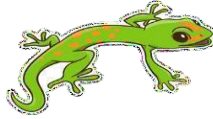


The Gecko



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Dear Concept Families,

I can't believe we are almost finished with the 2024-2025 school year! This year has been one of the best of my career. Our student body has truly been a community of caring individuals who look out for each other. They have been willing to take risks regarding their learning and have learned they can do hard things.

We added a wonderful new staff member, Anna Cuff, as transitions coordinator, had a successful Shakespeare Festival, experienced numerous field trips that were fun adventures for our students, had an active Parent Teacher Organization that did many things for our students and staff, had several students earn their driver's licenses, get jobs, and apply to college, had a student (Mitchell Shin), who became an Eagle Scout, installed a kiln to allow our students to work with clay, and had an amazing Arts Festival in the spring.

All the while, we were busy searching for funding to allow us to renovate and expand the front of our building. Please remember to send us any leads to a possible funding source. We want our building to look more modern while remaining a warm and inviting space for our students.

Finally, we are saying goodbye to Mrs. Camille Piccone as office manager. Camille has been with us for five years and has modernized our office procedures in many ways. While we will miss Camille immensely, we are happy to welcome Ms. Julia Kelly as our new office manager. Best wishes, Camille!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our successful year in 2024-2025. Our 2025-2026 school year is shaping up to be even better. We are enrolling new students and looking to add additional music classes and new electives. I can't wait until September 2, 2025!

Have a relaxing and safe summer,

Bill



June 11th - Awards Day – 12:00 dismissal
June 12th – Graduation Day – 12:00 dismissal
June 13th – Last Day of School – 12:00 dismissal



Dean's Deal

"Dance After Deluge"

After the downpour on Friday the 16th, the TCS Dance provided a quite satisfying end to the day. It was such a pleasure to see the students in their formal attire having fun at Thornbury Farm and enjoying each other's company. As I was bumping tunes as *DJ Only Bangerz*, I was impressed by how many of our students cut loose on the dance floor! From the Limbo to the Funky Chicken, many of them released their inhibitions, felt some rain on their skin, and moved to the music. Several students even got on the microphone to sing along to their favorite song. I could hardly believe it!



The students' comfort really underscored the type of environment we provide at TCS: one where kids don't have to worry about what other people think or say about them because we support each other's positive risk-taking, no matter how silly or different it looks. I am very proud of our students and hope they continue taking these types of positive risks, whether it's doing the Cupid Shuffle, singing in front of a crowd, or even just starting a conversation with someone new. Sometimes, to not take a risk is the biggest risk of all.



This year, The Concept School Community is happy to welcome Julia Kelly as our new Office Manager and Assistant to the Head of School.



Julia is very much looking forward to being a part of The Concept School! Julia was born and raised in New Jersey. She attended Eastern University where she graduated in 2020 with a dual BA in Marketing and Entrepreneurial Studies. It wasn't until 2022 that she found herself working at a school in Bryn Mawr and fell in love with the educational world. Julia enjoys the administrative side of a school realm and is looking forward to furthering her skills and knowledge here at The Concept School. In her free time, Julia can be found at the beach, the gym, or your local coffee shop!



Change can be hard and challenging, but also fun and exciting. It is now time for me to make a big change and to say goodbye. The Concept School has been my second home for the past five years, filled with staff and students I will never forget. I have worked in several different industries over the past 40 plus years, but nothing compares to surrounding your days with children. It has been such a rewarding experience, and I thank our parents for allowing me this opportunity to share my final working chapter with your students. So now it's time to sleep in, spend some time on hobbies, do a little traveling, and sit back and relax. It will seem strange at first, but I think I can get used to it real fast.

Arrivederci my friends! Until we meet again.

I will miss you all.

--Mrs. Piccone

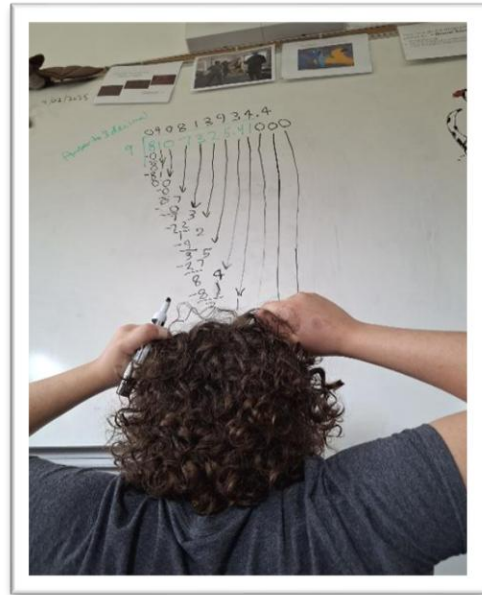


Classroom News

Mr. Burtch's Math Class:

I call this "Resilience".

The student said they liked it! (Danny Green)



Mitchell

Tor

Two students have distinguished themselves so far this year by doing a lot of math. One is an old champ, Mitchell Shin. The challenger is a familiar name, but not so much for extreme math practice - Tor Munson. Here is the data for these two. Since Labor Day 2024:

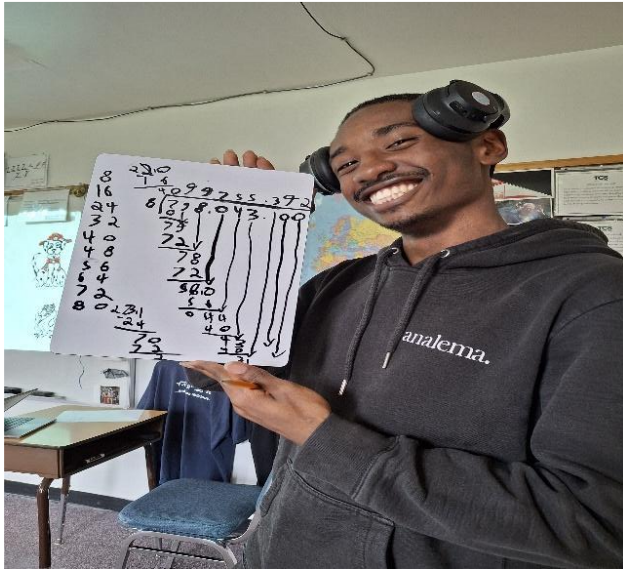
Mitchell has done 6,659 minutes or 111 hours of math. Yes, that is 111 hours.

Tor has done 6,557 minutes or 109 hours.

The week of April 7th, Mitchell did 457 minutes; Tor did 448 minutes. Mitchell was ahead by 2%. They are close.

I don't know about you, but I am extremely impressed. Math practice is the key to math excellence, and as Galileo said, "Math is the language in which God has written the Universe".

As the 2024-2025 school year wraps up, it is interesting to look back on everything that the students have accomplished in Math...



What types of math did students tackle?

This year, students have worked on a wide variety of math including Basic Math, Algebra (Pre, 1 and 2), Geometry, Trigonometry and even Calculus.

How much math did students do?

Students did a lot of math practice this year (i.e., almost 55,000 minutes or over 900 hours).

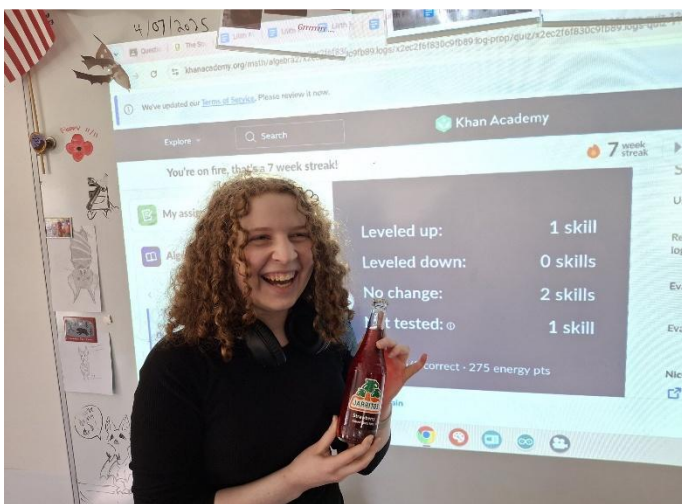
Students took many quizzes and often earned excellent grades.



Was there any special recognition for students who did really well?

Of course, those who earned an A or A+ on a quiz also earned a delicious Jarritos soda (with all-natural sugar).

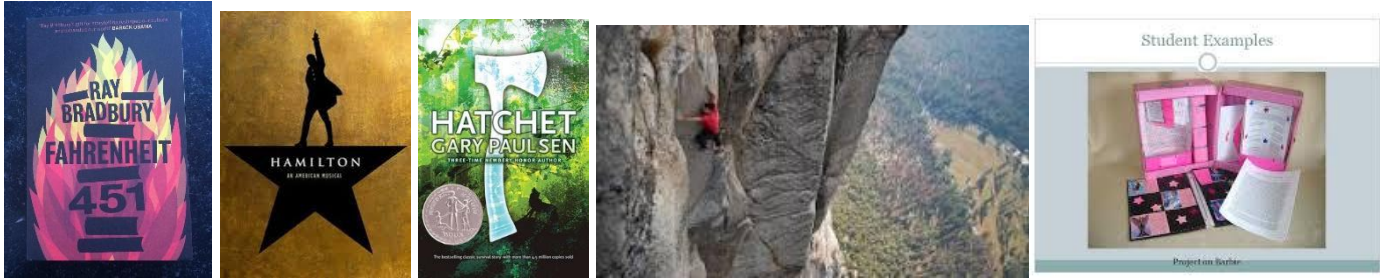
This year, students won about 100 individual bottles throughout the year.



Well Done!

Mrs. Griffith's ELA Classes:

We have been having fun while learning in all of our classes!



First Period readers are ending the year with a sampling of Ray Bradbury works. After reading Orwell's *Animal Farm*, we dove into *Fahrenheit 451*. By the time you read this, students will have learned Montag's fate. Our books have been eerily prescient this year; certainly, they have given us pause to think about the world we live in. As a mentor film exemplifying the importance of free thinking, individualism, and the importance of language art, we viewed and discussed the film *Dead Poets Society*. My hope is that my students "live deep and suck out all the marrow of life".

Second Period readers concluded their study of the contemporary creative, Lin Manuel Miranda. Using the libretto of *Hamilton*, as well as the musical, we learned close reading, history, rap, & narrative while interpreting figurative language, among other things. As a concluding activity, students were tasked with creating a piece which answers the questions: Who lives? Who dies? Who tells your story?

Two students wrote & performed musical numbers for their peers. They did not throw away their shot!

Kids are now reading *Fahrenheit 451* and contemplating Clarisse's question to Montag: "Are you happy?" You can't "unknow" things once you know, you know?

Third Period is finishing up their study of Gary Paulsen's survivalist, coming-of-age novel *Hatchet*. After Brian experienced set-back after set-back, students adopted his voice, writing beautiful "prayers" or "messages to the universe". We worked collaboratively to save a wasp, draw diagrams, and practice mindfulness. We spent meaningful time in the TCS Nature Center whittling our own spears, bows, and arrows! Thank you to Mr. Fredricks for his pocket-knives and support during the carving/creating process!

Fourth Period Creative Writers are on fire! We spent a marking period and a half creating multi-genre projects. Each week kids are taught one or two new genres of writing. We study models, talk, uncover treasures, and explore. Writers will follow a golden thread in their language art and house their writing in a creative presentation to be shared at the Arts Festival! Our time together has been magical!

Seventh Period Readers of the World are mature thinkers who have shared much with me about their world! Our recent study of the documentary *Free Solo* gave us many talking and writing opportunities. Audience buy-in, stakes, relationships, and autism were just some of our topics. Additionally, writing about our desire to do things (Why *would* Alex Honnold scale El Capitan with no ropes?) led us to share some of our dreams! Our study of *The Flash* opened up discussion about film tropes, allusions, metaphors, hero's journey, the meaning of time, the butterfly effect, and more! Finally, our study of *The Truman Show* incited us to explore fate vs. free will, individual autonomy, and truth.

****A note to my seniors:** In a traditional school setting, teachers and students wouldn't have the opportunity to forge relationships, build years of rapport, and use scaffolded learning to see real growth. You have unfolded in front of my eyes over the years. You have...become! How wonderful that we have shared our minutes with one another exploring the written word. Remember Bradbury's words in *Fahrenheit*: "The magic is only in what books say, how they stitched the patches of the Universe together into one garment for us." I have so enjoyed reading and writing with you and hope you continue to make reading a part of each day!

Ms. Cuff's Transition Class:

Our Transition class has been focused on many essential life skills this marking period, including cooking! We kicked things off in the classroom with a *Chopped*-style challenge, where students had to get creative and plan meals using a list of ingredients that wouldn't typically be combined.

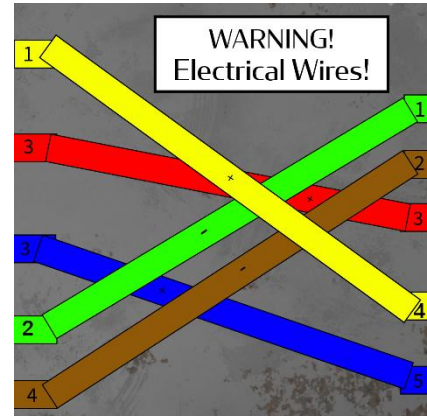
From there, we moved into hands-on cooking in the TCS kitchen. Each student picked a recipe and had to justify why it would be useful for their classmates to learn. On their recipe day, they led the class in the kitchen and assigned roles to their peers. They worked together to prep, cook, eat, and clean, all within our 50-minute class period. So far, we've made chicken tacos, pork tonkatsu (Japanese-style breaded pork), and a fun "dirt and worms" dessert. It's been impressive to watch them be creative, collaborate, and build everyday skills in a fun and practical way!



Mrs. Fredericks Technology Classes:

Mrs. Fredericks's **Pixar class** has had a truly remarkable year of creative exploration. We've gained a deep understanding of Pixar's storytelling techniques and the collaborative efforts that go into their animated films, including exploring their unique storytelling process and the diverse roles involved in bringing their animated masterpieces to life. A highlight of our studies was creating our own original story about a dying tree in need of water and the bird that tries to convince it to relocate. To cap off our amazing year, we're now learning to animate our story using two powerful iPad programs: Procreate and ToonSquid.

Mrs. Fredericks's **Game Design** class has been an exciting exploration of game creation! We've honed our programming skills in the Construct 3 game design engine, building everything from simple programs to intricate designs. Most recently, we tackled a different kind of challenge: crafting a BreakoutEDU experience. This involved designing five interactive puzzles, similar to digital escape rooms, which was a fantastic way to apply our learning. What a fun and engaging experience it's been!



What an incredible year it's been for Mrs. Fredericks's **Photography class**! Our students have made remarkable progress, evolving from mastering basic focusing to confidently navigating the complexities of the exposure triangle and beyond. We've creatively experimented with diverse techniques, including bouncing light with flash, capturing striking high key and low key photos, and composing intricate still lifes. Another technique is Selective Color using a Layer Mask. This is a photo editing technique where most of the image is turned black and white, but one color or object is left in color. This draws attention to the colored area and creates a strong focal point. We wrapped up the year with the captivating art of light painting—creating stunning images in complete darkness by using manual settings, a slow shutter speed, and a 'light stick' to literally paint with light. It's truly been an amazing year of photographic discovery!



Mrs. Fredericks's Video Editing class has had an amazing year. We kicked off the year with the "**door project**," inspired by the American Film Institute. Over the course of this year students mastered essential skills like **slicing film**, **adding music and sound effects**, and **integrating narration/voiceover**. Students identified their favorite projects alongside those that pushed them the most.

More recently, we completed a challenging project centered on **National Parks**. Each student chose a park, conducted in-depth research, and then produced their own original video. A highlight was undoubtedly the opportunity to **video conference with park rangers** from many of the featured parks, offering invaluable insights. We culminated the year by creating dramatic stories from a collection of video clips, showcasing the students' remarkable growth and creativity. They truly did an outstanding job this year!



Mrs. Daniel's German Class:

The students in German 1 this year have continued their fantastic progress, building a strong linguistic foundation for further language learning. As a wrap-up for our unit on *Essen* ("food"), we spent two days cooking delicious German specialties for the students and staff of TCS – *Spätzle* (handmade German egg noodle/dumplings), *Ki-Ba Saft* (cherry-banana juice), and *Spaghetti Eis* (sundaes made of hand-whipped cream covered in vanilla ice cream extruded through a potato ricer to look like spaghetti and topped with homemade strawberry sauce). It was a lot of work, but so worth it! We've continued reading and writing creatively in German through units focused on *Familie* ("family"), *Freizeitaktivitäten* ("free-time activities") and *Feier* ("celebrations"), and are now finishing up the year learning *Körperteile* ("body parts") and working with language to describe pictures of goofy monsters. We're still incorporating our own humor into our writing, and have continued to work on sentence decoding using color-coded parts of speech.

Take a look at some of the fun we had on our *Essen Tag* ("food day")!



English Language Arts with Mrs. Wright:



As the school year winds down, students have been enjoying the endings of their literature units while preparing for the Spring Arts Festival. In **period 2**, we are sitting with the ending of *The Outsiders* and Johnny's last words to Ponyboy. Soon we'll take a look at the 1983 film and compare the two literary medias. In **Periods 3 and 4**, we have tracked Ghost's journey on the Defenders track team and are now finding out the results of his very first race through the eyes of his teammate, Patty, in the next book of the Track Series: *Patina*. In **Period 5**, students have been eagerly waiting to find out if Peter and Pax will ever be reunited in the book, *PAX*. I encourage students to read the sequel! It has been a wonderful year with your children and seeing their growth in their literary and writing skills!



Theater Spotlight:

Our theater troupe has been busy preparing for our production for the Spring Arts Festival! As a group, we decided to stage another Sherlock Holmes mystery. Senior, **Sam Mandell**, suggested we take on *The Legend of the Hound of the Baskervilles*. What an excellent choice, Sam! We have been working with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story since the beginning of March. We read the story then we watched the Jeremy Bret film version next. We are beyond proud of all the students who were a part of the production! Each and every student brought their own creativity and hard work to help make the play the success it was! Each year, we think to ourselves, "It can't get any better than this!" Low and behold we are repeatedly proven wrong. Thank you for another year in theater filled with fun, laughs, creativity beyond measure, and trust!

Bravo,

Mrs. Griffith and Mrs. Wright





Teacher Highlight

Some of you may know him as Mr. Giess, but others know him as a Member of Untethered!

When he's not teaching Music at The Concept School, Mr. Giess is performing in the area. Check out Mr. Giess' band Untethered at the Turks Head Music Festival on June 8th at Everhart Park in West Chester, PA.

For More information visit <https://turksheadfestival.com>

3:00 PM



UNTETHERED

UnTethered unleashes music that is adventurous, experimental, melodic, dark & moody.

Blending a variety of styles to create their own blend of instrumental rock.

Ready to debut their first self titled album - details coming soon.

UNTETHERED

Field Trips



Winterthur Field Trip

April is a beautiful time of year to visit Winterthur Museum, Garden, & Library in Norther Delaware. TCS left early on Apr 23, 2025, in order to tour the Museum House (which has 175 rooms). The house built by Henry Francis du Pont was incredible. We had 4 groups each with a tour guide who led us through the amazing house filled with different paintings, several china sets, beautiful furniture and more. We also took a tour through part of the 60-acre gardens. We learned that the gardens have changed all the time, so this time next month the gardens will be different. Winterthur has 1000 acres of protected meadows, woodlands, ponds, and waterways.



Marshall Steam Museum

We had another beautiful day for our Marshall Steam Museum field trip on April 30, 2025! Marshall Steam Museum is located at 3000 Creek Road in Yorklyn, DE. We started our outing with a fun ride on the $\frac{1}{8}$ scale diesel train through the property. The museum had several diverse exhibits including different types of antique cars. The students learned about the different types of cars that were available during the early days of automobiles: gas, steam, and electric. We learned about the advantages and disadvantages of each type of automobile. We had a fun “shark tank” activity trying to “pitch” our car to student investors. This helped us learn more about each type of vehicle.





Original Story by Jeffrey Towles (7th Grade)

Once there was a dog named Jasper. Once when he was a puppy he was abandoned so he found a little school named TCS. The puppy went up to the door, the little dog knocked, then a woman named Ms. Piccone was one that found the puppy, then she fed it, cleaned it in the school bathroom, then she named the dog Jasper. Then he really liked that name. The little dog was happy to be a new school pet, so he had to help the students that love dogs and help them and support them and make them feel better in the end.

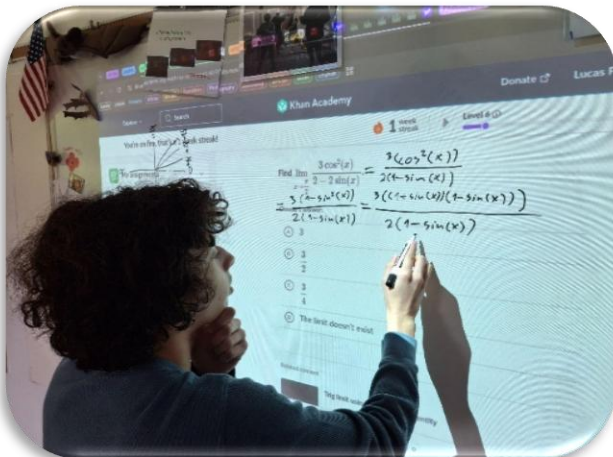
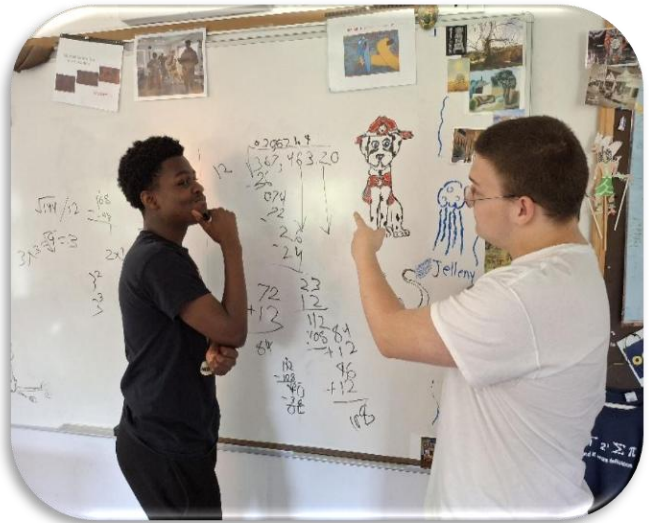


TCS Picture Gallery

Just for fun...



Mr. Dylan is busy instructing young Umar in the ways of math



Remember the Eagles? That's the 70s band not the football team. Lucas is "Takin' it to the limit, one more time".



More From the Senior Dance...

