

The image shows three graduates in the foreground, wearing purple and black graduation regalia. They are standing in front of a large crowd of people seated in bleachers, suggesting a graduation ceremony. The graduates are smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the graduates.

THE PAWPRINT

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

KEEPING TRACK OF THE PACK IN MCSD

THE PAWPRINT

VOL I, ISSUE III



Mr. Vance Varner

From the Superintendent

As the 2022-2023 school year has come to an end, I would like to thank the students, parents, staff and community members for another successful school year.

In this edition, the PawPrint will showcase the exceptional talents, efforts and accomplishments of our entire MCSD community. There will be articles on various professional development programs teachers have completed to help raise the educational bar for the district. Other articles will highlight field trips, literacy engagement and PBIS efforts taking place in our schools.

It gives me great pleasure and pride to witness the caliber of students who are graduating from the Mifflin County School District. Students from the Class of 2023 have achieved many honors and awards throughout their time in the Mifflin County School District. This year's graduating seniors have students attending an Ivy League college, the United States Air Force Academy, other prestigious colleges, universities, trade schools and branches of the Armed Forces.

I wish the retiring MCSD staff members and the Class of 2023 great success in all that the future offers.

Vance S. Varner
Superintendent

WHAT'S INSIDE



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Across the district, unique opportunities to explore and interact with science have kept students engaged in and out of the classroom, and programs in music, art, and at the Academy continue to flourish.



THE LIFELONG PROCESS OF LEARNING

Educators across MCSD have participated in a variety of professional development opportunities to expand their classroom expertise and pursue their content-area passions.



THE CLASS OF 2023

MCSD honors the graduating Class of 2023, recognizes their contributions to our school and community, and shares some of their future plans.



ELEVATING LITERACY

Over the past two years, the secondary English departments have remodeled their curricula to provide interest-based, innovative texts and courses to students. This work continues into the 23-24 school year.



OH, THE PLACES WE WENT

The 22-23 school year has included a bundle of experiential learning opportunities for students at all grade levels. Read more to find out where they went and what they learned.



THE POWER OF POSITIVITY & HONORING RETIREES

As the year comes to a close, we reflect on the success of PBIS throughout the district as well as on the service and dedication of our retiring faculty and staff.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



SCIENCE EXITS THE CLASSROOM

Science labs and skills have taken a full hands-on approach this year at MCSD.

At LES, the first-ever Chemistry Carnival gave high-school students an opportunity to mentor younger learners in chemistry-related activities. The students rotated through stations to interact with chemical reactions, changes in states of matter, chemical bonding, and more.

The science department was also busy earlier this spring when MCHS students went to Rec Park to help with Eco Day. Eco Day is a fifth grade tradition where attendees learn about conservation-related topics like sustainability and stewardship.

Additionally, Juniata College has collaborated with our junior high and high school for Science in Motion labs, and Penn State is working on engineering projects with MCHS students.

From elementary to high school, Mifflin County students are embracing science topics to learn how concepts, trends, and standards impact their lives and their communities first-hand.

As a part of a series of science-related events that happened at the high school, the Wildlife and Fisheries class took a field trip to Kish Park to reintroduce eels to local streams. "We had received the eels back in September and had been raising them in the classroom for the duration of the school year with the intention of returning them to their native waters to live out the rest of their life cycle," said Wildlife and Fisheries teacher, Mrs. Huerbin.

With the help of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, the Wildlife and Fisheries class has been able to do more hands-on activities.

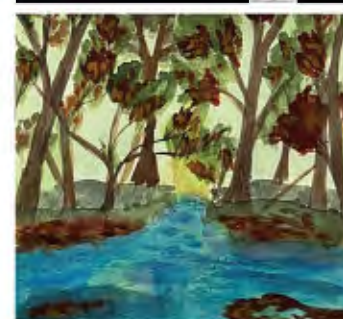
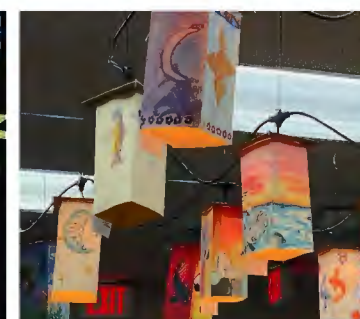
The reintroduction of eels to a local creek is intended to help sustain local mussel populations, introduce a predator for invasive species, and rebalance the waterway.

"We have already signed up to participate again next year," said Huerbin. "I can't imagine my class without the eels. Students taking Wildlife and Fisheries in 23-24 can expect their chance to learn about these amazing animals!"

EEL RELEASE



ANNUAL ART SHOWCASES



Art is in full bloom at MCSD! All schools participated in spring Art Shows to give their students' artistic talent and efforts their well-deserved spotlight!

SIXTEEN COMPETE IN SKILLS USA



Sixteen students from The Academy competed at the SKILLS USA conference in April. Alexis Casner, Kelsey Morrison, and Alexis Wilson placed second in Natural Resources/Agriculture/Food, and Keagan Scyoc took first in Telecommunications Cabling. He has qualified to compete at nationals this month. SKILLS USA students also volunteer throughout the year, contributing locally to the Ice Festival as well as to the Ronald McDonald House in Danville.

LOCAL PARTNERS



In April Academy's Collision Repair group had the opportunity to address a real-world issue. There has recently been a major shortage of automotive technicians nationwide. A group of 20 students had the opportunity to visit Lake's dealership in Lewistown. According to Academy director, Barry King, they were given demonstrations on plastic welding, painting techniques, and estimating. To help students practice their skills, Lakes donated a 2015 Ford Focus so the students can use the parts to practice panel repair.

MUSIC PROGRAM SHINES

MCSD was again honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation. This is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify, MCSD answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.



RECYCLING PROGRAMS GROWING

The Mifflin County School District as a whole has uplifted their students and encouraged them to improve their recycling efforts. Mifflin County High School has put a second recycling can in all classrooms; they now have a bin for paper and a bin for plastics in all classrooms as well as ones by the water fountains for cans. Along with the high school, the junior high has a collaboration with Strodes Mills Elementary School to strengthen their recycling program.



"Teaching is a lifelong process of learning."

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PETE&C OFFERS INSPIRATION

Teachers from buildings across the district attended the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference (PETE&C) earlier this year to learn new and innovative ways to use technology in the classroom.

PETE&C is a statewide event that offers sessions across all grades and many subject areas. Attendees are given a long list of session options prior to the conference dates. These individual sessions showcase new technologies and ways to create a collaborative learning environment for students. The sessions are laid out in detail with a location, time, and description. Teachers look over the list and plan out their days with regard to which ones best suit their school and classroom needs.

A few of the many sessions offered this year were Designing Accessible Digital Content, Connecting Curriculum and Instruction, Robots and iPads in the Classroom, Growing a STEAM Powered Elementary School, 50 Time Saving Tips for Teachers, and Creating a Collaborative Classroom & School. Along with learning sessions, the conference included inspirational speakers who showcased their love for teaching and helping students to find their own path in life.

Online learning's asynchronous atmosphere presents unique challenges for students, so it's important for Alpha Program teachers to seek opportunities that will enhance this environment. To accomplish this, the Alpha staff development theme for this school year was "Developing a Growth Mindset."

PD focused on empowering students to embrace their potential, develop self-efficacy, and achieve academic success online by emphasizing the importance of resilience, perseverance, and positive attitude toward changes. Alpha teachers learned about the "Yes, And" culture and research supporting positive statements. They also developed plans for incorporating a customer service approach in education which optimizes interaction among students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

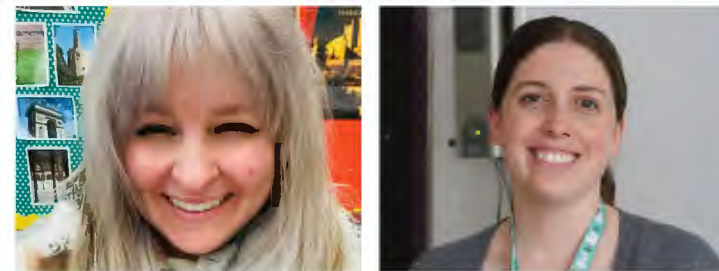
Alpha Program Director, Chris Gill, and LMS Educator, Suzi Bender, attended CAOLACon in March. The conference, hosted by PA's largest online learning consortium, provided more than 40 breakout sessions discussing topics relevant to online learning. Gill and Bender also attended TIU11's first annual Online Learning Symposium which spotlighted MCSD's Alpha Program as a model for virtual learning.

ALPHA SETS THE STANDARD ONLINE



By the end of the conference, teachers in attendance felt inspired and ready to implement new ideas into their classrooms. The networking and learning experiences obtained during this conference each year are invaluable. We are all thankful that these learning opportunities and others exist and are supported by the MCSD.

MODERN LANGUAGE LEARNING



Two MCSD Spanish teachers, Senorita Walser and Mrs. Czankner, had the opportunity to attend conferences to expand their content understanding. Walser attended the PA Modern Language Association's fall conference in Lancaster where she learned about engaging reluctant learners, increasing vocabulary acquisition, and incorporating authentic materials. Czankner attended the IUP Spring Methodology Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages where she learned more about trends in language teaching and finding a common ground between methodologies to aid in language acquisition.

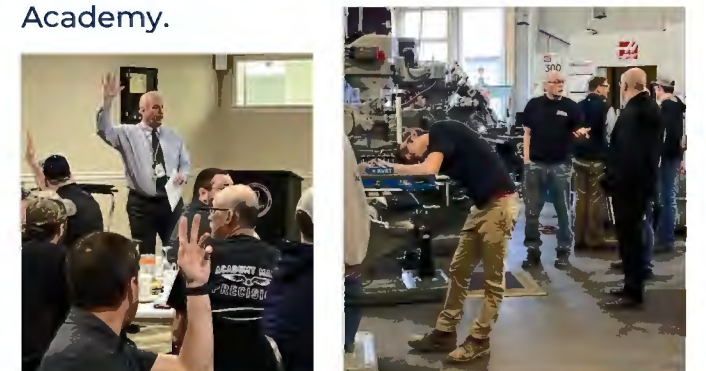
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Science teacher, Mrs. Huerbin attended a two-day training for a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience, held at the IU. She was guided in how to create learning opportunities for students to become more active within the community. She has since been putting forth her knowledge by aiding in attempts to clean up the Kish Creek with her classes. She plans to continue nurturing the young minds to help better our community.

ACADEMY SUMMIT

This spring, the Academy hosted nearly 40 local employers from the machining industry for lunch and a tour of the school's Precision Machining program. The event, sponsored by The Manufacturer's Association of Southcentral PA, was held by the school to introduce employers to the training and opportunities available at The Academy.



SUMMER SESSIONS



This summer chemistry teacher Mrs. Gates will be attending SHAPE MATTERS, a ten day workshop for life science and chemistry teachers led by the PSU Center for Science in the Schools. Here, she and other attendees will learn how to design a molecular modeling research project that she will be able to demonstrate and teach in future classes.

PENNSYLVANIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALIST

Miss Ashlie Crosson has been named a 2024 finalist for Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year. Crosson, a 2007 graduate of Lewistown Area High School, teaches English 10, AP Language, Survival Stories, and Journalism at MCHS. A resident of Reedsville, this is her twelfth year teaching and her third at Mifflin County. Crosson holds a Bachelor's of English from Susquehanna University, a Master's in Educational Leadership from Penn State, and she is a 2018 Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms fellow. The Teacher of the Year selection begins with a nomination followed by elimination rounds of essays, interviews, and videos. Crosson will be honored by the PA Department of Education in December, when the 2024 Teacher of the Year will be announced.



THE CLASS OF 2023

As the 22-23 school year came to an end, 348 Husky seniors looked toward a new beginning.

In their time at MCHS, the Class of 2023 faced many challenges, one of the biggest ones obviously being the Covid-19 pandemic. These students were freshmen when the pandemic began, cutting the beginning of their high school career short and turning their first year at MCHS into a rollercoaster of Zooms and closures.

"I am most proud of their perseverance," said Senior Class Advisor, Mr. Hoppel. "They have faced many difficult decisions and hardships, but they always pushed through."

The senior class was recognized for their tremendous efforts and supported in their futures at both the Senior Awards and Academy graduation ceremonies. The Class of 2023 received more than \$140,000 in scholarship and aid from the Mifflin County community.

MCSD is proud to have 98 students graduating with honors. Honor graduates receive this distinction for graduating with a cumulative GPA of 93 percent or higher. Earning the top spots this year are honor grad and Class President Gunnar Wagner, salutatorian Anthony Goldenbaum, and valedictorian Keragyn Hocker. These graduates addressed their peers and guests at commencement on Monday, June 5. Their remarks included messages

of gratitude, hard work, and seizing the moment.

Hocker noted, "In the past few years, we have been required to work for something that isn't necessarily important to some of us. However, graduation introduces a monumental change to all of our lives. We are no longer required to pursue any particular path. We have the opportunity to choose how we spend our future. This means that we now have the ability to pursue a life that truly interests us without worrying about the burden of a life that does not."

Wagner offered his classmates words of encouragement, urging, "All we can do is try our best to practice the trinity of gratitude: overcome, develop, express. With time, I've found that if you begin to appreciate the world, it begins to appreciate you back."

Goldenbaum reaffirmed his peers' optimistic advice, saying, "I understand that there's nothing I can say on this podium that will have a lasting impact on your lives, but that's the point. You are living your own life. It is up to you to secure for yourself happiness and satisfaction. Nobody is going to do it for you. You have to seize the moment or else you really will just... let it slip."

In *The Tyrian's* coverage of the senior class, Hoppel offered words of motivation to the newest batch of alumni. "Keep



plugging away," he said, "you've all accomplished so much and overcome a lot. Use this strength to push forward. Life is never easy, but hopefully the adversity you have all faced these past few years helps guide you through uncharted waters ahead. Be kind, stay humble, and let life take you on the best part of your journey." Mifflin County High School's graduates are sure to have major impacts in the future. According to remarks from Principal Mr. Kelly Campagna, 47 percent plan to attend

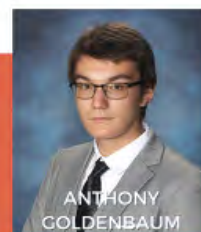
post-secondary school, twelve individuals are serving in the military, and 33 percent are planning to enter the workforce. Additionally, fifteen students will also be continuing their athletic careers at their respective universities.

The Class of 2023 is full of talent, not only academically and athletically, but musically, artistically, and creatively. In their time at MCSD, they have proven to be Husky Strong, and their future is promising and bright.



SENIOR STANDOUTS

The Class of 2023 is a remarkable group of young adults with promising collegiate and workforce futures. Four exceptional individuals were recognized at commencement for their achievements. Valedictorian Keragyn Hocker will be pursuing a degree in chemical engineering at Penn State University; salutatorian Anthony Goldenbaum will be pursuing a degree in Pharmacy at Duquesne University; and this year's honor grad, Gunnar Wagner, is headed to the Ivy League. He'll be studying Economics at Columbia University in the fall. Also graduating in the top 10 is Cory French, who received an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy.



ACADEMY STUDENTS PREPARE FOR THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

The Mifflin County Academy of Science and Technology graduated 86 students this year. Of those individuals, 26 plan to enter a post-secondary institution, and 39 are entering the workforce. While completing their occupational certificates, 66 students worked during the school year, and 50 were involved in extra-curricular activities such as Enviro-thon, SKILLS USA, varsity sports, marching band, and National Honor Society. Twenty earned Penn College Dual Enrollment credits, and 18 students participated in the school's signing day, gaining employment as a direct result of their training at the Academy.

ELEVATING LITERACY

HS-JR HIGH ELECTIVE CLASSES



11-12th grade: Film As Lit, Dystopian Literature, Sci-Fi & Fantasy



11-12th grade: Sports Literature, War Literature, Humor & Satire



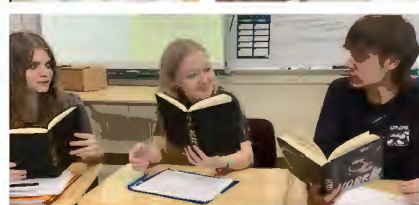
10th grade: Outdoor & Naturalist Literature, Gothic Literature, Survival Stories



9th & 10th grade: Coming of Age
9th grade: True Crime, Stephen King

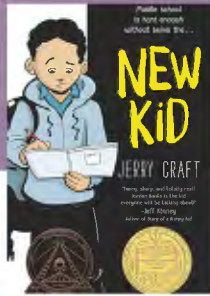
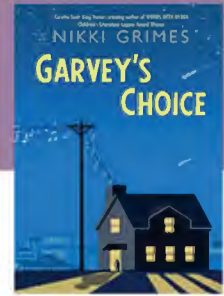
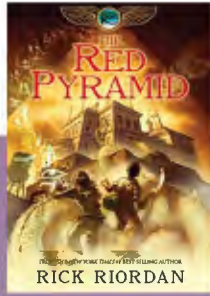
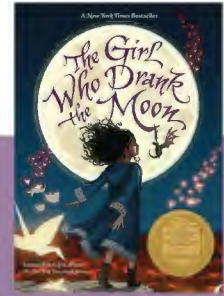
NEW COURSES PIQUE STUDENTS' INTERESTS

In recent years, the Mifflin County School District secondary schools have focused on expanding their curricula to include interest-based science and English courses. The high school made the first adjustments, introducing nine new electives for students to choose as half of their English credit each year. By including genre-based courses, students are able to build their skills while pursuing their own passions. "The kids want to dive into the nitty gritty which is a huge part of engagement," said Dystopian Lit teacher, Mrs. Krystena Mayo. Pending board approval, the junior high will follow suit as they too will be introducing three English electives for next school year. "We hope that by providing options for the students, we will be able to improve student interest in the subject," said junior high English teacher, Ms. Jennifer Freed. Although this approach requires shifts in materials and time management, response from students indicates the outcome is worth the effort. "I am hoping to take Stephen King Lit because even though its horror, I'd love to read his work," said eighth grader Gladrielle Leonard.



MCMS COMBINES COURSES

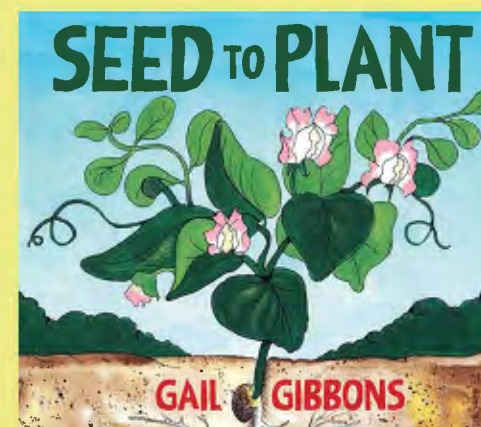
In the upcoming 2023-2024 school year, the Mifflin County Middle School is planning to create an overlap block period of both the language arts and reading classes. When teachers noticed that students were juggling multiple novels at one time by having two separate classes, they decided to streamline instruction by shifting to a two-period block. "We believe this will give us more time to teach our content and allow for more independent reading and writing," said English teacher, Mrs. MaryAnn Haines. "We are also looking forward to the ability to be able to conference with our students about their writing." The new curriculum will include a variety of texts and genres for reading as well as vocabulary acquisition and writing development. The department will spend the summer fine-tuning the new curriculum in preparation for next school year.



ONE BOOK, ONE SCHOOL FOSTERS COMMUNITY



Every year, the elementary schools strengthen literacy and school spirit through their "One Book, One School" programs, in which every student and faculty member receives a copy of the building's chosen book. This year's titles included: "The BFG," "Gooseberry Park," "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory," and "8 Class Pets + 1 Squirrel = Chaos!" The schools do various activities and events for students to reflect and learn together. IVEC created dream jars and had an outdoor showing of "The BFG," while SMES students were able to take a stuffed animal that represented one of the main characters from their book home and write about the experience of caring for it. They also made a nest for Stumpy, a character from the book. LES held a screening of "The Secret Life of Pets 2" and provided milkshakes to those in attendance, and East Derry launched their book with a school celebration and skit featuring Mr. Varner as Willy Wonka himself. Feeding the imagination of students at a young age by providing collective education experiences helps to elevate enthusiasm for literacy early on for Mifflin County students.



FARM BUREAU READ ALOUD

Each year the Farm Bureau picks a book that highlights agriculture and donates that book to each local elementary school. The Farm Bureau visited Lewistown and East Derry elementary schools, thanks to Tina Goss, a retired teacher that set up the visit. They read the book, *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons, to all six of the second grade classes. After the read aloud, the visiting representatives assisted the second graders with germinating sunflower seeds using a cotton ball and baggie.

OH THE PLACES WE WENT



FIELD TRIPS BRING LEARNING TO LIFE

Learning hasn't been limited to the classroom this year in MCSD. As Covid restrictions have disappeared, field trips have returned in full force. This year has included new destinations as well as beloved favorites; here are some highlights from throughout the district.

At the high school, AP Literature and Language classes visited Penn State to collect academic sources for their research papers and to experience life on a college campus for a day. Washington DC, New York City, and Baltimore played host to students from the Fine Arts department and English elective courses. The visits included going to the Holocaust museum, participating in theater workshops, seeing a Broadway show, sightseeing, and touring art museums. Rounding out the year, students from Medical Careers Club had the unique opportunity to watch a live surgery at the Whitaker Center, performed at Hershey Hospital.

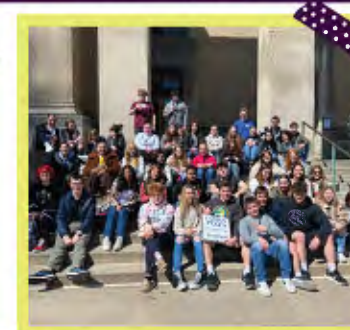
At the junior high, Spanish Club took a trip to Harrisburg to view two Hispanic dance shows by the Hispanic Flamenco



Junior High ski club hits the slopes at Elm Mountain Ski Resort



MCMS band students attend the Crimson Hawk Band Summit at IUP



AP Lit and Lang students research at Penn State University Library



IVEC students get hands-on with science at the Whitaker Center

Ballet based in Miami, along with watching different performances. Students were then given the chance to participate and learn some of the dances as well! Students also ate lunch at "El Rodeo" to sample some authentic cuisine. Earlier this year, Ski Club went on a day trip to Elk Mountain Ski Resort in Union Dale, PA where they went skiing and snowboarding on 24 different trails. Throughout the year, the life skills classes have also been taking Friday field trips to Dunkin Donuts.

At the middle school, 24 sixth and seventh graders were selected to travel beyond county lines for honors band opportunities. Twelve seventh graders also traveled to Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) for the Crimson Hawk Band Summit in November.

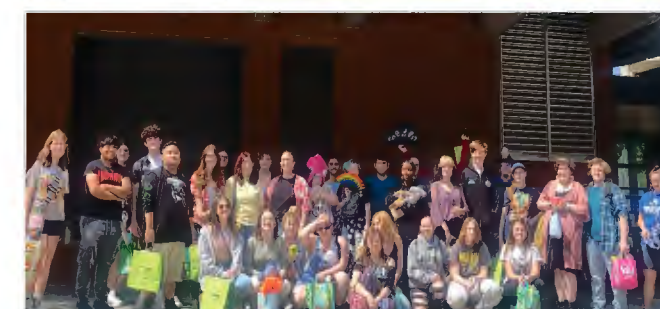
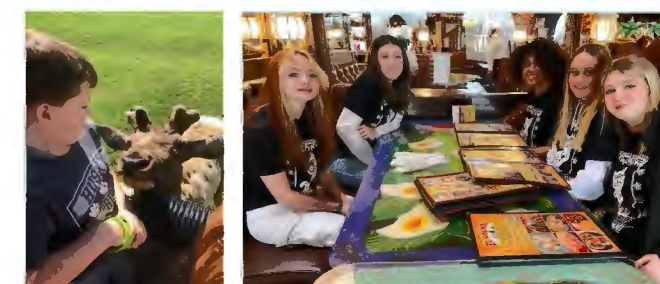
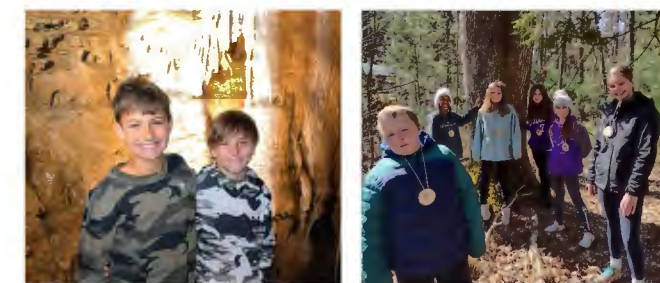
At the intermediate schools, fifth grade students participated in an annual MCSD experience, Outdoor School. Outdoor School is a four-day, three-night program, run by Penn State's nature center, Shaver's Creek. It provides students with a positive, outdoor education experience as they learn about the natural world through hands-on lessons and guided exploration.

At the elementary level, kindergartners visited the Lewisburg Children's Museum. The children's museum gave 118 youngsters a chance to play like grownups in a grocery store, garden, and hospital. Due to the rainy day, a planned stop at Huffnagle Park was not possible; however, the spacious Miller Center for Recreation opened its doors – including two gyms – to Lewistown kindergartners for lunch and playtime.

At East Derry, second and third graders visited the Whitaker Center for Science and Arts exploration. Students enjoyed hands-on science exhibits and got the chance to watch *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West*.

Looking ahead, staff at each school are already planning next year's off-campus educational experiences. 2024 will include a special adventure as more than 50 students from Mifflin County High School depart for London, Paris, Barcelona, and Rome next June.

“
*Experience, travel- these are
an education in themselves.*
- Euripedes



THE POWER OF POSITIVITY

Another year, another batch of celebrations and recognitions through the district's PBIS program. PBIS is a state-wide initiative to increase positive behavior and supportive services for students. Every MCSD school has made PBIS a unique part of their culture through individual, class, and school-wide rewards.

YEAR-LONG REWARDS



END OF YEAR FESTIVITIES



Mifflin County Middle School earned PBIS Banner Status this year, and Strodes Mills Elementary earned double Banner Status. Congratulations and well done to both schools for their commitment to implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support for our students.

BANNER STATUS

RETIREE RECOGNITION

Mifflin County School District recognizes twenty-two retirees from the 22-23 school year. From custodial staff to administrative assistants, to paraprofessionals, teachers, and principals; these individuals have been invaluable members of our MCSD community. Thank you to each of them for their service and dedication to our schools and students. Enjoy your retirement!



Scott Gantz
3rd Grade
IVEC



Lynn Scarton-
Fohringer
Culinary Arts
The Academy



George Miskinis
Health/ Phys Ed
MCHS



Kimberly Goss
Guidance Secretary
MCJH



Valerie Baker
Early Childhood Ed
The Academy



Nancy Rawding
Learning Support
MCMS



Amy Bergstrom
Health
MCMS



Tammy Henry
Paraprofessional
LIS



Tamara Matthews
Business
MCJH



Tammy McMaster
English/Lang Arts
LIS



Robin Wilson
4th Grade
LIS



Karen Hartsock
Custodial
MCHS



Sam Eddinger
Custodial
MCHS



Jenny Loht
Secretary
MCHS



Glen Kyle
Phys Ed
MCHS



Carol Stauffer
Administrative
Secretary
MCJH



Ellen Hartsock
English/Lang Arts
MCMS



Heidi Welham
Assistant Principal
MCMS



Nancy Kline
Administrative
Secretary
MCMS



Kim Stewart
Paraprofessional
LIS



Paul Maidens
Chief Operations
Officer
Administration



Rhonda Daddario
ELA/Lang Arts
MCMS



