

IN

An IN Community Magazine

Fox Chapel Area

Class of **2021** Celebrates **GRADUATION**


Fox Chapel Area
School District News

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Summer Outdoor Dining Guide

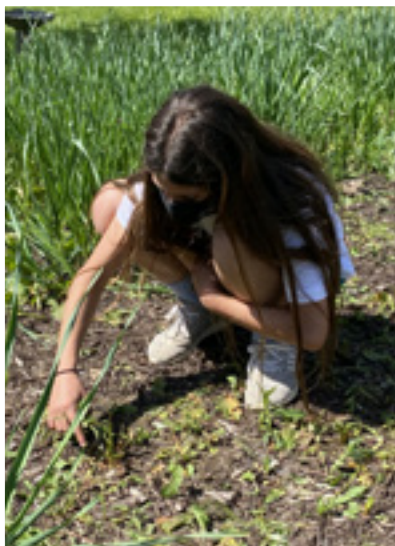
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FOX CHAPEL AREA

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fox Chapel Area Family,

Now that the 2020-2021 school year is over, I can finally say: We made it! Truly, what made all the difference is the spirit of collaboration that the entire Fox Chapel Area family showed during the past year. Everyone working together allowed us to return to school, to stay safe while we were there, and to remain in classes during the year, whether it was in person or virtually.

We're also proud that our students, despite the adversity and obstacles that our school community had to overcome because of the pandemic, continued to achieve at high levels academically, artistically, and athletically. We didn't just "get through." We learned new things. We were resilient. We did what we didn't think was possible.

In reflecting on our school year, I remain so very grateful for all of you. This school year would not have been possible without every member of the Fox Chapel Area team working together while keeping our students' needs at the center.

Though it's impossible to personally acknowledge the efforts of everyone involved, I'd like to point out our teachers' tireless efforts to design and implement learning experiences to help our students to achieve, often in entirely new ways and through constantly changing conditions, as well as our school counselors' managing of instructional model shifts and supporting the social and emotional needs of our students (and of our staff as well). Also, thank you to our school nurses for using their expertise to guide our planning, their caring nature to manage cases, their contact tracing skills, and for answering countless questions from concerned individuals.

We also appreciate the efforts of our district's unsung heroes, such as our custodians, maintenance staff, food service workers, police officers, bus drivers, and administrative assistants for their work in keeping our buildings safe and clean, making sure the members of our school community were well fed, and meeting the other critical needs of our staff and students.

Although I did not expect that during my first year as a superintendent I would be leading during an unprecedented health, educational, and social crisis, I learned long ago that one does not always control the context. Instead of dwelling on what we could not do this year, we creatively figured out what we could do, and then we did it. I am honored to be part of this community and am #FCProud of the entire Fox Chapel Area team.

I wish all of you a restful summer and look forward to our future together!

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac
Superintendent



*We didn't just "get
through." We learned new
things. We were resilient.
We did what we didn't
think was possible.*



FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2021-2022 FINAL BUDGET

The Fox Chapel Area School Board adopted the 2021-2022 final budget at its meeting on June 14, 2021.

Total Budgeted New Revenues	\$103,251,930
Unassigned Fund Balance	\$1,500,000
Total Revenues	\$104,751,930
Total Budgeted Expenditures	\$103,302,939
Budgetary Reserve	\$1,500,000
Total Expenditures	\$104,802,939
Total Net Change	-\$51,009*

*The budget will be balanced via fund balance drawdown.

The 2021-2022 final budget reflects an increase of 1.3% to the millage rate, which will go from 19.8686 to 20.1269. The increase in millage is expected to add more than \$800,000 in revenue each year. The district will also see an increase in

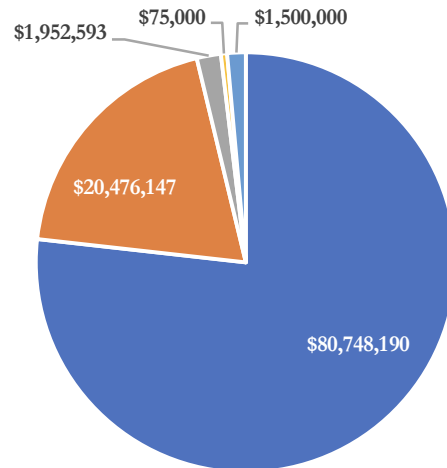
some state revenues starting in the 2021-2022 school year based on the reimbursement of 2013 bond debt service payments, which will provide the district with an additional \$300,000 each year based on the current payment structure of that bond.

In terms of expenditures, the 2020-2021 budget saw a reduction in many expenses because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2021-2022 school year, some of those items were added back into the budget, including summer custodial substitute staffing, maintenance services, the district's Summer Learning Academy, and transportation costs, such as buses for field trips. The district's copier lease was also renewed early to capture a savings in costs for the 2020-2021 year. The full lease cost is reflected in the 2021-2022 budget. The 2021-2022 final budget also includes almost \$600,000 in capital expenditures, some of which are expected to be paid for with federal stimulus funds, including a window project at Dorseyville Middle School and a roofing project at Fox Chapel Area High School.

The 2021-2022 budget reflects costs of more than \$16 million for the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) employer contribution, an increase of 6% over the current

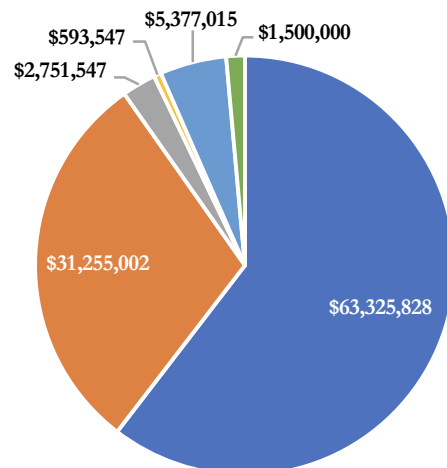
Breakdown of Revenues

Local Revenue (77.09%)	\$80,748,190
State Revenue (19.55%)	\$20,476,147
Federal Revenue (1.86%)	\$1,952,593
Other Revenue (0.07%)	\$75,000
Total Revenue	\$103,251,930
Unassigned Fund Balance (1.43%)	\$1,500,000
Total Revenue & Fund Balance	\$104,751,930



Breakdown of Expenditures

Instruction (60.42%)	\$63,325,828
Support Services (29.82%)	\$31,255,002
Non-Instructional (2.63%)	\$2,751,547
Facilities (0.57%)	\$593,547
Debt Service/Transfers/ Prior Year Refunds (5.13%)	\$5,377,015
Total Expenditures	\$103,302,939
Budgetary Reserve (1.43%)	\$1,500,000
Total Expenditures & Budgetary Reserve	\$104,802,939



year. The 2021-2022 PSERS employer contribution rate is set at 34.94%. The state reimburses the school district 50% of those costs, and that is reflected in the revenues.

Gaming Funds Distribution

On May 1, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provided the Fox Chapel Area School District with the amount of the district's share of gaming funds available for distribution. The final budget includes a distribution of \$1,476,270.35. The method of distributing these funds, as prescribed by Act 1, the Taxpayer Relief Act, will be via the implementation of the homestead exclusion. Under this provision, any property in the school district that was approved by Allegheny County as a homestead will have the lesser of its taxable value, or an estimated \$9,427.24 of its taxable value, excluded for the purpose of calculating current school district real estate taxes for the 2021 tax year. The owners of the 7,792* properties in the district that qualified for the homestead exclusion will receive the equivalent of a \$189.74 reduction in their property taxes. Property owners who currently do not have an approved homestead exclusion will have the opportunity to apply again when the district sends out letters to those homeowners in December 2021.

**Allegheny County has certified that there are 7,792 properties in the Fox Chapel Area School District that qualify for the homestead exclusion. If that number is adjusted by the county to include more or less properties, it could affect the amount of the final reduction.*

Federal Stimulus Funds

The district is expected to receive approximately \$5.4 million in stimulus and grants related to COVID-19 mitigation. These are the cumulative totals from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, special education mitigation funds from the Governor's Emergency Education

Relief Fund, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ESSER Fund, and various Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) grants. The district will spread the federal stimulus funds over multiple years to have the most impact on spending, and the plan is to use the funds on one-time, non-recurring costs.

Currently, the district has spent some federal stimulus funds on summer learning, special education, and personal protective equipment and other COVID-19 items, including cleaning supplies and technology equipment. Future plans for the funds include capital projects, the purchase of equipment, and learning intervention programs. The district also anticipates that some of these funds may be needed for unanticipated student and staff expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The stimulus funds must be used for expenses between March 2020 and September 2024.

Future Challenges

- The economic impact of COVID-19 for the current and future budget years is still widely uncertain.
 - As of March 2021, the estimated economic recovery has been projected at between five to seven years, per the Pennsylvania Independent Fiscal Office.
- The contribution to PSERS continues to be a challenge for all school districts in Pennsylvania.
 - The employer contribution rate is set by PSERS trustees, not by the district.
 - The district anticipates paying nearly \$45 million in PSERS contributions during the next five years.
- The five-year capital improvement plan has costs that must be factored into current and future budget planning.

Taxpayer Estimated Real Estate Tax Liability

	2020			2021		
Assessed Value	\$100,000	\$220,000 Median Home	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$220,000 Median Home	\$400,000
Homestead Exclusion	(\$9,468.74)	(\$9,468.74)	(\$9,468.74)	(\$9,427.24)	(\$9,427.24)	(\$9,427.24)
Net Assessed Value	\$90,531.26	\$210,531.26	\$390,531.26	\$90,572.76	\$210,572.76	\$390,572.76
Millage Rate	19.8686	19.8686	19.8686	20.1269	20.1269	20.1269
Tax Liability	\$1,798.73	\$4,182.96	\$7,759.31	\$1,822.95	\$4,238.18	\$7,861.02
% Increase				1.35%	1.32%	1.31%
Annual Increase				\$24.22	\$55.22	\$101.71
Monthly Increase				\$2.02	\$4.60	\$8.48

1. These amounts can be reduced by 2% if paid in full during the discount period.
2. Senior citizens may qualify for a property tax rebate program available through the state.

Continued on next page >



Budget Summary for the General Fund

	Actual 2018-2019	Actual 2019-2020	Estimated Actual 2020-2021 <small>Numbers as of 5/20/21</small>	Final Budget 2021-2022 <small>6/14/21</small>
Beginning Fund Balance	\$26,169,844.05	\$23,903,878.80	\$21,434,718	\$20,553,915
Revenues				
Current Real Estate Taxes	\$63,926,687.44	\$64,762,645.84	\$66,633,132	\$67,899,556
Other Real Estate Taxes	\$90,839.21	\$85,808.43	\$73,996	\$89,000
Act 511 Taxes	\$8,877,298.58	\$8,937,465.14	\$8,984,434	\$8,700,100
Delinquent Taxes (Real Estate & Act 511)	\$2,740,104.62	\$2,372,779.75	\$2,416,640	\$2,700,000
Other Local Income	\$2,267,475.05	\$1,869,766.33	\$877,875	\$1,359,534
Basic Instructional & Operating Subsidy	\$3,754,541.22	\$5,492,803.61	\$5,571,101	\$5,643,191
Revenue for Specific Educational Programs	\$2,392,145.33	\$2,567,776.92	\$2,417,779	\$2,417,779
Other State Revenue	\$13,149,771.83	\$11,917,033.61	\$12,099,579	\$12,415,177
Federal Revenue	\$1,064,257.41	\$845,223.57	\$1,720,586	\$1,952,593
Other Financing Sources	\$437,543.42	\$703,913.50	\$202,528	\$75,000
Total Revenues	\$98,700,664.11	\$99,555,216.70	\$100,997,650	\$103,251,930
Available/Unassigned Fund Balance (Less Portion to be Utilized as Drawdown)				\$1,500,000
Total Revenue Available (Includes Fund Balance Utilization)	\$98,700,664.11	\$99,555,216.70	\$100,997,650	\$104,751,930
Expenditures				
Instruction	\$61,635,772.63	\$62,290,719.71	\$60,975,076	\$63,325,828
Support Services	\$30,061,157.81	\$29,745,146.71	\$31,088,645	\$31,255,002
Non-Instructional	\$2,663,801.62	\$2,637,296.76	\$2,545,525	\$2,751,547
Facilities	\$855,326.68	\$273,788.52	\$875,095	\$593,547
Debt Service/Refund of Prior Year Receipts	\$5,725,998.62	\$5,669,449.80	\$5,569,111	\$5,352,015
Capital Projects Fund Transfer	\$24,572.00	\$1,407,976.00	\$823,000	\$23,000
Food Service Fund Transfer			\$2,000	\$2,000
Total Expenditures	\$100,966,629.36	\$102,024,377.50	\$101,878,452	\$103,302,939
Budgetary Reserve				\$1,500,000
Total Budgeted Expenditures (Includes Reserve)	\$100,966,629.36	\$102,024,377.50	\$101,878,452	\$104,802,939
Total Net Change (Revenues Less Expenditures)	(-\$2,265,965.25)	(-\$2,469,160.80)	(-\$880,802)	(-\$51,009)

Additional information about the 2021-2022 final budget can be found at www.fcasd.edu/budget.

GARDENS GROW PEACE, HOPE AT HARTWOOD, DMS

Students at Hartwood Elementary School and Dorseyville Middle School completed projects this year that they hope will reap benefits for a long time.

During the spring, members of Hartwood's student council planted a "Garden of Hope" on the side of the school to be a tranquil space for everyone in the building.

"We want it to be a place that students or staff can go to feel calm and at peace," says Hartwood school counselor Jacqueline Decker. "This year has been a lot for so many people, and our students wanted to create something that could bring a little peace and color to our Hartwood community."

In addition to preparing the garden, clearing the space of weeds, and planting flowers, students also painted rocks with positive messages to decorate the perimeter, and also made stakes adorned with peace signs to place alongside the blooms.

The project is similar to the "Peace Garden" installed in the Dorseyville Middle School courtyard earlier this year. According to Brianna Amoscato, a third-grade teacher at Hartwood who sponsors the "One Day" group at DMS, the club works to instill lessons about identity, race, diversity, equity, and justice throughout the school.



"The hope would be that this space would become a symbolic reminder of the importance of diversity, open dialogue, acceptance, kindness, love, and a daily celebration of identity and differences within our public schools," Mrs. Amoscato says.

In order to plant the DMS Peace Garden, paint the outdoor furniture for it, and create signs, students led a fundraiser during which they sold "One Day" shirts across the district, she says.

The eventual goal is to create similar gardens at all four elementary schools, according to Mrs. Amoscato.

"This is our hope as we continue to find ways to celebrate diversity in all forms," she says.

Ms. Decker says Hartwood students are already thinking of ways to use the Garden of Hope to benefit the greater community, such as potentially planting vegetables to donate to local food banks.

"We also want to think of ways for the food to feed the students at our school," Ms. Decker says. "Our students have thought of many different ways to enhance the garden for the future, and this is just the beginning."





TRADITIONAL GRADUATION RETURNS

Approximately 330 Fox Chapel Area High School seniors graduated Sunday, June 6, 2021, at a ceremony at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum in Oakland. The students celebrated this special milestone with hundreds of family members and friends in attendance. For many, it was the first time in more than a year to gather to celebrate a special occasion, and marked a bit of a return to normalcy amid the COVID-19 pandemic.





Phauness Contreras - Grade 11



Carlo Gambatto - Grade 9



Caroline Berger - Grade 9



Connor Zakin - Grade 11



Gloria Wen - Grade 9



Katie Chivinsky - Grade 12



Elijah Rynkiewicz - Grade 12



Lilygrace Goodworth - Grade 10



Sarah Rolewicz - Grade 12



Michael Tarasi - Grade 12

Fox Chapel Area High School

Pages 16-23 feature an art gallery
with student work from the 2020-2021 school year.



Jocelyn Morningstar - Grade 12



Leonora Carson - Grade 9



Emma Wienand - Grade 10



Scarlett Luden - Grade 10



Triston Vetter - Grade 12



Tyler Turner - Grade 12



Jonathan Li - Grade 10



Samantha D'Gregory - Grade 12



Noah Snider - Grade 11



Rebecca Chang - Grade 8



Drew Moyer - Grade 6



Xing Carluagh - Grade 7



Mira Owens - Grade 7



Mya Wilson - Grade 8

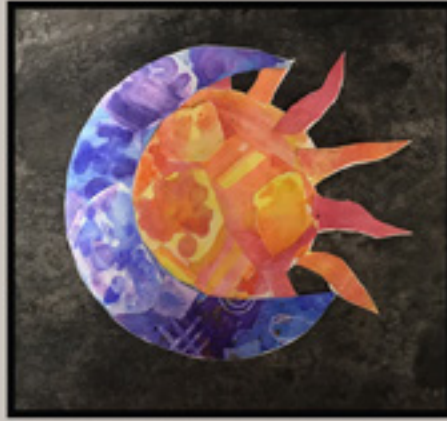


Owen Martin - Grade 7

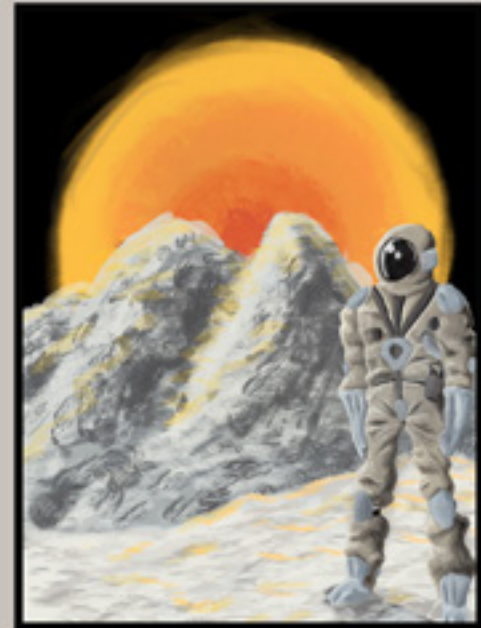
Dorseyville Middle School



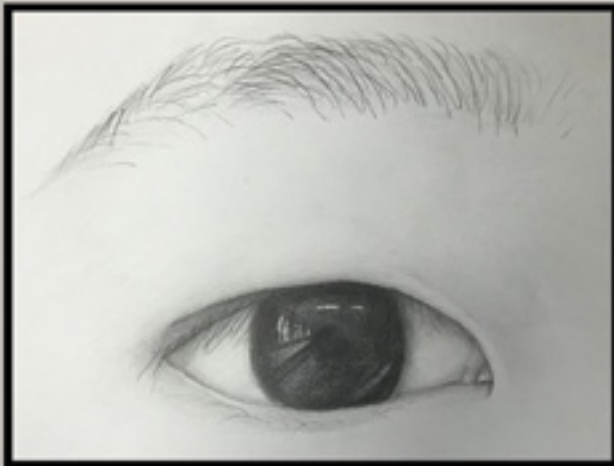
Ava Tramontina - Grade 6



Lucia McElwain - Grade 6



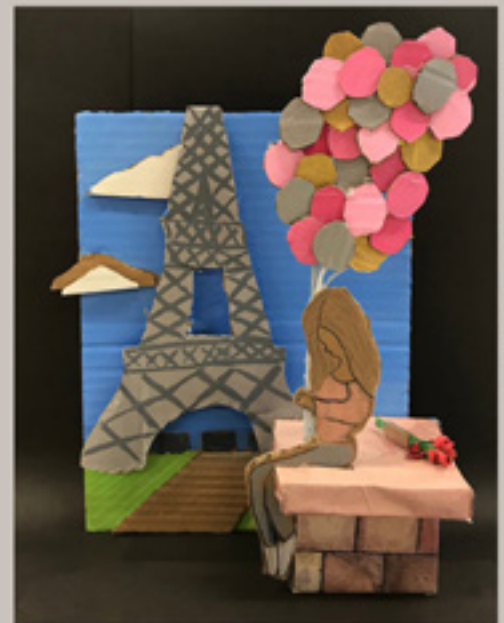
Shaefer Ostroff - Grade 8



Helen Xu - Grade 7



Digness Elwood - Grade 8



Cretchen Shelestak - Grade 8



Sophia Jacobs - Grade 7



Maura Regan - Grade 3



Geoffrey Welch - Grade 2



Marcus Nix - Grade 2



Vito Metz - Grade 5



Cameron Silverman - Kindergarten



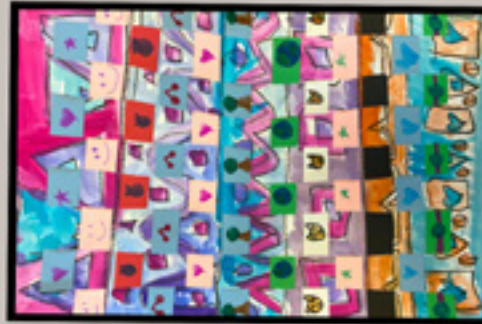
Gavin Scholz - Grade 1



Santiago Alvarez - Grade 5



Bennett Lutz - Grade 3



Emily Schroeder - Grade 1



Issac Chan - Grade 4



Eleanor Abel - Kindergarten

Fairview
Elementary

Hartwood Elementary



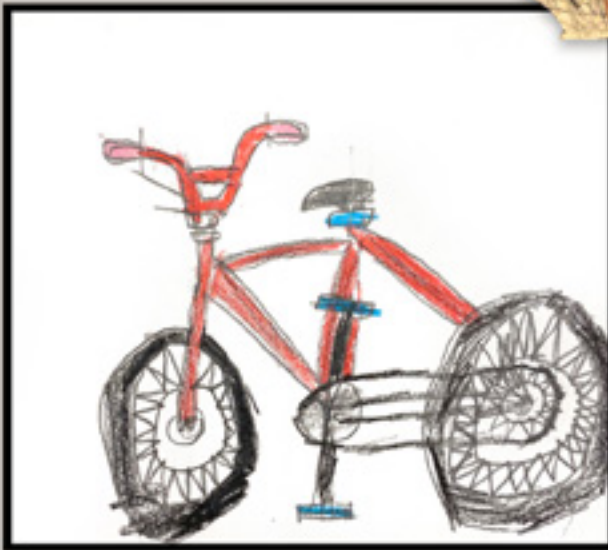
Wyatt Yates - Kindergarten



Emerie Hunter - Grade 2



Ianna Kabogambe - Grade 5



Ethan Sagath - Grade 4



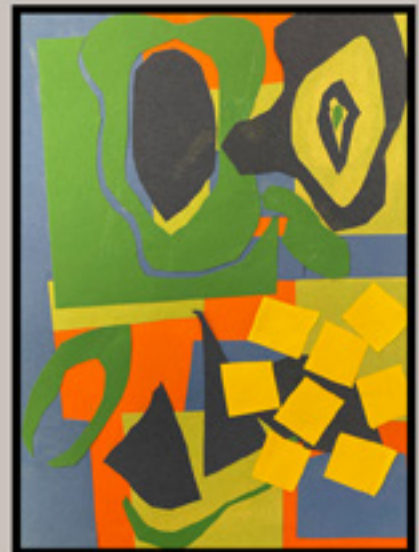
Alexa Lara Sakmar - Grade 2



Aisling Lupin - Grade 5



Purv Patel - Grade 5



Alex Li - Grade 2



Willa Meyer - Grade 5



Thomas Herstig - Kindergarten



Shamita Panat - Grade 5



Amelia Cheng - Kindergarten



Autumn Ewing - Grade 5



Sawyer Rzeszutarski - Grade 4

Emily Dean - Grade 3



John Lupetin - Grade 1



Elliot Tai - Grade 3



Ekaterina Pistsova - Grade 3



Ruth Cooper - Kindergarten



Lucas Ahern - Grade 5

Kerr
Elementary

O'Hara Elementary



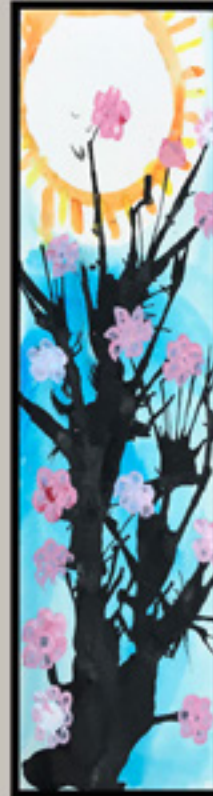
Emma Franklin - Kindergarten



Teddy Liszka - Kindergarten



Enzo Ressler - Grade 3



Freya Maci - Grade 2



Leo Ferry - Grade 2



Renata Wielechowski - Grade 4



Clara Stein - Grade 1



Soleil Muller - Grade 3



Jay Mohn - Grade 5



GRADUATES TO CONTINUE ACADEMIC, ATHLETIC ENDEAVORS

Despite the adversities created by the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of Fox Chapel Area High School 2021 graduates recently signed and/or committed to Division I, II, and III colleges and universities.

If there is any doubt that Fox Chapel Area High School's athletes excel no matter the circumstances, the following statistics reflect their diligence and perseverance:

- Every high school athlete, on average, spent more than 100 hours each season at strength and conditioning workouts, practices, and games.
- Over the course of the last four years (minus the spring 2020 season, which was canceled due to COVID-19), this year's seniors have participated in more than 1,100 athletic contests as a group and won more than 700 of those competitions.
- Teams with undefeated section records during the last four years included girls cross country, boys cross country, boys basketball, boys golf, girls golf, field hockey, boys tennis, girls tennis, boys swimming, and girls swimming.



According to Athletic Director Michael O'Brien, this year's athletic endeavors took on added significance because of the adversity that student-athletes faced.

"This is a special group because of the resilience and dedication they have

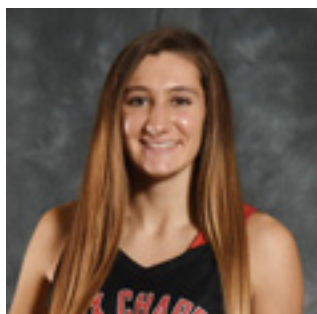


shown in, not just getting through, but even thriving during a pandemic amid great uncertainty and myriad challenges," he says. "I am proud of how they put to work their resourcefulness and creativity to find alternate ways to work out and hone their skills during the pandemic."

During a celebration, Mr. O'Brien also reminded the athletes that there will be challenges they will face in their futures, and that some days, they may even want to give up, "But you will figure out a way to get through it and continue on because the lessons you learned at home and here at Fox Chapel Area have given you the tools you need to persevere through because, as Tom Hanks once said, 'If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. It's the hard that makes it great.'"

He also told the athletes that they owe a great deal to their families for the support that they have been given throughout the years that enabled them to excel in their chosen sport.

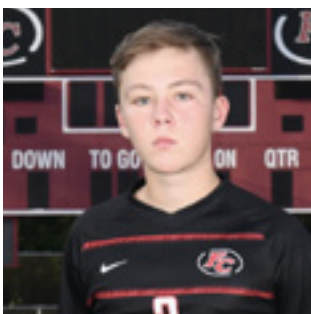
"Please don't forget where it all started, and know you will forever be a part of this great institution."



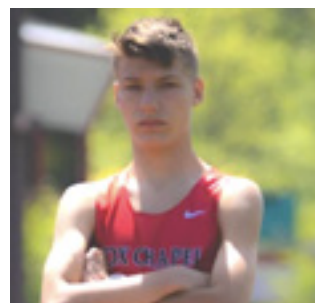
*Domenica Delaney – Basketball
St. Vincent College*



*Dante DiMatteo – Baseball
Washington & Jefferson College*



*Colin Elder – Soccer
Allegheny College*



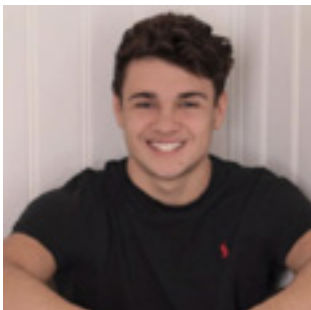
*Shane Funk – Cross Country/Track
Muskingum University*



*Thomas Golembiewski – Football
Utica College*



*Lauren Himmel – Volleyball
Case Western Reserve University*



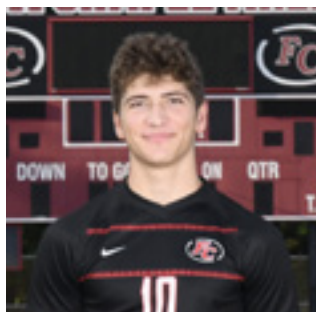
*Alex Khorey – Track
University of Detroit Mercy*



*Thomas Koch – Baseball
Brunswick Community College*



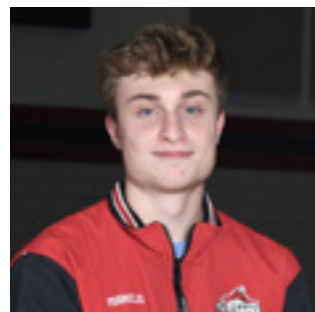
*Britta Lagerquist – Soccer
Grove City College*



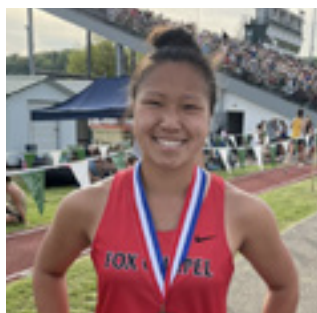
*Nate Lazzara – Soccer
University of Rochester*



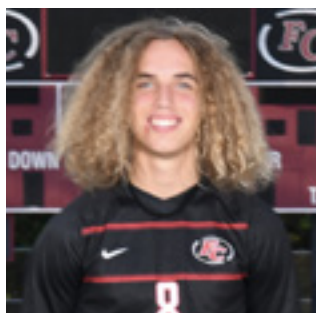
*Aiden Mack – Football
Muskingum University*



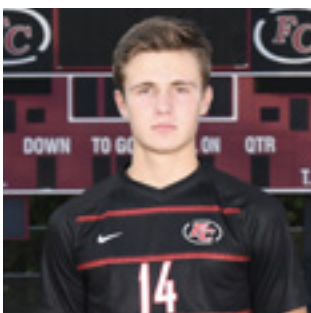
*David Manelis – Diving
U.S. Military Academy West Point*



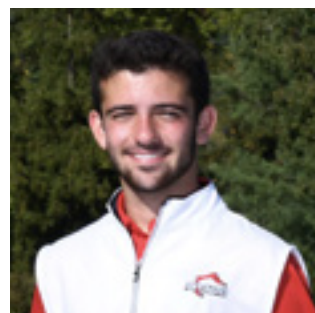
*Jessica Jing McCann – Track
Seton Hill University*



*David Merriman – Soccer
Rochester Institute of Technology*



*Jack Nury – Soccer
Franklin & Marshall College*



*Aidan Oehrle – Golf
Lehigh University*



*Lucy Ream – Soccer
Eastern Kentucky University*



*Vivian Shao – Swimming
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology*



*Emma Wecht – Soccer
Denison University*



UNIFIED SOCCER TEAM BUILDS ON DISTRICT'S INCLUSION EFFORTS

With a goal of furthering the ideals of inclusion, acceptance, and respect among students, the Fox Chapel Area School District recently added a Special Olympics Unified Soccer program at Dorseyville Middle School. Special Olympics Unified Sports aim to foster an appreciation of players of all abilities.

One of the hopes for DMS' Unified Soccer program, which joins Unified Bocce and Unified Track and Field teams at Fox Chapel Area High School, is to continue to promote inclusivity among students, according to Timothy Mahoney, the district's director of special education and pupil services.

"By developing a middle school program, we have created an opportunity for our students to build friendships while competing together and participating in one of the more popular club programs in our community," Mr. Mahoney says.

He also hopes the new program will lead to greater involvement and student leadership in Unified Bocce and Unified Track and Field at the high school level.

"Unified Soccer at the middle school will also foster opportunities for earlier friendships between teammates and help with the transition for all

students when they move from Dorseyville Middle School to Fox Chapel Area High School."

Dorseyville Middle School special education teacher Jill Bennett echoes that sentiment.

"We had five incredible high school students come to help coach our team," says Mrs. Bennett, a co-sponsor of the Unified Soccer team. "As we send many of our athletes on to the high school next year, the faces will be familiar and comforting to our students."

While students learn about the fundamentals of the game during Unified Soccer practices and competitions, those aren't the only lessons they receive.

"Students come to understand the importance of kindness, inclusion, and that everyone has his or her own strengths," says Caryn Campbell, a co-sponsor of the team.



"Our Special Olympics athletes receive a sense of achievement and accomplishment," Mrs. Campbell says. "They love working alongside their typical peers and forming relationships with each other."

Dorseyville Middle School Program Principal Dr. Laura Miller knows first-hand the benefits that a soccer program can provide.

"Having played soccer for 12 years, I'm passionate about soccer," Dr. Miller says. "Students have enjoyed the time playing and have had the opportunity to work on team-building skills, communication among team members, and also working on overall health and fitness."

The Unified Soccer program fits nicely into some of the district's long-term goals, according to Mr. Mahoney.

"We are working in support of the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives," Mr. Mahoney says. "We hope that this program is a model for schools in our region to support the type of districtwide inclusion that provides opportunities for individuals to grow beyond the classroom."

The district already has experience setting a standard for inclusion. In 2019, Special Olympics named Fox Chapel Area High School a "Unified Champion School," a prestigious honor given by the international headquarters of Special Olympics to a small number of schools that demonstrate a commitment to meaningful inclusion and quality Unified Champion Schools programming.



NEENA PIETROPAOLO MAKES MOST OF HER SENIOR YEAR, ON AND OFF THE FIELD

There were several things that occurred during the past year that Neena Pietropaolo wasn't exactly expecting, both good and not so good. One of the first was her disappointment when the spring softball season was canceled in 2020. She had been really looking forward to playing again after being named a WPIAL Class 6A all-section player as a sophomore.

Overcoming a bit of a slow start to the 2021 season, Neena hit the homer that ended up winning the game in the first round of the WPIAL Class 5A playoffs. The Foxes then advanced to the quarterfinals, where she hit another home run. The Foxes went on to the semifinals and qualified for the PIAA tournament for the first time in school history.

However, another event in Neena's life during 2020 didn't have such a happy ending, but what Neena did in reaction to it was remarkable.

Neena lost her grandfather to lymphoma last year and, with the two of them being very close, his



Softball player Neena Pietropaolo (right) and friend Bella Henzler raised more than \$80,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Western Pennsylvania.

death deeply affected her. While working through her grief, Neena was nominated to become part of a team that was very different from those she'd been used to. Neena and a friend from Hampton High School, Bella Henzler, who was a softball catcher for the Talbots, joined forces to raise money in a contest sponsored by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Western Pennsylvania.

"At first, we set a goal to raise \$30,000, but we raised more than I ever thought we would," Neena says of the

competition that drew 16 teams. "But I was really motivated because of my grandfather."

During the seven-week contest, the athletes asked for donations from family, friends, and the community, and held a variety of fundraisers. Their biggest success was a contest that utilized the software technology of HitTrak. The girls lined up different softball teams that made donations to compete against each other through virtual games.

"Whoever scored the most runs in the competition was the winner," explains Neena, who hopes to play softball at Mercyhurst College.

The duo ended up raising more than \$80,000, nearly three times as much as they originally anticipated.

"Basically, \$50,000 of the \$80,000 dollars that Bella and I raised all go toward the research of the exact type of blood cancer my grandfather passed away from. The generous donations from everyone made me realize how highly thought of he was."

SOFTBALL BEATS THE ODDS, MAKES SCHOOL HISTORY

When the Fox Chapel Area High School softball team started off the year, head coach Dr. Chris Olbrich didn't quite know what to expect. With a year off due to COVID-19, half of the team had never played in a varsity game, and the returning players were part of a team that had gone 3-15 in 2019. By the end of the year, however, the Foxes made school history as the first softball team to advance to the final four of the WPIAL championships and move on to the state tournament.

Even though the Foxes were assigned the 14th seed going into the WPIAL playoffs, the players proved to be tough competitors. Their resilience surprised everyone but themselves when they knocked off the third-seeded team in the first round, won their next game, and moved on to the semifinals.



The season ended for the Foxes in the first round of the PIAA Class 5A championships, but with 14 out of 16 players returning next year, the future remains bright. Coach Olbrich is extremely proud of his players and says, "I am very excited about the future, as this team will have another year to grow together, trust each other, and hopefully carry us further next year."



SWIMMER, DIVER GOLDEN AT STATES

Sophie Shao just finished up her sophomore year, but the Foxes' swimmer extraordinaire has made school history several times over. At the 2020-2021 PIAA Class 3A swimming championships, the honors student won her second consecutive gold medal in the 100-meter butterfly with a time of 54:59. Her accomplishments make her the only swimmer in Fox Chapel Area High School history to achieve that level of success. In total, Sophie earned four medals that day. She placed sixth in the 200 IM and was part of the 200 medley and 400 freestyle medley teams that medaled. She automatically earned all-state status and, later, was named All-American, both for the second time.

Swimming in four very competitive races that day was an incredible demonstration of Sophie's endurance and physical toughness. She swam her events within an hour, and the butterfly was her third event. She recalls, "I literally went at it with everything I had and tried to hold my underwaters really long in the last lap. I was pretty tired from doing the 200 and 400 before I swam the fly, so I am still not quite as happy with my time because I feel I have a lot more in me."

Coming into high school, Sophie's goal was to win a state medal, sooner rather than later, and she was confident it was within her reach with a lot of hard work. That included



ramped up dryland training (core, endurance, and weight training), especially when getting into the pool was not possible because of the pandemic.

"I've always concentrated on the back end of my races, but in the offseason, I definitely want to work on my out-front speed and get more mentally tough because I think I could have gone faster in all of my events," says the rising junior, who trains year-round. "And I can't wait to get outside and run more."

No matter how much Sophie's individual trophies mean to her, the honors student loves being part of the 200 medley and 400 freestyle relay teams, whose members include her sister Vivian, who is headed to MIT in the fall and will swim for the Engineers. Vivian also is an all-state awardee, along with the two other members of the relays, rising senior Rei Sperry and rising junior Talia Bugel. The fabulous four finished fourth at states in the 200 and seventh in the 400.

As one would expect from a champion, Sophie already is enthused about the 2021-2022 season, and she has a lot more goals in mind.

In her two years with the Foxes, Sophie broke a number of pool and school records, three individually and two as a member of the 200 medley and 400 freestyle relay teams. Her individual records are in the 100 butterfly, 100 breaststroke, and the 200 IM.

David Manelis Earns PIAA Crown

Diver David Manelis, a 2021 graduate, won a gold medal at PIAAs. Manelis, who was seeded first in the state competition, won with a margin of close to 100 points, and became the first diver in school history to earn that honor. Next year, David will attend West Point to further his education and dive for its men's team.



FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTORY

District Administration

611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/963-9600
www.fcasd.edu
Superintendent: Mary Catherine Reljac, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent: David McCommons, Ed.D.
Business Manager: Kimberly Pawlishak

District Resource Staff

Executive Director of Elementary Education and Instruction: Ashley Constantine, Ed.D.
Executive Director of Secondary Education and Instruction: Matthew Harris, Ed.D.
Director of Special Education and Pupil Services: Timothy Mahoney
Executive Director of Instructional and Innovative Leadership: Megan Collett, Ed.D.
Director of Literacy: Dana Simile
Director of Student Achievement and Instructional Verification: G. Daniel DiDesiderio III, Ed.D.
Director of Ancillary Services: Daniel Breitreutz
Chief of School Police/School Safety and Security Coordinator: Joseph Kozarian
Director of Athletics: Michael O'Brien
Coordinator of Communications: Bonnie Berzonski
Community Engagement Specialist: Jill Leonard

FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOLS

Fairview Elementary School

738 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/963-9315
Principal: Stephen Edwards

Hartwood Elementary School

3730 Saxonburg Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/767-5396
Principal: Rachel Fischbaugh, Ed.D.

Kerr Elementary School

341 Kittanning Pike
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
412/781-4105
Principal: Paul Noro, Ed.D.

O'Hara Elementary School

115 Cabin Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/963-0333
Principal: Kristy Batis
Program Principal: Dana Simile

Dorseyville Middle School

3732 Saxonburg Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/767-5343
Principal: Jonathan Nauhaus
Program Principal: Laura Miller, Ed.D.

Fox Chapel Area High School

611 Field Club Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412/967-2430
Lead Principal: Michael Hower, Ed.D.
Program Principal (A-L): Daniel Lentz, Ph.D.
Program Principal (M-Z): John McGee, Ph.D.

CONTACT INFORMATION SOUGHT

The Fox Chapel Area School District is gathering emails of individuals who do not have children in the district but are interested in receiving occasional emails from the district. If you are interested in getting email from the district, please fill out the Google form at <http://bit.ly/FCASDContacts> so that you can be added to an email distribution list.

FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Edith L. Cook, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary (2021 – Region III); Amy B. Cooper (2021 – Region I); Marybeth Dadd, President (2023 – Region III); Ronald P. Frank, Vice President (2023 – Region II); Adam G. Goode (2021 – Region III); Eric G. Hamilton, Treasurer (2023 – Region I); Vanessa K. Lynch (2023 – Region II); Somer Obernauer Jr. (2021 – Region I); and Dharmesh Vyas, M.D., Ph.D. (2021 – Region II).

Region I covers all of Sharpsburg Borough and Wards 2, 3, and 4 of O'Hara Township; Region II covers Districts 2, 4, and 5 of Fox Chapel Borough and all of Indiana Township; and Region III covers all of Aspinwall Borough, Blawnox Borough, Wards 1 and 5 of O'Hara Township, and Districts 1 and 3 of Fox Chapel Borough.

School Board meetings are usually scheduled for the first and second Mondays of each month at 7 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The Fox Chapel Area School District is an equal rights and opportunity school district. The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, or handicap/disability. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

Additional information pertaining to civil rights, school district policies, and grievance procedures can be obtained by contacting the compliance officers listed below between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. This notice is available from the compliance officers in large print, on audiotape, and in Braille.

Title IX: David P. McCommons, Ed.D.
(412/967-2456)
Section 504 and ADA: Timothy A. Mahoney
(412/967-2435)
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