FROM PRESIDENT MUSANTRY:

As I sit down to write this article, the fiscal end of the 2022/2023 is within reach. At the close of each school year, I like to reflect on the year that was. This one is an especially emotional one for me. It will be the last full school year as a member of the Palisades School Board. Oh, and what a ride it has been!

I have served on the Palisades SB since 2011 and had the privilege of serving as Board President for 8 of those years! I am extremely proud of the work of the board over those 12 years. While being fiscally prudent over the last 10 years (4 years of no tax increase and the rest all held under 1%), the district continues to be national, state and locally recognized for academic, artistic and athletic accomplishments. GO PIRATES!

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR:

On June 7th, the School Board approved the Final Budget with a 0% tax increase for taxpayers for the upcoming school year. Over the past 10 years, our tax increases have been set at 0% (3 years) or less than 1% (7 years) including gaming revenue. The millage rate will remain the same at 117.74 mills.

Also of note, Palisades SD has the second lowest millage rate in Bucks County only second to New Hope Solebury School District that brings in twice as much earned income tax than Palisades (See chart on page 3.)

Capital projects, those that are funded through district savings, will include the following for the upcoming school year: safety and security upgrades, Gold gym locker room upgrades at the high school, air conditioning at the middle school, Tinicum roof replacement, Wastewater treatment plant upgrades, and stadium lighting upgrades.
I have been able to participate in many leadership roles and activities throughout my career at Palisades! I have also been lucky enough to be a student representative for the school board for two years. The experience has been illuminating, and I am glad I had the chance to be welcomed and surrounded by extraordinary people. Thank you kindly for your hospitality!

My post-secondary plans are to attend and graduate from Harvard, studying Political Science and Government, also, Psychology. Then attend Harvard Law, become a lawyer, a judge, and then Supreme Court Justice!

Again, most appreciated,
Camila O’Donnell, PHS Class of 2023
Outside of planned savings to cover increased retirement costs, the capital projects mentioned above and Tech School renovations, the Final Budget uses $1,594,486 from Fund Balance to balance the district budget.

**NOTE:** The gaming relief funds that come directly from the Commonwealth, are slightly lower than the 22-23 year and the District has 5 more properties qualifying for the Homestead/Farmstead exemption. The combination of the two will result in a decrease of the gaming relief reduction of $0.86 per tax bill. Even with a 0% tax increase, there will be a slight increase in tax bills of $0.86 due to this change from the state gaming funds.

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### BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS CONT...WHAT FACTORS HAVE AN IMPACT?

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<tr>
<th>What has hurt...</th>
<th>What has helped...</th>
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<td>Over the last 14 years, the Charter School budget has increased 314% and the pension costs have increased 632%. These costs are state mandated and outside of local control.</td>
<td>Since the Preliminary Budget presentations in the winter, the health insurance renewal came in at 16% which is down from the 20% budgeted; the dental renewal came in at 5% instead of the budgeted 10%. These updates resulted in savings of over $400,000.</td>
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<td>The Capital Projects budget increased by $300,000 due a delay in Gold Gym renovations from the 22-23 budget. There was a decrease in Capital Projects budget of $20,000 for a server upgrade that is deemed not to be necessary. The net result is an increase of $280,000 in Capital Projects.</td>
<td>The Curriculum budget decreased by $26,010 as a result of eliminating a $20,000 purchase for materials that were not needed at this time and a reduction in field trip expenditures.</td>
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**HERE IS THE BOTTOM LINE...**

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During the month of May, our school counselors and our administrators worked together to place a spotlight on positive mental health. Each week in May, students and staff participated in activities that included strategies to improve mental health, as well as help to eliminate the stigma associated with this important topic being discussed nationwide.

Activities regarding taking time to enjoy your surroundings, being positive and kind, doing your best and persevering, as well as practicing self-regulation and mindfulness were a part of the month’s focus. Each school's activities were geared towards the ages of the students they serve, but the message of improving mental health was consistent across the district.

This project is a bookend discussion about Youth Mental Health in Palisades which was held in the fall, featuring panelists like Melissa Groden from the Council of Southeast PA, Beth Hall from Lakeside Educational Network, Kristi Hoover who is an Assistant District Attorney from the Bucks County Attorney’s Office, Katie Lloyd who is a Licensed Professional Counselor employed by Palisades School District, Chief Mike McDonald from Springfield Township Police and Dave Stiansen from Haycock Ministries in Kintnersville. The event was hosted by our Superintendent, Dr. Bridget O’Connell and Assistant to the Superintendent for Educational Programs, Dr. Michael Donnelly. Each panelist provided their take on what we can do together to help improve youth mental health in Palisades. The event was hosted by our Superintendent, Dr. Bridget O’Connell and Assistant to the Superintendent for Educational Programs, Dr. Michael Donnelly. Each panelist provided their take on what we can do together to help improve youth mental health in Palisades.

Focus Areas of the Plan:

- **Academic Excellence**: student preparedness, use of technology, and additional offerings for students.
- **Communication**: developing, distributing, and receiving timely and meaningful content and receiving feedback in a timely and efficient manner.
- **Facilities**: prioritizing infrastructure and building repair needs to enhance high quality instruction, as well as evaluating the safety and security of our buildings.
- **Student Services**: bullying prevention, improving mental health, as well as increasing public awareness regarding food services and student wellness as defined by School Code.

The Newsletter and Comprehensive Plan are found on our website www.palisad.org go to Our District