

PMSD CONNECT ON

Our Mission: To Prepare All Students for Tomorrow's Challenges and Opportunities

2022-23: Issue 3

PMSD teams earn high marks on World stage

The results are in, and Pocono Mountain School District's teams earned worldwide recognition in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals at Michigan State University over Memorial Day Weekend.

Pocono Mountain's teams, two from PM East Junior High School and one from PM East High School, earned recognition among their peers from across the United States and around the world by placing 3rd in Problem 5, The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!!! Division II, 5th in Problem 1 Pirates and the Treasure Division II, and 9th in Problem 5 The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!!! Division III.

"We are very proud of all of our teams who competed in Odyssey of the Mind this year, and exceptionally proud of our three teams who went to the World Finals and showcased their amazing talents on the world stage," said Dr. Catherine Sweeney, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

The theatrical problem team from PM East Junior High made it all the way onto the winners' podium by placing 3rd out of 65 teams for Problem 5, The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!!! Division II. The team, consisting of 8th graders Jenna Pyke, Alorah Badman, Camille Hubbs, Declan Angulo and 7th graders Hayden Christman and Sophia Hernandez and coached by Teacher Advisors, Jennifer Fiore and Galen Smith, earned the highest score of any team in the Problem 5 competition in the long-term problem and style portions of their team scores. The team was also the top finishing team from the United States in this Problem and Division at the World Finals. The students competed against teams from across the United States and international teams from Poland, China, Hong Kong and South Korea. This is the highest finish of a Pocono Mountain Odyssey of the Mind team at the World Finals, since the district first began offering the program as an after-school activity for students in 2007.

"It was so amazing to be recognized



Pocono Mountain's East Junior High School Odyssey of the Mind team proudly displays its 3rd place trophy.

as the 3rd place team in the world and the first in the United States!," said Hayden Christman. "It was a dream to cross the stage in front of thousands of people representing countries from all over the World but the best part was working together with my friends to make it there."

The vehicle problem team from PM East Junior High School earned 5th place in Problem 1, Pirates of the Treasure Division II out of 61 teams from around the world, including Switzerland, Japan, China, South Korea, Poland Mexico and Hong Kong. The team consisted of 8th graders Cole Clifford, Connor Smith, Lucas Angst, William Bock, Justice Cook, Julia Mancini and 7th grader Alissa Gilliland, and was coached by Teacher Advisors Mrs. Fiore and Mr. Smith.

"It was great to work as a team to engineer a solution that allowed for another student and myself to ride on a homemade vehicle that cost less than \$100," said Cole Clifford. "We also built a vacuum that could pick up smaller props and a cannon that launched plastic bottles that the judges



Two teams from Pocono Mountain East Junior High School competed at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals at Michigan State University over Memorial Day weekend. The teams earned 3rd and 5th place in the competition that included teams from across the United States and around the World.

complimented us on. At the competition our performance went perfectly and the whole team did a great job. It was so nice to meet students from all over the country and the world. It was such a great experience and we were so grateful for this opportunity."

The theatrical problem team from PM East High School placed 9th in Problem 5, The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!!! Division III out of 42 teams around the world, including teams from Hong Kong and Germany. The East HS team consisted of Seniors Marisa DeLano, Emily Farley, Christopher Fisher, Katherine Gude, Jessica Rinaldi and Lauren Waldstein, and Freshman Kailey Clifford, and was coached by Teacher Advisor Kevin Semian.

"The team was very pleased with placing in the top ten at the World Finals. This team has been resilient all season, always 'upping' their game," said Mr. Semian. "The team consisted of six seniors, for all but one, it was their first time competing at the World Finals. It was an amazing way for them to end their Odyssey of the Mind experience at East High School. I am so very proud of all of them!"

The path to the World Finals includes intense regional and state competitions. Each team had to score high enough in

their problem and division to advance from the Northeast PA competition to the Pennsylvania competition, and then repeat that success at the state competition to go to the World Finals.

"Through the years I've had the privilege to see the impact that OoTM has had on our students even after graduation," said Mrs. Fiore. "Odyssey of the Mind truly prepares students for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities by fostering a diligent work ethic, creative problem solving, confidence, and leadership skills. Some of our proud alumni include research scientists, educators, computer engineers at Google, and a chief navigator for the United States Navy."

Pocono Mountain School District offers Odyssey of the Mind as an after-school activity open to students in grades 4 to 12. Students try out to be part of these creative problem-solving teams. Each student brings their own individual talents to the team, which may include mechanical or building skills, artistic skills, problem-solving skills, and many other Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) skills and talents needed to take on the challenges of the Odyssey of the Mind problems that change every year.

From the Superintendent...



Dr. Elizabeth Robison, Superintendent of Schools, greets some of the West High School Class of 2023 prior to graduation.

By Dr. Elizabeth Robison
Superintendent of Schools

The 2022-23 school year was a school year filled with so many successes for our students, staff, schools and the district, all culminating in wonderful graduation ceremonies for our East and West High School Class of 2023. I am so proud of our graduates and excited for them as they embark on their post-high school journeys. I am hopeful that some of our graduates will return to Pocono Mountain School District (PMSD) as new teachers in a few years. Each year the Administration and the Board are excited to welcome former students back into the district as the next generation of teachers. There is something especially gratifying for all of us when our students choose to enter the profession of teaching and we can welcome them back home to PMSD.

When we look at the numerous accomplishments across the district throughout the 2022-2023 school year, we can be very proud of the hard work and efforts of our students and staff. Once again, PMSD has continued to build upon and expand opportunities available to students of all abilities, so all students have the chance to succeed academically and grow socially.

Student success doesn't happen in isolation. It takes a strong support group for students to reach their greatest potential while at school. This message was emphasized by our students during the June 3, 2023, instructional report on eSports and again in the graduation speeches of our 2023 East and West class presidents, salutatorians and valedictorians. We heard from students who wanted to find a place within our schools where they could fit in and excel, and a place to talk to other students about common interests and be supported. The place where they feel most supported and who is part of their support group may be different for each student. However, the common theme from all of the students was a need to fit in with a supportive group while at school and participating in school activities.

A challenge for all schools is how to encourage and sustain student engagement in school. Teachers and administrators know from experience that student engagement is critical to the ongoing success of students, both academically and emotionally. Research also shows that student engagement is a critical component of success in school.

According to the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments, "Student engagement is a key element of a positive school climate, with a large body of research linking it to academic achievement. Students demonstrate behavioral engagement through actions such as consistent attendance, completing assignments, coming to class prepared, and participating in class and in school activities."

Student engagement and involvement in their schools and connectedness with their teachers, other students and schools is so important it is measured as part of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey of risk behaviors. Pocono Mountain students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 completed the 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). This survey provides district administrators and instructional directors and supervisors with valuable insight into the possible risk behaviors of students and other important issues that impact students, including a series of questions on community and school climate which measure student commitment to school, the perceived importance of school, and student involvement in pro-social activities, all considered key components of student connectedness to their schools and strong student engagement in school.

Overall, 72.4 percent of PMSD students in grades

6, 8, 10 and 12 reported that "there are a lot of chances for students in my school to talk one-on-one with a teacher." A higher percentage of students answered yes on this question than in the previous survey from 2019. However, we have more work to do to reach the students who felt their schools did not provide a lot of chances to talk one-on-one with a teacher or who weren't confident enough to approach their teachers. Our principals, guidance departments, teachers and instructional directors and supervisors have already begun making improvements at our schools through the addition of mentoring programs and student check-in programs to help ensure all students feel confident that they can talk to a teacher one-on-one when needed.

A larger percentage of district students (82.2 percent overall) agreed with the statement "I have a lot of chances to be part of the class discussion or activities," and 77 percent of students overall agreed that "I feel safe at my school," both considered indicators of a positive school environment. As with the survey results on student perception on opportunities to talk to teachers, our administrative team won't be satisfied until all students feel they can be part of a class discussion or activities and feel safe at school.

According to the PAYS developers, "Giving students opportunities to participate in important activities at school helps to create a feeling of personal investment in their school. This increased investment results in greater bonding and adoption of the school's standard of behavior, reducing the likelihood that the students will become involved in problem behaviors. Students who demonstrate a lack of commitment to school are more likely to have ceased viewing being a student as a positive role. These students have a higher risk for a variety of problem behaviors."

PAYS results are just some of the various data points and measurements PMSD administrators use to help evaluate school climate and determine if adjustments are needed in student programming and supports to not only address evolving student risk behaviors, but to also ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities that provide them with a positive support group and make them feel more connected to their schools. In the back-to-school issue of the PMSD Connection, that will be published in August, we will provide a list of all of the after-school activities, clubs and sports offered to students in our PMSD schools. I ask parents to please review the list of activities with their children and encourage their children to try at least one activity next school year. The district really does try to offer activities and clubs that are as varied as the interests of our students.

Also, if you know about a student who is struggling and needs help this summer, please don't hesitate to use the Safe2Say Something (S2SS) anonymous reporting system (Adults and students may report tips anonymously through the Office of Attorney General's 24/7 Crisis Center [1-844-SAF2SAY], through a mobile app, or through Pennsylvania's Safe2Say Something website www.safe2saypa.org.) to report your concerns about bullying, harmful or threatening student behavior, or school safety. S2SS is operational all summer, and our administrative team is prepared to respond to any tips to keep our students safe.

Please have a safe and restful summer surrounded by your family and friends.



Pocono Mountain East High School Valedictorian

Class of 2023

Jessica Rinaldi


Jessica Rinaldi is the Pocono Mountain East High School Class of 2023 Valedictorian. Jessica's parents are Louis and Marta Rinaldi from Henryville, Pa. After graduation, Jessica plans to Major in Psychology at Frederick Honors College at University of Pittsburgh.

Jessica's scholarships and awards include a University Scholarship.

Jessica's accomplishments include being part of the 2023 World Finalist team for Odyssey of the Mind World competition, which placed 5th overall in Problem #5 The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!!! (Division III), a First Award, Perfect Score, and Excellence Award in Behavioral Psychology in the 2023 PA Junior Academy of Science competition and a four-time state qualifier, 2023 state qualifier for Science Olympiad, and 2021 Districts qualifier for Mock Trial.

Jessica was inducted into the following Honor Societies: National Honor Society, Math Honor Society (president), Tri-M Music Honor Society, Psi Alpha, National Science Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, and National English Honor Society.

NEXT STEP
Frederick Honors College
University of Pittsburgh
Psychology



Pocono Mountain West High School Valedictorian

Class of 2023

Daniel Martinez

Daniel Martinez is the Pocono Mountain West High School Class of 2023 Valedictorian. Daniel's parents are Eddie and Dorian Martinez of Tobyhanna, Pa. Daniel is of Puerto Rican and Colombian decent. After graduation, Daniel plans to Major in Neuroscience and Minor in Mathematics or Medical Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Daniel wants to become a Neuro-Anesthesiologist.

Daniel's scholarships and awards include the National Hispanic Recognition Program Award, AP (Advanced Placement) Scholar, National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist, and the recipient of the Gates Scholarship.

Daniel's accomplishments include accelerating a grade from 4th grade to 6th grade, Co-President of the Leo Club, Big Panther-Little Panther mentoring program, Student Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.), school events chairperson for Student Council; Scholastic Scrimmage; American Math Competition; Biology Olympiad; Brain Bee; Envirothon; and Integration Bee.

Daniel was inducted into the following Honor Societies: National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society (Vice President), National English Honor Society (Vice President) and Science National Honor Society (Treasurer).

Daniel's favorite things to do are reading, listening to music and taking long walks with his dog. Daniel enjoys playing volleyball & basketball.



NEXT STEP
University of Pennsylvania
Neuroscience

Pocono Mountain East High School Salutatorian

Class of 2023

Emily Farley

Emily Farley is the Pocono Mountain East High School Class of 2023 Salutatorian. Emily's parents are Patrick and Bronwyn Farley of Tannersville, Pa. After graduation, Emily plans to Major in Behavioral Neuroscience at Lehigh University.

Emily's scholarship and awards include the Daughters of the American Revolution Monroe County Good Citizen Award, at PA Junior Academy of Science Scholarship Award, and the College Board AP National Recognition for Small Town and Rural Area.

Emily's accomplishments include being part of the 2023 World Finalist team for Odyssey of the Mind World competition, which placed 5th overall in Problem #5 The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!!! (Division III), two-time state qualifier for Science Olympiad and a 2023 3rd place EPC finish; a First Award in the PA Junior Academy of Science and a three-time state qualifier with a Perfect Score in 2022, and a 2nd place at Districts Mock Trial.

Emily was inducted into the following Honor Societies: National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, Psi Alpha Psychology, Math Honor Society, National English Honor Society, and National Science Honor Society.

Emily was the Team Captain for the East Cardinals Girls Tennis Team and is nationally ranked in competitive Irish Dance.

NEXT STEP
Lehigh University
Behavioral Neuroscience



Pocono Mountain West High School Salutatorian

Class of 2023

Mychaela Dunham

Mychaela Dunham is the Pocono Mountain West High School Class of 2023 Salutatorian. Mychaela, her father Timothy Dunham and brothers James and John Dunham, are from Pocono Pines Pa. Mychaela attended Pocono Mountain School District from kindergarten to grade 12.

After graduation, Mychaela plans to Major in Psychology and Brain Sciences at The Catholic University of America, where she will be on a Pre-Med track while competing on the university swim team.

Mychaela's accomplishments include the American Math Competition in grades 9 to 12, Brain Bee, Science-Bio Olympiad, Robotics Team, Pen Dot Innovations Challenge, and Envirothon in grades 9 to 12.

Mychaela also played on the West Panthers Girls Varsity Soccer Team in grades 9 to 12, and is a school record holder on the Panther Varsity Swim Team for grades 9 to 12.

NEXT STEP
The Catholic University of America
Psychology & Brain Sciences



Board of Education has change in director for Region 3

The Pocono Mountain School District (PMSD) Board of Education bid farewell to a longtime school board director and appointed a new director for Region 3 at the June 21, 2023 School Board meeting.

Ms. Jacquelyn Leonard, who represented Region 3 since 2011, resigned from the PMSD Board of Education effective June 21, 2023. The School Board accepted Ms. Leonard's resignation from the board and appointed Mr. Michael Stern, a previous PMSD school board director, to complete the remainder of Ms. Leonard's term for Region 3 on the board, which expires in December 2023. Ms. Leonard did not seek re-election for Region 3, and Mr. Stern was running unopposed for the Region 3 seat.

"On behalf of our administrative team and the entire Pocono Mountain School District, I want to thank Ms. Jackie Leonard for her many years of service as a school board director on the Pocono Mountain Board of Education," said Dr. Elizabeth Robison, the Superintendent of Schools. "Jackie was first elected to the Board in 2011 and has worked tirelessly on behalf of the students, employees and taxpayers



(Left) Ms. Jackie Leonard, School Board Director for Region 3, resigned from the Pocono Mountain School District Board of Education on June 21, 2023. The board appointed Mr. Michael Stern (Right) to the board at the June 21, 2023 public meeting to complete the remainder of Ms. Leonard's term.



of the district ever since. Jackie's priorities as a school board director haven't waivered since she was first sworn in for the position. She wanted to provide the very best education and opportunities for our students while keeping our taxpayers in mind with every decision made. Jackie was the voice of the senior citizens and other fixed-income property owners who want our students to have the very best they can offer in the most affordable way possible."

During her time on the board, Ms. Leonard served in many important roles including as the Vice President

of the Board from December 2021 to December 2022. She also served as the Board's Liaison to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association from December 2014 to December 2022.

Ms. Leonard joined the Monroe Career and Technical Institute Joint Operating Committee in December 2012. She was the JOC Chairperson from December 2014 to November 2015; the Assistant Board Secretary from January 2019 to December 2020, and the Vice Chairperson from December 2020 to November 2021 and again from December 2021 to November 2022.

Mr. Stern served on the PMSD Board of Education representing Region 3 from December 2007 through December 2015 and again from December 2015 to December 2021.

Pocono Mountain School District wishes Ms. Leonard the very best on her future plans and welcomes Mr. Stern back to the district Board of Education.

PMSD Board of Directors

Region 1: Barrett Township, Paradise Township and Pocono Township

Christina Grape-Garvey - School Board Director since 2021 - Term Expires in 2025

Nathan Strunk - Board Vice President - School Board Director since 2021 - Term Expires in 2025

Stephen Watto - School Board Director since 2019 - Term Expires in 2023

Region 2: Jackson Township, Tobyhanna Township and Tunkhannock Township

Rusty Johnson - School Board Director since 2011 - Term Expires in 2023

Marion Pyzik - Board President - School Board Director since 2021 - Term Expires in 2025

Albert (Bert) Rinehimer - School Board Director since 2021 - Term Expires in 2025

Region 3: Coolbaugh Township and the Borough of Mount Pocono

Ronnie Byrd - School Board Director since 2019 - Term Expires in 2023

Anna Lopez - School Board Director since 2021 - Term Expires in 2025

Michael Stern - School Board Director (Appointed on June 21, 2023 to Complete Remainder of Ms. Leonard's Term) - Term Expires in December 2023

Junior scientists compete at State level test

Students from Pocono Mountain East High School and East Junior High School put their science research to the test at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science State Competition in May.

The Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) is a statewide organization of junior and senior high school students designed to stimulate and promote interest in science among its members through the development of research projects and investigations.



Eighth grader Finn McGovern earned the distinguished Director's Award for Junior High Excellence in Microbiology.

Pocono Mountain's junior scientists had to present their research projects at the regional competition in March to qualify to compete at the state-level event.

The hard work, effort and time students dedicated to their research projects paid off as students brought home a number of awards from the state competition. Pocono Mountain East Junior High 8th grader Finn McGovern earned the prestigious Director's Award for Junior High Excellence in Microbiology. In addition to the honor of being recognized for presenting the best research project in



Pocono Mountain East Junior High School students brought home First and Second Awards from the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science State Competition in May.

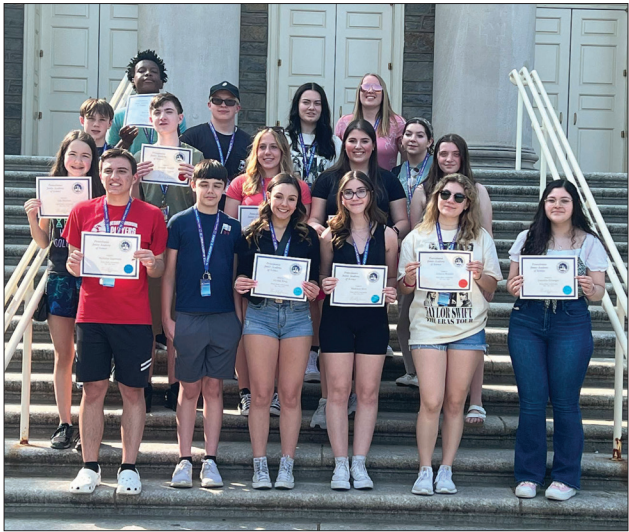
the state in Junior High Microbiology, Finn received a monetary award.

Congratulations to all of the district PJAS participants and award winners, as follows:

High School First Awards: Seniors Daniella Erlanger, Alissa King, and Madison Rios; sophomores Nicholas Ingrassia and Lila Shelton; and freshman Ryan Sanon

Junior High First Awards: 8th graders Julian Rivera, Sean King, Cole Clifford, and Finn McGovern; and 7th grader Jasper Shelton.

High School Second Awards: Seniors Alexandra



Congratulations to the Pocono Mountain East High School students who competed in and earned awards for their science research projects at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science State Competition.

Bock, Katherine Gude, Katelyn Ingrassia, Alexa Petroff and Jessica Rinaldi; sophomore Connor Straub; and freshman Frank Palmenta.

Junior High Second Awards: 8th grader Sophia Ardioni; and 7th graders Miriam Thomas and Sheena Patel.

A special note of appreciation for the team advisors and sponsors, teachers Maureen Elswick and Keith Walters; and retired teachers Suzanne Croll and George Croll.

Board approves resolution for 2023 property tax relief

The Pocono Mountain School District (PMSD) Board of Education approved a 2023 Homestead & Farmstead Exclusion Resolution at the June 21, 2023 public School Board Meeting that outlined the amount approved district property owners will receive in property tax relief on their 2023 property tax bills.

The Homestead Farmstead Real Estate Tax reduction is part of Pennsylvania's broad-based property tax relief provided from gaming funds through the Taxpayer Relief Act, also known as Special Session Act 1 of 2006.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) notified district officials that PDE will provide the district with \$7,824,277.58 in gaming tax funds to use for property tax reduction for 13,154 approved homesteads and six approved farmsteads for a total of 13,160 approved homestead/farmsteads in the district.

"PMSD acts as a pass through for gaming tax relief funds," said Joseph Colozza, Chief Financial Officer. "The funds allocated to the district are then reallocated to qualified property owners to reduce their school property taxes."

The property tax relief for approved property owners in the district for

2023 will be \$598.13 per homestead or farmstead within the district's boundaries.

Checks will not be issued directly to approved property owners. Homeowners with an approved Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion will see the exclusion amount deducted from their property taxes on their 2023 property tax bills.

Gaming funds dedicated to property tax relief also pay for a Philadelphia Wage Tax reduction, Philadelphia Senior Citizen Property Tax reduction, allocation to school districts for the Philadelphia Wage Credit, expanded Senior Citizen Property Tax & Rent Rebate Program, and the state allocation to the remaining school districts.

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

Who will receive the tax relief: Generally, most owner-occupied homes and farms are eligible for property tax reduction. Only a primary residence is eligible for property tax relief. For property owners to receive this tax relief they would have had to file a Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Your enclosed tax bill may include a tax reduction for your homestead and/or farmstead property. If you are an eligible homestead and/or farmstead property owner, you have received tax relief through a homestead and/or farmstead exclusion which has been provided under the Pennsylvania Taxpayer Relief Act, a law passed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly designed to reduce your property taxes.

BILL #		TAX ACCT ID											
LAND	17,420	BUILDING	64,490	TOTAL	81,910	CLASS	9	PARCEL NUMBER					
ASSESSMENT	BASE ASSESSMENT	LESS EXCLUSION	NET BASE ASMT	TAX LIABILITY	BASE AMOUNT	LESS EXCLUSION	NET BASE AMOUNT						
HOMESTEAD	81,910	28,841	53,069	HOMESTEAD	1,666.87	586.91	1,079.96						
FARMSTEAD	0	0	0	FARMSTEAD	0.00	0.00	0.00						
TOTAL	81,910		53,069	TOTAL	1,666.87		1,079.96						
Type Tax		Mills		2% Discount		Net Base Amt		10% Penalty					
SCH		20.3500 ML		1,058.36		1,079.96		1,187.96					
AMOUNT IF PAID BY				09/30/22	11/30/22	12/31/22							
PAY THIS AMOUNT				1,058.36	1,079.96	1,187.96							

RETURN BOTH STUBS WITH A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE FOR A RETURN RECEIPT.
 IF PROPERTY WAS SOLD, OR TAXES PAID BY A MORTGAGE CO, FORWARD BILL TO APPROPRIATE PARTY.
 CASHIER'S CHECK OR MONEY ORDER ONLY AFTER DEC 15.
 PAYABLE IN UNITED STATES CURRENCY ONLY. RECEIPT NOT VALID UNTIL CHECK CLEARS BANK.
 PAYMENT OF FIRST INSTALLMENT COMMITTS TAXPAYER TO THE INSTALLMENT FORM OF REMITTANCE.
 UNPAID ACCOUNTS RETURNED FOR COLLECTION AFTER DEC 31 TO COUNTY TAX CLAIM BUREAU AT 570-517-3172.

Sample 2022 Tax Bill showing where the Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion is located on property tax bills. The 2023 Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion for the 2023 will be \$598.13.

application with the Monroe County Assessment Office by March 1, 2023, and received a notice back that their application was approved. Any property owner who received property tax relief last year will 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 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.

Art is where its at as West High School expands Art electives

Ms. Michele Connors,
Assistant Principal
West High School

Paint, 3D printers, clay, cameras, and iPads are only just a handful of resources you'll find students working with if you visit the art classrooms at West High School. Our art teachers Mr. Steinruck, Mrs. Miele-Beatty, and Mr. James have a wealth of knowledge, resources, and creativity to help all students find their place in our art program.

According to the High School Program of Studies, students can choose from 18 different art electives to add to their class schedules this year. From Ceramics to Digital Photography to Art Exploration through STEAM, there is sure to be a class for any student wanting to begin their journey in the arts or for experienced artists looking to refine their skills and challenge themselves to try something new.

For the 2023-2024 school year, a new Art elective is available for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students - Digital Journalism. This course will be co-taught by an Art and an English Language Arts teacher and is designed to create the digital school magazine which is produced biannually. In Digital Journalism students will learn the concepts of newsworthiness and press responsibility and develop their skills in writing, editing, photography, graphic design, layout, and digital publishing.

Students interested in a future career in the art field may consider our Arts and Communication Career Pathway which is one of five Career Pathways



The West High School National Art Honor Society decorated the windows at the Clymer Library as part of their community service projects completed during the 2022-23 school year.

designed to help students focus on their area of interest and possible career path. According to the Program of Studies, "each Pathway is a broad grouping of careers that shares similar characteristics with employment requirements that call for many common interests, strengths, and competencies.

A chosen Pathway can help focus a student's elective courses toward preparing for a specific goal area." The areas of focus for the Arts and Communication Pathway include: AV Technology and Film, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Journalism and Broadcasting.

Students interested in art should also consider getting involved in our extra-curricular art opportunities. Our annual musical production seeks students interested in set design, and our National Art Honor Society (NAHS) is a great opportunity for eligible students to participate in community service projects at the elementary

and intermediate schools and in our greater school community such as at the Clymer Library. Our National Art Honor Society also participates in field trips to art museums, face painting at school and community events, and in student-designed clothing and pin fundraisers.

Mrs. Miele-Beatty suggests that the easiest way to get involved in the arts is to take a level one art class such as Ceramics I, Drawing I, or Painting I. She and the other teachers in our art department are constantly looking for ways to help students build their creative problem-solving skills, career-readiness, and a variety of soft skills.

Our art department works hard to provide creative opportunities for their students to participate in, including art exhibits and contests, virtual speakers and tours, college visits, and other educational field trips. Students may also choose to sign up for one of our four Advanced Placement art classes



West AP Art History students completed the African Unit of their course, which included creating formal analysis comparisons of artwork from the African image set and mystery African artifacts borrowed from a private collection.



West High School senior Kaiden Keys was selected at a Student Artist of the Month by the Pennsylvania Art Education Association.

to help build their resume and portfolio for college and career opportunities. Mrs. Miele-Beatty said that our art department makes each project student-driven and encourages all students to create works of art that are "authentically you".

The opportunities in the art department at West High School are endless, and all students are encouraged to get involved.

SEC recognizes Head Custodian Luis Bandala



Swiftwater Elementary Center Principals, Karen Doughton (left) and Dr. Krislin Ofalt (right) present head custodian Luis Bandala (center) with a certificate of appreciation.

Swiftwater Elementary Center's School Community would like to

thank Luis Bandala, head custodian, for his efforts in making Swiftwater Elementary Center a cleaner, safer, and healthier place to learn!

Luis was nominated for the 2022-2023 Custodians Are Key contest through The Tennant Company.

Luis was recognized for making SEC a better place by going above and beyond his daily job responsibilities to show the students and staff that he cares.

Thank you, Luis, for all that you and the custodial team do to make SEC a beautiful and safe school.

SEC could not do it without you and your team members!

**Sign up for
PMSD Alert
Messages**



Scan code or visit
pmsd.org



In addition, 8th grade student Finn McGovern earned the Junior High Excellence award in Microbiology. All students participated with pride and enthusiasm and represented the Pocono Mountain School District in a distinguished manner.

Students collect and analyze their data and prepare a formal presentation. They present their research at the regional competition at Wilkes University where

and effort, but participating in these types of performance opportunities is how students transform and grow into better musicians, actors, and people. Bravo to the cast and crew and we cannot wait to see and hear them on stage again soon!

Meet Finley - West Junior High's 1st therapy dog

Dr. Ann Marie Vaughn, Principal
West Junior High School

Pocono Mountain West Junior High is excited to introduce our very first Therapy Dog, Finley. Finley is owned and handled by Mrs. Eileen Hoffman, a member of our Health and Physical Education Department, and also a co-advisor for Aavidum here at West Junior High School.

Finley is a German Shorthair Pointer mix. She was originally from a breeder in Ireland and was brought over to the United States and purchased by Police to be trained as a "detection dog." Finley, however, seemed to have other plans and she was medically excused from the program.

The Hoffman Family adopted her in March of 2022 and got her back to perfect health. Finley had to have two different surgeries, but you would never know that today. She began her training with a local trainer shortly after she was healed and she completed her Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dog LLC certification test in April 2023.

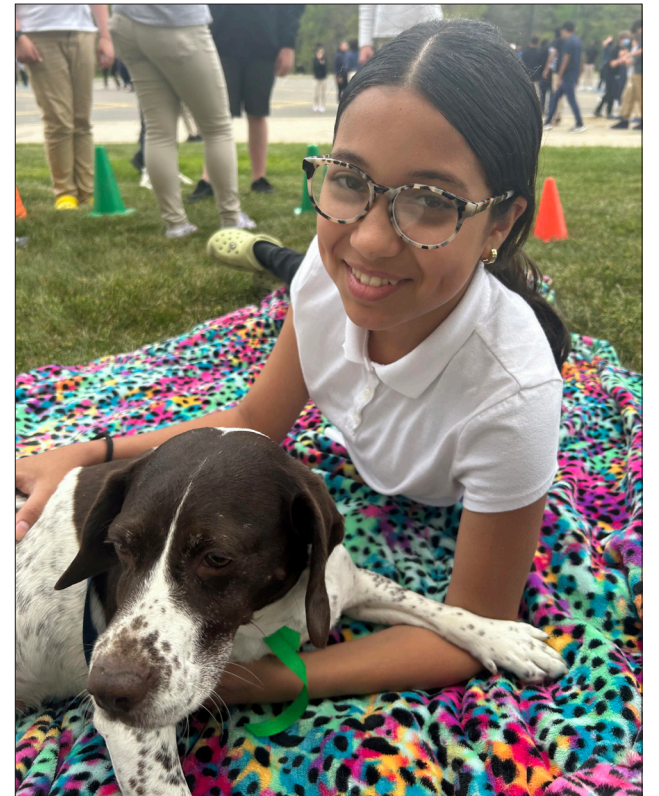
Finley and the students quickly bonded with each other and she has had the opportunity this year already to participate in our Mental Health Walk with Aavidum, PMSD Cyber's Carnival, and daily classes where she is always up for a belly rub, learning about the middle school health topics with the students, and she occasionally shares a snore or two. This new job definitely wears her out!

Ms. Hoffman's goal for Finley is to provide comfort



(Top & right) Students at Pocono Mountain West Junior High School enjoy spending time with Finley, the school's first therapy dog. Finley is at the school to provide comfort and support to students.

and support to students and staff in the building through both informal meet and greets as well as scheduled times as needed. She would love to have her become part of the PRIDE program (incentives: time with Finley, etc.) and work with clubs like Aavidum, Eye to Eye, and even the Girls on the Run Club, known as Heart and Sole at the Middle School



Level, which we are hoping to start in the Fall. Mrs. Hoffman is also very open to suggestions from staff on how Finley can be used to help support and build emotional well-being at WJHS.

We would also like to thank Ms. Ginger Chelik-Betti for all of her support and guidance given to Mrs. Hoffman and Dr. Vaughn throughout the process of getting Finley trained and certified as an official Therapy Dog!

2023-2024

The Registration Office is Here to Assist

Parents/Guardians have multiple options to register their student(s). Registration can be completed online or in person at our student registration office on the swiftwater campus. Please contact the Pocono Mountain School District Central Registration Office at 570-839-7121 ext. 40400 for more information or any assistance that you may need. Student(s) must be five (5) years of age or more, on or before September 1, 2023.

🍏 It is strongly recommended that you complete all required documents prior to you registering in person. All required documents can be found online at pmsd.org ➡ **For Parents** ➡ **Registration**.

🍏 If your student is starting Kindergarten and the registration process has been **completed**, your child will be scheduled for an orientation session sometime in August at their respective school building.

🍏 You can register online at pmsd.org ➡ **For Parents** ➡ **Registration** or scan the QR code pictured below.



WELCOME

Family Fun Night at SIS



Community partnerships, such as the partnership between Swiftwater Intermediate School teachers and administration, the school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and Pocono's Best, offer more opportunities to students and their families.

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 28, 2023.

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!

A big thanks to Pocono's Best, Little Caesars, the SIS PTO, and everyone who helped in making our night one to remember!

East HS ends school year on high note

By **Tamala Toleno, Principal**
PM East High School

East High School Principles of Engineering Students

Principles of Engineering students had a blast designing and constructing vehicles that can be powered by hydrogen fuel cells, solar panels, or battery power!

Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference

East High School students from Mrs. Kulikowski's class assisted in a presentation at The Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference (PETE&C) at Kalahari Resort on Wednesday, February 15. PETE&C is a statewide event that provides quality programs focused on technology. Students enjoyed sharing their experiences regarding "STEAM Journey: Kindergarten through High School Life Skills."

East High School Jazz Ensemble

Congratulations to the PME Jazz Ensemble! They traveled to the SteelStacks Jazz Showcase in Bethlehem and performed in the ArtsQuest Center. They returned home with an Excellent rating and Outstanding vocal soloist was given to Rachel Alexander!

East High School Esports Team Hosts Tournament

Congratulations to the Pocono Mountain East and Pocono Mountain West Esports Teams! Both teams played well in the First Annual Battle for the Mountain Esports Tournament at EHS on March 4. The EHS Banner Singers kicked off the event with the national Anthem. The EHS Dance Team performed during the intermission. EHS Psi Alpha and EHS EPIC provided their support for the event. Representatives from East Stroudsburg University, Desales University, Harrisburg University, PlayVS, and the US Air Force were present to support our competitors. Ferrara's Family Concessions provided a food and ice cream truck. Just Desserts LLC provided tasty desserts.

Science Olympiad Teams Qualified for State Tournament

The East High School and East Junior High School Science Olympiad Teams competed in the regional competition at Penn State Wilkes Barre. 22 high schools and 18 junior high schools from the northeast part of the state showed up to compete and try to earn a spot in the state tournament. The EJHS team finished 6th overall, and the EHS team finished 5th overall. This earned them a spot in the state tournament, held in Penn State Altoona on April 22nd.

East High School Model U.N. Team

The East High School Model U.N. Team enjoyed the Opening Ceremony at Lehigh University prior to their competition.

The East High School Model U.N. Team did a great job at their first Model U.N. event. They had two resolutions passed. Madeline Matos passed a resolution addressing violence against women including human rights violations for Mexico in the Women and Children's Committee by a vote of 20-6 and Lauren McLain passed a resolution addressing



The PM East High School Model United Nations Team participated in the Model U.N. event at Lehigh University where they worked with teams from other schools to pass resolutions addressing violence against women and the drug problem and corridor in Mexico. The experience helps develop high school students into future leaders.



PM East High School held another successful Mini-Thon raising \$14,626.76 to help fight pediatric cancer.

the drug problem and corridor in Mexico in the Security Council in a vote of 19-4. We are proud of their voices and courage.

East High School Performs Mamma Mia

Congratulations to the cast, crew, pit, and directors of Mamma Mia! The performances were incredible and enjoyed by everyone in attendance.

East High School SGA

Members of the East High School SGA had the opportunity to tour Penn State Children's hospital in Hershey, PA on March 28. They were able to witness firsthand how the money East students raised over the last 9 years of Mini-Thons is utilized. They were able to meet with the psychologist who works with the Four Diamonds families, one of the Music Therapists, and one of the researchers on staff while touring the facility that was built in 2013.

Biology Olympics

On Friday, April 14, freshman Mahi Patel, sophomores Emily Forlizzi and Lila Shelton, and seniors Daniella Erlanger and Lauren Waldstein participated in the Biology Olympics Competition at Cedar Crest College. They participated in several group and individual events and demonstrated an impressive amount of biology knowledge! As a team, they won third place in Biology Trivia and third place in Biology Bowl. Additionally, Lila Shelton won a first place award in Molecular Biology and Genetics, Lauren Waldstein won a third place award in Cells and Neuroscience, and Daniella Erlanger won a third place award in Medical Biology and Physiology.

Da Vinci Science Center Health and Medicine Expo

Students at East High School participated in the



PM East High School students in the Principles of Engineering built and programmed clawbot robots as part of their class projects.

Da Vinci Science Center Health and Medicine Expo on April 26. Students explored the human body and healthcare careers!

Learning stations offered students the opportunity to

1. compare and contrast animal organs
2. test their own body systems
3. complete a bioengineering challenge to stop the spread of a model virus
4. interact with Cyndi, the synthetic cadaver

East High School FBLA Members Competed at State FBLA Conference

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

National Poetry Month at East High School

East High School National English Honor Society Members chalked up the sidewalk near the entrance and bus lot with lines of poetry to celebrate National Poetry Month.

East High School Melee on the Mountain

The East High School Esports Club hosted Melee on the Mountain on April 29. The Esports team competed against students from Pocono Mountain West, Stroudsburg and Catasauqua!

East High School Video and Music Production

The East High School Video & Music Production Class is beaming with excitement!

June 1st in Hershey, Oksana Wojcik was awarded a \$400 cash prize for coming in second place in a digital media competition for "Biomedical Research Saves Lives." This was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Society of Biomedical Research.

The contest was for students in grades 6-12 from Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New Jersey. The purpose for the contest was to recognize students who digitally demonstrate a superior understanding of the connection between their life and biomedical research. Oksana was a participant in the Video and Music Production class with Mr. Eick and Mrs. Baldauff.

Cardinals soar past the competition

By Tamala Toleno, Principal
PM East High School

East High School Student-Athlete Leaders

The Athlife Foundation in conjunction with St. Luke's University Health Network, held a leadership workshop on Thursday, January 5th at the St. Luke's Sports Rink in Whitehall PA. During the workshop the student-athlete leaders from nearby high schools discussed various topics of mental health issues related to high school athletes and students.

East High School Wrestlers Compete at PIAA State Tournament

Congratulations to our EHS Wrestlers who competed in the District XI Championships! We had 2 wrestlers who qualified to continue in the PIAA State Tournament. *Scott Raymond at 121 lbs, Keegan Demarest at 133 lbs*

East High School Softball District XI Champions

Congratulations to our PME Varsity Softball team who won their 2nd District XI 5A title in four years! The lady cardinals defeated Whitehall, an EPC powerhouse team, for an upset in an amazing game.

East High School Baseball District XI Champions

Congratulations to our PME Varsity Baseball Team for winning the District XI 5A Championship.

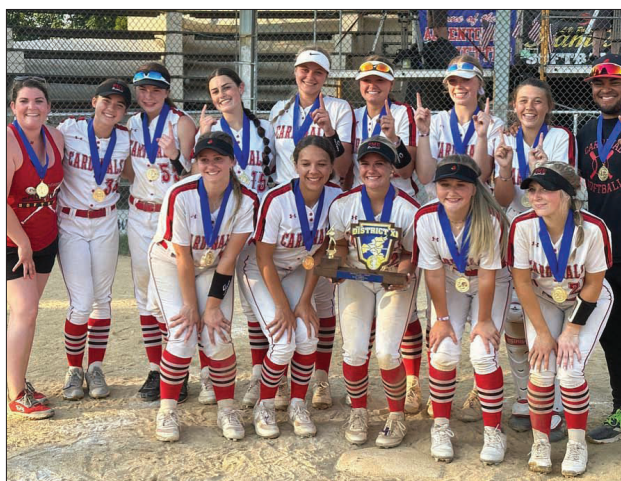
It has been a long awaited 42 years since the Cards last won the District Championship, but all the players and coaches' hard work and dedication paid off. The boys beat a fellow rival mountain team, Pleasant Valley, by a score of 4-3, securing the go-ahead run in the bottom of the 6th inning.

East High School Boys Volleyball Team Qualified for District XI Championships

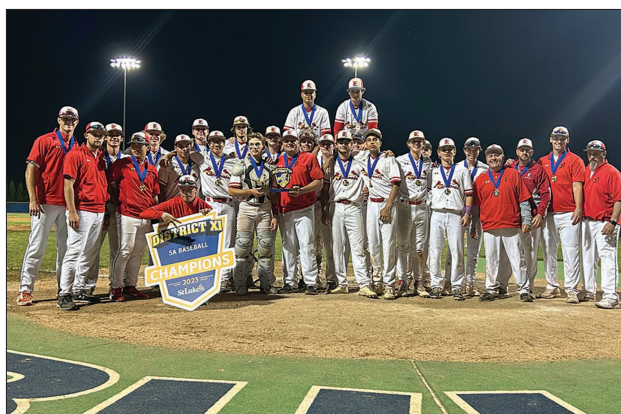
The East High School boys volleyball team beat Becahi in the District XI semi-final winning 3-2 in a 5 set match to advance to the District XI 2A championship!



The East Athlife student-athlete leaders are as follows: Lilly Soller, Rasu Wearing, Mackenzie Lopez, Gabby Maldonado, Makayla Grives, Brady DiPasquale, Rocco DelGiudice.



PM East High School District XI Softball Champions.



PM East High School District XI Baseball Champions.

One School One Book continues on at CRIS

By Amy Haynes, Principal
Clear Run Intermediate School

The Literacy Committee at CRIS is pleased and excited that for the 2023-2024 school year, One School One Book will continue!

This started back in 2016 with the book Wonder. Each year, since then, as an entire school, students at CRIS have read Fish in a Tree, Heartbeat, The One and Only Ivan, Lemonade War, James and the Giant Peach, and Cleo Edison Oliver Playground Millionaire.

Throughout reading each book, students and families have had the opportunity to participate in various activities before, during, and after reading.

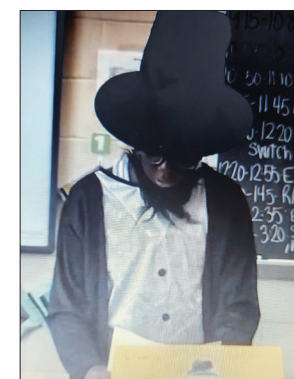
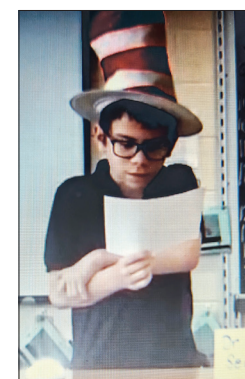
Central Administration, teachers, principals, families, and our high school Big Panthers have all taken part in our readings and activities to continue



Clear Run Intermediate School celebrates its student readers and leaders.

this great program.

To raise funds for purchasing our next selected book, on May 11th and May 31st, 3rd and 4th grade students gathered for our first "Bounce for Books." Students enjoyed dance lessons, snacks, and posing



Dr. Seuss and President Abraham Lincoln were just some of the living wax museum historical figures Clear Run Intermediate School students recreated as part of their Living Wax Museum.

CRIS third graders create wax museum

By Amy Haynes, Principal
Clear Run Intermediate School

On Monday, June 5th and Tuesday, June 6th, the 3rd Grade students at Clear Run Intermediate School hosted their first ever "Living Wax Museum."

A living wax museum is a collection of visual displays where students, dressed as famous individuals, stand at attention, while visitors walk around and tour exhibits illustrating the life of the person represented.

We welcomed the Clear Run Elementary Center 2nd Graders (soon to be 3rd Graders next year) to tour Clear Run Intermediate School (CRIS), learn some basic expectations, and allow for our current 3rd Grade students to showcase their writing and research skills through their wax museum projects.

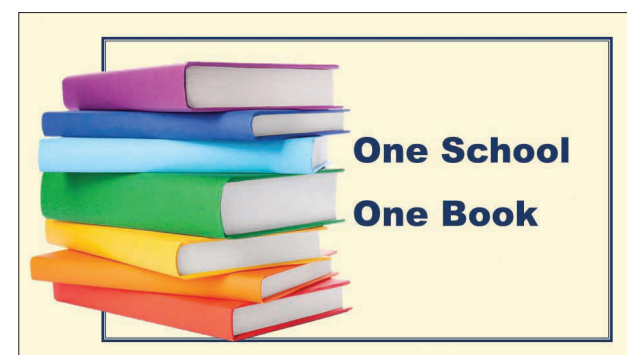
Not only were the 2nd Grade students able to learn some interesting facts about key people who have contributed to history or have had a positive impact on our world, but they were able to participate in a question and answer session with our 3rd Grade students as well.

Our 3rd Graders did an amazing job and left everyone with smiles, and we look forward to welcoming the 2nd Grade students to CRIS in the fall.

for photo booth pictures.

All proceeds from this event will support the purchase of books for One School One Book for next school year.

Stay tuned in the fall to hear about our next book selection!



Swiftwater Elementary hosts 6th Annual Police Appreciation Day

By Dr. Krislin Ofalt, Principal &
Ms. Karen Doughton Principal
Swiftwater Elementary Center

The Swiftwater Elementary Center's Police Appreciation Committee hosted the 6th Annual Police Appreciation luncheon on Friday, May 19th, 2023. The students at Swiftwater Elementary Center were joined by approximately 30 law enforcement officers from Pocono Mountain Regional Police, Pocono Township Police, Monroe County Sheriff's Department, the State Police in Stroudsburg, and Pocono Mountain School District security officers.

The cafeteria and entryway were decorated with artwork and letters created by the students of Swiftwater Elementary Center. The officers joined our students as they ate lunch, as they played on the playground, and as they participated in PE in the gymnasium.

To raise funding for this wonderful event, the SEC Police Appreciation Committee hosted a District Wide Police Appreciation t-shirt sale and a building based dress down day.

In addition, the Swiftwater Elementary Center's Police Appreciation Committee hosted a student sale of bracelets, stress balls, bouncy balls, pencils and notepads. Proceeds totaled \$1,025.00 this school year to fund \$793.00 being placed into the SEC's Police Appreciation Fund and \$232.00 supporting the PMSD Cardinal family scholarship.

To support our local police officers, 183 "Adopt a Cop" Cruiser Kits were given to each department and presented at the SEC luncheon to distribute to other officers in their respective departments. The cruiser kits included tissues, pens, note pads, granola bars, mints, gum, chapstick, hand sanitizer, and wipes.

Kid friendly kits were also donated that included



Swiftwater Elementary Center hosts its 6th Annual Police Appreciation Day to appreciate and support law enforcement officers who help keep their school and community safe.

activities for kids in need or distress on a scene/call. Items within those kits included stuffed animals, coloring books, and coloring supplies.

The Police Appreciation Committee would like to thank Minuteman Press for their help with the District Wide t-shirt sale. They would also like to thank the families of SEC students, and the following local businesses; Big Screen Escapes, Texas Roadhouse, Summit Lanes, Z-Towing, Philly Pretzel Factory, Weis Markets, ShopRite, Pocono Dessert Co., Nick's Big Belly Deli, and Chartwells for their donations.

The Swiftwater Elementary Center's Police Appreciation Committee proudly awards scholarships to one graduating senior who plans to enter law enforcement from both Pocono Mountain East and Pocono Mountain West High Schools. This year, we received applications from the East High School.

The committee was happy to award the 2022-2023 \$200.00 scholarship to East High School graduating senior Joshua Marrero. Joshua will be attending Temple University in the fall and will major in Criminal Justice.



Swiftwater Elementary students created beautiful artwork to show their support for the police.



The best part of SEC's Police Appreciation Day for students is when they get to meet and interact with law enforcement officers.

East Junior High School competes in Robotics Expo

By Dr. Kathleen Fanelli, Principal
PM East Junior High School

Several students in grades 5-8 attended the PMSD Lego Robotics Expo held at West Junior High School in April.

Lego Robotics is a program overseen by the gifted teachers in the district, and it all allows students to demonstrate what they have learned about the different areas of STEM.

This year the theme was "Superpowered," and the students explored energy and the essential role it plays in keeping our world running, from the machines that move us to the food that sustains us to the wireless technologies that connect us.

Our Pocono Mountain East Junior High School (EJHS) team was made up of 6 seventh graders, and together they were challenged in the areas of robot design, robot games (building mission models and coding the robot to complete different missions) and creating an innovation project that re-imagined a better energy future, all while focusing on core values such as teamwork, inclusion, fun, discovery, innovation and impact.



Congratulations to the Pocono Mountain East Junior High School Lego Robotics team, Melody Plywaczewski, Miriam Thomas, Jasper Shelton, Kylie Steele, Nicole Sobolev and Valerie Cooper, on a job well done.

This amazing team came up with the idea of a wind bus, which uses several different types of energy, but when able, the bus is fully powered by wind using the wind turbine located on the front of the bus.

Congratulations to our EJHS Lego Robotics team on a job well done! Students are: Melody Plywaczewski, Miriam Thomas, Jasper Shelton, Kylie Steele, Nicole Sobolev, Valerie Cooper.



STOP CYBER BULLYING

**BE THE SOLUTION
THINK BEFORE YOU POST**

Pleasant memories & a fond farewell to Dr. D'Angelo

By Dr. John Kevra,
Assistant Principal
Tobyhanna Elementary Center

Tobyhanna Elementary Center (TEC) is winding down the 2022/2023 school year with so many wonderful memories that it would be impossible to mention all of them. However, if I were to highlight a few of our most significant additions and accomplishments, I would have to start with a four-legged addition to TEC's family, our therapy dog, Barkley.

Barkley's role as a certified therapy dog means he has shared many laughs and tears with our students since arriving last summer. He welcomes every student into our guidance office and most importantly, makes the students feel comfortable to share their feelings with him and with Mrs. Dial. I truly feel he makes all our students feel safer, more comfortable, and more willing to come to school every day. Another memorable event at TEC was our recent production of *The Lion King*. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and peers were amazed at the talent and commitment that the adults and the students brought to the stage.

Our students also showcased their singing talents in December at Camelback Resorts as an unexpected visitor from up north lit an enormous evergreen tree. It was a multisensory experience for everyone! Keeping with

a tradition that started five years ago, every Tobyhanna Elementary Center student was inspired to do their best and graduate high school when they were treated to a visit from this year's high school graduates. Forty-three past Tobyhanna Elementary Center students donned their caps and gowns and processed through the halls of their childhood stomping grounds. Students from kindergarten to 6th grade were delighted by the visit and inspired by the graduate's words of advice. Their resounding message was, "Never give up!"

All the wonderful things that have happened at Tobyhanna this year are culminating in an event that stirs mixed emotions for all of us, the retirement of our esteemed principal, Dr. Anastasia D'Angelo.

Dr. D'Angelo has been a fixture at Tobyhanna Elementary Center for almost twenty years. She began her administrative career at our school after teaching in the Hazleton School District for over nineteen years as a reading specialist. So, her retirement is closing a door that has been opened for almost 40 years! In those 4 decades she has touched the lives of so many students, parents, and teachers. Her innate kindness is only overshadowed by her remarkable intelligence. She has utilized these two qualities to make Tobyhanna Elementary Center a very, very special place.



Dr. Anastasia D'Angelo, the Principal of Tobyhanna Elementary Center (TEC), announced her retirement at the end of the 2022-23 school year. Barkley, the school's certified therapy dog, was there to thank Dr. D'Angelo for all of her support and to help the team at TEC wish her a happy retirement.

Students, parents, and teachers can only remember how she touched their lives in positive ways. Whether she was doing her best to schedule classes with a rigorous curriculum or an after-school ice cream social for 6th graders, every decision was child focused. She never forgot that she was still a teacher at heart. What she didn't realize is that her decisions and actions were teaching

the adults around her as much as the children.

Anyone fortunate enough to know Dr. D'Angelo can only say they are better for it. Her humility mixed with her sense of humor makes her a character none of us will ever forget. We can only wish her the best of luck and tell her that she leaves Tobyhanna Elementary Center a better place than when she arrived.

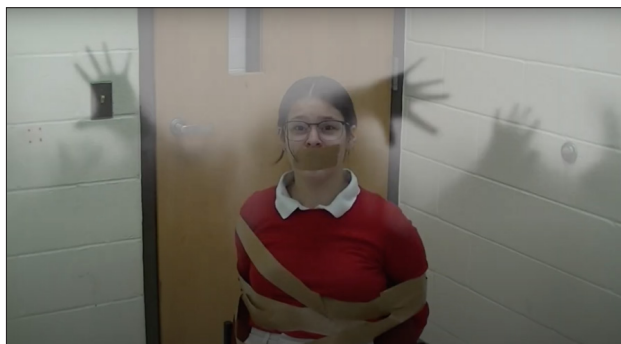
Technology and Music partner for an Award-Winning Year

By Amy L. Buffington
Director of Curriculum, Instruction
Social Studies & Humanities

This year the music and technology departments joined forces at East High School for a new endeavor, Video and Music Production! Students were taught by music and technology teachers to learn about things like sound engineering, music productions, lighting techniques and several other newly emerging trends.

This new STEAM endeavor had students working together on many different projects with a host of different experiences. Students explored several career paths and were able to dive deeper into them with their classmates and teachers. Some of our senior students will now be entering college in music and other realms with a vast array of experiences to help them in their future professions.

Heather Baldauff, technology and Tim Eick, music worked together throughout the year to educate students in yet another field of technology



PM East High School students Oksana Wojcik, Gianna Mignella and Ryan Corley won the Grand Prize in the "First Amendment Matters" PSA nationwide contest for their entry, "In a World Without Freedoms."

that continues taking on new life. They provided opportunities to learn techniques, utilize equipment, create collaborative videos for school events and even enter a few contests. Some of which they won!

One of the contests, the 2023 PA Society for Biomedical Research contest featured students from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and West Virginia. Our

own senior, Oksana Wojcik, won 2nd place. The theme was "Biomedical Research and My Life." She featured her sister, Andrea, in a very moving two-minute video submission. Oksana received a cash prize of \$400 and was honored at the annual awards dinner at Hershey Lodge on June 1, 2023.

Another contest hosted by School Journalism featured a "First Amendment Matters" PSA contest for students who reside in the United States. Oksana Wojcik, Gianna Mignella and Ryan Corley won the Grand Prize for their production of "In a World Without Freedoms" video. They received a \$100 Amazon gift card and a "prize box" that contained a variety of items such as t-shirts and school supplies.

These were some crowning achievements from the class along with so much more. Students learned a wealth of knowledge to help them in the future. STEAM is on the rise at PMSD and beyond. Our teachers and students continue to work hard to keep up with technology to meet tomorrow's challenges and opportunities with success!

First Day of School for Students - Monday, August 28, 2023

East Junior High wraps up the school year strong

By Dr. Kathleen Fanelli, Principal
Dr. Eric Vogt, Principal
East Junior High School

Pocono Mountain East Junior High School (EJHS) finished out the school year strong, with a number of accomplishments to share with parents and our school community.

East Junior High School completed the second annual EJHS Spelling Bee on Wednesday, June 7, 2023. Students first compete at the classroom level, then at the grade level, and finally a school-wide champion is crowned. This year, the 7th grade champion was Zakai Chambers. Our 8th grade champion was Declan Angulo. After a fierce battle between the two young men for the schoolwide title, Declan Angulo emerged as our 2022-2023 Spelling Bee Champion.

Our knowledge of plant life is growing at East Junior High School! Science students in Mrs. Albrecht's Science class developed a community herb and vegetable garden as they followed the germination process of a seed through to harvest of their crops. Through hands on authentic learning, the members of the class used the scientific method to investigate various stages of growth of the plants.

During the unit, students improved their research and writing skills as they investigated various crops that they were cultivating. In addition to research students utilized the safe and appropriate use of tools, materials and techniques to answer questions that arose during the gardening process and solve various problems they encountered.

Ms. Nalesnik's 7th Grade classes conducted a Circle Lab following their Geometry Unit. Students were asked to choose 2 different sized lids from a



PM East Junior High School 8th grader Declan Angulo emerged the school's Spelling Bee champion after a fierce spelling battle with the 7th grade champion, Zakai Chambers.

bin. They then had the challenge of finding the center, measuring the radius, measuring the diameter, and lastly; calculating circumference and area, utilizing the formulas provided during the lesson.

In Mr. Smith's Physical Science class at East Junior High School, 7th grade students built "vehicles" out of cardboard, tape, glue, bubble wrap, and cotton in order to hold an egg for a collision with another student's car. The purpose of this lab was to teach students about Newton's first law, impulse, and momentum.

Wrapping up the All for Love unit, 8th Grade ELA students at EJHS completed a "Body Biography" project based on characters in Romeo & Juliet. The projects are both a visual and written portrait,



(Top two photos) PM East Junior High students in Mrs. Albrecht's Science class developed a community herb and vegetable garden. The students used the scientific method to investigate the various stages of plant growth.



PM East Junior High students created visual and written portraits illustrating aspects of a character's life from Romeo & Juliet.

illustrating several aspects of the character's life in the play including visual symbols, quotations that reveal character traits, and analytical explanations of the representations.

Congratulations SIS Envirothon Team



Congratulations to the entire SIS Envirothon team on an outstanding day at Kettle Creek on May 15, 2023. Mr. Dalessandro and Ms. Schaller run the Envirothon Club at SIS and have worked weekly with students to prepare them for the competition. We are so proud of our SIS teams:

The Royal Elks took 2nd place and lost to the champion by a tie breaker question! Royal Elks team members are the following: Sienna Melton, Arianna Figueroa, Alyssa Comstock, Brent Baker

The Fox Dynasty team took 3rd place and earned a certificate for their expertise in Monroe County Trees! The members of the Fox Dynasty were Collin Pero, Tyler Laubengeyer, Riley O'Connor, Gabe Petroff, Dyson Sanon

OPEN HOUSE DATES

Secondary Schools

EHS: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 6:30pm (Gr 9 & New Student Orientation)

EHS: Friday, August 18, 2023 at 11am-1pm (Grades 9-12)

WHS: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 6:30pm (Gr 9 & New Student Orientation)

WHS: Thursday, August 17, 2023 at 6:30pm (Grades 10-12)

EJHS: Monday, August 21, 2023 from 3pm to 7pm

WJHS: Tuesday, August 22, 2023 from 3pm to 7pm

WHS: Friday, August 25, 2023 from 11am- 1pm (Walkthrough)

Come Join Us For Open House

Elementary Schools

CRIS: Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 4-6pm

CREC: Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 4-6pm (Gr 1-2)

PMSD Cyber: Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 4-6pm (Kdg-12)

SEC: Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 4-6pm (Kdg only)

TEC: Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 4-6pm (Gr K-2) and 5-7pm (Gr 3-6)

CREC: Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 4-6pm (Kdg only)

SEC: Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 4-6pm (Gr 1-3)

SIS: Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 5-7pm (Gr 4-6)

Student artists, therapy dog - Just some of the great things at Clear Run Elementary

By Mrs. Heidi Donohue, Principal
Dr. Jessica Loverdi, Principal
Clear Run Elementary Center

Students Participate in Pocono Arts Council Exhibit

In February, several students from Clear Run Elementary Center had artwork showcased at the 29th Annual Student Art Exhibit, which was sponsored by the Pocono Arts Council.

Under the direction of teacher Shelly Grillo, 16 students displayed work in the Primary Division, which included students throughout the Pocono Region in grades K-4. The following students were recognized for their individual artwork submissions: Dayton Ealey-3-D Foam- "Invisible Creature", Kelsey Clements-Print-"Fishy", Jeronimo Garcia Garibello-3-D Foam-"Mammoth Beast", Kenneth Jones-3-D Foam-"Watch Out for Green", Abigail O'Connel-3-D Foam-"Feather Beast", Jeremiah Ortiz-3-D Foam-"Eight Eyes", Steven Whifford-Print-"Rainbow Friends", Arabella Dernbach-Mixed Media-"Orb Dot", Roselia Jaramillo-3-D Foam-"Walking My Dog", Jeniyah Jarrett-Mixed Media-"NY Dot", Karter Harriott-Mixed Media-"Radiate", Lucia Santos-3-D Foam-"Flying Fox", James Padron-Print-"Monologue", Eliana Rodriguez-3-D Foam-"Rover", Alani Galloway-Print-"Orbs", Blaise Jolly-Drawing-"Rise Up"

In addition to being recognized by the Arts Council, students were also recognized by Dr. Loverdi, Mrs. Donohue, and Ms. Grillo. All students received special certificates and art pins.

Founded in 1975, the Pocono Arts Council's vision is to ensure the arts remain a vibrant cornerstone of community life throughout the Pocono region.

Meet Chip

Clear Run Elementary Center had the opportunity to welcome their very own Therapy Dog during the 2022-2023 school year - Chip. Chip is a 4-year-old Miniature Poodle whose owner is Mrs. Michele Taylor, an Educational Consultant that has an office in our building. He has been certified for Therapy since 2020, and also visits local nursing homes when he isn't at CREC providing support and encouragement to our children.



(Top two photos) Clear Run Elementary Center celebrated the academic and social growth of their Kindergarten students at the end of the school year.

Students frequently visited Chip when they were having a tough time in school, whether it be because they missed home or simply needed to take a break. Many of our students earned special Chip Dojo points for making good choices, which could also be exchanged for one-on-one time.

Chip has made many friends during this school year and loves to see and meet new people. One of his favorite things to do is tricks with his CREC family



Students welcomed a new Therapy Dog named Chip to the Clear Run Elementary Center for the 2022-23 school year.

for treats!

From Kindergarten to Graduation

We have lived, loved, laughed, studied, learned, and enriched our lives together.

During the last week of school, the staff and faculty of Clear Run Elementary came together with families and the community to celebrate the growth of our youngest learners with a Kindergarten Celebration.

Coincidentally, just days before, staff and students lined the hallways as graduates who were former CREC students traveled down memory lane to reminisce about where the foundation of their learning began. Congratulations to the classes of 2024 and 2035! Remember that we shall always be interested in their destiny – wherever they go, whatever they do, whoever they become.

East Junior High School participates in Monroe County Junior Envirothon

Pocono Mountain East Junior High School's Envirothon team participated in the Monroe County Junior Envirothon Competition on May 16, 2023, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center. Competing teams from local Monroe county schools were tested on their knowledge of the Pocono environment at four stations: Animals, Tress, Ponds and this year's Learning Station, Wetlands.

The Junior Envirothon educates students in 7th and 8th grades in natural resources and environmental sciences. The program emphasizes the importance of environmental sensitivity while stressing a need to achieve a social, ecologic and economic balance in life. The students get exposure to nature and see how humans impact the natural world, which provides invaluable lessons for understanding ecosystems and environment.



Tobyhanna Elementary Center students put on a crowd-pleasing performance of *The Lion King*. The students, under the direction of their advisors, worked very hard to learn their lines and songs to put on this memorable play and musical for their parents and school community.



PM East Junior High Schools Envirothon team (from left to right) Melody Plywaczewski, Mattea Lentz, Victoria Margopoulos, Kylie Steele, Melissa Venkursawmy, Samantha Massaia, Genesis Reeves, Jailene Lebron, Faith Cuello.

Full STEAM ahead at CRIS

By Amy Haynes, Principal
Clear Run Intermediate School

On April 18th, Clear Run Intermediate School hosted a Math and Science Family Night which included a number of STEAM activities.

Students and their families were able to act as detectives and participate in Science stations, Grocery Games, a scavenger hunt, test out the robotics club, solve Odyssey of the Mind mini problems while at our Amazing Mysteries themed event.

Our keynote presenter was Dennis Regling, who travels the country as a comedy math magician! With an interactive presentation, our audience participated in an engaging and educational show.

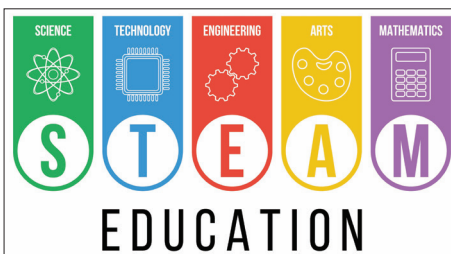
Each student also collected stamps on their clue cards to earn prizes, including the two grand prize telescopes, which we hope will be perfect for summer stargazing!

The students were also invited to learn more about Camp Invention, a fun summer STEAM camp that will run from June 19th-June 22nd.

Last year, our students were able to build problem solving skills, create inventions, improve academic achievement, reduce

summer learning loss, and learn more about innovative role models in the STEAM fields all while working collaboratively with their friends.

We are looking forward to hosting Camp Invention here at CRIS again this summer.



New tradition starts at SEC



East High School Senior, Jakub Pochron, founded the EHS Graduating Seniors' Day of Service starting with the class of 2023. Jakub was instrumental in reaching out to SEC administration, offering the service of seniors to permanently paint a wall that

will last a lifetime at SEC. East High School Art teacher Molly Callahan and East High School PMEA FBLA Chapter participated in "A Day of Service" by reaching out too many local entities providing support for our community.

At SEC, students and families will forever enjoy a photo opportunity



Join a team that makes a difference serving Pocono Mountain School District students.

- Full and part time positions
- Flexible work schedule
- Most weekends and nights off
- \$250 Referral bonus *ask for details*
- 401k and discount programs
- Career growth opportunities
- Free shift meals

Apply online today at

<https://careers.compassgroupcareers.com/>

Req ID: 186933

Or email tgivens@pmsd.org for more information.

chartwells
serving up happy & healthy



Swiftwater Intermediate School piloted using Classroom Dojo as part of its school-wide positive behavior system during the 2022-23 school year. Next school year, students will use the Classroom Dojo points they earn, instead of PRIDE Cards, to participate in the PRIDE Carnival, like the one held for students in 2022-23.

SIS Classroom Dojo supports PRIDE initiatives

The Swiftwater Intermediate School finished its first school year utilizing Classroom Dojo. Following a trial year with only a handful of teachers, the school-wide positive behavior system was implemented in all classrooms during the 2022-2023 school year. Classroom Dojo has replaced PRIDE Cards as a unit of currency to purchase items from the school-wide menu, classroom menus and the PRIDE store.

Teachers award Classroom Dojo points to students who demonstrate the five components of the PRIDE Matrix: Prepared, Respectful, Involved, Dependable and Empathetic. Parents who signed up to receive Dojo messages are made aware when their student gets a point added to their account through push notifications. The Dojo points are then available to purchase

various items from the menu options and the school store. In addition, there are quarterly school wide activities where these points can be redeemed to participate in additional experiences. The PRIDE spring carnival held at the end of the school year is the final opportunity for students to spend these points. Any Dojo points students have remaining after the carnival can be used for a chance to win prizes via a student raffle.

Next school year, Classroom Dojo will continue to be the foundation of the Swiftwater Intermediate School's Positive School-wide Behavior system. Parents are encouraged to sign up for notifications, as many teachers also use this as a means to communicate important school and classroom information. Look for the sign-up information with next year's first day paperwork.

Come
Work
With Us!



Scan the QR Code above to see all that Pocono Mountain School District has to offer!

Please email below for any assistance
mdunlap@pmsd.org (Support Staff)
astoner@pmsd.org (Professional Staff)



Pocono Mountain West Junior High School student speakers shared messages of encouragement during the Flintface concert.

West Junior High shines light on mental health

Ms. Aliya Grindle, Assistant Principal
PM West Junior High School

"Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light."
— Albus Dumbledore from Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Pocono Mountain West Junior High acknowledges Mental Health Awareness Month. May is a time to raise awareness of those living with mental or behavioral health issues and to help reduce the stigma so many experience.

Throughout the school year administration, guidance counselors, social workers, mental health workers and teachers work together as a committee known as the Student Assistance Program (SAP), to assist in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's success.

The primary goal of the Student Assistance Program is to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance, and remain in school. SAP referrals can be made by teachers, students, and parents. The referral link can be found on the West

Jr. High Helpful Links Tab.

To kickoff Mental Health Awareness Month, West Junior High invited musical guest, Flintface to our school. During the show, Flintface shared a musical message that weaves hopeful tales of the complex path of life, and how we can call on our inner strength to triumph in the face of adversity. The message of the show was, "Take Back Your Voice." Student speakers shared their messages of encouragement throughout the show.

Following the show, our Aavidum club and advisors Mrs. Heather Cerrone and Mrs. Eileen Hoffman, sponsored a Mental Health Awareness Walk.

Aavidums's focus is to end the silence that surrounds depression, and other issues facing youth. They

strive to create healthy communities where everyone feels accepted, appreciated, acknowledged, and cared for in schools. During the walk, students had the opportunity to create chalk murals, sign the school banner, and spend some quality time with Finley, our therapy dog.

To close out the month, the West Jr. High invited Dr. Mykee Fowlin to speak to the students and staff. His message is to encourage worldwide inclusion, not just tolerance. He hopes that all audience members will leave



Strategies for a successful summer break

By Dr. Catherine Sweeney
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Tips for managing your kids' downtime to help make it relaxing for everyone

While your child may be thrilled by the end of the school year, anticipating lazy days and sleeping in, the prospect of summer break is not quite that unalloyed pleasure for parents.

Here are some tips to help keep your child on track so summer can be as rewarding as possible for everyone in the family:

Kids do better with structure. That's even more true for kids with emotional or developmental issues. Therefore, summer break can be a challenge for kids and their parents. But following some basic rules can make summer easier to handle and more fun for everyone.

Keeping to your child's usual bedtimes and mealtimes is important. Posting the day's schedule helps kids move from one activity to another. Planning activities ahead of time, like going to the playground or pool every day, gives kid structure they can depend on. Then you can schedule other

activities around that.

Rules for behavior are important, too. It is good to pick a few "good" behaviors you want your child to work on. You can reward kids for good behaviors with stickers or a special outing. And ignoring as many minor "bad" behaviors as you can teaches kids that acting out won't get them what they want.

Meet-ups and other on-line groups are a great way of connecting your child with other kids and families who might make good matches for playdates. Outdoor activities are important for kids. If day camp is an option, it can provide great structure and fun outdoor activities that keep kids from spending too much time in front of screens. If a kid has anxiety, it's good to figure out what is triggering it. Then you can take baby steps to make those fears less scary.

Even if you do everything you can to prepare for summer, it's normal for kids to act out more over vacation. That's tiring for parents. It's important for parents to take care of themselves during the long summer break, too. Hiring a sitter for a few hours or asking family members to pitch in can make a big difference.

his performance with that wonderful, awakening feeling of beauty: the beauty within one's self and the beauty within others; the celebration of our differences, and the acceptance of our shared experiences.

Call 570-992-0879 for crisis and

emergency counseling and referral 24 hours a day for Carbon, Monroe and Pike Counties. Additional resources are the Suicide Prevention Resource Center/ Pennsylvania - 24/7 call 1-800-273-8255, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 24/7 call 1-800-273-825

Assistive technology improves accessibility for all students

Pocono Mountain School District (PMSD) prides itself on providing an educational environment that welcomes students of all abilities.

One of the ways PMSD helps make opportunities available for students with disabilities is through the use of assistive technology.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular on Assistive Technology describes assistive technology as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities.”

One such assistive technology device that is making a difference for students in Pocono Mountain East High School Art Teacher Molly Callahan’s class is a specialized table-top pottery wheel.

“The ceramic program at PMSD is not only a great way for students to be creative, but what many people don’t realize is that it is also an amazing way to build fine motor skills and help students build muscle strength in their hands,” said Mrs. Callahan. “For some students who need occupational therapy services, the ceramics classroom helps provide additional means of gaining these strengths and skills. But upon having a student in my class who was wheelchair bound, I realized that we needed to do more to ensure that the studio was equipped to help all students be able to participate in the curriculum. Since our pottery wheels are tripods, it would be impossible for a student with a wheelchair to use them. So, it was clear that we needed to get a more specialized wheel to ensure all students could create. A tabletop pottery wheel made it possible. Now students can create wheel-thrown pottery in a comfortable way.”

Assistive and adaptive technology are not just a consideration for the classroom. Something as simple as adding yellow tape to the steps in stairwells can make a big difference for students with depth perception challenges navigate stairwells in schools safely.



Pocono Mountain East High School junior, Alex Nauman uses a specialized tabletop pottery wheel in Mrs. Molly Callahan's Art Class. Alex also participates in the eSports Club at East High School.

“We strive to make our schools as accessible as possible for all students,” according to Lynne Star, Special Education Instructional Supervisor. “The solution to an accessibility consideration doesn’t always involve an expensive, high-tech piece of specialized equipment. Many times, it involves a simple, easy solution involving something as common as colored tape or the type of switches used on a piece of equipment.”

The need for assistive technology is discussed and determined during the evaluation process for students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.

“The student’s IEP or 504 Plan team meets and follows the SETT (Student, Environment, Tasks, and Tools) Framework, to help identify if assistive technology or services are needed for the student to ensure the student has the access and supports needed to excel in a class or activity,” said Dr. Marsha Kloss, Special Education Instructional Supervisor.

In addition to making district schools as accessible as possible during the school day, the district works hard to make after-school clubs and activities accessible to students of all abilities. One such activity that is really popular with students of all abilities is eSports offered as a high school activity at both the East and West High Schools.

“ESports levels that playing field for students of all abilities,” said Jonathan Reifer, Special Education Instructional Supervisor. “All of the high school Life Skills students are participating in eSports. ESports is providing a great mentoring opportunity for our Life Skills students. They have an activity where they feel at home and where they have something in common with all the other students in eSports. It’s a huge success so far.

As assistive and adaptive technology has become more available, the district has expanded its use beyond iPads and communication devices, to ensure students of all abilities have access to the classes and activities they enjoy at school.

“The art room is a place where all students are welcome and included,” said Mrs. Callahan. “No matter who they are, where they come from, what makes them different, or what abilities they have, all students can create something in my classes. It [the specialized pottery wheel] makes it possible for our classes to become a place where everyone belongs and each student is an important part of our classroom family. It’s probably my favorite thing about being an art teacher -- we get the amazing opportunity to see all students create something that wasn’t there before.”



Congratulations to the 376 graduates of the Pocono Mountain East High School Class of 2023. The East seniors were honored during a graduation ceremony held at the Swiftwater Campus Cardinal Stadium on Friday, June 9, 2023.



Congratulations to the 392 graduates of the Pocono Mountain West High School Class of 2023. The West seniors were honored during a graduation ceremony held at the Sullivan Trail Campus on Saturday, June 10, 2023.