

Pocono Mountain SD hosts Governor's press conference *Governor proposes charter school law reform with more accountability & transparency*

Pocono Mountain School District hosted a press conference for Governor Tom Wolf on August 13, in the PM West High School library where the Governor announced his new initiative to make changes to the charter school law.

Recognizing Pennsylvania's flawed and outdated charter school law is one of the worst in the nation, Governor Wolf is taking executive action, overhauling regulations, and will propose legislation to comprehensively reform the law. The governor outlined his vision that will strengthen charter school quality, accountability and transparency to control costs and improve outcomes for students.

"Pennsylvania's charter school law is unfair for students, parents, school districts, and taxpayers," said Governor Wolf. "While many charter schools are succeeding, others, especially some cyber charter schools, are underperforming and we are not doing enough to hold them accountable to the taxpaying public and the children they serve.

"Today I'm announcing comprehensive charter school reform through



Governor Tom Wolf outlines his proposal to reform the Charter School Law at a press conference at the Pocono Mountain West High School on August 13. Participating in the press conference were (left to right) Susan Spicka, Executive Director of Education Voters of PA, Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera, Governor Wolf, West HS Principal Dr. Mark Wade, and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Elizabeth Robison.

executive action, regulation, and accountability and transparency of legislation. These changes will level charter and cyber charter schools, and the playing field for all taxpayer-funded public schools, strengthen the better serve all students."

charter schools, and for-profit companies that manage many of them, are not held to the same ethical and transparency standards of traditional public schools. Despite the rising costs of charter schools to school districts and property taxpayers, school districts and state government have limited authority to hold charter schools accountable.

"We need school choice to become a fair and level playing field where all publically funded schools follow the same rules when it comes to educating our students and proving financial oversight and transparency of how taxpayer dollars are spent," said Dr. Elizabeth Robison, Superintendent of Schools. "Charter and Cyber Schools should have nothing to fear from sharing the same increased accountability and transparency that is expected and demanded of traditional public schools."

The poor academic performance of some charter schools is also a concern. A recent report from Stanford University found overwhelmingly negative results from Pennsylvania's cyber schools and called for the

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Cyber students: Enrollment still open, give PMSD Cyber a try

Nora Wandalowski
Director, PM Cyber & Academy Alternative Education Program

The Pocono Mountain School District Cyber Program offers alternative educational options for students from kindergarten through seniors in high school who are residents of the Pocono Mountain School District; additionally, PMSD Cyber Program offers credit recovery options for high school students who need to makeup credits to stay on track and graduate with their classmates.

The Cyber Program also offers options for students who are under 21 years of age, who left school without graduating and would like to return to Pocono Mountain School District to earn their Pocono Mountain diploma. This option sets Pocono Mountain apart from other local districts and from all other cyber programs.

Cyber students, it's time to make the move to the PMSD Cyber program. Learn more about PMSD's elementary cyber program ... see article on Page 12

Completing course requirements and earning a Pocono Mountain School District diploma puts students on a path to life-long success in post-secondary education, trade programs, or employment. PMSD Cyber Program offers options for students to work through credit recovery courses and earn a true Pocono Mountain diploma with the guidance of certified subject area teachers. These teachers are available to help guide students through these courses and PMSD's outstanding guidance department staff

is available to connect these students with post-secondary options for education or employment.

Returning students are not the only ones who need a flexible program. PMSD Cyber Program offers flexible schedules through full time at-home cyber instruction and hybrid cyber and building instruction for all secondary students in 7th through 12th grade.

Some of our students work online full-time from home and only come into the building to meet with teachers to receive support. These students have the option to work at their own pace to complete courses and often they accelerate through requirements.

PMSD Cyber Program students have the flexibility to work part-time jobs during traditional school day hours and complete course assignments in the evening. For many students this is the primary reason for wanting to participate in a cyber program, and having the options to still participate with their peers

See PMSD CYBER PROGRAM...Page 3

From the Superintendent...

By Dr. Elizabeth Robison
Superintendent of Schools

For many years, I have emphasized the importance of positive parent involvement in our schools. I have offered suggestions on how our parents can get more involved in our schools and how our school leaders can expand opportunities to welcome parents into our schools.

One of the most basic ways to increase positive parent involvement in our schools is by developing and maintaining positive parent/teacher relationships. When our parents and teachers partner in the success of each student, everyone wins.

Positive parent involvement results in parents who are more likely to be engaged and involved in their children's educational opportunities at school. Parents then feel that same connectedness to their children's schools that we want our students to experience. Parents who have positive relationships with their children's teachers are also more likely to extend and reinforce their children's classroom instruction at home by being involved in homework and school projects, or by reading to their child or having their child read to them.

Positive parent/teacher relationships begin with good two-way communication between parents and teachers. Teachers and parents each have an important role in establishing and maintaining good communication throughout the school year.

Our teachers should help establish communication



with parents at the beginning of the school year to let parents know when and how best to communicate with their child's teacher regarding a concern or for progress updates. Parents should be informed of when assignments will be graded and when grades will be posted to Home Access Center for parent review.

We also want teachers to communicate with parents throughout the school year on possible concerns about student performance or behavior, and on the positive contributions each student is making in the class and at school. Teachers should also share strategies with parents on how parents can help their children with homework and projects, and prepare for tests.

For parents, knowing what questions to ask teachers can help keep communication with teachers open, positive and focused on the issue at hand. Some great advice for parents on how to communicate with teachers comes in an article entitled, "The Smart Way to Talk to Teachers," written by Laura Flynn McCarthy and published in Parents Magazine (www.parents.com).

For example, if a teacher indicates that a student is having trouble completing school work, parents should ask teachers for specifics, such as, if the student is having trouble with just one subject or several, if the student struggled on one test or concept or many,

and if the student is completing assignments or seems overwhelmed and frustrated.

For a report of misbehavior, parents will want to find out if the child was interrupting, running around, or making noises, according to McCarthy. "Is the student disruptive at the same time each day?" Has something changed in the classroom?

For a report that a child appears anxious or stressed, McCarthy recommends that parents ask if their child is crying at school or going to the nurse's office at certain times of day, how is their child interacting with other students and how are other students interacting with their child?

Once parents gather more information from teachers, the next step is to get their child's perspective on the concern and then work with the teacher to develop a plan to resolve the concern. However, communication between the parent and teacher doesn't stop here, as it's very important for good communication to continue as parents and teachers follow up with each other on how the strategies are working for the child and if other supports or interventions may be needed.

In all situations, the best way to try to maintain good parent/teacher communication is for either party to try very hard not to get defensive, to try to understand each other's points of view, and to stay focused on solving a concern that is impacting the student's performance, behavior or happiness.

As our parents, students and teachers prepare for the start of the 2019-2020 school year, let's all renew our commitment to the success of each student at Pocono Mountain School District and work hard to develop and maintain positive parent/teacher communication and relationships focused on the individual needs of each student.

Board continues enhanced senior citizen property tax rebates

Pocono Mountain School District's enhanced property tax rebates for eligible property owners will continue for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

The District's Board of Education approved the enhanced property tax rebates in April 2016, and has continued to offer the enhanced rebates each fiscal year since to provide qualifying property owners with additional tax relief above the state rebate rate.

For many years, the District matched the state rebate program established by the PA Senior Citizen's Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program Act. That changed in April 2016, when the School Board passed its first resolution for the enhanced tax relief.

With the enhanced rebate resolution, qualifying property owners will receive their state rebate of up to \$650 and then up to 200 percent of that amount in a rebate from the school district for the third tax year.

Who Qualifies?

The guidelines for individuals to qualify for the state and Pocono Mountain SD property tax rebate programs are as follows:

- Must own and have occupied their



Pocono Mountain School District's Board of Education: (Row 1, left to right) Ms. Jackie Leonard, Mr. Rusty Johnson (President), Mr. John Coyle (Vice President), and Mrs. Annabella Lastowski; (Row 2, left to right) Mr. Ed Coover, Mr. Jim Gamble, Mr. John Davis, Mr. Frank Pecci, and Mr. Michael Stern.

- home as their primary residents during the school year of which the tax rebate is being requested;
- They or their spouse must have been at least 65 years old as of December 31 of the tax year;
- They were permanently disabled during all or part of tax year;
- Must be 18 years or older during 2018, and were unable to work because of a permanent medically determined physical or mental disability;
- Their total tax year household income must have been \$ 35,000 or less. Fifty percent of social security/railroad retirement income shall be excluded in determining eligibility income limits;
- They or someone on their behalf must have paid the school taxes in full on the residence for applicable school year by December 31;
- Only one member of each household may file a claim even if more than one person is qualified

to receive a rebate.

The application to apply for a property tax rebate and other information on the program are available to qualifying property owners from Pocono Mountain SD on the school district's website at www.pmsd.org under the Business Department. Individuals who do not have access to the Internet may call the Pocono Mountain business office at (570) 839-7121, extension 10163 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for more information.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

- August 21
- September 18
- October 2
- October 16
- November 6
- November 20
- December 4
- December 18

2019 PMSD gaming revenue property tax relief = \$444.16

Pocono Mountain School District qualifying property owners will receive property tax relief as part of Pennsylvania's broad-based property tax relief from gaming funds through the Taxpayer Relief Act, also known as Special Session Act 1 of 2006.

As required by law, the Commonwealth's Budget Secretary certified on April 15, 2019, that \$620,500,000 will be available in 2019-2020 for state-funded local tax relief.

The property tax relief for approved property owners in Pocono Mountain School District is \$444.16. This amount is based on the number of approved homesteads/farmsteads of 13,986.

Checks will not be issued to approved property owners for this property tax relief. Instead, state gaming funds will be remitted to PMSD to help offset school property taxes via an approved homestead and/or farmstead exemption. Homeowners with approved Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion applications will see the exclusion amount annotated and deducted on their 2019 property tax bill.

Gaming funds dedicated to property

tax relief will pay for a Philadelphia Wage Tax reduction, Philadelphia Senior Citizen Property Tax reduction, allocation to districts for Philadelphia Wage Credit, expanded Senior Citizen Property Tax & Rent Rebate Program, and the state allocation to the remaining districts.

The amount of gaming funds dedicated to property tax relief will vary each year, which means the amount of property tax relief for property owners will also vary each year.

Who will receive the tax relief?

For property owners to receive this tax relief they would have had to file a Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion application with the Monroe County Assessment Office by March 1, 2019, and received a notice back that their application was approved. Any property owner who received property tax relief last year still qualify. They do not have to reapply each year.

What happens to property owners who didn't apply for the Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion?

For those property owners who have

See TAX RELIEF...Page 12



FUTURE TECH LEADERS...Olivia Seidel, right, a 6th grader at Tobyhanna Elementary Center and member of TEC's Student Technology Leaders program, attended the International Society for Technology in Education Conference in Philadelphia, Pa., on June 25. Olivia, along with students from 6 other school districts, participated in a poster session that promoted the benefits of having student technology teams to empower students to teach, support, and partner with teachers to build capacity for technology integration into the classroom. Through programs like this, Pocono Mountain School District students build relationships with teachers, assist in supporting the learning environments, and collaborate with the school community to discover and use digital resources.



Dr. Elizabeth Robison, Superintendent of Schools, participated in Governor Wolf's press conference announcing his proposal to reform the Charter School Law.

Governor seeks Charter Law change

...continued from Page 1

commonwealth to take urgent action.

Governor Wolf's proposal promotes innovation and choice, while ensuring that charter schools are providing a high-quality education and meeting the same standards Pennsylvanians expect from traditional public schools.

"We owe it to the children who are attending Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools to ensure their parents are being given a high-quality choice, not just a choice," said Dr. Robison.

Governor Wolf's charter school proposal is available on the PMSD website at www.pmsd.org.

(Compiled from an article on Governor Wolf's website and local sources)

PMSD Cyber Program offers flexible scheduling...continued from Page 1

in school activities and events, is the reason they select PMSD Cyber Program over all others.

Students who do not want to work full-time at home in a cyber program, but still need a flexible schedule can participate in a hybrid schedule with PMSD Cyber Program and the traditional brick-and-mortar building.

Selecting the correct subjects for online study and for participation in the traditional building will be a team decision with the student, parents, a PMSD Cyber teacher, and building level staff meeting together to develop the best program for each individual student.

Pocono Mountain students wanting to earn additional credits during the school year and who are willing to work outside of the school day can accelerate through curriculum independently to enrich their educational experience. Taking courses in foreign languages, advanced mathematics, and additional electives allows students to focus their schedule during the school day on subjects they enjoy and complete other graduation requirements independently online at their own pace.

Using the Edgenuity Learning Management System (LMS), PMSD Cyber Program offers competitive courses for students on all instructional levels. From students participating in Advanced Placement courses, to students struggling with the core curriculum in need of additional instructional assistance, and for returning students working to earn a diploma, Edgenuity has curriculum that can meet individual student needs.

All PMSD Cyber Program students participate

Cyber program slots still available

in a personalized learning environment under the instruction of certified subject area Pocono Mountain teachers and work toward earning a Pocono Mountain School District diploma.

Students will have the opportunity to connect directly with the PMSD Cyber Program teachers face-to-face when necessary. Working with teachers that are located on the Sullivan Trail Campus allows the PMSD Cyber Program to offer the personal connection that sets it apart from other cyber schools. Secondary students, grades 7th through 12th, can attend our on-site cyber classroom located in the Pocono Mountain Academy. Students can opt to ride the bus to school in the morning and spend the day working with a variety of teachers, or schedule a time to come in and meet with a subject specific teacher

Meeting individual needs is the goal of PMSD Cyber Program. The opportunities for core course completion, recovery of course credits, enrichment beyond the school day, and access to face-to-face teachers is what set PMSD Cyber Program far above and apart from all other cyber schools.

If you are a district resident looking for the best cyber school option for your student, or want to learn more about the full-day and hybrid programs for students in kindergarten through 12th grade offered by PMSD Cyber Program, please contact Nora Wandalowski at 570-839-7121 extension 51266 to schedule an appointment.

What parents should know about school safety procedures

Wendy Frable

*Director of Public Relations &
Compliance Services*

Pocono Mountain School District parents may have heard their school-aged children talk about Run, Hide, Fight, which are the procedures practiced in District schools to respond to potential acts of violence against a school. Your children may also talk about evacuating the school for fire drills or the steps they take to practice lockdown drills.

All of those drills are done to prepare our students, faculty, staff and administrators on how to respond in emergency situations. Those scenarios and many more are part of the District's comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan for All Hazards, which outlines the procedures for the Superintendent, Central Administration Team, School Administrators, Faculty and Staff to follow to keep Pocono Mountain students and schools safe.

The plan is confidential, so parents won't find a copy of it on the District's website. The plan includes procedures for District employees and students to follow in all types of hazards from severe weather and hazardous chemical spills to a lost student or violent act against a school. The plan includes easy-to-follow checklists to help District employees ensure that in an emergency they know what steps to take to safeguard students and each other.

As part of the District's emergency preparedness procedures, all District schools practice lockdown drills. When a school is placed in a lockdown, whether for a drill or potential threat, the school remains locked down until the drill ends, or in the case of a perceived threat, the threat or hazard has been cleared. If the situation warrants it, the District may also lockdown an entire campus or all campuses during an emergency.

When a building is locked down, it's important for parents and community members to know that no one will be allowed into the school, including parents, who may want to rush to the school to get their child. Keeping students and employees safe, and dealing with a perceived threat or other potentially dangerous situation take priority over all else.

During an emergency, District officials need to keep the roadways and school campuses as free from other traffic as possible, so emergency responders



School safety is a year-round priority for Pocono Mountain School District, with much of the safety planning and preparation taking place over the summer. Beth DeLay, the Director of Health/Physical Education, Guidance & Nursing Services, updated the school safety go bags over the summer, to ensure the bags are ready for teachers and staff at the start of the school year. A new item for the go bags are lifesaving Stop-the-Bleed kits donated to the District by Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono. In addition to the safety go bags, Officer Jason Wile, School Resource Officer from Pocono Mountain Regional Police Department, and Brad Pensyl, the Executive Director of Student and Support Staff Services and the District School Safety and Security Coordinator, conducted safety assessments of all schools and other District buildings in July.

(police, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel, ambulances, etc.) can get to the school campus in question as quickly as possible. It will be very hard for emergency responders to get to District campuses and assist with an emergency if parents attempt to drive to their child's school to see what is happening.

Parent's role in an emergency:

- Parents can best assist the District Administration and Emergency Responders if they try to refrain from immediately calling their child's school or rushing to their child's school when a lockdown is initiated. During an emergency, school staff will be busy responding to the emergency and addressing the needs of students. Keeping the telephone lines open for emergency use is critical to the District's ability to respond quickly and effectively to the emergency.
- Check the PMSD website at www.pmsd.org.

org for information. Information and updates will be posted to the PMSD website during an emergency.

- Stay by the phone where you normally receive your ParentLink phone calls. District officials will use ParentLink phone calls and ParentLink alert emails and text messages to provide information to parents. If you don't receive alert emails and text messages regarding snow closures, school delays and early dismissals, you may want to sign up to receive the alert emails and text messages.
- Monitor local media outlets for updates, because the District will ask for the media's help to get information out to parents and the community. The District will send advisories to local television, print and radio news outlets to keep parents informed.
- Due to the unpredictable nature of any emergency, the location of the evacuation and parent reunification site will be announced by District officials following the incident. Depending on the emergency conditions, students may be released to parents at a designated location that is not at their school or campus.
- When you arrive at the designated site to pick up your child, please bring loads of patience with you, because parent reunification will take much longer than your normal after school parent pick up. Expect to be asked for photo identification when you arrive at the parent reunification site.
- Students will only be released to a parent or individual designated on the student's emergency form, so please make sure your child's school has the correct emergency contact information and permissions regarding who is allowed to pick up your child from school.

Please know that in an emergency, District officials will communicate with parents as quickly as possible, but their first priority is always going to be taking the necessary steps to immediately ensure the life and safety of students and employees.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Pocono Mountain School District's emergency operations preparedness or procedures, please contact your child's school principal, the District Safety and Security Coordinator at (570) 839-7121, ext. 40438 or Public Relations by email at wfrable@pmsd.org.



**Monday
August 26, 2019
First Day of School**

DRIVERS

Make school bus transportation safer for everyone by following these practices:

- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- When driving in neighborhoods with school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking of getting there safely.
- Slow down. Watch for children

walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.

- Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- Learn and obey the school bus laws in your state, as well as the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:
- **Yellow flashing lights** indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load

or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.

- **Red flashing lights** and extended stop arms indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

(From the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)



Tobyhanna Elem. is the place to be

Dr. Anastasia D'Angelo, Principal
John Kevra, Assistant Principal
Tobyhanna Elementary Center

It's hard to believe that a new school year is starting. It seems like yesterday we were tearfully congratulating our 6th graders and excitedly waving goodbye to our students in June. Although bidding farewell to the long, carefree days of summer is difficult, the inevitable return to TEC brings exciting opportunities for living, learning, and laughing with new friends.

At TEC we are committed to educating the entire child. We are concerned for all our students academic, social, and emotional needs. Additionally, our diverse student population is celebrated and has become the foundation for many of the programs we implement.

Consequently, we offer superior academic programs tailored to the needs of each student implemented by a team of seasoned professionals. This is particularly true with regards to our Mathematics and English/Language Arts support teachers. These teachers have been making data driven decisions that address the needs of our diverse population for many years.

For example, Ms. Amerman, Ms. Weirich, Ms. Garzio, Ms. VanLouvender, and Mr. Cooley support the classroom curriculum with programs such as: Foundations, Wilson, Just Words, and Fast Forward. In fact the Wilson Reading Program has proven to be so successful that it is being made available to third grade students this year.

With regards to mathematics, Mr. Mann, Ms. Delahanty, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Myers work with their students utilizing math programs such as: Imagine Math, Splash Math, First in Math, and Math Counts. Parents should remember that all TEC's academic programs are research based and have a proven track record of success prior to being offered at TEC.

Another hugely successful effort, and something our students can look forward to at TEC, is our "Celebration Weeks." A team of teachers jam pack an entire week with quizzes, assemblies, rallies, decorations, and announcements that focus on a particular subject. The subject areas include: Science, Math, Reading, Art, Music, and History. Our students can also anticipate a new week designed to celebrate multiculturalism.

Moving outside the classroom, students at TEC are offered various other opportunities for learning and socializing that are creative, stimulating and enjoyable.

For example, before and after school clubs and activities include: Mindful Moments, Future Teachers



Tobyhanna Elementary Center students enjoy learning in the school's outdoor classroom, The Classroom on the Hill. The outdoor classroom was built for TEC by Michael Scardigno, a Pocono Mountain West High School graduate, as his Eagle Scout community service project.

of America, Fitness Zone, Computer Club, Green Team, Odyssey of the Mind, and the Environmental Club. Additionally, our future musicians and thespians might be part of our chorus, school play, and talent show. We truly have something for everyone.

All students benefit from the generosity of our PTO with educational field trips such as: The Cranberry Bog, Medieval Times, The Harrisburg Capitol Building, ESU Planetarium, Claws and Paws, The Lehigh Valley Zoo, Scranton/Wilkes Barre Railriders games, and Quiet Valley just to name a few.

Closer to home, TEC's students spend valuable time getting to know our closest neighbor, The Clymer Library. What better way to promote lifelong learning than a trip to the local community's library?

Finally, when it's time to relax and just enjoy getting to know each other better, TEC offers: Field Day, Carnival Day, Snow Play Day, Fall Festival, Pep Rallies, numerous monthly incentives, and end of the year activities all designed with fun and socializing in mind.

Overall, the staff and faculty at TEC make every effort to create a learning environment that is more than just academically challenging. It is a place that our students look forward to returning to even if getting out of bed the first few days indicates otherwise!

As a parent, please remember that we know you have entrusted your child to us, and we take that responsibility very seriously. Also, know that we encourage our students' parents and guardians to communicate with us throughout the upcoming school year.

Your support is a necessary and an important part of our students' successes.

National FBLA Award...



Keira Carrington, a Pocono Mountain East High School Class of 2019 graduate, earned 4th place in the nation in Computer Problem Solving at the Future Business Leaders of America National Leadership Conference in San Antonio, Texas. This event tests FBLA members on their broad base of knowledge and competency in computer core hardware and operating system technologies including installation, configuration, diagnostics, preventative maintenance, and basic networking.

CRIS recognized for PRIDE

Clear Run Intermediate School's school-wide positive behavior program, "PRIDE" along with the Class Dojo program will continue to be utilized for the 2019-2020 school year.

CRIS students are Prepared, Responsible, Involved, Dependable, and Empathic across our school and community settings. The students and staff at Clear Run Intermediate have been recognized by the state for their fidelity and success with our "PRIDE" program. It is a school with a strong culture for learning and are dedicated to providing multiple opportunities for our students and school community to become successful learners in and out of the classroom.

Clear Run Intermediate school will be developing community partnerships to help provide resources, experiences, and interactions for students, families, and staff.

Clear Run's motto is "We share, we care, for the future we prepare – with PRIDE!"

SEC ready for an outstanding year

Krislin Ofalt, Principal
Tammy Toleno, Principal
Swiftwater Elementary Center

Swiftwater Elementary Center is “gearing up” for back to school after preparing for our incredible staff and students to return after a refreshing summer break.

We will continue to provide a welcoming and challenging atmosphere for learning. Swiftwater Elementary Center hosts several family events throughout the entire school year so that our SEC families have direct contact with our beautiful school and have “first hand” knowledge of our everyday routines and programs.

Each year, we take the time to assess our programs and think about, “How can we make our school even better”?

We want our students and families to know that our staff members, both professional staff and support staff, are part of SEC Specialized Committees that focus on all aspects of our many successful programs.

Each year, we assess and adjust committees based on the needs of our school. Some examples include: School Wide Positive Behavior Support Committee, Family Game and Fitness Night Committee, Art Show and Grandparents Event Committee, Pre-School Partnership and Kindergarten Orientation Committee,



Swiftwater Elementary Center hosted its first Mini-Thon filled with fun activities last school year to raise money for pediatric cancer research. SEC looks forward to making this an annual event.

and a newly established committee- SEC Mini-Minithon Committee. These are just a few examples of our many committees that meet throughout the school year to plan for and implement events that benefit our overall school experience.

We are looking forward to an OUTSTANDING school year!

Smarty Ants accelerates reading & literacy skills

Stacy Kulics
Director, Reading & English Language Arts

Mastering foundational reading skills are the first steps of moving students toward college and career readiness. Smarty Ants is a PreK-2 interactive, highly engaging, online learning environment which differentiates instruction and accelerates student achievement.

The adaptive system automatically provides students with the early literacy skills that they need through explicit instruction, independent practice, feedback, games and activities, and embedded assessments.

Through the Pocono Mountain School District's relationship with Achieve 3000, the parent company of Smarty Ants, as well as Early Childhood partners, the district is able to offer Smarty Ants licenses to preschool-aged children residing in the Pocono Mountain School District.

If parents would like access to Smarty Ants for their preschool-aged child, please contact the elementary school in which the child will attend kindergarten.



CRIS gets a new Principal

Mrs. Schank officially began her retirement, and Dr. Ann Marie Vaughn was named the new Principal of Clear Run Intermediate School.

She comes to us from Pocono Mountain West Junior High where she served as the Assistant Principal for the 2018 – 2019 school year, and previously taught for 10 years in Nazareth Area School District. She holds her undergraduate in Elementary Education from Penn State University, two Masters Degrees from Wilkes University in Classroom Technology and Instructional Development and Strategies, and a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership from Delaware Valley University.

Dr. Vaughn lives with her husband and three children in Easton, Pa., where she also grew up and graduated from. She is looking forward to working with Mrs. Haynes and Mr. Pawlowski to help CRIS continue to move forward and serve the students and community of Pocono Mountain School District.

Open House will be held at CRIS on August 22, 2019, from 5 p.m. to 7pm, and she looks forward to meeting parents and students at that time.

Clear Run Elementary focuses on wellness

Karen Doughton, Principal
Heidi Donohue, Principal
Clear Run Elementary Center

The accomplishments of the Wellness Committee at Clear Run Elementary Center were nominated for an Excellence in Education award for the presentation titled Harvesting Health and Hope.

The educational objective of this nomination was for students to be able to increase their knowledge of good nutrition practices through educational initiatives designed to provide exposure to healthy food and drink choices in an effort to create a healthier community of students.

The Wellness Committee at CREC is committed to providing students and their families with meaningful opportunities that offer life-long learning and sustainable progress in order to achieve a healthier future. After the committee completed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Comprehensive School Health Index, three goals were identified: (1) School Health Services; (2) Nutrition Education and Services; (3) Family Engagement.

Vision vouchers, the dental health van, and special presentations from outside agencies (i.e. United Way of Monroe County, St. Luke's University Health Network, etc.) are just a few examples of how the CREC students are getting healthy. In addition, the 30-Minute Club, assemblies (author visit -



Rethink Your Drink is just one of the student wellness initiatives underway at Clear Run Elementary Center.

kindergarten, “Try It, You’ll Like It” taste-testing program - first grade, “Know It All” interactive nutrition game show program - second grade), Wellness Wednesdays segment during morning announcements, “Rethink Your Drink” movement, spotlight features to emphasize Go (green)/Slow (yellow)/Whoa (red) foods and drinks, Chartwells Food Focus Series in monthly Principals’ Newsletters, cafeteria and gymnasium murals, and the share table concept in classrooms and cafeteria.

Family engagement is also consistently promoted through monthly workshops and other PTO-sponsored activities. These initiatives, as well as additional structures for improvement, will continue to be the focus of during the 2019-2020 school year.

**PMSD schools closed on August 30, 2019
for Labor Day holiday**



Pocono Mountain West Junior High School celebrates its PRIDE initiatives. The school is adding a new Teaming approach for students in the 2019-20 school year.

West Junior High welcomes all students to its TEAM!

Dr. Jessica Loverdi, Principal
PM West Junior HS

The Pocono Mountain West Junior High School will open its doors to students for its 14th school year on August 26th.

This year will bring exciting changes for staff, students, and families.

The West Junior High will re-implement TEAMING – a researched based scheduling model that focuses on collaboration, smaller learning communities for students, professional learning communities for teachers, and more time for staff and students to form meaningful relationships.

Teaming students into smaller groups assists students with

transition, builds a sense of community, and allows for greater opportunities for students to get to know each other and learn together. Our school will consist of six teams – three in each grade level.

Dr. Jessica Loverdi will join the West Junior High School Administrative Team this year as a co-principal with Dr. Eric Vogt. Dr. Loverdi will work specifically with the incoming 7th graders as they transition from Clear Run and Tobyhanna Elementary.

Dr. Loverdi has 18 years of administrative experience, most of which has been in the middle level.

Both Dr. Loverdi and Dr. Vogt are eager to begin the school year, TEAMING together to create excellent learning experiences for their students!

Clear Run Intermediate continues its One School, One Book program

Dr. Ann Marie Vaughn, Principal
Clear Run Intermediate School

Clear Run Intermediate School (CRIS) continues to build a culture of literacy through the many initiatives of their Literacy Committee.

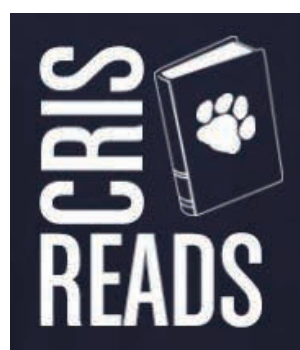
Every student will receive a novel on the evening of October 15th as part of the school-wide reading initiative called One School, One Book.

The entire school community - students, teachers, paraprofessionals, everyone! - will read one book that is carefully chosen to fit the needs and reading and comprehension capabilities

of CRIS students.

All families will embrace the chance to read with their children. Every student will receive a reading calendar and participate in correlated book activities. School-wide events such as drop everything and read, trivia, class discussion and take home activities are designed to promote literacy.

This will be the 4th novel given to every student in the past three school years. Previous books we have read as part of the One School, One Book initiative have been *Wonder*, *Fish in A Tree*, and *Heartbeat*. **Stay tuned to October 15th where we reveal this year's book!**



Swiftwater Intermediate School launched its Big Cardinal/Little Cardinal mentoring program which included Pocono Mountain East High School students tutoring the younger Cardinals.

Little Cardinals take flight with the help of their Big Cardinals

Having a high school located next door has its benefits as it enables the Swiftwater Intermediate School to partner with the Pocono Mountain East High School on programs that can benefit students from both schools.

One such program getting great reviews by all involved is the Big Cardinal/Little Cardinal program, an important cross-age peer mentoring program started last school year that will continue in the 2019-2020 school year.

Under the Big Cardinal/Little Cardinal initiatives, six high school seniors mentored Swiftwater Intermediate School students throughout the school year. Bigs met with the younger students, their Littles, every six days to connect, work on homework, read together, reinforce school behavior rules, or to just talk and listen. The program made a huge impact on both groups of students, as the mentors and mentees looked forward to their interactions and Bigs and Littles gained more confidence.

Cross-age peer mentoring programs where older students mentor younger students are growing in popularity,

according to Dr. Michael Karcher, author of "Research in Action, Cross-Age Peer Mentoring" and professor with the University of Texas in San Antonio. Cross-age peer mentoring programs can benefit both the mentors and the mentees with students involved in the programs experiencing improved connectedness to school, peers, friends, and culturally different peers, according to Dr. Karcher.

The Big Cardinal/Little Cardinal Program includes Peer Tutoring where five high school students tutored Swiftwater Intermediate students on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to help them learn their multiplication facts. Throughout the year, 30 sixth graders also helped tutor their younger schoolmates in math facts, fluency and vocabulary.

With the start of the 2019-2020 school year Swiftwater Intermediate School administrators and guidance counselors are excited to continue the peer mentoring partnership with the East High School, because increased school connectedness is tied through research to greater education outcomes for students.

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District promotes STEM learning through hands-on projects

Pocono Mountain SD promotes differentiated supervision projects District-wide that combine the use of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in hands-on learning opportunities/experiments for students in Science classes.

**Colleen Kuzmak,
Grade 5 Teacher
Shawn Kemmerer,
Math Support Teacher**
Clear Run Intermediate School

Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, a team of fifth grade students at Clear Run Intermediate School participated in a STEM based learning project as part of their science classes.

The project began with students exploring chemical and physical changes by testing various candies in a solution and observing which type of change the candy underwent. The students then studied various types of energy, based on their research. They designed balloon cars that moved by the wind power supplied by the balloon.

Once the students completed these two projects and could properly implement a STEM investigation, they had the wonderful opportunity to team up with the students from West High School's Biology Mentoring Program.



The goal of this joint STEM activity was to design a parachute that when dropped from a given height would take longer to reach the ground compared to their classmates.

During the preparation stage, the fifth-grade students and the high school students researched several types of parachutes and created models of these parachutes to determine which ones would work the best. They then joined together at CRIS for the day to share their parachute designs and work together as a team to build their final products.

The goal throughout the year with the STEM challenges in the classroom was



Through projects like Candy Chemistry (left) and Balloon Cars (above) students gain an understanding of how Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics can be used to test solutions and solve problems.

to slowly give the students more and more independence and choice within the challenges to encourage them to use their creativity and really explore various ways in which to complete the challenge.

For the final challenge, the students were given very little guidance and asked to complete it at home on their own. The challenge was to construct a container that would protect an egg from breaking or cracking when dropped from a second-floor window.

This project was an overwhelming success and was a great culminating activity for all the hard work the students put into the STEM activities

this school year. Parents were invited to CRIS for the final egg drop. It was great to see so many parents supporting their student(s) and sharing in the excitement of the day.

Last, but not least, the students celebrated the end of their STEM journey with a trip to PNC field in Wilkes – Barre to take part in their STEM Education Day. This experience was viewed through the eyes of the students as “the best day ever!”

In addition to enjoying all of the wonderful features a minor league baseball game has to offer, the students also experienced STEM outside of the classroom. Various businesses and organizations had tables set up to explain how STEM is used in everyday life and what types of careers focus on the four major parts of STEM. Students were able to observe and participate in these activities throughout the game.

The students loved that the STEM activities allowed them to be creative and figure out solutions to problems through collaboration with their classmates.

It was apparent that the students were able to make better real-world connections with the topics covered in the STEM activities. These connections were made obvious through the students' display of greater confidence and the desire to pursue various curiosities pertaining to new topics within the science classroom.

New pathways available in 2022 to meet statewide graduation requirements

Dr. Catherine Sweeney
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Act 158 of 2018 establishes new requirements for high school graduation, effective in the 2021-22 school year, by allowing alternative pathways for high school graduation and making other changes.

The law creates four options that students who are not proficient on the three Keystone Exams in Algebra I, literature and biology may use to meet requirements to graduate.

The measures-of-success under four options provided in Act 158 are relevant to students' individual career goals and reflect the coursework, grades, activities and achievements earned. In addition to Keystone Exams, alternative tests and other factors can be counted toward graduation.

The new performance-based system allows schools and teachers to obtain a more complete picture of a student's knowledge, skills and talents as a basis for awarding a diploma, instead of being based solely on standardized test scores. Act 158 contains provisions for oversight and accountability for schools and students.

For students graduating in 2022 and beyond, the following options exist to meet the statewide graduation requirement:

- **Keystone Proficiency Pathway:** Scoring proficient or advanced on each Keystone Exam - Algebra I, Literature, and Biology.
- **Keystone Composite Pathway:** Earning a satisfactory composite score of at least 4452 on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams (while achieving at least a proficient score on at least one of the three exams and no less than a basic score on the remaining two).

- **Alternate Assessment Pathway:** Successful completion of locally established grade based requirements for academic content areas associated with each Keystone Exam on which

the student did not achieve proficiency and one of the following:

- Attainment of an established score on an approved alternate assessment (SAT, PSAT, ACT, ASVAB);
- Gold Level on the ACT WorkKeys Assessment;
- Attainment of an established score on an Advanced Placement Program or an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program exam in an academic content area associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve at least a proficient score;
- Successful completion of a concurrent enrollment course in an academic content area associated with each Keystone Exam in which the student did not achieve at least a proficient score;
- Successful completion of a pre-apprenticeship program; or
- Acceptance in an accredited 4-year nonprofit



See **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS...Page 9**

WHS enters 4th year with Check & Connect

Jennifer Odom,
Guidance Counselor
PM West HS

The 2019-20 school year will mark the 4th consecutive year of the Check and Connect Program at the West High School.

The Check and Connect program provides supportive interventions to students found to be at-risk in the areas of academics, attendance and discipline. The essence is the belief that all students can improve in these areas by providing them with positive attention and relationships formed through mentoring, instilling goal setting and increasing the students awareness in the areas they need to work on while teaching alternative skills they need to incorporate to become successful student's and citizens.

In this program, each student is assigned a Mentor, a staff member whom they meet with routinely to form a positive relationship, and, in turn will serve as another layer to monitor the student's school progress.

The feedback from Mentors and students alike has been very positive. Through staff surveys, mentors indicated an increase in professional identity and growth.

Mentoring, which is voluntary for the staff, has seen a meteoric rise in staff volunteers since the inception of the program, demonstrating a continued commitment of the faculty in the belief of this worthwhile initiative.

Students who participated reported that Mentoring helps them, as many students previously have not formed positive relationships with adults and oftentimes these students have negative attitudes towards school since they were often in trouble and also lack supportive people in their personal lives.

Additionally, students meet bi-monthly in small groups with their peers where topics such as goal setting, identifying the barriers to their success, learning problem solving skills, as well as promoting positive encouragement and self-esteem are discussed and reinforced. Students who participate look forward to this group time and provide honest feedback and advice to each other.

They have formed positive relationships and encouraged one another to get to school, share concerns they are having in their lives, discuss how they can handle their behaviors differently and become more focused on their academics.

The student's overall response and the programs data collection reflect very positive results. The program continues to enhance many student's individual growth as well as identifying students who are in need of a higher level of supportive programming to become successful.

At the West High School we are highly encouraged and excited about the possibilities as we enter year four of this program and are looking forward to working with our incoming students.



The Pocono Mountain School District Board of Education recognized the students who improved their literacy and reading skills the most through the Achieve 3000 program during the June 19 Board meeting.

PMSD partners with Achieve 3000 to increase literacy gains for all students

Stacy Kulics
*Director, Reading & English
Language Arts*

The Pocono Mountain School District has partnered with Achieve 3000 for the past three years to improve literacy for students in grades 7-12. Through a blended learning model, students receive differentiated instruction on their individual reading level while working towards increasing their Lexile reading level.

Students also have the opportunity to work in the Achieve 3000 College and Career Readiness Center to research and learn about careers.

They also learn what types of literacy skills are needed in their selected careers and set literacy goals to work towards the skills needed.

During the June 19 School Board Meeting, Mrs. Stacy Kulics, Director of Reading and English Language Arts, and Stacy Peters, Achieve 3000 Regional Director, recognized the top 10 students from each secondary school

who far exceeded the expected growth in literacy. The top 10 students from each building were:

PM West Junior High School: Ana Galeano Rugama, Michal Wyszynski, Joshua Publik, Julian Pagan, Kyla Carter-Finch, David Rodriguez, Aryanna Morales, Marcus Ulysse, Katherine Milla, and Jacob Possinger.

PM East Junior HS: Brenda Chavez, Siobhan Torres, Kah-Asia Carter-Windley, Frederick Owusu, Angel Ortiz, Diomara Santiago Castillo, Jezmerick Woolley, Anthony Palmieri, Colin Herring, and Ayden Hinkel-Newkirk.

PM East HS: Julie Sanchez, Victor Delgado, Salome Sanchez Sanchez, Spirit Fersner, Tyler Richardson, Tyler Collins, Melanie Medina, Ayah Shaheen, Jenny Bazile, and Delano Patrick Lamin.

PM West HS: Amya Bolling, Breanna Goldspiel, Deljin Young, Prince Nieves, Jaron Bazil, Te'kwan Harper, Jonathan Rivera, Terrance White, Malakai Savage, and Ozan Kodala.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS...continued from Page 8

institution of higher education and evidence of the ability to enroll in college-level coursework.

- Evidence Based Pathway: Successful completion of locally established grade-based requirements for academic content areas associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve proficiency and demonstration of three pieces of evidence consistent with the student's goals and career plans, including one of the following:
 - Attainment of an established score on the ACT WorkKeys assessment, a SAT subject test, an Advanced Placement Program Exam, or an International Baccalaureate

Diploma Program Exam;

- Acceptance to an accredited nonprofit institution of higher education other than a 4-year institution and evidence of the ability to enroll in college level coursework;
- Attainment of an industry-recognized credential; or
- Successful completion of a concurrent enrollment or postsecondary course; and
- Two additional pieces of evidence, including one or more of the options listed above, or: satisfactory completion of a service learning project; attainment of a score of proficient or advanced on a Keystone Exam; a letter guaranteeing fulltime employment; a certificate of successful

completion of an internship or cooperative education program; or satisfactory compliance with the NCAA's core courses for college-bound student athletes with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0.

- CTE Pathway: For Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrators, successful completion of locally established grade-based requirements for academic content areas associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve proficiency and attainment of an industry-based competency certification related to the CTE Concentrator's program of study or demonstration of a

high likelihood of success on an January 2019 3 approved industry-based competency assessment or readiness for continued meaningful engagement in the CTE Concentrator's program of study.

Established cut scores for alternate assessments and guidelines to define pathway evidence will be released in the 2019-20 school year.

The reforms under Act 158 give students broader opportunities to demonstrate their readiness for success after high school. These options ensure that students are challenged to meet rigorous requirements for graduation while allowing them to focus on the courses and activities that support their postsecondary goals.

A-W: from Art to World Languages

Amy Buffington

Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Federal Programs: Social Studies & Humanities

We are ready for another great school year at PMSD in the areas of Social Studies and the Humanities.

Our teachers and staff are always searching for new ways to enhance the educational experiences of our students and expand it to the community.

Please continue reading and check the District Homepage Calendar to see what is new and exciting in the lives of students at PMSD for the 2019-2020 school year.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) programs will be implemented in primarily the Junior High Schools while new assignments and lessons will be implemented K-12 incorporating STEAM

ESL (English as a Second Language) - New software from Imagine Learning will be used to assist our elementary grades. LAS Links, a progress monitoring piece, will help assess all of our EL students prior to ACCESS testing. Our Kindergarten and Grade one students will be participating in the piloting of a WIDA Screener Field Test.

Family and Consumer Science- Our program will continue working with the Mountain Center for our Child Development course experiences and use the Tower Gardens to provide fresh produce for our food related courses while working on incorporating technology into our classrooms.

Music- The Pocono Mountain School District will serve as the rehearsal and host site for the some of the 2020 PMEA All-State Concert Band @ PM East HS; Wind Ensemble @ PM East JHS; and Vocal & Instrumental Jazz @ PM West HS beginning on April 22, 2020. Each school will host many concerts at various times of the year. Check the School and District websites for specifics.

Social Studies - Grade 10 Civics courses will be required to take a local assessment based on US history, government and civics whose scores and relevant data will eventually be sent to the state to meet the requirements Act 35.

World Languages - The Spanish Department will be utilizing a new series, Autentico, District-wide based on the pilot conducted last year on the West side of the District.

PMSD Website - www.pmsd.org

From math to volleyball, East Jr HS teacher holds first training camp for girls volleyball



The Pocono Mountain East Girls Volleyball Team held its first volleyball training camps in June under the direction of head coach and PM East Junior HS Math Teacher William Kline and assistant coach Bill Kline III. Girls from grades 4 to 6 participated in a morning camp, while girls in grades 7 to 9 trained in the afternoon.

East PRIDE flies forward

Michael Jones, Principal
PM East HS

Looking to 2019-2020 school year, students, teachers and administrators took time during the summer to develop strategies and put ideas into action that would continue to advance East PRIDE at the East High School.

While some of the minor adjustments may be procedural, there were also more significant efforts put into welcoming students back in the fall, promoting a more welcoming environment for all, and advancing our schoolwide expectations for students and staff.

For the welcome back at the start of the year, students and advisors from Team EPIC met over the summer to create back to school activities and lessons for students on the core expectations of our schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS) while also being engaging and enjoyable for students. These lessons included activities, resources, and student created videos that are designed for students by students.

Additionally, members of the EHS National Art



Honor Society volunteered time over the summer to brand Cardinal imagery in main hallway and offices to greet students, parents, and staff.

Also, the New Student Orientation this year included fresh elements that attempted to increase new student involvement in various school activities, including an activity fair the night of the orientation, a scavenger hunt for students to become familiar with the high school, and student tour guides that welcomed families to the high school.

2019-2020 PMSD Open House Dates

Secondary

- EJHS: Monday, August 19, 2019 at 1pm and 6pm
- EHS: Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 6:30pm (Gr 9 & New Student Orientation)
- WHS: Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 6:30pm (Gr 9 & New Student Orientation)
- WJHS: Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 6pm
- EHS: Friday, August 23, 2019 at 11am-1pm (Open House Grades 9 – 12)

Elementary

- CREC: Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at 4-6pm
- CRIS: Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 5-7pm
- SEC: Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 4-6pm
- TEC: Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 4-6pm (Grd 1-3) and 5-7pm (Grd 4-6)
- SIS: Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 5-7pm

Kindergarten only

- SEC: Wednesday, August 21, 2019 (KDG only) at 4-6pm
- TEC: Wednesday, August 21, 2019 (KDG only) at 4-6pm

PMSD announces Annual Public Notice on Special Education

Special Education (CHAPTER 14)

The Pocono Mountain School District, either directly or through various other education agencies including Colonial Intermediate Unit #20, provides special education services which may be required by children with special needs.

In compliance with state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the Pocono Mountain School District that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students).

If your child is identified by the school district as possibly in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

1. Autism
2. Deaf-blindness
3. Deafness
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Hearing impairment
6. Mental retardation
7. Multiple disabilities
8. Orthopedic impairment
9. Other health impairment
10. Specific learning disability
11. Speech or language impairment
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Visual impairment, including blindness

Evaluation Process

Pocono Mountain School District has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs, you may request screening and evaluation at any time whether or not your child is enrolled in the district's public school program. Child Find federal regulations also apply to highly mobile children, including migrant children.

Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to the building principal or to Dr. Mary Beth Gustafson, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education for the Pocono Mountain School District, at 570-839-7121 ext. 10181.

Consent

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the parents.

For additional information related to consent, please refer to the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website, www.pattan.net or the Pocono Mountain School District website, www.pmsd.org. Once written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process.

If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) at public expense.

Program Development

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and parents determine whether the child is eligible.

If the child is eligible, the individualized education program team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)/prior written notice is issued. Written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

Preschool Children with Special Needs (Age 3 to School Age)

Parents whose child has a developmental delay or one or more conditions as listed in the Special Education (Chapter 14) Notice above, and/or who have questions regarding their child's seeing, hearing, learning, talking, moving about, manipulating objects, understanding, showing emotions, getting along with others, playing with toys, taking care of himself/herself, should telephone Colonial Intermediate Unit #20 (CIU #20) at 610-252-5550, which offers Early Intervention, a preschool program for children with special needs.

CIU #20 can provide information, screening, evaluation, programs, therapy, parent support, and referral to community agencies at no cost to the parent.

For further information, call CIU #20 at 610-252-5550 or Dr. Gustafson at 570-839-7121 Ext. 10181.

Protected Handicapped Students (CHAPTER 15)

In compliance with state and federal law, the Pocono Mountain School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to

the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities.

In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening, and rights to due process procedures regarding protected handicapped students, you may contact, in writing or by telephone, Dr. Gustafson, at 570-839-7121 Ext. 10181 or any building principal.

Gifted Education (CHAPTER 16)

The Pocono Mountain School District provides gifted education services to school-age students identified as gifted who require these services to reach their potential. In compliance with state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the Pocono Mountain School District that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of gifted education services.

If your child is identified by the school district as possibly in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures.

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of gifted education services, you may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the school district's public school program.

Requests for evaluation and screen-

ing are to be made in writing to the building principal or Dr. Gustafson at 570-839-7121 Ext. 10181.

Confidentiality

All information gathered about your child is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law. The school district has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction and disclosure to third parties of this information.

Parents have the right to see and obtain a copy of their child's records. Personally identifiable information relative to an exceptional student will only be released with the permission of the parent and/or in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Pennsylvania Rules, Regulations, and Standards.

For information about policies and procedures, as well as rights of confidentiality and access to educational records, you may contact in writing or by telephone, Dr. Gustafson, at 570-839-7121 Ext. 10181 or any building principal.

Also, in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

- PSSA, Keystone Exam, and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets.
- PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

This amendment to the Annual Notice will be in effect at the start of the 2018-19 school year.

Thinking of passing a stopped School Bus?

If convicted of passing a stopped school bus with the red lights activated and the stop bar extended you will be subjected to:

60-Day Driver's License Suspension

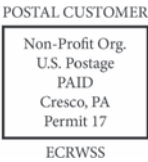
5 Points on your Driving Record

\$250 Fine plus court Costs

It's just not worth it!

Our children's safety is in your hands.





Outside cyber-charter schools can't match unique learning opportunities of PMSD Cyber

Nora Wandalowski
*Director, PM Cyber & Academy
Alternative Education Program*

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, all students in the Pocono Mountain School District Cyber Program will utilize the same learning management system (LMS), Edgenuity.

PMSD Cyber Program offers alternative educational options for students from kindergarten through seniors in high school who are residents of the Pocono Mountain School District. Edgenuity has been the LMS for secondary students over the past three school years; however, the company has expanded the curriculum offerings for elementary students and PMSD is excited to utilize Edgenuity for all Cyber Program students starting this fall.

PMSD Cyber Program offers multiple instructional options for parents of elementary students. The program offers full-day, at-home, cyber instruction for elementary students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade.

The full-day students have the option of participating with their classmates in all building level incentives and activities, a privilege that only PMSD Cyber Program students are offered. Students in other cyber programs do not have the same opportunity to connect with peers within PMSD school buildings.

The only requirement for PMSD Cyber Program students to participate in building activities with peers in the same grade is for the parent to transport the student to and from the school building on the day of a scheduled activity.

Information for all building activities can be found on the building specific website linked from www.pmsd.org, by clicking on the Schools tab and selecting the elementary school building the student would attend. If parents have questions about activities and want students to participate, PMSD Cyber Program Director Nora Wandalowski is available to connect parents with building contacts to get students involved.

Aside from the full day option, parents can choose a hybrid learning

Hybrid Learning is an option only offered by PMSD Cyber Program that sets PMSD apart from all other cyber schools.

option for any elementary student. Choosing a hybrid schedule allows the parent to select which classes and what time of day (half day AM or half day PM) the student will attend school. This is an option only offered by PMSD Cyber Program and sets PMSD apart from all other cyber schools.

Students who attend half day in the morning can choose to ride a morning bus to school and be picked up mid-day; whereas, students who attend half day in the afternoon will be dropped off mid-day by parents and can choose to ride an afternoon bus home.

The parent would choose two subjects for the student to study at home, most often English Language Arts and Mathematics are the subjects studied at home online, and then the student would attend additional classes for a half day in the building. If parents select English Language Arts and Mathematics at home, the student will participate in Science, Social Studies and Related Arts (Physical Education and Health, Library, Music, and Art) in the building.

The PMSD Cyber Program is flexible and we can offer any two subjects in the home and arrange for the student to attend the other subjects in the building. Selecting the correct subjects for online study and for participation in the traditional building will be a team decision with the parents, a PMSD Cyber elementary teacher, and building level staff meeting together to develop the best program for each individual student.

For elementary students, the Edgenuity modules have clear objectives, step-by-step explanations of assignments, direct examples for students and parents to review, and interactive instructional videos to support student comprehension. The graphics are engaging and designed to hold student interest throughout the



Americold in Gouldsboro, Pa., generously donated 100 new backpacks filled with school supplies and toiletry items to Pocono Mountain School District to help economically disadvantaged students start the school year with supplies. The backpacks were gratefully accepted by the District and picked up by PM East Junior HS Math Teacher and Girls Volleyball Head Coach, William Kline, (left). Pictured here with Mr. Kline (left to right) are Americold employees Susan Topar and Debbie Reilly; Justin Kline, a junior at North Pocono HS; and Americold employees Keyne Rice and Justo Benavides.

learning activity.

Students will study a topic, complete guided assignments and demonstrate knowledge by completing short quizzes. Content is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to allow for parents to set an instructional schedule that works for the individual student and family. All student progress is easily accessible to parents and all learning modules are outlined on the Edgenuity Dashboard.

Using the Edgenuity LMS, PMSD Cyber Program offers competitive courses for students on all instructional levels. From students working ahead of grade level in need of enrichment, to students struggling with core content requiring additional supports, down to the first school experience in kindergarten, Edgenuity has curriculum that can meet individual student needs.

All students participate in a

personalized learning environment under the instruction of certified subject area Pocono Mountain teachers. Students will have the opportunity to connect directly with the PMSD Cyber Program teachers face-to-face when necessary. Working with teachers that are located on West Campus allows PMSD Cyber Program to offer the personal connection that sets it apart from other cyber schools. Elementary students can schedule time to meet with an elementary cyber teacher and receive support to stay on track academically.

District residents desiring a cyber school option for their student, or who want to learn more about the competitive full-day and hybrid programs offered by PMSD Cyber Program, please contact Nora Wandalowski at 570-839-7121 extension 51266 to schedule an appointment.

TAX RELIEF from gaming revenue...continued from Page 3

not filed their Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion application, district officials encourage them to do so in order to be eligible for tax relief the next time funding is available.

If they apply today and their application is approved, they will not qualify for this year's tax relief, but will qualify for any future tax relief when available.

The applications and information

on how to apply are located on the District web site at www.pmsd.org under the Departments, select Business Office and the PA Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion page.

