

PALISADES

COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2022-23

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND PALISADES: *Join the Discussion*

Earlier this fall, Palisades School District hosted an event entitled, "Join the Discussion-Youth Mental Health and Palisades." We invited a panel of presenters from local organizations with whom we have a professional relationship as an educational partner in our community.

Questions were submitted by our community, in addition to general questions, which were directed to our panelists. As promoters of positive mental health in their day-to-day work, several "themes" became evident from this important discussion. These ideas can help to frame what each one of us can do to help improve mental health in our community. Here are 7 things that we can all do to help the youth in our community:

1. Eliminate the Stigma Associated with Mental Health:

Many individuals deal with mental health-related issues; after all, we are human. Feeling excessively sad or low, extreme mood swings between high and low, changes in sleeping or eating habits, fear of how you look, overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs, are feelings to which some of us can relate. In children, these feelings may present themselves differently since they are just beginning to learn how to express how they feel and process their thoughts and emotions. Children who feel emotional stress may experience:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums (from NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness)

2. Encourage Engagement and Belonging:

Children should be encouraged to participate in activities that will allow for interaction with others who have the values that you want to promote. Coaches, teachers, club advisors, troop leaders, and religious leaders can have a positive impact on your child and can help them to stay engaged. Promoting interests



Hosts and panelists for the evening included: Shari Vandergast (PSD School Board), Melissa Groden (Council of Southeast PA), Beth Hall (Lakeside Global Institute), Chief McDonald (Springfield Township), Dr. Michael Donnelly (Asst. to the Superintendent), Dr. Bridget O'Connell (Superintendent), Katie Lloyd (LPC Palisades SD), Kristi Hoover (Deputy District Attorney, Bucks County), and Dave Stiansen (Exec. Director, Haycock Ministries).

in activities and hobbies can help your child further develop feelings of belonging and allow them to continue to grow.

Too much screen time (devoted to social media, gaming or just surfing the internet) can be isolating and lead more toward antisocial behavior that is not helpful for positive mental health. Oversaturation in social media (we all know a little about algorithms that these companies use) is simply not good for anyone - going down a rabbit hole that can lead to depression, self-criticism, or worse - is just not in our children's best interest. Limiting screen time (as tough as it may be) is the first step!

3. Teach How to Self Regulate:

When your child is experiencing extreme emotions, learning the skills to self regulate is helpful and can really make a difference for your child's mental health. Learning to calm themselves when upset, cheering themselves up when feeling down, persisting through difficult situations, seeing the good in others or the upside in a challenging situation, and practicing mindfulness are just a few of the skills that children can learn to help maintain good mental health. It takes practice and perseverance, as we can all attest, to remain calm under pressure.

4. Remain Active and Exercise Regularly:

The many benefits of regular exercise and activity include boosting your mood, having fun and being social, and promoting better sleep. For these reasons and more, remaining active and exercising regularly is a great way to improve your physical and mental health. Promoting activity and exercise with children can help them, too! Best of all, making exercise and activity a part of a child's lifestyle will continue with them throughout their lives! This is a win-win for physical and mental health!

5. Be Proactive - Use and Advocate for Resources in Our Community:

A few examples of some of the programs that our schools use to provide social and emotional learning for students include programs from the Network of Victims Assistance (NOVA), LifeSkills (middle/high school) and Second Step (elementary). We also have provided Trauma Informed training for all of our staff to recognize and assist students who have experienced trauma which can negatively impact their ability to learn. These programs, combined with others like Positive School Wide Behavior and Interventions, Restorative Practices, and the work of our counselors, add to the safety nets we have in place for our students.

Continued on next page

Keep your resolution
@ the PHS Fitness Center!

Open: T/W/Th from 6-9PM;
Sat from 8AM-Noon
Closed: when no school for students

\$5/visit or \$25/month or \$200/year
College students \$50/year w/ID
See attendant to register

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Palisades Community,

At this time of year, we have an opportunity to review what has passed and what is to come in the New Year. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts as we begin 2023.

First of all, Palisades has many reasons to celebrate and here are just a few achievements to cheer about:

- All of our elementary schools (Durham Nockamixon, Springfield and Tinicum), as well as our middle school, have been recognized by the Positive Behavior and Interventions Center for their implementation of the schoolwide program with fidelity! This program establishes the social culture and behavior support needed to improve social, emotional, behavioral and academic outcomes for all students. We are proud of our students, faculty, staff and parents/guardians for their hard work in this area!
- Once again this year, Palisades School District was recognized as an Outstanding Visual Arts Community. Special thanks to our Art Department Teachers for their dedication to their craft; thank you to Kim DeNato, Brent Jones, Dayna McNichol and Lauren Sunday.

Congratulations to these students who were also recognized this fall, they include:

- Lindsay Ulrey was recognized as a National Merit Scholarship Finalist and a top student in the nation. Also, Allison Bauman and Lily Proutx Scandone are named as commended students for their academic performance by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
- Thomas Smigo (senior) is a 4 Time Colonial League, 4 Time District XI, and 2 Time State Champion for Cross Country.
- Giada Smith (junior) qualified for the state cross country championship meet as well.
- Savannah Witt (sophomore) took 1st place in the 123 pound division at the Princeton Open this Fall.
- Steven Lilly (senior) rushed for more than 1200 yards this football season.
- Cora Anderson (junior) qualified for the District Tennis Singles tournament; and Cora Anderson and Jasmine Catanzaro (junior) qualified for the District XI tennis tournament as a doubles team.

In addition to enjoying a fantastic fall sports season, with all of our varsity sports teams going on to postseason competition, we also experienced wonderful performances by our students in both music and theater:

- Our high school marching band had an excellent competition season this fall with a win at the Cavalcade of Bands at Boyertown HS and a 7th place finish in the state championship competition. The high school's Coffee House event is always a treat for the performers, as well as the audience members!
- Our high school's fall play, "Puffs," based on the Harry Potter series, delighted our school community and was produced/directed by senior students Gabe Freeman, Camryn Ivory and Michael Zaleski.

Finally, our Comprehensive Planning process is well underway at Palisades. I wanted to thank all of you who helped us by participating in our surveys either as a community member, parent/guardian, student or employee. This information is the key to developing the objectives and strategies for our upcoming Plan term which extends from 2023-2026.

The results of our surveys were overwhelmingly positive - topics like safety and security; student engagement and feeling supported and prepared; timely communication; and general feelings of gratitude and respect across the district scored very highly. Of course, our organization is not without areas which need some attention. As we finalize our new Comprehensive Plan, we will be looking at student services through a lens of the current needs of our students and families, what upgrades should be considered throughout our facilities across the district to meet the educational and programmatic needs, improvement to our communication methods, and a review of our curricular and extracurricular offerings for students to further engage them and enhance their experience in Palisades! The behemoth task of writing, approving, submitting and implementing our Comprehensive Plan is met with enthusiasm by so many who have offered to be a part of this process. We have nearly 100 stakeholders involved in this process!

I wish to thank you, as always, for your support, generosity, collaboration and consideration over the years! We often say that our district is "small but mighty," and I am grateful to all of you who make the Palisades School District and my role in it both fulfilling and enjoyable!

Best wishes for 2023!

Warm regards,
Dr. Bridget O'Connell,
Superintendent



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Continued on front page

Continuing to recognize the needs of our students and families and providing services or referring families to the necessary resources is paramount to social and emotional development and positive mental health. Shortages of employees and funding in many service organizations throughout Bucks County are limiting the availability of services for students and families. Your support of organizations like the United Way, the Red Cross, the Lord's Pantry in Ottsville, the YMCA, the Palisades Community Foundation and others help to provide food, clothing or services for those in need.

6. If You See Something...Say Something: Using Safe to Say

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to "say something" BEFORE it is too late. With Safe2Say Something, it's easy and confidential to report safety concerns to help prevent violence and tragedies. To submit an anonymous tip, please call 1-844-SAF2SAY

7. Strive for Five:

You CAN make a difference! You DO make a difference! It is beneficial for our youth to have at least 5 adults in their lives who can mentor, advise, and provide friendship and support! You can play a part in helping our children; maybe you are a coach, a caregiver, an employer or a neighbor - anyone can be a positive influence and a good role model! Helping our youth to learn how to be better citizens and contributors to our community can be rewarding. It can be as simple as a kind word at the checkout counter or as demanding as being a club leader or advisor. Everyone can make a difference! Thanks for doing your part for the youth in Palisades!

In closing, thank you for your support of our schools, students, staff, and families! Our district is a caring community, and we all work together, supporting each other and making this a great place to live and work. As a school district, we look forward to providing more information this year about mental health resources in our community. Later this school year, we will be holding a Community Resource Fair to introduce those services and representatives to our community, including those organizations in which our students and adults alike, can become involved. Look for more information coming out soon.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Palisades Community,

As you read this message, we will have enjoyed the holiday season and will be getting ready to begin a new year! This is the time of year to both be thankful and to reflect. I want to take a moment to express my personal gratitude to this community.

Thank you to all of the parents and guardians, not only for your faith in the Palisades School District, but also for giving up your precious time to volunteer - with our plays and musicals, STEM projects like Cybersonics, and the various sports feeder programs. These are just some examples. Thank you for your commitment to ensuring their individual successes, as well as the success of our district.

Thank you to those who engage through strong community service and partnerships. Your support for our district and schools takes us beyond our means. Groups like, but not limited to, the Palisades Community Foundation, our PTAs, township supervisors, and local and state police provide a ton of support and commitment.

Thank you to our wonderful, passionate and committed employees of the Palisades School District. I thank you for your dedication to educational excellence. The example you set for our students is truly "world class." And thank you to our students for all the hard work you put forth as you prepare for future success and becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

Finally, thank you to my fellow board members for volunteering your time, always striving to do what you believe is best for our students, and for making me a better person.

As I began this note, I mentioned that it is also a time for reflection; to reflect on the road ahead. Providing a "world class" education is not easy. One of the more immediate challenges is how to provide the best education for our Palisades students and the cost to our district taxpayers.

I am confident we will answer this challenge because this district always bands together in hard times, and gets it done, no matter.

In closing, thank you all. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to live in this wonderful community and play a small part in the education of tomorrow's leaders.

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and I wish you the best in the new year!

Sincerely,

Mr. Robert S. Musantry
School Board President



2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET

Budget development for Palisades is well underway. The process actually began in early Fall with administrators being responsible for submitting their building and department budgets for the 2023-24 school year. In addition to those operating budgets being calculated, estimates for fuel, personnel, benefits, new or replacement equipment, security and technology needs, and any building repairs foreseen for the coming year are added to the budget being developed for the upcoming school year.

Some key facts to know about the budgeting process:

- Capital expenditures are paid from the district's savings account and are usually "one time" costs, i.e., a new roof to be installed on a building, new laptops or chromebooks for students or teachers, security upgrades planned for school, etc.
- Our fund balance (savings account for the district) is usually not used to pay for ongoing operating expenses like building supplies, regular maintenance or personnel, etc.
- The preliminary budget which is presented to the Board in the Spring, is the "worst case scenario" since some of the final numbers needed are not yet available (i.e., fuel and benefits costs). The preliminary budget is a high estimate of expenditures and a low estimate of revenue.
- The board committees review expenditures that will be presented to the full board as part of the budget process - proposed expenses are discussed at our fiscal, facilities, or education programs and services committees before being added to the budget presentation for review by the full board.
- Professional and support staff contracts, as well as contracts with vendors impact the district's budget outlook; contracts are reviewed as they expire.
- The impact of cyber charter school (*) costs continue to plague our budgeted expenditures. For a student attending a non-Palisades cyber charter school, the cost to the district for the 2023-24 school year is \$22,908.80 if the student is considered a regular ed student and \$51,416.23 if the student is classified as a special education student. We consistently monitor and reach out to those families who have a student attending a cyber school in an attempt to either bring them back into a Palisades building or deliver their instruction through cyber programming developed and taught by our teachers.
- Our current millage rate is 116 mills and your tax bill is calculated based on the assessed value of your property. A mil is worth \$247,182.

Our School Board and Superintendent have joined other districts in the commonwealth to advocate for a reduction of the amount paid to cyber charter schools. They have asked our legislators to change the amount paid to a flat rate, not to exceed \$9,500 per student.

Finally, it is noteworthy that our school district has been deemed by our auditors (Gorman and Associates) to be in a positive net position. Sounds great, right! But what does it really mean...

At a Fiscal Committee meeting this Fall, Bo Travis (CPA and CGMA) from Gorman and Associates, commended Palisades School District for having a positive net position for the second year in a row. The net position of the District includes all liabilities that are not included in the General Fund and not a part of the District's annual budget, instead they are future long term liabilities of the District. The largest of these liabilities is the pension liability which has reached \$53 million dollars for Palisades. These long term liabilities are funded by the District's savings over time and do not increase our taxpayer's annual tax bill.

(*) The money our district budgets for cyber charter schools for our own resident students to attend is over \$2 million each year. This expenditure fluctuates depending on the number of students attending in a given year. The overarching issue regarding cyber charter schools is that the calculation for payment to these schools is based on the District's annual budget and enrollment of students in the District. While cyber charter schools do not have expenses related to maintenance and operations, the calculation is not reflective of this difference between brick and mortar schools and cyber schools.

TAX INCREASES/10 YEARS

School Year	Millage	Allowable Increase	Actual Increase
2011-2012	110.34	1.40%	1.37%
2012-2013	110.34	1.70%	0.00%
2013-2014	110.34	1.70%	0.00%
2014-2015	110.34	2.10%	0.00%
2015-2016	111.24	1.90%	0.82%
2016-2017	112.24	2.40%	0.90%
2017-2018	113.30	2.30%	0.94%
2018-2019	114.30	2.40%	0.88%
2019-2020	115.30	2.30%	0.61%
2020-2021	115.30	2.60%	0.00%
2021-2022	116.30	3.00%	0.87%

FAST FAST FAST FAST FACTS

Square Miles - 100.95

Schools in District - 5
Online Learning Option - **Palisades Cyber Academy**
Career and Technology Center - **Upper Bucks Technical School**
Intermediate Unit - **Bucks County IU22**
Students Enrolled - **1399**

Financials:

Median Household Income - **\$78,250**
Median Home Value - **\$373,300**
Average Assessment Value - **\$34,589**
Current Millage Rate - **117.74**
Average Tax Increase Over 12 Years - **0.65%**
Revenue Sources -
- Local Revenue - **\$34,889,545** or **75.3% of budget**
- State Revenue - **\$10,360,154** or **22.40% of budget**
- Federal Revenue - **\$1,057,572** or **2.3% of budget**
Instructional Cost Per Student - **\$19,600.92**
Cost for Charter School Students -
- Regular Ed - **\$22,908.80**
- Special Ed - **\$51,416.23**

Academics:

- Graduation Rate - **90.91%**
- Number of AP Courses Offered - **15**
- Plans to Attend College/University - **82.47%**
- SAT Performance -
Math - **571**
ERW (evidence based reading/writing) - **571**

Recent Awards & Recognition:

- Superintendent of the Year for PA - Dr. Bridget O'Connell
- Best Communities for Music Education - Districtwide
- Outstanding Visual Arts Community - Districtwide
- Blue Ribbon School - Tincum Elementary School
- No Place for Hate - Durham Nockamixon, Palisades Middle and High Schools
- Positive School Wide Behavior and Intervention Program - Implementation with Fidelity - Durham Nockamixon, Springfield Elementary and Tincum Elementary Schools, as well as Palisades Middle School
- US News and World Report - Top High School in the Nation - Palisades High School

Sign Up for the Palisades Patch

To get recent news about the district - go to www.palisd.org and click on Patch Registration (upper right hand corner of the main page for updates)!

Gender:

- Male - **50.23%**
- Female - **49.77%**
Special Education - **20.4%**
English Learner - **.5%**

Ethnicity:

- American Indian - **.33%**
- Asian - **1.17%**
- Black - **.78%**
- Latino - **3.52%**
- Pacific Islander - **.07%**
- 2 or more races - **1.57%**
- White - **92.56%**

Staffing:

Teachers - **141**
Teachers with a Masters - **131**
Support Staff (full and part time) - **280**

Colleges/Universities

Where the Class of 2022 Matriculated this Fall:

- Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
- Boston College
- Bucks County Community College
- Champlain College
- Colgate University
- Connecticut College
- Delaware Valley University
- DeSales University
- Drexel University
- East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania
- Emerson College
- Florida Atlantic University
- Friends University
- George Mason University
- Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus
- Gettysburg College
- High Point University
- Johnson and Wales Univ
- Juniata College
- King's College
- Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
- Lehigh Carbon Community College
- Lehigh University
- Marywood University
- Mercy College
- Metro Beauty Academy
- Military
- Millersville University of Pennsylvania
- Monmouth University
- Moravian University
- Muhlenberg College
- Pennsylvania College of Art and Design
- Pennsylvania College of Technology
- Pennsylvania State University
- Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Saddleback COMM College
- Saint Joseph's University
- Temple University
- Thomas Jefferson University
- University College London
- University of Massachusetts
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Scranton
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- West Chester University of Pennsylvania
- York College of Pennsylvania

BUDGET UPDATE FOR THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR:

- On Wednesday, December 21, 2022, the School Board passed a Resolution NOT to exceed the Act 1 Index of 4.1% for the 2023-2024 school year.
- The net result of the budget items presented to the Board reflects a preliminary overall deficit of \$3,249,563. This is the worst case scenario as it relates to projected school spending and revenues for the 2023-2024 school year.
- By passing the resolution at Wednesday's (12/21/22) School Board Meeting, the Board has limited the tax increase for the 2023-2024 school year to 4.1%. There has been no determination what the tax increase will be by the time the Final Budget is approved in June, however, an increase for the 2023-2024 school year cannot exceed 4.1% (our district's Act 1 index as specified by the PA Department of Education).
- A maximum 4.1% increase would mean a worst case increase of \$165 for the average assessed household in the District.

There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done on this budget by the School Board and Administration between now and when the final budget is passed in June. We will continue to do our best to minimize our projected costs while balancing our ability to provide the best possible education for all of our students. The final budget with modifications will be presented on June 7, 2023.

TO CONTACT ONE OF OUR SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS...

please visit our website www.palisd.org under School Board for a list of board members or email psdboard@palisd.org.



PALISADES cyber academy
INSPIRED TO LEAD...PREPARED TO SUCCEED

Online Options Available for Your Student
Palisades Curriculum Taught by Palisades Teachers
For more information visit: www.palisd.org
[Our District/Palisades Cyber Academy](http://www.palisd.org)



NEW!
LOCATIONS & TIMES

FRESH CONNECT
BUCKS COUNTY

<p>📍 WARMINSTER COMMUNITY PARK 1100 VETERANS WAY WARMINSTER, PA EVERY TUESDAY 11AM-1PM</p>	<p>📍 QUAKERTOWN MEMORIAL PARK 600 W. MILL STREET QUAKERTOWN, PA EVERY WEDNESDAY 11AM-1PM</p>
<p>📍 PALISADES MIDDLE SCHOOL 4710 DURHAM ROAD KINTNERSVILLE, PA 10AM-12PM EVERY OTHER THURSDAY</p>	<p>📍 BUCKS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE GENE AND MARLENE EPSTEIN CAMPUS 1304 VETERANS HWY BRISTOL, PA EVERY FRIDAY 11AM-1PM</p>

Generally, a school board's responsibilities lie in six arenas:

- Establishing a vision and goals for the school district that support the needs of students.
- Hiring and annually evaluating the superintendent and assistant superintendent.
- Setting and evaluating policies that define the expectations for the consistent day-to-day operations of the district.
- Adopting a district budget that reflects

the community's educational values and students' needs, balanced with the ability of the local taxpayers.

- Monitoring and evaluating student opportunity and achievement.
- Approving the planned instruction (curriculum) describing what will be taught.

School board directors evaluate the superintendent. While not getting "into the weeds" with student, staff or community concerns, they should funnel them to the

superintendent who can align the issue with the responsible administrator at the District level.

MEETING ETIQUETTE

In order to participate in a public meeting, we ask that you complete the google form, linked in the meeting agenda, by 3:30PM on the day of the scheduled meeting. There are 2 sections of public comment - 1) for the action items on the Board's agenda and 1) for comments about anything that is not covered on the agenda. Public comments are usually limited to 3 minutes per topic.

JARGON WE USE-BUSINESS/FINANCE TERMS

Account Code Summary

General Fund (10), which includes all aspects of running the general operations of the district. Capital Reserve Account (Fund 32), Activities Fund (Fund 80), Scholarship Fund (Fund 70), Food Service Fund (Fund 50)

Act 1 Index

The percentage up to which school districts can increase taxes. This is calculated by PDE every September 30th by averaging the Statewide Average Weekly Wage with the Employment Cost Index.

Act 153 - Farmland Preservation

An Act amending the act of January 19, 1968 (1967 P.L. 992, No. 442), entitled "An Act authorizing the Commonwealth of PA and the counties thereof to preserve, acquire or hold land for open space uses," expanding its scope to include all local government units through the Commonwealth.

AFR

Stands for "Annual Financial Report," the fiscal year end report filed with PDE that collects information on the finances of the district. Statements are provided by auditors and there are several schedules that must be completed by administrators. This report, when completed, is posted on our website under Business Office—Corresponding Year.

Bid Threshold

The amount over which the good or service must be bought only through competitive bidding, usually from three or more qualified bidders (contractors, suppliers, vendors). The 2021 dollar amount is \$21,300.00,—this number is adjusted annually, based on the Consumer Price Index.

Capital Reserve Fund

A type of account on a district's balance sheet that is reserved for long-term capital investment projects or any other large and anticipated expense(s) that will be incurred in the future. This type of reserve fund is set aside to ensure that the company or municipality has adequate funding to at least partially finance such a project.

EDR

Stands for "Extra Duty Responsibility," a negotiated stipend for leading an activity or club outside of normal work duties. These are housed under the professional staff contract, but the positions can also be filled by members of the support staff, depending on the qualifications required.

EIT

Stands for "Earned Income Tax." Local income taxes in PA are labeled as: earned income tax, wage tax, net profits tax, or some combination of these terms. Taxes are withheld from wages, salaries, commissions, net profits, or compensation of those employed in a taxable area.

Fund Balance

A fund balance is a measurement of available financial resources. It is the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund. According to Board policy 620, maintenance of a fund balance is "essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the school district and is fiscally advantageous for both the district and the taxpayer."

It allows the district to pay for sudden, unforeseen expenses or to protect it from unanticipated interruption in revenue. Board policy 620 states that "the school district will strive to maintain an unassigned general fund balance of not less than four percent (4%) and not more than eight percent (8%) of the budgeted expenditures for that fiscal year.

GASB

Stands for "Governmental Accounting Standards Board." This board is an independent, not-for-profit organization, formed in 1984, that establishes and improves financial accounting and reporting standards for state and local governments.

Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion

Act 1 of 2006 created homestead/farmstead designations for homeowners. This designation allows a homeowner to receive a break on their taxes directly from revenues generated by statewide gaming. As long as the gaming revenues are high enough, districts are allocated a portion of the funds as state revenue and are required to reduce tax bills for homestead/farmstead approved properties by an equal amount. Approvals are handled at the county level.



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PALISADES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023-26

Committee Chairs: **Dr. Michael Donnelly, Mr. Rich Heffernan and Mrs. Donna Holmes**

Once again, the Palisades School District is undergoing our Comprehensive Planning process for the next three years, including 2023 through 2026. When developed, the Comprehensive Plan for 2023-26 will outline the goals and objectives to be accomplished during

those school years. The Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed by our School Board of Directors and, when finalized, will be submitted to Pennsylvania's Department of Education by March 30, 2023, as required by law. A new plan must be submitted every three years.

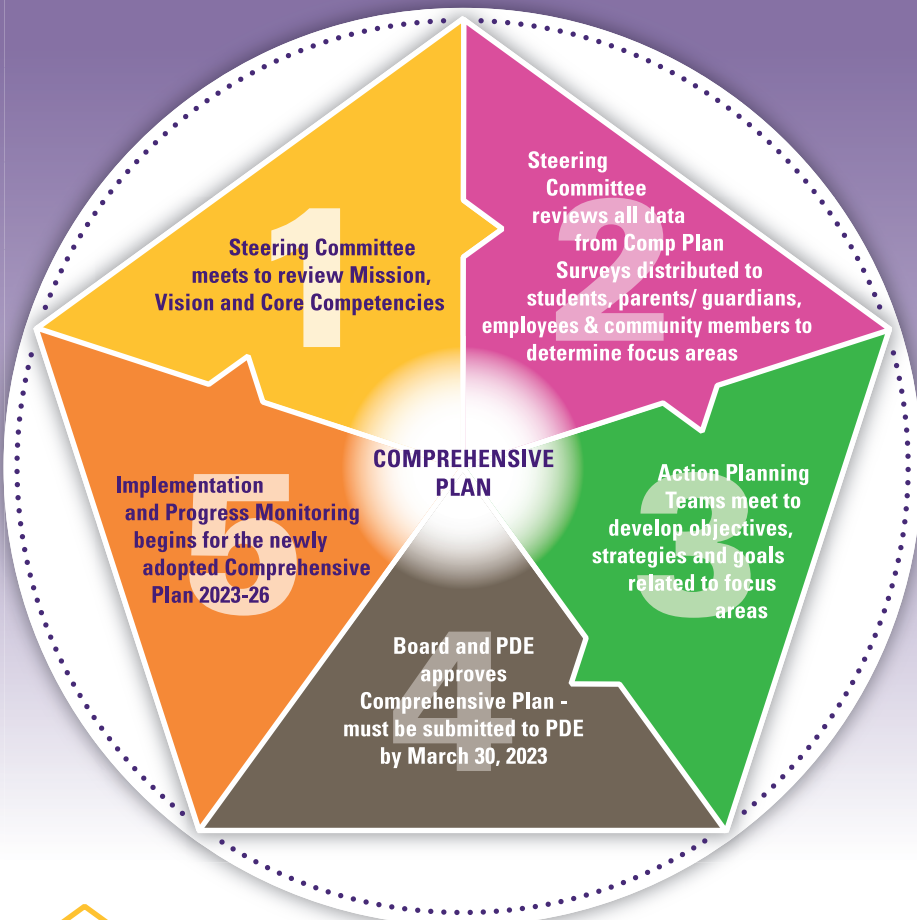
As part of the process, we review the skills that we hope our graduates demonstrate upon graduation; we refer to them as "core competencies." Aside from academic success, the District is committed to developing core competencies for our students; some of which include: leadership, problem-solving and perseverance, communication skills, intellectual curiosity and creativity, cultural understanding, and self-awareness and self-evaluation.

Other focus areas to address in the upcoming plan will be sorted out as we compile and review the results of the surveys distributed to the stakeholders in our community. This fall, surveys were distributed to employees, community members, students, and parents/guardians. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, composed of parents, community leaders, and school personnel from across the district, will analyze the survey results and look for common themes to address over the upcoming plan cycle.



Comprehensive Plan 2023-2026 Our PROCESS

There are five phases to developing our Comprehensive Plan and Core Competencies for students including leadership, problem-solving and perseverance, communication skills, intellectual curiosity and creativity, cultural understanding, and self-awareness and self-evaluation.



Special thanks...
to all of our Steering Committee members and to those who have volunteered to be a part of our Action Planning Teams. The Action Planning Teams will work on formulating the strategies and action steps to move the plan forward through 2026.

Our last Comprehensive Plan's focus was on areas such as Academic Excellence, Communications, Wellness, and Facilities. A summary of the last Comprehensive Plan can be found on our website at www.palisd.org. We will continue to work on these areas as our new plan is developed.

CORE COMPETENCIES (2020-23 Plan; will be modified slightly for 2023-26 when adopted)

- Collaboration
- Self-awareness and self-evaluation
- Communication skills
- Respect for self and others
- Intellectual curiosity and creativity
- Appreciation of diversity
- Leadership skills
- Civic and global engagement
- Independent problem solving and perseverance
- Responsible citizenship
- Cultural understanding
- Learning safety and responsibility using technology



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*****ECRWSEDDM*****

POSTAL CUSTOMER



Become a PEARL Volunteer

- Palisades property owner
- Earns \$35,000 or less annually
- Age 60 or older
- Resident for more than 90 days
- Loves working with children

Clearances and proof of income required.
 Volunteer for a minimum of 40 hours in the school year to receive a tax rebate of \$600 (issued by June 30).

PLAYGROUNDS...IT IS NOT JUST ALL FUN AND GAMES!



Administrators & parent volunteers celebrate the installation of a new play structure at Durham Nockamixon Elementary School. Special thanks to our top donors: Bucks Outfitters, DiPolantino Paving Contractors, Madeleine Sturm, Pleasant Valley Auto Care, Palisades Youth Soccer Association, Cooper Mechanical, Inc., Penn Community Bank, Palisades Community Foundation, and Springfield Township Lions Club

In our beautiful District, we are very fortunate to have expansive, level areas in each of our elementary schools for our students to run and play. In addition to having well-equipped playgrounds supported by district funds, as well as our parent volunteer organizations, we have instructional assistants who support, monitor and assist students during the 30-minute daily recess periods at the elementary level. They are important as managers of the social fabric of

“playground” time, during which socialization and development occur during our students’ free time.

At each elementary playground, a “buddy bench” has been installed; this is where a student who is feeling out of the fray for whatever reason, can sit down. By doing this, the student is signifying that they would like to have someone play with or talk with them. Our principals and staff talk with children about having this opportunity and how to use it; also students

learn how to be a good friend and how to help a fellow student who is waiting on the buddy bench. Programs like Second Step at the elementary level and Schoolwide Positive Interventions and Behavioral Supports at the elementary and middle levels, help to reinforce what it means to be a good citizen while at school or using our buses.

In addition to a variety of other jungle gyms and play structures, our schools have gaga pits installed. They are enormously popular with our students. They take turns playing gaga and teaching others how to play. Of course, the games are also monitored by adults so they are not too competitive! Finally, walking paths complete each of our playgrounds for those who want to simply walk and talk while getting some exercise and fresh air!

“Children have the opportunity to develop relationships with others outside of their own circle of friends quickly and on the playground is a great way for this to happen organically.”

- Mr. Blocher, Elementary Wellness/Fitness Teacher

The benefits of activity for children is well-documented as an important part of the school day. We are thankful to have the financial support we need to provide an engaging and safe environment for our children to stay active!