

Students return to in-person learning

Schools open with new principals, new classroom spaces

Penn Manor kicked off the 2021-2022 school year on August 30 with new faces in leadership roles and new spaces for students and staff to explore at the high school.

Students at all 10 Penn Manor schools returned to classrooms for full,

in-person instruction one year after starting the school year with a blend of in-school and online classes.

At Penn Manor High School, a new humanities wing featuring 50 English, social studies, foreign language, art and special education classrooms and studios opened, along with a new media center and offices.

At Conestoga Elementary, a new principal — Scott Keddie — greeted students as they entered school on the first day, and two assistant principals — Mike Fowler at the high school and Jerrell Birch at Manor Middle School — got to work in their new positions.

Penn Manor superintendent Mike Leichter reported a smooth start as more than 5,400 students arrived for



Teacher Alison Witmer greets one of her kindergarten students at Conestoga Elementary on the first day of school.

the new academic year.

“The first day of school is a time to reconnect with our students and celebrate the start of a new year,” he said. “We are excited to see all of our students and look forward to the year.”

Many thanks to our families, students and staff for a successful start to the new year!



Students take their seats in a new art classroom at Penn Manor High School.

Celebrating 41 years behind the wheel

There were plenty of hugs and tears when Ella Sensenig dropped off her final load of passengers from Central Manor Elementary School on June 4.

It marked the start of retirement for Ella, who drove a bus for Penn Manor for 41 years.

Two days earlier, Central Manor students, staff and

fellow drivers honored Ella for her years of dedicated service.

The school presented her with a banner made by students that read “We Will Miss You Ella!”

Sensenig also received flowers and a giant cookie from principal Brian Malek, along with a charm bracelet featuring a school bus, a heart and a charm that read “No one can ever fill your shoes”

In addition, her fellow drivers gave her plenty of hugs and flowers as a



Ella Sensenig



Ella Sensenig poses with some of her bus riders on her last week on the job at Central Manor Elementary School.

sendoff.

Sensenig started driving in 1980, first for Manor Middle School and then transporting students to sports events and Lancaster Career & Technology Center

campuses, before starting her Central Manor bus runs more than 20 years ago.

Over the years, she transported two generations of some families to and from Central Manor, but

More ELLA on Page 4

Three fill principal positions at schools



From left, Jerrell Birch, Scott Keddle and Mike Fowler are filling principal positions at Manor Middle, Conestoga Elementary, and Penn Manor High School this year.

Dr. Scott Keddle, a longtime principal and teacher in Penn Manor School District, has been appointed principal of Conestoga Elementary School.

In addition, Jerrell Birch has been hired to replace Keddle in his former role as assistant principal of Manor Middle School, and Mike Fowler is a new assistant principal at Penn Manor High School.

Dr. Keddle is replacing Tamara Baker, who retired from Conestoga at the end of last school year.

Scott served as assistant principal at Manor from 2006 to 2021 and was middle school social studies curriculum coordinator for Penn Manor from 2008 to 2015.

In addition, he was acting principal at Pequea Elementary School from January to June 2019, acting principal at Marticville Middle School from October 2016 to February 2017, and a social studies teacher at Manor Middle from 2003 to 2006.

Scott began his career with Penn Manor as a learning support teacher at Marticville Middle from 1999 to 2003.

He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Millersville University; his principal certification in 2006 from Penn State University; and his doctorate in 2012 from Immaculata University.

Scott lives in the Hempfield area with his two children.

Jerrell Birch is returning to Penn Manor after serving as assistant principal at Stony

Brook Elementary School in York in 2020-2021.

He began his teaching career in 2012 at Hambricht Elementary before moving to Central Manor Elementary, where he taught fifth grade until 2020.

After earning his bachelor's degree in elementary education in 2011 from Millersville University, Jerrell received his master's in education from MU in 2018.

He lives in Millersville with his wife and four children.

Mike Fowler worked as a math teacher at Penn Manor High School from 2007 through the 2020-2021 school year, teaching primarily statistics and algebra. He also was an alternative education teacher.

From 2012 to 2018, Mike was head coach of the Penn Manor wrestling team after serving five years as assistant coach. His teams had four state medal winners, eight state qualifiers and two district champions.

After earning his bachelor's degree in secondary education from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Mike earned his master's degree in education from the University of Phoenix and his principal certification from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

He replaces former assistant high school principal Jason D'Amico, who left the district this past summer.

Mike lives in Willow Street with his wife, Ashley, and their two children.

Message from the superintendent

On August 30, as I watched students walk into the new entrance of Penn Manor High School, I felt a sense of pride and excitement after nearly eight years of planning and construction at the high school. Our community has discussed, debated, and ultimately endorsed a new vision for our high school, culminating this fall in a building that our students are already embracing. While work continues on the final phase — a new auxiliary gym, locker rooms and other athletic facilities — most of the core academic and fine arts learning spaces are complete. The entire project will conclude in early fall 2022, completing a process that began with the early planning stages in summer 2014.

The new academic spaces are enhancing the high school's instructional program and preparing our students for life beyond Penn Manor. Completion of this crucial phase of the project also means that students no longer need to walk one-third of a mile in congested corridors to get to classes because all classrooms, labs and studio spaces are within a centralized area. This arrangement allows for better collaboration between teachers and students, more time devoted to instruction (as opposed to hallway travel), and greater learning opportunities for STEM, the humanities, agricultural education and the arts. Teachers are just beginning to take advantage of these new facilities, which provide limitless possibilities for expanding educational programming in the months and years to come.

I'd like to thank our Penn Manor community members for your patience and support during what has been a complex construction process. By investing in a once-in-a-lifetime high school project, Penn Manor is well poised for continued innovation in all areas of our academic and co-curricular offerings.

While the focus throughout the summer has been on the high school project, I am proud to announce that Penn Manor has been lauded by U.S. News & World Report, which recently released its first rankings of elementary and middle schools in the United States. All of the district's K-8 schools received good ratings, with five schools ranked among the top 10 public schools in Lancaster County and among the top 25 percent in Pennsylvania. This



Mike Lechlitter

was welcome news, especially during a time when a lot of our efforts have been focused on challenges related to the pandemic. We are incredibly proud of our students and teachers for their hard work.

As you will read in this edition of *Above & Beyond*, the start of the 2021-2022 year has brought new opportunities for student learning throughout Penn Manor. From a grant recently announced by the PA Secretary of Agriculture for the purchase of a plasma cutting table for our high school agricultural education program to a partnership with Millersville University to expand watershed education in elementary schools, our educators are continually exploring new ways to expand learning opportunities for students.

During periods of challenge, an organization has a clear choice to make — it can view uncertainty as an obstacle or as an opportunity. We choose to view the challenges we have encountered as a catalyst for making us stronger as we continue to focus on our core mission: providing an outstanding education for the children of this community.

— **Dr. Mike Lechlitter**

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Final phase of high school project begins

The Penn Manor High School campus was a beehive of construction activity over the summer as workers completed the second phase of a comprehensive construction/renovation project that began in 2019.

When students and staff returned for the 2021-2022 school year, they entered the school through a new main entrance and lobby, located next to the existing cafeteria.

Also completed over the summer was a new humanities wing, with about



Above is the new humanities academic wing and main entrance to Penn Manor High School. Below left, students work in the high school's new media center.



50 English, social studies, foreign language, art and special education classrooms and art studios that utilize natural lighting through massive, floor-to-ceiling windows.

The school also features a second floor media center bathed in natural light, along with technology offices and a suite of administrative offices on the first floor.

The construction project is now in its third and final phase, which will include a new auxiliary gym and health facilities and a redesigned cafeteria kitchen and serving area.

All site work should be wrapped up by December 2022.

We plan to invite the Penn Manor community to tour the new facilities when they are completed.

Construction reveals long-lost mural from 1962

The construction and renovation project at Penn Manor High School has resurrected a long-lost painting created by student artists way back in 1962.

In May, Superintendent Mike Leichliter was walking through a section of the old school scheduled for demolition when he noticed the door to an abandoned boiler room was open.

Leichliter, who wanted to make sure there was nothing there that needed to be saved, saw what looked like an old piece of plywood propped against the wall.

When he turned it over, he realized that it was a long-lost mural that once graced the school lobby.

Six members of the Class of

1962 created the 5-by-10-foot mural, which depicts life in Penn Manor and Millersville at that time.

"It brings back great memories ... not just of the painting and all that, but (of) all the people who were involved in this."

— Jack Eckert, Class of '62

Two students are walking toward the 1950s-era high school, set amid a landscape of rolling fields with farm buildings, rows of crops and animals, a factory, a church building and a 1962 Corvette tooling along the countryside.

At the bottom of the



This mural, painted in 1962 by five Penn Manor students, had been missing for nearly 25 years.

painting are the signatures of the student artists: Jack Eckert, Winnie Faye Todd, Suzanne Martell, Pam Glass and Cindy Dombach.

The mural had hung in the main lobby of the school from 1962 until about 1997, when it was taken down during an earlier construction project.

"It disappeared when I was an assistant principal," said former high school principal Jan Mindish. "We had done that first renovation, and when we came back in, I said, 'What did they do with the mural?'"

Jack Eckert recently visited

the school to see the painting for the first time in nearly 25 years.

"It brings back great memories," he said. "And remember, it's not just of the painting, and all that, but (of) all the people who were involved in this."

The mural has been restored by Red Raven Art Co. of Lancaster and hangs proudly in the high school lobby.

"For us to find something that was such a prominent feature in the high school and be able to restore that, to bring it back for all of our alumni, is just very meaningful," Leichliter said.

Penn Manor student athletes shine in state competition

Track and field gold in triple jump is PM's first since 1929

Penn Manor's Kyle Murr made history when he earned a gold medal in the triple jump at the state track and field championships at Shippensburg University on May 29.

Kyle is only the second track and field state champion in Penn Manor history and the first since 1929, when Amos Funk won gold in the pole vault.

Kyle earned the state boys' triple jump title after leaping 47 feet, 10.75 inches – nine inches longer than the second-place jumper.

He wasn't the only Penn Manor student athlete to earn a medal in state competition in 2020-2021.

Distance runner **Graham Thomas** placed eighth in the



Curtis Rabatin, left, and Maxwell Davis placed fourth in doubles in the state tennis championship.

3,200-meter run, and the doubles tennis team of **Curtis Rabatin and Maxwell Davis** place fourth in the state tennis championship.

Catherine Rabatin placed third in singles in the state tennis championship after placing first in the Lancaster-



Penn Manor triple jumper Kyle Murr stands proudly on the first-place podium after earning gold in the state track and field championships in Shippensburg.



Colt Barley



Catherine Rabatin

Lebanon League and District 3 tournaments. She also was named Section 1 Tennis Player of the Year.

Penn Manor wrestler **Colt Barley** also had a terrific season.

He placed fifth in the state in the 189 pound weight class after capturing the L-L League, and District 3 Regional and Sectional titles. He also placed fourth in the PIAA West Super Regional Championship.

In addition to his running awards, Graham Thomas also received the prestigious A. Landis Brackbill Scholar-Athlete Award, given annually to the top male and female student athletes in the L-L League. Another Penn Manor senior, Jordan Schucker, also



Graham Thomas

was nominated for the award.

The award is named after A. Landis Brackbill, a Penn Manor high school principal from 1944 to 1968 who was the first executive director of the L-L League. Winners receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Congrats to all of these outstanding student athletes.



Superintendent Mike Lechlitter with Ella Sensenig

Ella: 41 years on the job

Continued from **Page 1**

she never drove her own children, who grew up in Millersville.

Ella, who is 85, loved her job.

"I'd get up at 5 every morning, and even if I felt tired, once I got in that bus, I was happy," she said. "I'd keep driving if I wasn't so

old!"

In retirement, Sensenig plans to work in her vegetable garden at her Millersville home and spend time with her family, including two children, five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Congratulations, Ella, and thank you for your many years of service!

Free meals continue for all students this year

All Penn Manor students are eligible to receive free breakfasts and lunches in the 2021-2022 school year under a school meals program that was extended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of the pandemic.

Under the program, which began last school year, students can receive the standard breakfast or lunch offered at any Penn Manor school at no charge. Families will be charged for snack items and other extras not included in the regular daily breakfast and lunch menu.

Although meals are free this year, families are encouraged to apply for the free and reduced meals program by filling out an application at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/PennManorSD>

PA Ag Secretary visits high school

Praises PM's agricultural education program, awards Ag & Youth grants

Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding visited Penn Manor High School recently to tour the school's agricultural education classrooms and shops and announce the recipients of the 2021 Ag & Youth Program grants – including one for Penn Manor.

The \$7,500 grant will be used for training, curriculum materials and equipment to implement a plasma cutting table into the agricultural education welding curriculum.

The high school used an initial Ag & Youth grant in 2020, along with district funds, to purchase the Torchmate CNC Plasma Table so students can develop the advanced skills needed in welding industry jobs.

Welding students will use a CAD program to design projects, create blueprints and program the plasma table to cut out intricate shapes and replacement parts from metal.

About 150 students enroll in welding classes each year at Penn Manor.

The equipment also can be used by students completing their supervised agricultural experiences.

The equipment is located in the ag shop of the newly built STEM wing of Penn Manor High School.

Redding used the hydroponic greenhouse in the STEM wing as a backdrop during his May 12 visit to



Student Mackenzi Nafziger, right, explains the hydroponic gardening process to Secretary Russell Redding, in purple tie. In photo below, Redding addresses the audience outside the high school as Manor FFA members look on.



announce the Ag & Youth grants.

“Our goal with this program is to show Pennsylvania youth that agriculture is more than cows and plows. It’s computer science and technology, food science and animal health – it’s in labs and on farms, in restaurants and health care facilities,” he

said.

“More importantly, it’s on our plate every day, and we need a new generation to ensure that continues.”

Redding praised Penn Manor’s ag education program as one of the strongest in Pennsylvania. Following his address, Manor FFA members led him and other attendees on a tour of the school’s greenhouse, agriscience classrooms and agricultural mechanics lab.

In all, the secretary spent more than an hour with the students, learning about horticulture, veterinary science, welding, plumbing, small engine repair and other programs.

After the tour, Redding said the high school ag facilities were “the perfect backdrop” for announcing the grants.

HS earns seventh straight U.S. News award

Penn Manor High School is the No. 2 ranked high school in Lancaster County, based on academic and enrollment data, according to U.S. News & World Report.

Penn Manor improved upon last year’s fifth-place ranking among the county’s 18 public high schools, and improved in the statewide rankings to 71st out of 678 high schools in Pennsylvania.

This is the seventh year in a row that Penn Manor High School has earned a

ranking of sixth or higher in Lancaster County.

“All of the stakeholders in the Penn Manor community care deeply about our school,” said Baron Jones, high school principal. “Our students want to achieve at high levels, and our faculty and staff want to provide wonderful learning opportunities for our students to unlock their full potential.”

“With all of the uncertainty in the world, it is good to know that our community has

a solid foundation that will continue to propel us forward through these unprecedented times.”

The 2021 standings are based on each school’s graduation rate; students’ math and reading proficiency; the participation level and performance of students on advanced-placement tests; and the performance of “underserved” students, including low-income and minority students.

Congratulations to Penn



Manor High School students and staff on this well-deserved honor!

Special education services at PM schools

Penn Manor School District is required to provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who are determined, through the evaluation process, to need special education and related services under IDEA and 22 Pa. School Code §14.

A school-age child with a disability who is determined to be in need of special education and related services is identified as a child in need of specially designed instruction.

The following are disability categories under IDEA:

- Autism
- Deafness
- Deaf/blindness
- Emotional disturbance
- Traumatic brain injury
- Hearing impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Other health impairment
- Orthopedic impairment
- Visual impairment, including blindness
- Speech and language impairment

A full description of the services and programs available is accessible at: www.pennmanor.net/special-education/ or by contacting Theresa Kreider, director of student services, at (717) 872-9500, extension 2227.

Annual notices

Federal and state laws require school districts to provide students, parents and/or the public with notices on such topics as privacy, nondiscrimination, child nutrition, open records and homelessness.

Penn Manor invites parents and guardians of students to review the information on notices at www.pennmanor.net/annual-notices/.

Please contact your child's principal with any questions or concerns about the information contained in these notices. You may also contact the superintendent's office at (717) 872-9500, ext. 2223.

MU partnership brings watershed education to Penn Manor schools

Penn Manor is partnering with Millersville University on a \$400,000 project to expand the teaching of watershed education in elementary schools.

Millersville has received a three-year grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries to train Penn Manor teachers and MU elementary education majors to educate students about the impact of human activity on local creeks, streams and rivers.

Called "Shared Waters: An Upstream-Downstream Collaborative," the project is a joint effort of Millersville University, Penn Manor, Virginia Wesleyan University and Norfolk Collegiate School.

"This grant will help make science come to life for students, teaching them about watersheds and hopefully inspiring them to be good stewards of the environment."

— Dr. Jerry Egan
Assistant Superintendent
for Elementary Education

Over the course of three years, MU will provide professional development to 18 Penn Manor fourth-grade teachers and college faculty and provide training on watershed education practices to 500 teacher candidates attending Millersville University.

They'll take that knowledge into their classrooms and serve as mentors for other teachers to implement watershed education activities for their students. In all, more than 1,000 elementary students will learn about the impact of local actions on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

On August 2, six teachers and administrators from Hambright and Eshleman Elementary schools began their training at Millersville University's Watershed Education



Penn Manor educators, from left, Dr. Jerry Egan, Krista Cox, Jarred Fitzkee, Chris Ivey, Melissa Mealy, Brad Showalter and Katie Lutz at MU's Watershed Education Training Institute.

Training Institute, located at Creek Lodge, near the Conestoga River.

In addition to professional development and training, the grant will fund materials for students to participate in field trips and conduct field analysis on local waterways. In addition, the students will be asked to develop and implement strategies to improve the health of habitats at creeks and streams near their schools.

The funding "will enhance watershed education both at Penn Manor and across the Commonwealth as MU prepares the next generation of teachers to teach about local watershed issues," said Dr. Nanette Marcum-Dietrich, MU professor of science education and co-director of the Watershed Education Training Institute.

Dr. Jerry Egan, Penn Manor assistant superintendent of elementary education, said the program will provide more hands-on opportunities to spark students' interest in science.

"This grant will help make science come to life for students, teaching them about watersheds and, hopefully, inspiring them to be good stewards of the environment," he said.

Already, Penn Manor teachers are incorporating watershed education into classroom lessons.

Many thanks to Millersville University for partnering with Penn Manor on this important project!

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2021 commencement held in the open air

First time outdoors since 2006

On a beautiful June evening, members of the Penn Manor Class of 2021 received their diplomas before family and friends during an outdoor ceremony at Millersville University's Biemesderfer Stadium.

The June 4 commencement was Penn Manor's first outdoor ceremony since 2006. The move outdoors was prompted by pandemic restrictions.

In his address to the crowd, principal Baron Jones commended the 359 graduates for persevering in an unprecedented school year filled with construction, pandemic closures and quarantines, online learning and multiple schedule changes.

"You have navigated a challenging year and have come out of the other side



Graduates toss their caps into the air, above. In photo below, a graduate receives his diploma during the ceremony at Biemesderfer Stadium at Millersville University.

stronger and more resilient," he said. "I believe personal growth can only be forged through adversity. Therefore, your class is ready and eager to accept the challenges that await."

Valedictorian Andrew Glenn thanked several of his teachers for inspiring him and urged his classmates to keep striving for moral and intellectual growth.

"We know that learning, loving, serving and creating are the hallmarks of a meaningful life," he told the audience.

"And we are prepared – by the abundant opportunities which have been afforded us – to make the world a wiser and better place. The play goes on, and it is now our turn to contribute a verse."

Andrew was one of five students who addressed the crowd. The others were salutatorian Jordan Schucker, named Student of the Year at the ceremony; Thomas Hockenberry; Naisha Lamour; and Arden Morgan.

