

# TYNOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE TYRONE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



## HOME OF THE GOLDEN EAGLES

### DR. MEAGAN DELBAGGIO FERNANDEZ TO DELIVER COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS TO TAHS CLASS OF 2026



**Meagan DelBaggio Fernandez, DO - TAHS '97**  
Fellow of the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Dr. Meagan DelBaggio Fernandez, a member of Tyrone Area High School's Class of 1997, will deliver the commencement address for the Class of 2026 on Friday, May 29—bringing her journey full circle as she inspires the next generation of graduates.

She is the eldest daughter of Michael and Patrice (Gillam) DelBaggio, both graduates of Tyrone Area High School ('71 and '73, respectively). She has two sisters, Nicolee ('98) and Marie ('03).

During her time at TAHS, Meagan made the most of every opportunity, excelling both academically and in extracurricular activities. She was an active participant in basketball, golf, and track, and was involved in National Honor Society and Student Council. On the basketball court, she reached the impressive milestone of scoring 1,000 career points (one of only 17 Lady Eagles in TAHS history), and in golf, she advanced to the state championships.

Meagan continued her academic and athletic journey at the University of Pittsburgh, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree while competing as a Division I women's basketball player. She distinguished herself both on the court and in the classroom, earning recognition as a Bell Atlantic Scholar-Athlete and a Big East Academic All-Star. During her time at Pitt, she also expanded her global perspective through a semester of study in Florence, Italy.

Meagan's path then led her to the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, earning her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree in 2005. She went on to complete her orthopedic surgery internship and residency at UPMC Pinnacle Health System in Harrisburg. During

her residency, she gained valuable, hands-on experience through specialized rotations in pediatric orthopedics, musculoskeletal oncology, trauma, and foot and ankle surgery at leading medical centers across the country.

Following her residency, she pursued advanced training through a Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgery Fellowship at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Scottish Rite Hospital, further strengthening her expertise in caring for children with orthopedic conditions.

Meagan has served as Chief of the Division of Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgery at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville since February 2020. She also serves as Medical Director of Pediatric Ambulatory Surgery for Geisinger Health System and has been part of the Geisinger Musculoskeletal Institute's Division of Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgery since 2011.

In addition to her clinical leadership, Meagan is committed to medical education. She has served as an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine since 2017 and has held adjunct faculty roles at Temple University's Lewis Katz School of Medicine and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine since 2014.

Meagan is also actively involved in research aimed at improving care for children. Since 2020, she has led a multi-center study at Geisinger focused on personalized spinal implants for pediatric patients. She previously led a study comparing robotic-assisted and traditional surgical techniques for treating scoliosis.

*(Continued on page 3)*

# MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

As the 2025-26 school year closes, we reflect on the last year and the ways in which we continue to change. Each year brings a sense of accomplishment, as well as the urgency to achieve the growth necessary to adapt to the evolving needs of our students. Ultimately, it is our desire to provide the best educational experiences possible.

In this issue, we feature our commencement speaker, Dr. Megan DelBaggio Fernandez, TAHS Class of 1997, and welcome her back to TAHS to celebrate a milestone for the Class of 2026. Our tradition of inviting alumni speakers to address the graduating classes is one that we are proud to continue, and we hope that this practice provides our seniors with the confidence to know that they have been provided with a solid foundation on which to succeed.

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

I would like to thank the Tyrone community for the support of our students and staff. We have much for which to be proud and without your involvement and commitment, we could not provide such a successful educational program. Looking ahead, I am excited about the many possibilities for another productive year in 2026-27.

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



**Leslie Estep**  
Superintendent of Schools



**Class of 1976 officers: Front (left to right): Jennifer Bryan, Gretchen Searer and Judy Cowher. Back (left to right): Janette Lauder and Shelley Kobuck.**

## 50-Year Flashback—TAHS Class of 1976

Back when the United States Bicentennial brought the country together, the Tyrone Area High School Class of 1976 was starting its next chapter. This September, they will return home to celebrate 50 years—reuniting as the nation marks the United States Semiquincentennial.

On Saturday, September 19 at 6:00 p.m., classmates will join at Sage Creek Lodge (4061 Amy Lane, Tyrone) for an evening of reconnecting, reminiscing, and celebrating. The gathering will include a complimentary buffet dinner and live music for all Class of 1976 graduates and their guests.

For RSVP details and additional information, visit [www.tyrone.k12.pa.us](http://www.tyrone.k12.pa.us), click on the “About Us” tab and select “Alumni.”

If you would like to share class reunion information on the T ASD website, email [cjblaska@tyrone.k12.pa.us](mailto:cjblaska@tyrone.k12.pa.us).

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[www.tyrone.k12.pa.us](http://www.tyrone.k12.pa.us)

*(Commencement Speaker continued from cover)*

Earlier in her career, Meagan contributed to a variety of orthopedic research projects at Geisinger and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, studying topics such as bone health in adolescents, pain management after surgery, anesthesia safety, and spinal biomechanics. She also collaborated with researchers from Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University on innovative approaches to detect bone healing complications earlier.

Meagan has authored and co-authored numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and textbook chapters focused on pediatric fractures, sports injuries, and spinal deformities. She is also a frequent presenter across the country, sharing her expertise on scoliosis surgery, robotics, pediatric sports medicine, and emerging orthopedic technologies. Her dedication and impact have been recognized with numerous honors and awards, including distinctions for leadership, research, and excellence within her specialty.

Meagan’s impact reaches far beyond the patients she treats each day. She plays an active role in shaping the future of her field as an American Osteopathic Board of Orthopedic Surgery Board Examiner and is engaged in both national and regional professional organizations dedicated to advancing orthopedic care.

Despite her demanding career, Meagan is committed to service and community involvement. She has participated in international medical missions work and continues to give back locally through involvement in youth basketball associations, coaching, and supporting student-athletes as a team physician.

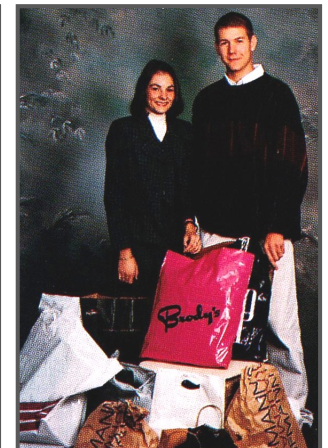
Dr. Meagan DelBaggio Fernandez’s journey—from Tyrone classrooms and basketball courts to national medical leadership—reflects the power of hard work, education, and strong community roots. Her story serves as an inspiration to today’s students and a reminder that a Tyrone education can be the first step toward making a meaningful difference in the world.



**Dr. Meagan DelBaggio Fernandez shares a confident thumbs-up as she prepares for a surgical procedure, reflecting her commitment to patient care and innovation in modern medicine.**



**The Fernandez Family**  
Pictured above (left to right), Michael and Meagan Fernandez, along with their sons Henry (13), and William (11), pause for a family photo during a visit to Citizens Bank Park, home of the Phillies.



**Photos above from the 1997 Eagle Yearbook:**  
Top: Meagan DelBaggio (back row, third from left), the only female on the golf team, capped off her senior season with a Bolten Invitational victory and a trip to the state championships.  
Bottom left: TAHS Lady Eagles senior basketball players (clockwise from top left): Tiffany Beckwith, Erica McNelis, Mary Miller, Sarah Grazier, and Meagan DelBaggio.  
Bottom right: Cousins Meagan DelBaggio and Andrew Woomer show off their style after being voted “Best Dressed” by the Class of 1997.

# STUDENTS EARN STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION

At the time of this publication, the following Tyrone Area Middle and High School students have earned the opportunity to compete at the state and/or national level during the 2025-26 school year.

## ACADEMICS

### Eagle Eye

- \*Abby Anthony
- \*Cadence Ball
- \*John Eaken
- Carter Gwinn
- Layna Hess
- \*Rowan Moore
- \*Jackson Murphy
- \*Carlie Nowlin
- \*Brayden Parsons
- Shiloh Price
- \*Reilly Rawlings
- \*Lucas Rudden
- \*John Stanton
- \*Addison Warren

### FBLA

- Aubrey Biter
- Ryleigh Holmes
- Carlie Nowlin

### FFA

- \*Aubrey Biter
- Josie Dicken
- John Eaken
- \*Cassidy Fleck
- \*Janice Gilliland

- Gracie Graham
- \*Alyssa Houck
- \*Nora Hoy †
- \*Paige Hoy
- Carlie Nowlin
- Wyatt Walls
- \*Frances Weaver
- Bailey Woomer
- Taylor Wrye
- Sarah Zimmerman †

### SkillsUSA

- Tyke Beck
- Alexander Brumbaugh
- Carter Burkett

## THE ARTS

### Jazz Band

- Jackson Conrad
- Evan Laird
- Cliff Wilson

### Marching Band

- Cooper Beck
- CiniAnne Bonsell
- Raife Carroll
- Emma Connelly
- Jackson Conrad
- Melina Corrigan

- Sarah Dale
- Jonathan Davis
- Jordyn Deck
- Cyrah Dively
- Violet Fenstermacher
- Hannah Gabel
- Hunter Harpster
- Leah Jeffries
- Evan Laird
- Logan Markel
- Reagan Markel
- Alex Martinez
- Aden Miller
- Bentley Miller
- Riley Miller
- Rachel Pedersen
- Elijah Richardson
- Paige Riggelman
- Haessly Scott
- Amberlyn Sherwin
- Alexander Sklenar
- Jesse Stewart
- Jaycee Wance
- Raelynn Wance
- Mackenzie Warner
- Rebecca Whited

- Cliff Wilson
  - Sophia Witkamp
  - Peyton Wray
- ### Percussion
- Cooper Beck
  - Lukis Bonsell
  - Raife Carroll
  - Emma Connelly
  - Jackson Conrad
  - Melina Corrigan
  - Sarah Dale
  - Violet Fenstermacher
  - Hannah Gabel
  - Hunter Harpster
  - Leah Jeffries
  - Evan Laird
  - Logan Markel
  - Reagan Markel
  - Aden Miller
  - Bentley Miller
  - Riley Miller
  - Rachel Pedersen
  - Elijah Richardson
  - Paige Riggelman
  - Amberlyn Sherwin
  - Alexander Sklenar

- Avery Stewart
- Jesse Stewart
- Jaycee Wance
- Raelynn Wance
- Isaac Weber
- Cliff Wilson
- Peyton Wray

## ATHLETICS

### Swimming

- Lucas Bonsell

### Track and Field

- Sarah Chichester
- Mason Emigh
- Braleigh Flick
- Drew Irons
- Claire Lehman
- Nicole Ramsey
- Raylee Woodring
- Lola Woomer

### Wrestling

- Kyle Scott
- Mason VanAllman

\*National Competition  
† 2025 Graduate

## FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS

Once again this summer, the Tyrone Area School District will partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide free, healthy meals to children. There are no income or registration requirements, and meals are available to any child 18 and under.

For more information, please call 814-684-4240, extension 3727.

**Monday through Friday**

**June 8 - August 7**

*(Closed Friday, July 3)*

**Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.**

**Lunch: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

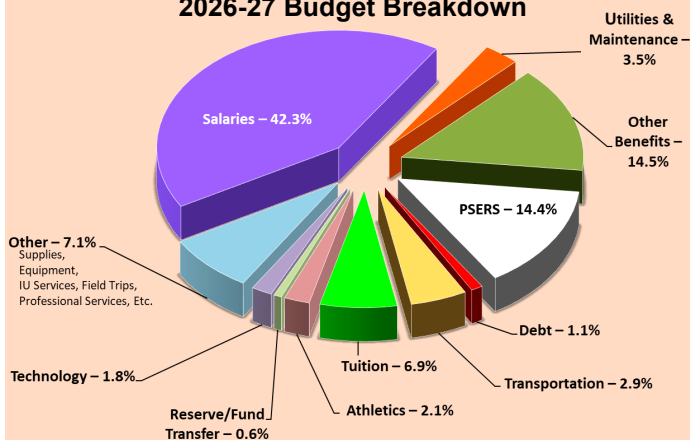
### Location:

Tyrone Area Elementary School  
601 Clay Avenue  
Enter through cafeteria lobby at the rear of the building

*(No registration required)*

## TASD PROPOSED BUDGET

### 2026-27 Budget Breakdown



### 2026-2027 Proposed Budget Facts

- Revenues total \$31,236,886
- Budgeted revenues represent an increase of 6.23% from 2025-26
- Expenditures total \$31,977,533
- Budgeted expenditures represent an increase of 3.18% from 2025-26
- Use of Fund Balance—\$740,646
- Millage rates proposed to increase to Act 1 Index of 4.9% for the 2026-27 school year

# RETIREEES LEAVE LASTING LEGACY



**Mary Joe Beck**  
The Nutrition Group  
Food Service Cook  
26 Years of Service

By Shiloh Price, TAHS 10th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

After 26 years of helping feed generations of Tyrone students, Tyrone Area High School cafeteria worker Mary Joe Beck is retiring. While cafeteria workers are not often in the spotlight, their work plays an important part in every school day, and for more than two decades, Beck has been a familiar face helping keep the high school cafeteria running smoothly.

Beck began working in the cafeteria when her children were in school. The job allowed her to stay close to her kids while also helping support them. Beck decided to stay on the job long after they grew up because she enjoyed being with her coworkers and serving the students. Over the years, Beck said the part of the job she will remember most is the people she worked with. “The thing that I am going to remember most is the friendships I have made with many of the lunch ladies,” Beck said.

Those who worked with Beck describe her as dependable, hardworking, and always willing to help wherever she was needed. “Mary Joe is always willing to step in and help out anywhere she is needed,” said coworker Gerri Smith, who added, “She also has the best chocolate stash!” Many of

her coworkers also said that her personality and sense of humor made work more fun for those around her. “Mary Joe is a genuinely good-hearted person,” coworker Leslie Kensinger said. “She’s so funny, and a lot of times she doesn’t even know it.”

One memory that stands out to many of her coworkers happened during the COVID pandemic, when all the cafeteria workers were under a lot of added stress, having to deal with extra safety procedures and protective equipment. It was not an easy time, but Beck did her best to maintain a positive attitude and knew how to relieve the tension and stress. “During COVID, we had so much PPE, and she just dressed up in everything,” Kensinger said. “She would put it all on and just be back there dancing. She had us all laughing.”

Her coworkers said Beck will be remembered for her hard work, humor, and friendship, and they all wish her the best and hope she enjoys lots of time with her family. “I will miss her grandmotherly ways,” Smith said. “The way she interacts with others is carefree and makes you feel appreciated and loved, but I think I will miss her laugh the most.”



**Rudy Bilka**  
TAMS English Language  
Arts Teacher  
14 Years of Service

By Paisley Fix, TAHS 9th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

From his first experience as a U.S. Army educator to his career as a middle school English teacher, Tyrone Area Middle School teacher Aloysius “Rudy” Bilka’s path to the classroom has been anything but ordinary. This summer, Bilka’s journey will take a new turn when he and his wife, Tina, both retire from the Tyrone Area School District. In retirement, Bilka hopes to dedicate as much time as possible to his current passion—shark fishing in the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Bilka’s experience as an educator began long before he began teaching in a public school classroom. From 1985 to 1990, he served on active duty in the U.S. Army, where he discovered that he had a gift and love for teaching while instructing soldiers in basic combat engineering skills at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. During his time in the Army, Bilka trained recruits in Advanced Individual Training and taught at the Sapper Leadership Course, a demanding program designed to develop elite engineer leaders through advanced training in demolitions, land navigation, airborne and air assault tactics, and combat endurance. “One of the most important

things I learned in the Army was clear, concise directions. I also learned that everyone has different learning styles, and what works for one person might not work for another,” Bilka said.

After his military service, Bilka took those lessons into the field of public education. He began his career at Tyrone Area School District in 2006 as a long-term substitute in fourth grade. Following that school year, he worked with small groups in learning support and served as a K–4 reading and math coach before becoming a full-time fifth-grade teacher in 2012. He later served as a sixth-grade team leader before finishing his career this spring as an eighth-grade English teacher and middle school yearbook adviser.

Bilka has been known as someone who teaches with a lot of humor and compassion, but still holds his students to high expectations. “He always tries to make everything we do fun, which is very rare in teachers,” current TAMS yearbook staff member Gia Sarsfield said. Whether he was helping young readers, guiding students through essays, or encouraging creativity in the yearbook class, Bilka said he always tried to help students develop a growth mindset. “Seeing a frustrated student return to a difficult essay, transform their initial failure into a strong success, and realize they are lifelong learners is the ultimate reward I carry with me,” Bilka said.

Students and colleagues said Bilka’s ability to connect with students made a lasting impact. “Yearbook was my favorite class in eighth grade. Every day felt like we were a big happy family. Mr. Bilka made everything enjoyable,” former TAMS yearbook staff member Bella Smith said. “Mr. Bilka is one of the most understanding teachers I have ever had,” current TAMS yearbook staff member Allie Desch said. Colleague Curtis Neff said Bilka brought humor and patience to the challenges of middle school. “Working with Mr. Bilka for the last five years has been a lot of fun. He has been a great mentor and role model for me with the humorous yet productive ways he handles middle schoolers,” Neff said. “My favorite memory would probably be when we scared a student into thinking he had to meet with all of the teachers to plead his case to stay in yearbook class.”

As Bilka prepares for retirement, he is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Tina. He also plans to spend more time with his children and five grandchildren, soak up the sun, and do plenty of shark fishing in the Outer Banks. “The key to shark fishing is to get the biggest fish head you can as bait. They just can’t resist it,” he said.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

*(Bilka continued from Page 5)*

Although he is looking forward to more time on the water, Bilka said he is especially grateful for the people who made his years at Tyrone meaningful. “As I close this chapter, I extend my deepest gratitude to the students, my supportive colleagues, and the entire Tyrone community,” Bilka said. “Your trust and commitment to education have made my career rich and meaningful. Thank you for the memories and the professional friendships that will last a lifetime.”

His next adventures may include calm seas, big catches, and plenty of time with family, but those who worked with him said Bilka’s impact at Tyrone will not soon be forgotten.



**By Paisley Fix, TAHS 9th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

After 27 years of dedicated service in education, Tyrone Area Elementary School special education paraprofessional Tina Bilka will retire at the end of the school year. Throughout her career, Bilka has worked with students of many ages and abilities and enjoyed helping them all learn and grow.

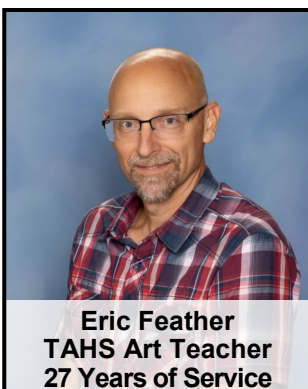
“Reflecting on a career that spanned several diverse roles, I’ve had the privilege of growing from my early days as a paraprofessional at the high school to teaching sign language within the elementary autism support program,” Bilka said. Bilka takes pride in working with teachers to guide students through each school year, watching their progress, and celebrating their achievements along the way. Her coworkers said that dedication to students has been a central part of Bilka’s career. “I have only known Tina for a short amount of time, but it has been my privilege to work with her,” TAES Assistant Principal Kellie Richner said. “She is dedicated to the students at TAES. She is kind and caring. She is reliable. I can count on her to help anywhere she is needed.”

Fellow TAES paraprofessional Noelle Lucas, who has worked with Bilka for the last 10 years, said Bilka’s care for students and positive attitude made her a valued coworker and, even more importantly, a friend. “I am truly going to miss her next year,” Lucas said. “I have so many great memories [of her.] We always had a wonderful working relationship with many laughs. She is truly a caring person, and I’m so happy to call her my friend.” Lucas said some of her favorite memories with Bilka came from the time they spent together working directly with students. “We have had so many fun memories with the students and each other,” Lucas said. “We always made learning fun for our students, and they enjoyed the love and laughter in our classroom. I have too many great memories to single out one.”

Beyond the classroom, Bilka said she has also valued the sense of community that came with working at TAES and building meaningful relationships with students, families, and coworkers. Elementary teacher Kristy Brennen has worked closely with Bilka and said that she will be greatly missed. “The way she cared for and worked hard to help our students make progress with their communication skills is what I will remember most about my time with her this past school year,” Brennen said. Special Education Teacher and Reading Specialist Lauren Garda said Bilka’s positive attitude is contagious. “I have not worked closely with her, but she always has a smile on her face and has a positive attitude,” Garda said.

Her husband Rudy Bilka, an eighth-grade English teacher, is also retiring from T ASD at the end of the school year. The Bilkas are looking forward to traveling to new places, spending more time outdoors, camping at the beach, shark fishing on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and spending more time with family, especially their grandchildren. Bilka also plans to stay active by working out and continuing creative hobbies like crocheting.

After nearly three decades in education, Bilka’s coworkers said her work has been much appreciated, and her presence will be missed. “Tina will be missed at TAES,” Richner said. “I wish her a beautiful and relaxing retirement.” Lucas also wished Bilka well as she begins her next chapter in life. I wish Tina all the best,” Lucas said. “She deserves it.”



**By Katherine Sorokie, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

The best teachers don’t just teach facts and procedures. They leave their marks on students’ minds, inspiring them to think differently and do more. TAHS art teacher Eric Feather has done that for generations of Tyrone students. He has also left a visible mark on the school and community through 25 years of annual art shows, numerous murals throughout the school and community, sets for more than 20 years of school musicals, hundreds of video productions and livestreams, decades of classroom projects, and even custom-painted PennDOT snowplows seen on local roads every winter. After a 33-year teaching career, including 27 years at Tyrone Area High School and six years at Bel Air High School in Maryland, Feather will retire at the end of this school year.

Feather said his interest in art began at a young age, and teaching allowed him to share that passion with others. “It meant a lot to me growing up, so being able to pass that on to young people felt important,” Feather said. Feather taught everything from the fundamentals of drawing, mixed media, sculpture, acrylic and oil painting, pastels, watercolors, to art history and video production. His lessons went beyond technique, encouraging students to see art as a way to understand history, culture, perspective, and self-expression. Through everyday conversations, strong instruction, and his ability to help students develop technical skills and confidence, Feather has made a lasting impression on generations of Tyrone students, teachers, and staff.

Several of Feather’s students have gone on to successful careers and/or won significant honors in the art world. Tyrone alum Megan Dale studied design at Penn State and is currently an e-learning designer for the Penn State Department of Nutritional Sciences. She credits Feather with helping her develop her artistic skills and find her career path. TAHS alum Lena Walk is a professional artist whose mural work can be seen in many Graystone apartments in the area. She said Feather taught her many technical skills and helped her believe that she was capable of creating meaningful art. Walk said Feather taught his students that art was about more than just technique—it’s a way to express emotions, ideas, and individuality. Altoona artist and TAHS grad Michael Kensinger has won numerous awards for his wildlife paintings, especially ducks and other natural

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Feather continued from Page 6)*

scenes. He gives Feather a lot of credit for helping to build his confidence. Kensing said Feather took him under his wing at a time when he needed someone to recognize and nurture his passion for art.

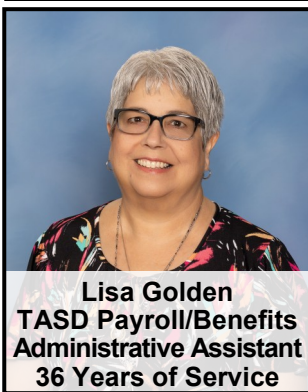
Many staff members said Feather's influence will continue to be felt long after his retirement. "He has a rare gift for making people laugh while simultaneously blowing them away with his intellect and artistic insight," Tyrone science teacher Bryan Gruber said. Gruber said he will especially miss Feather's kindness and daily presence in the school. "I've always loved that he was willing to be a taste tester for any treat I baked, but beyond the food and the jokes, it's his kind heart and willingness to listen that I'll miss the most," Gruber said. "The hallway won't be the same without him." Health teacher Christie Taylor said Feather's work has enriched the entire school community. "Mr. Feather has enriched the community by inspiring students to think creatively and push beyond the ordinary," Taylor said. "From introducing them to the classics in art history, to designing sets for countless high school productions, and mentoring future newscasters on Channel T, his impact is both visible and lasting." Biology teacher Beth Cannistraci said Feather consistently found ways to make Tyrone a better place. "Mr. Feather has had a tremendous and irreplaceable impact on the student community," Cannistraci said. "Whether he was organizing art shows, painting murals throughout the school, making sets for the play, or painting basketballs for seniors, Mr. Feather would always step up and make the school community a better place."

Feather's current students also said his encouragement helped them grow as artists and as people. "Mr. Feather always encouraged me and checked in on me and my artwork," senior Jenna Watson said. "He is always willing to help and inspire new ideas. His classes have helped me with patience a lot, especially with drawing."

In retirement, Feather is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Tracy, who is also an artist, becoming more involved in his church, traveling, biking, working on house projects, and continuing to create his own art.

While students and staff will miss Feather's artistic talent, many said they will also miss his sense of humor, intelligence, and the genuine conversations he brought to the school each day. Eagle Eye adviser Todd Cammarata said Feather's personality made him a memorable part of the school community. "He has an incredible sense of humor, and I will really miss our morning conversations about art, movies, music, and just about anything else," Cammarata said. "He is super intelligent and funny. He's truly a great guy and will be missed."

As Feather prepares to leave the classroom, he said he is grateful for the students and colleagues who have been part of his career. "To the staff, thank you for the opportunity to work alongside you and to learn from you over the years," Feather said. "To the students, thank you for letting me be a part of your lives. And always remember that success in art, like most things, isn't really about talent. It's about passion, perseverance, and putting in the work."



**By Gracie Graham, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

For 884 consecutive paydays, Tyrone Area School District employees could count on Lisa Golden to get their paychecks out on time. While paychecks will keep coming for TASD employees next school year, Golden will process them for the final time at the end of the 2025-26 school year before beginning her well-earned retirement.

Golden was first hired in September 1990 to type course guides for the Director of Curriculum's office. For the next two years, she floated between administrative offices before moving into the payroll secretary position full-time in July 1992, where she has remained for the last 34 years. Over the course of her long career, Golden has experienced several major changes in how payroll is handled. She remembers a time before computers, when all of the work was done completely by hand.

While technology has made the process faster and more efficient, Golden said the job has also become more complex. "Although technology has transformed the process over time, making it faster and more efficient, the role itself has grown more complex, with expanded responsibilities

such as reporting, benefits administration, and compliance," Golden said.

Golden said her proudest accomplishment was making sure payroll was completed accurately and on time every payday, a total of 884 paydays during her career. While that is a great accomplishment, Superintendent Leslie Estep said Golden's impact on the district goes far beyond processing the payroll.

"Besides the knowledge of the long tenure in her position, Lisa possesses a great deal of institutional knowledge that cannot be replaced," Estep said. Estep said Golden has always been available to answer staff questions and help explain complicated issues related to payroll and benefits. "She has a welcoming personality and is just an easy person with which to talk," Estep said. "I will miss Lisa's presence in our office, in general."

Golden's years with the district also included plenty of memorable moments. One that she remembers vividly was in the spring of 1999, when the administrative offices moved from Lincoln School to the new elementary school and had to pack up years and years of records and storage rooms for the move. Of course, this was prior to records being computerized, and involved thousands of documents in dozens of filing cabinets and storage containers. Not all of her memorable moments were related to payroll and paperwork. One of the most unexpected ones occurred when Golden walked out of work at Lincoln School and discovered that her car had been stolen from the side street where she had parked after lunch.

Estep said that beyond her great work ethic, Golden's personality has also made her a memorable part of the administration office. "Lisa has an innocence about her that makes her genuine reactions to things very comical at times," Estep said. "It is difficult to describe, but if you know Lisa, you know what I mean! She is a kind, caring person who naturally sees the good in people."

As she prepares for retirement, Golden said she hopes people remember her as a dedicated co-worker who was always willing to help, but most importantly, as a friend. Administrative Assistant Sally Woomer has worked with Golden for years and will miss her experience, but even more importantly, their daily interactions. "In addition to being a conscientious, dedicated, and extremely knowledgeable employee, Lisa has been a wonderful coworker and friend," Woomer said. "I can't imagine the office without her. She has worked hard to get to this point, and I wish her a long, happy, and healthy retirement."

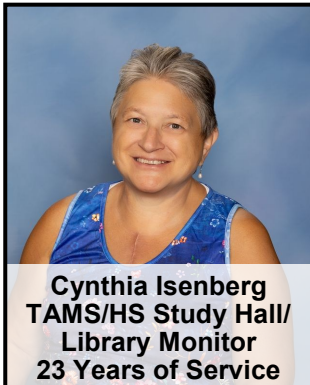
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In retirement, Golden said she plans to spend a lot more time at her campsite at Camp Blue Diamond, visit family and friends, and enjoy mornings sitting on the deck with a cup of coffee, watching the birds.

“As I look back on my years at TASD, I’m so grateful for the relationships I’ve built with my work family and the many memories I’ll always cherish,” Golden said. “I’m excited for this next chapter, having the freedom to do what I want, when I want, with no set schedule and no morning alarm!”

Estep said Golden’s retirement will leave a void in the administration office. “I am going to miss Lisa greatly,” Estep said. “She has dedicated herself to her position and to the district in ways that you don’t always see anymore. I wish Lisa the best in her well-deserved retirement. Our office will not be the same without her!”



**Cynthia Isenberg**  
TAMS/HS Study Hall/  
Library Monitor  
23 Years of Service

By Sway Cornelius, TAHS 11th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

Paraprofessional Cindy Isenberg will retire at the end of this school year, concluding a 23-year career at Tyrone Area School District, during which she served in many roles at all three TASD school buildings. Isenberg began her career as a kindergarten paraprofessional, then moved to the high school as a personal aide for a student with disabilities. After that student graduated, she moved to the middle school, where she worked with special education students in fifth, sixth, and seventh grades.

Tyrone Area School District Special Education Director Jessica Anderson said Isenberg was one of the first paraprofessionals she worked with as a special education teacher. “Although her roles have changed over the years, Mrs. Isenberg has remained committed to students,” Anderson said. “She worked one-on-one and with small groups in inclusive settings. She demonstrated flexibility and anticipated the needs of students and staff. She was consistent and held students accountable.”

After several years at the middle school, Isenberg returned to the high school to work with older students. Social studies teacher Todd Cammarata enjoyed his time working with Isenberg in his civics classes. “She always helped keep her students organized and on track and would guide them whenever they needed it, but she also held them accountable and wouldn’t do things for them that they could do themselves,” Cammarata said. “She always struck the right balance.”

When the study hall monitor and library aide position became available about four years ago, Isenberg moved into that role, where most current high school students have come to know her. Senior Cadence Ball has had study hall with Isenberg all year and appreciates the way she interacts with students. “I like how Mrs. Isenberg treats the students in study hall with kindness and respect and gives them the freedom to do what they need to do,” Ball said.

Many teachers and students expressed their appreciation for Isenberg’s dedication and kindness over the years. “Mrs. Isenberg will be greatly missed. I really enjoyed our conversations over the past couple of years during my first-period study hall in the library. She even taught me how to sign out books for the students,” physical education teacher Thomas Coleman said.

Through her multiple roles at every level of the district, Isenberg has seen education from many different perspectives and has enjoyed her time in the district. “I have always loved the community and atmosphere of the district. The staff has always worked together for the best of our students. I will miss working daily with the staff and students,” Isenberg said.

Her most rewarding experiences have been helping students and seeing them succeed. “My favorite moments were when students finally understood a concept after struggling with it for a long time,” Isenberg said. “It’s a great feeling to see a struggling student succeed, even if it was only one task.”

Students and staff appreciate everything Isenberg has done for the Tyrone community. Her presence in the library and study hall will be greatly missed, and she will not be easy to replace.

As she looks ahead to retirement, Isenberg is excited for the opportunity to relax and explore her interests. Isenberg said she plans to spend more time traveling, camping, and serving as a campground host at state parks. She also looks forward to having extra time at home to tend to her flower gardens and complete projects around the house. Most importantly, she looks forward to visiting with friends and family.

Isenberg said she would like to share one final message with Tyrone students: “Be safe, don’t be afraid to ask for help, make smart choices, and most importantly, reach for the stars and follow your dreams,” Isenberg said.



**Janet Miller**  
TAMS Special Education  
Paraprofessional  
22 Years of Service

By Gracie Graham, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

After a distinguished career in the special education department at Tyrone Area Middle School, paraprofessional Janet Miller will retire at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

According to Middle School Principal Shane Cowher, Miller is more than just a hardworking paraprofessional. She is an important member of the community. “Janet is a fixture at the middle school and in the community,” Cowher said. “If you go to a community event, you’ll see Janet. If you go to a sporting event, you’ll see Janet. Janet is involved and cares about Tyrone.”

Cowher has also seen firsthand how well she works with students in the middle school. “She is not afraid to push students who need pushing, but she also knows when to show a more caring side when students need it,” Cowher said. Cowher also praised Miller for her great attitude and for always putting students first. “Janet was always willing to help no matter where we put her, and I could trust that she would do a good job,” Cowher said.

This past year was seventh-grade special education teacher Carrie Grassi’s first year in the middle school, and Miller made the transition much smoother. “Although I have only worked with Janet for one school year, she has been a great help to me,” Grassi said. I have been a teacher for many years, but have never taught at the middle school. Janet was able to tell me who to call when I needed assistance, where to go when I needed supplies, and even how to read the middle school schedule.” Grassi also praised Miller for her excellent work with the students. “She demonstrates a great rapport with the students,” Grassi said. “She can manage students, even the occasional unruly ones,

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without teacher assistance. She is an ace at middle school subjects. If I wasn't sure how to do a math problem, she knew how to help. She will be missed not only in the learning support suite but across the entire middle school."

Tyrone Area School District Special Education Coordinator Jessica Anderson agrees. "I have known Janet to be a dependable and loyal team member and friend," Anderson said. "During her tenure, she was willing to step in to help students, staff, and teachers in all areas of the middle school. Her presence in the learning support suite will be missed."

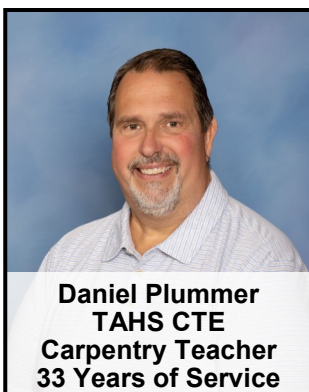
Cowher also credited Miller's sense of humor for making tough days fun. "She has a great sense of humor. Janet and her partner in crime, Becky [Schreckengost], were always playing little pranks on me, like filling my office with eggs on Easter or shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day," Cowher said.

Miller's students also said they will miss her. "She's the best," said one middle school student. "And we will miss her."

Miller said her most meaningful moments came when she could help students overcome challenges and finally understand something they had been struggling to learn. She said the job also taught her patience and how to take the daily challenges of working with middle school students in stride. "You are challenged every day, but it can be very rewarding," Miller said.

Miller said one of the things that makes Tyrone special is the support students receive from the staff. That sense of teamwork helped create an environment where students and staff could grow together, she said. As she looks toward retirement, Miller said she will miss the many friendships she made with teachers and staff members, and the daily interactions she has with students. Miller hopes she will be remembered as someone willing to take on any task and help wherever and whenever she is needed. "I will never forget the teamwork, laughs, and challenges," Miller said.

The final message she would like to leave students and staff is simple and upbeat: "Believe in yourself," Miller said. "My summer vacation is forever!"



**Daniel Plummer**  
**TAHS CTE**  
**Carpentry Teacher**  
**33 Years of Service**

**By Rowan Moore, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News and John Stanton, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

After 33 years of helping generations of students build something as simple as a wooden box to something as significant as a career in the construction trades, Tyrone Area High School carpentry teacher Dan Plummer is set to retire at the end of the 2025-26 school year.

Generations of students in the TAHS carpentry program have found a home in Plummer's shop, where they have made lifelong friendships and learned lifelong skills. Health tech teacher Christie Taylor, who has known Plummer for all 22 years she's taught at TAHS, calls him "a dedicated educator who believes wholeheartedly in his work." "The transformation he fosters, from students entering high school with little knowledge of carpentry to graduating with the skills to build or renovate a home, is truly immeasurable," Taylor added.

Plummer grew up north of Pittsburgh in Mercer, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Mercer Area High School in 1986. He began building carpentry skills in high school at the Mercer County Vo-Tech, much like many of his own students would later do in Tyrone. He was inspired to go into secondary education by his own experience as a student in a career and technology program. "I was interested in a career that allows for family. I am very family-oriented," Plummer said. "Teaching was a good fit."

After high school, Plummer attended Penn State University and majored in career and technology education with a focus on carpentry. His introduction to Tyrone came in 1989 when he completed his student teaching at Tyrone Area High School. After earning his degree from Penn State in 1990, Plummer worked for three years as a counselor at Specialized Treatment Services in Mercer County. However, when a carpentry teaching position opened at Tyrone Area High School, Plummer got the job and began his teaching career in 1993. Since then, he has seen thousands of students pass through his shop, and hundreds develop the skills necessary to begin their careers in the construction industry. Tyrone biology teacher Beth Cannistraci respects the quality of Plummer's instruction so much that she trusted several of his former students to work on her own home. "I can personally vouch for the craftsmanship from his students, as some of them have done work professionally on my house," Cannistraci said.

Former carpentry shop assistant Bob Wilson worked with Plummer for 16 years and called him a leader and mentor to many generations of Tyrone students. "He worked with the students to give them an incentive to get their work done and to keep their grades up. If any student needed help in any way, Mr. Plummer would be there to help them," Wilson said.

Art teacher Eric Feather's classroom has been next to Plummer's for all of his 27 years at TAHS, so he has also seen Plummer's interactions with students firsthand. "Mr. Plummer has always had a very focused approach with clear goals for his students. He has an engaging personality, connects well with students, and earns their respect through his experience, knowledge, and leadership in the classroom," Feather said.

As a member of the CTC department, Taylor says that Plummer's commitment is to all areas of Career and Technical Education, not just carpentry. "Mr. Plummer deeply believes in the power of Career and Technical Education. Throughout his career, he has seen it change and improve the lives of countless students, both in his classroom and across many CTE fields," Taylor said.

Students and faculty both said that Plummer teaches more than just career skills, and his concern for students' well-being goes far beyond academics. "I always felt he would have been a good guidance counselor or a student advisor," Wilson said. His students love being in the shop, and many of the seniors have been in the carpentry program for all four years of high school.

"He's not just a teacher, he's also like a friend to his students. He has a relationship with each student," senior Corey Gehlman said. Students love to joke with him and said they will always remember him for playing "the same five songs over and over in the shop" and for "Tater Pie around Thanksgiving," Gehlman added.

Plummer has been in charge of many large-scale projects, including four house projects, the last of which was completed in 2020, and their current project, a "tiny house" that was built on site at TAHS and will be moved by truck to its permanent home whenever it is completed and sold. On the house projects, as well as the tiny house projects, students in his classes did

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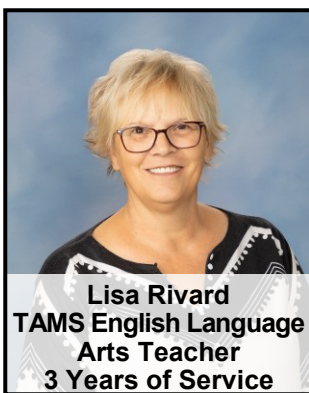
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most of the work framing and finishing full-size family homes, which were purchased by community members. “I learned drywalling and ceiling construction from working on the tiny home. It helped me develop skills required to build my own house from the ground up,” junior Tytus Novak said. Plummer’s students have also recently built several elevated hunting blinds, which will also be sold to the public. “Plummer has shown us the building blocks of the carpentry world, and that has allowed us to use those skills outside the classroom to build various projects,” junior Caleb Posnett said.

In addition to running the carpentry program at TAHS, Plummer has also been involved in coaching and several other student activities. Plummer served as the junior high head football coach and as an assistant to the varsity program. He has been the middle and high school ski club adviser for many years, taking students to Blue Knob and as far away as Vermont for ski trips. He has also been involved with the local chapter of the teachers’ union, holding several leadership positions and helping to negotiate contracts for the teachers in the district. Despite all of these commitments, Plummer was never too busy to help other teachers with projects. Feather said that Plummer was always willing to lend a hand with work on sets for the musicals or other projects that required his carpentry skills. He also helped high school science teacher Brian Gruber develop his own woodshop class. “He was a big help when I started teaching woodshops,” Gruber said. “He was always willing to provide advice for any new project I was attempting.”

Plummer said that he hopes people will remember him as determined and dedicated to the students, the carpentry program, the CTE department, and its successes in the past, present, and future.

He is looking forward to a fun and rewarding retirement full of relaxation and time spent with family and friends. “It will allow me to focus on what matters to me most in my life,” Plummer said.



By Leora Catich, TAHS 9th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

Seventh-grade English teacher Lisa Rivard will retire at the end of this school year after a 21-year teaching career, including the last three years at Tyrone, where she has made a lasting impact on students and staff. Before coming to Tyrone, Rivard taught at a school in Johnstown for 18 years. Rivard said that she chose to become a teacher because she enjoys literature, reading, writing, and working with students.

Students and staff said that they will remember her for her positive spirit, creativity, and helpful demeanor. “I’ll miss her ability to help me see things in a different light. She’s very calming, and at times, she helps me calm down,” said middle school English teacher Gwen Miller. One of Rivard’s former students, eighth grader Payton Wray, said he appreciated Rivard’s creativity when it came to assignments and projects. “The book reports at the end of each marking period were really fun,” Wray said.

While she is excited to retire, Rivard said she loves the atmosphere at Tyrone and will miss her coworkers and students. “The school has lots of spirit, and the community is always there for one another,” Rivard said. When asked about some of her favorite memories, Rivard mentioned her love for teaching *The Outsiders* and that one time a student did a backflip in her classroom. Rivard plans to enjoy her retirement by vacationing and traveling.

She had one message for all the students she has taught over the years: “Take education seriously,” Rivard said.



By Addison Zeiders, TAHS 10th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

After 29 years in a variety of roles in the Tyrone Area School District, middle school administrative assistant Becky Schreckengost will retire at the end of this school year.

For the past 10 years, Schreckengost has been the first person students meet in the middle school guidance office, where her welcoming smile has made her a positive presence for students, families, and staff. When middle school counselors Matt Kimberlin and April Campbell are busy, Schreckengost is always there, eager to talk to kids about their day or help them with their problems. Kimberlin and Campbell describe Schreckengost as a positive resource for students, families, and staff. “Becky brings a positive ‘we can do it’ energy, which lightens the load of a sometimes overwhelming job. She will be greatly missed,” said Kimberlin. “Her passion for helping students and staff shines very brightly throughout the office.”

Many current and former middle school students stop by to talk to her during the school day. Schreckengost said she loves it when students take the time to say hello and give hugs.

Throughout her years of service to the school district in several different roles, Schreckengost has had many memorable moments. One that stands out to her happened recently during a middle school spirit week. “We had a day when we dressed like the students, and the students dressed like teachers. We participated and had a blast doing it. The students would tell us that they don’t dress or talk the way we thought they did,” Schreckengost said.

Before taking her current position in the middle school guidance office, Schreckengost spent 13 years as an assistant in the technology department, helping to maintain the district’s computers, printers, and laptops. “When I worked in the technology department, we had a program where we could take over the students’ computers, and I did this to my niece, and she got scared. She didn’t know what was happening,” Schreckengost said.

Schreckengost also served as a paraprofessional, working with students one-on-one and in small groups, and even advised the high school yearbook for several years. Schreckengost said she will miss the staff members who have become her friends and the many students who have passed through her office. One student in particular has made an amazing impact on Schreckengost’s life. “She was a student who stole my heart. I actually got to know her mother, and I told her that I would retire the year she graduates, with the Class of 2026,” Schreckengost said.

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Throughout her 29 years, she has had many colleagues whom she now calls friends and will miss seeing every day. After retirement, she plans to make time to travel and see her children and grandchildren who live in other states, work on house projects, and help her parents.

Schreckengost said she has a message and some advice for students and staff. “For students, work hard, get good grades, but also relax and have fun. For the staff, thank you for being awesome. I have enjoyed my years at Tyrone, and that is because you all have been there for me,” Schreckengost said.



**Gerri Smith**  
The Nutrition Group  
TAHS Head Cashier  
20 Years of Service

Lunch is a time for students to unwind and get a much-needed break from the stresses of school, and seeing a friendly face in the lunch line can brighten the day. For the past 20 years, Tyrone Area High School cafeteria worker Gerri Smith has been that friendly face for generations of TAHS students and staff who have passed through her register station. Now, as Smith prepares to retire at the end of the school year, many students say they will miss the smiles and quick conversations that made her such a familiar part of their school day.

Some of Smith’s biggest fans among the students admittedly don’t know her by name, but when shown a photo, almost everyone instantly recognizes her and says how much they enjoy seeing her. “I literally love her,” senior Catie Sklener said. “Every morning when I go for breakfast, she asks me about my morning, and if I tell her it’s bad, she will be all hype about it and tell me how it’s going to be a good day. And she always comments on my little jokes at lunch. She is the best.” Senior Sarila Hensley looks forward to her daily conversations with Smith. “I love how she is so friendly in the morning and how she always goes out of her way to say hi to me and ask me how my day is going,” Hensley said. “And my favorite part about her is her bright, big smile.”

Smith’s supervisor, Tammy DelBaggio, said Smith has been an excellent employee and coworker. “She rarely misses work and is always willing to help where needed,” DelBaggio said. “Her work ethic and friendship will truly be missed.”

Coworker Leslie Kensinger said the best words to describe Smith are “conscientious” and “kind.” “Gerri has a kind heart, and she is great with the kids,” Kensinger said. “She’s like the quiet in the time of a storm because she never gets upset, and she’s always calm, even if a student is being difficult.”

Coworker Debbie McKeehen, who works the breakfast line with Smith, said she will miss seeing her each day and hearing Smith say “good job” at the end of each shift. “Gerri is so kind, and she always keeps us up to date on good books to read. I always enjoyed discussing our Sunday night shows together,” McKeehen said.

Smith said the most memorable and challenging time for the cafeteria staff was during COVID. “We bagged hundreds of breakfasts and lunches every day so that they could be picked up here or delivered to one of the pickup locations. It was hard work, and I was glad when it was over, and we were able to return to serving meals in our cafeterias,” Smith said. “Things were different during that time, and when we returned, but we got through it by working together.”

Smith is looking forward to retirement but said she will miss seeing her coworkers every day and trading stories about their families and lives. “I hope we can keep in touch,” Smith said. “I would like to thank each one of them for their friendship and for being with me through my ups and downs.”

Her plans after retirement involve traveling with her husband and spending more time with family, especially her granddaughter, who is two years old and “growing up too fast,” Smith said.

“I’m thankful for my health, and that is one of the reasons that I decided to retire this year, because you just never know what tomorrow holds,” Smith said.



**Tim Walk**  
TASD Computer/Audio  
Visual Technician  
24 Years of Service

**By Shiloh Price, TAHS 10th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

After 24 years at the Tyrone Area School District, Technology Department Assistant Tim Walk will retire at the end of this school year. Walk began at the Tyrone Area School District in 2002 after being laid off from C-Cor, a local technology firm. He was the first person Tyrone Area School District Network Administrator Glen Drager hired when he started at Tyrone. Together, they have worked through many changes and advances in technology for education.

Over the course of his career, Walk has helped classrooms upgrade from CRT televisions and VHS players to Smart Boards and one-to-one student Chromebooks. In his first few years, Walk had to install and maintain televisions in every classroom. They were hard-wired for cable TV, and each TV had a VHS player/recorder and later a DVD player. Computers were mostly limited to teachers’ desks, and several computer labs were scattered around each building. There was no wireless internet, and no students and very few staff had district-issued laptops. One of the biggest issues the technology department faced in Walk’s early days was scheduling, as teachers had to reserve a computer lab for their students weeks or months in advance. The department later added

rolling carts of laptops, which could be signed out by teachers and delivered to classrooms by Walk. Today, every classroom in the district has a Smart Board with internet access, and Tyrone is a one-to-one Chromebook school that issues a laptop to each student.

“I just remember some of the early days when we had less support and many things were done manually, which was much more of a challenge for the two of us,” Drager said. “Tim would take it all in stride, whether it was moving heavy equipment between buildings, setting up network drops, or touching every classroom to do some manual update.” Early in his career, Walk was responsible for much of the district’s audio and visual equipment and for setting up the auditorium for events like school musicals and graduation. “Before the auditorium’s renovation, Tim was the main person responsible for setting up the AV equipment for the concerts, shows, and any other events,” said tech department staff member Bryce Bauer. One of Walk’s

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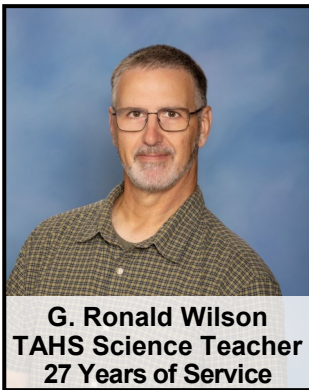
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main responsibilities these days is to prepare new Chromebooks in the summer before the school year begins and to repair broken Chromebooks throughout the year.

“The school has changed throughout the years because the technology has improved, and it makes it so we can repair things at a faster pace,” Walk said. Walk can put a new screen or keyboard on a Chromebook in just a few minutes. In fact, Walk said repairing computers and laptops is his favorite part of the job. Walk also assists by monitoring students’ online activity, making sure they follow district policies, and alerting administrators when issues arise. “The funniest thing about the job was watching what some students looked up on Google,” Walk said. Walk said he would like to be remembered for the help he provided to students and staff, whether it was fixing a tiny mistake or a big one.

One thing everyone in the technology department will miss about Walk is his stories and jokes. “Tim always has interesting stories to share, and many of them come out of left field,” Drager said. “You just never know when the next incredible story is coming.”

After dealing with some health issues in recent years, Walk said he plans to focus on improving his health in retirement. Drager said he will miss Walk and wishes him the best in retirement. “We tease Tim a lot, but he is good-humored, and we will miss his contributions. He has helped make it possible to manage and maintain the thousands of devices in our purview,” Drager said.



By Lucas Rudden, TAHS 9th Grade Student/Tyrone Eagle Eye News

After 27 years at Tyrone Area High School and 30 years in education, science teacher and department chair Ron Wilson will retire at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. Known for his constant positivity, calm personality, and genuine care and respect for his students, Wilson has left a lasting mark on generations of Tyrone students and staff. “To me, Tyrone represents the majority of my career,” Wilson said. “It’s where I grew as a professional and where I hopefully left a legacy of kindness. I am grateful for every student who came into my room and every colleague who walked the halls with me. It’s been a fantastic experience.”

Wilson grew up in Bellwood and graduated from Bellwood-Antis High School in 1981. He was a standout athlete in high school, excelling in wrestling, a sport he would coach at several schools during his career. Before becoming a teacher, Wilson worked in the circulation department at the Centre Daily Times in State College and later as an insurance agent. However, Wilson decided to return to school to get his bachelor’s degree in secondary education and science from Penn State. He earned his degree in education in 1994, and later received his master’s degree from California

University of Pennsylvania in 2017.

His teaching career began in 1996 as a long-term substitute at the Juniata Valley School District, where he taught seventh and ninth-grade science. He later taught astronomy for two years in Punxsutawney Area High School before an opportunity opened closer to home at Tyrone Area High School. Wilson began his career at Tyrone in 1999, and over the years, he became known not only for his scientific knowledge but also for the way he treated students. Wilson said he has always believed that classroom culture is just as important as curriculum. “The administrators that I have worked for have always provided me with the freedom to determine the direction of my instruction,” Wilson said. “I’ve always believed that while the curriculum is important, the environment you create is what sticks with a student. I have always felt it is more important how I teach kids than what I teach them.” That approach has made Wilson one of the most respected and well-liked teachers at TAHS.

Senior Kyle Scott said Wilson has been an important part of his high school experience, and not just because of their mutual interest in wrestling. “He has been a great teacher and an even better mentor over the past four years, and he will be greatly missed,” Scott said. Freshman Zoey Barnhart said Wilson’s sense of humor and easy-going personality make his classroom a place where students feel comfortable. “Mr. Wilson is great to be around in the classroom,” Barnhart said. “We can always joke around with him, and he doesn’t take it personally. When he leaves, he will be greatly missed by all students and teachers.”

Wilson’s fellow teachers said the students are not the only ones who will miss him. TAHS English teacher Kathy Beigle, who teaches across the hall from Wilson, said that while she is happy for him, she is sad that the school is losing such a great teacher. “I can’t imagine school without Mr. Wilson,” Beigle said. “He’s one of the best teachers – and people – I know. He truly is one of the best.” TAHS English teacher Steve Everhart said one of Wilson’s greatest strengths is the steady and calming presence he brings to the building. Karris Budny, a TAHS freshman English teacher, said Wilson is the kind of colleague that others rely on. “Ron is my go-to,” Budny said. “Whether I can’t figure something out, or I have forgotten to put something on the calendar, he is the person who saves me from myself.” Budny said Wilson’s character is one of the things that makes him special. “Ron is one of the most ethical and moral individuals I have ever met in my life,” Budny said. TAHS math teacher and fellow freshman seminar team member Brittany Baker said Wilson’s connection with students is obvious. “I always hear students chatting about how much they like Ron’s class in general, but more importantly, how much they enjoy Ron as a teacher,” Baker said. “He will be greatly missed by his students and by his colleagues.”

In addition to teaching, Wilson has also been involved in athletics and other extracurricular activities over the years. Notably, Wilson served as a varsity wrestling coach in three different school districts, including Tyrone, over his teaching career. “I’d rather not talk about records,” Wilson said, “I took over for some difficult situations. I had much better numbers as an athlete than as a coach.” But even through seasons when team wins were few and far between, Wilson had a positive impact on all of his wrestlers, teaching them the importance of hard work and dedication. In recent years, Wilson was involved in a more “intellectual” sport as an advisor to the Tyrone Quiz League Team.

After retirement, Wilson plans to spend more time with his wife and four children. He and his family enjoy sports, camping, and spending time together. While Wilson is looking forward to retirement, his presence at TAHS will be difficult to replace.

After nearly three decades in education, Wilson leaves behind more than lesson plans, labs, and lectures. He leaves behind a reputation for kindness, humor, patience, and respect.