



Summer Newsletter 2022

Quakertown Community School Board



Driver alert: Video enforcement to begin

Levy School Buses are equipped with stop-arm cameras

The Quakertown Community School Board has entered into an agreement dedicated to student transportation safety with Bus-Patrol, which is equipping Levy School Buses with stop-arm enforcement cameras to deter drivers from illegally passing stopped school buses.

BusPatrol's camera system is positioned to capture vehicles that pass a school bus while the stop arm is extended and flashing red lights are activated. Law enforcement, through QCSD partnerships with Quakertown Borough, Richland Township, and State Police, will review the footage to determine whether to issue a violation by mail.

"I love this," said Board member Todd Hip-

pauf, a ye in the 6-2 vote. "I think this is a no-brainer."

Janet Pelone, Quakertown Community School District's Director of Transportation and Pupil Services, said "We hope this program will help bring awareness to the community to be more careful around school buses at any time of day. We want everyone to get where they are going, but to do so safely."

Levy School Bus drivers have spoken positively of the program, which is in line with PA Motor Vehicle Code § 3345, and is scheduled to begin in mid-September.

Board slices tax increase to 2%

The Quakertown Community School Board passed the District's 2022-23 Budget on June 9th. The \$124.5 million plan includes a 2 percent property tax increase, half the size of the maximum levy included in the Proposed Final Budget and permitted under Act 1 of 2006, the state's property tax law.

The increase follows two consecutive years of property taxes remaining flat for the first time in approximately 50 years. The increase means a homeowner with an average assessed value of \$26,350 would pay an additional \$89 next year.

See BUSPATROL on Page 6

See BUDGET on Page 2

School Board 2022 Summer Newsletter

QCSD School Board members



Jonathan Kern
President
kern105@qcsd.org



Ron Jackson
Vice President
jackson764@qcsd.org



Todd Hippauf
hippau257@qcsd.org



Glenn Iosue
iosue146@qcsd.org



Michael Post
post927@qcsd.org



Brian Reimers
reimers688@qcsd.org



Diane Richino
richino771@qcsd.org



Charles Shermer
shermer167@qcsd.org



Chris Spear
spear205@qcsd.org

To contact the Board,
email board@qcsd.org

Message from the President

The budget process earlier this year had many ups and downs. It started off pretty bleak and it looked like we needed a 4 percent tax hike. We were facing the realities of trying to address last year's 0 percent tax increase (we knew it would leave us in the hole), improving on the class size issues in some areas, and accelerating the 100 percent availability of Full-Day Kindergarten. This Board decision required hiring more teachers (~\$1.7MM).

Add to contractual commitments we can't avoid; \$1MM Retirement Fund (PSERS), \$1.5MM Teacher raises, \$900K support staff raises, and additional personnel costs at Upper Bucks Technical School.

Toss the above with a heavy dose of inflation that was rearing its ugly head in June, we are far from being in a time of predictable economic weather. Therefore, the increase of 2 percent gets us closer to a balanced budget with a higher degree of confidence should things turn for the worse.

Process Improvement

Switching gears, one of the things we will continue to strive to do better on: **Slow down to go fast.**

This means we will begin a new cadence in September. Ideally, all substantial items must be brought up – usually through an appropriate committee – in at least one meeting before being brought to the board for any action. (Naturally, exceptions may occur



Jon Kern

due to unforeseen circumstances.)

This gives the Board and everyone else time to learn more of the thought processes behind the proposals, to digest the information, to provide feedback, and for folks to feel heard.

By bringing topics up and processing them more slowly, we can be more inclusive with stakeholders in the community, and get to our destination more quickly – and with less friction.

Committee Meetings For All

Coming in September, our four committee meetings are distributed so folks can attend every meeting should one so choose! Facilities and Policy will be held before the first Board meeting each month while Finance and Education will precede the second meeting. And they will be recorded just like our regular Board meetings. Now you can watch the sausage being made ;-).

Let's Talk Strategy

This year we will embark upon a journey to provide the district with a living document that allows all stakeholders to see the state of the district's infrastructure. How are our buildings being used – versus their capacity? How well are they staffed? What are the general cost trends – including potential future known costs.

The goal is to help see trends developing so that we cease being in reactionary mode whenever some new opportunity or challenge presents itself to us.

BUDGET

From Page 1

In a 6-3 vote, Todd Hippauf, Jon Kern, Mike Post, Diane Richino, Chuck Shermer, and Chris Spear voted in favor of the budget. Glenn Iosue, Ron Jackson, and Brian Reimers voted against it.

When the budget was adopted on June 9th, the deficit (excluding \$1.2 million in budgetary reserve) was \$2.6 million. Since that time, however, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed its budget, signed by Gov. Tom Wolf. Increases to Basic and Special Education Funding have decreased QCSD's budget deficit to approximately \$1.2 million.

The budget includes a \$5.1 million rise in spending based on decisions and commitments made by the Board, including:

- * Mid-Year Class Size Reductions, 3.5

full-time employees (FTE) \$364,217

- * Quakertown Educational Support Personnel Association (QESPA) Memorandum of Understanding \$438,524

- * Universal Full-Day Kindergarten (4 FTE) \$423,392

- * Additional Staffing Requirements (7 FTE) \$876,000

- * QESPA Maintenance Salary Increases \$74,880

- * 2022-23 Quakertown Community Education Association Contractual Increase \$2.4 million

- * 2022-23 QESPA Contractual Increase \$518,000

Several Board members said in the future the body must do more to seek cost-savings measures. One strategy Directors supported was to change from 2-tier

busing to 3-tier busing, meaning that each level (elementary, middle, and high school) would have its own start time and its own busing tier. The estimated savings from making this change was 2 to 5 buses, a savings of \$120,000 to \$300,000. In addition, the need for fewer buses helps eliminate the bus driver shortages that caused cancellations and service interruptions last year, which negatively affected many QCSD families.

Still, after two years without a tax increase, some Board members were unhappy with the tax rate rising, even at half the rate the Act 1 index allowed. Mr. Jackson criticized Directors for being "too comfortable" with raising taxes. Mr. Shermer, however, cited historically high inflation and gas prices. "The 2 percent hedges our bet," he said. "We have to have a bit of leeway because we don't know what's going to happen with the economy, and we can't run out of money."

Class of 2022 embraced its defining moments

The Quakertown Community High School community celebrated more than 400 seniors as a group who embraced opportunities and persevered through challenges. In a packed Alumni Field on a beautiful June 8th evening, these students were recognized at the 2022 Commencement Ceremony for their sacrifices through the difficult years of COVID and how they adapted in ways that demonstrated true character.

Class advisor Sandi Frisch told the students their life will be filled with defining moments. "Tonight is one of them," she said. "Many more are on your horizon, like finding your future career, building relationships with friends and future partners, traveling, having children, and even celebrating a night like tonight with those children."

Representing the Class of 2022 advisors - Lindsay Alcaro, Adriane Carickhoff, and Bethany Fuller - Mrs. Frisch shared with the audience of proud family members how students "learned new skills, and used your ideas and imagination to survive in a new uncertain environment. You stood and faced these moments and embraced opportunities. Class of 2022, you amazed and inspired us with your dedication."

Just two days after the community rallied with support in the third annual Parade of Graduates down Park Avenue and Juniper Street, grads enjoyed a fireworks display following the celebratory tossing of caps into the air. Then it became an emotional scene as students and teachers found people to embrace and soak in the final moments of their K-12 student life.

It was a glorious night as everyone was entertained by the QCHS band and chorus, listened to the words of Principal Mattias van't Hoenderdaal, School Board President Jonathan Kern, and student leaders Madelyn LaBonge, John Juszyński, Amelia Cianciola, and Madison Jeffery.

"It is my hope that we have instilled in you a desire to grow in character - that we have made just a small contribution in your journey to becoming a person who is unwilling to give up when they fail," Mr. V said. "A person who will always work hard, care about those around you and build strong relationships, and that you stay true to who you are. That you dedicate yourself to becoming just a little better every day, and that you start taking pleasure - not in the destination alone - but in the journey itself."

Commencement 2022

Special Section:

qcsd.org



The Class of 2022 included:

- ♦ **64 who earned membership in the National Honor Society and 10 who earned membership in the National Technical Honor Society.**
- ♦ **50 who achieved Advanced Placement Scholar recognition by their 11th-grade year, including 15 with Honors, and 14 with Distinction.**
- ♦ **Eight students who earned AP Capstone diplomas: Yelizaveta Hernandez, Eliza Menser, Delaney Peckham, Madelyn LaBonge, Alexis Mowrer, Lucas Schwartz, Paul Lancos, and Sara Nouri.**
- ♦ **\$9 million in scholarships.**

Where they're heading

Our grads will be attending Azusa Pacific, Boston College, Carnegie Mellon, Clemson, Coastal Carolina, Culinary Institute of America, Delaware Valley College, DeSales, Drexel, George Washington, Georgia, Illinois, James Madison, Notre Dame, Penn State, Pitt, Rochester Institute of Technology, Seton Hall, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, Temple, Tennessee, Vanderbilt, Western Welding Academy, Widener.

What they're studying

Our grads will be majoring in everything from Aerospace and Astrophysics to Zoo Science. Majors include Carpentry, Plumbing, and Heavy Machine Operations on the trade side. Others will learn Acting, Biology, Cinema, TV and Media Production, Criminal Justice, Economics, Engineering (Chemical, Electrical, Mechanical), Exercise Science, Fashion Design, Forensics, Funeral Service, Graphic Design, International Affairs, Kinesiology, Marine Biology, Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Nursing, Pharmacology, Physics, Political Science, Pre-Med, Psychology, Small Animal Science, and Sports Communication.

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Madison D'Cruz

Pennsylvania Army National Guard



"The military has been a part of my family for generations. Every single generation from beyond the past years has served. I

chose to serve this country not just for my family but for the people. It moves me to protect the freedom of our people. To show young women like me that anything is possible. Chase your dreams. Be that officer. Be that Sergeant. Be the Commander. Show the world that you are capable of whatever you set your mind to. The only thing to fear is fear itself."

Dominick Peterson

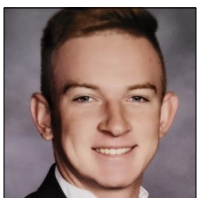
US Coast Guard

"Having the opportunity to serve your country and become a truly honorable man is something to marvel. I want to put a real reason to my profession in serving and protecting others, whilst pushing myself to become the man I want to be."



Freddie Steinmetz

US Marine Corps



"I chose the Marine Corps for the pride and history that the Corps holds as well as the challenge that will be provided."

Ethan Timer

US Air Force

"I want to serve my country and with an extensive military family who served in WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, it was the natural choice."



QCSD grads entering the military

As we celebrate all 2022 graduates, the Quakertown Community School District wanted to take a moment for a special tribute to the 11 individuals who will be enlisting in the military. (Two grads chose not to take part).

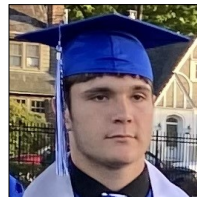
To those who will selflessly serve and stand guard, we thank you and pray for your safety.

Ladies and gentlemen, please take a moment to read about QCSD's 2022 graduates and future military leaders.

Kaden Roesener

US Marine Corps

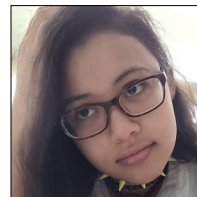
"I choose the military because it is something I have been wanting to do my whole life, and I wanted to be like my dad who was also in the Marines."



Alexia Ramirez

United States Navy

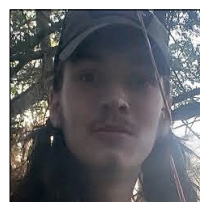
"I choose the military because it seemed like the best option for me. I personally didn't enjoy school so college wasn't really an option for me. Plus, the benefits that the military will give me can help me in the long run."



Daulton Grainger

United States Army

"I wanted to serve my country, and I wanted to do this since I was 10 years old."



Shay Causerano

US Marine Corps

"I have always been focused on the idea of joining some branch of the military all throughout high school, it was only until this year I came to the realization it was going to be the Marines. The Marines is known as the toughest branch, and I have never shied away from something that is going to heavily challenge me and what I'm capable of."



Andrew Proffit

United States Navy

"I chose the Navy because I have always wanted to serve my country and do more. I have always felt a duty to help those in need and what better way than to join the Navy, which has the best job opportunities and training to become a nuclear engineer or a pilot."



Special Edition Newsletter

For more information about the QCHS grads entering the military, go to <https://www.smores.com/phgsq>

Fulbright award for 2018 QCHS grad



Sadie Fowler, a 2018 Quakertown Community High School graduate, will be completing a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant award in Italy from October 2022 to June 2023.

"The Fulbright award is the perfect way for me to combine my interests in International Studies, Educational Studies, and Italian," said Sadie, who thanked Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner for his "encouragement" during her time in Quakertown and at Dickinson College. "It's something I have never forgotten."

"I'm so excited for the opportunity to use my TEFL (Teach English as a Foreign Language) experience from International TEFL Academy. I would never have believed that completing their course in 2020 would help me two years later with this Fulbright opportunity."

Sadie graduated in May from Dickinson magna cum laude with a B.A. in International Studies (with honors) and Educational Studies, and a minor in Italian. She is a certified TEFL Level 5 instructor.



Graduation parade

Quakertown Community High School celebrated its 2022 graduates on June 6 with a parade around Park Ave and Juniper Streets. Friends, families, and residents took their spots along the sidewalks for the third year in a row, enjoying the tradition that began in 2020 when COVID prevented the traditional commencement ceremony. The District appreciates the efforts and presence of local police and firefighters to keep students and their families safe during the event.

QCSD School Start Times

School	Start	End
High School	8:15 AM	3:00 PM
Strayer MS	7:30 AM	2:15 PM
6th Grade Center	7:30 AM	2:15 PM
Elementary	9:20 AM	3:50 PM

LifeSpan expands before- and after-school services

LifeSpan is expanding its before- and after-school care services for Quakertown Community School District families and moving that program to the Sixth Grade Center, 349 South 9th Street.

All Pre-K to Sixth Grade students who attend QCSD schools are welcome to sign up for before- and after-school care. Levy School Bus Co. will provide transportation to and from the elementary schools.

LifeSpan offers daily breakfast, after-school snacks, and fun activities for your children to enjoy during their out-of-school time. The hours of operations are 6:30 to 9:20 a.m. and 2:15 to 6 p.m., per the QCSD school calendar.

Please contact Miranda Grey at mgrey@lq.org or 267-347-0985 for further enrollment details.

Baseball team recognized for academic excellence

For the third time in four years, the Quakertown Community High School baseball team is receiving national recognition for its academic success. See the QCHS website under "News" for the story (<https://hs.qcsc.org>).

QCHS rises in U.S. News 2022 rankings

The US News High School 2022 rankings placed Quakertown Community High School in the top 16 percent of Pennsylvania's 718 high schools. QCHS is ranked number 113 in the state.

This is an improvement from a year ago when QCHS ranked 122.

"By earning a national ranking in the top 40 percent, Quakertown Community High School achieved status as a U.S. News Best High School," said Mark W. White, vice president for U.S. News & World Report. QCHS has ranked as a "Best" high school since 2014.

The data used in this edition is from the 2019-2020 academic school year. The methodology used focused on six factors: college readiness (30 percent); state assessment proficiency (20 percent); state assessment performance (20 percent); underserved student performance (10 percent); college curriculum



breadth (10 percent); and graduation rate (10 percent).

Here's how other schools fared in Bucks County and nearby.

Bucks County
Central Bucks East, 8
New Hope-Solebury, 10
Central Bucks West, 34

Central Bucks South, 37
Council Rock North, 41
Council Rock South, 83
Palisades, 91
Pennsbury, 98
Quakertown, 113
Neshaminy, 117
Pennridge, 215
William Tennent, 285
Bensalem, 394
Bristol, 463
Truman Senior High, 485
Bucks County Technical, 498
Morrisville, 507-676

Nearby Schools

Saucon Valley, 66
Souderton, 70
Parkland, 123
Emmaus, 139
Upper Perk, 169

BUSPATROL

From Page 1

Pennsylvania's Operation Safe Stop reported more than 250 illegal passes in just one school day in 2021, and reports estimate that state school buses are illegally passed 2.18 times per bus per day. Quakertown is no exception. Over time, this safety initiative seeks to curb dangerous driving behavior around school buses.

In addition to automated enforcement technology, Levy school buses will be outfitted with other critical safety features, including interior cameras, GPS tracking, and emergency response solutions. All of this technology has been provided at zero cost to QCSD taxpayers as the program is 100 percent violator funded.

Once law enforcement confirms that a violation occurred, notice is generated by BusPatrol and sent to the registered owner of the vehicle. No points are assessed to the vehicle's owner. The violation is \$300, with \$25 going to a state

To speak to a representative about a safety violation, contact the Alert-Bus Customer Contact Center at 1-800-852-7741.

student safety grant, \$25 to the local police department, \$100 to QCSD, and \$150 to BusPatrol.

Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law requires drivers to stop at least 10 feet away from school buses that have their red lights flashing and stop arm extended. That's considered the Danger Zone -- the area on all sides of the bus where students are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (10 feet in front of the bus where the driver may be too high to see a student, 10 feet on either side of the bus where a student may be in the driver's blind spot, and the area behind the school bus).

Motorists must stop when they are behind the bus, meeting the bus, or approaching an intersection where a bus is stopped. Motorists following or traveling alongside a school bus must also stop until the red lights have stopped flashing, the stop arm is withdrawn, and all children have reached safety. This includes undivided highways, such as Route 309, for example.

"This is one of the most serious traffic offenses that's impossible to enforce the way it's set up right now unless you have video pictures," Board member Chuck Shermer said.

According to the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, drivers across the U.S. are reported to drive past stopped school buses 17 million times a year.

Board President Jon Kern and Director Glenn Iosue voted against the agreement. "It increases the surveillance state, which kind of gives me a pause," Mr. Kern said.



The BusPatrol camera is attached to the side of a school bus.