



# UPPER ST. CLAIR SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ANNUAL REPORT: 2021



UNITY  
SUCCESS  
CHARACTER



Dr. John T. Rozzo

Superintendent of Schools

I am proud to introduce the 2021 annual report, which details how the students and staff of Upper St. Clair overcame the many challenges of the past year. The report highlights many of their accomplishments and further demonstrates the District's commitment to excellence.

Beyond the classroom, our school community was flexible and creative to ensure that students had the opportunity to experience important milestone events. Whether it was hosting the first-ever homecoming dance in the high school stadium, performing in outdoor venues, or live-streaming events for families and friends, we were fully committed to providing a positive experience for our students and their families.

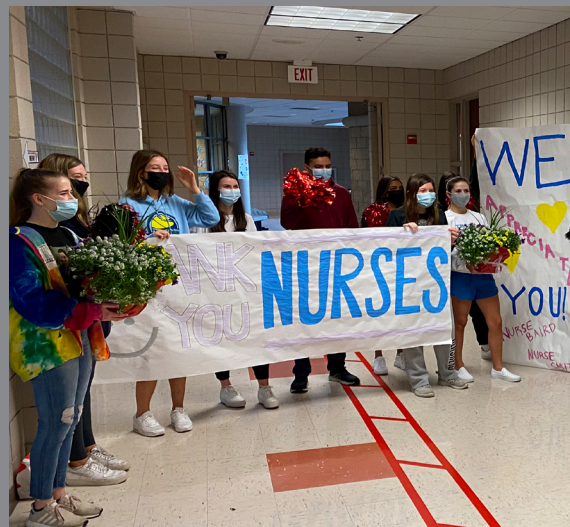
Throughout 2021, our students and our parent organizations made it a priority to demonstrate their appreciation for so many of our employee groups. Thank you for supporting our staff through these coordinated acts of kindness. These collective efforts are always appreciated.

As the information included in our annual report illustrates, despite the pandemic related challenges, amazing things continued to happen in our schools and classrooms. Now, more than ever before, it is important that we take time to recognize the many accomplishments and achievements of our students, our staff, and our USC schools. The annual report is a timely reminder of the unified effort needed to support our primary objective - educating the students of Upper St. Clair.

It is an incredible honor to serve as Upper St. Clair's superintendent of schools. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely yours,

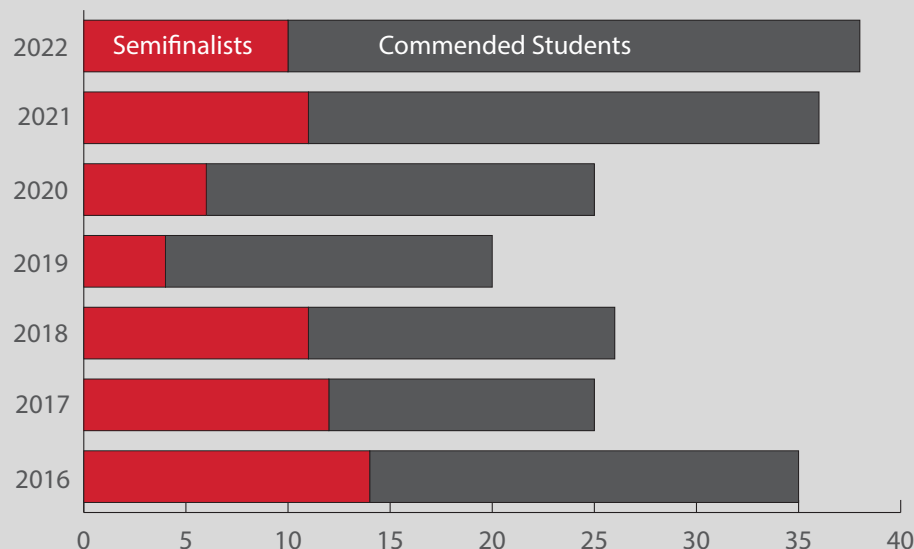
John T. Rozzo, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools





# Our Students

## National Merit Scholarship Program

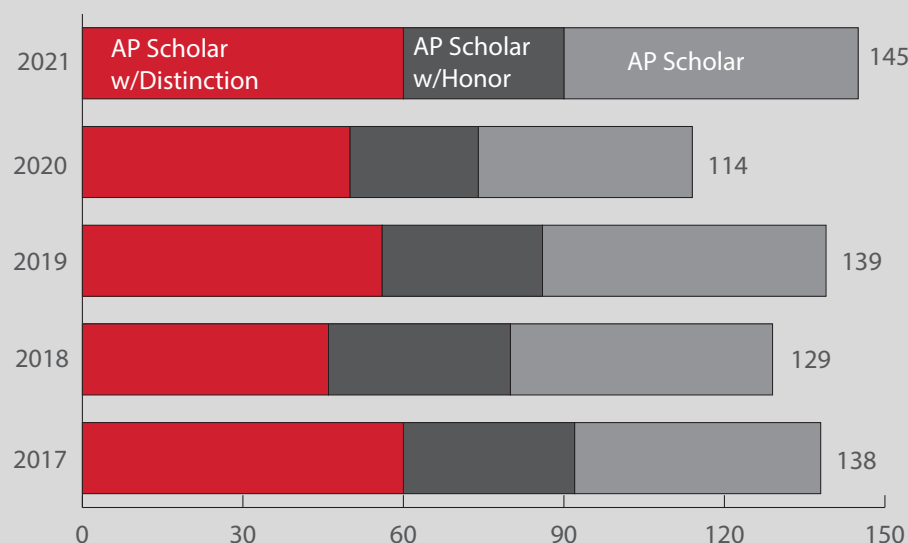


Students enter the National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the PSAT – the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test – during the fall of their junior year.

**Semifinalist:** scores in the top 1%

**Commended Students:** scores in the top 3%

## AP Scholars



**AP Scholar with Distinction:** average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more exams

**AP Scholar with Honor:** average score of 3.25 or higher on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams

**AP Scholar:** scores of 3 or higher on three or more exams

- For the second consecutive year, Upper St. Clair High School Student Council was honored as a **2021 National Gold Council of Excellence** by the National Student Council. Upper St. Clair is one of only nine Pennsylvania high schools recognized as 2021 National Council of Excellence Award Winners. Nationwide, 251 high schools earned this achievement.

- Ten Upper St. Clair High School students earned **Academic All-American** awards from the National Speech & Debate Association. 2021 graduates Atharva Barve, Antara Cleetus, Reshma Gudla and Sophia Shi as well as seniors William Bacdayan, Scott Cheung, Saif Durrani, Ammar Kethavath, Rushikesh Kulkarni and Nitish Sharma were honored for their academic rigor, competitive speech and debate success, and personal excellence.

- Boyce Middle School sixth grader Audrey Wetterau was honored with the **NextUp Award** for her extraordinary efforts through Socks With A Mission (SWAM). Since founding SWAM two years ago, Audrey has raised thousands of dollars and has distributed more than 30,000 socks to those experiencing homelessness in Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas.

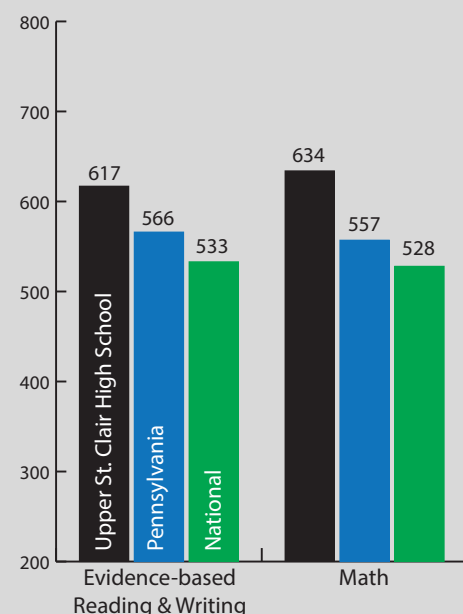
- The Upper St. Clair Speech & Debate Team won the school's first ever National Catholic Forensic League Sweepstakes Award, the **Daniel S. Masterson, Jr. Award of Excellence in Forensics**. The honor is given to the top five schools in the tournament who showed excellence across interpretation, debate and rhetorical events.

# Our Students



- Fort Couch eighth grader Rohan Mehta was crowned **champion of the Western Pennsylvania Spelling Bee** in March 2021. The runner-up was Boyce Middle School fifth grader Raana Parchuri, who won the previous year's competition as a fourth grader.
- Sophia Shi, a 2021 Upper St. Clair High School graduate, was named a **Semifinalist for the 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars**. Sophia was among approximately 625 Semifinalists who were selected from a pool of nearly 6,500 candidates.
- A team of Upper St. Clair High School rising seniors earned **top honors in the Pennsylvania Future Problem Solving State Finals**. By finishing first, the team of Shivani Jajoo, Aubrey Lang, Erin Payne and Nivedha Suresh qualified to represent Pennsylvania in the international competition.
- Samari Dreher was named a **National African American Recognition Program Scholar** and George Atencio was named a **National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholar** by the College Board for their academic achievements and outstanding performance on the PSAT and/or AP exams.
- For the second year in a row, Upper St. Clair High School's Speech & Debate team was named one of the **Top 100 schools in the National Speech & Debate Association**. In the 2020-21 school year, Upper St. Clair ranked 38 out of more than 3,000 schools nationwide – up from 50 in 2019-20.
- Junior Marina Gzikowski was named to the **Work2BeWell National Student Advisory Council**. She is working with other student leaders from across the nation to increase mental health awareness.
- Sophomore Mahir Parmar placed **fifth at the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) National Leadership Conference**, held virtually from June 29 through July 2, 2021. Mahir competed in the Introduction to Business category.
- 188 new members were inducted into the Upper St. Clair High School chapter of the **National Honor Society** in May 2021.
- Juniors Ariana Braugher, Tiffany Caskey and Lia Cortolillo were inducted into the **National Technical Honor Society**. The students are enrolled in programs at Parkway West Career & Technology Center.
- Fort Couch eighth grader Olivia Fuscaldo earned **second place in the 2021 NASA Student Art Contest**. Olivia was one of 90 student artists recognized from among 773 entries nationwide.
- Boyce fifth grader Mira Murthy placed **second in the nation in the 2021 National Chemistry Week Illustrated Poem Contest**, sponsored by the American Chemical Society. Mira qualified for the national competition by earning first place at the regional competition, sponsored by the Pittsburgh Section of the American Chemical Society.
- A team of Upper St. Clair High School seniors **placed second in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals**.
- The **girls varsity tennis team** won the **2021 Class AAA WPIAL championship** - the program's first title in 18 years and 14th overall.
- The **boys varsity basketball team** won the **WPIAL Class 6A championship** - its first since 2005 and its third overall. The team advanced to the PIAA semifinals for the first time in school history.
- Upper St. Clair hosted the 2021 WPIAL swimming championships and leveraged its home field advantage to capture the **WPIAL Class AAA boys swim team championship** - the team's first title in 10 years.

## 2021 SAT averages



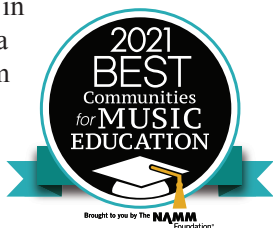


# Our District & Schools

- Upper St. Clair High School ranks among the top high schools in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report. The newspaper released its list of **2021 Best High Schools** on April 27, 2021. Ranked 19th in Pennsylvania, Upper St. Clair is the fourth highest-ranking high school in Allegheny County. Nationally, Upper St. Clair ranks 683rd out of nearly 18,000 public high schools in the nation.



- Upper St. Clair School District has been named among the nation's **Best Communities for Music Education** by the NAMM Foundation for the sixth consecutive year. Upper St. Clair is one of only 16 school districts in Allegheny County, 109 in Pennsylvania and 686 from across the country to earn the distinction in 2021.



- Upper St. Clair School District's elementary and middle schools have been named **Best Elementary Schools and Best Middle Schools** by U.S. News & World Report. To earn a spot on the "Best" lists, a school must rank in the top 30% of public schools in its respective state. Boyce ranks fifth and Fort Couch ranks ninth among Pennsylvania's 939 middle schools – both within the top 1% in Pennsylvania. Baker Elementary ranks 22nd; Eisenhower 44th; and Streams 61st among Pennsylvania's 1,607 elementary schools. All three Upper St. Clair elementary schools rank among the top 4% in Pennsylvania.

- All six Upper St. Clair schools earned the **Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) 2020-2021 No Place for Hate designation**. They are among the 50 schools throughout Ohio, West Virginia and western Pennsylvania that were recognized for their efforts. Upper St. Clair High School was honored with the All-Around Award - one of just four schools to earn a special award from the ADL.



- Upper St. Clair High School was selected as a **WPIAL Sportsmanship Award** winner for the 2020-2021 academic year. This marked the first year that Upper St. Clair received this recognition since the award's inception in 1996-1997.



# Our Staff



- Erin Peterson, Fort Couch Middle School assistant principal, was recognized with the Leonard R. Ference Outstanding Administrator Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Middle Level Educators (PAMLE). The award, established in 2004, honors “administrators who value, understand and support middle level education practices that promote powerful learning for young adolescents.”



- Two Upper St. Clair middle school faculty members were honored with the Promising Practitioners Award from the Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education (PAMLE). Tonia Autieri, school counselor at Boyce Middle School, and Eliza Luxbacher, resource teacher at Boyce and special education teacher at Fort Couch Middle School, were recognized during the PAMLE Virtual State Conference 2021. The Promising Practitioners Award “is presented to teachers who are just beginning their middle school careers. These beginning teachers have made a positive impact on both their school and community. They incorporate effective middle level practices in their everyday teaching.”



Tonia Autieri



Eliza Luxbacher

- Heather Herbay, art teacher at Baker Elementary School, presented at the National Art Education Association (NAEA) National Convention. Originally planned to take place in Chicago, the event was held virtually. More than 400 teachers registered for Mrs. Herbay’s presentation, “How to Rock the Power of Paper, Scissors, Glue & A Pencil.”



- Kate Ruth, a reading specialist at Fort Couch Middle School, was selected as a 2021 All-Star Teacher by the Pittsburgh Pirates. She was one of 18 teachers selected for this honor. Nominated for the recognition by the Fort Couch Middle School administrators, Joe DeMar and Erin Peterson, Mrs. Ruth was recognized for her caring and positive nature, content knowledge, teaching skills, energetic personality and unwavering commitment to her students and their learning.



- Pam Dillie, a third-grade teacher at Baker Elementary and the district’s elementary science curriculum leader, was named the K-8 Science Education Award winner from the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh.



- Dr. Christine Mussomeli, Boyce Middle School assistant principal, co-presented at the national 2021 WomenEd US Virtual Unconference. The theme of the WomenEd US Virtual Unconference was Leading through an Epoch of Change. Dr. Mussomeli along with Dr. Nicole Roberts, a principal in the New Kensington-Arnold School District, led the topic, “How do We Move from Self-Preservation Back to Self-Care?”



- Tracy Smith, Upper St. Clair High School physics and robotics teacher, presented at the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association (PSTA) 2021 Virtual Conference: Innovating for the Future. Mrs. Smith presented on the topic, “Building a Community to Empower Student Innovators & Entrepreneurs - Every Teacher’s Role in Technology Education.”



- Upper St. Clair High School math teacher Michael Funfar recently added published author to his list of accomplishments. Dr. Funfar contributed a chapter, titled “Out of Trauma Comes Strength: The Trauma-Informed Positive Education Model,” for the book, “Strategies and Methods for Implementing Trauma-Informed Pedagogy.”





# Safe & Healthy Schools

## USC earns WELL Health-Safety Rating

In February 2021, all six Upper St. Clair schools earned the WELL Health-Safety Rating – marking the first school district to reach this achievement worldwide.

The WELL Health-Safety Rating through the International WELL Building Institute is an evidence-based, third-party verified rating for all new and existing building and space types focusing on operational policies, maintenance protocols, stakeholder engagement and emergency plans to address a post-COVID-19 environment now and into the future.

This effort was fully funded through a grant from Highmark Foundation School Grants and Awards.

Designed to empower organizations to take the necessary steps to prioritize the health and safety of their staff, visitors and stakeholders, the WELL Health-Safety Rating can help guide users in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, instilling confidence in those who come through the building as well as the broader community.

“Our schools serve not only as learning environments for children, but also as workplaces for teachers and staff and as gathering spaces for communities,” said Rachel Hodgdon, IWBI president and CEO. “We applaud the Upper St. Clair School District for its leadership and commitment to evidence-based interventions that will help pave the way for schools everywhere that are navigating these pandemic times.”

In pursuing the WELL Health-Safety Rating, Upper St. Clair partnered with Advantus Engineers, LLC, which is led by Alicia Avick. In addition to serving as president of the engineering

company, Ms. Avick is a graduate of Upper St. Clair High School as well as a parent of two Upper St. Clair students.

“As an engineer, with so much invested in sustainable and healthy buildings, and as a parent, I was impressed with all the steps Upper St. Clair was taking to keep our children in their school buildings,” Ms. Avick said. “Teaming them with our highly experienced Director of Sustainability, Angelica Ciranni, to review and refine the great strides already being taken, validates those efforts and provides a science-based framework for moving forward.”

Upper St. Clair School District has been cited in numerous industry publications in association with the WELL Health-Safety Rating. In addition, Dan Synder, the district’s assistant director of facilities, served as a co-presenter at the national EdSpaces Conference in November 2021.



# Fiscal Responsibility



## 2021-2022 Budget

Despite the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the Upper St. Clair School District finished the 2020-21 fiscal year with a balanced budget. The district's budget for 2021-22 totals \$91,880,982, which included a 2.9% millage increase of 0.78 mills – resulting in a final millage rate of 27.6772 mills.

School districts throughout the nation received CARES Act and Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding to assist with pandemic-related expenses. In Pennsylvania, ESSER funding was distributed through the Pennsylvania Department of Education using the federal Title I formula.

At \$824,511, the Upper St. Clair School District received among the lowest ESSER II and III funds and, at \$204.69, the lowest per student allocation of the 665 Pennsylvania school districts and charter/cyber charter schools. Meanwhile, six cyber charter schools collected ESSER amounts ranging from \$4,268,250 to \$47,144,770.

In Upper St. Clair, 2020-21 ESSER funding was used to purchase technology, including student iPads, laptops, video-conferencing equipment, Promethean ActivPanels, as well as desk dividers. Use of ESSER funding for 2021-22 includes additional instructional technology, operations equipment, summer instructional remediation and COVID-19 contingency planning related to instructional models and curriculum.

Throughout the 2021-22 budgeting process, the district's leadership team and school board focused on three primary goals:

- Maintain a high-quality education for our students
- Balance the needs of the school district while recognizing its fiduciary responsibilities to the community
- Remain cognizant of the interdependence of all aspects that directly and indirectly affect the student school experience

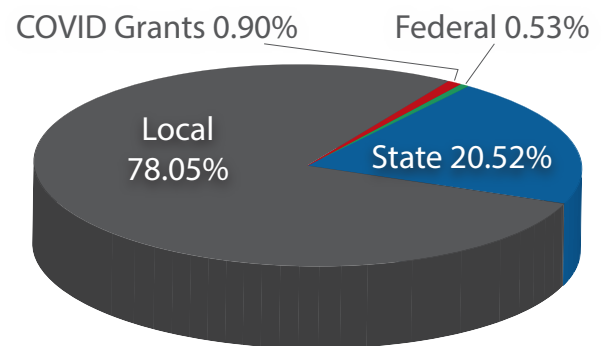
Upper St. Clair's budget is primarily funded by local taxpayers – amounting to more than 78% of all district revenues. State funding totals approximately 20%. Federal revenues – including Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds to offset COVID-related costs – accounts for less than two percent of the district's funding.

"The 2021-22 budget is highly considerate of short and long-term financial health as well as maintaining excellence in education," Scott Burchill, director of finance, said. "In addition to preserving all programs and activities, the district's fund balance was not used for recurring costs in the 2020-21 nor the 2021-22 budget."

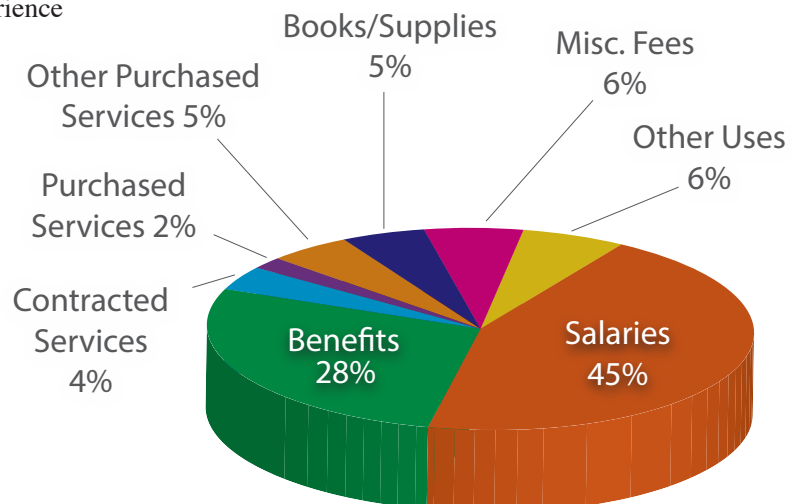
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### REVENUE: \$91,880,982



### EXPENDITURES: \$91,880,982

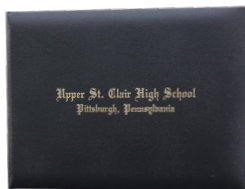




# Class of 2021

## Where are they now?

University of Akron, Main Campus  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
The University of Alabama  
American Musical & Dramatic Academy  
American University  
Anderson University  
Anglo-American University  
The University of Arizona  
Baldwin Wallace University  
Belmont University  
Boston College  
Boston University  
Bucknell University  
University at Buffalo  
California University of Pennsylvania  
University of California, Berkeley  
Calvin University  
Cape Fear Community College  
Capital University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Case Western Reserve University  
Castleton University  
Chatham University  
University of Cincinnati, Main Campus  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
Clemson University  
Coastal Carolina University  
University of Colorado Boulder  
University of Colorado  
Community College of Allegheny County  
Connecticut College  
University of Connecticut  
Cornell University  
University of Dayton  
University of Delaware  
DePaul University  
Dickinson College  
DigiPen Institute of Technology  
Douglas J Aveda Institute  
Duke University  
Duquesne University  
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania  
Elizabethtown College  
Elon University  
Emory University  
Flagler College-St Augustine  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
Florida State University  
University of Florida  
Garrett College  
George Washington University  
Georgetown University



Georgia Institute of Technology  
University of Georgia  
Harvard University  
High Point University  
Hofstra University  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Indiana University, Bloomington  
Ithaca College  
James Madison University  
John Carroll University  
University of Kansas  
Kent State University at Kent  
University of Kentucky  
Liberty University  
Longwood University  
University of Louisville  
Lynn University  
Marietta College  
Miami University, Oxford  
University of Miami  
Michigan State University  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
Middlebury College  
Millersville University of Pennsylvania  
Misericordia University  
New York University  
University of North Carolina at Asheville  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
North Carolina State University, Raleigh  
University of Notre Dame  
Nova Southeastern University  
The Ohio State University  
Ohio University  
Parkway West Vocational Technical  
Pennsylvania State University  
Pennsylvania State University, Altoona  
Pennsylvania State University, Allegheny  
Pennsylvania State University, Erie-Behrend  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown  
University of Pittsburgh



2021 Valedictorians: Benjamin Paul Bacdayan, Gabriella Jinelle Brubach, Richard Alexander Carlson, Christian Grant Chiu, Harrison Chui, Taylor Andrew Finkelstein, Reshma Gudla, Patrick Liam Joyce, Bryce Andrew Keating, Andrew Scott Levy, Madison Lynne Milone, Claudia Ying-Qi Ng, Abigail Barbara Rutkowski, Ryan Matthew Sarkett, Sophia M. Schlichting, Sophia Shi, Emma Brooks Skeel, Constantine Stephen Tripodes and Veronica Zhang.

Point Park University  
Purdue University, Main Campus  
Rhode Island School of Design  
Rhodes College  
Rider University  
Robert Morris University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Roosevelt University  
Rutgers University, New Brunswick  
Saint Francis University  
Saint Joseph's University  
Saint Vincent College  
San Diego State University  
Seton Hill University  
Slippery Rock University  
University of South Carolina, Columbia  
University of Southern California  
St. John's University, New York  
SUNY Morrisville  
Syracuse University  
The University of Tampa  
Temple University  
Temple University, Japan  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
University of Toledo  
Truckee Meadows Community College  
Tulane University of Louisiana  
Universal Technical Institute  
Vanderbilt University  
Villanova University  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
Washington & Jefferson College  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Waynesburg University  
West Virginia University  
Westminster College  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
The College of Wooster  
Yale University  
York College of Pennsylvania