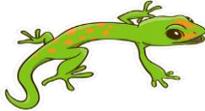


The Gecko 

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Dear Concept Families,

I am excited about this Friday's National History Day presentations. Our students have been working hard on their projects and I know it will be an informative day. I look forward to seeing our students dressed in business attire. Please join us, if you can, at 10:00 a.m.

The Board of Directors is still reviewing our renovation plans and deciding how and when to proceed with some preliminary land development activities. The main goal, for the time being, is to raise \$1 million dollars to get us started. Our Advancement Director, Shari Levine, is looking into numerous potential funding opportunities. Please keep your eyes and ears open for any possible sources of funding. Our students deserve a refreshed building!

The Concept School is seeing a lot of interest in our program. Our enrollment remains strong - we just admitted our 36th student. We have been impressed by all of the students we have admitted this year and all they added to our community.

Finally, please remain vigilant about the amount of time your student spends on devices. As I mentioned in an email, the students were an amazing audience and really contributed to our recent school-wide discussion about the dangers of social media. However, we are still hearing reports from students about negative things that are being said in chat groups outside of school hours. These comments impact our students long after the fact and cause unease in school.

Sincerely,
Bill



March 1: National History Day Presentations
March 25 – 29: Spring Break – school closed
April 5th – End of 3rd Marking Period
April 23rd – Primary Election – school closed
April 25 – Spring Arts Festival

SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMING PLATFORMS

- Student Assembly



Just like in every school across the country, our students are using social media and gaming platforms to communicate. Unfortunately, they sometimes make mistakes in what or how they communicate with each other. Teenagers feel they can say and do things online they would not say or do in person.

Mr. Schullery and Mr. Bennett met with the student body to discuss these issues. We discussed the topics listed on the handout below, and I ask that you review these issues with your student (especially if they are active on social media.)

It is suggested that you put some limits on the times your student has access to social media by having them give you their phones and devices in the evenings after a reasonable amount of time. Also, consider putting gaming systems in a room that you can monitor.

We have noticed a much better environment at TCS since we have not allowed phones to be used; we see a much calmer, relaxed community when we are not on our devices!



THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST CAN HELP YOU TAKE STEPS TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFER ONLINE.

- CHECK YOUR COMMENTS AND IMAGES.**
Have you posted anything inappropriate or illegal, like threats, nudity, alcohol, or drugs?
- TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT WHAT'S OK TO POST.**
Agree that you won't post embarrassing or hurtful comments or images of each other. Be clear that you'll delete – or if needed, report – any posts that are inappropriate, illegal, threatening, or could get you in trouble.
- REVIEW YOUR ACCOUNT SETTINGS.**
Always ask yourself – what is on my profile and who can see it?
- KNOW YOUR FRIENDS, CONTACTS, AND FOLLOWERS.**
These are the people who can see, share, and comment on what you post so you want to be sure you can trust them. Block and report anyone who makes harassing, threatening, or inappropriate comments.
- KEEP AN EYE ON 3RD PARTY AND CONNECTED APPS.**
Some of these will allow you to log into one app using account information from another. Be careful, as this may allow the company access to your profile information.
- DON'T FORGET MOBILE.**
When you use mobile devices like smartphones and tablets to post something or check in, you could also be sharing your location. Check your settings to make sure you're only sharing what you want to.
- REPORT.**
You have the right to be safe online. If anyone cyberbullies you, make a report to the website or app. If anyone shares or asks you to share sexual messages or images, make a report to CyberTipline.org.

NetSmartz®

For more resources visit Missingkids.org/NetSmartz/Resources.

Classroom News

Mrs. Phillips Transitions Class:

Alumni Alex Miller, a junior at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, came in to talk to our students about his experiences at TCS and his transition to college. He was very informative, and the students had many excellent questions for him to answer. We wish him continued success in his journey beyond TCS. He is pictured here with two of his favorite teachers Mrs. Meghan Wright and Ms. Shannon Tillman.



The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

(OVR) comes to TCS to speak to Transitions classes each month. WE are so lucky to have Ms. Angelica Webster here working with our students as part of the Pre-Employment Transitions Services program. If you have a student with a disability, please consider completing a referral form and have them sign up with the OVR to receive services. The OVR helps students find jobs, job shadow, get job coaching, and other transition services during high school and beyond. Here is some information about the OVR. If you should have any questions, please contact Mrs. Marti Phillips at mphillips@theconceptschoool.org.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Workplace Readiness Training



Self-Advocacy Instruction



Job Exploration Counseling



Work-Based Learning



Counseling on Postsecondary Training





Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) can help you learn about yourself, practice work skills, explore training options and choose a job.

- **Self-Advocacy Instruction** teaches you how to solve problems and manage your life.
- **Workplace Readiness Training** teaches you how to get and keep a job.
- **Job Exploration Counseling** helps you learn about jobs and pick a career.
- **Counseling on Postsecondary Training** helps you decide if college or training after high school is right for you.
- **Work-based Learning** connects what you learn in school to real jobs.



Want to learn more?
Scan the QR code to see services in action or visit www.dli.pa.gov/OVR.









INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE OVR REFERRAL

Thank you for your interest in Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) services. OVR's mission is to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence. You can initiate a referral for OVR services via the Pennsylvania CareerLink (PA CareerLink) website using the instructions below. If assistance is needed, contact information for an OVR office near you is listed at the end of these instructions.

Go to [PA CareerLink](http://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov) (www.pacareerlink.pa.gov)

1. Proceed with one of the following:

If you are already registered with PA CareerLink:

- i. Activate the "**Sign In**" link near the top right corner of the screen. Enter your **Keystone ID** and **Password** and Press/click the blue "**Sign In**" button. Select "**Career Services**" link in the blue menu bar at the top of the screen. Then choose "**Programs and Services**" link in the dropdown.

If you are a new PA CareerLink user:

- i. If you do not have an email account, you will need to create an account to Register.
 - ii. Activate the "**Register as a New User**" button near the top right corner of the screen. Select the Link "**Individual Seeking OVR Services**". Complete the online registration process by following the on-screen instructions. Once you reach the Registration Confirmation page, press the "**Request Staff-Assisted Service**" button in the middle of the page.
2. On the Request Services page, select one of two options for OVR services: "Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services" OR "Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services" and select whether you are or not interested in employment.
 3. Press the "**Request Services**" button near the bottom right corner of the screen. A pop-up notification will appear providing an explanation of OVR's mission and basic eligibility criteria. Choose "**YES**" or "**NO**" to the statement: "I WANT TO WORK AND HAVE A DISABILITY THAT CURRENTLY CREATES DIFFICULTIES FOR ME IN TERMS OF GETTING, KEEPING, OR ADVANCING IN EMPLOYMENT".
 - o Choosing "**YES**" and Pressing the "**Continue**" button will take you to the OVR Referral Form page.
 - o Choosing "**NO**" and pressing the "**Continue**" button will return you to the previous page.
 4. On the OVR Referral Form page, complete the required questions.
 5. When all questions are complete, Press the "**Submit Referral**" button near the bottom right corner of the screen, which will send your completed referral to the OVR District Office that covers your county of residence. A notice will appear with the local District Office contact information and the following message: "A district office staff member will be contacting you within the next 10 days to start your application for vocational rehabilitation services. We look forward to speaking with you!"

If assistance is needed with the above instructions, please contact the Norristown District Office at 484-250-4340.

OVR's Mission: To assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence.

Department of Labor & Industry | Office of Vocational Rehabilitation | 484-250-4340

[OVR Site](#) | Facebook: [@PAVocRehab](#) | Twitter: [@PA_OVR](#)

| Instagram: [@PA_OVR](#) | LinkedIn: [PA_OVR](#)

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Mrs. Griffith's Classes:

Second Period English finished their prose and film study of the epic story *The Odyssey*. Not only are they now well-versed in Joseph Campbell's monomyth of The Hero's Journey in *The Odyssey*, but they are applying it to their own lives. They prepared a song lesson from their personal playlists that demonstrated a hero's journey. Additionally, we rocked out to Bowie, The Chicks, Indigo Girls, Led Zeppelin, Radiohead, and Chumbawamba to see how those artists used the trope in their music and lyrics. We tried homemade tzatziki and pita as we learned about Greek food and the code of hospitality in our story. Finally, they examined actor Matthew McConaghey's 2014 Oscar acceptance speech and are writing their own personal essay focusing on what keeps them looking forward on their own journeys. I am proud of them, and we are having a good time learning! By the way, they are writers; don't let them tell you differently.



Third Period Creative Writers wrote a pastiche of Jason Reynolds's essay *Ten Things I've Been Meaning to Tell You*. They studied audience and purpose and revealed their hearts (as we approached Valentine's Day!) through writing. Additionally, students studied four ways of conveying characterization and created a succinct character sketch. Kids experimented with behavior and speech, appearance, and other characters' thoughts, words, and reactions. These writers learned how to write dialogue as well and were able to reflect upon and revise their own writing using color codes. In this way, they could determine if they met the criteria. As we approach March, we've been devoting a couple of weeks to the writing process of NHD. Scaffolded lessons from the fall (six-word summaries and the punctuation of compound sentences) have helped when trimming words for their history projects.



Fourth Period English is continuing their study of Sara Pennypacker's gem *Pax*. We deviate from reading to tie in mentor texts like bottle episodes from the television show "This Is Us", Margaret Renkl's non-fiction collection *The Comfort of Crows*, poetry, and Michaelangelo's art. We have been writing short paragraphs that ask us to make connections within the novel, to our world, and to ourselves. This novel, too, is a hero's journey! Our study is chock full of lessons about friendship, emotions, nature, war, service, grief, and transformation, to name a few. Students were even gifted with a visit from Declan's dad, Master Sergeant Joseph Baker, who shared with our class his story of service to our country and his continuing heartfelt service to humanity. Thank you for showing us your strong back and compassionate heart and thank you for your service to us as a whole.

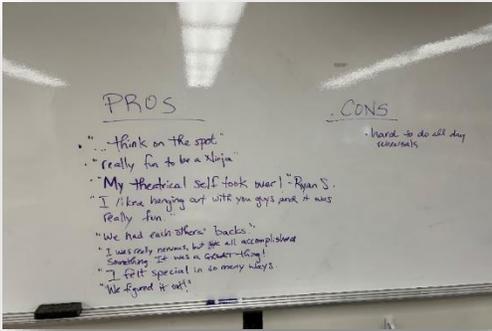
Fifth Period English completed their study of *Frankenstein!* I challenged them to write a five-paragraph essay, and they did not disappoint! This can be a daunting task, but these kids followed my visuals, step-by-step chunking process, and helpful hints and wrote top-tier essays showing their

philosophical contemplation of responsibility in our novel study. Keeping with the theme of responsibility, each student spent time on his or her own working to find quotes, learn to insert them correctly (with lead-in and follow-through), and revise and edit. They were accountable for their writing choices and really stepped up to the plate.

Seventh Period English class completed their reading of *The Odyssey* and continue to dive deep into Joseph Campbell's monomyth of the Hero's Journey. They are very familiar with the twelve steps on the circle that graces our classroom wall and can speak to each as it pertains to our story. We studied C.P. Cavafy's poem "Ithaka", and with chunking lessons, students wrote a seven-paragraph analysis essay. They were called to action, accepted the call, had me as a mentor, and faced the ordeals of the writing process! They entered "The New World" better, stronger, and more capable writers. They faced fears and grew! We are now being "rewarded" with the film version of our story. It does not disappoint!



Playing Ouisi in Mrs. Griffith's room!



Mr. Burch's Math Classes:

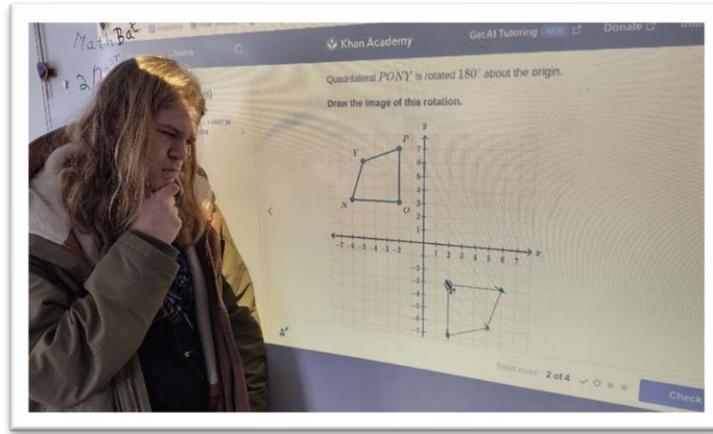
Financial Math: The seniors who are taking Financial Math have spent time learning about the various ways that one can be paid for their work. This includes a deep dive on hourly pay versus salaries, and special situations like overtime, tips, commissions and bonuses. Students also have done a quick review of the U.S. economy in 2023, considering key metrics such as inflation, interest rates, unemployment rates and stock market performance. They will now move on to study the wide and wild world of net pay versus gross, and the many factors that drive the difference.

Math Thoughts

I once thought of new math concepts as being like potentially scary boxes, maybe boxes full of spiders, that I feared to open! The thought of opening such boxes gave me anxiety. But I have learned that how one chooses to view new situations, like new math concepts, is a choice.

Now I look at new math challenges like Christmas or birthday presents waiting to be opened. I am confident that I will feel good, once I "open" them and know how to solve them. So, now I see new math challenges as presents that I just need to unwrap. Some presents may be harder to unwrap than others. They may have extra "tape". This is part of the process of learning. But I almost always feel good once the presents have been "unwrapped" and the problems have been solved.

Callie



Tor ponders over a geometric rotation.

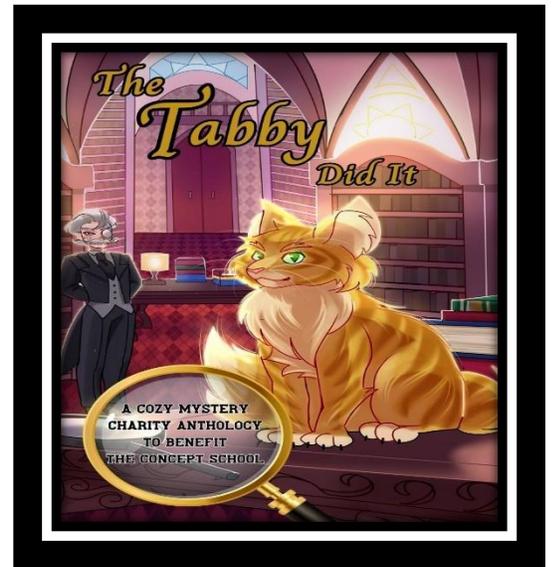
Mrs. Culler's History Classes:

Mrs. Culler's history classes have been working hard preparing for National History Day with a broad range of topics including the Black Plague, Agriculture and the Columbian Exchange, the introduction of motorcycles in the military, the Ziegfeld Follies, and the Video Game Crash of 1983! National History Day is a great chance to see students compile research, analyze primary and secondary sources, create written and visual content, and most of all see that they can connect their passions to history!

Writing Club: Writers' Club meets weekly during lunch periods. It's been great to see a rotation of students give Writers' Club a try. Several students are working on short mysteries to be included in the TCS Cozy Mystery Charity Anthology (more information on that soon).

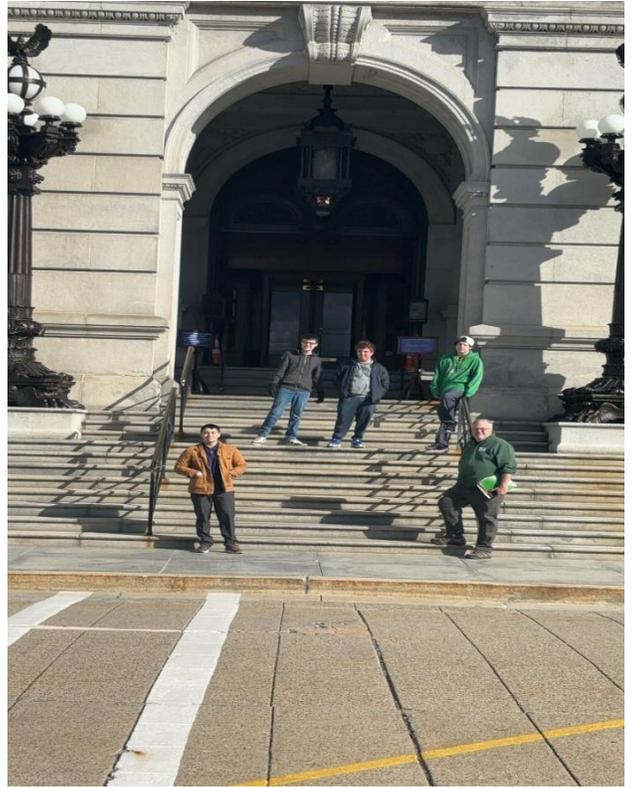


Henry Deputy and LeSabien Brown share a laugh (probably something silly Mrs. Culler did).

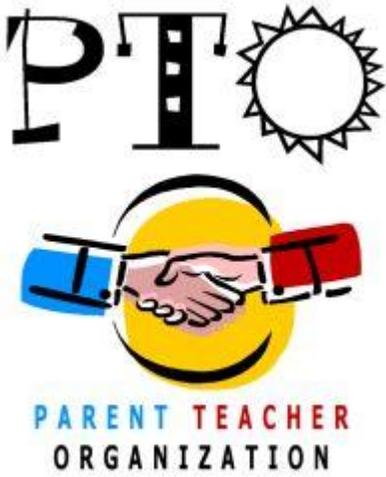


TCS Antho Cover

Senior Trip to Harrisburg







Thanks to our PTO for arranging a fun outing for our students this month.

Everyone had a great time at urbanAir Adventure Park in Springfield, PA!



TCS Picture Gallery

...just for fun!



Grace and Buddy



Professor Jasper running his master class on relaxation therapy