

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fox Chapel Area Family,

While the COVID-19 pandemic certainly commanded a great deal of our focus during this school year, the Fox Chapel Area School District also advanced a number of goals and celebrated many academic, artistic, and athletic achievements.

One of the district's ongoing efforts is bolstering diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, which was a goal set by the Fox Chapel Area School Board in June. By working closely and collaboratively during the past several months, the district's faculty and administrative team identified a number of ways to strengthen our districtwide approach, including:

- Establishing a district-level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which focuses on our endeavors as a district and creates both short- and long-term goals. This district-level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has overseen the development of similar groups at the building level to support the mission of the districtwide committee and to focus on specific plans and initiatives in each of our school buildings.
- Holding a number of professional development opportunities for our staff on topics such as understanding terminology, personal reflection, and identification of key topics for the district's multiyear diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
- Developing a new course proposal for the high school, Perspectives in History: African-Americans, which we will pilot in the fall of 2021.
- Undertaking a review of curricular materials in conjunction with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and instituting elementary read-alouds featuring underrepresented populations and voices.
- Collaborating with local, regional, and national experts to support our work.

We are committed to continue to look for ways to support diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our school district. We recognize that this is a journey that will take some time, and we will do our very best to improve our understanding, our work, and, most importantly, our school experiences for our children.

Throughout these pages, you'll also see that while the circumstances forced by COVID-19 drastically altered the concept of education as we know it, we didn't let that define who we are and what we do.

- Arts and music classes continued in engaging and inventive ways despite restrictions necessitated by the pandemic.
- Fox Chapel Area High School senior Jing McCann was named a finalist and received a Silver Award in a competition sponsored by the National YoungArts Foundation for her portfolio consisting of jewelry (wearable art) designed to communicate how stress and anxiety impacts her and others, and how it takes a toll on her mental and physical health.
- Senior Abigail Rickin-Marks received the National Alliance on Mental Illness Keystone Pennsylvania's Youth Mental Health Leadership Award, given to young leaders who shift perceptions and spearhead change in mental health advocacy.
- Our boys basketball team and our boys and girls swimming and diving teams won their sections. Additionally, teams and individuals qualified for WPIAL and state competitions.

I'm so very proud of these students, as well as faculty and staff members and all those who have supported our efforts. Though COVID-19 provided an interesting start to my role as superintendent, I feel so grateful to be here to witness the hard work, perseverance, and dedication that fill our halls, classrooms, and, yes, even our computer screens, each and every day.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac  
Superintendent



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fox Chapel Area Family,

Now that the 2020-2021 school year is over, I can finally say: We made it! Truly, what made all the difference is the spirit of collaboration that the entire Fox Chapel Area family showed during the past year. Everyone working together allowed us to return to school, to stay safe while we were there, and to remain in classes during the year, whether it was in person or virtually.

We're also proud that our students, despite the adversity and obstacles that our school community had to overcome because of the pandemic, continued to achieve at high levels academically, artistically, and athletically. We didn't just "get through." We learned new things. We were resilient. We did what we didn't think was possible.

In reflecting on our school year, I remain so very grateful for all of you. This school year would not have been possible without every member of the Fox Chapel Area team working together while keeping our students' needs at the center.

Though it's impossible to personally acknowledge the efforts of everyone involved, I'd like to point out our teachers' tireless efforts to design and implement learning experiences to help our students to achieve, often in entirely new ways and through constantly changing conditions, as well as our school counselors' managing of instructional model shifts and supporting the social and emotional needs of our students (and of our staff as well). Also, thank you to our school nurses for using their expertise to guide our planning, their caring nature to manage cases, their contact tracing skills, and for answering countless questions from concerned individuals.

We also appreciate the efforts of our district's unsung heroes, such as our custodians, maintenance staff, food service workers, police officers, bus drivers, and administrative assistants for their work in keeping our buildings safe and clean, making sure the members of our school community were well fed, and meeting the other critical needs of our staff and students.

Although I did not expect that during my first year as a superintendent I would be leading during an unprecedented health, educational, and social crisis, I learned long ago that one does not always control the context. Instead of dwelling on what we could not do this year, we creatively figured out what we could do, and then we did it. I am honored to be part of this community and am #FCProud of the entire Fox Chapel Area team.

I wish all of you a restful summer and look forward to our future together!

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac  
Superintendent



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## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fox Chapel Area Community,

As you look through our 2020-2021 State of the Schools report on the following pages, you will see many accomplishments by Fox Chapel Area School District students and staff members. While we are grateful as a district to celebrate these types of accolades on an annual basis, these recognitions reflect unprecedented diligence, perseverance, and tenacity.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our 2020-2021 school year was like no other before it. Our students and staff were forced to overcome unforeseen adversity every day. In the great Fox Chapel Area tradition, we didn't just finish the daily tasks before us. We persevered.

The academic, artistic, and athletic accomplishments that you are about to see would not have been possible without the cooperation and partnership of our entire school community – our students, families, staff, school board, and our residents. In ways both large and small, you contributed to our efforts to keep our students in school for in-person instruction, allowing them to grow and learn, and affording them some much-needed normalcy during a challenging time.

As we celebrate these successes, we're also looking ahead. One of the greatest lessons we learned during the 2020-2021 school year is that, truly, we are better together. We have adopted that as a mantra for this school year. As we work in the coming months to reconnect with one another and reimagine where we want to go, we pause to take one more look at where we've been. I hope that you are as #FCProud as I am!

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac  
Superintendent



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fox Chapel Area Family,

I hope that this time of year is filling you with love, joy, togetherness, and all of the warmth and comforts that the holiday season brings.

As fall faded into winter, I reflected on the first four months of the school year and our many academic, artistic, and athletic achievements, some of which you will read more about on the following pages. While many of these successes do not come as a surprise to me, as I see the hard work, diligence, and dedication that fill our classrooms each day, I certainly never take them for granted. Our students, staff, and the other members of our school community who support our learning continue to be a great source of pride for me, and I look forward to what we will continue to do together.

Just to name a few of these accolades:

- Twenty-two Fox Chapel Area High School students were recognized in the National Merit Scholarship Program, continuing Fox Chapel Area's long reputation of excellence in the program.
- Eighty-eight high school students were inducted into the National Honor Society this fall.
- All of our schools received an A+ grade in the most recent Niche rankings, and our schools also performed well locally, statewide, and nationally in U.S. News & World Report rankings released during the fall.
- Our high school fall play and Dorseyville Middle School musical marked the return of live performances in our district and showcased our students' incredible talents.
- The Fox Chapel Area High School marching band placed first in its division at a regional competition and received awards in two categories.
- Our students and staff have supported various local and national charities through food drives, fundraisers, and other initiatives.
- Nearly all of our fall sports teams participated in the postseason. Additionally, several of our teams and individual student-athletes qualified for state competitions.

You'll also be reading on page 11 about the district's participation in Learning 2025, a national initiative to reshape education in public schools. I look forward to continuing our work on this project after winter break and throughout the spring, and doing our part to help forge a future of which our students, staff, and community can be proud.

Until then, have a magical and memorable holiday season!

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac  
Superintendent




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