PUSD Page Unified School District

District Newsletter



April 2026

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Page High School Tenors Place at State





In March, the students that made the NW All-Region Ensembles were able to compete at the state level against all top students in the seven regions of Arizona.

Congratulations to Samuel Robertson who won 31st place among the vocal tenors of Arizona, and Reed Nolan who made 55th place among the vocal tenors of Arizona.

This is the 3rd year both senior boys have placed. Samuel Robertson made 34th (Sophmore), 33rd (Junior), and 31st(Senior). Reed Nolan place 53rd (Freshman), 47th (Junior), and 55th (Senior).

It is incredibly hard to make it to State at this level and the amount of time these students put in every day to go and be competitive against other high level musicians is substantial.

Way to go, boys!

CHEF'S KISS!

2nd Annual Discovery Kitchen Cookoff is Recipe for Success.



The 2nd Annual Discovery Kitchen Cookoff slow-simmered in drama, with a soupçon of competitive nervousness and an emulsion of thrill and pride as the finished plates were revealed to the judges. In short, this year's Discovery Kitchen Cookoff was a sizzling triumph.

Ten fifth and sixth grade students from Page Elementary competed in this year's Cookoff.

This year's winners were Wes Swinton, first place; Emmitt John, second place; and Piper Mangum, third place.

The Discovery Kitchn Cookoff was organized by Ian Klay, Director of Dining at Chartwells K-12, PUSD's food services provider.

The student chefs get to choose what dish they made at the Cookoff. They give Chartwells a list of ingredients, and Chartwells supplied them with the ingredients and a cooking station. Chartwells also provided a sous chef to assist and guide each of the student chefs. Most of the sous chefs were chefs who own and/or work at Page restaurants, and some were high school students in Page High School's Culinary Arts class. The chefs had one hour to cook, plate and present their meals to the judges.

The cook teams were Emmitt John with Chef Deveron of Grant Rustic Thistle; Grace Harrison with Chef Drew, Jaditooh Restaurant; Ashton Yazzie with Chef Davey Brown of Prickly Pear Kitchen Hyatt Place; Wes Swinton with Chef Dawn Flesher of Party in a Box Catering; Esmeigh Ruse with Chef David Moore of Lake Powell Resorts and Marinas; Aumei Hanks with Chef Shauntielle Emmons of Amangiri; Cash Goldtooh with Chef Bogdan of Ranch House; Piper Mangum with Ny'Asia Walsh of Page High Culinary; Cole Gardner with Daniel Szabo of Page High Culinary and Skye Singer with Bhrett Palmer of Page High Culinary.

This year's Cookoff was held at Page Elementary in its lunch room. Chartwells set up ten prep and cook stations for each cook team. The event was judged by Cori Hanson, Area Director for Chartwells; Jean Marc, VP Client Relations for Chartwells, David Paddock, Client Relations Director for Chartwells; Dr. Bryce Anderson, PUSD Superintendent; Mary Stahl, Page Elementary Principal; and Judy Franz, Director of Chamber Page/Lake Powell.

During the competition, the six judges visited each cooking station and talked to the chefs about such things as what they were making, and their processes. The dishes were judged on flavor, texture, presentation and knowledge of









the dish.

The event was open to the public, and the parents and family of the competitors watched intently from behind roped-off observation areas. In addition, Page Elementary teachers brought their students into the cafeteria to watch the Cookoff. It all made for a lively, buzzing atmosphere. That was all part of the vision of Klay.

The Discovery Kitchen Cookoff is something that could be done on a much smaller scale, but when Klay first envisioned it, she knew she wanted it to be big, to be bold, to have colorful work stations and a large crowd in attendance. Klay doesn't want the Discovery Kitchen Cookoff to be an off-to-the-side production, she wants it to be one of the district's highly-anticipated annual traditions. After the roaring success of this year's cookoff, it looks like it's heading in that direction.

"Part of why we do a big production is to help build confidence in the kids," Klay said. "Letting them see the support from our local businesses, from the school administration and the larger community lets them see that this is important; that what they are doing matters. We want this to be something the students looking forward to every year."

Klay believes the students competing in the Cookoff try harder knowing that it's being witnessed by hundreds of students and important adults from the community.

One such visitor watching intently from outside the cooking zone was Catherine John, mother of Emmitt John who was one of this year's student chefs. Catherine said her son loved getting ready for the Cookoff and he has taken it very seriously. He's been helping his mom make the meal for about a year. The Sunday before the Cookoff, Emmitt did most of the meal himself as the trial run.

"Cooking is something he enjoys doing so being able to do it on a stage allows him to prove to himself that he can accomplish things and discover there is more to school than just books," said Catherine. "I think it's great that the school is facilitating this because it introduces kids to cooking, and that it might be one more thing they could be interested in."

Page Elementary Principal Mary Stahl was impressed with the event, and the quality dishes her students created.

"Ian is fabulous!" said Principal Stahl. "She gives our students opportunities to shine, and she knows how to highlight food. I just thought this was a great event because it really just brought connection to families. The kids were









practicing with their families, they were listening to their families talk about why the recipe was important to the family. That was one of my favorite parts about this, was hearing the history of the family recipes."

It was Principal Stahl's idea to have all the elementary students visit the Cookoff and witness what was taking place at their school.

"We want them to get excited for their peers, but also to give them something to look forward to."

The students got to choose what meals they wanted to create and the majority of the meals prepared during the Cookoff were family recipes.

"We saw several instances of that," said Cori Hanson, Area Director for Chartwells. "We had one kid who cooked a recipe that his brother learned on his LDS mission. We had one who cooked his sister's favorite meal (taco cupcakes), we had two students who cooked their dad's favorite dish and the chicken puffs that won third place was her mom's favorite dish. This is a great event that not only inspires the kid but the whole family connection," said Hanson.

"The fact that our kids are practicing their dishes at home with their families already right there is a big achievement," Klay said. "The bond between the parent and the kid started



before the competition. The kid, at some point, has to practice making the dish and it is the parent who helps them. We don't have to wait till the competition to have a winner, all of the kids have already won at that point."

Page Jr. High Students Have Great Performances at Honors Orchestra and Band



Page Jr. High students traveled to the 2026 Middle School Auditions for Northern Arizona Honors Orchestra and Band in March, and it was a very successful outing.

Several notable chair placements stand out this year. Seventh grader Christopher Sloan turned in the 2nd best viola audition out of anyone trying out and will be seated 2nd chair viola. Raine Bennett's audition received a superior rating and earned her 4th chair cello spot in the orchestra. Seventh grader Jolesha Johnson earned 4th chair viola. Bailee Chee earned selection to the orchestra as a first-year player, having only begun playing the violin in August!

Several students also earned high chair placements relative to strong musicians from across the region. These students will travel to Yavapai College on May 8 and 9 to rehearse and perform alongside band, choir, and orchestra students from throughout northern Arizona.

This represents a significant accomplishment for these students. A large portion of the orchestra is composed of students from Flagstaff-area schools, and aside from those programs in Flagstaff, no other school has more students represented on the orchestra roster than Page.

The following students were selected:
Baylee Nez – 10th Chair, 1st Violin
Saelynn Tisi – 8th Chair, 1st Violin (12th overall)
Bailee Chee – 13th Chair, 2nd Violin
Inigo Hermosilla – 14th Chair, 2nd Violin
Raine Bennett – 4th Chair, Cello
Christopher Sloan – 2nd Chair, Viola
Jolesha Johnson – 4th Chair, Viola
Alternates:
Delilah Davis – Violin
LaNya Willie – Viola
From the band program:
Ceta-Mahto American-Horse – 3rd Chair, Trombone

Career Day 2026 is Best One Yet









Page Elementary held its 4th Annual Career Day and organizers believe it was the best one yet.

The most notable change this year is that the stations were arranged throughout the school's hallways rather than all together in the gym. Not having all the stations clustered together in the gym made it easier for teachers to keep their students from wandering off to look at a nearby booth. Having one or two stations in a hallway also gave the businesses and agencies more room to operate.

Career Day was organized by Page Elementary teacher Jodian Brown; she has been the organizer for all four of the school's Career Days. Pulling off a successful Career Day takes months of planning and hours of phone calls and emails to potential participant organizations. But when Ms. Brown sees the students engaged with the business owners and organizations, sees them showing curiosity and asking questions, she knows it was worth it.

"This year was really, really good," said Ms. Brown. "I feel like it was more productive this year. I think moving it out of the gym and into the hallways. The set up was more effective because we had grade levels moving throughout the entire school so there wasn't a crowd in one space."

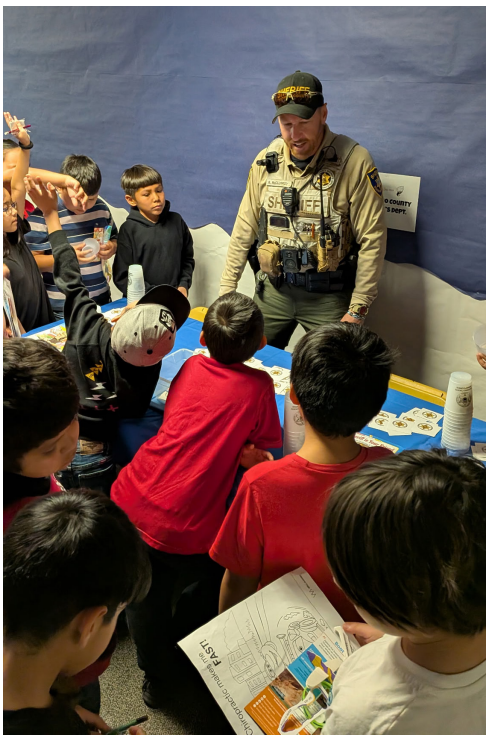
This year's business and government participants were Fitness Odyssey, National Park Service, City of Page Magistrate, Coconino County Health and Human Services, Amangiri Hotel, Antelope Point Marina, Chartwells Food Services, Coconino County Sheriff, Page Dental, Page Fire Department, Lower Antelope Canyon Tours, Black Streak Holdings / Lionel Bigthumb, Adams Chiropractic, Page Public Library, Page Animal Adoption Center and Page Police Department.

THANK YOU to all the businesses and organizations who participated this year!



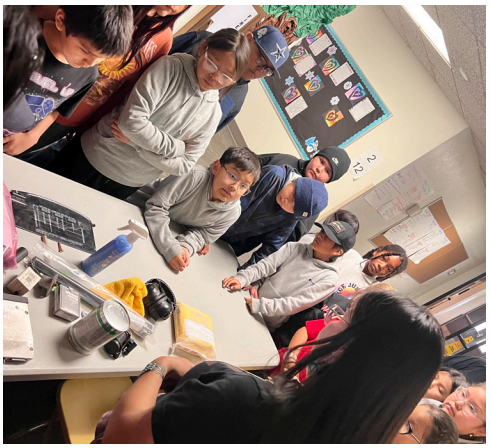



Salty
CREW




THANK YOU, VETERANS!
PAGE DENTAL CENTER





Wyatt Swinton Named FCCLA Adviser of the Year

Page High School Culinary Arts teacher, Wyatt Swinton, has been named 2026 FCCLA Adviser of the Year. Anyone who knows Swinton, and the program he has built, was not surprised by the announcement.

For several years, Swinton has been steadily building his students' culinary arts skills and his program's reputation for excellence. His students have won awards at the state and national level. Two of his students have held, or are currently holding, leadership positions at the FCCLA's state level.



- At this year's state FCCLA competition, Chef Swinton had nine students qualify, and three of them placed: Peyton Miller, Reagan Kirchner and Carmel Hermosilla.
- In 2025, two of Swinton's students – Miriam Lassen and Isaac Nelson – competed in the FCCLA National Convention. They qualified for Nationals after winning their respective categories at the State competition earlier that year.
- In 2024 Miriam Lassen took first place at the national competition, after taking first place at the state competition.
- In 2023, Miriam Lassen, who was a sophomore that year, took first place at the FCCLA state competition. Two other Culinary Arts students – E than Myers and Aaron Haynie – each took third place in their heats.

Swinton is known for the dedication and passion he brings to his class and his students, says CTE Director, Chuck Sharp. His students know he is willing to meet them at whatever level they are willing to rise to. For example, in the summer of 2025, Miriam Lassen wanted to practice the meal she would be making at the National competition, but due to having a summer job, the only time she had available was at 5 in the morning. For several weeks before the national event, Swinton met her at 5 a.m. at the high school culinary kitchen where they repeatedly practiced the dish.

"Wyatt's competitive," said Sharp. "He wants success and he wants his kids to have success. He wants them to know how success feels. He's pushes them as hard as they're willing to be pushed. He spends a lot of time preparing the kids in his program; not just the FCCLA kids, but all the kids."

The success of Swinton's culinary arts program is drawing the attention of the Culinary Arts Institute and the UTI, who are looking for students interested in a career in the culinary arts, says Sharp. That can translate into scholarship opportunities for Swinton's students.

Early Childhood Development Students Excel at FCCLA Conference









Page High School teacher Christine Johnson and her Early Childhood Development students had an excellent trip to the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) conference in early March.

Broydyn Whiterock, Tiara Cody, Tyla Begay and Aubrie Sloan all reached the podium in their respective categories. This was the first time attending the conference for each of them.

Broydyn Whiterock received gold in the Personal Interview category. This was a component of a larger Mock Interview category, in which he presented an introduction letter, resume, reference letters and a work sample portfolio to an FCCLA judge playing the role of a job interviewer.

Tiara Cody received gold in Technology in Teaching. He then took second place among the gold winners.

"That is a huge accomplishment," said Early Childhood Education adviser Christine Johnson.

Cody created an app called Scratch Junior that teaches early elementary-aged students how to code. Cody had only five minutes to present her app to the evaluators and explain what the app was, the age level she would give it to, the features of it, and why it was a good educational app."

Tyla Begay received Silver in the category of Toys that Teach. She made a toy out of a cereal box, a paper towel roll, paper cups, and chopsticks. The materials used were then assembled to mimic a model of a butterfly. The paper cups were each painted a variety of colors representing colors of the rainbow, used to add color onto the butterfly's



wings. Paper towel sheets were rolled into small bits and were painted to match the colors of the paper cups. A pair of chopsticks was provided to pick up these bits but hands could be used also.

To play the game, the player scatters the paper cups across the wings of the butterfly. Next, the paper towel bits in a bag needed to be dumped out into a pile. Then, the participant picks up the colorful paper bits with the provided chopsticks or with their fingers and place them into its corresponding paper cup color.

See FCCLA pg. 16

Culinary Arts Has Amazing FCCLA Conference







Page High School's culinary arts program continues to turn heads and gain attention at the state level. Three of Page High School's culinary arts students made it to the podium, and Page High School 's Culinary Arts Adviser, Wyatt Swinton, was named FCCLA Adviser of the Year.

Peyton Miller won level two Mise en Place. Reagan Kirchner took 2nd in level 3 Mise en Place, Carmel Hermosilla won level 2 cake decorating.

In addition, Peyton Miller was elected as the State Vice President of Finance for the FCCLA.

Chef Swinton took nine students from his Culinary Arts class to the FCCLA competition this year. He saw a lot of improvement in his students' performances and scores this year. Five of the nine students received gold medals based on their rubric scores, and three students got silver medals based on their rubric scores, and one student got a bronze medal.

"We had the highest overall scores in a lot of categories this year," said Swinton. "In cake decorating we got the highest overall scores we've ever had. We had one student Carmel win level two and I had another student, Ximena Robles Sepulveda, who got an 89 [out of a 100]. Based on how her cake looked I thought she was going to be on the podium too."

"Both of them are sophomores. If they keep practicing, I think they'll qualify for nationals before they're done."

The two students competing in the Chicken Fab contest both received golds.

"Our chicken fab kids, Savana Zimmer and Hayden Halona, were the most prepared kids and they got the highest scores we've ever had," said Swinton. "It was unreal how good they were. I thought for sure one of them was going to place. But, that competition is so tight that one little mistake, one tiny little issue and you're not on the podium. But both of them scored three to five points higher than we've ever had. One scored a 95 and a half and the other one scored a 93. Both of them did amazing!"

Read Across America Week is Lit













Page Elementary and Page Early Childhood Learning Center celebrated literacy, writing and authors during Read Across America Week last week. It was a booming success! More than 50 guest readers visited classrooms at Page Elementary and PECLC throughout the week. Our guest readers were parents, older siblings, AVID students, and volunteers from the community.

Thanks to all our volunteer readers!

Donkey Basketball is Big Fun!













Big Turnout for Grandparents Day









Page Early Childhood Learning Center saw a huge turnout for its 4th Annual Grandparents Day last Thursday.

PECLC Principal Brian Henderson was happy to see the large show of support.

"We want to foster community engagement," said Principal Henderson. "We want our families, parents and grandparents to have positive experiences with their students at our school and this is one way to promote those objectives."

When the grandparents arrived at PECLC, they were led to the school's gym where they met their grandkids. Once inside the gym, the families could go to one of several dozen tables set up on the gym floor, or go to a separate activity and game station. Several game and activity stations were set up around the gym where students and their grandparents could play checkers, Jenga, connect 4, 3D Tetris and

See BIG DAY pg. 16

Peyton Miller Elected As State FCCLA Officer

Page High School sophomore Peyton Miller has been elected as the Arizona FCCLA Vice President of Finance. The election occurred at FCCLA's winter conference in March. Miller will serve in that position from March 2026 to March 2027.

Getting elected at VP of Finance wasn't the only thing she accomplished at the conference; she also took first place in the Culinary Arts category for her preparation of Mise en Place, French culinary phrase meaning "everything in its place". It refers to the practice of preparing, measuring, and organizing all ingredients, tools, and equipment before cooking begins. This technique increases efficiency, reduces errors, and helps manage stress in the kitchen.

Miller is a very ambitious, active and engaged student. She is on the golf and tennis teams, and a member of the Student Council. She serves as its Treasurer. She's also Treasurer of the Devils Kitchen (the Culinary Arts Club), and Secretary for the Page Girls Tennis Club.

She's also working on her application for the National Honor Society, and beginning her election campaign to be Student Body Vice President for next year. If successful, she will be one of the first juniors to hold that position.

Miller didn't decided to run for the position of FCCLA VP of Finance until she was at the conference.

"I was inspired by my chapter to run for that position," she said. "It was a really cool process to go through. It didn't occur to me until I was in the interview process that I really wanted it.

I was researching what FCCLA was all about and it talked about helping kids with problems and challenges, and ways they help in the community overall. That's when it hit me. I thought that would be something really cool to be a part of."

Balancing her roles at Page High School, her new role at FCCLA and her future endeavors requires great organization and time management. Fortunately for Miller, those are her superpowers.

"I like being a busy person," Miller said. "I feel alive and I like being able to do everything. Taking on the new position with FCCLA didn't stress me out. It made me feel excited."

Miller uses a planner to help keep herself organized. Her mom helps her out as well.

"My mom and I have this thing where we talk about what's happening in our week and make a plan," Miller said.



That sometimes includes days to relax, unwind and destress.

"When we see we have a stressful day coming up we maybe take the weekend before it off to prepare ourselves," she said. "I definitely take my free days seriously. I decompress and relax, but I mostly go with the flow. I just make sure to plan things and I'm really good at communicating, telling everyone where I'm going to be, what I'm going to be doing."

Miller will begin training for her position as FCCLA VP of Finance in the coming weeks. It will begin next week with a Program of Work training, where she and the other state officers will gather together in Phoenix and talk about what they want to do during their term. This will be followed by Zoom meetings in the months to come, followed by a trip to the national FCCLA conference this summer. At the national conference, she will receive further training in her position.

At the national conference, some students will also be running for national officers. Miller says she's very interested in seeing this process up close and in person because she want to run for a FCCLA national officer next year.

Peyton's parents are Kymberli and Cody Miller.

PHS STUCO Wins Outstanding Council of Distinction



Page High School Student Council was awarded Outstanding Council of Distinction at the Annual State Meeting of Student Councils in January.

Shelby Johnson, who teaches science at Page High School, is the Student Council Advisor.

The state meeting was held at Gilbert High School. The Annual State Meeting of Student Councils is a gathering of the Governing Bodies of student council from high school across Arizona that focuses on developing student council students into future leaders. A lot of future networking gets its start during these conventions.

"It's a really great state-wide program," said Ms. Johnson. "We do a lot of activities with them. It lets our kids connect with school kids from across the state. It's really focused on leadership and being the leaders of tomorrow, and that's what we focus on here as well. Our Student Council class is really a leadership class.

"Student Council is in charge of a lot of things such as dances and fundraisers," said Ms. Johnson, "but in between we work on public speaking, ways to give them kids self-confidence and things to prepare them to be leaders in the schools today, and in the workforce tomorrow."

The Student Council has to meet several criteria to earn the Outstanding Council of Distinction. Those include being engaged in the community, doing things on campus to promote mental health, and being visible and available on campus to their fellow students.

This year STUCO kids have volunteered with Page Animal Adoption Center, National Park Service. They are also very involved with PUSD's other schools, helping with Halloween activities, Read Across America Week.

FCCLA from pg. 9

"This game was aimed to target fine motor skills within the hands of children and to familiarize them with the colors of the rainbow," said Begay.

Aubrie Sloan received Bronze in the category of Toys that Teach. She hand-sewed a plush toy for infants for the purpose of building and developing their senses.

"This was the first time the students had ever competed in any type of CTE competition," said Ms. Johnson.

"They showed up only knowing there was a rubric that they needed to follow and my description of the venue and what they might encounter from the judges. All four of them did a phenomenal job on their first attempt, and they truly shined not only for themselves but as representatives of Page Unified School District. They are definite superstars! Hopefully they will return next March and compete again."

BIG DAY from pg. 13







other games. Each student was given a bag filled with activities they could do with their grandparents at the tables.

Students and grandparents also had the opportunity to have their pictures taken with some Disney princesses and Easter Bunnies, courtesy of an arrangement PECLC Principal Brian Henderson made with the City of Page. The City of Page has costumes for its annual Easter Egg Hunt, but it needs people to be inside the costume. Principal Henderson, coordinating with Page High, arranged for PHS Student Council students to be inside the Easter Bunny and princess costumes during the Easter Egg festivities at the Sports Expo. In exchange, the City let's PECLC use their costumes during Grandparents Day. Page High School's STUCO kids don the costumes again for Grandparents Day. The Easter Bunnies and princesses are a big hit!

PECLC and the City of Page have been doing the trade since the first Grandparents Day four years ago.

"It's a lot of fun, the kids really enjoy it, and it works out well for everybody," said Henderson. "The addition of the easter bunnies and costumes makes it a cooler event."

The Parent-Teacher Organization – along with teachers Erica Beam, Maddy Crane and Jessica Dyke – did most of the work organizing Grandparents day. They set up the tables, chairs, game stations, make the activity bags and decorated the gym and did most of the coordinating between the City and the student council. They also provided snacks and drinks.

Employees of the Month

Certified Employee of the Month
February 2025



Abraham Rodriquez

Classified Employee of the Month
February 2025



David Walters

February Students of the Month



Asher Clark

Page Preschool



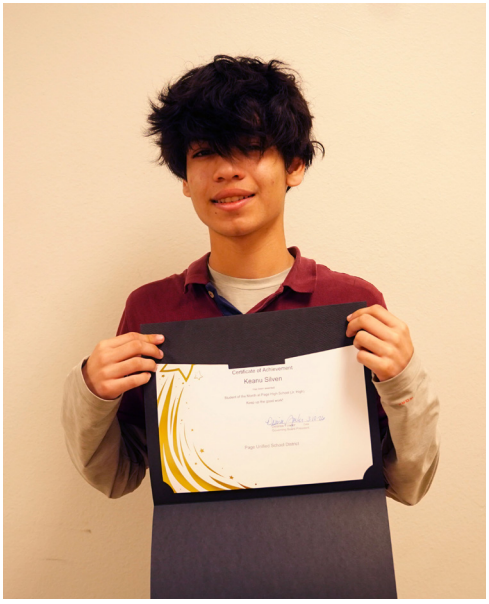
Alivia Calnimptewa

Page Early Childhood Learning Center



Kelsie Tsosie

Page Elementary



Keanu Silven

Page Jr. High School



Isabellae Boone

Page High School



Aiden Onesalt

Manson Mesa High School