



**KENNETT
CONSOLIDATED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

LEARN. APPLY. ACHIEVE.



Celebrating the Class of 2019

During the school's 128th commencement ceremony on Friday, June 7, 2019, 297 graduates walked down Kennett High School's iconic front steps to receive their diplomas. Student speakers included class president Pierce Genereux, as well as Elaina Maahs, Kate Erisman, Kevin Lemus, and Molly Hohner. The invocation was presented by Nancy Avalos.

Pierce welcomed his fellow graduates, family, and friends, and on behalf of his classmates, he thanked the teachers, administrators, and staff who supported them through high school, saying, "Most of us don't realize it, but they have done more good for us than we have done for ourselves at times. . . With their help, as Dr. Seuss says, we now have knowledge in our heads and our feet in our shoes, and now we can steer ourselves in any direction we choose."

Elaina told her fellow graduates, "We, as the Class of 2019, have driven ourselves to set new school and state records. We have driven ourselves to achieve unmatched academic awards and to create new opportunities and, furthermore, to take those opportunities, grab the wheel, and go. I have full faith that we will continue to be driven and to drive others to want to find the best in themselves."

Kate spoke about drive and determination and reminded her peers that despite multiple achievements, "the individual roads each of us chose in our high school journeys were not without struggles. We juggled our various commitments: countless hours working at our regular coursework, preparing for the SATs, and participating in various sports, clubs, or activities. We volunteered



our time to serve our community, and many of us added part-time jobs to our already hectic schedules."

Kevin admitted that he expected high school to be more like *High School Musical*. "We all walked in on our first day of freshman year believing we were all grown. Some thought about how we would finally be able to walk or drive to school, join cool clubs, or do whatever things we saw on TV or in movies about high school." Grateful for his Kennett experience, Kevin concluded, "Always remember that no matter where you go or which back roads you take to get there, you should leave a legacy."

Molly reminded her fellow graduates that failure is not an option, but making mistakes and recalculating are. "When you make mistakes, you learn more than if you had initially succeeded." She concluded by encouraging her peers to continue to make mistakes, to take risks in all they do, and to recalculate if they need to.

For more on the Class of 2019, see pages 4 & 5.

Helping Students Succeed: The Ultimate Priority for the Kennett Consolidated School District

Six years ago, the Kennett Consolidated School District brought together a large contingent of parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and business owners to create a six-year strategic plan outlining the District's most important goals. Over several days, the group targeted four priorities:

- Priority Goal 1: Develop strong STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) opportunities.
- Priority Goal 2: Develop a menu of additional learning opportunities.
- Priority Goal 3: Enhance our students' technology experiences and establish blended learning opportunities.
- Priority Goal 4: Increase parent involvement.

single resource is a faculty that understand the needs of students.

"Our staff works competently and tirelessly to help our students achieve," states superintendent Dr. Barry Tomasetti. "I couldn't ask for a more dedicated group of educators."

Priority Goal 1: Develop strong STEM opportunities

The Kennett Education Foundation was instrumental in initiating the Kennett Consolidated School District's STEM program by providing a \$150,000 grant that allowed the District to bring in courses from Project Lead the Way, a leading creator of STEM curricula.

The District offers students in each grade, from kindergarten through twelfth, a strong STEM curriculum. "Our program is unique in that from the start, we have had mathematics and physics teachers teaching STEM classes," Dr. Tomasetti explains.

In fact, Kennett altered STEM staffing throughout the state by encouraging the Pennsylvania Department of Education to require that STEM teachers be certified in math and physics. The Pennsylvania Department of Education agreed.

At the elementary school level, the District introduced the Math in Focus curriculum during the 2017-18

Continued on page 2

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With the end of the 2018-19 academic year comes the conclusion of year five of the six-year strategic plan that emerged from these priority goals. Much growth has been realized over the past five years. While it has been a collaborative effort, the District's most important

Helping Students Succeed *Continued from page 1*

school year. Dr. Lydia Hallman, director of curriculum and mathematics and science instruction, explains that Math in Focus helps students learn the language of math through hands-on learning, visualization, and pictorial representations.

“The focus is problem-solving and critical thinking,” Dr. Hallman says. “The curriculum teaches the journey, not just the answer.”

Math in Focus is a rigorous curriculum that strengthens students’ mathematical knowledge and shifts from meeting Pennsylvania core standards to focusing on international standards. At every level, students are presented with real-world applications and are taught to apply what they know.

This shift in how mathematics is taught required extensive professional development over the last two years. The District invited Dr. Paul J. Riccomini, associate professor of education at Penn State, to provide secondary teachers with instruction in differentiated learning techniques. His work has enabled teachers to better reach students at all academic levels. Looking ahead to the 2019-2020 academic year, staff development will continue using a peer-coaching model based on each teacher’s needs.

Integrating hands-on STEM lab activities into the elementary curriculum is a balancing act, Dr. Hallman explains, since students are still learning to read and write. At these grade levels, after-school and summer STEM camp programs engage students in real-world project-based learning.

During their years at Kennett Middle School, all students participate in three quarter-long courses: Design and Modeling in sixth grade, App Creator in seventh grade, and Automation and Robotics in eighth grade. These courses provide the fundamentals of engineering and lay the foundation to encourage students to pursue engineering courses at the high school level.

For the past two years, Kennett Middle School has qualified as a Project Lead the Way Distinguished School. This national recognition program is designed to honor schools that are committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their Project Lead the Way programs. Kennett Middle School is one of only 53 schools nationwide to qualify for this honor two years in a row.

At Kennett High School, five honors-level STEM courses are offered, including Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering and Architecture, and Digital Electronics, which provide hands-on experience using industry software, such as REVIT, and innovative equipment, such as a life-size wind tunnel.

The high school’s newest elective, Advanced Placement Environmental Science, is a rigorous college-level course that challenges students to understand the interrelationships of the natural world. Students identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made, evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and examine alternative solutions for resolving or preventing them. Students explore Earth systems and resources, the living world, population dynamics, land and water use, energy resources and consumption, pollution, and global change. The course’s real-life applications have made it a favorite among students.

“We strive to have students use technology in a meaningful manner,” Dr. Tomasetti explains. “Middle school students learn coding in the app creator and robotics course, and this learning is extended at the high school level.” Counselors report that there has been an increase in Kennett graduates pursuing engineering-related majors in college.

The high school also offers STEM-based after-school activities, such as the Demon Robotics team, which consistently finishes top in the region and has competed at the world competition as recently as this spring.

Kennett High School senior Molly Hohner is a member of the Demon Robotics team and is one of the founders of the school’s Society of Women Engineers SWENext Club. She invited her friends to join her in starting the club because there weren’t many girls taking STEM classes.

SWENext Club member Madison Canter will attend Penn State in the fall and plans to major in architectural

engineering. She says that the high school’s Civil Engineering and Architecture course helped her choose her major.

Priority Goal 2: Develop a menu of additional learning opportunities

The District makes a multitude of learning opportunities available to students in every grade, both in and out of school.

For our youngest learners, the first few weeks of kindergarten can be scary. For students who haven’t attended preschool, sitting still for periods of time, walking in a line, and raising their hand can be challenging. To help instill confidence and facilitate their adjustment, the District has partnered with the Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County to provide two-week programs to introduce students to these classroom behavior expectations. Children who have not attended preschool are identified through the kindergarten registration process and are invited to attend the free program.

While in previous years the District ran a similar program on its own, partnering with the Maternal and Child Health Consortium enables the District to provide transportation for all students and include a parenting component. Summer of 2018 was the first year for the partnership during which 28 students participated. This opportunity is funded entirely by generous donations through United Way.

Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center principal Mrs. April Reynolds provided professional development to the Consortium’s teachers so that they could model what students would experience during their kindergarten experience.

“The program reviews school-readiness skills such as walking in a line, playground behavior, as well as the alphabet, colors, numbers, and shapes,” Mrs. Reynolds explains.

Speaking to the program’s success, Mrs. Reynolds says, “We had our lowest number of students crying during the first week of school this year.”

In grades one through five, all students engage daily in STAR (Strategic, Targeted, and Responsive) time as a method to provide reading remediation or enrichment. At the beginning of the school year, students are placed in small groups—their STAR groups—based on their reading assessment. However, these group designations are simply a starting point. STAR group assignments are flexible, and students may transition throughout the years ensuring that they continually receive the support they need.

During STAR time, students who read on grade level receive enrichment, such as literature circles in which the group discusses a book on a deeper level. Students in need of additional support work with a reading specialist.

As part of the District’s Title I program, the Summer Academy is offered for five weeks during summer break to students in grades one through five. This free program is made available to students who have been identified as requiring extra assistance to bolster their literacy and math skills.

“The curriculum for the Summer Academy provides scaffolding in literacy and mathematics skills for the next academic year,” Dr. Tomasetti explains. “The goal is to build confidence in our students.”

The Summer Academy incorporates STEM activities into the curriculum and devotes one hour a day to “front-loading” the math skills that students will learn in the coming year. “This technique of introducing students to the math curriculum over the summer has increased math scores across the board,” Mrs. Judith Jester Durante, curriculum supervisor for language arts and social studies, explains.

The Summer Academy program coordinator, Mrs. Emlyn Frangiosa, teaches English language learners during the academic year. Approximately 250 students participate each year, and the program provides transportation. Incentives of free books encourage attendance, and the names of students with perfect attendance are entered



At the District’s Summer Academy, students build their confidence in literacy and mathematics skills in preparation for the next academic year.

into a drawing to win a bicycle.

Faculty-led Title I tutoring is also provided year-round for elementary students. At New Garden Elementary School tutoring is offered before school, while Bancroft and Greenwood Elementary Schools offer tutoring after school.

At Kennett Middle School, three programs are giving students the extra boost they need to excel. One offers assistance during the school day, and two offer support after school.

Three years ago, the administration adjusted the master schedule to include intervention periods within the school day. What I Need (WIN) uses research-based techniques to support students who are struggling in reading and math. Principal Mr. Lorenzo DeAngelis says that WIN is making a difference in students’ math and reading grades.

Work Wednesday is an after-school program that provides students with a quiet place to complete their homework. Students identified as needing assistance are invited to join. The program is voluntary, and the middle school principals assist approximately 30 students each week.

Power Hour is a PSSA booster program for sixth grade students on the cusp of proficiency. Students meet with teachers twice a week for six weeks after school to work on skills before the PSSA testing period.

For students who are new to the country, navigating the college application process can be an overwhelming experience. Ms. Loretta Perna facilitates WIN, the Walk in kNowledge program that provides students with extra guidance to achieve their dreams after high school.

“The WIN Program was conceived as a way to clear a path to higher education for students facing significant social, financial, language, or other cultural barriers. It has been largely successful,” states Ms. Perna.

This program offers academic support, increased options for post-secondary education, parent education regarding the American school system, acculturation, and mentoring. Since 2008, Ms. Perna has worked with hundreds of students. Of the 246 seniors with whom she has worked closely, 93 percent have pursued post-secondary education.

For the 2016–2017 academic year, Kennett High School implemented block scheduling for ninth grade algebra, ninth grade survey literature, and tenth grade world literature. Principal Dr. Jeremy Hritz explains that algebra was identified as a particular area of need through the Keystone exam.

Algebra is now offered as a two-period block for all ninth grade students, allowing teachers to go into greater depth with the content. This is especially beneficial for students for whom algebra has been historically challenging. After the first year of offering algebra as

Alumna Scores Career Touchdown

Ms. Emily Badis, Class of 2011, is quick to name Mr. Ronald Phillips as her favorite teacher from her days at Kennett High School. “He taught me to enjoy math, even though I thought I would never use it after high school,” Ms. Badis says, smiling. As it turns out, she uses her math skills every day as the salary cap and contracts analyst for the Atlanta Falcons.

Ms. Badis earned this position after completing a coveted internship as a seasonal football systems assistant with the Falcons. As an intern, she worked in the Football Systems Department and was taught how technology, data, and analysis are used within a pro sports team. Some of her responsibilities included writing reports, writing code, and working on specific analytics projects. The internship exposed her to all facets of football operations, including scouting, coaching, and salary caps and contracts—all of which prepared her for her current job.

As the team’s salary cap and contracts analyst, Ms. Badis’ primary responsibility is to assist in player contract negotiations and to support the staff that handles direct negotiations. She helps set the markets for upcoming player negotiations based on player statistics, biographical information, and career history. She also helps prepare for the NFL Draft by running studies on college free agents.

“As soon as the Draft ends, it becomes an extremely competitive process to sign the best players who are left, so my analysis beforehand helps with the allocation of that money and the best way to spend it so that the Falcons can sign and retain quality players,” Ms. Badis explains.

While salary cap and contracts are her focus, Ms. Badis also assists two other analysts with reports for the coaching staff. She has started creating tools for the athletic performance staff members to use.

At Kennett High School, Ms. Badis was the goalie for the varsity field hockey team and played basketball. She looks back fondly on her Kennett High School coaches, Megan Shumway and Vince Cattano, and thanks them for teaching her the value of hard work, leadership, and discipline.

She also participated in the senior class play and was a member of student council. After graduation, she attended the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where she played field hockey and earned a degree in mathematics. Upon graduating, she attended West Chester University, where she earned a master’s degree in applied statistics. At West Chester University, she was the Applied Statistics

Departmental Representative for the Graduate Student Association and was the graduate student representative on the Academic Recognition Committee. It was after her graduate work that she began her internship for the Atlanta Falcons.

Ms. Badis admits that working in professional sports is challenging and stressful, but says it is also extremely rewarding. “Every Sunday during the season, I get to watch the team compete and know that I helped contribute in some way,” she says. “Growing up playing and watching sports has made me a competitive person, and to have a real-life opponent to compete against is so cool, especially knowing how much work I contributed.”

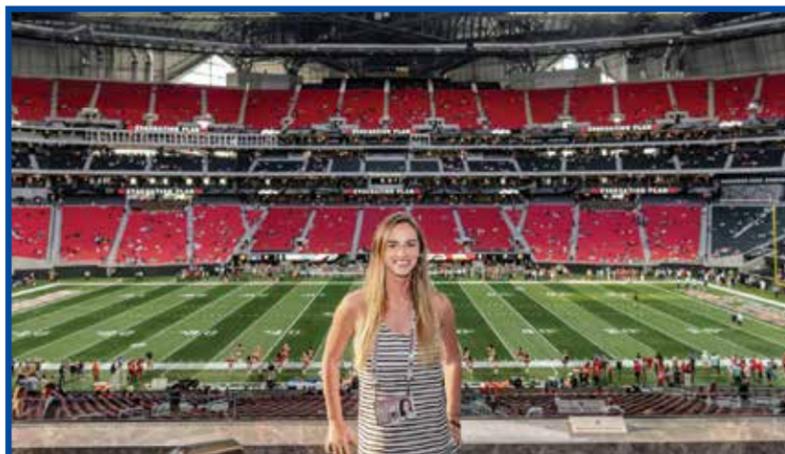
She also explains that she didn’t know much about contracts going into her current position, but by reading the NFL’s Collective Bargaining Agreement and different player contracts she has been able to develop her skills beyond what she had originally expected. These skills have also helped her contribute in more ways than just providing numbers or an analysis.

Ms. Badis identified two challenges in her current position. The first is in determining the actual salary cap.

“Many players and agents believe that they deserve to be the highest paid player, and that is just not possible. So trying to figure out where each player falls and how much they should be paid or what their contract structure should be is definitely difficult at times,” she says.

The second challenge is the difficulty of creating markets for positions with less readily available performance data. Positions like wide receiver and quarterback are typically easier because data such as receptions, yards, and touchdowns are consistently tracked. However, positions like offensive tackle or guard do not accumulate statistics in the same way. Since she is not a scout and doesn’t watch film to compare these players, she must find other ways to quantify their skills to create markets for them.

As for “wow” moments in the job, Ms. Badis mentions two. The first happened when she first started with the Falcons. She was in the cafeteria getting her lunch and Matt Ryan, quarterback and team captain, strolled up



next to her and casually asked “Hey, how’s it going?”

“At the time I was new and fresh in the industry and thought it was so cool; now it’s just everyday life and they’re just normal people,” she says.

Her second “wow” moment was working her first Super Bowl in February 2019. “The Super Bowl is the sporting event of all sporting events, and to be there on the ground level watching the players walk by to warm up was so humbling,” Ms. Badis admits. “It reminded me how hard I’ve worked to get to where I am, but to also just take in that moment and that night because it’s not every day that you get to attend the Super Bowl!”

Her family has always been supportive of her aspirations and for that she is thankful. Family members attend a few games every season, and even though she knows it pains them (especially her dad and brother) to wear Falcons gear instead of Eagles jerseys, they do it for her.

Ms. Badis enjoys playing golf, reading by the pool, and going to brunch with her friends. She also loves hanging out with her sweet dog, Holly, when she visits Pennsylvania.

If you know a Kennett High School alumni who should be featured in this publication, please reach out to Kristine Parkes, district communications, at PR@KCSD.org.

Kennett High School Seniors Stroll Down Memory Lane

On Thursday, May 30, approximately 300 members of Kennett High School’s Class of 2019 participated in the fourth annual Senior Stroll.

The seniors, clad in their graduation gowns, visited Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center, New Garden Elementary, Greenwood Elementary, Bancroft Elementary, and Kennett Middle School. College-bound graduates also wore T-shirts from their respective colleges and universities under their gowns. The hallways were lined with teachers and students cheering on and wishing good luck to the soon-to-be graduates. Members of the graduating class wore color-coded name tags based on the elementary school they attended, so former students were easily identifiable as they entered their old school buildings.

Dr. Jeremy Hritz instituted the Stroll in his first year as Kennett High School principal.

“This is a special year for the Stroll because this is the first senior class that would have attended Bancroft Elementary. Our students are excited to reunite with their former teachers and to motivate and inspire the younger students.”

Senior Caleb Pebly, like many of his classmates, attended Kennett schools for all 13 years leading up to this moment. He attended what was then Mary D. Lang Elementary School from kindergarten to fourth grade, then moved to Greenwood Elementary School for fifth grade.



(above) Kennett Middle School eighth grade students/rising freshmen (left to right) Abigail McConn, Lila Kuder, and Blake Ciresa anxiously await the seniors’ arrival.

(right) Seniors happily high-five students at New Garden Elementary School.

“I’m excited to go back and see how everything has changed,” Caleb said. And I’m anxious to have the chance to say good-bye the right way, to let my teachers know that I truly appreciate everything they did for me.”

Caleb is headed to Penn State this fall.

Kennett High School’s 128th commencement exercises were held on June 7.



The Class of 2019: A Profile of the Class

On June 7, 2019, the Kennett Consolidated School District family celebrated the 297 members of the Class of 2019. Here we feature a handful of our graduates and their diverse talents, interests, and future pursuits.



It comes as no surprise that **Nicole McDonald's** motto is "never give up." In her sophomore year, she fractured her back while cheerleading and was bedridden for three months. She describes that time as traumatizing and reflects that she came out of the experience a different person.

A carpentry student at Technical College

High School, Nicole was one of the few females in the program. However, she didn't let it stop her from pursuing her dream. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA and was named an outstanding senior. Other awards she earned include the 100% Completion Award and the Completion Education Award. Nicole also served three years as a student ambassador for the carpentry program.

Nicole is grateful to her teachers at Technical College High School, who she says were always by her side and helped her grow into the ambitious young adult she is today. She will be attending Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology in the fall. She plans to earn her bachelor's degree in management and hopes to one day own her own business.

In addition to being a cheerleader and a Girl Scout, Nicole has been working as a general contractor with John Young, Inc., for the last year.



For her 11th birthday, **Maya Das** received an iPod Touch. She immediately began styling her friends in her mom's clothes and taking pictures of the looks. It was from that time that her love of fashion, photography, and videography blossomed.

At Kennett High School, Maya participated in KTV and Photography Club,

serving as president in her senior year. She was also president of the Senior Video Club and photographer for the yearbook. A member of the National Honor Society, Nicole received the Kennett Education Association's Scholarship for Technical Arts, and her work was nominated for an Emmy for writing and videography through the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, Mid-Atlantic Chapter.

Although she has only known Mr. Scott Bosch for a year, Nicole credits him as having the greatest impact during her time at Kennett High School. "He has been a gift," she says. "He trusted all of my ideas and helped make me into the artist I am now, and he taught me to be confident in myself."

She is proudest of creating a two-hour documentary about the Demon Robotics Team's winning season and trip to the world competition in her junior year and being accepted into her first-choice school, the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Her goal is to become a fashion photographer.



Looking back, **Refugio Lara** credits his social studies teacher, Mr. Thomas Brientnall, with encouraging him to take his first Advanced Placement class, AP European History. Refugio says that that first course in tenth grade created the ripple effect that led him to take an additional seven Advanced Placement courses in high school.

In addition to his rigorous course load and making the honor roll throughout his high school career, Refugio found time to run track for two years and participate in both the Unidat and the Walk in kNowledge programs. He also served as class treasurer his senior year.

Refugio was a member of the Penn State Millennium Scholars Program, designed for high-achieving science,

technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students who are on the path to becoming leaders in their chosen fields and are committed to increasing the diversity of professionals in STEM-related disciplines. Last summer, he completed the University of Pittsburgh's Health Career Scholars Program.

Refugio will attend Penn State University and Medical School in the fall and intends to major in biochemistry and molecular biology and minor in economics. His goal is to work with underserved populations.

This summer, Refugio will be working alongside his father at the family's butcher shop, Carniceria Moroleon, located in West Grove. He will also be attending a four-week summer bridge program at Penn State.

Refugio is determined to take advantage of all the opportunities his parents have given him.



Claire Borman says she has lived and breathed field hockey since the first grade, and it is her commitment to the sport that has earned her a scholarship to play for Villanova University. At Kennett High School, Claire was a varsity squad starter all four years. She helped take the team to the playoffs during her sophomore, junior,

and senior years, and won multiple awards for her performance on the field. A cherished memory, she says, is being a member of the Kennett team that defeated Unionville High School's field hockey squad for the first time in 30 years!

She credits her sister and her coach with encouraging and supporting her as an athlete.

In addition to field hockey, Claire played basketball her freshman year and varsity lacrosse for three years.

Off the field, Claire participated in Model UN her junior and senior years and was a member of the National Honor Society. She plays the violin and was a member of the string ensemble for three years. She also plays the accordion, an instrument her grandfather taught her to play.

Claire is anxious to continue her athletic and academic career at Villanova University. She says she will continue to play the violin and accordion for her own enjoyment.



Camille Avedisian enjoys staying active and knows that she wants to help people after graduating from college. It is for these reasons that she pursued an appointment to the Merchant Marine Academy. She received her Congressional Award Letter from State Rep. Lloyd Smucker (11th District). Camille will major in marine engineering, and after graduating will serve five

years in the Navy Reserves.

Camille is a member of the National Honor Society. She played soccer for Kennett High School and rowed for the Wilmington Youth Rowing Association, earning a varsity letter in each sport. She also enjoys hiking, and has explored Maine, Florida, and the Adirondack Mountains.

Camille and her family lived in Colombia, South America, for six months during her high school career when her father was relocated for his job. During this time, she says she and her parents became closer. She also learned how to adapt to new cultures.



While at the VEX Robotics World Championship with Kennett High School's Demon Robotics Team in her sophomore year, **Molly Hohner** attended a presentation by the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). It was this presentation, along with her personal drive to get more females interested in STEM, that led her to form a SWENext chapter at the high school.

In addition to being a member of the Demon Robotics

team including serving as president her senior year, Molly played doubles tennis, played violin in the orchestra and the string ensemble, and was a member of the Special Friends Club. To show younger students that math is fun, Molly was a tutor with Math in Motion.

A National Merit Commended Scholar, Molly was also named a Lockheed Martin STEM Scholar and was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the SWE.

Molly will be attending Schreyer Honors College at Penn State where she will major in industrial engineering. She is looking forward to attending football games, becoming involved with SWE at the collegiate level, and studying abroad.



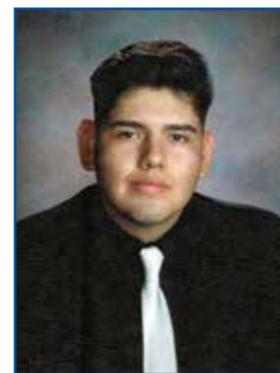
Miguel Niño Zavala likes to help and protect people. He was also seeking a challenge after high school, which led him to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. After his four-year commitment, Miguel plans to become a police officer.

He chose this path because of the respect he has for the military and for law enforcement. He is proud of his career path and hopes

to make his father proud as well.

Miguel attended Chester County Technical College High School, where he studied criminal justice and police science. He is thankful for his teacher and retired Marine drill instructor, Mr. Bill Hevner, who taught him discipline and integrity.

Outside of the classroom, Miguel enjoys soccer and swimming.



Eric Diaz Camacho didn't see himself attending college, so he decided to follow in his sister's footsteps and enroll in the auto collision program at the Chester County Technical College High School. He did well in the program, scoring "advanced" on the NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute) exam and earning the Senior Class Award.

During Eric's senior year, he chose to do a co-op, working half-days at A. Duie Pyle in West Chester. He will stay on full-time with A. Duie Pyle after graduation.

Eric would like to thank his favorite teacher, middle school science teacher, Ms. Heather Uster, for supporting and believing in him.

In addition to working on cars, Eric enjoys video editing and photography. He would be happy to be recognized for this work in the future. Through his church, Eric is also active in community service.



Estefani Sanchez is the first person on her mother's side of the family to graduate from high school and attend college. She will attend Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Cook Honors College and will major in sociology and human services. Her goal is to make her family proud and to be a role model for her sisters and cousins.

During her time at Kennett High School, Estefani kept busy in and out of the classroom. She was a member of the National Honor Society, was named Student of the Year in 2013, and regularly made honor roll. Estefani was a four-year member of both Walk in kNowledge and Hermanitas. She participated in student council, the Kennett Area Democratic Club, The Garage, and the National Hispanic Institute.

She is grateful for her parents who made many sacrifices for her. Estefani is also grateful for Ms. Loretta Perna and Mrs. Joyce LeDonne—she calls Ms. Perna "her angel" because of all the support she gave her both personally and academically. She remembers Mrs.

LeDonne for being the teacher who helped her to learn English and for being the first teacher to help her grow as a student and a person.

Estefani is looking forward to participating in Indiana University's Latino Student Organization, as well as Indiana County Young Life Club.



Yareli Gonzalez's goal is to become a licensed practical nurse. Her path began at Chester County Technical College High School—Pennock's Bridge Campus where she participated in the Health Career Pathways program and graduated with her Medical Assistant Certification, Home Care Aid Certification, and CPR/First Aid Certificate.

At Chester County Technical College High School, Yareli was a member of the Gay and Straight Alliance.

Yareli also took advantage of the dual-enrollment program with Delaware Valley Community College and took two courses during her senior year; she is taking a course over the summer, as well. Yareli chose to continue her education at Delaware Valley Community College because of its affordability. She will work as a medical assistant while earning her associate degree in nursing after which she plans to transfer to a four-year college to earn her bachelor's degree.

When she is not studying, Yareli enjoys doing arts and crafts. She describes herself as a "DIY gal." Her favorite project is creating small storage boxes from old boxes. She watches videos online for inspiration.



When **Kevin Lemus Moreno** arrived in the United States in the eighth grade, he didn't feel as if he belonged. He didn't speak English, and while many of his classmates spoke Spanish, he still wanted to return to Mexico.

When Kevin entered Kennett High School, he was introduced to Ms. Loretta Perna and the Walk In Knowledge (WIN)

program. He became a WIN member and says that he began to feel better about himself and his school work.

"Ms. Perna saw the potential in me," Kevin says. "It is because of her that I had many amazing experiences ... she motivates me to become better every day."

In his sophomore year, Kevin began working at Longwood Gardens, a job he still holds.

In his junior year, Kevin added Hermanitas, a national mentoring program with educational and skill-building opportunities, to his extra-curricular schedule. It was also the first year he was taking classes without English as a Second Language support and was placed in advanced English. He also took French I. Kevin was also invited to become a National Honor Society member, an honor he was not expecting.

But it was in his senior year when Kevin truly blossomed, fully participating in all Kennett High School had to offer. In addition to being a member of WIN and Hermanitas and working at Longwood Gardens, Kevin joined Unidad, the student council, and the Sign Language Club.

Academically, Kevin excelled his senior year. He took Honors French II, Advanced Mathematics, Advanced Placement Macro Economics, and Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics. He enjoyed all his classes but found his AP government class to be the most meaningful to him.

"My AP Government class helped me to understand who I was becoming as a United States citizen," Kevin says.

While accepted into many prestigious colleges including Cornell University, Kevin will attend the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Honors Program, where he received a full scholarship. He will major in biology and pre-med to reach his goal of becoming a veterinarian. This summer Kevin is working mornings and weekends at Longwood Gardens and is shadowing the veterinarians at Unionville Small Animal Associates.



William Michael has played the guitar and piano for his entire life. He began writing songs four years ago, and his band, Off Color, just released its second album on streaming platforms.

At Kennett High School, William used his music and technology talents to support Mini-THON as the Senior Chair of Technology and was also a member of

tech crew working with the school's musicals, plays, and other events. William was also co-president of Thumbs Up, Funs Up, a social/activities club.

William was named Student of the Year his junior year. He says his greatest accomplishment was being able to balance school, work, extracurricular activities, and a social life throughout his high school career.

He appreciates teachers Mr. Shawn Duffy and Mr. Joseph O'Sullivan for their passion for their jobs and their dedication to their students.

William will be attending Drexel University in Philadelphia to pursue a degree in marketing. He chose Drexel University because he loves the city and feels that Drexel is the right school to help him explore his

ambitions. While at Drexel, William hopes to continue to make music, work at Wawa, and complete three co-ops in his five years as a student.



Davis Piercy began running cross country in eighth grade and hasn't looked back. He ran cross country, as well as the mile and 800-meter events for both the indoor and outdoor track teams. As a senior, Davis qualified for states in cross country; he qualified in indoor track as both a junior and a senior. He also played tennis for four years.

Davis was a member of the Demon Robotics team during his sophomore and senior years and was a member of the Future Business Leaders of America in his freshman and senior years. He volunteered with Mini-THON and the Special Friends Club, and he served as a class officer during his junior year.

Academically, Davis was recognized as a National Merit Commended Scholar and is a Rensselaer Medalist, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's merit scholarship for outstanding math and science students worth \$100,000.

Davis will attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and will major in computer and systems engineering and will run track and cross country.



Olivia McLaurin was first inspired to pursue a career in science after watching the last manned space shuttle launch in person from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The growing STEM program at Kennett High School and her participation with the Demon Robotics team further inspired her to pursue a STEM career.

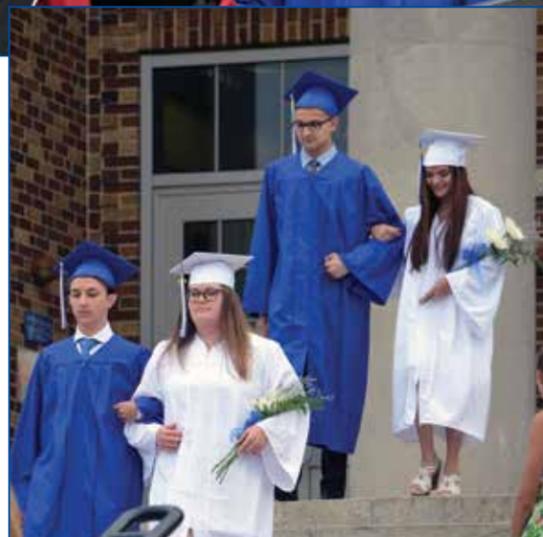
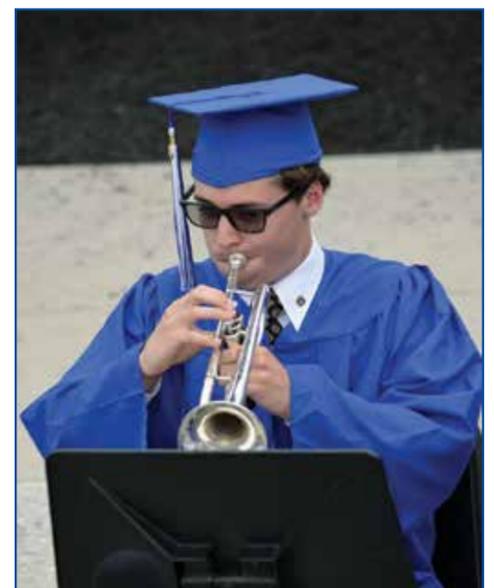
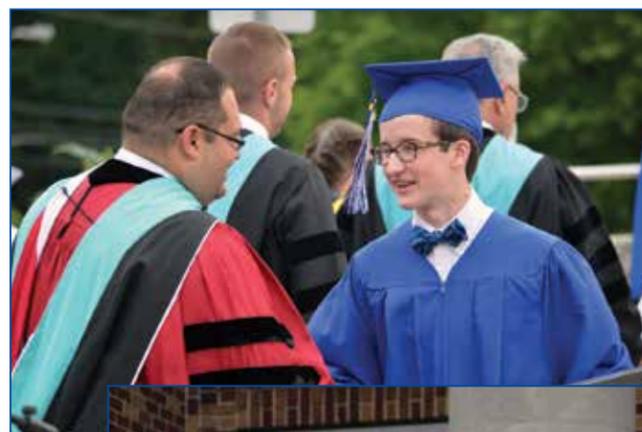
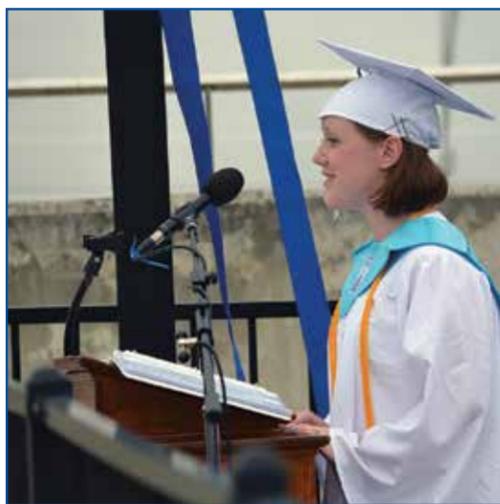
Olivia will attend Purdue University and plans to major in either mechanical or aerospace engineering.

During her time at Kennett High School, Olivia played tenor saxophone in the marching and jazz bands. She also played volleyball and ran with the cross country and indoor and outdoor track teams. Olivia holds the current school record for the 300-meter hurdles.

Olivia was a member of SWENext, the Demon Robotics team, Reading Olympics, and the Humanitarian Club.

Olivia is looking forward to joining the Society of Women Engineers at the collegiate level, the Purdue All-American Marching Band, the Black Cultural Center, and running with the Running Club.

Commencement Ceremony



Helping Students Succeed Continued from page 2

a two-period block, proficiency rates doubled on the Keystone exam.

Survey literature and world literature are also provided as two-period blocks as evidence indicated that these classes were especially challenging to some students.

“These three courses are foundational courses for our students,” Dr. Hritz says. “Providing them with a strong start is essential for them to be successful in future courses.” Dr. Hritz credits teachers working together to design curriculum and develop materials as the driving force behind the program’s success.

Priority Goal 3: Enhance students’ technology experiences and establish blended learning opportunities

Today’s technology is evolving at an alarming rate, and it is easy to be caught up in the latest and greatest gadgets. However, the Kennett Consolidated School District’s vision is “students first, technology second.”

“Our vision is realized by creating a personalized learning environment for students through increased accessibility, strategic integration, resource and support expansion, and long-term sustainability,” says Mr. Dan Maguire, supervisor of technology services. Highlights of the District’s technology milestones over the past five years include implementing Schoology, a virtual learning environment; creating Building Technology Integration Specialist positions; and expanding students’ at-home internet and technology access.

Schoology brings purposeful data-driven instruction that combines face-to-face teaching with technology-assisted instruction, leveraging each student’s learning style and interests for deeper meaning. Because Schoology allows users to create, manage, and share academic content, teachers can create a more personalized learning environment. This year—year two of the District’s Schoology implementation—has been dedicated to expanding the integration of Schoology at Kennett Middle School. It is now standard practice for teachers to post assignments and assessments for all courses online. This year, Kennett High School teachers have continued to implement the learning-management system with the goal of maintaining course calendars in Schoology for all courses starting next school year.

Staff response thus far has been incredibly positive. Activity reports show that staff and students are using Schoology more and more.

A Building Technology Integration Specialist position has been created at each school to help support teachers using technology. They provide three to four hours of support each month through training sessions and individual/team meetings as well as faculty-wide meetings that focus on the particular technology needs at the school.

“The building technology integration specialists have been critical in supporting the integration of Schoology,”

Mr. Maguire comments.

Expanding accessibility to educational programs both in and out of the classroom has been key to putting students first as the District advances in technology.

“All of these programs provide hope that all of the children in our District can succeed, and that is the overarching goal.”

Dr. Barry Tomasetti

Achievements include:

- Expanding the Student Loaner Laptop program to include nearly 250 devices for students in first through twelfth grades. The District is evaluating the program’s effectiveness and exploring solutions for replacing existing MacBooks with refreshed Windows-based devices and/or new Chromebooks.
- Expanding the STEM Student Loaner Laptop program to include Kennett Middle School at the beginning of the 2017–18 school year.
- Expanding the Bring Your Own Technology Initiative to include Kennett High School beginning with the 2018–19 school year following great success at the middle school.
- Facilitating the Community Laptop Initiative for the third straight year. This initiative works with local resellers to secure special prices for refurbished laptops for Kennett families.
- Posting 100 percent of educational student programs—such as Accelerated Reader, Study Island, and Mathseeds—for at-home access.
- Creating a password-management solution for all programs so that students only need to maintain one login and can spend more time learning.
- Exploring programs offered by local providers such as Comcast’s Internet Essentials to provide affordable home internet access for families.

For families without internet access at home, completing homework can be difficult. The District is in year two of its Kajeet Mifi Hotspot Initiative, which provides up to 35 families from each school building with home internet access. A filtered Wi-Fi hotspot, the Kajeet Mifi Hotspot allows students to connect easily to any of the nation’s five leading internet provider networks.

Mr. Maguire explains that internet use is monitored via web portal, and teachers and building administrators can monitor student progress. As with loaner laptops, after families sign a loan agreement, the devices are

barcoded and checked out like a library book. The District is considering expanding this initiative if needs warrant.

Priority Goal 4: Increase parent involvement

Family involvement in a child’s education is critical. According to the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, no matter their family’s income level or background, students with involved parents are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.

Armed with this knowledge, the Kennett Consolidated School District has partnered with the Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County to provide a Spanish-language parenting program targeted to the District’s most vulnerable families. The four-week program is offered twice a year and has served nearly 100 families since it began in 2017.

The District works with subsidized daycare centers to identify families with children from newborn to 5 years of age to invite to join the program.

“Parents learn simple strategies to prioritize learning in their home,” Dr. Tomasetti explains. “The program focuses on brain and language development.” Parents are encouraged to read to and set limits for their children.

This program is fully funded by the Longwood Rotary Club.

A second program, ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX), is a 10-lesson curriculum that teaches how to prioritize learning and education in the home. The program is facilitated by qualified volunteers from the Latino community who personally invite parents to join the program. It is this personal outreach and the contribution from Latino volunteers that have fueled the program’s success. Since beginning three years ago, the program has served hundreds of families.

“The APEX program has been instrumental in increasing collaboration between home and school with parents who are used to a different educational system,” Dr. Tomasetti says.

A third program offered in partnership with the community’s Head Start programs invites successful high school students to speak with parents of younger children. The students describe how their parents helped them become successful. The purpose of this program is to provide tangible ways for parents to support their children’s education by making education a priority in the home and by encouraging participation in extracurricular activities.

“All of these programs provide hope that all of the children in our District can succeed, and that is the overarching goal,” Dr. Tomasetti states.

Childhood Teacher Bestows The Gift of Reading

What began as a typical summer day quickly turned into anything but for Bancroft Elementary School Principal Mrs. Leah McComsey when she received an unexpected phone call.

“I got goosebumps when I realized that Mrs. Peg Merryman, my fourth grade teacher from Avon Grove Elementary, was on the phone,” Mrs. McComsey recalls. “She was calling to ask if I would accept a donation of her entire collection of Newbery Award-winning books!”

The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, and is given to the author of the book chosen as the year’s most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. The first Newbery Medal, awarded in 1922, went to *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem van

Loon. In 2019, *Merci Suárez Changes Gears*, written by Meg Medina, was honored with the award.

Mrs. Merryman began collecting each year’s Newbery Medal winner in 1968 when she was a graduate student. “I fell in love with the concept of the best book of the year,” she explains. “And the Newbery Medal-winning books are geared for students in fourth through sixth grades, and I taught fourth grade.”

In 2011, Mrs. Merryman had clipped an article announcing that Mrs. McComsey had become principal of Bancroft Elementary School and pinned it to her bulletin board, vowing to one day call her former student and make a gift of her collection. The call didn’t come until this summer, 51 years after acquiring her first Newbery Medal winner. After they spoke, Mrs. Merryman wasted no time in delivering the books, stopping by the very same day. Mrs. McComsey said she again

got goosebumps when her teacher walked into the main office bearing her unique and generous gift to Bancroft Elementary School.

Mrs. Merryman will return to the school in September to speak to the fifth grade students about the history of the collection and to formalize her donation.

Principal Mrs. Leah McComsey (right) and her fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Peg Merryman.



It's Never Too Late for Summer Reading

The first day of school may be just around the corner, but it is never too late for your child to start reading a book from their summer reading list. According to the U.S. Department of Education blog, studies indicate that students who don't read or who read infrequently during their summer vacation see their reading abilities stagnate or decline.

Referred to as "the summer slide," this effect becomes more evident as students get older. In fact, researchers at Johns Hopkins University published a study revealing that learning loss accumulates over time, contributing to an even greater achievement gap for high school students than for elementary school students. And for many students, this achievement gap continues beyond high school.

How can parents counteract the summer

slide? Get them busy reading! The Kennett Consolidated School District has published summer reading lists for first through twelfth grades on its website under the For Parents link. Under this link, parents and high school students will also find summer assignments for Advanced Placement classes.

Here are a few ways to make reading fun:

- Create a special reading space—Whether inside or outside, we all love a cozy, special place where we can escape and get lost in a book.
- Start a book club—Whether your child is 7 or 17, commit to reading the same book and then discuss the book over ice cream sundaes or at the beach or the park.
- Read to your child—Audiobooks are

proof that no one is too old to listen to a story. You and your child can also take turns reading chapters to each other.

In the immortal words of Dr. Seuss, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."



Familiar Faces Assume New Positions

Introducing New Garden Elementary School's New Principal



The excitement in Mrs. Elizabeth Weaver's voice is contagious, and she says she can't stop smiling. On August 26, she

will welcome New Garden Elementary School students back as their new school principal.

"To be able to teach in the community I live in has been wonderful," Mrs. Weaver says. "Now to be a principal in the same community is an honor."

Mrs. Weaver's husband and three children all graduated from Kennett High School. Since 2006, she has taught in the Kennett Consolidated School District: first at Mary D. Lang Elementary School (now Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center) and more recently at Greenwood Elementary School.

Mrs. Weaver earned her Bachelor of Arts in education from St. Joseph College in Brooklyn, New York, and her Master of Science in Instructional Leadership from Neumann College. She holds a Special Education Certification and Principal Certification from Immaculata University.

Prior to working at Kennett, Mrs. Weaver taught second and third grades and was a learning support teacher in the Oxford Area School District. She also taught first grade in Delaware's Christina School District.

Mrs. Weaver is a beloved teacher in the District. She was nominated multiple times for the Citadel Heart of Learning Award. She has been a Kennett Education Foundation (KEF) Hats off to Educators recipient and an Honor a Teacher recipient.

"I have loved everything about teaching," Mrs. Weaver says. "Being in the classroom, establishing a mini-family, seeing the students grow academically, socially, and emotionally."

It is these aspects of being in the classroom that she is looking forward to establishing at the building level. "I can't wait to build relationships with teachers,

staff, parents and students," she says. "I know that there is hard work ahead of me, but I know that it will be worth it."

As she looks towards the 2019–2020 academic year, Mrs. Weaver's goals are to create an environment where everyone feels valued. She wants to make learning fun for students, and for teachers and staff to love being at New Garden Elementary School. She knows this will come through building relationships, something she is excited to begin cultivating.

In her free time, Mrs. Weaver loves to read and walk at Longwood Gardens and Anson B. Nixon Park.

Kennett High School Welcomes New Assistant Principal



Mr. Duane Kotz has taught German at three different high schools during his 20-year teaching career, the last 12 years at

Kennett Middle School and Kennett High School. This year he transitions into a new role as assistant principal at Kennett High School, filling the vacancy left by Mr. Raymond Fernandez, who retired in June.

"I have always been able to make connections with students to help them see that they can achieve anything if they set their minds to it," Mr. Kotz explains. "I have felt for a while now that I have

had more to give to the District and the community. I am excited to have the opportunity to interact with more kids on a day-to-day basis."

Mr. Kotz earned his Bachelor of Arts in German and secondary education from Millersville University and attained his master's degree in German from Middlebury College. Mr. Kotz went on to earn a second master's degree in educational leadership from Cabrini University, where he also was awarded his principal certification.

Mr. Kotz explains that his students in the German program are the part of his former job that he will miss the most. "My students were always the best part of every day at KHS."

Mr. Kotz will miss the daily classroom interactions with his former students, but is excited for the opportunity to see all of the incredible activities that take place in every classroom. As an assistant principal, he looks forward to applying his love of instruction as he works with other academic departments to support teachers as they build strong class curricula and create engaging daily activities.

Mr. Kotz and his wife, Wendy, live in the District and have two children: Jameson, who attends Kennett Middle School, and Marlis, who attends Bancroft Elementary School. Mrs. Kotz is an English language development teacher at the high school.

Mr. Kotz enjoys walking the family German shepherd, Jäger, in the early morning hours before his family wakes. In his free time, he likes spending time with his family and attending his children's sporting events.

2019-2020 Calendar Dates to Note

The 2019-2020 student school year will begin on Monday, August 26, 2019 and end on Friday, June 5, 2020 if there are no make-up days added to the end of the student school year. Unless used as inclement weather make-up days, there will be no school for students on the following days:

September 2, 2019 (Labor Day)

September 30, 2019 (Rosh Hashanah)

October 9, 2019 (Yom Kippur)

November 5, 2019 (Election Day)

November 28 and 29, 2019 (Thanksgiving)

December 23, 2019 through January 1, 2020 (Winter Holiday)

January 20, 2020 (Martin Luther King Day)

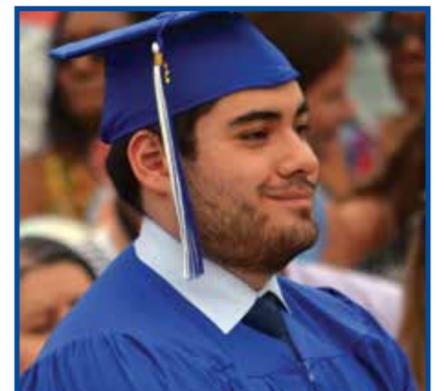
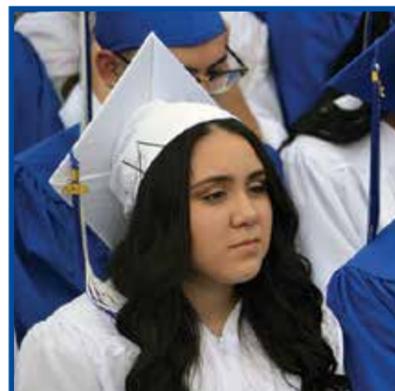
February 17, 2020 (President's Day)

April 6 through 10, 2020 (Spring Holiday)

April 28, 2020 (Election Day)

May 25, 2020 (Memorial Day)

Full calendars will be distributed to students during the first week of school.



STEM Comes Alive Through Hands-on Learning

The highlight of the Kennett Consolidated School District's fourth annual Family STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) Night was the level of hands-on interaction at each activity station.

Designed to encourage interaction among family members and to increase awareness of the District's STEM opportunities, staff, students, and volunteers helped to operate 25 STEM activity stations. Attendees had the opportunity to explore 3-D printing, create dough, conduct chemistry experiments, learn about the Blue Demon Robotics program, construct a pom-pom popper, play math games, and explore chromatography. New this year were activity stations led by volunteers from Phillips Mushroom Farms, Longwood Gardens, PECO, and Exelon Energy.

The stations were designed to interest children of various ages—from kindergarten to eighth grade. A popular station with younger students was the Candy Nuclear Reactor engineering activity. At this station, students learned the basics of a nuclear reactor using a plastic cup (reactor vessel), mini marshmallows at the end of straws (fuel rods), Nerds candy (fuel pellets), soda (moderator), and Twizzlers (inserted into the straws to stop the reaction).

Blake Ciresa, a rising ninth grade student, is a member of Kennett Middle School's FIRST Lego League. She was at the event explaining her roller coaster project to visitors.

"I never thought I would be interested in the STEM classes, but the teachers are so supportive," Blake says. "My favorite part of the roller coaster project

was revising... When something didn't work, we had to figure out a new way to make it work."

"STEM Family Night is a great event for the entire family," Kennett Middle School principal Mr. Lorenzo DeAngelis says. "Parents have the opportunity to learn about the District's STEM program, and students have the freedom to explore through age-appropriate activities."

Rising first grade student Aiden Witt attended the event with his mother, Mrs. Stephanie Witt. His favorite activity was the Chromatography Butterflies, which combines art and science to demonstrate capillary action using markers, coffee filters, and water.

"Aiden loves science," Mrs. Witt says. "STEM is a reason to get him excited about school."

Phillips Mushroom Farms hosted another popular activity and gave students a bag of substrate and mushroom spawn to take home to grow four pom-pom mushrooms to eat.

For more information regarding the District's STEM program, please contact curriculum director, Dr. Lydia Hallman, at lhallman@kcsd.org.



(Above) Kennett Middle School student, Maia Lawson, concentrates on meeting the Ringle Pringle Challenge.



(Left) New Garden Elementary School student, Lochlan Gettings, (front) and his sibling Quinn, add mushroom spawn to their bag of substrate.

New Garden Elementary Students Take the Stage

The American Alliance for Theatre & Education notes that students who participate in a theatre program demonstrate improved reading comprehension, maintain better attendance, and exhibit higher self-esteem. The fourth and fifth grade students in New Garden Elementary School's Theatre Club have benefited from these outcomes in addition to making new friends.

Art teacher Ms. Katherine Skopowski founded the club five years ago. A year later, first grade teacher Mrs. Lisa McCoy hopped onboard to co-direct with Ms. Skopowski. Beginning in January of the school year, the club meets weekly leading up to a performance in May.

Due to the club's popularity, its participants are chosen by lottery. To enter the lottery, students are asked to write a brief statement explaining why they wish to be involved. This past year, 50 students applied with 22 selected.

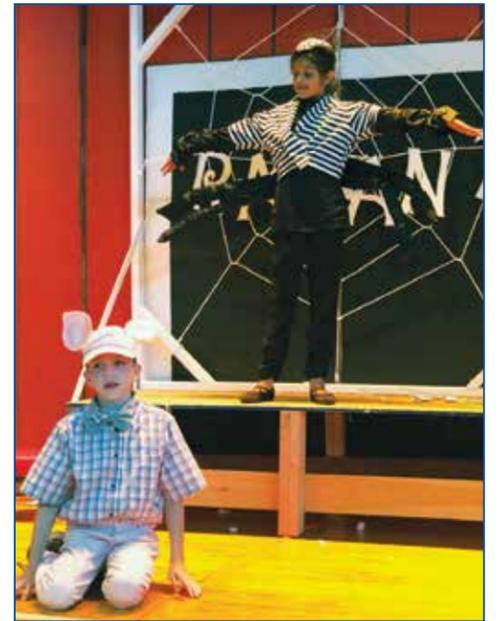
In order to give as many children as possible a speaking part, multiple students play the same role. For example, this year the Theatre Club performed the childhood favorite *Charlotte's Web*. Three students were cast in the role of Charlotte and three in the role of Wilbur. The play was broken into three parts so that each of the three actors/actresses could perform for one-third of the play.

Ms. Skopowski's mother runs a theatre group for children, which exposed her to the stage from a young age. Understanding the benefits of theatre, Ms. Skopowski proposed the idea of bringing a theatre club to principal Mrs. Susan McArdle, who loved the idea.

"It is important for students to have options like theatre at a young age," Mrs. McArdle says. "And our program feeds nicely into the middle school theatre program."

Ms. Skopowski and Mrs. McCoy typically select plays based on children's books. Before *Charlotte's Web*, they performed *James and The Giant Peach* and *The Little Mermaid*. Choosing a play that is adapted from a book allows classroom teachers to incorporate the book into their curriculum so that younger students are familiar with the story before they see the performance at the end of the school year.

Ms. Skopowski's favorite part of Theatre Club is watching it all come together in May. "The camaraderie of the students is amazing," she says. "They are all so dedicated to their craft and to each other...it makes me very proud."



Wilbur and Charlotte were just two of the many characters to steal the show.

Class of 2031 Dances the Night Away

In late May, Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center students and parents entered the school's gym to find that it had been transformed into their favorite board game, Candyland. The scene was set for a wonderful family dance experience!

Lollipops lined the walls, gingerbread houses adorned the gym, and there was even a life-size game board! The kindergarteners twirled, whirled, and sang their hearts out as they made their way through the sweet scenery. Students were able to sit on Gumdrop Mountain, take photos in front of a Candyland backdrop, and hold up signs designating themselves as members of the class of 2031!

"I love seeing the smiles on everyone's faces as they danced the night away in fancy attire," principal Mrs. April Reynolds says. "What a SWEET night it was!"

A big thank you to co-chairs Mrs. Jen Fisher (son, Jacob) and Mrs. Amy Melasseca (son, Nicholas) for bringing this age-appropriate and fun-filled night come alive for the children and their parents.

Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center Principal Mrs. April Reynolds poses with her student Cameron and his mother, Becky Wagner.

