Pleasant Valley High School Route 209 Brodheadsville PA 18322

Bear Facts

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Pleasant Valley welcomes new staff for a new year

Pleasant Valley High School begins the 2026-2027 academic year with several new faculty hires and internal staff transitions across multiple departments. The incoming staff includes a mix of first-year educators, veteran teachers, and returning alumni filling various instructional and advisory roles.

By: Khloe Dooner and Harrison Sullivan

With the 2026-2027 school year underway, Pleasant Valley welcomes several new staff members, along with familiar faces taking on new roles. From first year educators to experienced teachers returning to the classroom, each brings a unique experience.

Roberta Hans joins Pleasant Valley with an extensive background in education and administration leadership and special education. Hans decided to return to her passion for



Roberta Hans



Christopher Fredericks

working directly with students. "I decided that I wanted to go back to educating since my heart is in the classroom," Ms. Hans explained.

Christopher Fredericks is beginning his first year of teaching, bringing a background in coaching and a desire to help students succeed. Having grown up near Pleasant Valley, he was drawn to the school district's strong sense of community.

"I was originally a coach and loved the challenge of trying to help students, so what would be a better way to do that than be an educator," Mr. Fredericks asked.

Matthew Martino also brings experience and a connection to the local community. Having grown up in Saylorsburg and attended Pius X, Martino wanted to return closer to home. He is excited to continue supporting students and contributing to the district.



Matthew Martino

"I've always been interested in teaching, especially social studies and history since I was young," Mr. Martino shared.



Rick Lage

Rick Lage is entering his eighth year in education and is excited to become part of the pleasant valley community. His interest in teaching developed while working at a university planetarium during college.

"I decided to pursue a career in education after spending a summer in college working two part time jobs: one in a lab, and the other at the university's planetarium" Mr. Lage stated.

Ryan Morris is serving as a building substitute after previously attending Pleasant Valley as a student. His familiarity with the district made the position a natural fit, and his experience working with students has encouraged him to pursue teaching as a long term career.



Ryan Morris

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District

Bears win first Bucket Game since 2023

The Pleasant Valley community rallied behind their team during an expanded annual bonfire festival leading up to the historic rivalry matchup. On the field, the Bears delivered a commanding performance, winning the 66th annual meeting with Pocono Mountain East and their first Old Oaken Bucket in three years.

By: Jacob George

The bonfire is a huge celebration that happens every year during the week of the annual bucket game. The Bucket Game is a long standing tradition between Pocono Mountain East and Pleasant Valley, with the game being the 66th meeting between the two schools.



source: Pocono Record

The bonfire happens on the Thursday night before the game where the whole town gathers around a huge bonfire to celebrate the occasion.

Aleisa Kinsey, business teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, is the organizer for the bonfire festival and says that she is excited for the celebration.

"We [had] nine food trucks, six more than last year," explains Mrs. Kinsey.

The whole community was excited for this occasion and the celebration was bigger this year than in previous years.

The outcome of the Bucket Game was a Pleasant Valley win with the score being 35-11. The Bears dominated the Cardinals with key performances like Chris Ward's four touchdowns.

"It felt good to help my team win," states Ward.

Both the Bear's offense and defense were on point with the Cardinals only points coming from two safeties of botched punt snaps and one touchdown in the fourth quarter with the Bears, forcing the Cardinals to punt the ball away six times while also forcing two interceptions.

Pleasant Valley football coach Blaec Saeger was excited about both the win and what it means for his players.

"In my 24 years of coaching this was one of my favorite moments. To see the happiness it brought to the kids makes it all worth it," explained Coach Seager.

District

Pleasant Valley High School begins year with new additions

Pleasant Valley High School students kicked off the school year in a newly modernized building. While work is still in progress, the renovation is on track for full completion by October 2027.

By: Daniel Diller

Last year, Pleasant Valley High School began construction to revamp the school into the new building students are currently attending. Construction isn't finished just yet, but the team worked hard to complete most of the construction by the beginning of the 26-27 school year.

Changes to the building include a modernized cafeteria with an attached bathroom and senior cafeteria with its own outside patio. Along with others like a school store, the relocation of various offices, water bottle stations, a STEAM lab, and new lettering for almost every hallway.



The brand new STEAM lab built in the center of the high school.

"The high school looks incredible, walking through the halls and seeing the transformation from last year is amazing. Our kids deserve the best, and I'm so happy they get to enjoy this new space," explains Principal Brian Boylan.

Each and every person in the building has their own opinions on their favorite addition to the school, and Mr. Boylan stated his favorite addition is the senior cafeteria.

"The [seniors] were thrilled to have a space to call their own, and the outdoor patio has quickly become a huge favorite among the senior class," explained Mr. Boylan.

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Life & Style PG 7; Sports: 8

Nation

Country music legend passes away at 80

Musician, actor and philanthropist, Dolly Parton passed away on Aug. 25 after battling cancer.

By: Giada Morales



source: New York Times

Dolly Parton was a world wide sensation who sadly passed away due to cancer on August 25, 2026 at age 80. Dolly was mainly known for her music along with TV appearances, and her theme park "Dollywood."

Dolly Parton was born on January 19, 1946 in a small rural town in Tennessee and was the fourth child of twelve children born into a fairly poor musical family. This later influenced her legendary songwriting.

In 1967 is when Dolly Parton's career really started to take off. This happened when she first appeared on the popular show, "The Porter Wagon Show," as a co-host and featured performer.

Later in 1971 she released her first hit single "Joshua" which later influenced songs like "Jolene" and later her dipping into pop music. Finally, she launched to complete global stardom in 1980 with her hit movie and popular song "9 to 5".

Famous actor and musician, Miley Cyrus, who also is Dolly Parton's goddaughter, briefly talked about her in an interview with Variety.

"[Dolly] is known for the fake, the hair, the makeup, and the show of it. But there's a part of her that I think is what everyone gravitates towards how real she is and how authentic she is," stated Cyrus.

Reba McEntire, famous actor, musician, and close friend of Dolly, made a tribute to her on Instagram.

"There will never ever be another you. We will remember and cherish every memory and every note you ever played and sang," McEntire said.

Jacqueline Brinker, Pleasant Valley High School English teacher, was a notable fan of Dolly Parton and was able to give some insight to her unfortunate passing.

"She will be missed. It is sad to think she will no longer be here to add to her words of wisdom, of which there are many. I will do my best to honor her memory, and 'pour a cup of ambition' every day as well as 'give a smile' to someone who needs it," Mrs. Brinker explained.

Nation

PV ignites school pride ahead of annual Bucket Game

Leading up to the highly anticipated rivalry matchup against Pocono Mountain East, PVHS students are celebrating with themed dress-up days, culminating in the annual bonfire and Bucket Game.

By: Jamie Jones

The week of the Bucket Game, Pleasant Valley High School's biggest rival football game, against Pocono Mountain East.

The week consists of a week full of fun themes such as "Dress like a Farmer," "Jersey Day," "Decades Day" and "White Out."

Spirit week is an important factor to the whole district and, Principal Brian Boylan shares why.

"Spirit week gets the entire school involved to show their school ownership," explains Principal Boylan.

Many themes over the years stay the same while some change and the district explores new ideas to get the students involved with spirit week

"'Dress like a Farmer' has always been a yearly theme, and students pick the other themes" Mr. Boylan shares.

Leading up to the Bucket Game, and within the week of spirit week the school has a "block party" in which the students, staff, and families from within the district get together the day before the big games. Together, the Pleasant Valley community "burn the nest," eat food, play games, and hangout with their friends.

"The bonfire has been around for a very long time. It has always been part of Spirit Week," explains Mr. Boylan.

District

Pleasant Valley prepares for opening night of murder-mystery comedy

Pleasant Valley High School theater department is set to debut the murder-mystery comedy, "This Murder Was Staged." The student cast and crew are ready to showcase their hard work in the new auditorium

By: Jamie Jones

This coming November, the Pleasant Valley High School theater department will kick off its fall season with the opening night of the murder-mystery comedy "This Murder was Staged" at 7 PM on Nov. 20 and 21, as well as 2 PM on Nov. 22 in the main auditorium.

Pleasant Valley High School English teacher, Vanessa Fego, is the play's director with fellow English teacher Jacqueline Brinker and building substitute working as the assistant directors. English teacher Craig Morris is working as the play's set designer.

"I wanted to pick something challenging and fun. A play within a play was the natural choice," shared Mrs. Fego.

The castings for the play are decided by the three directors. The main cast consists of the seniors, Alayna Boland, Sam Lowell, Sophia Dobson, and junior Cindy Page.

The cast spends weeks preparing for the play as they have a busy schedule leading up to opening night.

"Auditions, rehearsals every week for months, tech rehearsals closer to the performances, and then the performances," director Mrs. Fego shares.

Sam Lowell, senior, is playing Sinclair Hemmings and believes the characters are relatable to audiences.



The cast of "This Murder was Staged" rehearsing while having fun in their Halloween costumes.

"Three words I would use to describe Sinclair are egotistical, stylish, and dramatic," explains Lowell. "I know I just shared some pretty negative things about Sinclair, but deep down, I can tell that he just wants to see his friends succeed in accomplishing their goals, and that is a trait I believe I share with him."

The cast has spent the next few weeks getting prepared for opening day, as they spend countless hours after school in the auditorium rehearsing lines and learning new skills they never had to use until now. They put everything they have into this play and are excited to share with their families, and peers.

"I can't wait to hear the audience on opening night and see that all of our hard work paid off," shares Lowell.

District

Seniors leave their mark painting paws

What began as a simple display of school spirit in 1990 has evolved into a beloved tradition where graduating students personalize bear paws along the stadium pathway, allowing incoming senior class to creatively celebrate their achievements and showcase their lasting school pride.

By: Emma Wing



source: Christmas City Studios

Every fall, the incoming senior class gathers along the pathway to the football stadium to take part in one of Pleasant Valley's most visible traditions–Senior Paw painting. What began in the autumn of 1990 for the Class of 1991 has grown into a 35 year legacy of student pride.

The tradition originally looked quite different from what students see today. At first, paw prints were not painted individually by each student. Instead, simple white paws marked with "91" line the driveway leading to the stadium, ending with a large paw print by the entrance that read "Class of 1991".

The following year, the prints were updated with "92'", but after a few years the event evolved into the current personalized tradition where individual seniors could paint and design their own paws. The tradition continues to thrive under simple guidelines.

Seniors are instructed to keep all artwork neatly within the outline of their bear paw, including their first and last name, graduation year and their sport or club involvement. To ensure consistency, all paint is provided directly by the school.

Beyond creating colorful artwork, the event holds a lasting significance for the graduating class.

"Paw paint gives our seniors a powerful sense of pride and ownership in our school," explains Brian Boylan, Principal of Pleasant Valley High School.



source: Christmas City Studios



source: Christmas City Studios

According to Aziya Moore, senior at Pleasant Valley High School, leaving a mark on the school parking lot during the final year as a member of the school community is a great way to feel seen.

"It was nice to be able to have my name in the parking lot and I appreciate the opportunity for recognition," states Moore.

This event holds a special place for seniors serving as a lasting reminder of their high school years and memories they made along the way.

"Every time they walk past their print this year, it serves as an inspiring reminder of their achievements and all the hard work that got them here," states Mr. Boylan.

State

Shapiro and Garrity compete for Pennsylvania in 2026 election

Incumbent Democrat Josh Shapiro and Republican challenger Stacy Garrity are campaigning to lead Pennsylvania through critical decisions on education funding, the state budget, and energy policy. With the election rapidly approaching on Nov. 3, voters are evaluating how each candidate's platform will shape the state's trajectory for years to come.

By: Khloe Dooner

As Pennsylvania prepares for the 2026 Governor election, voters will decide who will lead the state for the next four years. The race features Governor Josh Shapiro, Democrat, who is seeking a second term, and State Treasurer Stacy Garrity, Republican, who is challenging him for the position.

The election is scheduled for Nov. 3, 2026, and it is one of the major statewide contests taking place during this year's midterm elections. Pennsylvania's governor has an important role in determining how the state government operates, making the election significant for issues that affect schools and communities.

Carmen Russell-Sluchansky a writer for whyy.org, explains the role that the governor plays in statewide governing.

"The governor proposes the state budget and negotiates spending and policy priorities with law makers while overseeing agencies responsible for education, health care, and environmental regulation, prisons and state police," says Russell-Sluchansky.



Josh Shapiro
source: spotlightpa.org

The governor can also sign and veto legislation, issue executive orders, and declare state emergencies.

Because the governor has influence over many areas of state government, the election could affect Pennsylvania residents in ways that extend beyond election day. Decisions about how state funding is spent can influence public schools, transportation, health care, and public safety.

Josh Shapiro became Pennsylvania's governor in January 2023 after winning the 2022 election. He is now running for reelection and will be joined on the democratic ticket by Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, while Stacy Garrity, is running with Jason Richey.

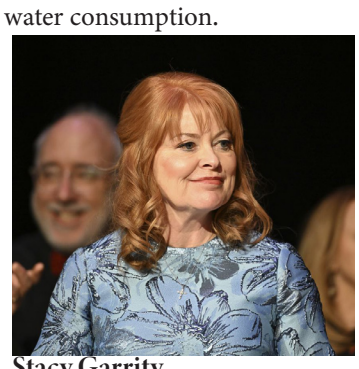
Shapiro entered the 2026 campaign as the incumbent, meaning he is seeking to remain in the office he already holds. During his first term his administration has dealt with issues including state budgets, education funding, and environmental regulation.

Garrity brings a different political background to the race, having served as Pennsylvania's State Treasurer since 2021. Before entering statewide politics, she had a career that included military service and work in the private sector, and she has presented herself as a candidate focused on government spending and economic issues.

The candidates also have different political affiliations, meaning voters will be choosing not only between the individuals but also between two political parties with different views and approaches.

Aside from the state budget, public education is another major issue because the state government provides funding to school districts across Pennsylvania. The amount of funding can affect school resources, programs, and facilities.

The environment and energy are also important issues because the state has a large energy industry while also facing questions about pollution and data centers. Recent debate over data centers has focused on electricity use and water consumption.



Stacy Garrity
source: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Mr. Chupa, a history teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, described the long-term importance of the election.

"Think of this election as setting the curriculum for Pennsylvania's next couple of decades. The winner's policies on state tax structures, energy infrastructure, and public education funding formulas will leave a lasting footprint. Plus, judicial appointments made by the governor will shape state court rulings for years to come," explains Mr. Chupa.

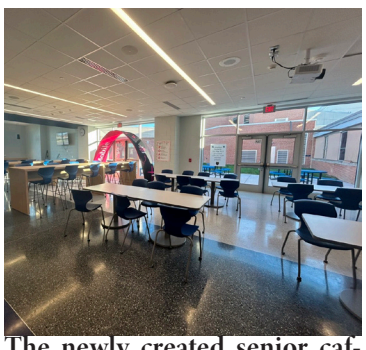
As the campaign continues, voters will have opportunities to learn more about each candidate's positions and compare their plans for Pennsylvania. Rather than relying only on campaign advertisements or predictions voters can examine candidate records.

According to cityandstatepa, "Josh Shapiro (Democrat) is the market favorite at 98%, ahead of Stacy Garrity (Republican) at 4%. Figures refresh every 30 minutes."

The campaign will continue to develop as Election Day approaches, and both candidates will have opportunities to make their cases to Pennsylvania voters. The voters will decide which candidate will serve as governor beginning in January 2027.

New Additions, continued

Remaining construction includes the completion of the math wing in the space the original main office once occupied, and the old E hallway located where history teachers: Mr. Jermey Goff and Mr. Drew Dymond's classrooms used to be.



The newly created senior cafeteria built just off to the side of the main cafeteria.

Daisy Genovese, a staff member that has been teaching for 38 years, joined Pleasant Valley in 1994.

"I think it looks really good," she added, "I can't wait to see the finished project. I'm especially proud of the Class of 2024's donation. As their advisor, the class and I gifted the high school the cafeteria mural that reads, 'Welcome to Bear Country.' This design, along with the creation of the new PV Bears logo, took over 2 years to come to fruition, and we couldn't be happier with the result."

The construction is expected to be complete by October 2027.



The cafeteria mural donated by the Class of 2024 that includes the new bear logo

Nation

Looney Tunes voice actor dies at 46

Entertainer Eric Bauza, best known for voicing of Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, passed away at his Los Angeles home from heart disease.

By: Shelby O'Neill and Zuzanna Romancyzk



source: CNN

Eric Bauza, a Canadian voice actor and animator, has died at the age of 46. He was best known for his work on "Looney Tunes", voicing Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and many others since 2018.

Although his career started in 2001, in 2018 he really got moving by voicing different characters in Looney Tunes.

Bauza, the first person of color to officially voice Bugs Bunny, won three Children's & Family Emmy Awards for his Outstanding Voice Performance in "Looney Tunes Cartoons," "Bugs Bunny Builders" and "Teen Titans Go!" from 2022 to 2025. He also received many Emmy nominations for other voice performances.

Bauza was raised in Scarborough, in Toronto, Canada by Elvira and Eddie Bauza. Elvira and Eddie Bauza immigrated from the Philippines to Toronto, Canada in the early 1960s.

Emily Abrams, senior at Pleasant Valley, understands the impact he had on pop culture through the years.

"He did "'[The] Woody Woodpecker Show,' he did Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester and Junior. He was in 'The Woody Woodpecker Movie.' He had a heart disease." explains Abrams.

Bauza died from hypertensive cardiovascular disease, says the Los Angeles Medical examiner.

"The Los Angeles County Medical Examiner reported that he died at his home from hypertensive cardiovascular disease." says Jake Coyle, writer for Associated Press, in an article for PBS.

Hypertensive cardiovascular disease is when there is structural and functional damage to the heart and blood vessels. According to the Cleveland Clinic, "This happens because long-term high blood pressure (hypertension) makes it harder for your heart to pump blood. And it often makes it more difficult for your heart muscle to relax."

Being male, overweight, and being over the age of 45 are all risk factors that contributed to Bauza's death.

Bauza is survived by his son Ryker Bauza.

Editorial Policy of Bear Facts

The Bear Facts is the official student newspaper at Pleasant Valley High School. Its primary purpose is to inform, interpret and entertain through accurate and factual reports. It will strive to be accurate, fair, impartial and responsible in its coverage of issues that affect the school community. The Bear Facts will not publish any attack material that is obscene, libelous invasive of others' privacy or that encourages physical disruption of school activities. It will not publish any material regarding individuals' religion, gender, age, mental or physical ability, ethnicity, race, culture or lifestyle choices.

The Bear Facts accepts advertising as a fundraiser and reserves the right to reject any advertising not in accordance with school policy.

All editorials are written by a member of the Editorial Board. Letters to the editors are welcome, but must be signed and have the writer's homeroom. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters become the property of the Bear Facts.

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Who lands the knockout punch?

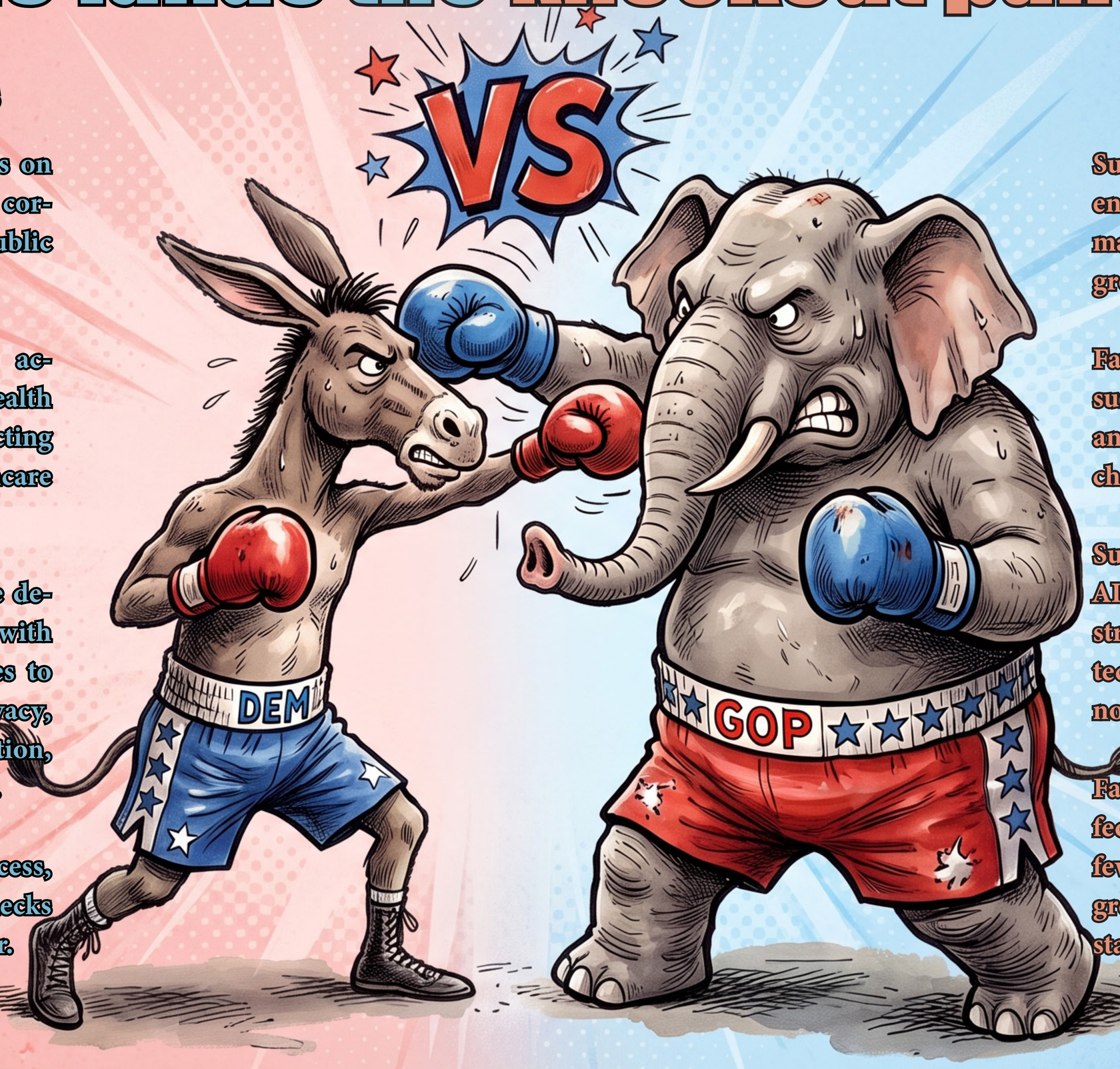
Democrats

Support raising taxes on wealthy people and corporations to fund public services.

Support expanding access to affordable health insurance and protecting government healthcare programs.

Believe AI should be developed responsibly with the government rules to protect people's privacy, prevent discrimination, and keep people safe.

Emphasize voting access, voting rights, and checks on presidential power.



Republicans

Support lowering taxes, encouraging American manufacturing to help grow the economy.

Favor private health insurance, competition, and giving people more choices in healthcare.

Support expanding AI infrastructure to strengthen American technology and economic competitiveness.

Favor a more limited federal government, fewer regulations, and greater individual and state responsibility.

New Staff continued

"I absolutely love it so far," Mr. Morris said of his first year working in education.

Shannon Simpson is another familiar face returning to Pleasant Valley. A 2017 PV graduate, Simpson initially began substituting while pursuing a career in animation. However, an influential experience with art teacher Mrs. Negron helped Simpson discover a passion for art education.

After returning to college, Simpson earned a K-12 art education certification in May 2026. Simpson has spent the past three years as the high school's building substitute and hopes to secure a permanent art teaching position at PVHS.

"I don't have my own classroom yet, but I'm crossing my fingers that an art teacher position will open up here at the high school so I can continue to work with and positively impact both the staff and students I've come to love since first starting as a substitute teacher 2023," explained Ms. Simpson.

Kelly Sutphin is con-



Kelly Sutphin

tinuing her career at Pleasant Valley as a new special education at the high school. Now in her 24th year of teaching within the Pleasant Valley school district, Sutphin welcomed the opportunity to take on a new role following Mr. Caffrey's retirement.

Her passion for special education stems from her desire to help others and make a lasting difference in their lives.



James Igoe

"I realized that as a special education teacher, I could help people and hopefully have a positive impact on them," explains Ms. Sutphin.

James Igoe has also transitioned to the high school, bringing 24 years of teaching experience, including 23 years



Paige Oiler

at Pleasant Valley. Igoe is excited to teach new courses, including robotics and engineering, while giving students opportunities to explore hands-on technical skills.

"I am excited to teach several of the new courses, such as robotics and engineering," Mr. Igoe explained.

Paige Oiler is beginning her teaching career at Pleasant Valley after graduating from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a degree in family and consumer sciences education. Growing up in the pocono mountains, Oiler is excited to work close to home and become part of a community that values family and connection.



Matthew Gearhart

"What I find so special about FCS is that we teach students practical life skills they will carry with them long after they leave the classroom,"' Ms. Oiler said.

Matthew Gearhart is also joining Pleasant Valley with a passion for helping students learn and grow. Now in his third year of teaching an experience tutoring and mentoring college freshmen during COVID-19 pandemic.

"I chose to come to Pleasant Valley because I have the opportunity to work with a group of hard-working, experienced teachers and administrators who will push and assist me towards my ultimate goal of becoming the greatest teacher that I can be!" Mr. Gearhart stated.

Joseph Anderton is in



Joseph Anderton

his 27th year of teaching and has made the transition from middle school to high school, taking a step he wanted to pursue for a long time. For Anderton, this change is more than a long standing goal and an opportunity to embrace new experiences, demonstrating that growth doesn't stop with experience.

"Something I've wanted to do for a long time and there was a transition with the curriculum, and I've wanted to change the grades I have been with, and I'm looking forward to working with older students," Mr. Anderton stated.

As the school year continues, students and staff have the opportunity to get to know these educators, learn from their experiences, and welcome the new perspectives they bring to the classroom.

Regardless of how long they have been in education, they all share the opportunity to shape something greater than a lesson or a grade but the lives of students they meet.

Nation

Beloved actor Tim Curry dies at 80

The versatile British star passed away peacefully at his Toluca Lake home, leaving behind a legacy of blending comedy, drama, and horror that continues to captivate generations of fans.

By: Khloe Dooner

Tim Curry, beloved British actor known for his memorable performances on stage and screen, died Aug. 25, 2026 at the age of 80. His career lasted for decades during which he became known for playing a wide range of characters, from theatrical figures to some of television's most known villains.

Curry became widely known for playing Dr. Frank-N-Furter in "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," which grew to become more than just a movie role.

As history.com described, "He transformed the Rocky Horror Picture Show into a participatory cultural phenomenon and brought theatricality, humor and menace to countless villains and misfits."

Beyond his role of Dr. Frank-N-Furter, Curry appeared in many different films, television shows, and stage productions, including the eccentric butler Wadsworth in "Clue" and the villainous Pennywise in the television adaptation of "It."

Curry's ability to switch between comedy, drama, horror, and musical theater made him a distinctive performer. His work allowed him to connect with many audiences across generations.

Curry continued working in entertainment throughout his later years including voice acting.

His longtime manager, Marcia Hurwitz, confirmed to Variety.Com that "Curry died peacefully at his Toluca Lake home."

His impact extended beyond his individual performances, as Curry became an actor recognized by many generations of fans. His performances helped make him a lasting figure for so many years in popular culture.

Jason Robbins, a history teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, reflected on Curry's lasting career, believing his versatility is what made him so beloved.

"[His versatility] allowed him to stay relevant for decades. Tim Curry is a cinema icon who will be missed by friends, family, and movie fans," explains Mr. Robbins.

Tim Curry leaves behind a legacy defined by creativity and unforgettable characters. His career also shows how an actor could become successful across so many different forms.

Whether he was making audiences laugh or frighten them he brought a unique personality and energy to every role. Although



source: CNN

Curry's career spanned many decades, his work continues to introduce new audiences to his talent.

The current Rocky Horror Picture Show Broadway cast honored Curry for his unforgettable career and his major impact on theater and film by having the former, current, and future actors portraying Dr. Frank-N-Furter took the stage during the curtain call to sing "I'm Going Home," a song made famous by Curry while he played the character.

Tim Curry will be remembered not only for the characters he played but also for the lasting impact he had on society. His career serves as a reminder of how one performer's creativity and can leave a lasting mark on generations of fans.

District

PV crowns royalty for homecoming dance

Pleasant Valley students gathered under lantern-lit ceilings on October 10 to celebrate homecoming in a weekend where seniors Gavin Tonkay and Lila Borger were crowned the 2026 Homecoming King and Queen.

By: Jamie Jones

The Homecoming Dance took place at Pleasant Valley High School gymnasium. The night of Oct. 10, the gym was filled with students, dancing and laughing as everyone had a great night.

A month prior to the homecoming dance, students at Pleasant Valley are able to vote for a theme of liking. The theme for homecoming 2026 was "Tangled in the Lanterns," a mixture of purple, yellow, light blue, brown, orange, and green.

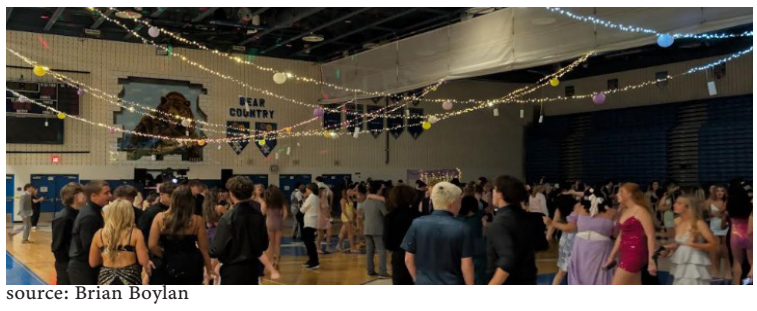
The gym had lanterns and fairy lights hanging from the ceiling. Seniors running for Homecoming court consisted Ava Oviedo, Giada Morales, Lila Borger, Rylan Knapp, and Mya Williams, Nicholas Springer, Nathan Tyner, Brant Wines, Isaac Klein, and Gavin Tonkay.

Trinity Tanzillo, Pleasant Valley Student Council President, sees Homecoming as a chance to bridge the gap between each grade in the high school.

"I believe spirit week does bring different grade levels closer. As we all unite and come together to show our school spirit, while dressing up for fun and complimenting others for their outfits," states Tanzillo.

This year the theme was inspired by the Disney movie "Tangled" allows the student body, and faculty to have a theme day around Disney during Spirit Week.

"My favorite day for this week is actually 'Dress up as a Disney Prince or Princess Day.' I'm excited to see what outfits people come to school with, and I get to wear a tiara for a day, so I think that's pretty awesome," shares Tanzillo.



source: Brian Boylan

Along with the dance, the homecoming football game is filled with cheers, laughter, and excitement, where the district comes together to cheer the football team on and find out the king and queen of this year's dance. During halftime the King, and Queen were announced alongside the Prince, and Princess.

Gavin Tonkay, Homecoming King, was excited about winning, and how it impacted the event for him.

"It was a fun experience and the homecoming dance was even better," says Tonkay.

Lila Borger, who won Homecoming Queen, shares Tonkay's excitement, adding how meaningful winning queen was.

"I feel so happy about winning homecoming queen because I feel like it really shows people see me as a person and how much people like me as a person," explains Borger.

Along with Tonkay, and Borger winning king and queen, Isaac Klein and Rylan Knapp won Prince, and Princess.

Homecoming is more than just a game. It is a lifelong tradition where the school walls are covered with colorful banners representing the different grades, students laugh and dance through the night in what is always a memorable weekend, and the 2026 Homecoming was no different.

Nation

Thousands gather to support civil rights and voting access

Exactly 63 years after the historic 1963 demonstration, the 2026 March on Washington served as a modern call to action, urging Americans to continue the ongoing fight for equality in their local communities and elections.

By: Khloe Dooner

The March on Washington 2026 was an important event that connected the civil rights struggles of the past with issues facing Americans today. On Aug. 28, 2026, thousands of people gathered at the Lincoln memorial in Washington, D.C, to support civil rights, voting rights, and opportunities for Americans.

The event took place exactly 63 years after the historic 1963 march on Washington for jobs and freedom. While the 1963 march focused on jobs, freedom, and civil rights, the 2026 march focused especially on protecting voting rights, equal opportunity, and economic dignity.

The 2026 march happened because organizers believed that the work for civil rights was not finished. The event focused on defending the right to vote and encouraging people to become involved in their communities and government.

The 2026 march was also connected to concerns about protecting voting rights and making sure people continue to have a voice in government. Organizers wanted to bring attention to these issues and encourage people to participate in their communities, especially as the country continued facing disagreements over civil rights.

The 2026 march was inspired by the original march on Washington for jobs and freedom in 1963. According to ABC7NY.com, "The first ever march on Washington, theme jobs and freedom, drew about 250,000 people to the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963 and was the site of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's iconic 'I have a Dream' speech."



source: Reuters

The large number of people who attended the 1963 march showed how strongly many Americans supported the fight for civil rights. The peaceful gathering also demonstrated how protests could bring attention to important problems facing the country.

The 2026 march returned to the same location and date as the historic 1963 event, connecting the current movement to its history. However the purpose of the 2026 march was to address current concerns and show that the work for civil rights must continue.

According to MarchonWashington2026.com, "What happened here does not end here. The work of defending the fort continues in every statehouse, every county board, every election office and every neighborhood you went to."

This quote shows that the organizers wanted people to understand that civil rights work does not end when a march is over but can continue through involvement in local communities and government.

Mr. Fredericks, a history teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, provides additional context about the 2026 event. He explains, "The march on Washington was led by civil leaders Reverend Al Sharpton of the national action network along with martin luther king lll and Arndrea waters king of the drum major institute."

Fredericks also explains that these leaders were joined by major civil rights organizations, labor unions, student groups, and faith leaders from across the country. Their involvement showed that people from many different backgrounds came together to support civil rights and bring attention to important issues in 2026.

The march on Washington 2026 showed how many people can use peaceful demonstrations to bring attention to issues affecting their communities. It also reminded Americans that the work started by earlier civil rights leaders can continue through participation in communities and efforts to protect civil rights.

District

Seniors “sunrise” and shine to kick off their final year

The Class of 2027 gathered early on Oct. 8 to celebrate the beginning of their final high school chapter.

By: Emma Wing

As the new school year kicked off, Pleasant Valley seniors came together on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026 for one of the high school's most cherished traditions: the Senior Sunrise. The event marks the official start of their final chapter, serving as a symbolic fresh start to help students build school spirit and look forward to the memories ahead.

Averie Acevedo, senior at Pleasant Valley High School, highlighted how important it is for bringing the senior class together.

“Keeping the Senior Sunrise tradition alive is important for our school's culture because it marks the beginning of our final chapter at Pleasant Valley,” says Acevedo.

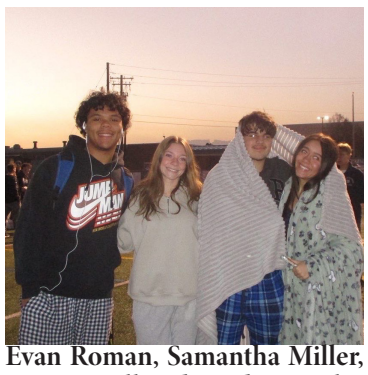
To make the morning extra comfortable and memorable, organizers encourage all attending seniors to bring blankets, cameras to snap photos with friends, or even make handmade signs to celebrate the milestone.

Aleisa Kinsey, business teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, explained that organizing the morning came with unique planning challenges.

"Organizing the event required coordinating permissions, setup, timing, such as ensuring the sun would rise before school started, but not too early,” explains Ms. Kinsey.

The cozy event was complete with donuts, hot cocoa, water, music, and a banner for seniors to decorate with their hand prints while waiting for dawn.

With the hot cocoa in hand and friends by their side, the Class of 2027 kicked off their final year of high school with a sense of optimism and pride.


Evan Roman, Samantha Miller, C.J. Cornell and Giada Morales at the Senior Sunrise

Nation

Peter Cullen passes at 85

The beloved entertainer, best known for bringing Optimus Prime and Eeyore to life for generations of fans, died peacefully in his Los Angeles home.

By: Gavin Tonkay


source: ABC News

Peter Cullen, the famous voice actor best known for playing Optimus Prime in the “Transformers” franchise, passed away on Aug. 26, 2026, at the age of 85. He died peacefully at his home in Los Angeles, surrounded by his family.

Cullen was born on July 28, 1941, in Montreal, Canada. He became famous for voicing Optimus Prime in the original “Transformers” animated series during the 1980s. His deep and powerful voice helped make Optimus Prime one of the most recognizable characters in entertainment history.

Ian Youngs, writer for the BBC, provides context for how Cullen developed the iconic voice of Optimus Prime.

“His Optimus Prime voice was inspired by his older brother, a decorated US Marine and Vietnam War veteran,” writes Youngs.

When asked how he came up with the voice, Cullen quoted his brother in an interview with BBC, saying “he’s strong enough to be gentle.”

He later returned to voice the character in the live action “Transformers” movies, introducing him to a new generation of fans.

Jaxx Valenzuela, a junior at Pleasant Valley High School, was introduced the Cullen’s voice as a young kid, and it has stuck with him.

“I still remember watching every Transformers with my dad when I was little. Optimus Prime was by far my favorite character and his heroic voice was a big part of it,” explains Valenzuela.

Besides Optimus Prime, Cullen also voiced Eeyore in “Winnie the Pooh” and provided sounds for the alien creature in the 1987 movie “Predator.”

Peter Cullen will be remembered for his incredible voice, his dedication to acting, and the impact he had on generations of fans.

District

PVSD bell schedule changes for the new school year

Pleasant Valley started the ‘26-’27 school year with a new bell schedule, pushing the end of the day five minutes later than previous years.

By: Emma Wing

As the 2026-2027 school year gets underway, students and staff are adjusting to a new daily schedule. The most noticeable change is a five-minute extension to the end of the school day; dismissal has shifted from 2:15 pm last year to 2:20 pm this year.

While five extra minutes might seem like a small shift, administration explains that the changes were carefully planned to meet state standards. They also noted that the additional time helps improve academic learning opportunities across all class periods.

Dr. James Konrad, Superintendent of Pleasant Valley School District, made recent changes to the bell schedule in the high school to increase instructional time and meet dismissal needs for the Pleasant Valley Middle School. He emphasized that aligning with state guidelines ensures students receive proper instructional support, driven by reflections on the previous academic year.

“I proposed changing the working hours of our professional staff by five minutes at the middle school to accommodate the necessary adjustment needed for middle school dismissal,” explains Dr. Konrad. “Reflecting on the 25-26 school years, we were determined to increase the instructional time in the high school to provide more high-quality learning opportunities for the 26-27 school year.”

Another addition under the updated schedule is hallway passing times. They are currently set at five minutes. However, students can expect passing time to be changed to 4 minutes after the high school renovation project is complete.

With the new schedule officially in place, the extra minutes in class aim to support learning goals across the district as students get settled into the new routine. Teachers and administration hope this transition leads to a productive academic year for everyone.

He decided to maintain the same start and end times for professional staff at the middle school and the high school while making minor adjustments to the class schedule at the high school. This approach keeps schedules consistent across the schools while addressing specific high school needs.

District

Ward looks to highlight career with playoffs

Running back Chris Ward has had an impressive high school career that has seen him grow as both a player and as a leader. Now as a senior, he looks to finish his high school career by achieving milestones and helping his team succeed.

By: Giada Morales

Chris Ward, senior at Pleasant Valley High School, is part of the high school football team. Ward has played for four years originally starting with flag football, he currently plays running back or will sometimes switch positions with the quarterback Brandt Wines.

Nick Colella, who is also a senior, shares his experience with being on the same football team as Ward.

"Chris has always been a good teammate. He makes sure to show up and helps us not only be a strong team but a family," Colella stated.

Ward's football coach, Blaec Saeger, believes in Ward's potential and has seen clear development from Ward over the last few years.

"Ward is one of the best players I have ever coached. He is extremely talented but also a hard worker and a very coachable kid. Ward has elevated his game every year. He has become bigger, faster and stronger with each year in the program," said Saeger.



Chris Ward during the 2026 Bucket Game

While Ward's development as a player is clear to those who have been watching him play, it is important to remember his leadership skills are nothing new.

"He is the same humble, hard working kid as a senior as he was as a sophomore. I will miss him dearly both as a player and as a person after this year," explains Saeger.

Ward was able to give some of his insight about his football career too, highlighting the moment that he believes set the tone for his football career.

"My highlight was either winning the conference title or the game against South my sophomore year. I think that really brought my confidence and was the turning point in my football career," Ward said.

While Ward is finishing his senior campaign with the Bears, that does not mean that he is happy with where he is right now.

"My goals this season are to beat East, go as far as we can in the playoffs and reach the 1000 rusher club," stated Ward.

District

Senior Kira Hnat anchors the volleyball team as her high school career reaches new heights

From starting in the fourth grade to surpassing 500 career assists, the offensive leader embraces her full-time role and drives Pleasant Valley toward district playoffs.

By: Giada Morales


Kira Hnat sets the ball for a teammate

Kira Hnat, senior at Pleasant Valley High School, is a member of the volleyball team, playing as a setter. Hnat has been playing volleyball for 6 years, and originally started practicing in the 4th grade.

Throughout her volleyball career Hnat has made many accomplishments. Her most notable ones being nominated for The Pocono Record's student athlete of the month, along with hitting her 500 assists during one of the recent home games.

Drew Dymond, social studies teacher and volleyball coach for Pleasant Valley High School, gave the rundown of his view of Hnat as a player.

"Kira is a versatile and athletic player who is the offensive leader of our team. As our setter, Kira runs our offense and distributes the ball to the players she thinks will help us score," stated Mr. Dymond.

While she is a leader of the team now, that was not always the case, and finding a more permanent position on the team provided Hnat with this opportunity for growth.

"Kira has grown so much over the years and was asked last year to become a full-time setter. She accepted this role, worked on it during the off-season, and has compiled 364 assists this season. Kira is a big reason our team is currently at the top of the division," explains Mr. Dymond.

Teammate Mya Williams, senior, describes both Hnat and the impact she has on the team.

"Kira is an encouraging contributor to the team, she tries her best to involve everyone on the court," Mya stated.

As a senior, Hnat is in the position to look back at her high school career and to reflect on the highlights.

"The highlight of my sports career was definitely hitting my 500 assists during one of our home games. It was really nice because I had all my friends and family there," stated Hnat.

However, while enjoying this year's success, Hnat hasn't taken her eye off the ball, as she continues to look ahead at what's to come.

"I'm most excited to celebrate all the wins with my team this season and get ready for districts potentially," Hnat said.

Nation

Unexpected miracles and devastating injuries shake up the 2026 NFL season

While some teams remain undefeated and others surge, teams like the Giants battle through severe quarterback losses in a chaotic push toward the NFL playoffs.

By: Daniel Diller

This NFL season has shown the return of stars, such as defensive legend Aaron Donald, who teamed up with reigning DPOY, Myles Garrett along with the reigning MVP, Matthew Stafford, in Los Angeles. Garrett underwent arthroscopic surgery in September after suffering a knee injury in training camp ahead of the 2026 season.

The Las Vegas Raiders, led by quarterback Kirk Cousins, have taken a surprising start to the season, defeating the Dolphins, Chargers, and Saints, only losing to the Chiefs in week 4.

Similarly, the Kansas City Chiefs dynasty is looking more alive than ever once again, as they are currently undefeated with a 4-0 record after picking up the Super Bowl LX MVP, running back Kenneth Walker III. They missed the playoffs last season.

Following a game 1 win against the Broncos, Walker III acknowledged Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce's leadership. "They've accepted me with open arms, and I appreciate them for that," he stated via NFL on ESPN.

The New York Giants are the top seed in the NFC East, boasting a record of 3-1 after losing their starting quarterback Jaxson Dart to a severe knee injury. He joins Caleb Williams, Sam Darnold, and Jayden Daniels on the list of injured starting quarterbacks.

source: NFL.com

Drew Dymond, social studies teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, has been a fan of the Giants since he was 6 years old, and was asked about his thoughts on the team

"We had a lot of high hopes, and they were slashed when Dart's season was ended, when his knee was injured," Dymond stated.

Backups Jameis Winston and new addition J.J. McCarthy will fill in during Dart's absence. In an interview, Winston indicated the team dedicates wins in honor of Dart.

"Winning this game for Jaxson," Winston said. "Twelve points. Six times two, it's for you."

Halfway through the season, the NFL is looking very entertaining for most fanbases, with some unexpected miracles beginning for teams like the Raiders, Browns, and Vikings. The battle for a Super Bowl spot remains as the game is scheduled for Sunday, February 14 on Valentine's Day at SoFi Stadium.

Nation

Milwaukee and Tampa Bay set for the World Series

The Major League Baseball set for a brand new champion as neither the Brewers nor the Rays have ever won a World Series before.

By: Jacob George

The 2026 Major League Baseball playoffs are heating up as three teams have already secured spots in the championship series with the Cleveland Guardians taking on the Chicago White Sox for a decisive game to determine the last spot in the championship series.

The Los Angeles Dodgers, Milwaukee Brewers and Tampa Bay Rays all advanced after winning their Division Series matchups. The Dodgers defeated the Atlanta Braves in a 3-1 series while the Brewers beat the San Diego Padres in a 3-1 series victory. The Rays swept the Yankees to secure their spot.

In the national league the Dodgers and Brewers will meet for the second consecutive year in the championship series with Los Angeles hoping to make another world series appearance.

Jake Procita, senior at Pleasant Valley High School, believed the Dodgers would win the title for the third year in a row.

"The Dodgers are gonna win the world series," said Procita.

This ended up not coming to pass as the Milwaukee Brewers swept the Dodgers in the National League Championship Series.

Since then, the Tampa Bay Rays won the American League Championship Series against the Cleveland Guardians.

Milwaukee beat Tampa Bay four games to one, earning their first World Series title in franchise history.