

# IN

An IN Community Magazine

# Fox Chapel Area

FOX CHAPEL AREA  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**2016-2017**  
**STATE OF THE  
SCHOOLS**

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FALL 2017  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

**W**e have a lot to celebrate in the Fox Chapel Area School District! I am pleased to report we are receiving national attention for our educational excellence and I am proud of the progress we have made. Beginning with the announcement last fall that Fairview Elementary School won a National Blue Ribbon based

on the high performance of our students, we then also received a number of other prestigious honors and recognitions throughout the year. Many of the achievements are detailed in this 2016-2017 State of the Schools report, but a short list also includes:

- Fox Chapel Area was chosen to become a member of the prestigious League of Innovative Schools as one of 19 new school districts added to the 87 from across the nation.
- Fox Chapel Area School District and our students ranked high in the Pittsburgh Business Times Regional School Report Card, based on the most recent three years of state standardized assessment scores.
- The district stacked up well on 2017 rankings from Niche.com, a Pittsburgh-based website that uses rigorous analysis and authentic reviews to highlight the best places to live and schools to attend. Points of note are:
  - Best School Districts: Fox Chapel Area was number 2 out of 78 in the Pittsburgh metro area; number 5 of 497 in Pennsylvania; and number 22 out of 10,364 in the nation.
  - Districts with the Best Teachers: Fox Chapel Area was ranked number 2 out of 75 in the Pittsburgh metro area; number 4 out of 480 in Pennsylvania; and number 30 out of 8,195 across the nation.
  - Safest School Districts: Fox Chapel Area was number 4 out of 75 in the Pittsburgh metro area; number 16 out of 480 in Pennsylvania; and number 103 of 8,211 in the nation.

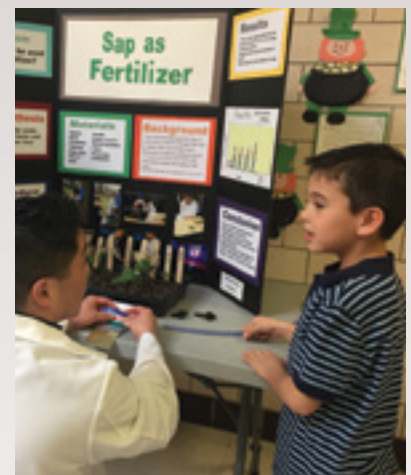
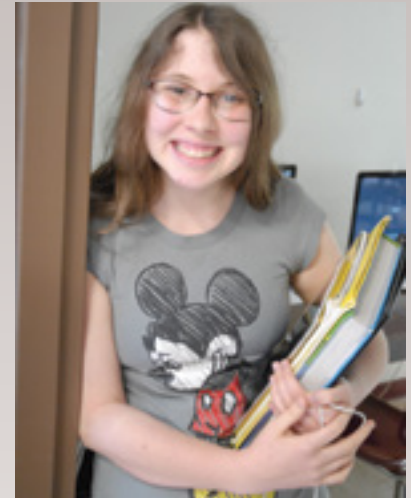
Even more important than national awards and recognitions is the actual progress in performance and achievement our students attained. Since 2014-2015, when the Pennsylvania Core became the new guide, our standardized assessment results have shown steady and continued growth. In fact, our students' scores have improved in all grade levels in every subject. More specifically, the grades three-eight PSSA proficiency has increased by five percent in English Language Arts and by nine percent in math. The Fox Chapel Area Keystone Exam pass rates for 11<sup>th</sup> graders have also all increased, and more than 90 percent of our students are passing the Algebra I, literature, and biology exams.

One of the reasons for this improved performance is that we have successfully implemented a system of quarterly benchmark assessments. Each school year, beginning early in the fall, students are assessed so that administrators and staff can identify areas of strength and areas of needed improvement in each student's knowledge and achievement. With this information, instruction is adapted early on to ensure that students are meeting or exceeding their overall achievement goals. I am pleased to report that we are finding that student assessment results indicate that the initial academic starting point for students is increasing. I expect even higher levels of achievement from our students by the end of this school year, and continuing improvement in upcoming years as well.

Our school district has a committed staff, a caring and involved community, and the tools to achieve even higher goals for our students. I believe that the current year and the years to come will truly bring the best – that Fox Chapel Area students will demonstrate the best is yet to come.

Sincerely,

Gene Freeman, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



## 2016-2017 State of the Schools Awards and Achievements

- For the eighth year, Fox Chapel Area High School received a Silver Medal rank from U.S. News & World Report. The high school was also ranked among the top 250 high schools in the nation and received an “A+ Overall Niche Grade” on *niche.com*, and was named among the 2017 Washington Post’s America’s Most Challenging High Schools.
- The district was honored by the College Board in 2017 with placement on the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual AP<sup>®</sup> District Honor Roll, a distinction for districts that show significant gains in student access and success on Advanced Placement courses and tests.



- High school junior Shania Khatri participated in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair – the Olympics of student science competitions. Shania’s project was entitled “Using Bayesian Network Modeling to Locate Breast Cancer Genes.”
- A total of 147 high school students were named Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars by the College Board for demonstrating college-level achievement on the AP examinations taken in May 2017. Rohan Chalasani, Alec Eckman, Mihir Garimella, Sarah Hamilton, Elizabeth Heidenreich, Yelim Lee, Darwin Leuba, William “Tim” Marsh, Moira McCormick, Suvir Mirchandani, Kristen Rabbitt, Jeremy Rodrigues, Caroline Smith, Philip Swigon, Thomas Swigon, and Nathan Wecht, all seniors, qualified for the National AP Scholar Award by earning an average score of 4 or higher on all AP exams taken, and scores of four or higher on eight or more AP exams.

## HIGHLIGHTS



- Fox Chapel Area was accepted into Digital Promise’s League of Innovative Schools, one of 19 new school districts nationwide selected by the league for their innovative learning and collaboration. League-member schools meet several times a year, and Deputy Superintendent David McCommons, Ed.D., said, “As a member district, we have already benefited from our involvement in the areas of connections, research opportunities, and collaborative grant making.” The district is collaborating with two League-member schools in reimagining the creation of media centers, partnering with a tech start-up to evaluate computational thinking in first grade, and partnering with the RAND Corporation on a National Science Foundation Grant in the area of digital fabrication and Fab Labs.

- Fairview Elementary School was named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education in September of 2016. Fairview was one of among 329 schools from across the nation selected to receive this honor. Representing Fairview,

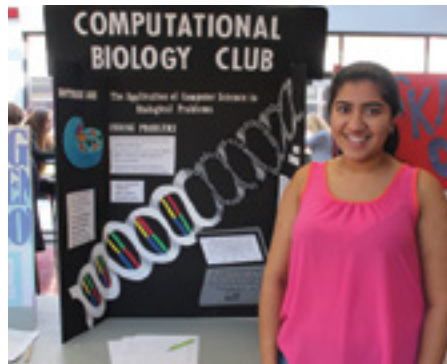


Principal Rebecca Stephan, Ed.D., and fifth-grade teacher John Anderson attended the Blue Ribbon ceremony held in Washington, D.C. Each of the Fox Chapel Area schools has been named a national Blue Ribbon School. This is the second time that Fairview was given the award, and Fox Chapel Area High School also was named a Blue Ribbon School twice.



- High school senior Mihir Garimella was named one of Fortune’s 18 Under 18, a listing of teens considered to be the “most innovative and ambitious teens under 18 years old.” According to Fortune, these are “young innovators who are changing the world.” Mihir was also named to the 2016 Guardian Teen Power List, a list that featured 25 young activists, scientists, artists, athletes, entrepreneurs, and big thinkers shaping the future from around the world that says “It’s not about your age, it’s about your ideas.” Additionally, Mihir was also named to The Science 7 by the Society for Science & the Public. Mihir was chosen for his creation of a low-cost, intelligent drone that can be used by first responders to enable them to explore dangerous environments to find people who are trapped.

- High school junior Shania Khatri was chosen to present her breast cancer research at the American Medical Informatics Association 2016 Annual Symposium in Chicago. The symposium included a dedicated presentation session, educational activities, and networking events for high school students and high school teachers participating in educational research partnerships with biomedical informatics researchers from across the United States.



- Alison Francis, the facilitator of the district’s Creativity and Literacy Program, was one of 10 first-place winners in The Henry Ford’s Innovation Nation Teacher Innovator Awards for her work inspiring creativity, innovation, and problem solving. Mrs. Francis was the only teacher from Pennsylvania to be recognized as part of The Henry Ford Awards. Judges selected the winners based on their original and creative approach to teaching, their demonstrated resourcefulness, and the positive impact they made. Student engagement, learning goals, and evidence of achieving those goals were also taken into consideration.



- Fourteen high school seniors were named National Merit® Finalists in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program including Rohan Chalasani, Mihir Garimella, David Han, Elizabeth Heidenreich, Yelim Lee, Darwin Leuba, William “Tim” Marsh, Tanvi Meringenti, Suvir Mirchandani, Grace Mueller, Hannah Mueller, Mary Clare O’Connor, Ellen Pil, and Kai Shaikh. Additionally, 18 seniors were named Commended Students.



- Senior Bryanna Urso and sophomore Sofia Porter Bacon won gold medals in the National Scholastic Art Awards program. Additionally, senior Elaina Graca and sophomore Paige Johnson won silver medals. Bryanna and Sofia were invited, along with their art teachers, to a ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City. A total of 30 Fox Chapel Area High School students qualified for national judging.

- High school senior Yelim Lee was named a recipient of the President’s Volunteer Service Award. The award recognizes people of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of time to serve their communities and their country. Additionally, she was named a winner in the Princeton Prize in Race Relations awards. Winners of the Prize have stood up to intolerance, worked toward greater inclusivity, and encouraged understanding and harmony in their communities.

- Dorseyville Middle School eighth graders Amulya Garimella and Sanjay Seshan were named two of only 300 MASTERS from across the nation in the Broadcom MASTERS competition for middle school students. In order to qualify, both first won awards at the Covestro Pittsburgh Regional Science & Engineering Fair.

- The high school’s literary arts magazine “Tapestry” received a “Superior” ranking in the 2016 National Council of Teachers of English Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines. Additionally, the magazine was also named a first-place winner in the 2016 American Scholastic Press Association’s Annual Contest/Review for Scholastic Magazines.

- For the sixth year in a row, Fox Chapel Area School District was named among the Best Communities for Music Education.

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## Full-STEAM Ahead as Technology Advances in District

Fox Chapel Area School District has become known as a leader for its commitment to STEAM education and the infusion of maker education and deeper learning concepts as an everyday part of the curriculum for all students. During the past school year, opportunities were boundless for students to experience computer science, robotics, and digital fabrication projects designed to spark technological interest in even the youngest students.

- High school senior William “Tim” Marsh was one of five national winners in the spring 2017 Create Real Impact teen safe driving campaign and won the grand prize in the art category.
- Senior Jared Cohen won first place in the national 2017 Founding Freedoms Essay Contest and senior Allison Gould was named a second-place winner in the contest.
- High school senior Suvir Mirchandani and freshman Claire Fenton earned Gold Medals on the 2017 National Latin Exam.
- High school senior Dominic Gaggini won a Gold Award on the 2017 National German Exam.
- Middle school eighth grader Vivian Shao was selected as a 2017 Carson Scholar. Additionally, high school ninth grader Gwendolyn Davison was selected to renew her Carson Scholar status.
- High school orchestra director Mairi Cooper received the Power of Excellence Award from the Carson Scholars Fund.
- High school senior JP Ramassini was named a finalist in the national Stossel in the Classroom 2016-2017 essay contest.
- Seniors Mihir Garimella, Darwin Leuba, and Suvir Mirchandani were named semifinalists in the 2017 United States Presidential Scholars Program.



### Mobile Fab Lab Debuted

High school students have access to their own Fab Lab where they conceptualize and create using digital fabrication equipment as a part of the technology education curriculum and as a teaching tool. This past year, there were even greater opportunities for younger students to also take advantage of the latest addition to the Fox Chapel Area School District – the mobile Fab Lab – thanks to a grant from The Grable Foundation. Created in a “tiny house,” the mobile Fab Lab was put together and equipped by high school students under the direction of technology education teacher and Fab Lab manager Justin Papariello. The mobile Fab Lab includes everything found in a stationary Fab Lab including 3D printers, CNC machines, laser engravers, vinyl cutters, computers, and other technological equipment efficiently packed into the tiny space. Mr. Papariello and a group of high school students take the mobile Fab Lab on the road and literally roll into a parking lot and set up a classroom with tables, tents, and laptops. The Fab Lab allows for not only Fox Chapel Area students to use these powerful technological tools, but other students in the region as well. The mobile Fab Lab first debuted at Remake Learning Days in May 2017, as part of the events which showcased the Pittsburgh region as a recognized national leader in innovative teaching and learning.

Led by Megan Cicconi, the district’s director of instructional and innovative leadership, a team of elementary school teachers developed a curriculum for the mobile Fab Lab. The curriculum will be shared with educators wherever the mobile lab visits.





## Computer Science Curriculum Revised to Address Coding, Programming, and Robotics

District staff members developed a new and redesigned computer science curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels that includes coding, programming, and robotics beginning in kindergarten. Students use these tools to first learn the basics, and then they use and apply them in cross-curricular projects. This past year, for example, Dorseyville Middle School students used their district-provided iPads and Hummingbird Duo Robotics Kits™ to create a museum-type display to demonstrate what they learned by creating circuits, coding the Hummingbirds, and researching their topics about westward expansion in the United States. A group of fifth graders discovered they could take their new-found knowledge of coding and robotics – and some recycled materials gathered in their art classes – to create robotic-driven “junkbot” works of art. Even the youngest students learned the rudiments of coding, computer science, and robotics through games such as Puzzlets™ and Bee-Bots®.



At the high school level, a new Advanced Placement course, Principles of Computer Science, was implemented and was geared toward students who may benefit from programming skills, yet may not be intending to major in a computer science field. This college-level course provides a broad-range of concepts that allows students to use technology in programming as a means to solve computational problems and is designed with a focus on multidisciplinary creative problem solving and real-world applications. Additionally, the high school continues to offer classes in robotics, engineering, electronics, and architecture and high school students use these tools and concepts in other curricular areas.

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- High school senior Ellen Pil advanced, for the second year in a row, to the semifinal round in Student Congress at the National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Championship Tournament. This accomplishment placed Ellen in the top 60 students in the nation. In addition, five other Fox Chapel Area High School students advanced to the national tournament.

- High school art teacher Sarah Stewart was selected as one of 53 participants in the 2017 National Gallery of Art Teacher Institute on Art of the Renaissance held in Washington, D.C. The six-day seminar brought together teachers of art, English, history, math, and related subjects from 22 different states.

- High school math teacher Kristine Yacamelli was selected to receive the University of Chicago’s Outstanding Educator Award. She was nominated by 2016 Fox Chapel Area High School graduate Anja Schempf, a student at the University of Chicago.

- High school social studies teacher Jen Klein was named an “Outstanding Teacher” by Denison University. She was nominated by 2016 graduate Cami Walter.

- Middle school art teacher Nanci Goldberg was chosen, for the second year in a row, to take an educational trip with other educators through Classrooms Without Borders. In the summer of 2017, she traveled to Israel as part of an arts and culture trip.

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- Eight high school students won awards at the Pennsylvania Technology Student Association (TSA) conference and qualified to participate in the national conference in Orlando.
- Seven high school students placed at the 2017 Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) State Leadership Conference and qualified to participate in the national conference in Anaheim, California.
- Fox Chapel Area School District publications received awards in the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) 2016 Publications and Electronic Media Contest and in the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association (PenSPRA) Excellence in Education Communications Contest.



## District Accepted into Elite National League of Innovators

Fox Chapel Area School District was accepted into Digital Promise's National League of Innovative Schools, one of 19 new districts to join this elite organization.

“While we are thrilled at the opportunities the coveted membership has opened for the district, our role within the League is one of a contributor as well,” said Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D. “As an active member in Pittsburgh’s Remake Learning network and a leader in innovative instructional practices, our district is known regionally and now nationally for our expertise in infusing digital fabrication, making, and STEAM into elementary learning experiences.”



- Dorseyville Middle School eighth graders Harry Chen and Mark Puthenpurayil placed in the top five percent in the nation on the American Mathematics Competition (AMC) 8 exam.
- High school juniors Albert Liu and Ruopeng Wang and freshmen J. Oliver Choo and Rajeev Godse were among the top scorers in the nation on the AMC 12 exam and qualified to take the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME).
- Dorseyville Middle School was named the Pennsylvania winner in the 2017 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. A top winner was selected from each state.





Since joining the League last fall, Dr. Freeman and Deputy Superintendent David McCommons, Ed.D., met with the 87 school districts from 33 states, representing 3.5 million students, in order to advance positive change in education. According to Dr. Freeman, “As we field calls from colleagues around the nation, we are able to positively impact learning and make a difference nationally. We are simply better together.”

The district is collaborating with two League-member schools in reimagining the creation of media centers, partnering with a tech start-up to evaluate computational thinking in first grade, and partnering with the RAND Corporation on a National Science Foundation Grant in the area of digital fabrication and Fab Labs. Partnerships have been created among regional schools as well as schools in Virginia, British Columbia, California, and Georgia. According to Dr. Freeman, the district is grateful to Digital Promise, the League of Innovative Schools leadership, and local pioneers in innovation.

**FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT WAS ONE OF JUST 19 NEW DISTRICTS ACCEPTED INTO THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS.**



- Middle school sixth grader Elijah Conklin was named a semifinalist and qualified for the 2017 Pennsylvania Geographic State Bee where he won third place.
- A total of 13 high school and middle school students won first place awards at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual State Meeting of the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS).
- Sophomores Courtney Kennedy and Ryan Setzenfand were chosen to attend the Pennsylvania HOBY Leadership Seminar in June.

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## Students Organize Local Hackathon

For the first time in the Pittsburgh area – and among one of the first in the state and nation – three Fox Chapel Area High School students organized a high school hackathon, FCHacks. In March 2017, more than 185 students in grades 8-12 from 28 schools gathered at the high school to discover, first-hand, how exciting computer science and engineering can be. The teams of students conceptualized an idea and then used hardware and software to take their idea and turn it into reality using computer science and engineering skills. Projects at a hackathon are built from scratch and can include apps, drones, games, robots, and more. Mentors from schools, universities, and tech companies around the region were on hand to help the students with their projects and the title sponsor was Eaton.







- The Fox Chapel Area High School Madrigal Singers were selected to perform at the 2017 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Annual Conference.
- High school senior Philip Swigon, junior Katherine Chomko, and sophomore Chloe Yofan were selected by audition to perform with the prestigious 2017 PMEA All-State Orchestra. Additionally, seven students were chosen to perform with the Western Region State Orchestra, nine students performed with the District 1 Orchestra, and 16 students were selected to perform with the PMEA District 1 Honors String Orchestra.
- High school junior Elizabeth Mountz was chosen to perform with the elite 2017 PMEA All-State Wind Ensemble, and sophomore Hannah Kim was selected to perform with the exclusive PMEA All-State Symphonic Band. Four high school students were also selected for the PMEA Region I Honors Band, four were selected to perform with the District 1 East Honors Band, and seven were chosen for the District 1 Honors Band. Additionally, three high students were chosen to perform as part of the District 1 Honors Jazz Ensemble.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The district's comprehensive student-benchmarking and response-to-data process requires that students in kindergarten-grade 11 are assessed quarterly using an internationally-recognized and statistically-normed assessment tool that identifies areas of academic strengths and needs based on the Pennsylvania Core Standards for academic performance. The assessment is short (an average of 20-minutes per session) and provides teachers and administrators with achievement levels, as well as assisting them in developing lessons, instructional plans, and interventions to address the needs of individual students. Through this process, Fox Chapel Area students have continually met or exceeded both district and national growth standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics on standardized assessments that are administered each year in the spring. Additionally, the district has found that since the benchmark assessment system has been implemented, the academic starting point for students has improved each fall when the first benchmark assessment is administered. Through the extensive study of individual student results, Fox Chapel Area School District teachers and administrators continue to push students to their fullest potential for learning.

### 2017 PSSA Results

#### PERCENT SCORING ADVANCED OR PROFICIENT ON THE 2017 PSSA

School	Math	ELA	Science
Fairview Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	95.8%	94.6%	98.2%
Hartwood Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	87.0%	88.8%	96.6%
Kerr Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	69.3%	79.7%	93.9%
O'Hara Elementary School (Grades 3-5)	82.2%	89.4%	94.1%
Dorseyville Middle School (Grades 6-8)	63.5%	85.0%	79.1%
State Averages (Grades 3-5)	48.3%	61.0%	74.5%
State Averages (Grades 6-8)	36.9%	60.7%	52.7%

*Fox Chapel Area School District PSSA overall assessment scores have risen consecutively for the past three years. This comparison is important as 2014-2015 was the first year that the PSSA aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards.*

- The PSSA English Language Arts (ELA) assessment encompasses reading, writing, and language arts.
- Students in grades three-eight take the ELA and math assessments.
- Students in grades four and eight also take a science assessment.
- Students are rated as Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic.



## 2017 Keystone Results

### PERCENT SCORING ADVANCED OR PROFICIENT ON THE 2017 KEYSTONE EXAMS

	Algebra I	Literature	Biology
Fox Chapel Area High School (Grade 11)	90.4%	96.4%	90.9%
State Averages	65.6%	72.7%	63.4%

*The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments administered at various grade levels and the results are banked until the students' junior year for accountability purposes.*

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- High school seniors Elizabeth Heidenreich, Carlie Platt, and William Schwartzman were selected by audition to perform with the PMEA All-State Chorus. Additionally, 10 high school students were chosen to perform with the PMEA Region I Chorus, and 11 students were selected to perform with the PMEA District 1 Chorus.

- The Dorseyville Middle School Sinfonia and Philharmonic orchestras and the Dorseyville Middle School Honors Band received first-place awards in their divisions with superior ratings at Music in the Parks festivals. The Sinfonia orchestra was ranked as best overall orchestra, and the honors band also received best overall band at their competition.

- Five Dorseyville Middle School students were chosen to participate in the 2017 PMEA District 1 Junior High East Band Festival. Additionally, four middle school students were selected to perform with the 2017 PMEA District 1 Junior High Orchestra.

- Six fifth graders, three from Hartwood Elementary and three from O'Hara Elementary, were chosen to perform at the first-ever PMEA District 1 Elementary String Festival.

- Middle school eighth grade language arts teacher Scott Vensel was named to the Pittsburgh-based The Incline's "Who's Next: Education" class featuring 18 young educators under 40 preparing Pittsburgh for the future. The Incline's "Who's Next" series highlights some of the most dynamic people under 40 who are shaping Pittsburgh.

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•Fox Chapel Area School District teacher Alison Francis was named the winner of the 2017 Carnegie Science Center's Elementary Educator Award. Mrs. Francis, who is the facilitator of the district's Creativity and Literacy Program, received the award for her innovative teaching and her work as a leader in both STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and maker education.

•Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D., was elected to the Frick Pittsburgh Board of Trustees.

•High school seniors Yelim Lee and Suvir Mirchandani and junior Shania Khatri were named among the top 10 and each received gold medals in Trib Total Media's 2017 Outstanding Young Citizen Awards Program.



### 2017 SAT/ACT/PSAT Mean Scores

Fox Chapel Area High School students continue to outscore the state and nation on the SAT, ACT, and PSAT in all subject areas. The district administered the PSAT to all students in grades 10 and 11 during the 2016-2017 school year. The results of this assessment are being used to improve outcomes for students on the SAT and to increase college and career readiness.

2017 SENIOR YEAR SAT MEAN SCORES			
	Fox Chapel Area	Pennsylvania	Nation
ERW*	611	540	538
Math	606	533	533

*\*ERW = Evidence-Based Reading & Writing  
A total of 240 members (72 percent) of the 332 students in the Class of 2017 took the SAT during their junior or senior year.*



2017 ACT RESULTS			
	Fox Chapel Area	Pennsylvania	Nation
English	27.3	23.4	20.3
Math	26.7	23.4	20.7
Reading	27.7	24.2	21.4
Science	26.5	23.3	21.0
Composite Score	27.2	23.7	21.0

*A total of 121 high school students took the ACT in 2017.*

2017 GRADE 10 PSAT MEAN SCORES			
	Fox Chapel Area	Pennsylvania	Nation
Mean Total (ERW* & Math)	1046	964	938

*\*ERW = Evidence-Based Reading & Writing*

2017 GRADE 11 PSAT MEAN SCORES			
	Fox Chapel Area	Pennsylvania	Nation
Mean Total (ERW & Math)	1091	1004	1020

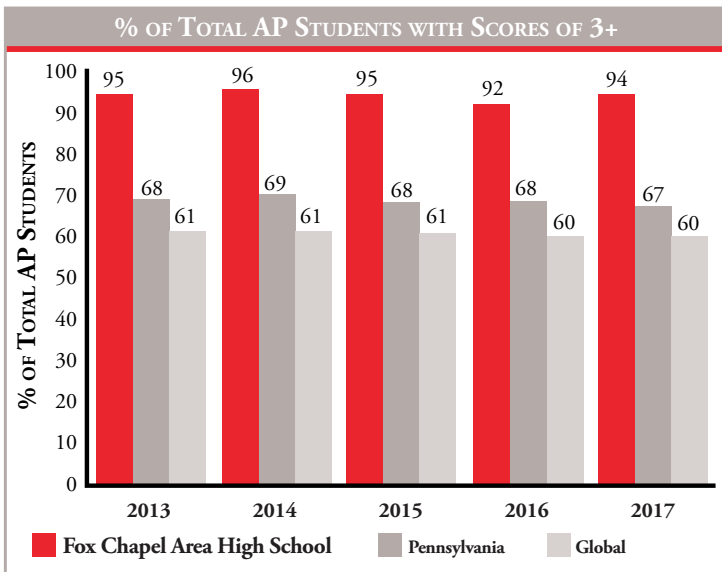
## AP Test History

The high school offered 26 Advanced Placement (AP) courses during the 2016-2017 school year and many students take multiple courses. A total of 299 students completed 621 AP exams. More than 93 percent scored 3 or higher. Success on an AP exam is defined as an exam score of 3 or higher which represents the score point that research finds predictive of college success and college graduation. These findings have held consistent across the decades.

FCAHS FIVE-YEAR AP TEST HISTORY

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total AP Students	259	256	309	338	299
Number of Exams	502	498	613	690	621
% of AP Students with Scores of 3+	95.0	96.5	95.5	92.3	93.6

•Fox Chapel Area School District students raised more than \$70,000 (a record-breaking total!) in the 27<sup>th</sup> annual telethon. Over the last 27 years Fox Chapel Area students have raised more than \$766,000 for various local and regional charities. The 2016 telethon raised money for Live Like Lou, which was founded by two parents (Suzanne and the late Neil Alexander) in the Fox Chapel Area School District to help ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease) patients and their families in Western Pennsylvania.



•Fox Chapel Area district administrators and teachers continue to earn national, state, and regional recognitions and be elected and appointed to both state and national positions. They are also invited to share their knowledge by making presentations at prestigious conferences and workshops.





## SUMMER LEARNING

This summer, the district again offered summer learning opportunities for students at all grade levels. This included the elementary Summer Learning Academy, the middle school Summer Learning Academy along with a project-based learning module, a middle school summer science program, the Western Pennsylvania Summer STEMM Academy for high school students, and the LAUNCH program for incoming high school freshmen. New this year was the Summer STEAM Camp for elementary and middle school students.



### First-Ever STEAM Camp Provided Summer Fun

As STEAM becomes ever more important in students' academic lives during the school year, it became clear that the level of engagement is worthy of some summertime fun. So for the first time ever, elementary and middle school students had the opportunity to participate in the Summer STEAM Camp. The camp events were well-received and each camp selection was sold out!



Camp sessions infused the components of STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math. The full-day camp was held for one week and on the final day, parents were invited to an open house in which students demonstrated what they had learned and created. Topics offered included coding, chemistry, construction, robotics, Fab Lab, drones, making iMovies, and creating an escape room.

“Escape rooms are the hottest new trend and fastest growing form of entertainment,” said Kerr Elementary School teacher Carli Hackett who led the Escaping STEAM camp in which participants visited Enter the Imaginarium in Harmarville to experience an escape room challenge. They then researched ideas to learn how to develop and incorporate technology to design and build their own escape room including developing the back story of the game. On the final day, parents were invited to escape the room the students had created.



“Students gained confidence, collaboration skills, precision, perseverance, problem-solving skills, and knowledge of how to create pathways that are intertwined to move the game along for multiple players,” Mrs. Hackett said of the Escaping STEAM camp.



Other camps also gave students a glimpse of the use of real-world STEAM applications. One involved students using Apple's iMovie® editing/production software to create videos. Another session was Drones to the Rescue in which students built a large obstacle course and then drove their drones through it. The students in the Fab Lab course made and designed things such as fidget spinners and a handle to better carry grocery bags. Through the STEAM Camp the students learned problem solving as well as scientific testing and checking, all in a fun environment. Students also learned an important lesson that if the first attempt fails, they need to revamp and rethink in order to attain success.



## LAUNCH Program in Second Year

More than a third of the incoming ninth grade class spent a week of their summer launching their high school careers. The unique program, entitled LAUNCH (Learning And Understanding the Necessities of College and High school), helps students be better prepared to start high school and was developed by district teachers and administrators.

Incoming freshmen participated in a series of orientation activities and worked to build strategies to improve academic performance, time management, and organizational skills. The program also featured important messages from several keynote speakers. Topics addressed included healthy relationships; the importance of confidence, perseverance, and openness to new ideas; and keeping a positive online and social media presence. A highlight for many of the students was a keynote address about success and leadership by baseball broadcaster and former Major League Baseball player Roberto Clemente Jr., son of baseball great Roberto Clemente. He spoke with the students about his father's legacy of not just baseball, but of his most important legacy – one of giving back to the community. He also had the students look at their hands and talked about leaving only positive fingerprints behind and the importance of helping others.

Additionally, every day featured classroom activities that focused on building the incoming freshmen's executive functioning strategies (goal-setting, time management, organization, and problem solving) and learning skill sets (reading comprehension, note taking, and analytical writing).





THE FOX CHAPEL AREA COMMUNITY HAS MAINTAINED ITS COMMITMENT TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ITS CHILDREN.

## SCHOOL RENOVATIONS ONGOING

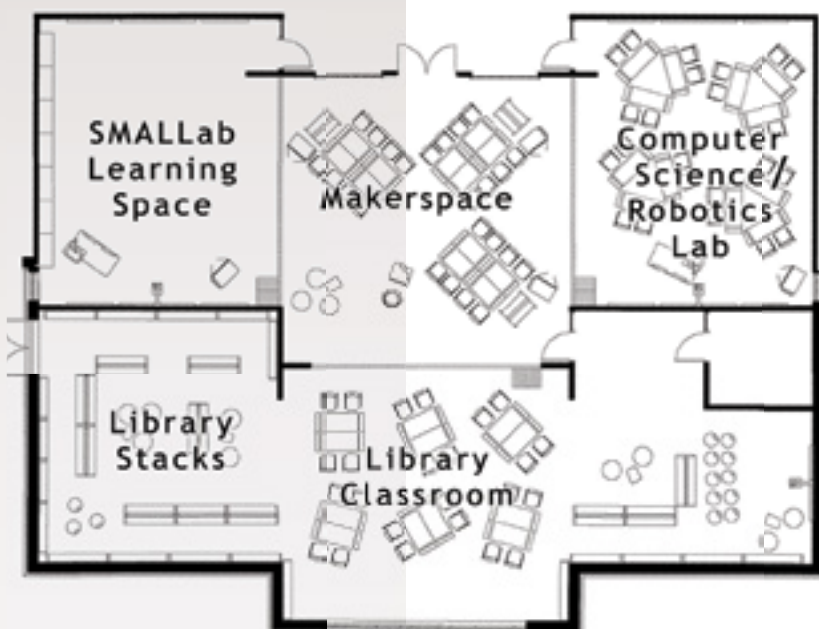
### Major Projects Part of Facilities Upgrades

The Fox Chapel Area community has maintained its commitment to a high-quality education for its children. An important part of that commitment is a continual evaluation and upgrading of the district's facilities. With the completion of the major high school renovation in 2016, the school district has moved its focus to other schools in the district and the School Board authorized a new bond issue to fund upcoming construction and renovation work at its May 2017 meeting.

### Plans for a New Kerr

This past spring, the Fox Chapel Area Board of School Directors approved a plan to begin preparations to build a new Kerr Elementary School to replace the oldest building in the district. It will be located on the present Kerr property and is slated to open by the end of 2019. The new Kerr will provide for critical updates including more advanced technologies designed to enhance student learning.

One of the highlights of the new school will be the inclusion of a collaboratory cluster – a large central area where students will come together to work on projects, conduct research, collaborate, and plan. Included will be a makerspace, a SMALLab, and a computer science and robotics lab classroom, as well as the library.

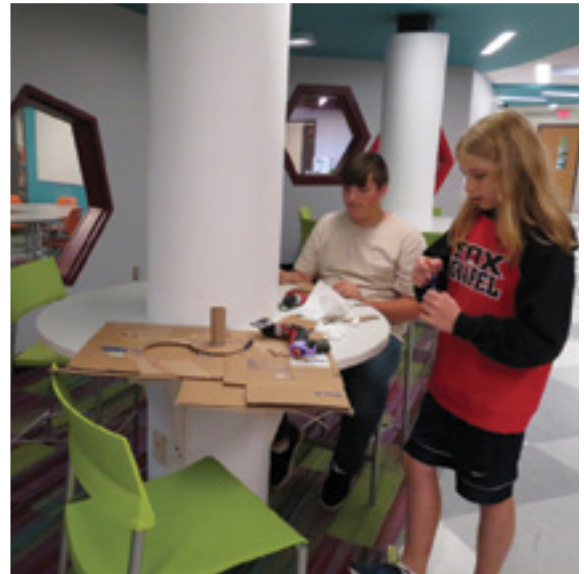


Another proposed feature of the new Kerr is the addition of a language immersion program that would allow students to be taught in both English and Spanish during the entire school day. Students from all four elementary schools would have the opportunity to enroll in the new program. Additionally, there are plans to include open areas outside of the building that would be designated for instructional purposes and a pre-kindergarten program is being proposed to help children better prepare for school.

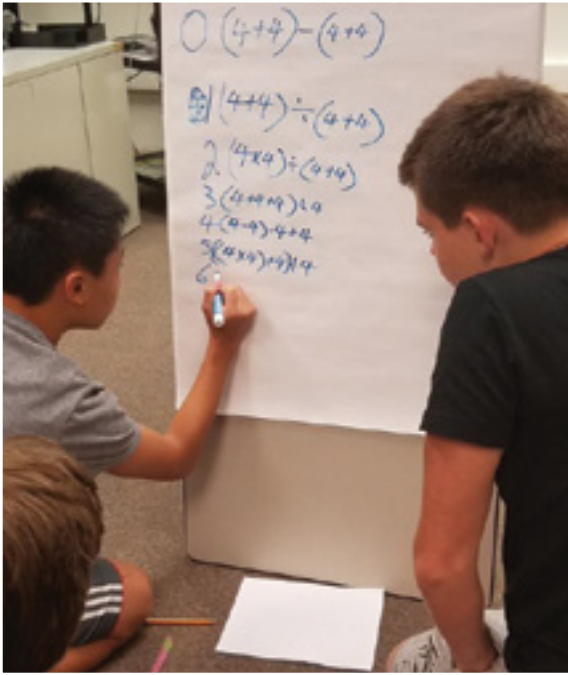
The decision to build a new Kerr came after lengthy research and discussion when the School Board and administration concluded that even with extensive renovations, the nearly 90-year-old building would be inadequate, both structurally and programmatically. Additionally, a renovation would not have been cost-effective in the long run. Public meetings have been held with parents, Kerr neighbors, and other interested residents. Planning for the new building will continue throughout the 2017-2018 school year and there is no plan to redistrict students to different elementary schools. Additionally, Kerr students will not be displaced during the construction of the new building.

### Additional Renovations

Renovations began in the summer of 2016 at Dorseyville Middle School and the summer of 2017 at Fairview and O'Hara elementary schools. Renovations at all three schools include new office spaces and upgrades to improve the safety and security of students and staff, as well as mechanical upgrades. Additionally, makerspaces are being added at DMS and O'Hara, and common spaces were renovated. To make the entry and exit from Hartwood and Dorseyville safer and easier to navigate, a new driveway was also added. Dorseyville Middle School had upgrades to the gymnasium, the food lab, and the art classrooms. O'Hara is also receiving upgrades to the library, art rooms, and hallways; is getting three new special education classrooms; and is getting a new playground area and equipment.







## NEW CURRICULUM DESIGNED TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING

Because the needs of students are constantly changing, the Fox Chapel Area School District curriculum is reviewed and revised on a regular basis. In recent years, the areas of English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and the gifted curriculum have all had major revisions. In 2016-2017 new elementary ELA and STEAM curricula were approved and are being implemented during the 2017-2018 school year. A new ELA curriculum was implemented for sixth graders in 2016-2017 and was piloted for seventh and eighth grade during that same school year. It is being fully implemented during the 2017-2018 school year.

### Math Lab Allows Students to Dive Deeper into Math Concepts

Math Lab was added to the math course curriculum to enhance student learning as part of the high school's Algebra I course. It is a two-day a week, half-credit course that is taken simultaneously with algebra in a lab environment and is a hands-on way of learning algebraic concepts.

The curriculum runs parallel to the Algebra I course, according to math teacher Justin Guadagni. "But we narrow the scope and dive deeper into topics at a more conceptual and applicable level," he said. The format "is purely a collaborative environment with each student in the group playing a specific role. They experience one rich task each day to complete in their group and have one to two reflection prompts to respond to for homework."

### Capstones Encourage Students to Think Critically and Solve Challenges

The elementary gifted program is designed to enrich the studies of gifted and high-performing learners. During the 2016-2017 school year, the district implemented a new gifted curriculum divided into three capstone experiences that provides students with a cross-curricular, project-based approach to learning.

Each of the three capstones encourages students to connect their projects to real-world issues or problems, according to Ashley Nestor, Ed.D., executive director of elementary education and instruction. The first is the ELA-based creative connections and participants wrote and published their own books. The second is innovative inquiry in which students worked on a series of design challenges. The third is the math-based application avenue in which students

worked on a stock market challenge or data analysis project. Each multifaceted assignment was designed to encourage students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as thinking flexibly, creating and innovating, persisting, and working collaboratively.





## GALA FUNDS ENHANCE MUSIC PROGRAMS

### Community Sing Concert Featured All-Elementary Chorus

Nationally-known, Boston-based song leader and composer Nick Page, playing on his ukulele, led elementary students at all four buildings in joyful song and movement during a two-day visit to the school district. Mr. Page brought a level of fun and spontaneity to the one-hour sessions with the fourth and fifth grade choruses that were followed by a gathering of the student bodies at each school. His visit to the district culminated in a community sing concert on March 31 that featured a 170-member fourth and fifth grade all-elementary chorus. One of the songs they sang, “Train Song,” was an arrangement by Mr. Page, commissioned by the Fox Chapel Area School District Music Department. The Community Sing Concert, the commissioning of “Train Song,” and Mr. Page’s visit to the elementary schools were made possible from the funds raised at the district’s 2012 Community Gala event.



### Band Piece Commissioned Through Gala Funds

The Fox Chapel Area elementary bands commissioned a piece that was debuted at the combined elementary fifth grade concert in February 2017. The piece was funded through money from the Gala Fund and is entitled “Bringer of War.”

The piece was written by award-winning and internationally-recognized composer Brian Balmages. It is listed as one of the top choices and an editor’s choice on the music website JW Pepper where many music educators purchase their music for the year. The commissioning and popularity of this piece ensures that the Fox Chapel Area School District’s name is being shared with elementary bands all across the nation.



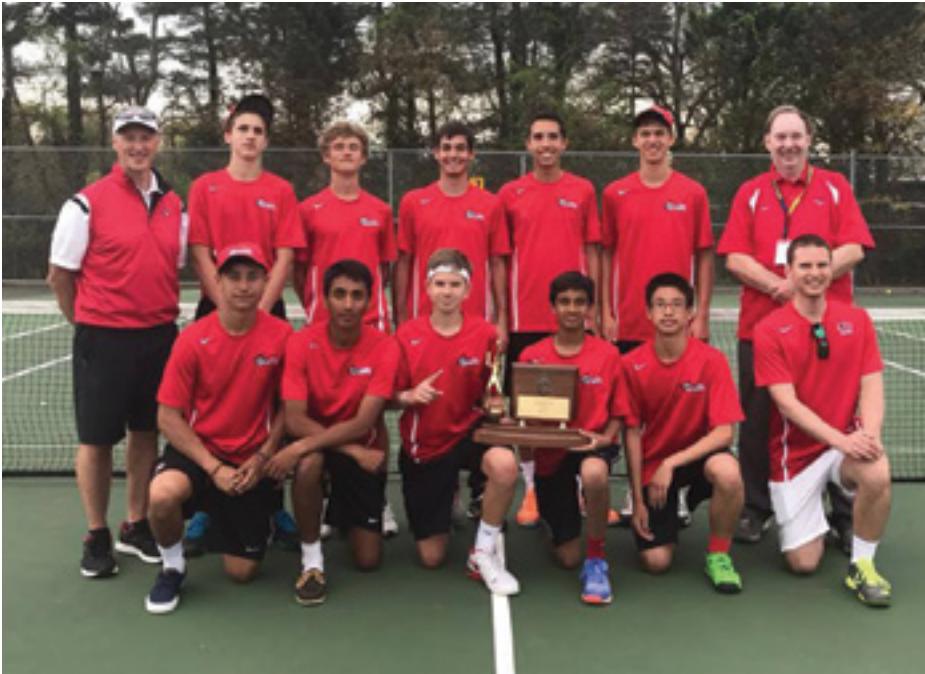
## 2016-2017 Athletic Accomplishments

- Tennis team members junior Amanda Nord and freshman Charlotte James were the PIAA doubles champions – the third state doubles title in four years for the Foxes – and the second time for Amanda. They were the WPIAL Class AAA doubles champions (the third time for Amanda) and the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 doubles champions. Additionally, Amanda was the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 singles champion.
- High school junior Abby Pitcairn was named to the 2017 Junior National Squad in field hockey, sponsored by USA Field Hockey.
- For the second year in a row, senior Megan McCrady was named a high school lacrosse All-American. Junior Katherine Goodwin was also named an All-American in lacrosse.
- High school sophomore Jonah Cagley was named to the National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association (NISCA) list of 2017 All-American Divers. He was featured as part of the 2016-2017 NISCA/Speedo Boys One Meter Diving All-America Team. Additionally, Jonah won first place at the WPIAL Class AAA Diving Championship and won third place at the PIAA championship.
- Seniors Sarah Hamilton, William Marsh, Alan McIvor, and Elizabeth Woodwell were named to the 2016-2017 USRowing Scholastic Honor Roll. The Honor Roll recognizes high school seniors who have excelled in both academics and rowing.
- Nine Fox Chapel Area High School student athletes were named to their respective all-state teams. The students include: seniors Anthony Cordaro – boys' golf, Deena DeBaldo – girls' soccer, Alex Lawson – boys' golf, Dixon Veltri – girls' soccer, and Michael Snowball (boys' soccer); juniors Amanda Nord – girls' tennis and Abby Pitcairn – field hockey; sophomore Jonah Cagley – boys' diving; and freshman Charlotte James – girls' tennis. All-state team selection is the state's highest honor in interscholastic sports.
- For the first time in school history, the high school girls' cross country team qualified for the PIAA Cross Country Championships.



The athletic teams at Fox Chapel Area High School and Dorseyville Middle School had another great year as evidenced by their performances and the number of individuals and teams that represented the district at PIAA and WPIAL championships. A few facts about the Fox Chapel Area athletic program include:

- A total of 832 boys and girls at the high school participated on athletic teams, and 499 DMS students participated;
- Indoor track for both boys and girls was added as a new PIAA sport;
- Field hockey, girls' lacrosse, boys' and girls' tennis, and girls' swimming had perfect section records;
- All high school teams maintained at least a 3.1 QPA;
- A total of 21 seniors were recruited and signed to play sports in college; and
- DMS sports teams had successful seasons including: the eighth-grade girls' basketball team had a record of 18-4, seventh-grade boys' basketball team finished the season with a 18-2 record, field hockey had a 9-2-3 season, and boys' soccer completed a 13-1-4 season.



- The boys' varsity tennis team won the WPIAL Class AAA Championship for the second year in a row. The team advanced to the PIAA quarterfinals and finished the season with a 7-0 record in section play and 17-2 overall. The team also won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 team championship. Additionally, Robby Shymansky won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 singles championship.

- The varsity field hockey team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 2 Championship and the WPIAL Class AAA Championship, and participated in the PIAA playoffs. The team was undefeated in the section (12-0) and had an overall record of 16-5.

- The girls' varsity tennis team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 team title. The team was undefeated in section play, and the entire team also qualified for the PIAA tennis tournament.

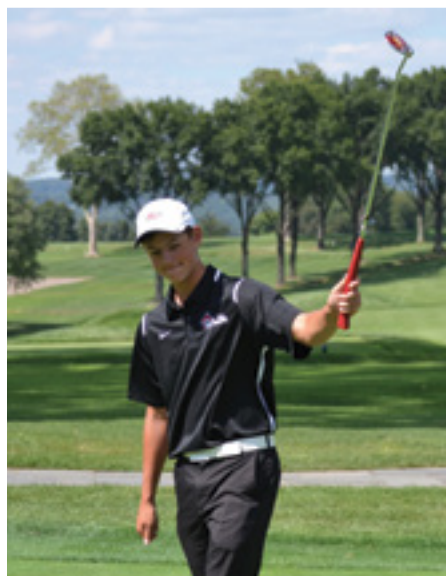
- The girls' soccer team was named the WPIAL Class 4A Section 3 co-champions and advanced to the PIAA playoffs.

- The Fox Chapel Area High School Girls' Varsity Lacrosse Team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 2 team championship and qualified for the WPIAL Class AAA Championship. Additionally, the team participated in the PIAA playoffs – making it to the quarterfinals. The team was undefeated in the regular season, with a record of 18-0.

- Sophomore Gregor Meyer won the WPIAL Class AAA individual golf championship and qualified for the PIAA Western Region Golf Championships. Seniors Anthony Cordaro and Alex Lawson both qualified for the PIAA Golf Championships where they tied for sixth place.

- Fourteen athletes qualified to participate in the PIAA individual championships. They included: junior Amanda Nord and freshman Charlotte James (girls' tennis), seniors Anthony Cordaro and Alex Lawson and sophomore Gregor Meyer (boys' golf), senior Adam Cook and freshman Christian Fitch (boys' cross country), sophomore Sarena Seeger (girls' cross country), sophomore Jonah Cagley (boys' diving), junior Joslyn Filo (girls' swimming), senior Mike Mahon (wrestling), sophomore Robby Shymansky (boys' tennis), and junior Caelan Miller and sophomore Kate Carnevale (girls' track and field).

*Continued on next page*



- A team of students won second place among 18 of the top teams in the nation at the Scholastic Rowing Association of America Regatta. Earlier, the team also placed second in the Midwest championship.
- The boys' varsity golf team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 4 team title for the 27<sup>th</sup> time. At WPIALs, they missed the championship title by just one stroke! The team finished 15-1 overall.
- The boys' varsity basketball team was named the WPIAL Class 6A Section 3 co-champions.
- Senior Mike Mahon was named the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 182-pound wrestling champion.
- The high school girls' varsity swimming & diving team won the WPIAL Class AAA Section 3 Championship. The team was undefeated in the regular season with a record of 11-0.
- Twenty-two of the 26 high school interscholastic athletic teams and/or individuals from those teams qualified for postseason WPIAL competition. That list includes: boys' basketball, boys' cross country, girls' cross country, field hockey, boys' golf, girls' golf, gymnastics, boys' indoor track, girls' indoor track, boys' lacrosse, girls' lacrosse, boys' soccer, girls' soccer, softball, boys' swimming & diving, girls' swimming & diving, boys' tennis, girls' tennis, boys' track & field, girls' track & field, girls' volleyball, and wrestling.
- High school sophomore Alexis Schutzman was named Western Pennsylvania's "Most Positive High School Athlete" in girls' soccer. She received the award from former Steelers great Hines Ward, along with 28 other winners representing a variety of boys' and girls' sports at the Sixth Annual C Harper Positive High School Athlete Awards.
- On February 15, Coach Ron Frank earned his 400<sup>th</sup> career win and is third among WPIALs all-time winning wrestling coaches. Additionally, the high school field house wrestling room was dedicated in his honor.
- Boys' basketball coach Zach Skrinjar, who earned his 100<sup>th</sup> career victory, was named section coach of the year.
- Girls' soccer coach Peter Torres was named co-section coach of the year.
- High school athletes continued to be named to prestigious all-star teams and all-conference teams.



Photo Courtesy: Costello Productions



# FOX CHAPEL AREA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2017

On June 11, 2017, a total of 321 seniors became the 56<sup>th</sup> class to graduate from Fox Chapel Area High School. Of these, 90 students had above a 4.0 Quality Point Average (QPA) when they graduated. Approximately 90 percent of the Class of 2017 are continuing their education and 58 percent are enrolled in schools outside of Pennsylvania. The graduates continued the tradition of being accepted to the top colleges and universities across the nation.



## *Fox Chapel Area High School Class of 2017 College Choices*

Alcorn State University • Allegheny College (3) • American University • Baldwin-Wallace University (3) • Belmont University • Boston University • Bowling Green State University • Bucknell University (3) • Butler County Community College • Community College of Allegheny County – Monroeville Boyce Campus • California University of Pennsylvania • California Institute of Technology • Carnegie Mellon University (8) • Case Western Reserve University (5) • Community College of Allegheny County – Allegheny Campus (36) • Community College of Allegheny County – North Campus (8) • City University of London • City University of New York – Baruch College • Colby College • Colorado Mesa University • Denison University (4) • DePaul University • Duquesne University (3) • Eastern Michigan University • Edinboro University of Pennsylvania • Elon University • Franklin & Marshall College • George Mason University • George Washington University • Georgetown University (2) • Georgia Institute of Technology • Grove City College • Hogschool Vvia Zwolle • Indiana University of Pennsylvania (3) • Indiana University – Bloomington • Ithaca College • James Madison University • Johns Hopkins University (2) • Kean University • Kent State University (2) • Kenyon College • Lackawanna College • Le Moyne College • Lehigh University (3) • Liberty University • Long Island University – Brooklyn • Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge • Marshall University • Mercyhurst University (3) • Miami University – Oxford • Middlebury College • Northeast Ministry School • Notheastern University (2) • Northwestern University • Nyack College • Oberlin College • Oberlin Conservatory of Music • Ohio State University (2) • Ohio University (3) • Otterbein University • Pace University – New York City • Penn State Altoona (2) • Penn State Behrend • Penn State Greater Allegheny • Penn State New Kensington • Pennsylvania State University (9) • Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics • Pittsburgh Technical Institute (3) • Point Park University (3) • Pomona College (2) • Purdue University (3) • Radford University • Rice University • Robert Morris University • Rochester Institute of Technology (2) • Rose-Hullman Institute of Technology • Saint Francis University • Saint Mary's College • Saint Vincent College (2) • Savannah College of Art and Design • Seton Hill University • Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania (9) • St. Bonaventure University • St. Margaret School of Nursing • Stanford University (3) • State University of New York – Stony Brook • Suffolk University • Syracuse University (3) • Temple University (2) • Texas Christian University • The American University (2) • The Catholic University of America (2) • The College of Wooster • United States Naval Academy • University of Akron • University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa • University of Arizona • University of California – Los Angeles (2) • University of California – Berkeley (2) • University of Colorado – Boulder (4) • University of Dayton (4) • University of Florida • University of Kentucky • University of Mary Washington • University of Miami (2) • University of Michigan – Ann Arbor (4) • University of Minnesota • University of North Carolina – Wilmington • University of Notre Dame (3) • University of Pennsylvania • University of Pittsburgh (14) • University of Pittsburgh – Greensburg (3) • University of Pittsburgh – Johnstown (2) • University of Richmond • University of South Carolina – Columbia • University of Wisconsin – Madison (2) • Virginia Technical Institute (2) • Washington & Jefferson College • Waynesburg University • West Virginia University (4) • Westminster College • Yale University



**Fox Chapel Area**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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