



***WELCOME TO THE  
FOX CHAPEL AREA  
SCHOOL DISTRICT!***



## ***Message from Gene Freeman, Ed.D., Superintendent***

Welcome to the Fox Chapel Area School District! This booklet includes an overview of our school district and the many accomplishments we have achieved as a community. As you look at the achievements of our students and the many things we accomplish together as the Fox Chapel Area community, you will see why we are so proud.

From the school district's inception in 1958, the community has continued to expect excellence from our students and the district. That tradition continues today and results in high standards, high expectations, and high performance. Our students demonstrate exemplary academic achievement in all subject areas and at all grade levels, and our students and staff receive national and international awards and recognition for their accomplishments. Each year our graduates are accepted into the top colleges and universities in the nation, including Ivy League schools and military academies.



Our facilities are designed to enhance learning at all levels. Our buildings are currently being renovated and updated to not only incorporate state-of-the-art computer science and technology labs and classrooms, but to make better use of educational space and increase the safety and security of our students and staff. Additionally, plans are currently underway to construct a brand-new Kerr Elementary School to replace the current building, to be completed by the end of 2019.

For more detailed information about our school district, our programs, or any of our individual schools, please visit our website at [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu), or contact our communications office at 412/967-2410. After you read about our district, we invite you to see for yourself what makes FCASD an award-winning district and a special place to live!

### ***The School District...***



The Fox Chapel Area School District is located in a dynamic, suburban community about 11 miles northeast of downtown Pittsburgh. The district includes six municipalities: the boroughs of Aspinwall, Blawnox, Fox Chapel, and Sharpsburg and the townships of Indiana and O'Hara. There are six schools: Fox Chapel Area High School; Dorseyville Middle School; and Fairview, Hartwood, Kerr, and O'Hara elementary schools. The district's population represents a wide range of social, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The schools provide a comprehensive array of educational opportunities to serve the needs of the diverse population and to meet the high expectations of its residents.

## Nationally-Recognized Schools...



Photo Courtesy Joshua Hoover, U.S. Department of Education

- Each of the Fox Chapel Area schools has been named a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Just this past year, Fairview Elementary School was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School for the second time. Fox Chapel Area High School also was twice named a national Blue Ribbon School.

- The district was honored by the College Board in 2017 with placement on the 7th Annual AP<sup>®</sup> District Honor Roll, a distinction for districts that show significant gains in student access and success on Advanced Placement courses and tests.

- The high school was the first school, nationally and internationally, to receive Exemplary Educational Program Credentials in school counseling in 2012 from the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.

- Fox Chapel Area High School was awarded Silver Medal rankings by U.S. News & World Report over the past decade and is consistently ranked among the nation's top high schools by Newsweek. The high school is also ranked among the top 200 high schools in the nation and received an "A+ Overall Niche Grade" by Niche (a website that ranks schools and districts). Additionally, the high school was named among the 2017 Washington Post's America's Most Challenging High Schools.

- Dorseyville Middle School was twice named a Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn Schools: Schools to Watch school.





## ***High Performing Students & Highly Ranked District...***

Each year, approximately 90 percent of the graduating class chooses to continue their education, and our graduates are accepted into the top colleges and universities across the nation. This year, 13 Fox Chapel Area High School seniors were named National Merit Finalists in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program, and 18 were named Commended Students. Additionally, a total of 16 high school students received National Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar Awards from the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP examinations taken in the spring of 2017. These AP Scholars earned an average score of 4 or higher on all AP exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more AP exams.



Fox Chapel Area students receive national, state, and regional recognition for their accomplishments in academics (in particular in science, technology, engineering, and math), essay writing, music and the arts, athletics, and community service. The school district regularly has students qualify and win awards in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, as well as the Broadcom MASTERS® competition. Additionally, students have won scholarships to study overseas from the Youth Exchange and Study Abroad program and receive top recognition in The National Scholastic Art Awards.

The school district strives for constant academic improvement in our students and that is substantiated by our recent standardized assessment scores.

—Over the last three years, the grades three-eight Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency has increased by five percent in English Language Arts and by nine percent in math.

—The Fox Chapel Area Keystone Exam pass rates for 11<sup>th</sup> graders have also all increased, and more than 90 percent of students are passing the Algebra I, literature, and biology exams.

—In 2013-2014, Fox Chapel Area exceeded the standards for student academic growth in 26 percent of the categories. In 2015-2016, Fox Chapel Area exceeded the standards for student academic growth in 80 percent of the categories.





Each year, the Pittsburgh Business Times publishes its Regional School Report Card. In 2017, the Fox Chapel Area School District ranked #7 in Western Pennsylvania and 13<sup>th</sup> (up three places from 2016) in the state. The 11<sup>th</sup> grade was ranked third (up one place from 2016), eighth grade was ranked seventh (up two places from 2016), seventh grade was ranked sixth (up two places from 2016), and sixth grade was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> (up 15 places from 2016) in

Western Pennsylvania. The districtwide fifth grade ranking was fifth, the fourth grade ranking was fifth, and the third grade ranking was third. The annual Pittsburgh Business Times Honor Roll ranks the 103 school districts in the region and the 494 districts in the state based on scores from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams. Fox Chapel Area has consistently ranked among the top-performing schools on the list since the rankings were first published in 2005.

Niche is a website that ranks schools and districts in the Pittsburgh metro area, as well as Pennsylvania and the nation. Here are their 2018 rankings of the Fox Chapel Area School District:

- Best School Districts: #2 out of 41 in Allegheny County; #2 out of 77 in the Pittsburgh metro area; #6 of 497 in Pennsylvania; and #45 out of 10,574 in the nation.
- Districts with the Best Teachers: #5 out of 41 in Allegheny County; #5 out of 77 in the Pittsburgh metro area; #10 out of 497 in Pennsylvania; and #71 out of 10,541 across the nation.
- Safest School Districts: #4 out of 41 in Allegheny County; #5 out of 77 in the Pittsburgh metro area; #29 out of 497 in Pennsylvania; and #208 out of 10,576 in the nation.





## ***Leader in Innovation & Technology...***

Opportunities abound for students to experience computer science, robotics, and digital fabrication projects designed to spark technological interest in even the youngest students.

The district infuses computer coding in computer science at all grade levels. Beginning in kindergarten, students participate in a variety of activities designed to develop their coding experience. Throughout the elementary years, students use the latest tools and software to build coding, robotics, and gaming skills. Middle school



students experience elements of coding and robotics in their computer science and technology education courses, while the high school offers a wide variety of experiences in coding from full courses in computer science to coding in technology and engineering courses.



Students have access to a Fab Lab at the high school where they conceptualize and create using digital fabrication equipment as a part of the technology education curriculum and as a teaching tool for cross-curricular projects. Most recently, thanks to a grant from The Grable Foundation, the high school students built a mobile Fab Lab in a “tiny house” which will be taken on the road. Elementary students at all four buildings, as well as from other districts in the region, will benefit as the lab

will allow them to experience authentic learning – planning and creating using the high-tech 3-D printers, CNC machines, laser engravers, vinyl cutters, and computers.

Middle school students will soon have access to a makerspace in their school. Students at all grade levels in the Fox Chapel Area School District have opportunities to use makerspaces, and recent renovations have included dedicated makerspaces for students to plan and create as a part of the curriculum.





Last year, Fox Chapel Area was accepted into Digital Promise's League of Innovative Schools, one of 19 new school districts nationwide selected by the league for their innovative learning and collaboration. The league specifically recognized the district for its comprehensive K-12 computer science curriculum with digital badging at the elementary level, the district's infusion of maker education and deeper learning concepts, and the various educational technology and research partnerships that have been developed with institutes of higher education and local entrepreneurs.



Additionally, the district was twice recognized for both its commitment to computer science and as a leader in maker education by the White House in 2016.





## ***Recognized for the Arts...***

The Fox Chapel Area community is committed to providing quality music and fine arts for all students. While many music and visual arts programs in public schools across the country continue to be cut due to budgetary restraints, art is thriving in the Fox Chapel Area.



### ***Music Arts...***

Students make music from the beginning of their elementary school experience. Kindergarten students receive music instruction once a week for 40 minutes, and students in grades one-five receive music instruction twice a week for 40 minutes. Beginning in third grade, students can begin to play a string instrument; in grade four, they can start a band instrument; and each school has a fourth and fifth grade chorus. That elementary foundation in music is built upon at the middle school level where all students continue to have music instruction and can choose to participate in the band, chorus, and/or orchestra. During high school, students can elect to perform in any number of nationally-recognized/award-winning choruses, bands, orchestras, and/or musical ensembles that are offered both as a part of the school curriculum and as an extracurricular experience. Each year, individual musicians as well as high school choruses, bands, orchestras, and ensembles rack up national awards and recognition for their music performances.



### ***Visual Arts...***

In addition to regularly scheduled art classes beginning in kindergarten and continuing throughout middle school, high school students can elect to take art classes in a variety of media including computer art, ceramics and fibers, drawing and painting, and jewelry and glass, as well as art history and advanced studio art and portfolio experiences. Approximately a third of Fox Chapel Area High School students participate in art classes, and there are numerous activities and clubs that provide even more opportunities. High school students are regularly recognized for their art projects including being named gold and silver key winners in the prestigious annual National Scholastic Art program.





### ***Community Gala...***

The community held a gala in 2012, and a major portion of the proceeds was earmarked to offer even greater opportunities to enhance the exemplary music and fine arts programs offered in the district. Two noteworthy opportunities for students were made possible from the funds raised. First, an artist-in-residence project at the high school involved more than 100 students from all art media designing and creating huge mosaic murals that are on display at the high school. In 2017, an all-elementary guest music artist program involved every student at all four buildings and culminated in an evening community sing performance. Additionally, both an elementary choir piece and a band piece were commissioned to be written with Gala funds.

The commitment to arts education and the quality of the music program is why the school district has been named a 2017 Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation for the sixth year in a row. Other noteworthy recognitions in music and the fine arts at the high school include the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools exemplary educational program credential in music in 2012, and the high school art program being named an exemplary educational program in 2015, the first school to be given this distinction both nationally and internationally.





## ***Noteworthy Accomplishments of Our Staff...***

The accomplishments of our students would not be possible without the exemplary staff members who deliver the instructional program. Every year, Fox Chapel Area administrators and teachers are chosen for leadership positions and are recognized by national, state, and regional organizations for their accomplishments. Just in the past year, Alison Francis, facilitator of the district's Creativity and Literacy Program, was one of 10 first-place winners in the Henry Ford Teacher Innovator Award for her work inspiring creativity, innovation, and problem solving. Earlier this year, Mrs. Francis was named the 2017 Carnegie Science Center's Elementary

Educator of the Year. High school orchestra teacher Mairi Cooper, who was Pennsylvania's 2015 Teacher of the Year, was a recipient of the 2017 Carson Scholars Fund Power of Excellence Award.

Additionally, Superintendent Gene Freeman, Ed.D., was recently elected to the Frick Pittsburgh Board of Trustees to serve as a Term Trustee. Other commendations have included the Outstanding Superintendent Award from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA), the 2012 PMEA District 1 Citation of Excellence, the 2011 Assistant Principal of the Year, the Yale Distinguished Music Educator Award, and a Disney Teacher Award.



## ***A Few More Facts...***

- Fox Chapel Area High School operates on a flexible block schedule configured with semester-long courses, similar to the college-semester format, with most major subjects offered five days per week, 80-minutes per class. Additional half-credit elective courses are offered two or three days per week for a semester.

- The elementary program features full-day kindergarten. This provides a more rigorous academic program and enables kindergarten students to be engaged in the same special area classes such as music, art, library, computer science, and physical education as the older elementary students.

- Elementary students in kindergarten-grade five receive instruction in Spanish.

- The high school sponsors the Western Pennsylvania Summer STEMM Academy that is open, not only to Fox Chapel Area students, but to students from the greater Pittsburgh Area. Additionally, for the first time this year, the district offered a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) Summer Camp for students entering grades one-nine. The students spent a week learning and applying STEAM concepts.



## ***The Future...***

The Fox Chapel Area community has maintained its commitment to a high-quality education for its children. Long before the present school district was created, early settlers built one-room school houses in Indiana and O'Hara townships, the first recorded in 1806. When the Fox Chapel Area School District was established in 1958, the first order of business was to construct a high school so that students could be educated within the school district boundaries. Since that time, schools have been constructed, updated, and renovated to meet the changing curriculum and student needs. The latest major construction/renovation was completed at the high school this past winter. The project included a new natatorium, featuring an eight-lane pool; a new auditorium; an upgraded library/media center and commons area; a new atrium-style entrance; and a new cafeteria, in addition to improvements throughout the building. Renovations began in the summer of 2016 at Dorseyville Middle School and the summer of 2017 at Fairview and O'Hara elementary schools. Renovations at all three schools include new office spaces and



*Photo Courtesy Primetime Shots*

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

Most recently, the Board of School Directors approved a plan to construct a new elementary school to replace the oldest building in the district, Kerr

Elementary School. It will be located on the current Kerr property and is slated to open by the end of 2019. Among other things, the new Kerr will allow for the use of more advanced technologies designed to enhance student learning. It will feature a centrally-located collaboratory cluster that will include a large area where students will gather together to work on projects and allow for research, collaboration, and planning of projects. The cluster will include a makerspace, a SMALLab learning space, a computer science-robotics lab/classroom, and a library.



Other features of the new Kerr may include space for a pre-kindergarten program to help students better prepare for school and more open areas outside of the building that would be designated for instructional purposes. The new school may also feature a language immersion program that would allow students to be taught in both English and Spanish. Research has shown that students who engage in a dual-immersion program outperform their peers in standardized assessments as well as other measures. Students from all four elementary schools would have the opportunity to enroll in the new program.



**Fox Chapel Area**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

611 Field Club Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238  
412/963-9600 | [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu)