

SPARTAN SCOOP

Inspiring Excellence, One Spartan at a Time!

Celebrating the Class of 2018

During Wyomissing Area Senior High's 94th commencement ceremony, 167 graduates received their diplomas on Friday, June 2. Student speakers included Valedictorian Matthew Driben, Salutatorian and President of the Class of 2018 Joseph Cullen, Secretary of the Class of 2018 Samuel Botterbusch, and Treasurer of the Class of 2018 Lauren Gechter.

Matthew Driben shared the story of the Quiz Bowl Team's last regular season match, where he had to recruit new team members because overlapping of extracurricular activities pulled regular team members away from the Quiz Bowl Team.

"Sometimes, life lessons reveal themselves in the least expected places," Matthew told the audience. "I didn't think Quiz Bowl would teach me more than random trivia this year, but that day I learned a much broader lesson that applies to all of us graduates here today—that overcoming the challenges we will all face in the real world will be impossible to do alone."

Matthew concluded by saying, "Comparing life to a Quiz Bowl match may be a bit overdramatic, but the lessons Quiz Bowl teaches, like knowing one's own limits, asking for help, aiding others, and working as a team, will ultimately guide us graduates to successful futures, regardless of the paths we take."

Besides being salutatorian and president of the graduating class, Joseph is a runner, and he opened his remarks with the saying "Life is a marathon, not a sprint."

"I've always been told we are to treat life like a marathon, and not a sprint. Of course, as a distance runner, this analogy has always made sense to me," Joseph began. "At Wyomissing, there's the momentary comfort of knowing where to go today, and tomorrow, and the day after that... But there are also the nerves that accompany any meaningful race: What'll happen once I'm on my own? Will anyone be there for me when I stumble? For so long, one thing has remained constant in our lives: structure. But not anymore. Now we run our own races, on our own paths, and at our own paces. While life may be a marathon and not a sprint, do not be afraid to "sprint" in these final moments together and make lifelong memories. The advice of treating life as a marathon and not a sprint, though applicable to most situations, is designed to allow us to sprint at the most meaningful moments."

In his speech, Samuel reminded his classmates that while they have grown a lot to get to where they are today, they are not nearly finished.

Continued on page 2



Sidney Barrer accepts her diploma from Superintendent Robert Scoboria at the 2018 Commencement Ceremony.

SUMMER 2018

Full STEAM Ahead

As the last bell rang signaling the end of the 2017-18 academic year, contractors at Wyomissing Area JSHS were completing demolition in what will become the new STEAM wing at the school. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. And across the building, contractors were just beginning demolition on Phase II of the JSHS Project. Both construction projects are slated to be finished before students return on August 27.

The STEAM wing renovations include:

- The old woodshop classroom converted to STEAM Innovation Lab
- The complete renovation of five classrooms
- New HVAC
- Family/Consumer Science classroom updated with new appliances/equipment.

Phase II of the JSHS Project includes improvements to 31 classrooms in the 200-level north and south hallways. This section of the building was last renovated in 1965 and 1993. Renovations to these classrooms include the complete replacement of the HVAC system. The current system, was installed in the early 1990s. The new system will be quieter and more efficient.

Additional classroom renovations will include converting carpeted areas to tile flooring, painting classrooms, installing security locks, replacing ceiling tiles, changing chalkboards over to whiteboards, and converting all lighting to LED.

As part of Phase II, the HVAC system in the library and cafeteria will be upgraded, and lighting in both gymnasiums will be converted to LED. Also, more than 400 1939-vintage lockers in the seventh- and eighth-grade areas will be replaced.

"The STEAM renovation project will provide our students and staff with great spaces for innovation, exploration, discovery, and invention," comments Superintendent Robert Scoboria. "These skills are essential to prepare our students for competitive post-secondary education and employment opportunities. With the addition of STEAM Innovation Classrooms at WHEC and WREC, all Wyomissing Area students will have the opportunity to participate in these exciting learning opportunities."

Fall Open House dates for community members will be posted on the District website.

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Page 2

Student-athletes from across the Wyomissing Area School District bravely accepted the Spartan Challenge.

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Taking on the Spartan Challenge

With a clear blue sky as the backdrop, this year's athletes proudly displayed their school's banner as they made their way down the track at Flannery Field to open the 2018 Spartan Challenge. After the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," 29 students with special needs, representing kindergarten through 12th grade, were ready for competition.

The athletic events held at Flannery Field and in the JSHS gym included the 40-meter dash, the 100-meter dash, the 400-meter dash, the long jump, and a softball throw. An introduction to yoga was provided by Maggie Barnard from Building 7, and All Abilities Fitness of Exeter provided the athletes with the opportunity to try various pieces of athletic and adaptive equipment.

"This day is easily one of my favorite days every year," commented Director of Special Education Mrs. Jessica Lengle. "The excitement our student athletes exhibit and the presence of so many families, school board members, administrators, and staff makes the day just perfect. Our committee worked hard to plan this year's event, and the time spent was well worth it."

Mrs. Jeanette Fotis' son, Hank, is in the second grade. This is his third year participating in the Spartan Challenge. "He loves participating," Mrs. Fotis says. "It gives him a huge sense of pride and a connection to his peers."

The athletes wore T-shirts that were donated by Pediatric Dentistry of Reading and designed by Assistant Principal, Dr. Robert Kucharczuk. The planning committee spent hours organizing the Star Wars-themed event, ensuring that the day would be as inclusive as possible and would allow for opportunities for family members to interact with their children and school employees.

As part of Wyomissing Area JSHS' Best Buddy Club, eighth-grade students Kate Kotula and



Semaj Delgado gets a little help from a friend to make it over the hurdles

Alexandra Hill volunteered at the Spartan Challenge. The girls agreed that volunteering at the event is the highlight of their club experience. They especially loved working with the younger students.

After the outdoor activities, everyone enjoyed a wonderful lunch that included doughnuts donated by Wyomissing Family Restaurant. An awards ceremony honoring everyone's efforts wrapped up the day.

Senior Represents Wyomissing Area at Penn Relays

Wyomissing Area High School senior Hunter Niedrowski represented the school in the javelin event at this year's Penn Relays. It is believed to be the first time in the history of WAHS that the school was represented at the annual national track and field competition.

The Penn Relays is the oldest and largest track and field competition in the United States, hosted by the University of Pennsylvania at Franklin Field in Philadelphia each year since April 21, 1895.

While skill with the javelin runs in the family—Hunter's father was the District III Javelin Champion in 1992 and 1994 and PIAA State Javelin Champion in 1992, with a school and county record throw of 227' 11"—Hunter didn't

join the track team until his junior year. He went on to state competition that year, placing 17th.

Before joining the track team, Hunter played baseball and football for WAHS. He hung up his baseball glove to join the track team, saying that he wanted to switch things up.

Hunter didn't do as well as he had hoped at the Penn Relays; he finished in ninth place with a throw of 180' 11". However, he did win in the Class 2A event at the District III Track and Field Championships with a throw of 199' 8". He also set a school record.

Hunter plans to continue competing at West Chester University.

Continued from page 1

Celebrating the Class of 2018

"The future for each of us holds millions of new experiences, new lessons to learn," Samuel said. "The people we are today, the people who are going to walk out the doors of this building as graduates of Wyomissing, are far from the same people we will be 10 years from now, or 20 or 30... May each of our futures be as interesting and exciting as the last six years have been. Tonight, let's celebrate all that we've accomplished and all of the gifts Wyomissing has given us, but tomorrow, let's accomplish something new, not as Wyomissing students, but as Wyomissing graduates."

Lauren Gechter recapped the 2017-18 academic year for her fellow graduates, ending her speech by saying, "I don't think all of the realities of graduation have hit me yet. We will never again walk the halls of Wyomissing High School as students. We will never again be all together as a class. We will never again have food confiscated from us in the halls or be restricted from wearing ripped jeans. Today, we part ways for the final time, whether it be to post-secondary education, the military, a trade, or a career. I could not imagine a more perfect way to end senior year."

For an in-depth look at the graduates, see pages 4 and 5.

Students Spread Messages of Encouragement

When walking around Berks County, if you look carefully, you just might find a rock colorfully painted with whimsical pictures or with inspirational words carefully hiding in plain view. It is likely that the painter was a student in the Wyomissing Area School District, and that written on the back of the rock will be either “Berks County Rocks” or “The Kindness Rocks Project.”

Both projects encourage individuals to paint rocks with inspiring messages and pictures and leave them around the community for others to find. When they find one, people in the community are supposed to take a picture of the rock and post the picture to either group’s Facebook page.

This spring, Mrs. Lindsay Rada’s ninth-grade reading class read *The Outsiders*, a novel by S.E. Hinton, as well as “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” a poem by Robert Frost. Mrs. Rada and her class discussed the reference to Frost’s poem in *The Outsiders* and how it set up a theme in the story. In the novel, just before Johnny dies, he tells Ponyboy to “Stay gold.” Focusing on the theme of what is meant by staying “gold,” the students learned that it means to stay innocent and true to oneself, keeping committed to values and life goals.

In order to carry this message into the community through art, the students painted rocks for “Berks County Rocks.” Working with art teacher Ms. Laura Zamperini, the students painted “Stay gold” on their rocks accented by their own unique designs. Each painted one rock for him or herself and one to contribute to the community, then chose a location to place the rock where someone would benefit from the motivation/reminder to “Stay gold.”

Austin Pinder chose to place his rock outside of Reading Hospital. “Most people who go to a hospital are going through emotional things,” Austin explained. “I hope that my rock brightens someone’s day.”

Ciara Torres enjoyed reading *The Outsiders* and thought the book’s message was relevant to today’s generation. “I left my rock outside of the school because everyone in the school goes through a tough time at some point.”

At the West Reading Elementary Center, the Art Club brought Berks County Rocks to the residents of Spruce Manor Rehab Center during one of the club’s monthly visits. Joined by their peers in Student Council, members of the Art Club helped residents sketch out a design for their rocks before dipping their brushes into the bright paint colors. After the rocks dried, the students distributed them throughout the community.

“The residents love having the kids here,” says Helen, an activity assistant at Spruce Manor Rehab Center. “They are always asking when are they coming back.”

For the Art Club and the Student Council, visiting Spruce Manor Rehab Center raises the level of the



Mrs. Meredith Caldwell’s kindergarten class proudly shows off their kindness rocks.

school’s involvement in the community.

A similar community action project called The Kindness Rocks Project was a highlight of the school year for kindergarten students in Mrs. Meredith Caldwell’s class. Students painted rocks with inspiring messages and left them for someone to find.

Lila Kaufmann painted a ladybug on her rock, and she hid it by a tree close to her home. The rock was found; she checked.

“I hope that the person who found my rock knows that it was painted by a kind person and that it is a very special rock,” Lila says.

Her classmate Julia Wickstrom wrote “happy” on her rock, and she drew a happy picture on it, as well. She hopes that the person who finds her rock feels happy to have found it.

Whether in high school or kindergarten, each of the students participating in a painted rock activity discovered that creating the rocks and leaving them to inspire others gave them a warm and fuzzy feeling that could only be replicated by finding a rock.



A Strong Tradition of Athletic Excellence

The banners touting county, district, and state championships that hang in the new gym, like the trophies standing proud in the archive room, reflect a tradition of athletic excellence and student-athlete participation at Wyomissing Area JSHS.

Tradition built success. These are the words athletic director Mr. Frank Ferrandino uses when he is asked to describe the school’s athletic program.

“Wyomissing Area JSHS has a strong tradition of excellence,” says Mr. Ferrandino. “The expectations are that our student-athletes will try their best to compete at the state level each year.”

The Wyomissing Area School District believes that the purpose of an interscholastic athletic program is to provide learning experiences that will contribute to the personal, physical, and psychological development of the individual student-athlete. In partnership with athletes, coaches, and parents, it is the Athletic Department’s mission to create an environment that will complement and enrich the educational experience for all students.

According to the annual High School Athletics Participation Survey (2016–17), conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations, Pennsylvania continues to rank sixth in the nation in sports participation, with 319,153 students participating in high-school athletics. The national number reached an all-time high of 7,963,535. The number of female participants also reached an all-time high, with the largest increase since the 2000–2001 report.

Wyomissing Area JSHS offers 15 boys’ varsity sports and 13 girls’ varsity sports. While there were several district championship teams in the 1970s, it wasn’t until the mid-1980s that the varsity teams became competitive. Mr. Ferrandino was a

student at the time, and he remembers athletic director Mr. Matt Ecker working hard to make athletics important to the student body. The success of his efforts spilled over into the community. And in the early 2000s, Wyomissing Area Senior High began to dominate.

To date, the Wyomissing Area JSHS has:

- 21 team state championships across nine different sports;
- 6 individual or relay state champions across 8 different sports;
- 74 district championships across 12 different sports; and
- 122 county championships across 13 different sports.

“I am most proud that our championships are spread out across many sports,” says Mr. Ferrandino. “We don’t have one or two dominant sports, and this is due to strong coaching, strong community and parental support, and strong administration support.”

Yoga & Story Combine for Classroom Fun

For many adults, yoga is an escape from the stresses of everyday life. It quiets the mind and gently stretches the muscles. Yoga also has recognized benefits for children, including developing motor skills on both sides of the body and increasing balance, coordination, concentration, focus, and attention span.

Understanding these benefits, first-grade teacher Dr. Toni Wengerd was excited when Mrs. Sara Smith, the parent of one of her students, approached her about offering yoga sessions to the class.

“Mrs. Smith visited our class five times this past year,” Dr. Wengerd explains. “Each time, she tied the yoga poses to a storybook with a theme relating to the time of year.”

For example, at Halloween, Mrs. Smith read *Room on the Broom*; in the winter, she read *The Mitten*. In honor of Dr. Seuss’s birthday, Mrs. Smith taught poses named for popular Seuss books or characters.

If giggles and smiles are any indication, Mrs. Smith’s yoga sessions will stay with the first graders for quite some time.



A Spotlight on the Class of 2018

Our Wyomissing Area High School graduates have worked hard and will continue to make a difference in the world. To give you a glimpse into the lives of our graduates and the paths they will take, we would like to introduce you to the following students, who represent this year's graduating class.



Trevor Jackson is a dedicated student-athlete who proudly became the first Wyomissing Area student to apply and be accepted to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

Trevor received high honors every quarter in high school and had a grade point average above 4.0 in his junior and senior years.

Athletically, Trevor participated in six sports during his high school career—golf, football, basketball, cross-country, volleyball, and swimming. He was the captain of the swimming team during his junior and senior years and placed seventh in the 500 freestyle at the district competition in his senior year. In volleyball, he was honored with the Coaches' Award.

Trevor chose the Massachusetts Maritime Academy for its regimented lifestyle, as well as the opportunity to travel and the incredible job opportunities the Academy provides after graduation. He explains that classes are assigned to all students, and he can expect early mornings and long nights. While Trevor will be trained as a military officer – tailored to the Coast Guard and Navy – there is no service commitment upon graduation. He will major in marine engineering and is looking forward to playing club basketball.

Trevor leaves August 18, for his two-week boot camp/orientation.



Abby Goldberg has always been intellectually curious and interested in a variety of subjects. This curiosity comes through in the diversity of her activities throughout high school.

Abby was a member and student director of the Drama Club, served as vice-president of the Math Team, played

violin and served as librarian for the orchestra, and was the treasurer of the Cooking Club. She also was a member of the Service Club and Environmental Club and taught technology classes at the Jewish Community Center.

Abby's academic honors included being named an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction, a National Merit Finalist, and Berks Best in Mathematics. She has also received numerous scholarships and awards.

Abby credits Mrs. Kristin Allen for teaching her the value of learning and Mr. William Dramby for helping to broaden her interests.

Abby will be attending Brown University, where she plans to major in applied mathematics and/or psychology. She chose Brown because the school encourages students to create their own course of study integrating their major areas of interest into a broader program of liberal learning. She is looking forward to getting involved with the school's theater program, Associated Puzzlers, and the Brunonian Cheese Society, to name a few.



Daevaun Edwards has always been interested in cars; his dream car is the Maserati. His long-term dream is to become a mechanic and open his own shop.

Daevaun has been enrolled in the Berks Career and Technology Center's Auto Collision Program since the ninth grade, and with

graduation behind him, he is one step closer to realizing his dream. He was accepted and awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to the Universal Technical Institute in Exton, where he will major in diesel automotive.

At Wyomissing Area JSHS, Daevaun wrestled in the 220 lb. and heavyweight classes. He also played football.

Daevaun says his mother made the greatest impact on his life. "She has been with me through thick and thin," he comments. "I'm extremely grateful for that woman."



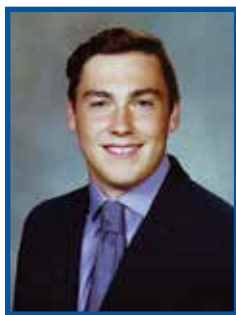
For **Austin Keim**, nursing runs in the family. His mother and older sister are nurses, and his two other sisters are currently attending the Reading School of Health Sciences Nursing School—to which Austin has also been accepted. After graduating as a registered nurse, Austin wants to finish his bachelor's

degree, become a nurse practitioner, and work in dermatology like his mother.

"My mother works very hard," Austin says. "I have watched her work 12-hour shifts, and it has made me want to follow in her footsteps."

At Wyomissing Area JSHS, Austin spent a lot of his free time on the track. He was the captain of the indoor track team his junior and senior years and captain of the spring track team his sophomore, junior, and senior years. In addition to running cross-country, his events were the 4 x 400 relay, 400-meter, and the 4 x 800 relay. In his junior year, Austin was a member of the 4 x 400 relay team that won the state championship.

In addition to running, Austin enjoys lifting weights and playing video games. He was also a member of the Chess Club and the Science Olympiad Team.



It wasn't until **Jaxton Taylor** job-shadowed his best-friend's mother that he realized a career in the health field was right for him. This fall, Jaxton will enter Elizabethtown College on a Dean's Scholarship as a biology major, with the goal of becoming a physician assistant. He will also play soccer.

Jaxton is a dedicated athlete who has played soccer and lacrosse since he was four- and six-years old, respectively. In his senior year, he was captain of both the varsity soccer and lacrosse teams and was named to the all-division soccer teams his junior and senior years.

In addition to playing soccer, Jaxton participated in the Big Spartan, Little Spartan program and peer mediation.



Patrick Mahon, a well-rounded student-athlete, is headed to Georgetown University in the fall, where he will be an economic/social justice major. He says he chose the school because of its proximity to Washington, D.C., where he will be able to apply what he is learning through internships.

Patrick's athletic pursuits included soccer, swimming, and volleyball, while his academic extracurricular interests included student council, Science Olympiad, and Spanish Club. Patrick was also a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society and was awarded the Principal's 4.0 Award in his junior year.

Patrick wishes to thank his Student Council advisor and Honors American History/Advanced Placement World History teacher, Mr. William Dramby, for teaching him how to learn and participate effectively

and correctly, saying, "He placed an emphasis on communication and critical thinking."

Patrick is looking forward not only to continuing his education but to continuing to develop as a person at Georgetown University.



Leah McAvoy is ready for the next chapter. A devoted student-athlete, member of the National Honor Society and a recipient of the Principal's 4.0 Award, Leah will continue her education at the University of Michigan. She will major in neuroscience, which she sees as the perfect combination of

her two favorite subjects, biology and psychology. After earning her bachelor's degree, she plans to pursue either medical school or graduate school.

During her time at Wyomissing Area JSHS, Leah was a member of the tennis, basketball, and lacrosse teams. She was named to the all-county team for basketball in her junior and senior years and for lacrosse her junior year. In tennis, she was the district doubles champion in her junior and senior years and the county champ in her senior year.

Leah was named 2018 Berks County Athlete of the Year by the Reading Eagle.

In addition to athletic pursuits, Leah was involved with the Environmental Club, served as the vice-president of both the Latin Club and Student Council, was a member of Math Club, and participated in Big Spartan, Little Spartan.

Leah credits Mr. Peter Beck for having an impact on her: "He always supported me, whether academic, sports, or volunteering. I know he will always be there if I need him," she says.



Grace Keefe has always found happiness in art. In fact, she can't remember a time when she didn't have a brush or pen in her hand.

Her talent has been recognized by others, as she has been awarded the Berks County Secondary Art Exhibit Award, the Yocum Institute Juried Art Exhibit

Award, and the Promising Artist Scholarship from the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design.

Grace will be attending the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design in the fall. She has yet to decide on a major—animation and illustration are her two choices. Her preferred media are fine-tipped pens and watercolor. However, she is looking forward to exploring other media at college. She loves drawing people, especially the female figure, and explains that she wants to break the myth that all women must be stick-thin.

She thanks her mother for being supportive and encouraging and her stepfather for always pushing her to be her best.

When she is not drawing, Grace enjoys watching horror films (Stephen King is her favorite), watching Netflix series (*Black Mirror* gets her thinking), and playing video games.



Following in her father's footsteps, **Carly Tomczak** will be continuing her education at Temple University.

"Not only have I grown up hearing his stories," Carly says, "but I love Philly. The atmosphere, activities, and the relative closeness to where I live all played a role

in my decision."

Carly will major in early childhood education,

with a focus on special education. Over the years, she has grown very close to the girl she babysits, who is autistic. Carly has also shadowed her swim coach, who is a special education teacher, and in her junior and senior years has been a volunteer teacher assistant in the autistic classrooms at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center and at the Wyomissing Area JSHS.

Carly's dedication to teaching is evident in her extracurricular activities. She is a Sunday-school teacher and nursery leader at Calvary United Methodist Church and has been giving swim lessons since 2015.

Additionally, Carly is a member of the National Honor Society and the National Society of High School Scholars. She is on the swim team and was the team's captain in her junior and senior years.

She has been awarded the Advanced Placement Scholar Award, the Principal's 4.0 Award, the President's Award for Educational Excellence, and a Polish-American Board of Education Scholarship.



Carly is looking forward to swimming with the Temple club team and possibly becoming a tour guide.

When **Quinn Hogue** steps onto the campus of Elizabethtown College in the fall, the general engineering major will already have college credits

on his transcript. Quinn attended Berks Career and Technology Center's Mechatronics Engineering Technology program, which is a pre-engineering program with a planned sequence of secondary and postsecondary technical courses.

Quinn explains that it was his mother who suggested he try the program in tenth grade, and he ended up really liking it. He is looking forward to continuing his engineering education with a concentration in mechanical and electrical engineering. Quinn will also wrestle for Elizabethtown College.

At Wyomissing Area JSHS, Quinn played football, wrestled, and was a member of the track and field team. He was awarded the Bert Moore Memorial Scholarship for his performance on the football field and the District III Wrestling Coaches Association's Scholarships for Books. Quinn went 24-12 during his senior year, placed fourth in the District III Class 2A Tournament, and qualified for Southeast Regional. He was voted to the Berks County II all-division team.

Quinn also participated in the Big Spartan, Little Spartan program in his junior and senior years. He grew close to a boy who had recently moved to the United States and spent time mentoring him each month through his senior year.



Matthew Driben is nothing if not driven. The valedictorian

has played piano since kindergarten; has written for and edited the school's newspaper, the *Chariot*; has been a member of the Quiz Bowl team; and has been a member of the track and field and cross-country teams since seventh- and eighth-grades, respectively.

Matthew was a member of the cross-country state championship team in his senior year. Off the track, he set the record for the number of student newspapers published in one year, was a member of the county championship Quiz Bowl team in his junior and senior years, and was his school's first-ever qualifier for the US National Chemistry Olympiad in his junior year.

Academically, Matthew was named a Justice Brandeis Scholar, a National AP Scholar, and an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction. He was also awarded a merit scholarship from Brandeis University.

Matthew will attend Brandeis University, where he will be a member of the cross-country and track and field teams. He is also looking forward to continuing his Quiz Bowl career.

Matthew credits his coaches, Mr. Tim Hetrich and Mr. Erik Uliasz; the advisor of the *Chariot*, Mr. Christopher Stanek; and his Quiz Bowl advisors, Ms. Joelle Ostrich and Mr. James Comford for imparting a strong work ethic, giving him the drive to work through obstacles and challenges, teaching him about the freedom of the press, and challenging him to think critically and form his own opinions.

Class of 2018: After Graduation

In addition to the list of the colleges and universities that the Class of 2018 will be attending, below you will find other paths that the members of the Class of 2018 will be pursuing:

- American University
- Arcadia University
- Berks Technical Institute
- Boston College
- Brandeis University
- Brown University
- California University of Pennsylvania
- Coastal Carolina University
- Columbia College Chicago
- Danish Army
- Drexel University
- Duke University
- Duquesne University
- Electrician
- Elizabethtown College
- Elon University
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Prescott
- Emerson College
- Employment
- Fashion Institute of Technology
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida International University
- Georgetown University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Gettysburg College
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- James Madison University
- Jefferson University
- Kauai Community College
- Keystone College
- King's College
- Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
- Lee University
- Liberty University
- Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
- Massachusetts Maritime Academy
- Millersville University of Pennsylvania
- Music Education and Harp Performance
- Neumann University
- New York University
- Ohio University
- PA School of Art & Design
- Pennsylvania College of Technology
- Pennsylvania State University - Berks
- Pennsylvania State University
- Reading Area Community College
- Reading School of Health Sciences
- Rhode Island School of Design
- Ringling College of Art and Design

- Saint Joseph's University
- Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania
- St. John's University - Queens Campus
- Temple University
- Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology
- The George Washington University
- The Los Angeles Film School
- The University of Alabama
- United States Air Force
- United States Army
- United States National Guard
- Universal Technical Institute of Pennsylvania Inc.
- University of Michigan
- University of Mississippi
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- University of New Mexico
- University of North Carolina at Asheville
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown
- University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
- University of Vermont
- University of Virginia
- Volunteering Abroad
- West Chester University
- West Virginia University



Inspiring the Next Generation

The excitement and energy in the gymnasium at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center were infectious during the school's first Innovation Day.

Upon entering the gymnasium, students were directed to one of three stations— Dash robots, Makerspace, and Ozobots. The students rotated through these stations to participate in hands-on, creative, and interactive STEAM activities. At each station were teachers and parent volunteers.

Mrs. Kate Cirulli has two children; one in second grade and one a freshman. "The enthusiasm of the students as they listen intently is contagious," she says. "They are having a blast and it is wonderful to watch."

Dash robots are cute blue robots that help to interest younger students in coding by making it feel more like play and less like schoolwork. Using an iPad, the students create paths for their Dash robot to follow. For this activity, the students were challenged to make their Dash robot move forward 15 feet, over one foot, and back 15 feet. Working with the Dash robot encourages students to develop critical thinking, collaboration skills, and creativity.

In the Makerspace, the students were challenged to make a droid using only the materials found in a paper bag at their place. Items included a plastic cup, half a paper towel holder, a small Styrofoam ball, wires, and two plastic bottle tops. Available for everyone's use were markers, tape, and scissors. Also on the table for inspiration were pictures of famous droids, such as C-3PO and BB-8 from the Star Wars movies.

A wee bit smaller than a Dash robot, an Ozobot is a pocket-sized robot that students can code using markers or stickers for a screen-free coding experience. For the activity the students were challenged to use a Sharpie and colored stickers to create a line for their Ozobot to follow. Each color represented a different command: for example, the sequence red/green/red/green tells the Ozobot to perform a "tornado trick." When it rolls over that code, it will acknowledge the command with a blink and then perform the maneuver.

"The goal of today's event was to give the students a chance to engage with different areas of STEAM," explains Dr. Rob Kucharczuk, assistant principal. "For many of the students this is their first experience with



Working together to code a Dash robot.

STEAM. Today's activities allow them to interact and let their minds run wild."

This activity was sponsored in part by the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation.

Matter Monsters Take Over Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center

The S.P.A.R.K.S. Foundation's visit to the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center was filled with wonder, excitement, and hands-on learning. For just about an hour, each fourth-grade class explored the wonderful world of science through interactive experiments that left them oohing, aahing, and scratching their heads.

As the students took their places at the lab tables, they were provided with a lab coat (which they could take home), goggles, and a "science name," such as Reaction Roger or Catalyst Carrie.

While walking the students through two scientific experiments, Solar Sarah Troy, the S.P.A.R.K.S. Foundation program coordinator, taught them about the scientific method, the roles of scientists, and laboratory protocol.

The first experiment created an endothermic reaction: a reaction that absorbs heat from its surroundings, so that the vessel feels cold. This is one that most people are familiar with – mixing baking soda and vinegar to create a gas. To demonstrate that a gas is released when the liquid and solid are

combined, Solar Sarah had the students combine them in a plastic glove, which they held closed at the wrist. The glove inflated when the gas rose.

Solar Sarah called the second experiment, which created an exothermic reaction (one that gives off heat), a "matter monster." She explained that a "matter monster" is something that goes through all three stages of matter: liquid, gas, and solid. The students were given two liquids of varying viscosities that formed foam insulation right before their eyes. The looks of surprise were priceless as they watched their very own "matter monsters" grow!

As they cleaned up their lab tables, the students were given a bag to hold their foam insulation experiments, along with pipe cleaners, buttons, and other items they could use to turn these experiments into "matter monsters."

The Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center would like to thank the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation for funding this program through various Educational Improvement Tax Credit contributions.



The students' faces were priceless to watch as their Matter Monsters grew.

District Engages Stakeholders to Develop Comprehensive Plan

In the spring, the Wyomissing Area School District (WASD) began the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan, as is required for school districts to do by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. When complete, the Comprehensive Plan will provide priority areas and target goals for 2019–2021. The process is being led by Assistant Superintendent Lynette Waller and Supervisor of Assessments and Instructional Assessments Jen Mangold.

"Comprehensive planning facilitates communication and collaboration, promotes shared practices and resources, and ensures that every stakeholder is working toward common goals," Mrs. Waller explains. "It is a time for us to reflect on the data and to project how we, as a district, will move forward for the benefit of all students."

The comprehensive planning process began by bringing together groups of people who work for the benefit of WASD students. Through these stakeholder group sessions, broad themes were developed. With these broad themes in mind, Mrs. Waller and Mrs. Mangold reviewed data from a multitude of sources looking for trends. Examples

of the data that sources reference include enrollment, demographics, school performance, PSAT/SAT/ACT scores, Advanced Placement Tests, post-secondary plans, and extracurricular programming.

As per the Department of Education, the District Comprehensive Plan must include the following components: an induction plan, a professional education plan that includes the instructional plan, a student services plan, a gifted plan, a pre-kindergarten plan, a technology plan, and a special education plan. WASD has completed its special education plan, and it is available on the District's website.

"The comprehensive planning process is a unique opportunity for us to look at the District from a big-picture perspective," Mrs. Mangold says. "The process provides an overall snapshot of how we are doing and the areas that need improvement."

The goals that have been identified for the 2019–2021 District Comprehensive Plan are:

- Goal 1: Establish a district system that fully ensures consistent implementation of standards-aligned curricula across all schools for all students.

- Goal 2: Establish a district system that fully ensures the consistent implementation of effective instructional practices across all classrooms in each school.
- Goal 3: Establish a district system that fully ensures students who are academically at risk are identified early and are supported by a process that provides interventions based upon the students' needs and includes procedures for monitoring the interventions' effectiveness.

From these goals, target objectives for effective implementation will be developed as the draft of the Comprehensive Plan is finalized for presentation to the Board of School Directors in September. According to the planned timeline, the Board of School Directors will approve the Comprehensive Plan in October. The District is required to submit its Comprehensive Plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education by November 30, 2018.

Model Senate Program Provides Real-Life Experience

With intense curiosity and open minds, six Wyomissing Area High School juniors jumped at the opportunity to participate in Senator Judy Schwank's fifth-annual Berks County Model Senate program.

Maggie Ferrandino, Vittoria D'Addesi, Erin Drebusenko, Chloe Gehret, Sarah Fleischood, and Emily Weidner are members of Mr. Joe Alcaro's AP US Government and Politics class.

"I have been involved in politics since the 2016 election," Vittoria explains. "Mr. Alcaro's class helped me understand our government better and this program sounded very interesting."

Emily explains that one of her friends participated in 2017, so she knew what to expect. "Not only did I learn more about politics," she says, "It was a good experience that helped me open up."

The Berks County Model Senate program is broken into three sessions. During the first session, students met at Senator Schwank's office to elect a governor and caucus leaders and appoint committee chairs. At this session, Vittoria D'Addesi was elected governor. The students then decided which bills would be introduced and brought up their own proposals for debate.

Throughout the next month, the students discussed their bills outside of school in preparation for the second session. The students' bills addressed legalizing cannabis, teachers' right to carry firearms, and single-use plastic bags.

During the second session, students met with experts in the fields in which the proposed bills were grounded to ask questions and finalize their bills.

The final session brought the students together in

Harrisburg. This daylong session included a brief tour of the State Capitol building, as well as a formal introduction from the floor by Senator Schwank. After watching the Pennsylvania Senate debate legislation, the students engaged in their final debate and voted on their three pieces of legislation.

Emily says that engaging with her peers on the final day was her favorite part. She explains, "It wasn't till that last day that we knew what the other caucus was thinking."

Maggie comments, "Watching the Senate debate legislation, I was surprised at how unorganized it actually is."

At the end of the day, the girls were grateful for the experience and were disappointed that they couldn't do it again next year.

Safe Schools Advisory Committee

In the spring, the Wyomissing Area School District administration held three meetings (one at each school) of the Safe Schools Advisory Committee. Co-chaired by Director of Building and Grounds Michael Cafoncelli and Wyomissing Police Department Lieutenant and parent Thomas Endy, the objectives of this committee are to:

- Review information to fully understand current safety/security measures at the Wyomissing Area School District
- Seek additional information through presentations and guided facility tours
- Collaborate and discuss information with respect to various opinions and viewpoints of stakeholders
- Make informed recommendations for school board/administration consideration

- Assist administration as key communicators to share accurate information learned through the committee's work
- Continue as a committee following the issuance of initial recommendations to provide ongoing monitoring and review of Wyomissing Area School District safety/security measures.

At each meeting, committee members were given a guided tour of the school and a demonstration of the CCTV camera system, and had the opportunity to learn about current safety measures, facility upgrades and transportation safety measures. Each school's principal also provided a review of drills and challenges for his or her school. Lieutenant Endy and West Reading Police Chief Stephen Powell spoke about their departments' relationships with the school district.

The result of these meetings was the development

of priority recommendations and additional suggestions, which were presented to the Board of School Directors by the committee co-chairs. The administration is now working to research and discuss the priority recommendations as well as the other recommendations.

"What we know from these meetings is that we have a safe school district," says Superintendent Robert Scoboria. "I am confident that, working with the stakeholder group and experts that we have convened, we will be able to address the recommendations that were identified."

The Safe Schools Advisory Committee will meet again in Fall 2018 and continue to serve as a district resource to provide ongoing support of school safety measures.

Walk with WYO Exceeds Fundraising Goal

Walk with WYO is a walk like no other. Starting at Pinwheel Lane, the students at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center have a blast walking around the outside of the school, enjoying activity stations such as Hanging Pool Noodles, Flamingo Way, Candy Land Walk, and Watch D.O.G.S. Dad Row along the way.

"Walk with WYO serves as the Wyomissing Area PTA's primary fundraiser," explains Mrs. Heidi Crowley, Walk with WYO 2018 event chair. "It is an opportunity for the students to work together with the community to raise funds that go directly back to the students of the Wyomissing Area School District."

This year's Walk with WYO raised \$31,452. These funds will be used by the Wyomissing Area PTA to sponsor mini-grants, assemblies, movie nights, back-to-school events, book fairs, career day, staff appreciation events, and many other activities.

Walk with WYO is a major event, and is only successful because of the help of numerous volunteers and sponsors. Mrs. Tracey Weiss, West Reading Elementary Center Liaison and Walk with WYO volunteer, loves the event because it gets all the students involved.

"Walk with WYO gets the students outside and promotes school and class spirit," Mrs. Weiss adds.

Fellow volunteers Mrs. Sara Smith and Mrs. Quinn Kaufmann agree that Walk with WYO is a fundraiser that is easy for parents to support.

In addition to parent volunteers, student athletes

from the high school were on hand to assist at each station, as were Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center's Watch D.O.G.S. Dads who were cheering the walkers on as they entered the homestretch.

The Walk with WYO committee would like to thank the sponsors, as well as business and individuals who provided in-kind donations, for helping to make this year's event amazing.



Making Math Fun and Games

The Math Carnival is one of the days that fifth-grade students at West Reading Elementary Center look forward to all year.

Created more than five years ago by math teachers Mrs. Erika Homan and Mr. Keith Arnold, the Math Carnival is designed to inspire excitement for math. The daylong event is broken into three sections—the outside carnival-like atmosphere, with 15 fun games; guest speakers; and fun math activities in non-math classes.

On the playground, the students race around the outdoor carnival, testing their math skills at as many game tables as possible. Parent volunteers are stationed at each game to explain the rules and record top scores.

One game, called Decimal Double Down, asked the player to choose a “Decimal Dare” from the table. These cards presented the student with a math problem. Once the student answered the math problem, he or she then had to complete a challenge using the answer, such as doing that number of jumping jacks in 30 seconds. Upon completion of that challenge, he or she chose a “Decimal Card.” This card presented the student with a math equation to be solved as quickly as possible.

Another game, called Fill in the Blanks, had the player draw a card that only had numbers on it. The player then had to determine which operation—addition, subtraction, division, multiplication—was needed to complete the equation. The catch? The player had to figure this out in less than a minute.

“This is a terrific way for kids to use the skills they have learned during the year,” says Mrs. Amy Smedley, a parent volunteer. “It really makes math fun.”

Three guest speakers donated their time to explain how they use math every day in their job. Eli Peters, from Mastercraft Woodworking Company, demonstrated how he uses math to develop an estimate to tell a potential client the cost to install kitchen cabinets. He showed the students a video of a machine that requires a person to key in the X and Y axes.

Minal Patel, PA-C, a gastroenterologist, explained to students how their doctor uses a growth curve and showed them the two formulas that can be used to calculate body mass index. She worked through an example with them.

Bill Gartner, director of research and development for Penske Racing Shocks, was a big hit with the students. His interactive presentation demonstrated how math

is used to calculate speed and other factors needed to produce high-quality shock absorbers.

In the afternoon, students were treated to hands-on math lessons in their non-math classes, such as restaurant and shopping math, probability, and coding.

It takes many hands to organize a successful Math Carnival. However, the look on a student’s face when they beat the high score at a game table is well worth the effort—especially when you know that they’re utilizing math knowledge without realizing it.



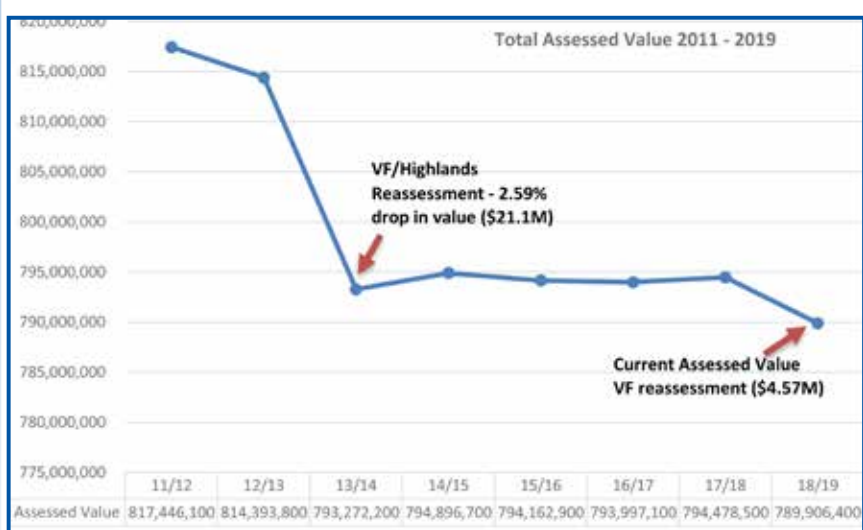
Jazmine Moran works to find the correct math operation to complete the equation.

Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2018-19

As the District developed the 2018-19 budget, we had uncertainties and challenges to overcome. These included increases in enrollment, pensions, healthcare costs, charter-school tuition, special-education costs, and safety and security costs, as well as decreases in assessed property values. Taking these variables and the long-term forecast into consideration, the District had to make difficult decisions—including a potential tax increase. The Act 1 index (the limit on how much a school district can raise taxes, set by the state) was set at 2.4%. The Board of School Directors decided to raise taxes for the 2018-19 school year to 30.668 mills, which amounts to a 2% increase. For example, a 2% increase will raise taxes by an estimated \$90 on a home assessed at a value of \$150,000.

Challenges and Uncertainties

One of the biggest challenges for any school district is assessed property values, which are the Wyomissing Area School District’s biggest source of funding, making up 82.61% of local revenues. More than 78% of the District’s total revenue is derived from local sources. Local sources include real-estate property taxes, the earned income tax, the business-privilege tax, and transfer taxes. Real-estate tax revenue is based on the assessed property value of the District, which is currently \$789 million. Since the 2011-12 school year, the assessed property value has decreased by \$27.5 million, or 3.36%. At the current millage rate of 30.668, this amounts to an estimated \$843,370 in lost revenue. The chart below illustrates this loss.



Another challenge is that the District’s student enrollment has been steadily increasing over the past eight years. By using student enrollment projections, including forecasting tools, the District follows enrollment changes very closely throughout the year. An increase or decrease in enrollment can affect class sizes, which will have an impact on staffing

and District expenditures. The chart to the right displays the growth of the District’s enrollment overlaid with the decline of assessed property values.

The overall expenditures budgeted for fiscal year 2018-19, passed by the Board of School Directors on June 11, 2018, total \$36,426,467. The largest expenses are related to personnel, which account for 71.43% of total budget expenditures; this was an increase of 0.79% over last year. The increase is a result of increases in salaries and wages, the employer contribution to the state retirement plan, and the cost of health insurance. The remaining 28.57% of budgeted expenditures are for supplies, student services, facilities, and debt-service payments (see pie graph at right).

State Funding

The total State funding that the Wyomissing Area School District receives is about 19.36% of the total budget. State funding is a combination of Basic Education Funding, Special Education Funding, Transportation Subsidy, and PSERS and Social Security Subsidy. The Wyomissing Area School District receives the lowest amount of Basic Education Funding when compared to the 17 other school districts located in Berks County. Even with the new Basic Education Funding Formula, which allocates all new money allocated to education by the Commonwealth in a fair funding formula that takes into consideration several different statistics, we are still lower than our peer school districts.

The graph to the right displays the disparity between basic education funding and total enrollment of 16 of the 18 school districts located in Berks County (the Reading Area School District and Boyertown Area School District were removed due to the amount of Basic Education Funding received).

