MISSION
The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf educates students to succeed by recognizing and developing individual strengths, building confidence, collaborating with families and communities in a nurturing, dynamic, and language-rich environment steeped in cultural awareness of Deaf, Hearing, and worldwide diversity.

VISION
PSD empowers children with hearing loss by providing fully accessible services and a quality education so that they can become educated, productive, and responsible members of society.

PSD DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE
Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against applicants for admission, or students because of race, color, religious, national origin, ancestry, age, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, armed forces liability, disability, social or economic status.

DONATE
Scan the QR code to make donation or visit us at www.psd.org/donate

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD) has long valued its place in history as the third oldest school of its kind in the country, and its 203 year legacy of educational excellence. It is with a deep respect for this legacy that I formally introduce myself to you as the 18th Head of School, and share our Fall 2023 issue of PSD World.

When I joined PSD in 2011 as an ASL Specialist in Early Childhood Education, I brought with me a firm belief in the power and value of Deaf education. As the child of Peruvian immigrants whose first language was Peruvian Sign Language, I knew how important having a “home” at a Deaf school could be. It was at a school for the deaf that I began to cultivate my own interests and envision my future. In all of my roles at PSD over the past 12 years, I have strived to foster an atmosphere of belonging and unlimited potential for our students.

Joining me in a leadership role at PSD is Mark Apodaca, who was appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees at the June 2023 board meeting. Mark is an accomplished leader with a deep grounding in the Deaf and Latinx communities who brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise in finance and educational administration.

Our theme for the 2023-2024 School Year is “Together We Thrive.” The phrase conveys the spirit of community that PSD creates for our students, families, partners, alumni, and friends. It captures our continued commitment to providing high quality educational experiences for our students, preserving our history through programs such as the Deaf Culture and Heritage Center, and preparing our students for future college and career readiness as laid out in our soon to be released Strategic Plan. In the years ahead, PSD will continue to focus on college and career-readiness, student choice, and a robust academic curriculum tailored to each student’s learning style. And, of course, we remain deeply committed to bilingual education, because we know language is the key to unlocking learning.

“Together We Thrive” also conveys one of the seven core beliefs that guide all of PSD’s work: “Our students thrive when they have the knowledge and skills they need to self-advocate, pose and solve problems, and become critical and creative thinkers.” (You can read the full list of our beliefs by visiting psd.org.) In the pages that follow, I hope you will enjoy reading about just some of the ways our students model these traits, as evidenced by their artwork, teamwork, performances, and academic success.

PSDly yours,

Melissa S. Draganac-Hawk

REFERENCE LINK
https://psd.org/
On Friday, June 9, 2023, 16 graduating seniors celebrated an enormous milestone in their academic journey: high school graduation. Over 100 family members and friends were on hand to join in celebrating every student’s accomplishments as they took their place among PSD’s thousands of accomplished alumni. Over 20 awards and scholarships were distributed to students taking the next step in their educational journey including college, specialized training, and PSD’s Transition Academy.

PSD’s commitment to bilingual education was on full display at this year’s commencement, as this year’s Valedictorian and Salutatorian gave portions of their remarks in both American Sign Language and English. Each shared moving statements about their experiences and academic journey.

“When I first got here I didn’t know any ASL, I felt lost. I looked around and I didn’t feel like I belonged. Later, I started to get comfortable with the school, and the people, and the kids that I became friends with...During COVID, it was really impactful. I felt like I had lost my home, my identity, and who I was. I was away from all of my people, in a new environment, it was a big change, and very devastating...And when I came back on campus I felt like I belonged again, and I knew who I was again...It taught me one lesson: don’t take things for granted and enjoy every moment, because it doesn’t last forever. And I also learned that a new environment wasn’t a bad thing. It’s something you need to go through: you need room to grow and have new experiences...So I want to say to new graduates, its ok to be afraid of leaving the house the built you and your character. It’s ok to be afraid of change. But what’s not ok is to not believe in yourself.”

– Alex, Valedictorian

“I know today is a sad day for some of us because it is the end of high school. But it is not the end. It’s the beginning of the rest of our lives. We all arrived in high school as one person and have grown, learned and matured into an improved version of ourselves...Graduating today, I feel more confident as a person in both (the hearing and Deaf) worlds, and I am proud to be a future student at Gallaudet University.”

– Noelle, Salutatorian

Claire Bugen, Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer from the Texas School for the Deaf, also provided remarks filled with wisdom, expertise, and encouragement for graduates focused on why being deaf is a “superpower,” and some of the ways in which she has watched deaf students excel, prosper, and lead in 30+ years of work in Deaf Education.

The joyous ceremony was bittersweet in just one regard, as it marked the last commencement ceremony presided over by Peter L. Bailey, PSD’s former Head of School, who has assumed the role of Superintendent of the Texas School for the Deaf.

Students, staff, and families shared fond memories of Peter, and Peter remarked on the school’s growth and bright future ahead.
Elements of Summer
Water, Earth, Wind, and Fire

This year’s Extended School Year (ESY) programs were some of PSD’s best ever, with students participating in a wide range of educational programs. The theme was Water, Air, Earth, and Fire, and students were exposed to different concepts of these four basic elements in language arts and mathematics classes across departments.

- PSD’s youngest learners participated in daily lessons all built around the four elements theme, with students exploring each element through books, materials, small-group activities, and community-building activities. During our weekly Story Time programs, students learned about the transition between elements as we moved from one “element” to the next. Students wrapped up with the perfect antidote to scorching temperatures: Rita’s Water Ice!

- K-12 students explored a different element each week, with teachers designing excellent and creative lesson plans that provided students with opportunities to undertake hands-on activities reinforcing their year-round academics. For example, Elementary School students visited Fairmount Water Works to learn about different topics related to water (with, of course, hints of the other elements and their interconnectedness as well). Middle School and High School students visited the East Falls Glassworks to learn about glassblowing. Students even got to bring home two of their own “glass works” creations.

- Everyone came together during the last week of summer programs to celebrate Fire Week, during which PSD hosted special visitors and a field day! Presentations included Monica Foletta, a Deaf fire performer from California, who treated students and staff to spectacular performances, incorporating important discussions about fire safety as well.

- On the very last day of ESY, students participated in a wide range of activities related to the four elements: digging for dinosaur toys, carrying water balloons, and passing around a “hot potato.” Activities were led by High School students working with PSD staff, who served as role models for younger students and further developed their leadership and team-building skills.
PSD has always emphasized the importance of connecting school and work, and preparing students for life beyond the classroom. In fact, over the years PSD was renowned for having established one of the strongest vocational programs for the Deaf in the country - with its own printing press, shoe repair shop, and dressmaking businesses.

Today, Transition Services at PSD are led by highly skilled staff with expertise in best practices for college and career readiness, who have paved the way for PSD to expand our partnerships with local businesses to provide a wider array of career exploration and hands-on work experiences for students. In addition to the WorkReady Summer programs described on the previous page, this year’s Transition Services programming ranged from site visits to local employers, Senior Seminar, the largest ever Transition Fair, and more.

**Ready. Set. Work!**

A New Era for Transition Services at PSD

Creativity and community are both critically important for Deaf and hard of hearing students, providing a visual outlet for strengthening foundational language skills, communication skills, and self-expression. The Student Art Show and Family Cookout has become a highlight for PSD students, staff, and families alike. This year, PSD’s community of families, students, staff, and friends all came together to enjoy a lovely outdoor meal on our historic campus and view a beautifully curated display of creative artwork. Student projects ranged from an interactive video exhibit, to ceramic sculptures, graphic design prints, and watercolor paintings.

**Building Community Through Art: Student Art Show and Family Cookout**

This year, the PSD Panthers are ready to go! Our Girls Volleyball, Boys Soccer, and Boys and Girls Basketball Teams are gearing up for a great season. With our new coaches in place, our teams are ready to take on the fierce competition across the ESDAA.

Visit psd.org to view the 2023-2024 schedule, which will be posted online as soon as it becomes available.

**Go Panthers!**

PSD Athletics is Ready to Go!

Visits our Sideline Store for the best and latest Panther merch!
What Are Thinking Maps?

Have you ever heard of Thinking Maps? Perhaps your child has brought home drawings of maps, or has talked about using “maps” at school. Do you ever wonder what exactly these Thinking Maps are intended for, how they are used in school, and how you could use them at home? Thinking Maps are a very helpful visual tool for instruction and learning. The following real-time examples of how we use Thinking Maps are adapted from PSD’s Curriculum Corner newsletter.

**Preschool Student**

A preschool student decided to draw a circle map, pictured below, to show facts about themselves and their friendship with a classmate and then used it to explain information on the map.

**Making Connections**

PSD’s Library and Literature teacher worked with Preschool Students to draw a circle map of their favorite winter activities. Students immediately made the connection between the map and one they had made in class the day before focused on winter clothing.

**Handsland and ASL Phonological Development**

The “Colorful Animals” song from Handsland sparked a lot of fun language play with handshapes in a preschool class. At lunch one day, the class was playing with handshapes, one thing led to another, and ultimately the game became a Tree Map - sorting with details. See if you can decode it!

**Social Emotional Learning**

All year, Elementary students learn about the key components of C.A.R.E.S., which stands for cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. *The map shown on the right was used in one class as part of a lesson on Responsibility.*

**Celebrating Black History Month**

Elementary and Middle School students created a Thinking Map of Black Creators, and then matched them with their creations:

Students then focused on specific creations, including fashion, and the unique designs created by Dapper Dan (dapperdanoft Harlem.com).

If you would like to learn more about our curriculum, please email us development@psd.org with the subject “Curriculum Corner.”

PSD has created a series of videos on Thinking Maps, what each map is used for, and how families can use these maps at home. To view the videos, visit https://psd.org/fes/thinking-maps/.
PSD Students Travel to Gallaudet

On February 21-22, 2023, PSD High School students traveled to Gallaudet University to participate in CEASD’s Education and Advocacy Summit, which is held annually on the university campus. Students were asked about their experiences and what they learned.

What are three things that you learned in the CEASD workshop training?

The three things that we learned are how the government and each branch works, how the congress runs things, and backstories of Gallaudet University.

What are three things that you discussed in the meeting with the senator’s office?

We discussed the importance of our education and shared the lack of research on the successes of bilingual education for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students. We emphasized that many school districts take Deaf children and put them in other schools where there is less communication access.

Students stayed at the Kellogg Conference Hotel on the campus of Gallaudet University. The hotel is the historic site of Kendall School Division II for Negroes and was built in March 1903. Mrs. Louise B. Miller led the work to have her son and other Black Deaf children admitted into Kendall School at Gallaudet, formerly the Columbia Institution for the Deaf.

Did you know?

Did you know that PSD’s connection to Gallaudet University dates all the way back to both schools’ founding? Gallaudet University was founded in 1864, just 22 years after the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. In the years since, many PSD alumni have graduated from Gallaudet and gone on to forge careers in education, science, government, business, and much more. Notable alumni include John Carlin (one of PSD’s first students, a renowned artist who received the first degree awarded by the college, an honorary Master of Arts), Hume LePrince Battiste (athlete, entrepreneur, and first Black deaf student to attend Gallaudet University), Melissa S. Draganac-Hawk (Deaf advocate recognized by Vice President Rockefeller for her work in the Census Bureau), Harvey Jay Corson (long-term educator and President of American School for the Deaf), Dr. Elizabeth Moore (current PSD Trustee, retired Professor, and Interim Chief Diversity Officer at Gallaudet University), and many more. And, just this year, PSD’s Head of School Melissa Draganac-Hawk became a member of the Gallaudet University’s Board of Trustees.

The Kendall School, and this site, holds a very important place in history. On June 22, 2023, in a moving ceremony held at Gallaudet, the “Kendall 24,” as they were then known, finally received their degrees after 70 years. Gallaudet University conferred high school diplomas to the 24 students and the four Black teachers from the school in front of a crowd of 300 people, and many more via livestream.
Technology at PSD

Technology plays a critical role in all aspects of PSD’s educational programs. PSD has long been a leader in using technology to help our teachers and students to get ahead of the digital curve in a rapidly changing technological environment. From partnering with Comcast to provide each student an iPad, to using Smart Passes to protect students during the COVID-19 pandemic, PSD is committed to using innovative technology to maximize our learning experience for teachers and students.

New Student Technology

In February, our K-12 students received new Chromebooks and cases from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund II (GEER II Funds). Students were thrilled to explore the new technology, especially the ease of use and simple joy that comes with the feeling of “newness.” Depicted below is a Middle School class working on a Library/Literature project using their new laptops.

New Classroom Technology

PSD is in the midst of our next phase of innovative classroom technology upgrades, moving from projectors and smart boards to dynamic, interactive, multi-touch TV screens. The new TVs will greatly enhance the classroom experience for our students, providing:

- Better image quality than current projectors, with higher brightness for more visual students
- Multi-student touch screens and sharing capacity, allowing for more classroom collaboration
- Connection to our LSI emergency alert system, improving student safety

The new TVs allow teachers to design programs previously not possible. For example, the Senior Seminar is a 2-day program for High School seniors focused on Transition Plans and skills, with an emphasis on LinkedIn, resume-building, networking, etc. Smart TVs made the experience “feel” more like a real-world college classroom and work environment for students and presenters alike.

To date, six classrooms have been equipped with the upgraded technology and 25 more will be installed this year. Special thanks to the McLean Contributionship and Pennsylvania ESSER Funds for supporting this important initiative!

Deaf Awareness Night at The Flyers

Thursday, March 14, 2024
Game Starts at 7:00 PM

VS

To purchase the tickets, please visit www.psd.org/flyers or scan the QR code here.

Limited Tickets: First Come, First Serve
Recent Events

PSD extended a warm welcome to over 500 guests, visitors, and supporters at a variety of events the past few months, ranging from Deaf Awareness Night at the Phillies and PSD Community Day to Back to School Night and PSD’s 5th Annual Golf Outing. Below are some glimpses of some of our recent happenings.

Deaf Awareness Night at the Phillies

Community Day

Saturday, September 30, 2023
Smiles all around as community members and PSD staff gather with the Philly Phanatic and PSD Panther at our recent Community Day.
October 2, 2023
Fore a great cause! PSD's 5th Golf Outing was a tremendous success, raising an impressive $42,000 to support our students and initiatives. A fantastic day of golf, camaraderie, and philanthropy on the greens!

October 3 and 5, 2023
Excitement fills the air as parents and educators build bridges between home and school to support PSD students' growth!

Back to School Night
Golf Outing
The Path Ahead
PSD’s Next Strategic Plan

In June 2023, PSD’s Board of Trustees approved its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. The plan is the result of a year-long process that engaged PSD’s Executive Team, Board of Directors, staff, and community members to identify the priority areas PSD will focus on to fulfill its mission and increase its impact. The plan is both an outgrowth and continuation of the 2019-2022 which laid the groundwork for PSD’s growth in four core areas. Building upon these efforts, PSD has identified the following five strategic priorities:

A. Strengthen Students’ College and Career Readiness
B. Define and communicate PSD’s market relevance, priorities for growth, and commitment to our mission
C. Enhance the PSD Experience
D. Build long-term financial stability and opportunities for growth
E. Enhance our culture and grow talent to become an employer of choice.

As a leader in Deaf education, PSD is committed to enhancing and broadening its reach to prospective students, families, teachers, and partners.

We are committed to upholding our standard of excellence and core beliefs. In the months ahead, we look forward to sharing details of the plan, and our strategies for achieving these goals.

The Path Ahead
Dedication and Leadership

Margaret “Peggy” Steele

On June 8, 2023, at our last full meeting of the PSD Board of Trustees, we bid farewell to Margaret “Peggy” Steele following her nine year term on PSD’s board, including six years as Board Chair. In honor of her service, commitment, and tremendous contributions to PSD, the Board presented her with a plaque and shared brief remarks on the incredible impact she has had on the school.

Anyone who worked with Peggy Steele knows that she was an incredible part of PSD. Peggy joined PSD’s board during a time of transition. She led the search committee that hired Peter L. Bailey, ushering in a time of growth and transformation. After seven years of strong leadership and successful initiatives, Peggy also worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition for Melissa S. Draganac-Hawk as the next Head of School. Peggy will be remembered for her tenacity, commitment to unifying the board around joint efforts, and successful fundraising, including working PSD leadership to secure a $1 million grant from the Maguire Foundation to support the Early Childhood Education program and the highly successful 200th Anniversary Gala.

Ms. Steele brought significant experience in governance and philanthropy to her role at PSD. She and her husband founded the Frank and Peggy Steele Internship Program for Youth Leadership Development at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, which provides meaningful, hands-on training in numerous professional careers. She has served on numerous Boards across the Southeastern Pennsylvania Region.

Mark D. Apodaca, current Chair of PSD’s Board of Trustees, states: “Peggy was a true force for good at PSD. She helped position the school into its third century, and brought the board, staff, and partners together around the school’s common goals.”

While the Board and staff will deeply miss Peggy’s staunch dedication to elevating PSD and upholding its mission, we are grateful for the foundation she has laid for the Board’s work moving forward. On behalf of the entire PSD community, thank you Peggy!

Peter L. Bailey

Peter L. Bailey joined Pennsylvania School for the Deaf seven years ago at a time of great organizational change, and was responsible for enhancing the breadth of the school’s programs, the quality of our academics, and the atmosphere of our campus. In 2019, Peter and the Board of Trustees adopted a three-year Strategic Plan which outlines four strategic pillars for advancing the school’s vision as it enters its third century of educating Deaf students. Leading up to and throughout the planning process, Peter galvanized the entire PSD community of staff, alumni, families, partners, and, of course, students with optimism, strength, and forward thinking.

Peter has positioned PSD for continued evolution and growth in the years ahead. The school has performed increasingly well in terms of student outcomes, alumni engagement, and diversity. His presence on campus will always be remembered. He will be remembered for his genuine passion for the school, his ability to continuously adapt and evolve to meet the needs of PSD’s students, families, staff, and community, and, of course, his sharp suits and colorful ties. He truly elevated PSD events, from Community Day, to the Golf Outing, to the unforgettable 200th Anniversary Gala. We are thrilled that Peter will continue his leadership role in Deaf education, and look forward to preserving PSD’s tradition of excellence right here at home in Philadelphia.
Greetings from the PSD Alumni Association

This has been a very busy time for us, as we are preparing for our rescheduled PSD2020 Reunion and a wide range of events and activities!

Here’s an update from PSD 2020 Chair, Jenny Strunk ’84:

As many of you know, the PSD2020 Alumni Reunion committee had planned to host a three-day reunion in June 2020. Marsha Miceli ’70 & Sara Wummer ’82 are the Co-Assistant Chairs. The reunion has now been rescheduled for June 20-22, 2024. We are busy planning a memorable, fun, and inspiring event for the alumni (teachers and staff, too) from across the years and campuses. Marsha, Sara, and I would love for you all to join us!

Saturday, November 4, 2023
We are also planning our Annual Holiday Bazaar, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the PSD Gym. We are still accepting vendors for the event. If you are interested in reserving a table, please contact Jackie Kanekuni at bazaar@psdalumni.org.

Special thanks to our 2023 Holiday Bazaar Co-Chairs: Jackie Kanekuni, ’77 and Mike Krieger, ’82

Saturday, December 2, 2023
Fourth Annual Holiday Party at PSD’s Gym from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, April 20, 2024
Family Resource Center 3rd Annual Conference, PSD Resource Center and Transition Fair

For the latest updates on PSD2020, and how you can get involved, please visit: https://psdalumni.org/psd-2020/

#PSD Alumni Association can be found via social media channels, Facebook and on our website: http://www.psdalumni.org/holidaybazaar

Chair
Jennifer Strunk, Class of ’84
Co-Assistant Chairs
Marsha Miceli, Class of ’70 & Sara Wummer, Class of ’82

For more information: psd2020info@gmail.com
To stay up to date on all events for PSD and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community across the region, sign up for our newsletter at https://psd.org/news/.

For a full listing of PSD events, please visit https://psd.org/calendar/.

Stay tuned for the following upcoming events!

**2023**

- **NOVEMBER 23**
  PSD student performance at 6ABC Thanksgiving Day Parade
- **NOVEMBER 28**
  Celebrate Giving Tuesday with PSD and raise funds for Deaf Education
- **DECEMBER 3**
  Ice Skating for PSD Families

**2024**

- **FEBRUARY 22**
  Deaf Awareness Night at the 76ers
- **MARCH 14**
  Deaf Awareness Night at the Flyers
- **APRIL 20**
  Family Resource Center 3rd Annual Conference, PSD Resource Center and Transition Fair