

New "Smart" Boards at Princeton Charter

By Simon Santamaria and Ian Kim

Many students will have noticed that over the summer, "smart" boards were installed in a number of classrooms that didn't already have them, and according to Mr. Patton, the boards came from a closing Camden charter school that was auctioning off some items to pay its legal costs. The boards each cost \$5,000 to \$6,000 dollars when new, but the school got them for less than \$300. PCS had to sign a declaration saying they would pick the boards up, and they were brought to PCS over the summer.

Mr. Patton was able to acquire 14 total boards through an auction. Because the Camden school had paid for them with government money, by law they had to be auctioned off. These auctions allow people to buy used items at greatly reduced cost, although the quality of the items is not guaranteed.

We got some Promethean and some BenQ boards, which are very different from each other. The Prometheans have a Chromebox which is similar to a Chromebook without the screen. This means that a teacher can connect to the Promethean directly and doesn't have to use a desktop, which is required when using the BenQ. Mr. Patton told *The Hawkeye* that while he wasn't completely satisfied with the boards, \$300 dollars for 14 of them made the purchase worthwhile. Also the boards are better than the interactive projectors, which were rarely used. According to Mr. Patton, teachers are enjoying the new boards, and one teacher, who originally refused to use a board, requested one for their classroom.

New Teacher Interviews By Jonina Hou and Romy Heuck

With every new school year comes new teachers. The Princeton Charter School Newspaper Club interviewed these teachers and asked them some personal and professional questions in hopes that students can get to know them better.



Katrina Rakowski is the new PCS art teacher. Here is our recent interview with her:

Q: What subject and which grades do you teach?

- A: I teach art and I teach every grade, K-8.
- Q: How long have you been teaching for?
- A: This is my seventh year teaching.
- Q: What school do you come from?

A: I taught at a school called Academy Park High School. It was a gigantic school with over 1,600 students.

Q: Have you taught any other subjects except for art?

A: With the Audubon Society, I'm sort of an advocate for birds. There's also a program in Philadelphia called Lights Out Philly that's about turning off the lights in the city buildings so that birds don't collide with the buildings and die or get injured during migration. But otherwise, I taught art at Fleisher Art Memorial in downtown Philly. Q: What do you like about teaching? A: I love everything about teaching. I realized that every human being, throughout the course of their life, has something they don't know about, and there is always another person to help them learn how to get to the next level with it. I had a previous career as a general manager in a restaurant, so I started off teaching people how to run and be in a restaurant, customer service, and that kind of thing. I was training managers and teaching them how to manage money, and buy all of the different supplies you could buy. Overall though, I really enjoy watching people grow and learn.

Q: What do you think is the most effective teaching method and why?

A: That's an interesting question. I like the idea of learning through the process of exploration. So, you could show someone how to do something and then they do it. But then I think that there's also the process where you can give something to someone and say, "Here, see what it can do," and then you see what it can do and you can take them from there to "This is what it can do now as well".

Q: If you don't mind sharing, what's your middle name?

A: I was never given a middle name

Q: Do you have any pets?

A: I do. I have a little parrot and a cockatiel, and an old dog that just recently passed.

Q: Do you live far from the school A: I do. I live in Philadelphia. It takes me an hour to get here, and the longest it's ever taken me is two and a half hours. We're looking for a place that's closer. Q: Where are you originally from, and what is your ethnicity? A: I'm originally from Long Island, New York. My family is a smattering of all kinds of things from across the globe. My grandmother is Australian, my grandfather was Polish, my other grandmother was Lithuanian, my other grandfather was Irish, and then there's a little bit of Mongolian in there, but I forgot how it traces back ethnically. I grew up with Polish roots, a lot of Polish traditions and things like that. Q: What's your favorite time of the day? A: The morning. I get up really early in the morning in the springtime when I'm not traveling to work to go bird watching (chasing birds, sometimes it's referred to as). But it's also that you have the whole day ahead of you, and there's good, clean light and everything. If you mess up in the morning, you still have time to figure things out that day or in the afternoon.

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: I have a lot of hobbies. I scuba dive whenever possible, I am into archery, I do woodworking, I do gardening, and I used to horseback ride.

Q: What's your favorite color?

A: Yellow, but not like the bright yellow like a primary yellow, but something more like when you see goldenrod blooming on the side of the road.

Q: What type of students are your favorite? A: That's a tough question, and I have a complex answer. Obviously, the art stars are wonderful, and as an art teacher, I always love and admire working with them. I hate the phrase "I can't make art" and "I can't do art" because there's a long, long history of art making, and there's a long, long future of art making. Particularly in history, you can see so many different artistic creations, and I think people get really stuck in thinking that art is one thing. I think it's important for every person to try and make art in different ways, whether they succeed or they don't succeed to the extent that they want to so that they can broaden their artistic vocabulary. At the same time I think each artist is very individual in their way of expressing, their way of drawing, even something as simple as a straight "line" across a page. Every person has an identity in the way that they make art.

Q: What's your opinion on social media? A: I've actually just started reading a book called Stand Out of Our Light, and the title is talking about resisting social media as it is right now, in its toxic form, which I've agreed with for a long time. I do have social media accounts and I've been sort of sucked into them on one end but I also find them very liberating and helpful. I'm connected to people that I would never have been able to connect to before, but I think that the advertising and the aspect of advertising is problematic. The way social media curates what we're going to see, not necessarily what we want to see, and how it can shape the way you see the world is really problematic. I think social media on its own is not necessarily the devil or anything, but I just think that it needs to be harnessed for good.

Q: Why did you choose to teach at PCS? A: I was really struck by the kindness and the humanity of my administrators. At the last school I was teaching at, the administrators were really hands off and weren't really interested. The administrators here were so thoughtful and kind, and they had clearly invested their life, to some degree, in art, which is really unique. When they explained what the student body was like and how rigorous and how hardworking everyone is here, I really thought that was a unique and wonderful opportunity. So when they offered me the job, I took it.

Q: What do you think about the environment at PCS so far?

A: It's fantastic. The environment in my classroom is phenomenal. I would love for there to be less echoing like a gymnasium but it's a beautiful school. Everybody is walking around with a gift and with some perspective on the world. It's a very supportive environment and that's my perception of it.

Q: Do you have any children?

A: I do have a son named Teddy, and he is 20 months old. I started being a mom late in life, but he's the most wonderful thing that ever happened. He's very happy, curious, and energetic, and he's really changed my worldview a lot.



Wesley Laga is the new PCS drama teacher. Here is our interview with him:

Q: How long have you been teaching for?A: This is my seventh year teaching, but I have been directing and working as a teaching artist for 15-16 years.Q: Have you taught at any other schools?A: I started teaching in grad school at a private school called Basis Independent

Manhattan.Then I worked at different schools and camps as a teaching artist. Q: Have you taught any other subjects

besides drama?

A: I was a physical education teacher for three years.

- Q: What did you think of that job?
- A:Worst thing I have ever done.

Q: Why?

A: I-I'm not athletic. My school asked me to.

Q: What would you do with your students? A: I would google sports and do my best to remember how to play.

Q: What do you like about teaching?

A: I like that I get to learn about my students from an academic standpoint but also from a musical and theatrical standpoint.

Q: Why did you want to be a teacher?

A: I never wanted to be a teacher. I actually promised myself when I was in middle/high school I would never become a teacher.

Then I started working at a summer camp, directing shows, and I really liked working with kids, but I also liked directing theater. That is how I became a drama teacher.

Q: What do you think is the most effective teaching method and why?

A: That is a loaded question. Getting to know your students as individuals, not just students. Then learning about them and how they learn.

Q: What type of students are your favorite? A: Enthusiastic students.

Q: Do you have any good memories from teaching?

A: Putting on shows. Yeah. Putting on shows.

Q: What shows have you put on in the past? A: Antigone, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, Annie, Peter and the Starcatcher, The Complete History of the World.

Q: Do you prefer putting on plays or musicals?

A: That's a great question. If I had to choose whether to direct only plays or only

musicals, I would choose plays. I love directing musicals though.

Q: Can you sing?

A: No. Not well.

Q: Are you excited about this year's musical?

A: Yes. So excited!

Q: Do you want to announce it?

A: No. That is for the people who are

signing up for me to reveal. Q: How do you think PCS could improve its

arts department?

A: I want us to get involved in doing Shakespere. I want us to put on funny plays with funny characters such as *Peter and the Starcatcher*. This is about how Peter Pan became Peter Pan.

Q: What is your opinion about students using social media?

A: I think social media can be very addictive and people can be very mean behind a screen. During covid, social media was great because it gave people confidence posting on TikTok. There is a lot of very creative stuff on tik tok.

Q: Do you have TikTok?

A: I do. My TikTok is private. I actually have two instagrams though, one for teachers, that is Mr. Laga's Drama World and another private one. So in all, I think people need to make sure they use social media correctly.

Q: Why did you choose to teach at PCS? A: I really wanted to teach in Jersey again and I had recently gotten my certificate to teach drama at public schools. I found a listing online and I applied just to see what would happen. I then met with Mr. Patton, Mrs. Dowling, and Mrs. Eckstrom, and they really convinced me. I got to see the theater because at my old school I only had a cafeteria. I really liked it here and I got to do my demo lesson.

Q: What do you think about the environment at PCS?

A: Mostly supportive. I think it is a very cool environment where kids can do sports and the arts and really find themselves.

Q:Do you have any pets?

- A: Yes I have two cats.
- Q: Do you live far from school?
- A: No, I live 30 minutes away from school.
- Q: Do you have any children?
- A: Yes, my honey bunny Sky.
- Q: Did you always want to have children?
- A: Yes, I have always wanted to be a dad.
- Q: Do you want more than one?

A: We'll see what happens. The world is always changing.

Q: What's your middle name?

- A: Richard.
- Q: Where are you originally from?
- A: Bergen County, New Jersey.



Michael Keogh is the PCS 6th grade English teacher. Here is our interview with him:

Q: What subject and which grades do you teach?

- A: I teach grade six English.
- Q: How long have you been teaching for?
- A: This is my 22nd year.

Q: What school did you come from?

A: American School Foundation of Monterrey, Mexico.

- Q: When did you move back here?
- À: In August.
- Q: Is it weird?

A: A little bit, as I've been gone for nine years.

Q: Have you taught any other subjects? A: I've taught all middle school and high school grades English and ESL (English as a Second Language).

Q: What do you like about teaching?

A: Being around kids.

Q: Do you have a favorite age group?

A: Sixth grade laughs at my jokes more than any other grade level I've taught, so so far, I'm really liking sixth grade.

Q: Why did you want to be a teacher? A: My first job teaching was in Japan, and I wasn't sure I wanted to be a teacher. I just wanted to live internationally because when I was in high school, I had a lot of friends who were from Korea, Japan, Thailand, and Taiwan, so I really wanted to travel to East Asia where so many of them were from. After college, I had the opportunity to go to Japan. I wasn't really intending on a career in teaching, but it just kind of happened. Q: Where did you grow up?

A: Around here, in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania, and I graduated from the Pennington School.

Q: What do you think is the most effective teaching method and why?

A: I like the workshop model. The idea is that the first 10-ish minutes should be a mini lesson, and then there is a big chunk of independent time in which students are working on things that were taught during the mini lesson or maybe something that was taught the day before or a few days before. I think that independent time is really important because it gives students a chance to work on something with a lot of independence and a lot of responsibility. I get to move around the room and have small group conferences or one-on-one conferences with students to check in with the work they're doing. It's a chance for differentiation [teaching different students differently]. In smaller groups or one on

one, it allows the teacher and the student to personalize things and focus on specific things that can't always be focused on in large groups.

Q: Do you have a favorite type of student? A: No.

Q: Do you have any memorable memories from teaching?

A: For me it is more about the atmosphere than any specific memories. The Pennington School is nice because it has a real family feel to it. I graduated from Pennington and I taught at Pennington so it felt like home to me in a way when I was teaching there. So then after Pennington, I taught in South Korea for eight years, and there I just liked the students' education. There was such a big focus on the culture in Korea. They take school a little too seriously sometimes, and I liked trying to help people to still work hard but maybe focus more on growth and not on the grades.

Q: Why did you choose PCS?

A: This school has a good reputation, and it was a chance for me to come back to this area. For me, I really like teaching in small class sizes, so I really like how the English department has, relatively speaking compared to the other subjects, such small class sizes. That's something that's really important to me. That small school feel often does lead to a family feeling. Q: How far do you live from school?

A: I live in Lambertville which is about 35 minutes away.

Q: Do you have a middle name? A: Yes, Thomas.



Adriana Gaissert is the new middle school Spanish teacher at PCS. Here is our interview with her:

Q: How long have you been teaching for? A: I have been teaching for about 20-21 years.

Q: What schools have you taught at prior to PCS?

A: I have taught at only private schools, so this is my first time teaching at a public school. I taught at Stuart, Princeton Day School, and a while back at Princeton Boys' Academy.

Q: Did you enjoy teaching at those schools? A: I did. I think every school has its own charm. Stuart was little girls in elementary school and after that I taught middle school. But, every school has its own charm. Also, I hope this doesn't answer another question, but every school I went to I learned a lot. You think we are the teachers, but you, the students, teach us a lot. So I have a very special love for each school.

Q: Have you taught any other subjects or just Spanish?

A: Just Spanish. In Columbia when I finished college though, I finished economics. So I was a system professor in teaching finances.

Q: Did you enjoy teaching finances or do you like teaching Spanish?

A: I think I like teaching Spanish better because when I came to this country I always said I wanted to do something for my culture. I want to do something where other people learn to respect another culture. I would teach Spanish for free if I didn't have to work because it is kind of my way to do something for my culture but also do something for others.

Q: What do you like about teaching? A: Many things. I think I always wanted to be a teacher because I was always playing teacher at home. I had a little board and I would pretend people were listening to my lesson. But what I love is I learn a lot of things from the students and I feel like I'm a better person and a better teacher because I learned from the parents and students. I also love to share my passion for language and traveling with my students.

Q: What do you think is the most effective teaching method?

A: You know in language, there are many different teaching methods. I think there really is no one teaching method. It is many factors. It is about the personality of the teacher, the personality of the students, but I think one thing that is important is the relationship with the students. So I think if you have a good relationship with the students, whatever teaching method you use will work.

Q; What type of students are your favorite? A: This is an interesting question. I don't have a favorite kind of student. But there are things you love like if a student does their homework, you know what I mean, and they learn. But there are also students who have a particular quality like kind or funny. Q: Do you have any special memories from teaching?

A: Special memories? Oh my gosh. I have many special memories. I used to run the exchange program with Barcelona in my other school. I had this kid and he was struggling in Spanish for many years and he had a learning difficulty. So when we advertised the program and filled out the application everybody was asking questions and taking up lots of our time. He never said anything and the last day the forms were due, he brought all the forms totally quiet and he qualified to go. When he came back, he came back talking a lot of Spanish and he and his family were so thankful. That was very nice.

Q: What is your opinion of students and social media?

A: So my opinion is that social media has some very good things and as teachers and parents we cannot go against that, because that is what it is. It is like when the car was invented; you couldn't say "No I don't want the car to be here." It is part of life and technology development. However, I think our job as teachers and parents is to teach the students to have self control and understand that it is important to balance screen time with other activities. Q: What do you think about the environment at PCS?

A: As a community? That's a good question. You know I am very happy. I heard that the students here have very high standards. So my expectation was I was going to teach students that really want to do well and are really focused on academics. I find some kids though to be pretty irresponsible because I see kids running late to class often and students constantly losing things. I feel very comfortable with the teachers here. When I started, I knew I would have to get comfortable with many things, but I feel settled in now. I feel as though I have taught here longer than I have. The kids are kind, smart, and responsible for the most part. Q: Do you live far from school?

A: I live 22 minutes away from school.

Q: Do you have any children?

A: I do have two children.

Q: What are their names?

A: Lucas is my oldest and he is a sophomore in college. My youngest is Isabella and she is a freshman in college. I can't believe my children are already so big!

Q: Where are you originally from?

A: I am from Colombia.

Q: When did you move here?

A: I didn't think about moving here, but after college I went to study international finance. So, I came to Boston, Massachusetts. After that, I met someone from here and got married. Now I'm divorced, but yes. I stayed here though because I married someone from here.

Q: Do you visit Colombia often?

A: Yes I do. I try to visit at least once a year, but sometimes I go much more. Last year, I went four or five times. We hope these interviews helped students get to know these new teachers better and their interests outside of school.

History of the Pledge of Allegiance By Rohan Srivastava

The pledge of allegiance is a unique part of the American schooling experience. A country thrives on its nationalism, but why is pledging fealty to America a legal requirement in 47 states? At this point, it's become so normalized that many students never stop to question it, but in recent years it has become the subject of much controversy due to the phrase "under God," a phrase that most students are conditioned to say and is somewhat a declaration of faith. But how did this pledge get written? How did it make it into schools? How did "under God" get added, and why are you required at least to stand at attention while it's recited?

The first publication of the pledge of allegiance was in *The Youth's Companion*, written by Francis Bellamy in 1892 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the European discovery of the "new world," meant for millions of schoolchildren around the country to recite in celebration. It appeared in that magazine quite differently from how it is today: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands—one Nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all."

The most controversial part of the pledge, the one that is missing from this early draft, is "under God." Its addition has much to do with war. America, built on capitalism, found a threat in Russian communism. In order for America to preserve its economy and to maintain the status quo, it had to find a way to prevent Marxist ideas from arriving on its soil. As seen in *Animal Farm* with Moses the raven, Russia was, as a state, atheistic, so the U.S. wanted to counter this "godlessness.". The pledge, having started as a speech for children, was already making its way into schools, so President Eisenhower thought adding the phrase "under God" was a great way to teach the children the difference between them and children in communist countries.

Having been accepted by the government, the pledge was now mandatory and was allotted time in the morning for students to recite under the leadership of their teachers. The first amendment to the constitution, however, reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." A supreme court ruling in the 1940s ruled that students cannot be forced to recite it because doing so would violate the first amendment because students cannot be legally forced to say "under God," and so, from a celebration of colonization to a way to bring nationalism into America to something that has become routine, the pledge of allegiance has weathered many years and changed with the times.

PCS Alumni: Where are they now?

By Madeleine Tsai

Overview:

The Hawkeye recently had the opportunity to speak with PCS alumni to gain insight into where our PCS alumni are now. Ryan Litvinsky, Tristen Schartman, Paige Menapace, and Eowyn Deess all have unique experiences and memories from PCS and share their high school experiences with us.

Ryan Litvinsky:

Rvan Litvinsky, a freshman at PHS, looks back upon his favorite PCS memories, "My most memorable experience at PCS was definitely the quadrant ball tournament." For Ryan, PCS's first quadrant ball tournament where students on different PCS quadrant ball teams competed against each other was one of his most fun experiences at PCS. As a freshman in high school, Ryan recommends "being in a lot of clubs, because you never know what you'll find and enjoy." He is in many clubs at PHS, "For example, I'm in the skiing club. They take you to the mountains in the winter and you go skiing. I also signed up for a rock climbing club." With school courses, Ryan feels as though he has been prepared well for high school. He states, "PCS has been really ahead in the curriculum, so the academics are much easier at PHS."

Tristen Schartman:

Having graduated from PCS three years ago, Tristen Schartman recounts his most memorable experiences at PCS, "Field days were definitely my most memorable experiences. I remember having a sense of team and school spirit on the field every year, which was always fun." He commented on the biggest changes at PCS since he graduated: "The biggest change at PCS since I've graduated was the expansion. I graduated just the year before it was finished. I haven't been inside of them [the new buildings], but they look pretty nice."

Paige Menapace:

A freshman at PHS, Paige Menapace, recalls "the eighth grade DC trip. Everything about the trip was fun. It was probably my best memory from PCS." As Paige explains, "The best part of it was not going to school." She also has a particularly fond memory of "the toilet getting clogged in fourth grade, overflowing, and getting an hour of break." Recently entering high school, Paige would give advice to the eighth graders going into high school to "be happy. Do what makes you happy or else you won't enjoy your limited time in high school."

Eowyn Deess:

Eowyn Deess is a freshman at PHS. Eowyn had too many fond memories to think of one solitary memory that stood out. In her words, "There were a lot of moments where I was like, 'I'm gonna remember this for the rest of my life.' I really can't pinpoint one." Noting her new experiences at PHS, she

Mon Lit

Par Anna Bachurina Dans mon lit Je lis Et je suis endormie Toutes les nuits

Les couvertures Sont très pures Ils sont la jolie couleur pêche Dans les matins je me dépêche

Mon lit sent le miel Du caramel et du ciel Mon lit est confortable Jamais désagréable!

Dehors

Par Fiona Li Mon hamac attaché À deux arbres Une flaque dans Le ciel Um lac pour mon kayak. Un voyage et un paysage has for sure prepared me for PHS. I don't want to compare schools, but it generally says, "I like it there. It's a very new experience. It can be chaotic at times, but overall it's good." Eowyn commented, "It seems like PCS has prepared me better than I might have been prepared had I been at a different school

In summary, our PCS graduates are thriving in their new environment, participating in a variety of clubs, and are making the most of their time in high school. Uniformly, they all feel well prepared by the experience they had at PCS. These PCS graduates give us good advice to pursue what makes us happy and to try many new activities when we get to high school. We look forward to following up with them at a later point in their high school career.

My Bed

Translation: Mme Zahariéva In my bed I read And I am asleep Every night

The covers Are very clean They are the beautiful color peach In the mornings I hurry up

My bed smells of honey Caramels and sky My bed is comfortable Never uncomfortable!

Outside

Translation: Mme Zahariéva My hammock attached To two trees A puddle In the sky. A lake for my kayak. A trip and a landscape, Dehors (continued)

Dans le monde Il y a Beaucoup pour explorer

Le Benjamin de la famille Par Maryam Maruf

Mon petit frère est adorable Mon petit frère adoré Aime être à l'aise comfortable

Nous sommes copains d'Anniversaire Et il est mon cadeau d'anniversaire Mon anniversaire est le 23 décembre Son anniversaire est le 24 décembre

J'adore ses grands yeux Son rire et son beau sourire Il est mon meilleur ami Et le nouveau favori!

Mon sac de Hockey

Par Grayson von Raalte Mon sac de hockey est rouge Mon sac de hockey est gros Lourd comme un roc Après un match cela pue

Mon sac de hockey est aussi noir Mon sac de hockey a mille odeurs Mon sac de hockey sent la sueur Et peut-être un peu le savon.

Outside (continued)

In the world There is So much to explore.

The Youngest in the family

Translation: Mme Zahariéva

My little brother is adorable My adored little brother Likes to be comfortable

We are birthday buddies And he is my birthday gift My Birthday is December 23rd His birthday is December 24th

I adore his big eyes His laughter and his beautiful smile He is my best friend And the new favorite one!

My Hockey Bag

Translation: Mme Zahariéva My hockey bag is red My hockey bag is fat Heavy as a rock After a game it stinks

My hockey bag is also black My hockey bag has thousand smells My hockey bag smells sweat And maybe a bit of soap.

Mon canapé

Par Sophia Eby Mon canapé n'a pas de nez Il n'a pas de bouche Mais il a la touche D'une plume

Mon canapé est brun Il partage un parfum Avec moi Chaque soir

Il tient mon chien Même s'il laisse une trace De fourrure sur sa place Sur le canapé

Mon canapé me prend moi Pour regarder la télé Merci, canapé Au revoir!

Mon Stylo

Par Tanvi Yalakanti J'ai un stylo. Mon stylo est beau. J'écris des mots. L'encre est bleue.

Je dessine des images sur la page J'écris mon alphabet: ABCDEFG Je dessine la lune en fromage Les personnes et les objets.

Je dessine la robe chère. J'écris mes devoirs. C'est presque l'heure de se coucher. Bonsoir et au revoir!

THE HAWKEYE Reporters

Romy Heuck, Jonina Hou, Ian Kim, Simon Santamaria, Rohan Srivastava, Madeleine Tsai, Madeleine Yang

Supervisor and Editor: Mr. Myers

My sofa

Translation: Mme Zahariéva My sofa does not have a nose It has no mouth But it has the touch Of a feather

My sofa is brown, He shares a perfume With me Each evening

It holds My dog Even if he leaves a trace Of hair on his spot On the sofa

My sofa takes me To watch TV Thank you, sofa, Good bye!

My Pen

Translation: Mme Zahariéva I have a pen. My pen is beautiful. I write words. The ink is blue.

I draw images on the page. I write my alphabet: ABCDEFG I draw the moon as a piece of cheese The people and the objects.

I draw the expensive dress. I write my homework. It is almost time for bed. Have a good evening and goodbye!