, exactly what you see from Marchand and Walsh.

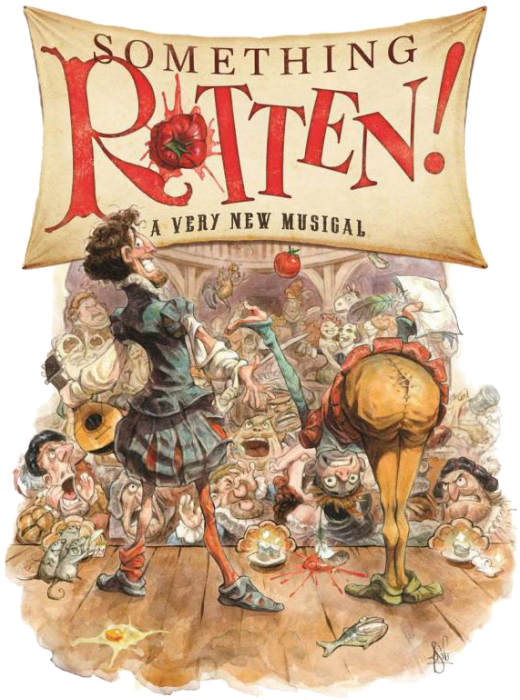
In a short course pool (25 yards or meters), underwaters add up quickly, which is why NCAA finals often look like an underwater contest for most races. At every wall, the best athletes hit a flat, rigid streamline to the right depth, hold it for a beat, and then switch to a high amplitude and frequency kick pattern. The body wave is led by the trunk, then the knees follow, and a down-kick that snaps through.

This is why the fastest "stroke" in swimming isn't really a stroke like freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, or butterfly. The seconds when a swimmer is underwater are the fastest. Both Marchand and Walsch attest to this by spending more time in a race doing underwater dolphin kicks than actually swimming a stroke. Fox Chapel Swimmers Nate Agens, Hugo Mickus, and Desi Ruff agree that mastering depth, streamline, and a snappy dolphin kick is the fastest and most decisive seconds of any race.

Spring Musical Announced: *Something Rotten*

By Ellie Passavant

The Music Department is thrilled to announce this year's spring musical: *Something Rotten*. Something Rotten is a fun musical comedy set in Renaissance England about two brothers, Nick and Nigel Bottom, a pair of struggling playwrights. Because their work is constantly being overshadowed by the plays of the great William Shakespeare, Nick Bottom goes to visit a soothsayer, who reveals that the future of theater is not plays, but musicals. The brothers then embark on an earnest attempt to write the first-ever musical, and hilarity ensues. With songs like "A Musical" and "God, I Hate Shakespeare," alongside many allusions to modern show tunes you know and love, *Something Rotten* promises to entertain its audience.



"I think they liked it."

If you are interested in joining the cast, auditions will take place the week of November 17th, with two tap dancing clinics (not required, but highly recommended) being held. The next one is on November 13th, from 2:30 to 4:00. In addition to acting roles, there are other opportunities to be involved, including pit orchestra, hair & makeup, and tech (lighting or sound); however, there will be no dedicated stagehands this year. The show will run February 26th - March 1st, 2026. Anyone interested in participating should go to the stage manager board in the music wing and pick up an application packet, which is due by November 7th. All of the audition information is also available on the choir website, www.tinyurl.com/fcachoirs. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the stage managers (Lily Cannon, Aristia Lang, and Ellie Passavant), or the director, Mr. Murray. Personally, I cannot wait to begin working on the musical!

Student Earns National Awards for Community Service Impact

Junior Victoria Pfendler has been honored by the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) and InnerView Technologies as part of the 2024-2025 National Community Service Awards. The program is open to students across the nation and is designed to connect student community service activities, skill development, and commitment to Sustainable Development Goals to transform our world. Victoria was also the recipient of the Kroger Co. Zero Hero Zero Hunger Award which is given to students for taking action to help create communities free of hunger.

For her largest volunteer effort, Victoria has spent the last three years helping at the Christ the King Giving Garden. There, she is involved in a variety of tasks with regard to growing healthy fruits and vegetables that benefit the St. Vincent de Paul and Blawnox food pantries. In total, she has spent more than 102 hours volunteering. According to Victoria, "Volunteering at the garden has taught me the value of hard work and community service, and I'm proud to be part of an effort that helps provide fresh, healthy food to people in my community." The Giving Garden's mission is to serve the community by practicing sustainable gardening and donating fresh produce to local food pantries, helping to address food insecurity and promote environmental responsibility.


Junior Victoria Pfendler has been recognized for her volunteerism by multiple organizations.

Melissa DeStout, the coordinator of the community garden says she is grateful for the time and creativity Victoria has dedicated. "Victoria has been an integral part of our volunteer team, contributing her time, effort, and skills to support our mission of serving the community through sustainable gardening practices and food donation initiatives," she says.

Victoria has also participated in many activities at Fox Chapel Area High School, including the girls tennis team, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), the pickleball club, and community outreach. She will also serve as a student ambassador during the 2025-2026 school year.

When In Doubt, Sleep It Out

By Eliana Wellman and Abigail Vaughan

"Ugh, my mom is being so annoying!" "OMG, I'm gonna fail this test… I studied all night!" "I never have enough time!" Sound familiar? Teens, especially high school students, are stereotypically notorious for being moody, grumpy, and hard to be around. Parents often claim that their children do not get enough sleep for the day, and scientists agree with them. Students, especially teenagers, need 8-10 hours of sleep nightly, but very few schools offer reasonable chances for students to achieve this. If this is a universally accepted guideline, why do schools make it so hard to achieve the recommended amount of sleep? There are so many conflicts with studying late into the night and early school hours such as sports, clubs, and jobs; what is the best solution for everyone?



Medical experts generally regard maintaining a healthy sleep schedule as a crucial need for teenagers. Unfortunately, school can make meeting this need challeneging.

Sleep is essential for a person's mental and physical health. According to the National Sleep Foundation, "Healthy sleep is linked to important emotional functioning in teens, which can help manage anxiety, depression and reported stress among those who get sufficient sleep" (Flarey). The more sleep one gets, the more likely one is to be able to manage the stress that comes from daily life. A designated nap time schedule would help students who do not get enough sleep during the night. They would be able to catch up on their sleep and manage their stress and other expectations effectively. Additionally, the National Institute of Health, reports that over 60% of teens have sleeping problems. Teenagers should get between eight to ten hours of sleep each night. However, most teens get around six hours of sleep on an average school day. Lack of sleep and poor sleep quality can potentially lead to medical issues in the future. These problems include heart disease, obesity, increased risk of strokes, kidney disease, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and increase the risk of certain cancers. Getting more sleep lowers the risks of these health complications.

In "The Merionite, Snooze to Succeed: A Case for Napping," Alexa Saler makes the case for why students should be allotted a nap time during school. She writes, "It is natural for students to become fatigued from absorbing vast amounts of information and rest is crucial to synthesize the information" (1, Saler). Humans naturally absorb more information directly before going to sleep or getting a good night's rest, which is why many specialists recommend skimming notes or homework before bed to cement the information while one sleeps. Harvard Medicine professor Rebecca Spencer wrote, "...children who nap soon after learning new words remember the words 80 percent of the time, as opposed to 30 percent for those who don't nap" (1, Saler). If students get time to sleep in school, they have the opportunity to retain more information for upcoming exams or tests, which lowers their overall anxiety, and boosts average grades. This idea has been studied, and the results prove that napping is beneficial for students' learning. According to the CDC, "In the study, students who slept only five hours at night, but were given a 1 1/2-hour nap at 2 p.m., did better remembering pictures and facts than the students who slept 6 1/2 hours a night" (Blackwelder et al.). Students may struggle to get the recommended amount of sleep,

Studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have proven the benefits of nap time for students.

especially before exam days, but factoring in a specific time where students can get some extra rest can boost their memories, helping them do better on tests.

Some people recommend students going to bed earlier so that they get the optimal amount of sleep. While this idea makes sense, for many students this choice is not possible. Not taking into account late night sports, extracurricular activities, and jobs that they might be occupied with, teenagers' circadian rhythms make sleep difficult. According to The Merionite, "Their melatonin doesn't kick in until after 11, yet they have to get up early for school" (Saler, 1). Melatonin, the chemical in humans that makes people feel tired, does not go into effect until late at night for many teenagers. This can lead to the inability to feel tired until 11:00 or later, causing many students to be unable to go to sleep earlier than that, no matter the time they go to bed. "Among high school students, 72.7% reported insufficient sleep, with about 20% reporting sleeping fewer than six hours a night" ("CDC: Most Middle and High School Students Don't Get Enough Sleep"). The only other option for getting the recommended sleep is sleeping during the day, which many teenagers do unintentionally. "At least once a week, more than one-quarter (28 percent) of high school students fall asleep in school, 22 percent fall asleep doing homework and 14 percent arrive late or miss school because they oversleep" (Wood). The addition of a nap time during the school day could fix these issues. Students struggle to get enough sleep during the night, so they feel tired during the school day. This can be resolved with a nap time, where students are able to rest and reset. There would be less students sleeping during lectures, and productivity would increase in the schools.



A possible solution to alleviate teenage tiredness is having dedicated nap time allotted during the school day, similar to what one may have had during preschool or kindergarten.

While napping in school has many benefits, there are also many drawbacks in the eyes of certain people. For example, some may worry about the use of learning time and funding of taxpayer dollars for students to not learn, and instead, sleep. However, napping in schools can actually save time and money. Many high school students in the US have goals to matriculate to college or trade school, which are both expensive, with college being $9,800 per year on average without additional costs like room and board, and trade schools ranging from $3,800-$16,000 total, according to Midwest Technical Institute. Additionally, according to "Scholarship Statistics: The Latest Data, Facts and Costs," "30% of all scholarships in the United States are awarded to students with a GPA between 3.0 to 3.4." When students get more sleep, they retain and learn information better and more efficiently, which can save time and improve their learning, therefore improving their test scores. This can make getting into college or other schools easier with the help of scholarships. All in all, it is a trade off, but can have benefits for all involved.

The environment at school would significantly improve with the introduction of naps. There would be fewer mental problems among students, easier classes to control, and more productivity. The well-being of students is not a sacrifice students should make for school, extracurriculars, or jobs. Getting a healthy amount of sleep should be a basic right for everyone. The teachers will likely be very grateful, as incorporating naps into the school day would make life easier for the teachers and staff who have to put up with groggy teenagers on a daily basis. So, when students get naps during the school day, everyone wins.

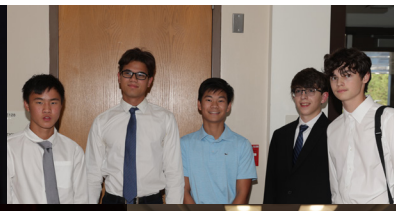
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National Honor Society Induction







Service...





Rodrigo Silva represented "service" at the NHS ceremony. Mememberss must contribute 25 hours of service per year.





Scholarship...





Zehra Ozkaya represented "scholarship" at the NHS ceremony. Members must keep a 3.7 QPA.





Character...





Zinta Jacob represented "character" at the NHS ceremony.





Leadership...





Avery Jones represented "leadership" at the NHS ceremony.





Marching Foxes Win First Place at PIMBA Championships



The Fox Chapel Area High School Marching Band came away with first place at the annual Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association (PIMBA) Championships held on October 18th at Deer Lakes High School. The competition judged all elements of the band including their musical performance, visual performance, and general effect.

The Fox Chapel Area High School Marching Band won first place at the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association (PIMBA) Championships. The Marching Foxes placed first in Class 2A at the competition which was held October 18th at Deer Lakes High School. The Marching Foxes earned a score of 86.375, and also won awards for the highest Music and General Effect. The theme of this year's show is "From the Ashes."

The band is under the student direction of drum majors senior Sophia Nguansiri and junior Nadre Digbohou, and band directors/teachers Daryl Lesnik, Evan Hertrick, Joshua Branker, and Karli Umholtz. Congratulations to all members of the Marching Foxes on this incredible achievement.



The Marching Foxes receive their award at the PIMBA Championships at Deer Lakes High School. From left to right are Band Director Daryl Lesnik, senior drum major Sophia Nguansiri, color guard captain senior Kayleigh Sejvar, and junior drum major Nadre Digbohou.

Dates to Remember for November

11/3 - Half Day with Five Minute QRT, Ceiling Tile Painting Event

11/4 - No School (Election Day, 18-Year Olds: embrace the 26th Amendment and vote!)

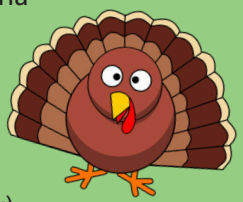
11/6 to 11/8 - Fall Play Show Dates

11/10 - Meeting For Club Leaders in Cafeteria

11/11 - Picture Make Up Day

11/26 - Half Day with Full QRT

11/27 - 12/1 No School (Thanksgiving Break)



SOCCER PROGRAMS CONTINUE SUCCESS FROM LAST YEAR

BY ELI OLIFSON

As the WPIAL soccer season comes to an end for both boys and girls, it comes as no surprise to see both Fox Chapel teams on top of the standings, something that has become almost tradition in recent years. Both teams are coming off of dominant seasons: for the boys, the season ended in a heartbreaking 2-1 loss in the PIAA Quarterfinals after a stunning WPIAL-winning run that October, and the girls shared a similar fate losing by the same score in the PIAA Quarterfinals after narrowly dropping the WPIAL Championship game. "High" would be a massive understatement for the pressure that was on Fox Chapel soccer this year, but as the curtain is slowly closing on the 2025 regular season, the Foxes have still managed to meet and go beyond these mountainous expectations.



The Fox Chapel Girl's Soccer Team has consistently proven their ability to hold their ground against challenging opponents.

At the time of writing, the Fox Chapel girls are 11-1-1, their only loss by one to a talented North Allegheny team, and tying Mars. Highlights and standout players have not been hard to find thus far, as the team has enjoyed its fair share of blowout victories. 10-0 and 9-0 wins against Obama, as well as a 7-0 win against Penn Hills are just a few of these, but the team has also won some nailbiters. The girls have had multiple 1-score wins against challenging opponents like Seneca Valley, Shaler, and Mars. The diversity in scores of victories reflects the team's ability to beat opponents of all skill levels, and knowledge of how to handle difficult situations. Junior Emily McKee has been a force on offense, averaging two goals per game and 0.5 assists per game. McKee has scored 26 goals in 13 games this season, along with six assists. But it isn't only the offense winning games, goalkeeper Lia Pizzella has been unstoppable in goal. Thanks to both Pizzella and the defense as a whole, opponents of the Foxes have only scored nine goals through 12 games. This is severely outmatched by Fox Chapel's 55 goals in the same amount of time.



Girl's soccer has experienced some recent close matches. This, however, has not diminished their overall stellar performance this season.

With four games remaining in the regular season, Fox Chapel has a favorable chance to win out. Hampton, Gateway, Peters Township, and Norwin will be the final foes for the team, but not a particularly challenging group as Fox Chapel has already collected victories against Hampton and Gateway. At this point in the year, the Foxes should be planning a playoff strategy

and scheming how to replicate past success. It has now been back to back years of the Fox Chapel girls being in the WPIAL Championship, ending with a win in 2023 and a loss in 2024. This year looks to be no different, but the road to the Championship is never an easy one. However, earlier victories against challenging opponents coupled with strong players on both sides of the ball give the Foxes a more-than-likely chance to make a deep run this playoff season.



The Fox Chapel Boy's Soccer Team currently benefits from strong junior and senior players alike.

For the boys, success has not been any harder to come by. The squad hasn't lost a game since August 26th when they encountered their only loss to an in-section Canon-McMillan team. The then 2-1 Foxes have skyrocketed to 13-1 approaching their last four games against Butler, North Allegheny, North Hills, and West Allegheny, three of which the boys have already beaten. Fox Chapel is primed to repeat what was done last year and then go further. For the Foxes, winning the WPIAL last year wasn't enough, they wanted it all. A 2-1 loss in the state's quarterfinals stopped Fox Chapel after an incredible season. This year, however, FC does not plan to go out before winning states, and their regular season domination shows what they are capable of. Sweeps against great soccer teams like Seneca Valley prove that these boys will beat anyone that stands between them and the PIAA Championship. However, in order to get there they must make it through the WPIAL playoffs, a feat that seems like destiny, as the Foxes have made it to at least the WPIAL semi-finals every year since 2020.

Success in the boys' soccer program at Fox Chapel seems to just be passed down from year to year. This season's varsity team is led by a very strong senior and junior class, with a few underclassmen in the mix. Seniors like Sean Regan, Brady Matthews, Nick Squeglia, and Rocco Didomenico have proven themselves as leaders of the team. However, the Foxes have no need to worry about success when the class of 2026 graduates, because the class of 2027 has proven to be one of the strongest we've seen. The future is bright for the Foxes, and so is the remainder of the season. The boys have dominated both in and out of their section, a positive omen for their fate in this year's playoffs.

FOX CHAPEL FOOTBALL ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE

The past few years of Fox Chapel football have been an uphill battle to say the least. Though we boast several championship and section-winning teams in virtually every sport, football has historically faced challenges. For reference, the football team has not won a conference title since 1997.



Fox Chapel Football has experienced a series of rough seasons over the past three years. This season, however, the team began to make a promising comeback.

Since the back-to-back 0-10 seasons in 2022 and 2023, the program has been taking small steps back to achieving normality or even success, as seen in the 2021 playoff team. Last year, the Foxes broke their 22-game losing streak and beat Baldwin 38-7. It may not sound like much, but that feeling of a win – a decisive one, at that – sparked motivation in the team that had not been felt for two years. Though it had been hard losing several games by more than 30 points and losing hope, the boys came to understand that feeling they were fighting for every Friday night. Later this season, they were able to pull off one more win against East Allegheny in the last game and send the seniors off on a good note.

This year, Coach Leasure and the program took it a step further to ensure greater success on

the field. It all started with the summer workouts, which entailed around four sessions per week, made to condition players into shape and instill the playbook into long-term memory. The team showed greater numbers in attendance this year, and the goal early on was to win out the first few games and to prepare for the five grueling section opponents.

At first, the message seemed a little lost after a 30-7 loss to Taylor Allderdice to open the season. The result may not have been what they wanted, but signs of hope also showed, such as the defense holding the Dragons to 3.9 yards per carry, a drastic decrease from last year's game (~6 YPC). The well-deserved outcome would come in the next week against Baldwin, where the Foxes took home a 48-14 win. The team was firing on all cylinders, and it was an amazing feeling for them to get a big win at home and prove their ability to the fans; however, the magic would start to wear off as the Foxes began section play. They went 0-5 against conference opponents, including a 35-0 loss to Plum on Homecoming night, which was heartbreaking after the early accomplishments.



The team's seniors, such as quarterback Joey Geller (pictured above) have put forth incredible effort despite the team's hardships.

For the seniors though, they enjoyed the journey while it lasted, having endured the most hardships during their tenure. They faced two 0-10 seasons their freshman and sophomore years and won a total of five games through their junior and senior years. Despite that, they knew that their experiences were memories for life, especially on the nights where they pulled off a win. Senior tight end and captain Thomas Billings said, "I understood what was at stake for me personally this year, and put it all on the line." Billings won 1st team all-conference his junior year despite miraculously playing on a torn ACL and meniscus the whole season. After the nine month recovery process, he was eager to get back on the field and help the Foxes in every way he could. "I knew the opportunities I had were coming to an end and I wouldn't play ever again, so I didn't take anything for granted."

His leadership abilities were also invaluable to the freshmen and the future of the program. Thomas's work ethic and capabilities on the field were what earned him his role as a captain, and he would solidify his position by guiding the ninth graders through their first year and helping make them better players on and off the field. Along with him, the two other captains Aiden Elwood and Carnegie Mellon commit Max Melocchi emphasized teaching the younger team members resilience and to fight on even when losing. They could not help but remember their winless days as underclassmen, and preached about how times would always change for the better if the work continues to get done.

As the football season has come to a close, a common saying from the head coach Mr. Leasure comes to mind: "You'll be hanging up the Christmas tree before you know it." Looking back on how fast the first quarter and fall sports season has come and gone, that statement could never be more true; inevitably, the holidays will soon be upon us. It goes to show how quickly memories can be made in a sports season, and how fast the direction of a program can also change. In this case, the Foxes look to continue their upward trend and make even greater strides during the 2026 season.

Student Recognized in National Science Competition

Fox Tales' own Rishabh Krishnamurthy has been named one of the Top 300 Junior Innovators in the 2025 Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge (Thermo Fisher JIC) for the third consecutive year. Thermo Fisher JIC is the nation's premier science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) competition for middle school students and the Top 300 represent the best and brightest middle school STEM talent in the United States and its territories. The Thermo Fisher JIC, a program of Society for Science, inspires young scientists, engineers, and innovators to solve the grand challenges of the future.

Students who place in the top 10% of their local science fair are eligible to enter the contest. Rishabh was chosen based on his project "Robots: Filling the Human Void," for which he was awarded a first place in the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair in April 2025 when he was an eighth-grader at Dorseyville Middle School. Each of the Top 300 Junior Innovators will receive a $125 award from Department of Defense (DoD) STEM, as well as a special prize package.


Rishabh Krishnamurthy has been named a Top 300 Junior Innovator for the third consecutive year.


HOMECOMING DANCE






HOLLYWOOD


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FOX CHAPEL AREA
POLICE

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Boo Bash: A Ghoulishly Great Event

By Maeve Beresford

On the evening of October 30th, hundreds of excited children and parents arrived at Fox Chapel Area High School for the annual Boo Bash, a fundraising event hosted by the school's National Honor Society chapter. This year, the event collected monetary donations for Backpack for Hunger as well as toiletry and food items for the Sharpsburg Food Pantry. This spooky community celebration offered children a safe and fun way to celebrate Halloween. Participating families were asked to bring necessities for the cause, including toiletries and food. This year, we received an overwhelming response from the community, raising $2000 and collecting an entire truckload of donations. Thanks to generous donors that attended, we will be able to help both Backpack for Hunger and the Sharpsburg Food Pantry's causes, thus making sure that our community will be full and healthy this holiday season!



Upon entrance, families were greeted outside with a display of emergency vehicles! Police officers and firefighters interacted with the families, handing out candy and providing information on safety within our community. The outside of the school also featured a pumpkin decorating station. Families could decorate a pumpkin, let it dry while enjoying the activities inside, and then pick it up on the way out.

Boo Bash

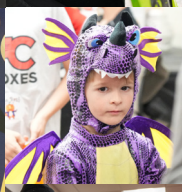


















Inside of the school, there was no shortage of fun activities to participate in! There were over thirty activities around the school for families to engage in, led by FCAHS clubs and small groups of students who dressed in costume. Students walked throughout the hallways, handing out candy to trick-or-treaters. The Fox Chapel Orchestra performed on-theme music in the entrance. The Foxes Den store was open for families looking to shop school district spirit gear. The Baking Club held a bake sale that sold tasty treats. Fan favorite booths this year were the hair tinsel, glitter tattoos, beanbag toss, paper plate mummies, and face painting booths. There was also freshly popped popcorn in the commons area! While going around the school, children were encouraged to search for haunted eggs. If they were lucky enough to find one, they could redeem them for spooky treats at the prize table near the exit!

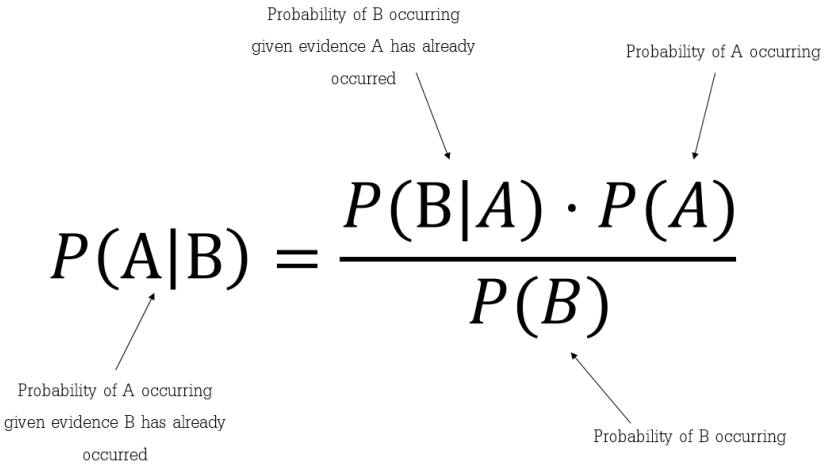
The turnout for the Boo Bash this year was bigger than ever, most likely due to the advertising of it at the school district's elementary schools this year. All parties involved are so grateful for the community participation and for the donations to Backpack for Hunger!

Math Minute: A Quarterly Report About Numbers and Mathematics

Today's Topic: Probability — Predicting the Unpredictable

By Rishi Krishnamurthy

Imagine that you have just undergone a medical screening for a rare and life-threatening disease. Although the disease affects only approximately one in 10,000 individuals, its severity has led to a statewide mandate requiring all doctors to administer the test during routine checkups. The test is highly accurate, correctly identifying 99% of individuals who have the disease and correctly ruling out 99% of those who do not. Your results arrive as positive. Naturally, you begin to worry and perhaps envision worst-case outcomes. However, should you be so concerned?



An explantation of the Bayes' Theorem formula for conditional probability.

My name is Rishi Krishnamurthy, and I am a ninth grader at Fox Chapel Area High School. Every quarter, I write an article about numbers and mathematics. My plan is to continue this until I am a senior. So, make sure to check out A Math Minute every issue!

In the last issue, I continued my series of articles that discussed famous mathematicians. I examined the mathematics of Hypatia, Pythagoras, Lagrange, and Turing. I plan to continue the series in a future issue. In this issue, I will discuss the mathematics of probability and risk. Probability may seem simple or even unnecessary; however, I hope that you will gain an appreciation for probability after reading this article. Don't worry! I do not aim to bore you with complicated formulas and theory; rather, I will explore the numerous real-world applications that are vital for many aspects of everyday life.

First, let us look back at the scenario that I described earlier. At first glance, a positive result on a test that is extremely accurate for a life-threatening disease may seem alarming. However, the likelihood of truly having the disease is still less than 1% due to the rareness of disease in the general population. Out of 10,000 people, only 1 truly has the disease. The test correctly identifies this person with 99% accuracy, so it will almost certainly detect this one true case. Among the remaining 9,999 healthy people, however, 1%, or about 100 people, will have false positives. Therefore, in total, there will be approximately 101 positive results, but only one of the results will represent a true illness, so your chance of having the disease is roughly 1/101, which is less than 1%.

This counterintuitive result is a classic example of Bayes' Rule for conditional probability, in which the probability of a condition given a test result depends not only on the accuracy of the test but also on how common the condition is in the population. In this example, we also used the basic probability formula that the probability of an event is the number of favorable outcomes (one true illness) divided by the total number of outcomes (101 positive test results).

Two other important concepts in basic probability are exclusivity and independence. Two events are mutually exclusive if they can never happen at the same time. For example, when a coin is tossed, it lands on either the heads side or the tails side, never on both. On the contrary, two events are independent when the outcome of one event does not influence the probability of the other. For instance, when flipping two different coins, the outcomes are independent. If one coin lands on "heads," the other coin is not more (or less) likely to land on "heads" or "tails." Clearly, two mutually exclusive events are not independent, for if one event occurs, the other event will not.

Probability has a plethora of applications in real

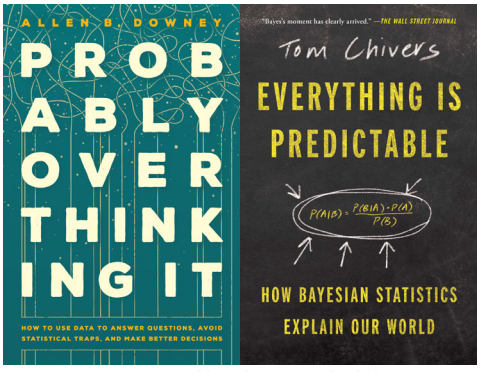
life across science and technology, economics, and decision-making. Without it, we would not be able to estimate the likelihood of rain, evaluate the accuracy of medical tests, optimize investment strategies, or design reliable communication systems. We live in a world where nothing is guaranteed, yet probability allows us to make informed predictions and assess uncertainty.

If I were to ask you to name the first word that comes to mind regarding probability, many of you would respond with "gambling." So, I would be remiss if I fail to describe gambling risk in this article. Risk is the tension between uncertainty and reward. Every wager involves a trade-off. While games of chance may appear to be purely luck-driven, they are governed by mathematical principles that quantify risk, such as expected value and variance. Expected value is the average outcome of a probabilistic event over time, while variance measures how spread out the possible outcomes are. Expected value is calculated by multiplying each possible outcome by its probability and summing the results. For example, the Powerball jackpot costing $2 per ticket might offer a $1 billion prize with odds of one in 292 million, giving an expected value of just over $1.40 per ticket. Another game costing the same amount per ticket with a one in 10 chance of winning just $32 has a similar expected value but far less variance. In the Powerball, the payout is massive but extremely rare; in the other game, the payout is modest but much more likely. Both games may offer the same average return, but the risk and reward profiles are dramatically different. Does the potential reward justify the gamble? I would advise you to be careful before taking risks.



The Powerball lottery and classic games of chance are excellent real-world applications of probability.

This week, I will be recommending two exceptional books about probability: *Probably Overthinking It* by Allen B. Downey and *Everything Is Predictable* by Tom Chivers. The first is a fundamental handbook in using data to your advantage, especially relating to decision making. It describes common misconceptions that most people have and the importance of interpreting data correctly. The second book dives into Bayes' Rule, which I mentioned earlier. Bayes' Rule affects our lives in an uncountable number of ways, in medicine, technology, law, economics, and so much more. The book describes how almost all probability is rooted in Bayes' Rule and how to use it to your advantage. I particularly like these two books because they are written in everyday language, for all of us to understand.



Two exceptional books on probability are Probably Overthinking It by Allen B. Downey and Everything is Predictable by Tom Chivers.

Finally, as usual, I will end with a joke about mathematics. This week, the joke is about a group of bright students taking a statistics class. Collectively, the students decided not to study for their upcoming probability test. The teacher was shocked by the students' poor grades from the class. When she questioned her students though, they replied, "We decided to take our chances." I hope that you enjoyed this issue of Math Minute and now understand that probability helps us not only understand the world but also make smarter choices. In future issues, I hope to discuss more advanced applications of mathematics, particularly in computer science, and to wrap up my series of famous mathematicians.

No Need For a Membership: FCAHS's Free After-School Gym

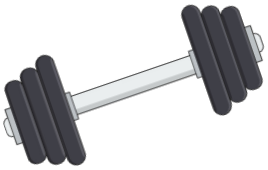
By Diego Pelfrey

Your brain isn't the only thing that can be worked out at school. Did you know that the high school offers a great opportunity to not only grow your muscles but also socialize with friends after school? The school offers an after-school gym three times a week from 2:35 to 4:00pm. The gym is open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, with both Tuesdays and Thursdays having transport home provided via the BOT bus. It's the same facility you use during gym class, with many amenities to serve your every need.



The fitness center is commonly used by the physical education department and sports teams. The facility is available for free use by students during certain times as well! It is one of the many free wellness resources offered to students.

The workout space has free weights like a bench/squat rack and dumble rack, as well as exercise machines like the leg extension and assisted pull up. The fitness center even has a diverse set of cardio equipment like the rowing machine, exercise bikes, elliptical, and treadmills, assuring the gym is a place well suited for every type of gym goer.



How Do I Sign Up ?

Here is the fun part thing, it's not like a club or sport, you do not have any obligation to go every week or even every month! You only have to check in on the day you want to go. There is a check-in board at the entrance where you put your first name, last name, and your grade.

Who is at the Gym?

The casual atmosphere of the gym makes it so no one day has the same cast of characters. You may see athletes between seasons, or before and after practice. You may also see groups of friends both lifting and socializing. This experience might be some students' first experience going to a gym, and may serve as a great time to connect with experienced lifters who can mentor newcomers. The teachers who lift and chaperone at the gym are often more than happy to help you perfect your form, build your program, or answer any question you might have.

Benefits of the Gym

Going to the gym obviously has the physical benefit of allowing people to grow their muscles, strengthen the skeletal system, and aid in a healthy weight loss journey. But there are some additional advantages the high school's gym has:

1. Ease of use: the gym's location at the school allows for a seamless transition from academics to after-school leisure. As said previously, the BOT bus's availability on Tuesdays and Thursdays makes the hassle of transport home even easier.

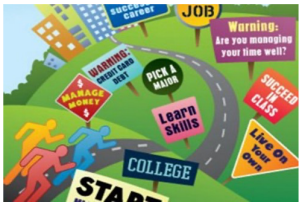
2. Built in schedule: the gym staying open from 2:35-4:00pm and three days a week, allows for enough time to do what you have to do.The near constant of the gym allows one to plan gym splits accordingly. The limited time makes it a more focused environment for some, ensuring efficiency.

3. Affordablity — it's free! Gym fees are a common barrier of entry for many new people to the gym. The gym having no-entry fee or membership requirement removes financial stress making it an easy sell for parents.

Fox Chapel Area Online Summer 2026 Course Offerings

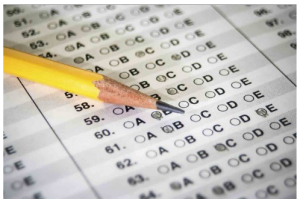
Open to students currently enrolled in grades 9, 10, and 11.
Online courses run for 5 weeks from
Friday, June 12 through Friday, July 17
Application deadline: February 28, 2026

FCAO Career and Financial Essentials



For students entering grades 11 or 12, **Career and Financial Essentials** complements all disciplines and other standards by developing postsecondary goals regarding career planning and financial literacy. Students will embark on a career search, compose a job application, and develop a personal résumé. Students will also learn about consumer skills, debit/credit, budgeting, and taxes. The culminating experience is a one-on-one professional interview that will be conducted in the fall. All activities are completed online. Assignments are due weekly, but students may work ahead, if desired.
.5 credits

FCAO SAT Prep



For students entering grades 11 or 12, **SAT Prep** helps students strengthen their skills using Khan Academy's SAT Practice modules to build test readiness. Students will complete two full-length, timed SAT practice tests to simulate real testing conditions and track their progress. Lessons focus on improving performance in Reading, Writing, and Math. Additionally, students learn test-taking strategies, including familiarity with the Bluebook testing app utilized by College Board. Weekly assignments help students stay accountable and steadily improve their scores.
.5 credits

FCAO Discovery Health



For students entering 10th grade, **Discovery Health** allows students to apply wellness concepts to the study of the human body. Utilizing basic facts about the body systems, students will discover how daily decisions can impact the operation of the human body. This is a required course for graduation from FCAHS. It meets the PA State Standards for Health, Safety, and Physical Education. All activities are completed online. Assignments are due weekly, but students may work ahead, if desired.
.5 credits

***** These are compressed courses. Students are completing an entire course in five weeks.*****

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the format of these classes? These classes are fully online & asynchronous, with weekly due dates.
What if a student is on vacation for part of the 5 weeks? Students can choose to work while on vacation or complete their assignments ahead of time. The late work policy will apply to all students, regardless of travel plans, so it is important to plan accordingly.
What is the late work policy? Late work is accepted up to one week with a 20% penalty; no work is accepted beyond one week late. No work is accepted beyond the last day of class, Friday, July 17th. The expectation is that all students will follow the course schedule due to the compressed nature of the classes.
How much should be expected for these classes? These classes are the same semester-long classes compressed into five weeks.
Can a student take more than one course? It is possible, but the student should consider their schedule and availability to complete multiple semester courses in a five-week span.
How do I register? Spaces are limited and classes get full. Spots are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. A student isn't enrolled until the form AND check are received. No refunds are available after June 1st.

Fox Chapel Area Online
Summer High School Course Registration
Courses run from June 12 – July 17
Open to students currently enrolled in grades 9, 10, and 11
Registration Deadline: February 28, 2026

I would like to register for the following summer course(s):

- ☐ FCAO College and Career Essentials (grades 11 & 12), $200.00
- ☐ FCAO SAT Prep (grades 11 & 12), $200.00
- ☐ FCAO Health (grade 10), $200.00

Student Name: _____

Current Grade Level (circle): 9 10 11

Student Email: _____@student.fcasd.edu

Student Phone : _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

SPACE IS VERY LIMITED!
STUDENTS ARE NOT ENROLLED
UNTIL REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT ARE SUBMITTED.
NO REFUNDS after June 1, 2026.

Please make check payable (separate check per course) to:
Fox Chapel Area School District (FCASD)
Submit check and form either in-person (high school room 168) or via mail to:

Lisa Gibson
FCAHS Summer School Registration
611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Contact Lisa_Gibson@fcasd.edu (412-967-2479) with any questions.

Fox Tales Quarterly: Meet The Staff

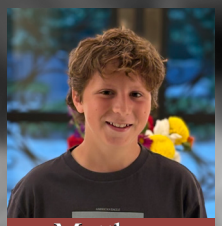
2025 - 2026



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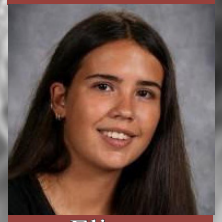
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Fox Tales is a quarterly news publication created by the students of Fox Chapel Area High School. The mission of this publication is to showcase the many positive happenings in the Fox Chapel Area School District and surrounding community. Fox Chapel Area School District is comprised of six municipalities: Aspinwall, Blawnox, Fox Chapel and Sharpsburg boroughs, and Indiana and O'Hara townships. To contribute articles, photographs, or letters, please contact the Fox Tales faculty sponsor, Lisa Gibson, at Lisa_Gibson@fcasd.edu or 412-967-2479. Letters should not exceed 350 words.

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Dr. Michelle Young, Program Principal (A-L)
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Volume 11, Issue 1
First Quarter. 2025-2026 School Year


Homecoming
2025
CHOIR
PLINKO
Mock Trial
SUPPORT THE BAKING CLUB
CAHS GERMAN CLUB
Soft pretzel SALE
RACE YOUR Friend
CARE ACROSS BORDERS