0 [he 0]Hawkeye Spring 2025

# Maintenance Issues in the Five-Eight Building

By Annelise Sutphin and Eliz Ruggeri

The *Hawkeye* interviewed Mr. Patton, our head of school, to find out about the that may need to be made to the 5-8 building both this summer and even years after that.

*Hawkeye:* Why can't teachers in the 5-8 building turn the heat on when they want and set the temperature in their classrooms?

Mr. Patton: The heating systems haven't changed since 1965, and they need to be replaced which is expensive. However, in the meantime, we can't change the temperature.

*Hawkeye:* Will there ever be central air conditions in the 5-8 building? What would be required to have that?

Mr. Patton: We are looking into a plan to do that. However, this would also be very expensive.

*Hawkeye:* How is maintenance dealing with rodents in the building?

Mr. Patton: The less snow, the more rodents. Due to the fact that we are having milder winters, there are more rodents. The rodents look for food. This is why we try to minimize the amount of food in the building. Also, we have a pest control company that takes care of the pests.

*Hawkeye:* Now that the big additions are built, including the new 5-8 classrooms and the extension to the Charter Rooms, are you satisfied with them? Are there any things you wish had been done differently?

Mr. Patton: I love the way that the new extensions to the 5-8 buildings have come out. I wish that we had added water spigots so that people can drink water. I miss Charter River because it was fun to see all of the kids playing in the mud. I would like to put a slide in.

*Hawkeye:* How's the recycling plan working out? When will the school move to recycling glass, cardboard, and even plastics?

Mr. Patton: We've done a good job. I love how the composting plan has turned out. Around September [of next year], after we have gotten used to it for the rest of this year, I'm thinking of trying a plastic and cans bin.

Princeton Charter's Recycling Acts By Gabby Poynter and Arjun Krishnan At the start of February, Mr. Patton started working to save the planet and make Princeton Charter School a cleaner and safer environment by asking the Student Council to help Princeton Charter School become more eco friendly. One step taken was to compost. There are now two composting bins in the cafeteria for the food that people don't eat. After the food is collected, it is transported to a local farm where the food is then given to animals, mainly pigs. The extra food that students and teachers don't eat isn't wasted but is used.

Another step the Student Council has taken is to teach students about recycling. There is a recycling bin in every classroom in both the 5-8 school and the K-4 school. The recycling bins are strictly for paper. Everything else, including plastic should go into the trash cans. The Student Council hopes that students will be helpful by putting their trash in the correct cans.

The reason Princeton Charter School has decided to begin recycling is because Earth's climate has changed significantly due to human actions, such as pollution. Over millions of years, the planet has experienced periods of warming and cooling, including ice ages, with cyclical changes driven by factors like Earth's orbit and plate tectonics. In the last century, however, human release of greenhouse gases has accelerated warming, leading to rising global temperatures, melting ice sheets, and sea level rise. This trend is a direct threat to animals and to human civilizations. PCS's actions are helping the Earth and influencing others to do the same.

Some reasons why people should recycle is because it offers significant

benefits to the planet, including saving resources, reducing pollution, and providing cleaner water.

Be sure to talk to your friends and family and make them aware of the benefits of recycling. Together we can make a difference in the planet's health.

## Farewell, Mrs. Nahan

By Jonina Hou and Romy Heuck

Recently in January, our beloved music teacher, Mrs. Nahan, retired during the last week of January after spending 27 years of her life at Princeton Charter School. She had her last winter concert on January 22nd. The gym was filled with parents, alumni, and staff who came to celebrate her last Charter endeavor.

Mrs. Jeanne Nahan had been with Princeton Charter School since its opening in 1997. Originally, Mrs. Nahan didn't plan to go into teaching; she originally wanted to play in an orchestra pit. But when she went to music school, she met so many people who were more talented than she was, so she thought that she "didn't fit in the puzzle" because she was not able to sight read well enough compared to the other students. Thus, she first attempted to pass an exam to obtain a teaching certificate, which she failed, so she took the two courses that she previously fell short in. Prior to teaching at PCS, she taught at a Florida middle school for one year, at a high school for six years, and at Mercer County Community College. The first school she taught at was a brand new charter high school with no senior class where she established the theatre department. Thanks to this, she attained the

knowledge and experience required to build up our own PCS theatre department.

Naturally, throughout the process of setting up this new program, Mrs. Nahan was faced with tough obstacles, one of which was managing her time between her personal and professional life. While being a music teacher for all grade levels, she also led the musical, orchestra, and chorus director but at the same time was a mother to young children. During our interview, she recalled her desire for a second music teacher to "work in tandem with," but when she proposed the idea, the school administration refused, saying that it would go over budget. In addition to the stress of juggling her priorities, she looked back on the times when students were required to be in chorus. However, since many were not as passionate about singing as others, they would mouth the words, but some students made it increasingly difficult, pushing her to make chorus voluntary.

Her proudest achievement during her Charter career was creating a program that her children's middle school did not have and she did not have growing up. Along with chorus, she orchestrated the addition of other fine arts including jazz, orchestra, and more. Mrs. Nahan also mentioned to *The Hawkeye* her pride about directing the concerts and musicals. In fact, she was the one who added the eighth grade play to our arts program. Another accomplishment was the fine arts scheduling that she organized. Prior to this, older students were not offered the option to choose their fine arts courses as we are today.

Looking back, Mrs. Nahan recalls many fond memories at Charter such as the

time when the art room was on the third floor in Ms. Miller's room, and the other classrooms were on the lower levels. Often, the students in the lower Do you mean 2nd floor? classrooms would sit on the stairwell, reading and enjoying the fresh air and sunlight. One day, after a productive art class, the art teacher seemingly forgot about this well-known fact and dumped a bucket of dirty paint water, hitting the students sitting below! They were wet. They were cold.

When asked what she misses most about Princeton Charter School and her position as music teacher, she talked about the collaboration between her and the students. Mrs. Nahan said, "I miss making music with other people. Whether it's the little kids banging the drums or the singing or having somebody accompany [in a concert]." That was one thing that made the PCS concerts special. Not only would there be many children singing on stage but also students accompanying them - a collaboration. Mrs. Nahan specifically looked back on her last concert when she paired Alice Chen, a guitarist, and Jasper Block, a cellist, together to accompany the fifth and sixth graders singing "Black Bird" by the Beatles. Another example of the collaboration she brought to the Charter community is evident all around her old room. She worked with students to paint beautiful murals, including the tree with the branches that stretch across the perimeter of the room. The other is a mask containing words to represent our time during the pandemic. These paintings pose as the physical mark Mrs. Nahan left behind for

the PCS community in addition to the impact she left upon us.

During the interview, Mrs. Nahan informed us of her plans for the future. Currently, she is singing in a community choir in Hopewell valley with a director she admires. She also considered becoming a piano teacher for a few students, but she is thinking about coming back to Charter next year, waiting out the one year requirement, to perhaps start a piano ensemble or another music-based club. She was excited about her upcoming trip to Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, where actors there are dressed up in old American clothing. She was also planning on visiting her young nephew, a composer in Nashville, Tennessee.

Mrs. Nahan also left teachers and students alike with some final words of wisdom. For the teachers, she suggested having a "self-employed mentality". That means that they should be vocal about what they want, and if they have an idea, be confident and execute it. "Don't expect people to give suggestions", she says. For the students, she told us that we are all very lucky to be at PCS. It's like a "secret club". She recommends that everyone try everything at Charter because in high school, students may get cut if they're not good enough. Charter is such a small community where we are given the privilege to go out for everything, so we might as well take advantage of it.

Whether she is teaching you how to play the glockenspiel, playing the Queen of the Night's aria through the big speakers, or galloping around the room to Dance of the Sugar Plum while playing with the neon scarves tucked in the piano bench, she has undoubtedly left a lasting mark not only on the arts community of Charter, but also on us all. We will miss you!

## **Blasts from the Past**

TEACHERS' EDITION A reflection on the teachers' experiences in middle school By Madeleine Yang and Yusuf Maruf

Mr. Eisenbach

Mr. Eisenbach, PCS upper school math teacher, went to junior high (as middle school was referred to) at Schuyler-Colfax Middle School in Wayne, New Jersey. Junior high was a tough time in his life because everything was changing. So, while he had many friends and loved certain aspects of middle school, unfortunately, many of his junior high memories aren't positive. However, one of the things Mr. Eisenbach enjoyed most about his junior high experience was the independence and freedom. He was no longer the little kid who was constantly micromanaged by his parents. He felt "much more independent, much more on [his] own, and [he] loved that." His favorite subject, though he is now a math teacher, was actually science. He had an amazing science teacher, who helped him enjoy the subject, and, furthermore, helped him realize the importance of good teachers. In a three word summary, Mr. Eisebach would say that his junior high experience was boring and awkward, but also freeing, helping prepare him for even more independence in high school. Middle school is a very important time in our lives, but it's also "a stepping stone" to the next stage in young adult life. Some advice Mr. Eisenbach would give current PCS students is to not stress too much over middle school- whether you are anxious about grades or your social life. In other words, use middle school as a way to get as prepared as you can for high school and enjoy a taste of freedom!

## Ms. Miller

Ms. Miller, PCS 8th grade English teacher, went to middle school at Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart, not too far from PCS. At Stuart, Ms. Miller remembers a similar atmosphere to what we try to foster here at Charter-learning in community. Even without remembering all the content of her classes, the joy that accompanied her learning stayed with her and is now a feeling she tries to incorporate into her own classes today. In middle school, Ms. Miller's favorite subject was science. She really wanted to become a STEM person, so she was very enthusiastic and focused in her math and science classes. In fact, her science teacher was previously a nun and showed Ms. Miller how seemingly disconnected or even clashing areas such as science and religion can coincide. This perspective in her science class fascinated her, further cultivating her interest in science. Ms. Miller describes her middle school experience as "hard, worth it, and memorable." Finally, some words from Ms. Miller to PCS students. "Middle school is one of the hardest times of your life because of all the things that are happening, not only in your body, but in terms of your expectations as a student. But... realizing that middle school is not forever and that you're building the skills that you're going to need to carry you through high school and

also life beyond the classroom [is important]." Her advice is to hang in there "and realize that all of your hard work does pay off. It's just sometimes hard to see it while you're in the midst of the struggle."

## Mr. Myers

Seventh grade English teacher Mr. Myers went to Park junior high in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Mr. Myers went to middle school in a time when bell bottom jeans and colorful, patterned clothing were popular, so although he doesn't have many positive memories to share, he does recall the fun fads. He remembers the clacker toy craze, where two ceramic balls were connected by a string, and students would swing them back and forth to make a clack-clack sound. "It was all you'd hear on the playground," he says. But when the clackers were banned for breaking and hurting people, everyone switched to vo-vos and started learning new tricks. Mr. Myers' favorite subject in school was history. But his middle school experience wasn't always easy. "In 7th grade, my handwriting was so bad that they took me out of English and put me in typing class," he laughed. "That's actually where I learned to type [so well]!" In three words, Mr. Myers described middle school as "torturous, full of angst, but also growth-filled." While it was a tough time for him, he acknowledges that it did help him grow. Mr. Myers also talked about how middle school is where the kids start beginning to care more about popularity and relationships. "Everyone is trying to put on a 'cloak' of personality," he says. "Some kids are better at it than others, but it's a rough time." Even though there were some

enjoyable moments at times, Mr. Myers says he wouldn't go back to middle school for anything. "By the time I got to high school, everything was much better." Though his middle school years weren't the best, Mr. Myers believes it was a time of important growth; mentally, physically, and emotionally. "Middle school is tough, but it helps you figure out who you are," he says.

## Mr. Burt

Mr. Burt, third and fourth grade math teacher, went to John Witherspoon Middle School, as we now know as Princeton Middle School. He transferred schools in middle school, so "it was a different town, different school, different people." He had to adjust, which made the middle school experience even more challenging and different for him. When Mr. Burt attended John Witherspoon, grades were grouped together, so fifth and sixth graders would be in the same classroom and seventh and eighth graders would be in the same classroom. Students would have the same teacher for two years in a row. His fondest memories of middle school were of his science class. He had his science teacher, Mr. Luke, for both seventh and eighth grade, and he just thought Mr. Luke was the best. Because of Mr. Luke, science class was his favorite class. He also enjoyed PE because he had a great PE teacher. One of the things he enjoyed most about middle school was that he could ride his bike to and from school through Princeton's amazing downtown each day. Mr. Burt would say his middle experience was "fun, it was challenging, and it was different."

## Ms. Trenholm

Fourth and Fifth grade English teacher Mrs. Trenholm went to South Lakes High School. High School? Yep, her high school used to be 7th to 10th grade! But as she moved up a grade, so did the high school. So then it became 8th to 11th, "and then finally a school for ninth through twelfth grade." So for her, it became less of a middle school experience and more of a mixed experience of middle and high school. Her favorite memory from South Lakes was participating in her track team. "Although I didn't like the races, I love being a part of a team, which was really fun." In middle school, Ms. Trenholm was finally able to ride a bike without her parents being around due to the fact that her school didn't have a school bus. This was one of the first steps to her independence. Her favorite subject was surprisingly math class! She said "Even though I wasn't great at it, I think I enjoyed it because I liked the routine of it." Awkward, inspiring, and fun were the three words Mrs. Trenholm used to describe her time in junior high. In her time in middle school, she was able to solidify her friendships, which was a really important part of middle school for her. She became closer with two friends from elementary school, and today they are two of her best friends.

## **School Sports Ending at Charter?**

Romy Heuck, Ayona Kahlon

As many may have heard, there was a large imbalance in the participant distribution for the fall sports. While cross country thrived with nearly 60 participants, other sports like soccer struggled to successfully play even a single game due to a shortage of players. Now, with the graduation of our eighth graders, the futures of other teams, such as lacrosse and field hockey, come into question.

In an effort to prevent this, The Hawkeye interviewed students from sixth to eighth grade who participated in fall sports, asking them to describe their favorite parts of fall sports and what potential solutions they could come up with. While attracting a large number of students may be difficult due to varying interests and tastes, there was a general consensus among the students that the less popular sports like field hockey and soccer needed more publicity. Additionally, since the thing about the less popular fall sports that was most enjoyed by participants was the camaraderie amongst teammates, we at The Hawkeve believe that these sports should highlight the joys of team sports as the main selling point. While both of the less popular sports, soccer and field hockey, are played in a team setting, cross country, which is currently the most popular, is really an individual sport. Therefore, those who sign up for cross country may be missing out on the team aspect that is so appreciated by many students.

When conducting a poll, we discovered some of the many worries students face when considering joining after-school sports. Here are some of the most recurring issues: Some may be worried about the cost to participate, but in fact, the sports programs are all completely free. The jerseys, transportation to games, and the equipment needed are all provided. This is unlike other sports clubs around Princeton, like Princeton Field Hockey Club, which costs \$500 per season with jerseys and tournaments funded separately. The Princeton FC Soccer Club charges \$455 for two sessions per week. The Blue Star Lacrosse club charges players \$395 per season, and the equipment generally costs \$250. Princeton Charter School teaches you the skills and gives you the playing time needed to improve at no cost at all.

Another issue that was often mentioned was that the students seemed to be nervous about starting a sport with no previous experience. Middle school is such an important time to try out new activities to decide what you want to focus on in High School. So go out there, explore and just enjoy your middle school experience.

#### Winter Sports Wrap-up

By Maya Romalis, Kainne Mark, and Ruhi Zhou

The Hawkeye interviewed the coaches of the basketball teams to do a winter sports wrap-up.

The 2025 basketball season was a great year for the girls' Charter basketball team. With 10 wins and two losses, the players dominated the field and grew their skills in basketball, practicing man-to-man defence, team skills, proper shooting, ball sharing, and running on offense.

This year, the team was too small to have separate varsity and JV teams, so all the players worked together in all the games. In addition, most of the other teams didn't have JV teams, so the coaches had to work hard so that all the players played in every game.

Despite these challenges, the coaches were happy to coach such an eager team full of students who were dedicated to each other and to team success. The student team managers, especially Ayana, helped make sure the season ran smoothly.

The team also had lots of younger players (sixth and seventh graders), so next year, the returning players can learn how to play basketball at an even higher level instead of starting again. Next year, they may also be able to introduce a new defensive scheme, which will improve their skills even more.

While the team loves away games, the coaches prefer home games because they like that a crowd with friendly faces comes to support the team. The coaches say that with a supportive and friendly crowd, the game is more exciting.

The team played 10 schools and 12 games (they played Hun twice). Their biggest loss and win were both against Hun. In their first game against Hun they were taken by surprise, but the very next day, they redeemed themselves and won 20 to 17.

The 2025 basketball season was a great year for the Boys' basketball team. With eight wins and four losses, the players dominated the field and grew their skills in basketball by practicing shooting, dribbling and defence.

There was a varsity and JV team, each with 17 players who were chosen based on their age and experience. Therefore, the older and more experienced players played on varsity and the younger, less experienced players played on JV. There were also some players who played on both varsity and JV.

Mr. Gonzalez wanted to coach this year because he played basketball when he was a kid and he coached at his old school. He is glad that this year the team won more games than last year, and he is proud of his players. He says the hardest part of coaching was giving people equal playing time and finding a new strategy when the one they had wasn't working. His maxim is "Work hard, and we will win."

Next year, the players who are not graduating will learn more foundational skills. Their favorite team to play was Chapin, one of the schools physically closest to PCS.

Their biggest win was against Chapin who had beaten them a week earlier and their worst loss was against Metuchen.

The team likes both away and home games. At home games, there is a friendly crowd supporting them and cheering them on. On the way to away games, the bus ride for players is always a joy because they can hang out.

# **Faculty v.s. Students Basketball Game** By Arjun Krishnan and Gabriella Poynter

The student-faculty basketball game took place on February 14, 2025. It was an intense and energetic experience for both the students and the faculty. From the eighth grade student body, Romy, Isabella, Lucas L., Lucas C., Audrey, Max, Kush, Henry, Alex, Charles, Rajveer, Peter, and Nikolai all played terrifically. They had excellent defense as well as offense, dribbling the ball with precision. From the faculty team, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Madia, Mr. Ciuffreda, Mr. Laga, Mrs. Dowling, Mr. Vogel, Ms. Burd, Mrs. Volone, Mrs. Zarambo, Mr. Papp, Mrs. Schmitt, Mrs. Lamont, and Mrs. Miller were all in the mix.

Mr. Gonzalez enjoyed the game thoroughly. He said, "It was fun. The atmosphere was good. It was a tough game and it was a challenge." Mr. Gonzalez was an important asset to the faculty team, scoring a total of twenty-four points.

Mr. Laga, a good sport who scored no points, said, "I was exhausted and five minutes into the game I was out of breath. But it was fun!"

Izzy also shared some opinions about the game. She said, "The game was played well by both students and teachers with the students staying in the lead for most of the game, which I've never witnessed before. I really enjoyed playing with some of the boys since I usually don't and remember feeling accomplished with my assists (although I didn't score). I hated missing the last shot that could've won us the game ugh. Besides that, the game was a good time and a memory I will cherish going into high school."

Kush remarked, "The basketball game was great. Being able to be part of this tradition at charter was very special to me. I think that we played great offense, but our defense was our only problem in the game, even though that was pretty good. I think I did pretty well in the time I played. Overall it was a fun game."

The game was excitingly close with the final score forty-six to forty-five. The faculty won in the end by one point. The eighth graders got two pointers constantly with a couple of three pointers. The faculty got a lot of two pointers from Mr. Gonzalez and Mrs. Garcia. This would be another win for the faculty after many previous wins. There have been so many games that the faculty and students have lost track of how many games they both won! The halftime show was performed by the kindergarteners who did a ribbon dance to the song *Bad Blood* by Taylor Swift. This halftime show was very entertaining and everyone loved the adorable little kindergarteners.

## **Local Restaurant Reviews**

By Lucas Cervantes and Aryan Kondakindi

*The Hawkeye* sent a pair of reporters to eat at and review some local restaurants. Here is their report.

**Mi España -** Mi España is a restaurant dedicated to making authentic Spanish cuisine similar to what you would find in Spain. We ordered croquetas de jamón ibérico, a classic spanish tapas dish. Croquetas de jamon iberico is a fried dish of a set bechamel sauce with the classic spanish jamon. Aryan liked it a lot and gave it an 8 out of 10 as it had a buttery texture with a really warm and soft inside, "It tasted like a bathbomb." Lucas, whose dad is from Spain, gave it a 6.5 out of 10 because the texture was lumpy and there wasn't much jamon or jamon flavor.

**Taste of Mexico -** Taste of Mexico is a restaurant dedicated to making authentic Mexican cuisine similar to what you would find in Mexico. Upon arriving, we ordered 3 tacos al pastor for about \$12. Tacos al pastor is marinated pork meat on a spit, which is a vertical skewer. The tacos came with salsa verde y salsa roja and chips. The chips were crunchy and made fresh, and the salsas were standard. The tacos came with two tortillas each, one crunchy, and a soft one. They

loaded it up with meat and added some cilantro and onions. Aryan liked it a lot and gave it a 9 out of 10. However, Lucas, a harsh rater, gave it an 8.2 out of 10 because it was a good taco but it didn't blow him away.

**Olives -** Olives is a Mediterranean restaurant which also doubles as a supermarket. The way we ordered our food was fairly unique. We first asked the chef to make us what we wanted, and after a fairly long wait (approx. 15 min), we got our food and paid at a different counter. We ordered a gyro, which consisted of meat, lettuce, tomatoes, and more. The reviewers did NOT enjoy this meal. Aryan gave it a 4 - "I don't know how you can mess up a gyro!" It didn't taste good, and was nothing special. He felt as if you could make it at home. Lucas, though usually harsh, gave it a 5.2. The ingredients were fresh, but the quality wasn't and the bread wasn't good either.

La Mezzaluna - La Mezzaluna is an Italian restaurant that serves classic Italian dishes. It is a sit down restaurant, however you can do takeout if you like. The service was great, and after just a small 10 minute wait, we got a plate of spaghetti bolognese. Lucas, the first reviewer, thought it tasted only of tomato, and he could not enjoy the meat and cheese that were there as well. Therefore, Lucas gave it a 6.4 out of 10. However, Aryan, apparently "having no taste buds," enjoyed it so much. He couldn't stop eating it! After a long wait, much consideration, and getting insulted by our friends for eating too much, Aryan gave it a 9.5 out of 10. **XiBei Cuisine -** XiBei Cuisine is a Chinese restaurant that opened recently close to the library. It is a sit down restaurant which can do takeout as well. They serve all types of Chinese cuisine, like dumplings, noodles, and salads. We decided on the soup dumplings, and it took them 15 minutes to make them. After close consideration from the first reviewer, Aryan rated it a 9.1 for the warm inside and jiggly outside. Lucas gave it an 8.9 because it was freshly cooked, cooked well, and the meat was flavorful. Overall, we give this restaurant nine stars out of 10 and we do recommend you try the food out for yourself!

**Mamoun's** - Mamoun's is a middle eastern (mostly Syrian) restaurant located at 20 Witherspoon St. in Princeton. They serve all types of shawarma and falafel. We decided to go for the traditional shawarma, and after a very short wait, about five minutes, we got the shawarma with some fries and sauce. It was absolutely delicious! Overall, we rated it an eight out of 10 because of the delicious texture and how fast we received our food. These poems by Madam D's 7th-grade French students were written following the pattern of **Le Chat** by Guillaume Apollinaire.

## Poems inspired by le Chat

Je souhaite.... Je souhaite dans mon jardin: Un frère qui n'est pas pénible, Mes amis pour jouer au volley, De longues conversations en famille, Et un livre intéressant sur les genoux. Par Ruhi Zhao

Pour toujours Je souhaite dans ma maison Prendre mon stylo et dessiner Manger secrètement des bonbons Un violoncelle dans le coin du salon Rire avec ma famille devant la télé Lire des histoires d'amour Notre bonheur préservé pour toujours Par Catherine You

La Joie Je souhaite dans ma vie De la joie dans ma famille Le soleil qui brille dans le ciel Rigoler avec mes amies Des livres qui sentent le miel Par Anya Bachurina

Je souhaite dans mon parc, De nouveaux skis, Un vélo de montagne Des bons films de mystère, Sans lesquels je ne peux pas vivre Par Allegra Shank I wish.... I wish in my garden: A brother who is not annoying, My friends to play volleyball with, Long conversations with my family And an interesting book on my lap.

#### Forever

In my house, I wish To pick up my pen and draw To eat candies secretly A cello in the corner of the living room To laugh with my family in front of the TV To read romance novels; Our happiness preserved forever

Joy In my life, I wish for Joy in my family The sun burning brightly in the sky Friends who laugh with me, And honey-scented books

I want in my park A pair of new skis, A strong mountain bike, And good mystery movies Which I cannot live without