

PARSS eNews

October 2026

Dear PARSS Members,

Since school signed off for summer more than three months ago, the days seemed to pass at a feverish pace. At least that's how it felt to me. My briefcase was barely unpacked before the World Cup soccer matches got underway in June. And then weeks later we had our nation's 250th birthday bash.



What sticks in my mind are the experiences of the international fans who visited the United States during the World Cup. They raved about everything, from our mammoth sports stadiums and hospitality, to shopping at Wal-Mart. Our foreign guests looked at everyday life in America with fresh eyes that prompted me to take stock of all the positives that surround us here.

First, rural Pennsylvania is a beautiful place to work and play. While some educators in this country and state commute on crowded highways or noisy trains, we have blue mountains and cornfields along the road. Pay attention to the natural world on your drive to work. Use its splendor to calm your soul, collect your thoughts, and plan the day ahead. Is there a way to use your location for new activities or experiences for your students?

One PARSS district, Berlin Brothersvalley, caught my attention recently for doing just that. While scrolling through Instagram recently, I saw the Mountaineer football team run onto their field carrying American flags. It was such a stirring sight on a picture-perfect evening in rural Pennsylvania. The team elevated routine pre-game activities to new heights that made everyone feel pride in their school and country.

Another positive--you've got a steady collaborator in PARSS to support your work year-round. Not only do we serve as consultants when the hiccups occur, but we are here to help plan board and administrative retreats and in-service days. We're here to facilitate superintendent searches and manage a job listing service on our website: <https://www.parss.org/job->

[postings](#). And when education news breaks in Harrisburg, we'll inform you and help you respond.

A third benefit of PARSS is our annual grant program, which is OPEN NOW! Alert your teachers about the application process. Grant recipients in the past have received funds to purchase new equipment, begin or expand clubs, plan field trips, and upgrade technology and lab facilities. Application forms are delivered via email and are available on our website. Scroll down for more information.

I wish you success as you take on another school year and remind you that we are surrounded by exceptional Pennsylvania environments we sometimes overlook. Please consider PARSS a part of that environment, too. Whenever you need us, we're on call and ready to serve.

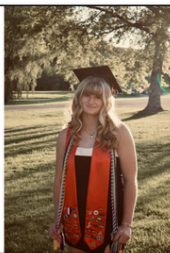
Sincerely,
Edward Albert, Ed.D
Executive Director

THE 2027 PARSS CONFERENCE...



2026 PARSS Conference Recap - Scholarship Winners

Chartiers-Houston School District	Clarion Area School District	Commodore Perry School District
		
Rachel Bova Rachael will be pursuing Aero Space Engineering at Penn State University.	Olivia Boddorf Olivia plans to attend Slippery Rock University majoring in Finance.	Lainey Dias Lainey will be attending Laurel Technical Institute for Cosmetology.
Fairfield Area School District	Homer-Center Area School District	Juniata Valley School District
		
Austin Snyder Austin plans to attend East Stroudsburg University to pursue a career as a Physical Education teacher.	Isabella Arone	Laken Cook Laken plans to attend Juniata College.

Littlestown Area School District	Meyersdale Area School District	North Star School District
		
Emily Long Emily is going to Shippensburg University for Early Childhood Education/Special Education.	Trinity Hoover Trinity is attending Frostburg State University in the fall to receive her master's in Athletic Training.	Maddie Kimmel Maddie plans to attend PennWest University (California).
Pine Grove Area School District	Ridgway Area School District	Titusville Area School District
		
Zofia Fegley Zofia will attend Lebanon Valley College for Nursing and participate in ROTC.	Francis Miller	Cameron Bennett and Maxson Chatham Cameron will attend the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and major in Dental Hygiene. Maxon will attend Westminster College to major in Finance and Cyber Security.
Wyalusing Area School District	Girard School District Northgate School District Penn Cambria School District Smethport Area School District State College Area School District	
		
Nadia Brown Nadia will attend Misericordia University to major in Speech Therapy.		

PARSS Grants Are Open, Apply Now!

It's time to declare an official start to the 2026 PARSS grant season! We invite all member schools to review application materials and begin to apply now. Please forward this information to faculty members without delay.

What you need to know:

--**Follow directions** and complete each question. You **MUST** declare how much you are requesting and how many students will benefit. Write legibly. We can't judge what we can't read. Be sure all requested contact information is accurate and written clearly.

--**Submit your application on time.** Applications will not be accepted after the due date! Attach the grant form to an application essay (about 500 words) that fully explains your needs. Tell us about your classroom, club, or activity situation and why extra funds will make a difference in the lives of your students. Will opportunities suddenly increase? Will a PARSS grant offer an experience like no other? Is there a job or career connection to your classroom upgrade?

Although we don't expect a line-by-line budget breakdown, give us a sense of exactly how the award will be spent. For example, if a portion will be used for a major piece of lab equipment, give us that number. If the balance will be used for supporting materials and parts, tell us that too.

Just as important, however, is your story in full detail. For example, how might a high-tech skill acquired in a science lab lead to a job or further study at the college or university level? Tell us why a field trip for future engineers will be a game-changing event. Does a new, expanded science class or club tap into existing resources in your community? Might a local artist want to spend time in residence? We'd like to know more about who it is and why it's essential for your school.

--**Request realistically.** PARSS grants are typically a mix of small (0-\$1999), moderate (\$2000-4999) and larger (\$5000-9999) amounts. ***As worthy as they may be, requests totaling \$10,000 or more are difficult to approve when so many districts are in need.***

Applications must be received by the end of the day on Monday, October 26!

Download the Grant Application Here

Send the completed form and essay to ealbert@parss.org.
Grant recipients will be announced before the Christmas break.
Superintendents will be the point of contact.

The weeks and months ahead, often marked by bad weather, budget pressures, and even challenging attitudes, can feel daunting. We cannot change the weather, sidestep financial pressures, or take responsibility for the attitudes of others, but we can take steps to improve our outlook, keep our energy up, and position us to take care of ourselves and those who depend on our leadership.

Each of us has favorite activities that give us energy, keep us positive, and help us maintain perspective. The key is to schedule and engage in those activities regularly, regardless of the competing pressures or the temptation to focus on the problems and expectations of work.

We may not be able to get away for extended breaks to fully recharge, but we can often find time to get away for a weekend and commit not to work or spend the entire trip thinking about work. Exposing ourselves to new ideas and different ways of thinking frequently can energize us and open new possibilities. An evening at the movies, reading a favorite book, listening to favorite music, or just visiting with someone from outside of education can help us avoid falling into “ruts” with our thinking.

Don't forget to spend quality time with loved ones. Often, they feel the pressure under which we find ourselves, but they are not in a position to do anything about it. Committing to spend time pursuing mutual interests, learning together about a non-work-related topic, or just reconnecting and enjoying each other's company regularly can make a big difference for us and those we care about.

Finally, remember that problems and pressures are almost always temporary. This month's big deal is likely to be next month's “so what.” Few issues and challenges we face will, by themselves, change the course of the organization or our careers. Not every problem is a crisis and not every challenge is a mountain we must climb. **The secret to maintaining perspective and sustaining our energy often resides in deciding which battles are worth fighting and which likely will take care of themselves if given time and space.**



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