



# THE TALON

SENECA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL GERMANTOWN, MD

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## SVHS 2.0

By: Merna Nakhla

Seneca Valley High School 2.0 will be the largest public high school in Montgomery County, holding more than 3,000 students. It will compete in size with Blair High School, which is currently the largest high school in Montgomery County. The process of building the new high school started in September 2017, and it is expected to be completed in August 2020.

It is being constructed now on the athletic fields of old Seneca. When the new building is finished, the new athletic fields will be built where the old building stands now.

The planning of the new building was divided into three phases: relocation of electricity, the new school, adjoining or demolition parking lots and stadium and the new parking lot and field completion.

## A New School Means New Boundaries: Who Will Attend the New Seneca Valley?

By: Gabriel Tuckhorn

The systemwide Montgomery County public school boundary analysis is a study designed to give key information on demographics, travel routes, school utilization, and school assignments. This information will be used to inform the Board of Education on ways in which the current boundaries of the county's schools may be bettered, and how more students may receive more equitable opportunities, and no student is left with a lesser opportunity than another due to the school they have been districted in.

The need for this study has come in the wake of

The school will consist of four floors and 110 classes. The school will also include new programs such as Cyber Security, Construction and Architecture, Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Law Enforcement.

Many of these new programs will offer real professional certifications.

The school provides great services and a great future for our students. All luck to Seneca Valley 2.0.



Photo Courtesy of Moseley Architects

more than 30,000 additional students being enrolled in Montgomery County public schools in the past twenty years. Though this extreme uptick in population has made MCPS is one of the most populous and diverse school districts in the nation, it has also resulted in an extreme overcrowding problem in many of the schools within the district. MCPS has not been able to build schools fast enough or make structural changes fast enough to keep up with the large influx of students.

The changes that the boundary study promises to make is to streamline the effectiveness of the assets already in possession of the county (how to better use schools we own right now as opposed to building new schools), so that the county may have more economic solutions to the current overcrowding problem.

Though the boundary study is supported by many,

including a majority of the Board of Education members, some parents of more well funded and maintained schools worry that the boundary study will result in their child being forced to transfer to schools that they believe provide a lesser education, and that have fewer resources for their child to utilize while at school. Many believe that race will be a factor in the study (which it will) and don't want their child to be "punished for being white," as one Quince Orchard parent put it, causing a large outcry from much of the Montgomery County community.

No matter what your opinion is on the study itself, there is no denying that the people that have the loudest voice in the room will get their way when it comes to school boundaries.

## The Screaming Eagle Family Welcomes Ms. Wanzer

By: Kailey McDougall

A member of our Talon staff interviewed our new administrator, Ms. Kisheena Wanzer. This is what she had to say:

**Kailey:** What do you like to do?

**Ms. Wanzer:** I enjoy spending time with my family and shopping. I like the movies and taking pictures. I like music, all kinds, from rap to blue grass.

**Kailey:** How long have you been working with MCPS?

**Ms. Wanzer:** 22 years. I started to be able to give back in educating young minds. I would change the process to help students be in the best learning environment. You have to go through a lot in a long period of time to find the correct placement for kids, and sometimes it does a disservice to the student and the teacher because the teachers are exhausted at this point and are losing trust in administration helping them.

**Kailey:** Tell me a little about yourself.

**Ms. Wanzer:** I would say I am a compassionate educator who cares about students achieving academically and becoming leaders in society by demonstrating the motivation and power to change the world. I advocate for

students, families, and teachers to make sure that students needs are being met. I love my family and care about each individual, and I'm always ready to greet people with a hello and a smile because kindness is timeless and lasts forever.

**Kailey:** Why did you come to Seneca Valley?

**Ms. Wanzer:** I started working here because central office placed me here to be a part of a new team and help open the new Seneca Valley. I'm not afraid of Seneca's reputation. I am excited about what the reputation will be. I roll up my sleeves to work with the team to make Seneca an excellent place to learn and grow.

**Kailey:** How do you feel about how the year is going so far?

**Ms. Wanzer:** I recently got married, and I'm really happy. I'm enjoying my experience here as an administrator, and I love the staff and students.



# Your Voice Matters! Students Get Involved

## The Principal Advisory Council

**By: Gabriel Tuckhorn**

The Principal Advisory Council (PAC) is a new council that was established this year by Dr. Cohen, with the purpose and goal of amplifying the student body's voice when it comes to making major school-related decisions. The decision to form this council has come at the dawn of the new building and the population of Seneca growing dramatically. During this historic moment in this school's history, there is now more of a need for student input than ever. In the next year and the next few years decisions will be made that will affect the students of Seneca Valley High School for generations to come.

The council meets bi-weekly, and discusses topics of interest to students, generally introduced by Dr. Cohen, though it has been made clear that they all have an equal voice, and anyone may introduce a new topic at any time they want. Dr. Cohen may also consult with the council before a major decision is made that will seriously affect the lives of the student body. One of the current objectives of the group (that was introduced by students) is to ensure that that this year's current student body feel as valued as ever, and don't feel like their worth is diminished since we will be getting a new building so soon. This is important to current juniors and seniors, who have had to spend more time in this building than any other class. Another main objective of the group is to find ways to make new and possibly disillusioned students coming from different school clusters to feel welcomed at Seneca Valley. This is a goal that the council wants to accomplish without infringing

that "small town" feel that is inherent to Seneca. "Everyone knows everyone, and people really care about one another here," said, Mr. Irvin when asked about what makes Seneca unique compared to

other schools. "We want to make new students proud to go to Seneca Valley," said Dr. Cohen.

One of the only current downfalls of the organization is that the make-up of the group is less diverse and representative of the average students that attend Seneca Valley High School than initially wanted. Dr. Cohen hopes that this will change, and also that the Council will be able to operate independently from himself and be completely facilitated by students, though he acknowledges that in these early days of the organization, he must be there to help maintain its being.

## Athletics Captains Council

**By: Sean Quiroga**

Seneca Valley Captains Council is something new that athletic director Jesse Irvin has started for Seneca Valley athletics. Captains council started towards the

address not just issues, but how we can improve what we already have with Seneca Valley Athletics.

Considering who is particularly selected for Seneca Valley captains council there are representatives from every sport, from Football down to handball. Irvin wants representatives of Captains Council to treat every sport the same. One aspect of captains council is school spirit; Irvin would like more students to attend athletic events to show that even though Seneca Valley may not have many students, Seneca Valley still has pride. Irvin emphasizes this every other Tuesday at captain's council meetings as he wants members of the captain council to understand what it takes to be a leader and how the littlest things that you can do can make you a leader.

Even though Irvin would like more students to be involved with Seneca Valley athletics and have more spirit, he still wants the athletes of Seneca to have leadership. Irvin emphasized, "We need to make sure we focus on the leadership aspect and community service, not just the school spirit or involvement". Irvin doesn't just want this to be a one and done phase. He would like to continue this as it is "a work in progress" with Seneca Valley 2.0 being built and the plan for it to be ready by Fall 2020. Irvin wants to make captains council something bigger, but with the same message. Even with 1000 more students coming to Seneca next year Irvin has made it clear that "making sure that all members understand the commitment and dedication that is needed."

Captains Council at the current moment is headed in the right direction and seems to be improving as time goes on.



end of the 2018-2019 school year as Irvin and other coaches of Seneca Valley hand-picked student-athletes to be apart of captains council.

The reasoning for captains council according to Irvin, with no political affiliation towards it is to "make Seneca Valley Athletics great again." Irvin has also stated: "To make sure that the student-athlete voice was being heard, to give them a voice and also to allow our athletic department to be more in touch with what our student-athletes are thinking." Irvin wants what is best for Seneca Valley; not just what he thinks but how can others have a voice and make a difference in improving Seneca Valley athletics. Irvin wants to

## Register to Vote!

**Text VOTE to 240-203-7350**

**Or**

**Register in person during lunch at SENECA VALLEY High School in the cafeteria on JANUARY 14, 15 & 16, 2020.**

**What you need: a Maryland Driver's license, Permit, ID or know the last 4-digits of your Social Security #**

## Volunteer on Election Day!

**Presidential Primary Election (Tuesday, April 28, 2020)**

**Earn up to \$210 or 25 SSL hours.**

**To serve, you must be a U.S. citizen, registered to vote, live in Maryland and be at least 16 years or older by April 7, 2020. Students with bilingual skills are encouraged to apply!**

**Text SERVE to 240-203-7350**

**Or**

**Register in person during lunch @ SENECA VALLEY HS cafeteria on JANUARY 14, 15 & 16, 2020.**

## Seneca Parents and Students Speak Out in Favor of Equity and Diversity

**By: Gabriel Tuckhorn**

On the night of November 13th, hundreds of angry and hopeful parents descended on the Carver Educational Services Center. The building was refitted decades ago to serve its present purpose. Years ago it was the only segregated, all-black school within the Montgomery County school district, serving as a perfect metaphor for what was taking place there that night at the Board of Education boundary study hearing.

Angry parents from Clarksburg sparred with scared parents from Seneca Valley, both hoping the board would hear and accept their respective proposals for the new districts to go into place after Seneca Valley 2.0 is completed. Seneca affiliates support the superintendent's recommendation, which would result in the most equitable racial and socioeconomic makeup of both Clarksburg and Seneca Valley. Clarksburg's parents support a plan that would increase racial and economic disparity to levels that have never been seen at Seneca valley.

An important term to know is FARMS. FARMS is an acronym for Free and Reduced Meal services, which serves as a measure of a student's family's net income. Those qualifying for the FARMS program have a family income below a certain threshold depending on family size. These students also qualify for assistance paying for other school related expenses.

Currently, about 39 percent of Seneca Valley students are qualify for assistance. This means that Seneca Valley is not able to go on as many field trips, and struggle to cover costs for things like a homecoming, prom, and graduation packages. For a class to take a field trip, the school must be able to pay for all students that are not able to afford the trip. If too many students are not able to afford the trip, and the school does not have enough money to pay for them, the trip is canceled. This has happened countless times, so often that teachers have stopped trying to get field trips at all.

At Clarksburg, there is a 24 percent FARMS rate.

This means they currently can go on almost any trip they want because the cost of the trip is offset by the high amount of students that can pay in full. The plan supported by the Clarksburg community would give Seneca Valley a 42 percent FARMS rate and Clarksburg a 19 percent FARMS rate. This would result in even more hardship for Seneca Valley when it came to things like Field trips, and even more freedom for Clarksburg.

Many concerned parents and students from the Germantown community attended the meeting to speak in favor of the option they viewed to be best for students. Celia Bidwell, Hailey Hill, Erin Currier, Lauren Seibb, and Beverlyn Boamah were all on the agenda to speak at the meeting. Boamah, as well as many others who spoke, made sure to put an emphasis on the advantages of a diverse school community: "Students who go to diverse schools will be better prepared for jobs and universities in diverse areas like the DC metropolitan area."

# SVHS Birds of Play Presents: The Diary of Anne Frank

By: Sean Quiroga



Christian Curtis, Aalyiah Chesley, Daniel Salgado

Seneca Valley had its first play of the year, The Diary of Anne Frank. There is a widespread cast for this play, as not only are students participating, but also teachers of Seneca Valley have decided to participate in this play. The cast and crew of the play have taken time out of their day after school and during school to rehearse for this play.

This play tells a historical background of Anne Frank. This play can be considered by many sad, shocking, interesting, and even a learning process as some may not know who Anne Frank is. Drama Director Ms. Fellows describes the play as, "The true story of a young girl and her family, The Diary of Anne Frank illuminates the human lives within one of the most inhuman crimes ever committed. The Diary of Anne Frank is an account of the Holocaust, of adolescence, of first love, family, friendship, and hope."

Any play takes a lot of dedication and cooperating with castmates to make sure everything goes according to plan. Members of the play have looked at this process as a long road considering that they have to get a lot done. They have to get everything perfect such as remembering their lines, places, and movements during the play. All of this process proves how dedicated the actors are to this play and how much they want this play to do well. With opening night on November 7, the actors have a good feeling about this play and are not scared of the spotlight. Many of the actors on stage have already been a part of a play before, while others this is their first time.

Ms. Fellows added: "I am always proud of the work our students do, but this particular show has really brought out the leadership capabilities of three students in particular: Grace Rodriguez, Shannon McDonald, and Kira Shimokaji. These young women have taken on extraordinary responsibility and ownership, and the product you will see is very much their work."



Sophia Clari, Marjorie Lemus, Maria Wraback, Daniel Krom



**You haven't missed your chance to get involved in the Theatre program! This year's Spring musical is *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown***

**Interest meeting in room 221 during lunch on December 3. Auditions December 9 and 10. Want to get involved behind the scenes? Go to the interest meeting and ask about Tech Crew! See Ms. Fellows in room 221 or visit [svhsbop.com](http://svhsbop.com) for more information. All Are Welcome!**

## New Faces and a Bright Future for Cross Country

By: Sean Quiroga

This cross country season has been seemingly different due to the fact of having two new boy runners that have recently been added to the team. Sophomore transfer John Klansek and Freshmen Ryan Turner have shown what true cross country runners are actually like. In the past cross country has not been much of a popular sport, as not many people are fans of running. These two cross country studs have decided to run cross country with them both being their first year here at Seneca.

Turner is a freshman who has decided to do cross country to stay in shape for basketball and to just be apart of an athletic team. When asked why he's doing cross country he emphasized: "I wanted to try another sport besides basketball and it would condition me for basketball."

Klansek spent freshman year at Rich Montgomery then transferred to Seneca after his freshman year. At first, he decided to try out for the boys' soccer team, but then he realized that he was not that big of a fan of soccer and decided to run cross country. Klansek mentioned,

"What strives me to run is just to want to get better and improve myself every day."

Turner came in the first week of the season and caught a lot of eyes at first because he would go out for long runs as if he was already a veteran runner. This past season he may have been looked upon as a veteran due to his times and running a sub 20 minute 5k. As Turner stated "It looks like I'm not new to the sport from the look of my times."

What also brings this cross country team together is how much of a connection they have off the course, specifically considering Klansek and Turner. Turner first joined the team at the start of the season, and Klansek came to the team after trying out for soccer and not enjoying it as much as cross country. Like Turner, Klansek got off to a fast start by being 2 seconds right behind Turner in his very first race. Klansek immediately enjoyed cross country as he liked the objective of running and the team around him. "The bond as a team and the results you get after working hard every day during practice and seeing that transform into meets is the best feeling you can

have."

For Klansek and Turner this season has been nothing but an adventure and fun times for their first season of cross country. The big aspect of this is that they are only underclassmen. With Klansek and Turner already having veteran 5k times, they look to improve themselves over the next couple of years that they are here at Seneca.



Ryan Turner



John Klansek

## More Than A Building

By: Gabriel Tuckhorn

Seneca Valley High School, established in 1974, was initially an experiment in modern education, with no walls separating classrooms, and only serving grades ten through twelve. Since then, the school has evolved copiously, and conformed to the more traditional American high school structure. In its inception, Seneca was dwarfed by many of the powerhouse schools of the day, but it wasn't long before Seneca proved itself to be a very prestigious athletic institution. By 1976, just 2 years after its creation, Seneca won its first football state title, and would go on to win twelve more over the next thirty years.

To this day, Seneca Valley alone has won more state football championships than any other high school in Maryland. But Football isn't where Seneca's athletic excellence stops. Throughout the school's existence, it has earned dozens of county, regional and state awards for

every sport that Seneca has ever participated in. There is no doubting that Seneca has created a mighty athletic legacy that has left a lasting imprint on its participants.

Seneca has not only been defined by its athletic accomplishments, but also its sense of community. When asked about a moment that made him especially #svproud, Mr. Lee, a history teacher, serving at Seneca for more than 27 years, said "As strange as it might sound, it was right after 9/11. Everyone made an extra effort to make sure their peers and those around them were doing okay and safe. All divides were gone and people really came together." No other instance better exemplifies the sense of community and family that is held here at Seneca.

Traditions have been one of the cornerstones of life at Seneca for decades. One of the traditions that has been important to the culture of the original Seneca is the spirit walk for every Friday home game, which has inspired pride and passion in Seneca Vallians towards their school and football team.

Another important tradition has been the annual graduation, held at the DAR constitution hall every year (though initially held at the Kennedy Center), which has been home to many historic events including being host to every US president since Calvin Coolidge. The students and teachers, the life and blood of the building, are what



Nicholas Jardine leads the marching band during a spirit walk.

has made Seneca Valley an amazing school and what will ensure that we continue to excel in everything we do. The traditions, environment, and standard for excellence that has been fostered at the current Seneca Valley High School building is truly special and must be carried with us into Seneca 2.0.

❄️ **Help the SGA** ❄️  
**collect food**  
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**school community!**  
**Participate in the**  
**Winter WonDOOR-**  
**land Door Deco-**  
**rating CANtest!**  
**Talk to your teacher**  
**or club sponsor for**  
**details.** ❄️

# 10 Tips to Have Your Best Thanksgiving Ever

**By: Merna Nakhla**

Thanksgiving will be celebrated this year on November 28. It is where close or far people come together to show gratefulness in their lives. Preparing for Thanksgiving is hard, whether it is physically by preparing food, mentally by preparing your mind to meet the people you love or hate, or whether it is emotionally by preparing yourself to see new people, people from far away, or drama. I have all the hacks and tips that are going to get you through this upcoming Thanksgiving:

- Bring something with you whether it is a gift, food, etc. Don't come empty-handed, even if the host does not want you to bring anything.
- Ask what can you bring when you are invited. The host might need something.
- Don't just sit down and wait for food. Introduce yourself, start a conversation, make friends, help the hosts in the kitchen cooking, cleaning, and preparing for the guests.

•If you met someone and discovered that you disagree with this person issues on politics, religion, societies, or any other subject. Don't fight or start a debate.

•Don't overhelp. You don't get extra bonus points for working too much.

•Don't exclude anyone, make everyone feel included and considered.

•Use place cards to show that you have already prepared a special place at the table for them.

•Make your guests feel comfortable, you invite different kinds of people not all are going to be satisfied but at least try to make it more fun and enjoyable.

•Prepare every room in the house.

•Keep food warm.

Even though Black Friday is the day after, where you get all the sales, you still need to prepare for your Thanksgiving. Always be thankful.

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- The Talon is also in search of Individuals interested in becoming patrons of our publication.
- For details about this opportunity, Please contact our sponsor at [kellie\\_e\\_hofmeister@mcpsmd.org](mailto:kellie_e_hofmeister@mcpsmd.org) or at 301-353-8016
- **Thank you! Go Eagles!**

## Opinion: Impeachment Inquiry Into President Donald Trump

**By: Merna Nakhla**

Reaching the White house is a hard process. People spend a great effort to get to the presidency, and for someone to come and remove after all of this work is ridiculous and unacceptable.

On September 24, 2019, Democratic Party politician and House Speaker Ms. Nancy Pelosi announced a formal impeachment inquiry of President Trump. Impeachment is when the Congress sees that the president has violated one or more of the three Articles of Impeachment. The three Articles of Impeachment considered by the House Judiciary Committee are: Article I: Obstruction of Justice, Article II: Abuse of Power, Article III: Contempt of Congress.

Only the Congress and specifically the House of Representatives can vote to impeach the president. The process of it is simple. First, the Congress has to investigate if there is any evidence against the president that proves he has committed illegal actions. Second, a majority of the House of Representatives has to agree to impeach the president and state which article is being violated. Third, the Senate tries the president.

After months of President Trump challenging and daring the Democrats to impeach him, they finally risked it. At the end of last month, Ms. Pelosi declared Mr. Trump as

unfit for the office. Pelosi said about Mr. Trump's action as a "betrayal of his oath of office, betrayal of our national security and betrayal of the integrity of our elections." She stated that Mr. Trump has betrayed his pledge of his position, the security of the country, and the solidarity of the elections.

She is addressing that Mr. Trump has requested from Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, an investigation of Joseph R. Biden Jr., the former vice president of the United States, who is also a candidate nominated for 2020 Democratic presidential elections, and his son. "The actions taken to date by the president have seriously violated the Constitution," Mrs. Pelosi said.

Mr. Trump offered to release a transcript of the conversation to prevent Democrats' impeachment rush, but unfortunately Democrats demand the full whistle-blower complaint and other documentation about White House contact with Ukraine, even if the expensive impeachment inquiry does not require these pieces of evidence.

The outcomes are unpredictable. Will the Democrats win and Mr. Trump become the third impeached president? Or will the innocence of president Trump appear and abolish the democrats. Best wishes for the president and the party.



Photo Credit: The Hill