

## **Superintendent's Student & Staff Accomplishments January 15, 2025**

**School Director Recognition Month:** Each year, January is designated as School Director Recognition Month. Tonight, we would like to take a moment to recognize our school board directors for their ongoing dedication and service to Pocono Mountain School District. School board directors are elected to govern and make informed decisions on behalf of our public schools, our students, and our school communities. Pocono Mountain's school board directors volunteer their time and devote on average 10 hours each month to school board business. Their work is complex and diverse. From approving budgets to adopting policies, school board directors make key decisions that drive public education. The majority of school directors indicate their primary reason for serving on the board is to give back or contribute to public education, and to improve educational outcomes for students. This month, let's recognize our school directors for their time and dedication. Thank you to our school board directors for all you do for our students and schools, and in support of public education.

**Retiree Appreciation:** Tonight, we have some district retirees who retired during the first half of this school year. Before I introduce each of you, I wanted to thank all of you for your service and dedication to our district and the wonderful care you extended to all of our students. Your efforts over your many years of service to this district have left a lasting and positive impact on our students, our schools and this district. You have been an inspiration to current and future generations. On behalf of the entire school district, thank you for your service and dedicated to the education and wellbeing of our students and the Pocono Mountain School District.

The retirees here tonight are as follows:

Linda Hamilton	Administrative Assistant	24 Years of Service to the District
Maria Juarez	Custodian	20 Years of Service to the District
Celeste Ventura	Custodian	5 Years of Service to the District

I would also like to recognize and thank Paul Kovitch and Joanne Palmer, retirees who couldn't be here tonight. Paul Kovitch was a custodian in Pocono Mountain School District for 19 years. Joanne Palmer served the district as a para professional for 7 years.

Collectively, our retirees here tonight gave 75 years of service to Pocono Mountain School District.

**Tobyhanna Elementary Center Book Club:** Laura Jeffer, a kindergarten teacher at Tobyhanna Elementary Center, started a unique book club designed for kindergarteners, first and second graders. The club meets after school twice a week to read books, play literacy games and work on crafts. The response to this club has been overwhelmingly positive, and the children have read over 54 books so far this year.

**Swiftwater Elementary Center Update:** Swiftwater Elementary Center has embraced the PMSD initiative to enhance student attendance within the school for the 2024-25 school year. The SEC attendance committee has held several meetings and this year, the school is implementing the following: SEC announcements reminding students of the importance of attendance, handing out attendance trifold at nightly events alerting parents of state and local mandates, and sending DoJo messages to families regarding the many ways families can send in excuses for student absences. To celebrate student accomplishments, SEC Homerooms with 95% or better attendance earn monthly SEC

Classroom Golden Awards along with DoJo points. In addition, several individual students with perfect attendance are recognized monthly and awarded a very special prize. For the past two years, at the end of the school year, students with perfect attendance have the opportunity to earn special recognition which included exclusive luncheons, noteworthy awards and memorable prizes.

SEC Supports Toys for Tots: Swiftwater Elementary Center is proud to announce that the school focused on giving back during this past holiday season. The PMSD Toys for Tots initiative motivated the SEC school community to go above and beyond during the 2024-2025 school year. SEC participated in the district dress down day raising \$576. SEC staff and parents also contributed 31 additional toys for children in need. In addition, for the first time, the SEC Sunshine Committee hosted a staff pasta luncheon and raised an additional \$700 for Toys for Tots, totaling \$1,276.00 SEC donated to Toys for Tots. SEC is proud of this accomplishment that involved all members of its school community.

**West High School Update:** We have two new 1,000 pointers at West. Congratulations to West High School Senior, Adrian Brito, who earned his 1,000th point in his Panther boys basketball career at the away game at Scranton Prep on Saturday, December 21st. Also, congratulations to West Junior, KJ Coles who earned his 1,000th point in his Panthers boys basketball career at the home game versus Harry S. Truman High School on Saturday, December 28th.

Esports: Congratulations to the West Esports team for a successful fall season. West High School freshman, Michael Oke advanced to the PIEA D2 SSBU individual state championships on December 10th and was the first student in West High School's history to advance to the state finals in an individual

Esports competition. On December 17th, Michael won the state championship.

FBLA Champions: Seventeen students in West High School's Future Business Leaders of America organization won their regional competition and will compete at state level in Hershey this April. First place regional winners included: Franklin Ramos, Brandon Schwartz, Kaitlyn Mihalik, and Owen Kliesh. Second place regional winners included: Jarred Valderamma, Alexander Siguenda, Stefan Meler, Eric Gonzalez, Brissia Bagu, and Joseph Pavlasky. Aimee Rosario placed third in her event.

Merit Scholarship: Congratulations to West High School and MCTI senior, Jennifer Poku on earning a Merit Scholarship for Howard University. Jennifer is in the Business & Hospitality program at MCTI and will major in economics and finance.

**West Junior High School Concerts:** The West Junior High School 7th and 8th grade band will be celebrating their winter concert on Thursday, January 16th at 7:30 p.m. in the West High School auditorium. The 7th and 8th grade choruses will be celebrating their winter concert on Thursday, January 23rd at 7:00pm in the WJHS Auxiliary gym. They hope to see everyone there.

**East High School Update:** The East High School Art students' artwork will be in an art show this Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>.

Erika Trunzo will be awarded an Honorable Mention for her art piece at an awards ceremony on Monday at the Stroudsmoor. Congratulations to student artists Erika Trunzo, Kylie Transue, Adriana Rulevas, Nicole Law, Aubrey Coulter, Brianna Mirabile, Charlie Heafield and Nick Pinto. These students participated in the Julianna and Wayne Bolt Art Contest, part of East Stroudsburg University's 28th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration.

Their work will be displayed Monday, January 20, 2025, from 10 am- 12 pm in the ESU's Madelon Powers Gallery. The Madelon Powers Gallery is located in the Fine Arts Center on ESU's campus.