



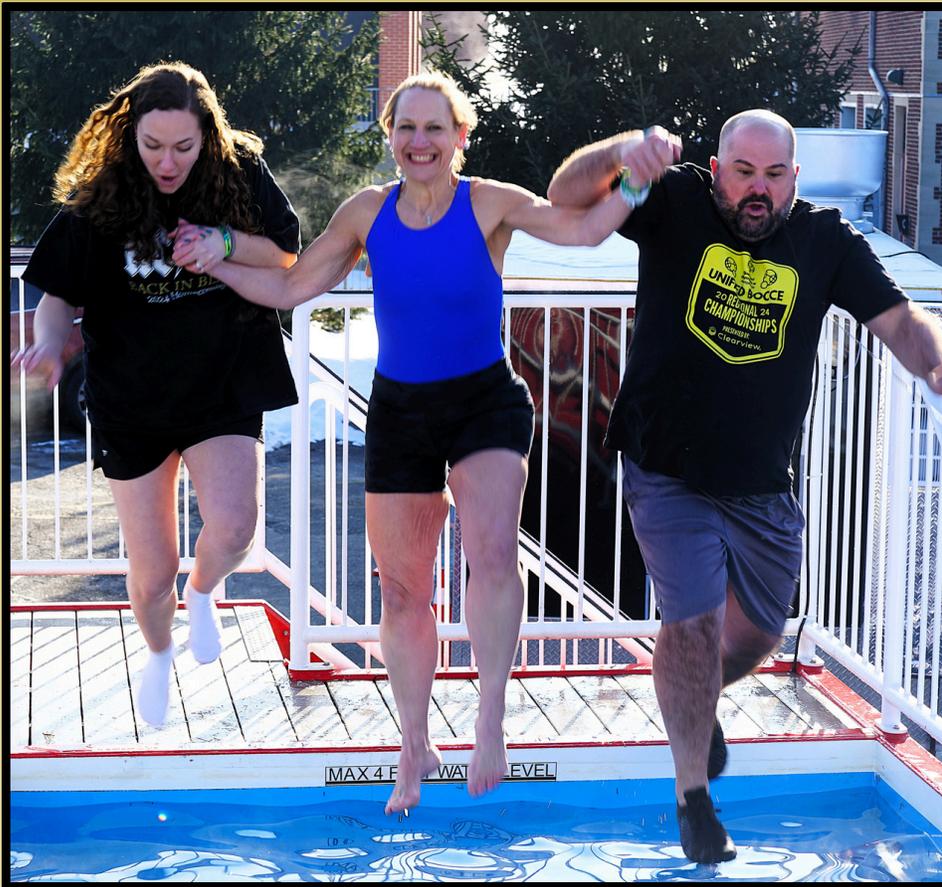
GCASD Makes a Splash at Polar Plunge!



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GCASD Marks a Decade of Participation in Polar Plunge to Benefit Special Olympics



Grove City Area School District proudly participated Feb. 13 in the Polar Plunge to benefit Special Olympics Pennsylvania Unified Programming, marking the 10th consecutive year the district has taken part in the event.

Thanks to the combined efforts of the school district and the greater Grove City community, more than \$14,000 was raised to support Special Olympics Pennsylvania Unified Programming and inclusive opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Nearly \$5,000 was raised by the GCASD community.

Despite freezing temperatures and snowy conditions, more than 30 students and teachers took the plunge, demonstrating school spirit and a strong commitment to inclusion. Kicking off the event was Hillview Principal, Kevin Persch, who kept his promise and plunged after the school surpassed its fundraising goal.

“This event is about so much more than jumping into cold water,” said Mr. Greg Mulato, a teacher who also oversees the district’s Unified Sports programs. “For 10 straight years, our students and staff have shown what inclusion truly looks like. The support from our community allows us to continue growing Unified Sports and creating meaningful opportunities for all of our students.”

In a message following the event, Diane Sickles of Special Olympics Pennsylvania’s Northwest Region shared her appreciation for the collective success and the community’s strong support.

“I cannot begin to thank each and every one of you for all you did to make the first annual Grove City Plunge a huge success,” Sickles said. “It was amazing seeing the support the community has for our athletes.”

Sickles also noted that organizers have already begun discussing ways to grow the event next year.

Grove City Area School District extends sincere thanks to all donors, participants, and community partners who helped make this milestone year a success while continuing to advance inclusion through Special Olympics Pennsylvania Unified Programming.

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GCAHS Pep Band Wrapping up Return Season

If you've been to a Grove City Area High School Boys Basketball game this winter, you've probably noticed that something missing from the past few years has finally returned: live music.

The Grove City Area High School Pep Band is back, and it didn't happen by accident. Alex Holmes, a 2023 Grove City graduate and the district's new assistant marching band director, decided it was time.

"I said, as part of this, I'm going to try and bring pep band back," Holmes said.

The last time it existed in any real form, he was a freshman. That was early 2020, right before COVID hit and everything about school life, especially crowded gyms and loud student sections, disappeared overnight. Back then, pep band only played girls basketball games, and even that was limited. "There was a DJ," Holmes said, "but I had a lot of fun with it." That stuck with him.

So when marching band season wrapped up this fall, Holmes made a move. He contacted the basketball team and pitched a simple idea: Before you hire a DJ, let the band bring the energy. The basketball team was in.

He put up a sign-up sheet near the end of marching season, and the response was immediate. On a typical night, the group assembles somewhere between 18 and 20 students. However, this is not pep band in the traditional sense.

Holmes built it around a smaller, more modern format. It is still anchored by woodwinds and familiar marching band tunes, but it is layered with bass, guitars, and a drum set to create a fuller, more upbeat sound.

"I've added some bass and guitar parts just to get some more sound. And then the drum set," he said. The goal was not to reinvent the wheel; it was to make the music fit the gym.

The group takes marching band songs and plays them faster, brighter and, as Holmes put it, "a little peppier." The format has also created a door into the program for students who might not have walked through otherwise.



Alex Holmes leads the high school pep band during a recent home game

Holmes pointed to one example right away, a student guitarist who was not involved in GCASD music programming before pep band started but is now a regular part of it.

"There are a lot of kids who are very musically talented in this school that don't participate in any ensemble," Holmes said. "I think having representation of that is important."

The other key piece is how low-pressure the whole thing is. Participation is optional on a game-by-game basis, a decision Holmes made deliberately and one that seems to be working. "Come to what you can, and we'll make it work," he told students.

It is a small gesture, but it matters. Between sports, clubs, jobs and family responsibilities, a lot of students simply cannot commit to another rigid schedule. Holmes understands it, because he is living it too. He is a full-time student at Slippery Rock University studying Digital Media Production, and he works at GCASD in his spare time.

In a lot of ways, this revival is about more than just adding noise to a gym. It is about bringing back something that COVID quietly erased, one of those school traditions you do not realize you miss until it is gone. It is about giving 'band kids' another place to play and giving non-band kids a way in. It is about restoring what makes game nights feel like game nights.

GCAHS Student Brings Winterfest to Life Through Her Individualized Learning Plan

When Grove City Winterfest takes center stage, there's a lot happening behind the scenes that helps make the night feel magical — including the beautiful floral arrangements presented during the event.

This year, one of those behind-the-scenes contributors was Aleah Lewis, a Grove City Area High School junior who played a special role through her Individualized Learning Plan with Wolf Creek Florist. Aleah helped create the floral arrangements that were presented to this year's Winterfest Princess, Kaitlyn Majure (see next page).

Aleah's interest in flowers has been growing steadily over time. While she says she has always liked flowers, her love for them has especially blossomed in the last two years. That growing passion helped lead her to her placement at Wolf Creek Florist, where she's been learning the art of floral design in a real florist shop.

As Aleah quickly discovered, floral arranging is about much more than simply putting flowers together.

"You have to take time to plan and make sure you have balance in the arrangement," she shared. "It's important to not have too much greenery or filler."

For the Winterfest arrangements, Aleah helped bring a winter-themed design to life, adding thoughtful details — including touches of blue to match the seasonal feel. While the overall plan was already established, she was responsible for arranging the pieces and ensuring they looked polished and balanced.

The experience was meaningful not just because of the skills she gained, but because of the tradition she was supporting.

"It was nice to be able to see the arrangements being enjoyed by the court," Aleah said. "It was fun to be able to tell people that I put the flowers together."



Aleah says her Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) has helped her grow in confidence and creativity, giving her the chance to make design decisions, try new things, and get comfortable trusting her instincts.

"It has definitely helped me feel more confident and a little more creative," she explained. "I got more comfortable trying things out and making my own design choices."

Her time at Wolf Creek Florist has also shown her just how much she's learned since the beginning.

"Having the opportunity to work there has been extremely helpful," she said. "I can clearly see a difference from where I started and where I am now. They have taught me so much and I'm so thankful for the opportunity."

Aleah's story is a great example of what Individualized Learning Plans can do: connecting students with real-world experiences, helping them explore personal interests, and giving them the confidence to contribute in meaningful ways to their school community.

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Kaitlyn Majure Selected Winterfest Princess



Congratulations to GCAHS student Kaitlyn Majure, who was selected as this year's Winterfest Princess during the Thursday, Jan. 29 boys' basketball game against Hickory! Majure officially reigned over the Winterfest Dance the following night, helping make it one of the most anticipated weekends of the winter season. (Photo Credit: Kaelin McFeely, GCAHS Yearbook Staff)

GCAMS Students of the Month

Congratulations to Grove City Area Middle School's January Students of the Month! These students were recognized for their hard work, positive attitudes, and the way they represent Eagle pride every day.

Front row (L to R): Clarissa Bable, Chloe Tedford, Brennan Seivers.

Back row (L to R): Sadie Taylor, John Pisano, Ryan Ochs.



A Closer Look at the 2025–26 GCASD Budget

When the Grove City Area School District Board approved the 2025–26 budget in June, it did so knowing the district was facing a projected deficit.

That decision was not made lightly, and it was not made without a plan.

The budget includes a projected shortfall of \$4.8 million — but it also reflects the reality of running a school system in a period when costs continue to rise faster than revenue, and when many of the biggest financial variables affecting public schools are set by forces outside our direct control.

As part of our ongoing commitment to transparency, we want to share what is driving the district’s current financial picture, what steps we have already taken, and what the district will be watching closely in the months ahead.



The Deficit is Real — But So is Our Plan

It’s important to understand that a projected deficit is not the same thing as an emergency.

The district’s general fund balance, which currently sits at \$7.1 million, exists for this purpose: to provide stability during years when costs increase, revenue falls short, or unexpected financial pressures arise.

It is also important to understand that part of the deficit is not money the district expects to spend — but money we are required to budget.

“At least a million dollars of that deficit is budgeted for what-ifs,” Harris said. “Because the state doesn’t allow us to spend more than our total budgeted expenditures, we need to put a little cushion in there.”

That “cushion” is a responsible budgeting practice, and it helps protect the district against mid-year surprises.

What’s Driving Costs Up — And Why Revenue isn’t Keeping Pace

The core financial challenge facing Grove City is one facing school districts across Pennsylvania. Inflation has driven up the cost of almost everything we purchase — including health insurance, property insurance, utilities, transportation, contracted services, supplies, and facility maintenance — but the district’s revenue has not risen at the same pace.

“When you’re looking at inflation rates around 3% to 4% or higher, which is what we’ve been seeing the last few years, there is a proportionate increase in the cost of all products purchased by the district,” Harris said. “The school’s also seeing the impact of cost increases in other areas — health insurance costs have been increasing at record rates throughout the country and the district is no different.”

Unlike a private business, a public school district cannot simply raise prices to cover rising costs.

The Real Estate Assessment Appeals: A Major Hit to Our Tax Revenue

In addition to inflation and long-term structural funding issues, the district has faced a very specific local challenge: commercial property tax appeals, primarily properties located near and including the outlet mall.

“The outlet mall appeals have really crushed us,” Harris said.

Beginning in 2021, several hotels and commercial properties near the outlet mall successfully appealed their assessed values, citing significant revenue losses during the COVID shutdown period.

“We had a lot of hotels start this trigger in 2021 out by the outlet mall,” Harris said. “Because when COVID hit, everything shut down. So they had a significant loss in revenue for that year.”

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A Closer Look at the 2025–26 GCASD Budget

Because commercial assessments are tied to the business's fair market value and revenue plays a major role in that determination, those appeals resulted in reduced property values — and reduced local tax revenue.

Perhaps, the most significant impact on the district was from the assessment appeal of the Grove City Factory Shops themselves. A settlement agreement was reached in 2023 which implemented a three year incremental reduction in assessed value of the property for 2022, 2023, and 2024.

The district has also seen additional appeals, including Walmart, Wendell August Forge and the former Rite Aid building.

“These appeals impacted not only our real estate tax revenue for each of those years, but also had a cumulative impact on our fund balance,” Harris said. “The district lost approximately \$2.8 million in tax revenue over the course of the last five years due to assessment appeals, \$2.2 million of which was solely due to the outlet mall. This is money that should have been included in our fund balance.

“Just in the current school year, if those appeals had not gone through, I’m estimating that we would have had about \$1.1 million in additional tax revenue.”

For 2026-27, Harris said, the district currently expects to lose about \$24,000 in real estate tax revenue due to new assessment appeals.

The Grove City Factory Shops have filed another appeal for 2026 which is currently going through the appeals process at the court level and may result in additional reductions to their assessed value, which would mean additional reductions in real estate tax revenue for the district.

Reassessment is Coming — And We Want Residents to Understand What it Means

Mercer County is currently in the process of a countywide reassessment, and the district expects that process to be a major point of discussion in 2026 and 2027. It is important for residents to understand what reassessment does and does not do.

Reassessment does not generate new money for the district. Some taxpayers may see their taxes go up, some may see them go down and some may be relatively unchanged, but the district will not see an increase in tax revenue.

District tax revenue is determined by the total of all district taxable assessed property values multiplied by the district's millage rate. When the total assessed value goes up, which will happen after the reassessment when all properties are brought to today's fair market value, the district will be required to reduce the millage rate so that the tax revenue to the district neither increases or decreases.

However, reassessment still matters since it should align all properties with today's fair market value. Taxpayers are encouraged to appeal their assessed values in 2026, prior to the district resetting the millage rate, if they feel that their assessed value does not reflect the fair market value of their property. If taxpayers appeal their assessments after the millage rate is reset, in January 2027, the district could lose tax revenue.

“It would adversely affect the district if people get their real estate tax bills in August 2027 and are not happy with their taxes and file an appeal,” Harris said. “If they appeal and succeed in reducing their assessed value after the millage rate is reset, it will be a direct loss of revenue to the district, much like the assessment appeals over the past five years. That is why the district will be encouraging residents to pay close attention to the timeline.

Demystifying State Funding: Why Grove City isn't Receiving “Adequacy” Dollars

The district's revenue picture is also shaped by state funding formulas, and Grove City has not seen the same increases some other districts have received.

“The state subsidies coming to us to fund our school's education are lower than the state average,” Harris said, “and they're not keeping pace with inflation.”

Pennsylvania's “adequacy funding” program has been described publicly as a major investment in schools. But Harris said Grove City does not qualify under the current formula.

“The State keeps touting ... all this additional money that they are giving to the schools in this adequacy funding,” Harris said. “Grove City is not one of them.”

Harris said the formula is based on COVID-era financial data — a period when federal relief funding temporarily increased per-pupil spending.

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A Closer Look at the 2025–26 GCASD Budget

During that time, Grove City expanded summer school programming and moved to one-to-one Chromebooks — decisions the district believes were right for students, but which increased per-pupil spending in the data used by the state.

This year, Harris said, Grove City received \$50,000 through a new state minimum allocation for districts that do not qualify for adequacy funding through the formula. But last year, the district received nothing.

Federal Funding is Shrinking

Federal revenue is a small share of the district’s overall budget, but it has continued to decrease year after year.

“It’s probably less than 5% of our total revenue,” Harris said. “But it has continued to decrease every year.”

Federal funding supports targeted needs — including staffing and services at Hillview and safety and security investments.

“Some of the federal money is used for safety and security, like the Raptor system that we have at the main entrance of our school buildings and our emergency response app used by our district employees and first responders,” Harris said.

The High School Renovation:

A Necessary Investment with Long-term Costs

The district has also begun to see the annual budget impact of the bonds taken out for the high school renovation project.

“We had to take out two bonds for the high school project — two \$10 million bonds,” Harris said. “So we’ve started to see those principal and interest payments become part of our annual budget.”

The renovation addressed critical infrastructure needs.

“The boilers were approximately 75 years old,” Harris said. “Multiple systems were reaching their end of life with many already beyond their end of life.”

In addition to the two bonds for the high school project, the district already had three \$10 million bonds from the Hillview project. The district will spend just under \$2.8 million in bond principal and interest repayments during the 2025-26 school year. This will increase to just over \$3.0 million for 2026-27.

Cost-saving Steps Already Underway

The district has not waited for a crisis to begin making changes. Over the past nine years, the district has taken multiple steps aimed at reducing costs through staffing efficiencies while protecting classroom instruction; this has resulted in a 25% overall decrease in total district staff. The district capitalized on efficiencies by reassigning job responsibilities, when possible, instead of hiring new employees to replace vacancies due to retirements or resignations.

In the past year alone, the district has reduced salary and benefits costs by over \$900,000 due to staff restructuring and improved efficiencies. One example of this is the restructuring of the Hillview assistant principal position. Instead of two full-time, 12-month principals at Hillview, the assistant principal is now a full-time, 10-month position.



A Proactive Step That Returned More Than \$200,000: Cyber Charter Recapture

One of the most immediate examples of the district taking proactive action occurred this past summer. The district participated in a cyber charter student recapture effort, designed to bring students back from cyber charter schools into district programming.

The financial impact was substantial: the district reduced tuition expenditures by more than \$220,000 through that effort.

The goal was not simply financial. The district believes students benefit from remaining connected to Grove City teachers, support staff, and programs — even when families need flexible learning options.

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A Closer Look at the 2025–26 GCASD Budget

Charter Reform Helps —

But it Doesn't Solve the Problem

Pennsylvania lawmakers have made changes to charter and cyber charter tuition calculations, and Harris said those changes will help the district.

“It will save us approximately \$1,000 for each regular education student and \$5,000 for each special education student for the 2025-26 school year,” Harris said. “So it’s helpful, but it’s not the windfall that everyone expects it to be.”

The Tax Base: Limited Growth and Significant Exemptions

The district’s ability to generate new local revenue is limited not only by economic growth, but also by the structure of the tax base. Harris said a significant portion of property in the borough is tax exempt.

“In 2025, 60% of the borough didn’t pay real estate taxes because they’re tax exempt,” Harris said.

That includes nonprofit institutions, churches, and educational entities.

Harris said the district has also seen slower-than-expected development near the outlet mall, due in part to infrastructure limitations.

What Comes Next?

The district has been sharing five-year projections with the board for years.

“We’ve been showing the board the five-year projections since 2018,” Harris said.

For a time, federal COVID relief funds helped stabilize the district’s fund balance.

“It was nice when we had the money from COVID,” Harris said. “That kind of put a bandage on our financial situation for those couple years.”

Now those funds are gone, and the district is again facing the underlying challenge of expenses rising faster than revenue. The district will continue to explore options, including ideas to both increase revenues and decrease expenditures — such as accepting non-resident students which was discussed publicly at a recent Board meeting.

“We must explore every avenue to decrease our annual deficit,” Harris said, “as we’re running out of fund balance, we cannot continue to sustain a deficit year after year.”

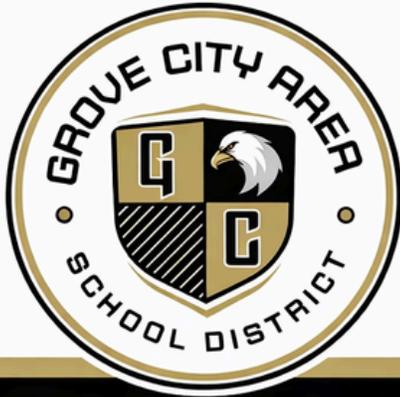
Harris said she understands how difficult this is to communicate.

The district’s goal, Harris said, is to continue providing strong programming while being honest with the community about what the numbers show.

“The goal is to continue to provide the best, high quality education and offer as many services as possible,” she said.



GCAHS Reminds Families to Park Responsibly During School Events



PARKING COURTESY & PROPERTY ACCESS

During School Events

Please be considerate of our neighbors and community by following these guidelines during school events:

Please be considerate of our neighbors and community by following these guidelines:



AVOID PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS

Do not block or park in residential driveways.



REPORT ISSUES IMMEDIATELY

Report any blocked driveways to event staff promptly.



RESPECT LOCAL BUSINESSES

Do not park in nearby business lots.



COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Let's work together to ensure safe and respectful parking practices.

• **VIOLATORS MAY BE TOWED AT THE OWNER'S EXPENSE** •

Thank you for your cooperation and vigilance.

As our school community continues to gather for athletic events, performances, and school activities, Grove City Area High School is reminding families and visitors of the importance of following parking restrictions and respecting neighboring properties.

Dr. Brendan Smith, GCAHS Principal, shared that the unique challenges of our landlocked campus can make parking difficult during high-attendance events. However, maintaining positive relationships with nearby residents and businesses remains a top priority.

“Our goal is to ensure the safety of all students while maintaining a respectful presence in our neighborhood,” Dr. Smith said. “Your adherence to these guidelines is crucial for maintaining smooth traffic flow and preventing accidents.” Families and guests are reminded not to block or park in private residential driveways. Additionally, nearby business lots—including Ace Hardware, Dairy Queen, and Flynn’s Tire—are private property and must remain open and accessible for their customers during business hours. These locations should not be used for event parking or parent pick-up.

If a blocked driveway is observed during a school event, attendees are encouraged to report it immediately to event personnel so an announcement can be made and the situation resolved before towing becomes necessary. Please note that unauthorized vehicles may be towed at the owner’s expense.

Dr. Smith emphasized that while some parking concerns may involve individuals from outside the Grove City community, a collective effort from our families and supporters will go a long way in preventing issues. Thank you for your continued cooperation and vigilance as we work together to ensure a safe and respectful environment for our students and neighbors.

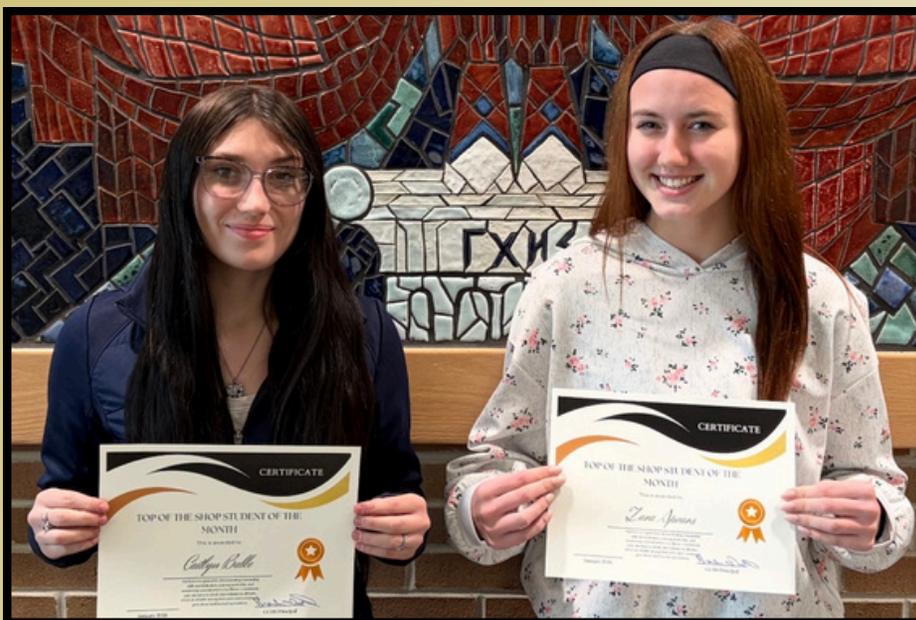
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GCAHS Top of the Shop Students of the Month

Each month, our Top of the Shop award recognizes students who demonstrate dedication, passion, and growth within their chosen programs. These students not only excel in hands-on learning but also show a clear vision for their future careers. This month's honorees reflect the pride we see every day in our shops and classrooms.

Zara Spears – Cosmetology

Zara chose the cosmetology program at MCCC because becoming a hairstylist feels like the best path for her future. She loves that cosmetology blends creativity, visual learning, and even chemistry, and she appreciates the supportive, hands-on teaching style that allows students to learn at their own pace. Zara says the program has helped her thrive in a way a traditional classroom doesn't, while still building real-life skills she can use long-term. After graduation and earning her cosmetology license, she plans to study abroad to gain her esthetician and extension licenses, with the ultimate goal of owning her own salon.



Pictured from left: Caitlyn Bable and Zara Spears.

Caitlyn Bable – Welding

Caitlyn decided to attend the Career Center to learn something new and set herself up for a strong future career. She chose to study welding because it's something she has always wanted to do—especially because her grandpa welded, and she has always looked up to him. Caitlyn plans to use the skills she gains to work in a fabrication shop after graduation, and after a few years of experience, she hopes to own and run her own full-time welding shop.

GCAHS Thespians Shine on Broadway Night



The GCAHS Thespians brought the house down on Jan. 29 for *A Night on Broadway*.

The entertaining evening was anchored by our multi-talented Thespians and theatre students.



Growing Kindness: “Be the Kind Kid” Challenge Takes Root in February



This February, Hillview Elementary came together to focus on something powerful: kindness. Through our schoolwide SEL and PBIS initiative, “Be the Kind Kid,” students and staff embraced the idea that every act of kindness—big or small—helps our school community grow stronger.

At the center of the initiative was the beautiful Kindness Tree display in the cafeteria (thank you to Jess Guiney for creating it!).

Throughout the month, students earned paper hearts in recognition of thoughtful actions, encouraging words, and positive choices.

Each heart, proudly labeled with a student’s name, was added to the tree—creating a vibrant visual reminder that kindness spreads.

The hearts also served as February’s Mystery Motivator, connecting seamlessly with our P200 system and reinforcing positive behavior in meaningful ways.

“The Kindness Challenge has empowered our students to lead with empathy, and it’s been incredible to watch kindness become part of our everyday language,” said Hillview School Counselor, Rebecca Trinchese.



Pictured clockwise from top: The Kindness Tree at Hillview. Fifth-grade students make valentines for veterans. A Valentine bouquet and gifts made by Mrs. Eller’s class for their ‘Adopt-a-Grandparent.’

Each week highlighted a different theme:

- Kindness to Self — “I matter.”
- Kindness to Others — “My words and actions matter.”
- Kindness to Our School & Community — taking care of the people and places around us.
- Kindness in Big & Small Ways — showing that kindness spreads.

Through weekly announcements, affirmations, classroom activities, and staff support, students found countless ways to practice empathy, responsibility, and compassion.

“Be the Kind Kid” was more than a February challenge—it was a celebration of the caring, connected culture that makes Hillview Elementary such a special place.

GCAMS Teacher Named Outstanding Teacher of the Year by PAECT

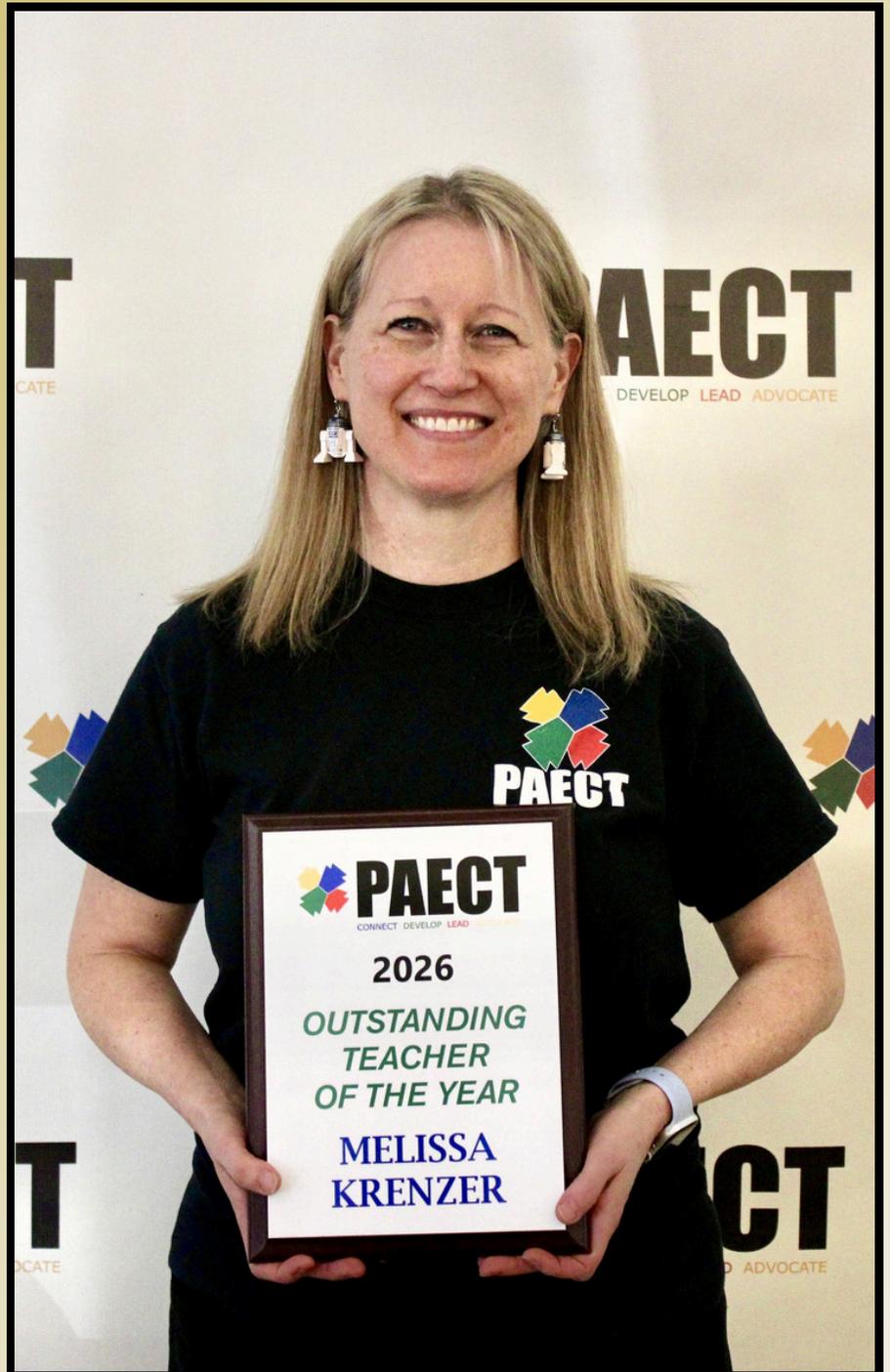
We are proud to announce that Melissa Krenzer, a dedicated sixth-grade math teacher at Grove City Area Middle School (GCAMS), has been named the 2026 Outstanding Teacher of the Year by the Pennsylvania Association of Educators of Communications and Technology (PAECT).

She received this prestigious honor at a recent state conference in recognition of her outstanding contributions to education. Mrs. Krenzer has taught sixth-grade math at GCAMS for the past three years, building on nine years of experience as a fourth-grade teacher at Hillview. A proud Grove City resident, she and her husband, Gary, have raised three children who all attended the Grove City Area School District—further reflecting her deep commitment to the community.

Known for her creativity and passion for student engagement, Mrs. Krenzer brings math to life through an exciting *Star Wars*-themed classroom. Students earn game points for completing homework and demonstrating positive behaviors, which allows them to participate in weekly “Galactic Battles”—a fun dice game that reinforces math skills while encouraging teamwork and enthusiasm.

In addition to her work with students, Mrs. Krenzer is a leader among her colleagues. She regularly provides professional development for middle school staff, sharing strategies for using technology tools and effective instructional practices. Her collaborative spirit and dedication to continuous improvement inspire both students and fellow educators.

Mrs. Krenzer has been an active PAECT member since 2018 and serves on both the regional and state boards. She has also dedicated the past four years to the KTI Summit, a weeklong professional development opportunity for educators across Pennsylvania.



“I am honored to be recognized for my passion for teaching students and for helping other teachers,” Mrs. Krenzer shared. “I love Grove City and the students and families here. I truly appreciate the support I receive from the school administration, which enables me to excel in my profession.”

Mrs. Krenzer’s recognition as Outstanding Teacher of the Year is a testament to her commitment to educational excellence and her positive impact on the Grove City community. Please join us in congratulating her on this well-deserved honor.

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Mr. DeCola Named VFW Citizen Education Teacher of the Year



Grove City Area Middle School is proud to recognize Mr. Mike DeCola, who was honored on January 31, 2026 as the VFW Citizen Education / Teacher of the Year.

GCAMS Principal, Larry Connelly, shared: “Grove City Area Middle School is so very proud of Mr. DeCola for being chosen as the VFW Citizen Education / Teacher of the Year award. On a daily basis, Mr. DeCola goes above and beyond to support all students. He is consistently optimistic, energetic and passionate while being an outstanding physical education teacher. He works tirelessly to support his colleagues and provide the best possible learning experiences for his students. GCAMS is a better place because of him! Congratulations to Mr. DeCola!”

The VFW Teacher of the Year Award recognizes educators who promote citizenship, character, leadership, and positive values in students. Mr. DeCola was nominated by Grove City VFW Post 519, and the award was presented at a dinner held at the West Middlesex VFW Post 6233 by Mike Staab, President of VFW District 28.

Mr. DeCola was nominated by fellow Physical Education (PE) teacher Mr. Bobby Thorne, who highlighted Mr. DeCola’s extraordinary commitment to students. His nomination noted Mr. DeCola’s personal purchase of monthly Walmart gift cards for PE Students of the Month, his work hosting PE activities for Life Skills students, and the countless hours he dedicates to preparing for events like Field Day.

One story shared in the nomination described Mr. DeCola setting up for Field Day at 2:00 a.m., using only a golf cart light to work in the cold and dark—an example of the dedication he shows in creating meaningful experiences for students. Congratulations to Mr. DeCola on this well-deserved honor!

Grove City Wrestlers Earn District/Section Titles, Advance to Regionals

Grove City's Chase Karenbauer (114) and Hudson Hohman (152) captured individual titles at the PIAA District 10 Championships on Feb. 21, leading the Eagles to a second-place team finish behind Cathedral Prep. Ian Stearns (121) and Kagen Painter (127) each added runner-up finishes as Grove City continued its strong postseason run.

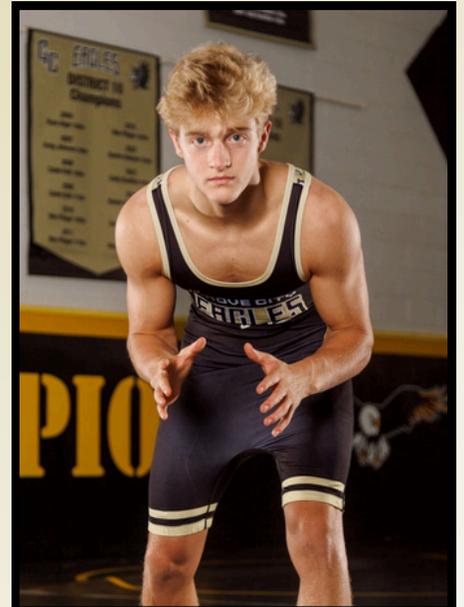
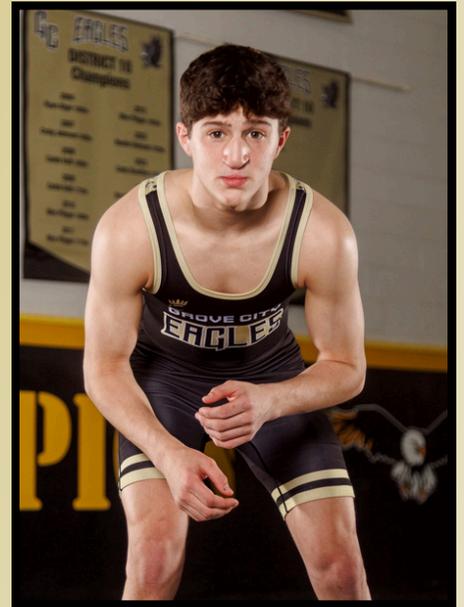
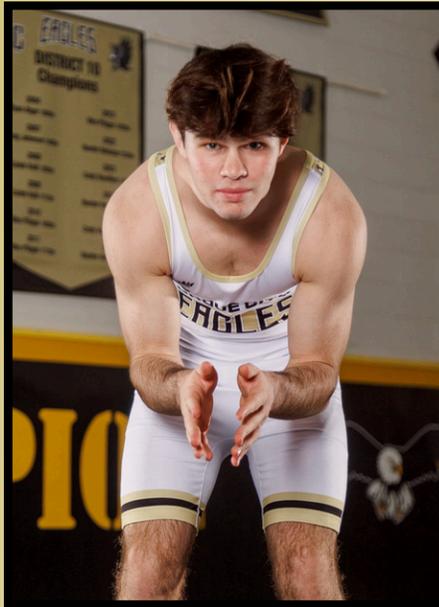
The District performance followed an impressive showing at the Section 2-AA tournament, where Grove City finished second as a team with 182.5 points and advanced 11 wrestlers to districts, the most under head coach Wesley Phipps.

Hohman, a senior at 152 pounds, won his third Section title and reached the Section finals for the fourth straight year. He entered districts with a 35-2 record and is a three-time state medalist. Karenbauer, a sophomore at 114 pounds, claimed his second straight Section championship and remained undefeated at 40-0.

At Sections, Stearns placed second at 121 pounds for the second straight season and carried a 26-6 record, while junior Tanner Hamilton earned his third career Section runner-up finish at 139 pounds. Additional Section medalists for Grove City were Peter Augustine (fourth); Heath Hohman and Cayden Skeath (fifth); and Cam Montgomery, Gavin Purdy and Nash Salmon (sixth).

On the girls side, freshman Kennedy Unrue placed second at 124 pounds at the District 10 Championships to qualify for regionals, finishing with an 11-3 record. She received a first-round bye and recorded back-to-back pins in the quarterfinals and semifinals to reach the championship match in her first district appearance. She finished second after a 10-3 decision in the finals.

GC Wrestlers are back in action at Regionals on Feb. 27-28.



Elementary Students Shine at SRU Equations Competition



Grove City Area School District elementary students had an outstanding showing at the Equations Competition held in February at Slippery Rock University (SRU). For the first time, every Grove City team earned a placement in the competition—an exciting milestone and a testament to the students’ preparation, teamwork, and strong math skills.

Leading the way was the Grove City 3rd/4th grade team of Simon Moore, Natalie Stawicki, Ella Faulconbridge, Peter Verbois, and AJ Midberry, who earned 1st place overall. Simon and AJ both finished the competition undefeated, contributing to the team’s championship performance.

Two additional Grove City 3rd/4th grade teams also had impressive results, tying for 6th place. These teams included Arbor Duggan, Eleanor Loretto, Cole Roberts, Isaac Waha, Hudson Fisher, Ava Tedford, Liliana Uhler, John Dillinger, Tori Roth, and Allie Jordan. Tori Roth completed the competition undefeated, highlighting the depth of talent across the teams.

Grove City’s 5th/6th grade team—David Rendos, Henry Roth, Oscar Sutton, Jonah Robinson, and Amelia Loretto—earned a strong 4th place finish. Oscar Sutton and Jonah Robinson both ended the day undefeated, helping lead their team to a top finish.

Middle School and High School Students Excel at SRU Equations Competition

Grove City Area Middle School and High School students earned impressive results at the Equations Competition held at Slippery Rock University.

In the middle school division, Grove City teams swept the top three spots. The team of Willa Guiney, Elise Verbois, Sarah Wolfe, Leo Gildersleeve, and Eddy Falso placed 1st, followed by John Pisano, Brenna Fisher, Levi Wise, Madeleine Bardy, and Christian Bauer in 2nd, and Ayla Greleski, Hannah Dicus, Scarlett Blair, Caleb Byun, and Noah Robinson in 3rd. Undefeated middle school competitors included Willa, Sarah, Elise, Eddy, Ayla, Brenna, John, and Christian.

In the high school division, Samantha Plummer, Samantha Myers, Zach Mathieson, Colton Greleski, and Ethan Cooke earned 3rd place. Undefeated performances were recorded by Samantha Myers, Zach Mathieson, Owen Hammel, and Jordan Gamble. Congratulations to all students for representing Grove City with excellence!



GCAHS Students Perform Well in Mock Trial to Advance to District Playoffs

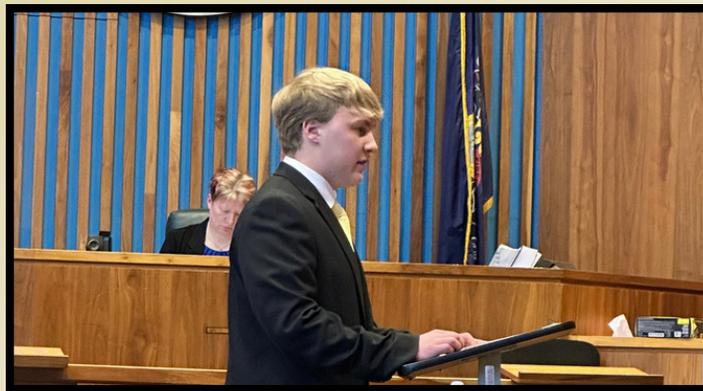
In January, Grove City Area High School students competed in the Mock Trial competition at the Erie County Courthouse. Mock Trial is a courtroom simulation in which students serve as attorneys and witnesses, presenting evidence and examining witnesses while developing critical thinking and public speaking skills.

The Defense team—Julia Shaw, Ares Hynde, Ben Fischer, Daniel Mariacher, Caroline Jackson, Laken Cook, Christopher Shaw, and Graham Hatfield—competed against Collegiate. Ben Fischer was named Best Advocate, and Daniel Mariacher earned Best Witness honors.

The Plaintiff team—Mia Mertz, Brayden Krenzer, Zach Mathieson, Vincenzo Trezona, Drew Gildersleeve, Abby Donnelly, Amelia Jackson, and August Cowan—competed against Meadville. Mia Mertz was named Best Advocate, and Vincenzo Trezona was recognized as Best Witness.

We are happy to announce that our Mock Trial Team won both of their cases this month and will advance to the District playoffs on Wednesday, February 25. Students will travel to Erie for the competition and will be out of school for the day as they compete.

Congratulations to all students for representing Grove City with excellence, and best of luck at Districts!



Talented Cast Shines in GCAMS' Epic Performance of *Hercules*



Grove City Area Middle School's Theatre Program impressed audiences with a fantastic production of *Hercules* on February 5–7. Our talented middle school performers brought the legendary story to life with energy, confidence, and strong stage presence.

The three performances were a true showcase of student dedication and teamwork. Thank you to everyone who came out to support our young performers!



Kindergarten Registration



The image shows a registration card for Groves City Area School District. At the top is the district's logo, a shield with a 'G' and an eagle. Below the logo, the text reads: 'GROVE CITY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN FOR 2026-2027'. A gold banner below this says 'ENROLL ONLINE BY MARCH 31, 2026'. The card lists requirements: child must be 5 by Sept 2, 2026; required documents include birth certificate, immunizations, physical, dental, parent/guardian driver's license, proof of residency, and proof of guardianship. It also mentions a kindergarten registration program on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm. For new families, it says to scan a QR code. For existing families, it provides a navigation path: Infinite Campus > More > Registration and Verification > 2026-2027 New Student Registration, and contact information for Mrs. Dawn Guy. A QR code is provided with the text 'SCAN TO ENROLL' and the URL 'https://tinyurl.com/HillviewReg'.

Thank You for Reading!

Thank you for reading the Eagle Spotlight Newsletter. Eagle Spotlight is published monthly by the Grove City Area School District and delivered by ParentSquare. If you haven't already, please sign up for ParentSquare so you never miss a newsletter, along with other updates from GCASD.

If you have news, photos, or story ideas to share, please send an email to GCASD Communications Specialist Charlie Deitch at charles.deitch@gcasdk12.org.

Finally, follow us on social media at the links below for all the latest district news and updates. We'll be posting content and providing information all year long!



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