

Superintendent's Student & Staff Accomplishments

May 3, 2023

National Teacher Appreciation Day: Tuesday marked National Teacher Appreciation Day. I wanted to recognize the important work our teachers do every day to educate the next generation of citizens and leaders. Teaching requires flexibility, resilience, and many other important attributes. Teaching is a unique profession where the impact our teachers have on others, especially their students, will never be forgotten. Thank you to our Pocono Mountain School District teachers.

West HS Update: Congratulations to WHS National Art Honor Society, Sophomore Kailyn Sage, for being a winner in the Pennsylvania Society for Biomedical Research's "Biomedical Research Saves Lives" Poster Contest. Kailyn will be presented with her award at the Annual PSBR Annual Awards dinner on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at the Hershey Lodge.

College & Career Fair: The West High School held a college and career fair on Thursday, April 25, for juniors in the West High School gymnasium. Representatives from over 40 colleges and the different branches of the military were present and able to speak with students about their offerings and requirements. Students were able to gather information to help them make informed decisions in the coming year about their future plans.

West High School Musical: Congratulations to the cast and crew of the West High School musical, Little Shop of Horrors, who performed this past weekend. The show received positive reviews, and we are all proud of their efforts in making the show a big success.

PMEA All-State Jazz Ensembles: West High School hosted the PMEA All-State Jazz and Vocal Jazz Ensembles from the evening of April 19th to April 21st. The best young jazz musicians from around the state rehearsed and performed a concert at the West High School on April 21st.

Community Night: The Prowling Panthers performed at Community Night at the Northampton Area Community College Monroe Campus where they greeted visitors and added energy to this great community event.

Rookie of the Year: West High School Freshman KJ Coles was selected as the Morning Call's Rookie of the Year for the 2022-2023 basketball season.

Scholarship Winners:

- West High School Senior Natalie Skorupa won the Lehigh Valley Health Network Pocono Foundation's Dr. Elmo Lilli Memorial Healthcare Scholarship in the amount of \$3,500.00.
- West High School students Kaiden Keys, Em Davies, and Tais Ramirez each won a Buck Hill Art Association Scholarship for Monroe County.
- Senior Kaiden Keys also was selected to receive the 2023 Suzanne Anderson Art Scholarship from Pocono Arts Council. Kaiden has been invited to participate in the Members' Exhibition which opens Saturday, May 6th at 4 p.m. with an Awards Presentation at 5 p.m.
- Senior Brooke Schmidt accepted the NCC Presidential Ambassador Scholarship. She was one of only 3 students in Monroe County to win the award and will have her full tuition paid for her first year at NCC.

FBLA Competition: Congratulations to West Junior Kaya Meler, who won second place in the entire state for Organizational Leadership at the FBLA state competition in Hershey, which was held April 17th through the 19th. She will continue to the National Competition in Georgia this summer.

Scranton Integration Bee: West High School students, Samara Cornejo, Edgar Escalante and Daniel Martinez, all competed in the University of Scranton Integration Bee, a math competition where students must solve a specific type of calculus problem under strict time constraints which was held on April 27th. All students did very well, and Daniel Martinez made it to the final round of competition.

East High School Update:

Steel Stacks All-Star Jazz Competition: In February, the East Jazz Ensemble performed at the ArtsQuest building in Bethlehem. Out of the 20 bands that performed throughout 2 days, East's Senior Rachel Alexander was nominated as one of 2 vocalists in the Steel Stacks All Star Jazz Ensemble, sponsored by Moravian University. She will be rehearsing with the All-Star band through the summer with a final performance at Musikfest in Bethlehem on Aug 5.

Biomedical Research Video Competition: East High School's video & music production class is beaming with excitement. Senior, Oksana Wojcik,

submitted a video for the 2023 PA Society for Biomedical Research and won 2nd place. She will receive a cash prize of \$400 and will be honored at the annual awards dinner at Hershey Lodge on June 1. The media theme was "Biomedical Research and My Life." Oksana featured her sister, Andrea, in her submission. The contest encompassed Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and New Jersey.

Jazz Festival: Congratulations to the East Jazz Ensemble. They traveled to Easton High School to participate in their Jazz Festival. The Ensemble returned home with a rating of Superior.

FBLA Conference: Congratulations to East High School FBLA members who competed at the State FBLA Conference in Hershey. Junior Evan Seymour took 5th place in Electronic Career Portfolio and Junior Samuel Nyakundi took 1st Place in Electronic Career Portfolio. Samuel will move on to the National Leadership Conference in Atlanta, GA in June.

District 24 Math Tournament: The 24 Math Game is fast-paced and requires students to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to solve each card faster than their opponents. On April 9th and 10th, Pocono Mountain students in grades 4 through 6 competed in a district tournament. The top students will advance to the Regional Tournament to be held at Colonial IU in May. Congratulations to the winners of the 4th and 5th Grade Tournament – 1st Place Zola Marshall (SIS), 2nd Place Peyton Valderrama (SIS), 3rd Place Arabella Pigg (CRIS), and 4th Place Maliah Toussaint (CRIS). For the 6th Grade Tournament, congratulations in 1st Place Nicholas Trindade (CRIS), 2nd Place Lorenzo Coke (CRIS), 3rd Place Kayla Dell'Aquila (SIS), and 4th Place Damarion Daguio (CRIS)

NAMM Best Communities for Music Education: Congratulations to all of our Pocono Mountain School District Educators on the District receiving its 8th consecutive NAMM Foundation Best Communities for Music Education award. This award is further confirmation of all of the amazing things that are happening inside and outside of our classrooms to expand music education and opportunities for our students, schools and community. The award program recognizes outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders who have made music education part of a well-rounded education. Designations are made to districts and schools that demonstrate an exceptionally high commitment and access to music education.

East Junior HS Update: The new East Junior High School Science Olympiad Team competed at the state level on the weekend of April 22nd. As a team, they finished just out of the top 30 for the state at 31st place. The following students earned medals in events at the tournament:

- Forestry - 2nd place - Jake Merritt, 9th grade, and Julian Rivera, 8th grade
- Solar System - 10th place - Julian Rivera, 8th grade, and Valerie Cooper, 8th grade

The following honorable mentions finished in the top 20 in the state:

- Flight - 14th place - Alissa Gilliland, 7th grade, and Owen Gower, 7th grade
- Sounds of Music - 15th place - Valerie Cooper, 8th grade, and Henry Crosby, 9th grade
- Storm the Castle - 18th place - Valerie Cooper, 8th grade
- Bio-Process Lab - 11th place - Julian Rivera, 8th grade, and Jasper Shelton, 7th grade

Reading Olympics: The following East Junior High students took part in the Reading Olympics Spring Challenge at Easton High School on April 20th. While the team did not score in the top three, they did triple their points from last year, so congratulations to these students:

- Naima Hull-Goings
- Kaliq Daley
- Abigail Malyszko
- Olivia Dow
- Jayla Perez

TEC Seedlings for Schools Program: Tobyhanna Elementary Center distributed 600 Spruce and Dogwood saplings to students in the Seedlings for Schools program, which is a statewide program in partnership with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. This program began in 2008 to help distribute the saplings to Pennsylvania students throughout all counties. The program allows students to be care takers of the environment while having fun in the outdoor classroom. Hopefully, Pennsylvania will have many new trees as a result of TEC's efforts.

Community Night Art Contest: Pocono Mountain School District's student artwork stood out at the Monroe County Children's Roundtable Community Night Art Contest and exhibit at Northampton Community College Monroe last night. Congratulations to the following student artists who won awards for their artwork depicting the theme Hope for Trauma

- East High School - Evelyn Higgins for Impossible Life
- West High School - Eliana Espinal for Gorda y Bonita
- East High School - Elizabeth Higgins for Sad
- East Junior High – STEM CLASS for Hope (doors) - 2nd Place in the Junior division
- East High School - Eliana Balas for Lighten the Dark - 2nd Place in the Senior division
- East High School - Emily Febus for Letting Go of Trauma - 1st Place in the Senior division
- West High School - Chloe Lawrence for New Beauty from Old Scars - Best of Show

Dual Credit Program Grant Award: The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced that \$6.7 million in grant funding has been awarded to 100 school entities to enable more high school students to enroll in dual credit programs across the Commonwealth, giving them more opportunities to chart their own course and prepare for successful careers.

I am excited to announce that Pocono Mountain School District has been selected to receive a dual credit program grant award of \$61,780 to expand dual credit opportunities for all secondary school students, including students experiencing educational instability, students enrolled in career and technical education programs, low-income students, and historically underserved student groups.

SIS Family Fun Night: Swiftwater Intermediate Physical Education teachers joined with Pocono's Best to provide an action-packed evening for students and their families during "Family Fun and Engagement Night!" on April 28th. Students and their families were introduced to and had the opportunity to participate in three activities: Dance, Parkour, & Karate! But the fun didn't end there, free pizza was provided to everyone from Little Caesars, along with chances to win prize baskets which included outdoor games, frisbees, sidewalk chalk, a water bottle and more. Thank you to

Pocono's Best, Little Caesars and everyone who helped in making our night one to remember.

Upcoming Events:

Night of Science: The West High School's Science National Honor Society would like to invite everyone to their "Night of Science," on Monday, May 8th, from 5 p.m. to 8 pm. The event is free to the public. The event will include more than 30 demonstrations and lab activities that explore various aspects of science. Food trucks will also be available.

Clothing Drive: It's time to spring clean our closets again and donate your gently used items to a good cause. Pocono Mountain School District is holding a clothing drive to raise money for our school Clothing Closets. Items being collected are usable and wearable clothing; purses, belts, scarves, backpacks, and gloves; shoes; soft household items such as blankets, pillows, curtains, rugs and comforters; and small toys and stuffed animals. Donations may be dropped off at your children's schools from May 1st to May 5th or during the community drop-off night at the Administration Building on May 8th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

School to Work Program Pajama Drive: The Pocono Mountain School to Work Program has organized a Pajama Drive for foster children. Community members may donate new pajamas for infants to 18-year-olds by dropping them off at any of our schools now until May 16th.

Social Media Safety & Vaping Parent Night: I highly encourage parents to attend the special presentation by the Office of the Attorney General on Social Media Safety and Vaping Parent Night on Tuesday, May 9th at 6 p.m., in the East High School Auditorium. The Attorney General's Office will present Social Media 101 for Parents and Behind the Smoke – Vaping is No Joke. The event is free and open to all district parents and their children. If you are concerned about the safety of your child online, online bullying or the effects of vaping on children and teens, this is a Parent Night event you don't want to miss.