

The Tower

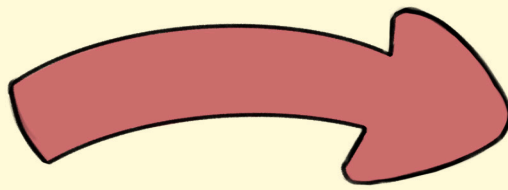
96th Year: New Student Issue

August 26, 2024

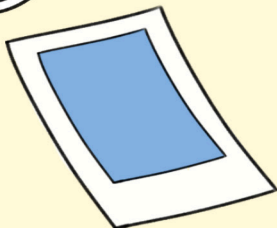
Tower Presents

New Student Issue

NOW



SOON



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Matias da Costa and
 Claire Tang
 NEWS & FEATURES
 CO-EDITORS
 Harry Dweck, Leila
 Guitton, Reed Sacks, and
 Meiya Xiong,
 NEWS & FEATURES STAFF



New Message: PHS Resources

graphics: Charley Hu

Ideas Center

Are you struggling to understand a mind-boggling math problem? Is an impending biology test keeping you up at night? The Ideas Center has got you covered. Located on the second floor right next to the Twilight Zone (at the end of the 270s hallway), the Ideas Center offers free tutoring that pairs students with others who have successfully taken the course in previous years.

To request a personal tutor, simply open the PHS website and hover over the “Students” bar. Open “IDEAS Center” and click on the link “Request a tutor,” which will take you to a form to set up a tutoring session. Tutoring is offered during block periods, breaks, and Tiger Time on Thursdays. Drop-in hours are also offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m, with no appointment needed. In addition to free tutoring, the Ideas Center also provides SAT prep, study skills, college essay and application help, and midterm and finals study groups.

Gym

Do you want to work out but don't have access to gym equipment? Head straight to the PHS weight room, located near the two gymnasiums. The weight room offers a large selection of gym equipment open for student use during school hours and after school whenever a teacher is present.

Free News

Ever get frustrated with the New York Times paywall? That ends now: the Learning Commons offers all PHS students free NYT and Wall Street Journal subscriptions. Head to the Learning Commons website through PPS Link and type in any word in the central search bar. When the search goes through, scroll down the right sidebar until you find the NYT under the bolded “Continue Your Search” heading. Clicking the text will open a new page where you can create an account with your school email address. That's it. Now you have free access to the NYT!

Demystifying schedules with PowerSchool and Canvas

PHS's barrage of classes and homework is often so intense that it can make you wonder if you've remembered everything. Two apps that many PHS students find helpful are PowerSchool and Canvas. PowerSchool shows weekly schedules for each student and can be accessed from students' phones. Canvas also offers a calendar that shows upcoming homework, tests, and surveys in various classes. However, not all teachers use this feature, so it's a good idea to record any assignments mentioned in class in a free PHS agenda.

SAVE THE DATES

Picture Day

September 4

Parent Orientation

September 10
 7 p.m.–9 p.m.

Field Day

September 17

Back To School Night

September 26
 7 p.m.–9 p.m.

Club Fair

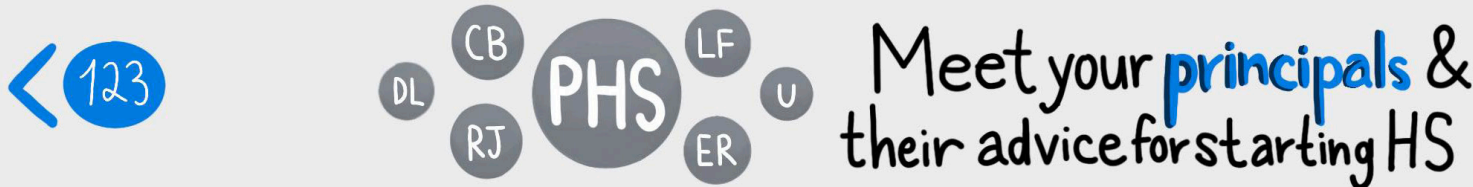
September 27

Spirit Week

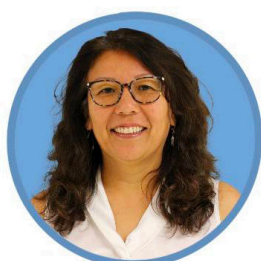
Week of
 October 14

Homecoming & Pep Rally

October 18



What's some advice for new PHS students?



Cecilia Birge (Principal)

I joined PHS over a decade ago and have had the privilege of serving in various roles and am entering my second year as PHS Principal. I live in town and have had four children who recently graduated from PHS. As you learn to explore your passion, please keep the following in mind: Kindness—treat others the way you'd like to be treated, both in person and online. Words have power. Acceptance—take the time to understand who you are and embrace your individuality. Celebrate your differences—focus on what's important to you: growth comes from seeking out challenges and stepping outside of your comfort zone. I am thrilled to be part of your journey as you navigate your high school years. Let's make these years memorable together!



Rashone Johnson (Assistant Principal)

Welcome back to school everyone! I am responsible for students with the last names beginning with the letter H-O. My office is in the main office. My advice to begin the school year is to build upon last years' experience by making the appropriate adjustments this year to ensure your success. Take it one class, one assignment, and one situation at a time. Looking too far ahead can be overwhelming; so make short-term and long-term goals for yourself.



Lauren Freedman (Assistant Principal)

I grew up in Princeton and am a proud PHS [alumna]. My goal is to continue working with the dedicated staff, students, and families to prepare all students to lead lives of joy and purpose as knowledgeable, creative, and compassionate citizens in our community. [I recommend students] take advantage of all the opportunities that PHS has to offer. There is something for everyone because we have over 100 clubs. Don't put too much on your plate, surround yourself with groups of students who support you in being the happiest and best version of yourself, and do things that bring you joy. Our school motto says it best, “Live to Learn, Learn to Live.”



Erica Marotta (Assistant Principal)

My advice to incoming and returning PHS students is to be your best self every day. Come to school ready to learn and create new experiences. And always remember to allow yourself grace because none of us are perfect. I look forward to meeting you all during the upcoming school year. I am here to work with Principal Birge, Assistant Principal Johnson, and Assistant Principal Freedman to help students navigate their educational path to success. My office is located in the athletics suite near the PAC. I sincerely hope you all have an educationally and culturally fulfilling school year that is wonderfully successful!



Diana Lygas (Dean)

My office is located in the counseling suite to the right of the main office. Please stop by if you want to learn more about getting involved in clubs, student activities or our campus community. I am also the Anti-Bullying Specialist at PHS and want to make your time at PHS the best it can be. If you just have a random question, stop in and I will try to get the answer for you! My advice to new students is to try new things, explore your passions, take time to eat and rest. Be patient finding your niche. And don't be scared to ask for help. Oh, and get to know me! I love helping students out!

PHS-Admit - 1

HIGH SCHOOL MYTHS

BUSTED

MEAN GIRLS

True

Similar to Cady Heron, you'll likely find yourself meeting new people and making friends. Student Council dances, the football team's homecoming game, and school concerts are a great way to get to know your peers outside of class.

False

Different from the cafeteria cliques in Mean Girls, there are many ways to spend your break time at PHS. Feel free to attend a club meeting, a tutoring session at the Ideas Center, or get some fresh air out by the flagpole.

Never Have I Ever ...

True

Just like the Vishwakumar family, we celebrate South Asian culture and other cultures such as Latino, Japanese, and Middle Eastern at events like Day of Dialogue and Asian Fest. Held once a year, these functions are a great way to get involved with clubs, join an affinity group, and familiarize yourself with our diverse PHS community.

False

Unlike Devi, you'll be held accountable for your mistakes. Check out the student handbook on the PHS website to get to know school policies.

SPIDER-MAN FAR FROM HOME

True

You may get a chance to visit other countries during your time at PHS through music or world language programs. Past trips include PHS Studio Band's visit to London, where they recorded their second studio album Run It Twice, and the Spanish department's summer trip to Peru.

False

As far as we're concerned, no one is an undercover superhero. But just like Peter Parker, the most productive students use time management to their advantage. Using online calendars or agendas can make balancing your home and school life easier.

If high school isn't like the movies, what can you expect to see at PHS? Vanguard is here to debunk your favorite teen flicks.

Syra Bhatt and Zoe Nuland,
VANGUARD CO-EDITORS

HSM ...

True

As per the popular High School Musical song, you don't have to "stick to the status quo". With over 100 clubs ranging from interests in Bollywood dance to climate change awareness, there's so many ways to explore and express who you are at PHS.

False

We aren't the wildcats — we're the tigers! Show school spirit by wearing our school colors of blue and white, or by sporting merchandise from school clubs, athletics, or programs.

photos: Daniel Guo
graphics: Katherine Chen
photos: Paramount Pictures,
First Street Films, Kaling
International and Sony
Pictures Entertainment

PHS SPEAKS OUT

graphics: Charley Hu

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM FRESHMAN YEAR?

"My favorite moment was when my group and I got a 99/100 on the final bio lab report for Mrs. Shoop's class. Her bio class was by far ... the most challenging class a lot of people I know and I have ever taken. No matter what I did, there seemed to be at least something wrong with my answers, but when I got that A it was a testament to how much I've improved and [how] hard I worked. At that moment I felt like I could take on the world." - **Noah Lee '27** (pictured right)

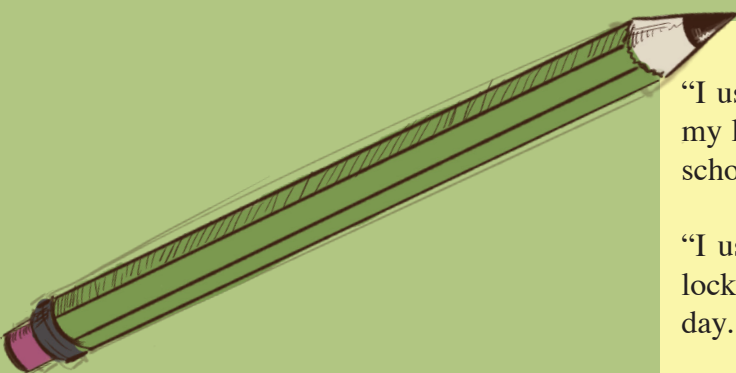


photo courtesy: Noah Lee

HOW DO YOU USE YOUR LOCKER?

"I use my locker in season for field hockey, to put my stick and bag away. Luckily my locker is in a good location so I can easily go to grab my change of clothes after school. I will also let my friends put stuff in it as well." - **Emily Suttmeier '26**

"I use my locker every day. I store my sports equipment and my lunch box in my locker so I don't have to carry those things around with me throughout the school day. In the winter I also put my coat in my locker, and, if it's raining, my umbrella." - **Lara Bahr '27**



HOW HAVE YOUR FRIENDSHIPS CHANGED IN HIGH SCHOOL?

"I moved right at the start of freshman year, so when I entered PHS, I didn't know anybody. I started out with a couple of friends who were in the same classes as me, and they introduced me to their friend groups. From there, it was like a ripple effect, with friends in those other friend groups introducing me to even more people... I've been able to make new friends while also getting much closer with older ones through joining clubs, doing extracurriculars, and spending time together outside of school. Compared to middle school, I'm much closer to my high school friends because I've been able to spend more time with people I want to, and I'm in classes and involved in extracurriculars with people who have similar interests. Overall, high school has allowed me to meet a lot more people, and ... I've been able to make better and closer friends than ever before." - **Ak Sama '26** (pictured right)



photo courtesy: Ak Sama

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT A CLUB YOU'RE IN?

"I've participated in [the Multicultural Student Achievement Network] (MSAN) since my freshman year at PHS, and even before that starting in the seventh grade, prior to and during quarantine. It's definitely been an amazing support system for me, getting to congregate with fellow minority students and make a positive impact on our school community by highlighting our black and brown student voices. I feel this club has made my experience at PHS exponentially better because it's allowed me to ground myself in a place where students can easily get lost in the midst of so many different cliques and student dynamics. I'm thankful for PHS's MSAN group, and while being president this year, I'm excited to designate the club's future leadership position and solidify MSAN's place in PHS for years to come." - **Angel Ash '25**



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PHS FOOD ITEM?

"I personally really like the white powdered donuts in the tiger cafe. The container has several donuts inside and it doesn't cost much. I like to get it because if me and my friends are hungry we can just split it since there are so many donuts inside." - **Aimy Solares '26** (pictured right)



photo courtesy: Aimy Solares

TOWER MULTIMEDIA

A NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION VIDEO

With advice from PHS administration and students on thriving at PHS.



MONTHLY PROJECTS



WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW GOING INTO FRESHMAN YEAR?

"I'd probably tell myself to worry less about getting the perfect grade and more about really trying to learn the material in depth. I put so much pressure on myself last year to get perfect grades, and then I couldn't really enjoy classes I cared about because I was so focused on that. So even if you're a perfectionist like me, just try to cut yourself a little slack. You don't have to take all the APs or do all the extracurriculars — it's completely fine to take care of yourself every once in a while! I promise no matter how much you compare yourself to others, you are beautiful and talented in your own way." - **Julia Scibienski '27** (pictured right)



photo courtesy: Julia Scibienski



HOW DO YOU BUILD GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEACHERS?

"I build good relationships with teachers by showing that I care about their class. This includes being punctual, greeting and thanking teachers, staying engaged, and offering to help the teacher if there's an opportunity. Moreover, I show further initiative by visiting them after class whenever I have questions about the lessons or homework. During these visits, I try to stay open to my teacher's constructive criticism, using it to improve. I also take responsibility for my actions, making amends if necessary. Most importantly, I implement these strategies on a regular basis in order to build a meaningful relationship over time." - **Daniel Haiduc '26**

MEET THE TOWER



Tessa Silver and Chloe Zhao, OPINIONS CO-EDITORS

SECTIONS:

The Tower has two section categories: print sections and non-print sections. The print sections are News & Features, Opinions, Vanguard, Arts & Entertainment, and Sports. Each print section has three pages per issue of the Tower, composed of articles, photos and graphics. Non-print sections are related to some aspect of creating and publishing of each issue, but don't produce articles. The non-print sections are Visuals, Multimedia, Copy, Business, and Online.

News & Features is a facts-based section, focusing on current events pertaining to PHS and feature profiles of PHS community members. Articles follow classic journalistic procedures, placing heavy emphasis on an authentic portrayal of PHS and its community.

Opinions features articles about a wide range of subjects, allowing writers to express their takes on prevalent issues surrounding PHS: academic culture, consumerism, classes, and misinformation have all been past article topics.

Vanguard is the Tower's most flexible section. It presents articles and visuals based on a different theme every issue; past themes have included herstory, superheroes, and fairytales. With its unique format, Vanguard provides an excellent platform to showcase creativity.

Arts & Entertainment covers everything related to arts at PHS, whether it be about school art or general culture. For the former, writers employ similar article formatting (reports and feature profiles) as News & Features but exclusively about the arts. Writers also display their personal tastes through media reviews and recommendations.

Sports covers everything related to sports at PHS — sport teams, team members, and athletic culture — using a similar style to Arts & Entertainment and News & Features. It also includes features on sports in general culture, with recent articles describing student opinions on movies, the Olympics, and more.

Visuals is responsible for every graphic and photo found in the pages of the Tower. Visuals editors, staff, and contributors take photos or draw images based on the needs of each section and their articles for that month.

Copy works to make sure that every issue of the Tower follows grammatical and stylistic guidelines, using the Tower's style guide to check every article and page for errors.

Business is in charge of the financial side of the Tower. It manages ads, subscriptions, and fundraisers to ensure the Tower has enough money to handle print costs.

Online maintains the Tower's web presence, and uploads articles to the Tower's website with every new issue.

POSITIONS:

Contributor — Any PHS student can contribute to any section, except Business. There are no prerequisites to be a contributor, and you can contribute as often as you want.

Staff — To become a staff writer for a print section, there is a requirement of contributing at least three articles to a section before applying and being approved by the section editors and senior editors. Staff writers must attend at least three hours of production every production cycle and contribute one article each issue. Copy staff members have to attend at least six hours of production each cycle. Visuals staff members need to have contributed to three consecutive issues before becoming staff, should have art skills, and preferably have access to digital art or photography equipment. Visuals staff are also required to attend at least three hours of production and contribute at least one visual per issue. Multimedia staff must contribute to 3 productions of projects, which can include videos or podcasts. Additionally, Multimedia staff must host/lead their own monthly podcast or production with contributors.

Section editor — There are typically two section editors per section. Print section editors organize article assignments and visual requests, help writers through the process of writing their articles, edit articles, and create the newspaper page layouts of their section. The Head Copy Editors provide structural and grammatical feedback for articles all the way from the first draft of an article to right before the article is published. Visuals editors create images and take photos for each section, and oversee their staff and contributors, who do the same thing. The Multimedia editor creates and assigns ideas for videos and podcasts, and also creates some of the section's output. Business editors raise money for the Tower through subscriptions, ads, and fundraisers, and oversee the Tower's finances. Online editors manage the Tower's website (towerphs.com), updating it whenever a new issue comes out, and create online-only features, such as the mini crossword.

Senior editor — The senior editors are the Editor-in-Chief and two Managing Editors, who as a group oversee all of the Tower's sections. Their duties include supervising deadlines, overseeing section edits, editing articles, and more. To read more about our Senior Editors this year, turn to the last page for their Senior Reflections.

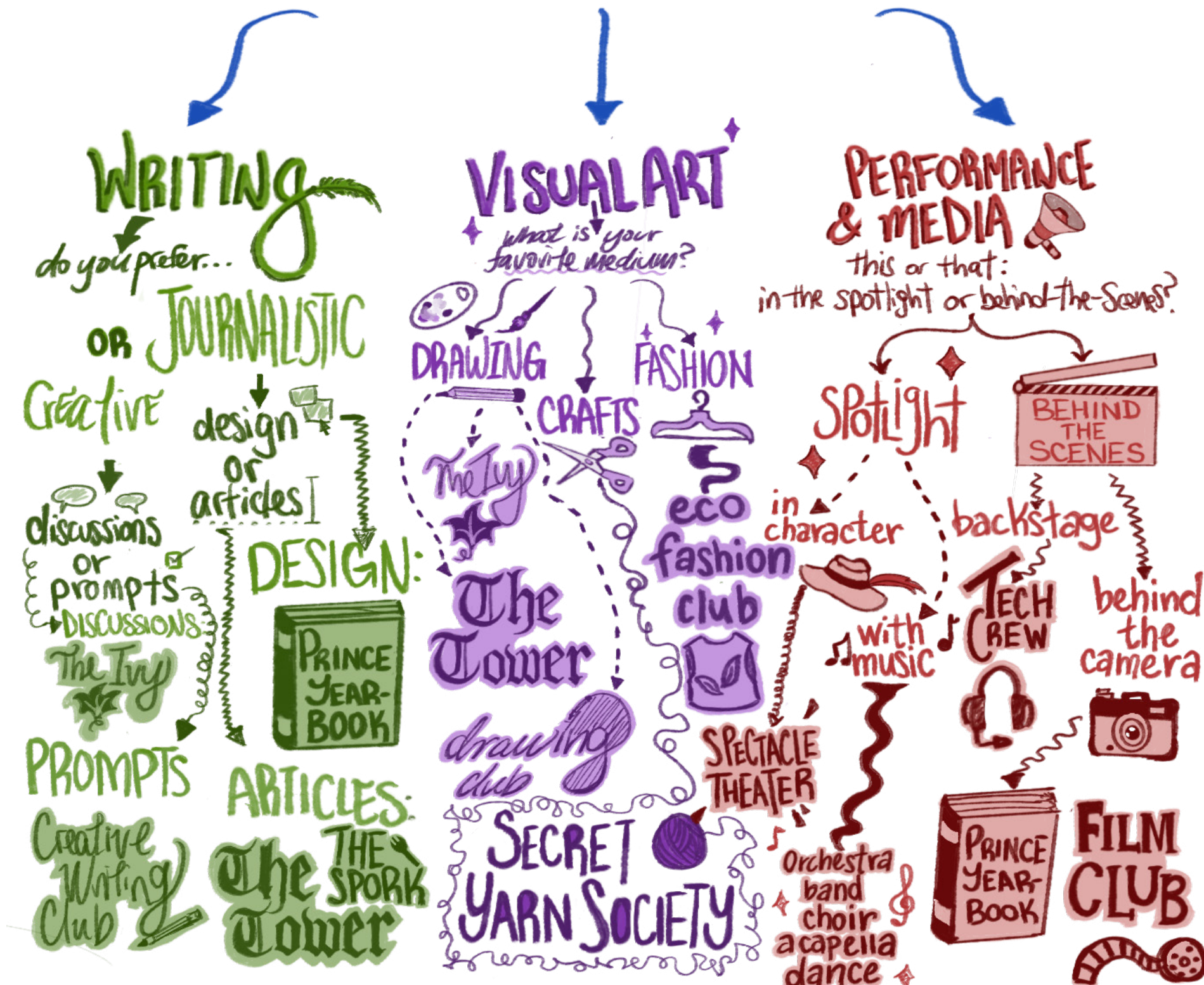
HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Sign-ups for each section are released near the start of each month through an email newsletter. To get on the email newsletter for a specific section, email the Tower at phstowersenioreditors@gmail.com or sign up at the Club Fair. Article sign up openings are often short (a few days), so be alert and take action as soon as you can to make sure assignments are available!

What's the right arts and entertainment club for you?

Sophie Zhang, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CO-EDITOR

WHAT ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN?



graphic: Charley Hu



Finding community through orchestra

Chloe Lam, STAFF WRITER

When I first joined PHS Orchestra, I was introduced to new opportunities and challenges. At first, I was nervous, because I was surrounded by people who were already friends with each other. However, as I learned how the piano fits into orchestral music, I slowly gained confidence in my playing and became more comfortable in my new environment. Being a part of PHS Orchestra has allowed me to start a new journey, which has involved meeting new people and participating in unforgettable performances.

Every year, we have many performances and rehearsals that help us bond. One of the most recent was an amazing tour in Europe, where we got to perform in Italy, Switzerland, and France. Back in my freshman year, we performed to raise money for the charity UNICEF and featured PHS alum Zachary Mowitz. It was inspiring to see a successful cellist who once stood where we are now return to perform with us. We also performed live in musicals such as "Newsies" and "Beauty and the Beast," as well as operas like "The Little Prince." Although the rehearsals can be long and tiring, the musicals captivate the audience, and as they roar in applause, I realize that all our hard work has paid off.

Whether we're celebrating a successful concert or finishing off a tough rehearsal, these experiences have forged strong friendships and a sense of unity within the orchestra. The friendships and memories we create remind me that music is not just in the notes we play but in the connections we create.



graphic: Charley Hu

Stay posted for these PHS arts events

Gabby Kaputa, STAFF WRITER

- Student Club Fair Dates and Times TBD
- PHS UNICEF Concert
- PHS Spectacle Theatre Fall Play
- PHS Choir Tree Lighting
- Princeton Symphony Orchestra Holiday POPS
- PHS Winter Concert
- PHS Jazz Festival
- PHS Spectacle Theatre Spring Musical
- PHS Spring Choir Concert
- PHS Spring Concert

graphic: Charley Hu

Back to sports

Katie Qin, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST?

FALL

"This year I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to push myself. Last year I was coming off of an injury, so I'm excited to have the chance this year to PR and set some new goals for myself."
- Avery Bahr '26

"I'm looking forward to the pressure and competition that all the other teams in the state will be putting on us after last season. Everyone is out for us now we won a championship, so I'm ready for them to give us all they got."
- Archie Smith '25

"As one of the captains this year, for this season I am really looking forward to watching new and old girls work together to create new stunt groups, and work as a team ... Our goal is to look and be uniformed, so we want to work on sharper movements, better stunts, synchronized movements, [team] spirit, jumps, and overall the performance we give out."
- Valeria Trujillo '26



WINTER

"I am most looking forward to working hard with my teammates and putting together a successful season for myself and the team. As a senior, I'm also looking forward to the opportunity to compete for a final time."
- Josh Hanan '26

"I'd say I'm most excited for the post season meets such as counties because I feel like the competitive nature of them really bonds the team together, and the energy is really great."
- Rachel McInerney '25

"I'm probably most excited for spending time with my teammates ... [like] running together, exploring different places, getting ready for practice, or just talking and spending time with my best friends."
- Grace Hegedus '27



SPRING

"This upcoming season for lacrosse I'm looking forward to reconnecting with new and old teammates. My past sophomore year we had a successful season where everyone had a connection on the field. I believe that by working hard everyday in practice together we can create the same team unity."
- Leah Bornstein '26

"[I'm looking forward to] being able to be back with my teammates. They are a great group of people, and it's fun to be with them during the season ... We are also really close with [West Windsor] South but fall short in [the] sectional final. With some fresh faces, we are hoping to advance to the group three finals."
- Aashil Patel '26

"[I'm looking forward to] hanging out with the entire team again and hopefully going to states! ... [Last year] at states, we finished third out of the public schools. Next year we'll try to beat what we did last year."
- Jacqueline Zhang '25



graphics: Katherine Chen

How to sign up for sports

Dester Selby-Slazar, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

Thinking of signing up for a school sport? Joining a fall, winter, or spring sport is a great way to find new friends and make new memories. The process of signing up may seem a little daunting, so here's how to navigate the system.

1. Go to the PHS Athletics page, which can be found on the PHS website under "Activities." After that, you should create an account to place all of your forms. If you have a sibling who participated in high school sports, they will have an account that you can place your documents in. The option to create or log in to

an account can be found under "Register For Your Sport." If you are creating an account for the first time, you will need your student ID, which can be found in PowerSchool or your email if you're transferring from Cranbury School or Princeton Charter School.

2. Register for an imPACT test if you are required to. ImPACT tests are required every two years from grade six onwards. This test gives you a base score for your cognitive abilities which can be used to determine if you have suffered a concussion. After taking the test, make sure that the nurse has registered the test.

3. You should set up an appointment with your doctor and fill out the necessary paperwork. Once complete, submit those forms to the Princeton High School nurses: Margarida Cruz, Gail Cipolloni, and Monica Sossa. Once the nurse verifies that all the paperwork is correct, upload the forms to the PHS Athletics page and you should be good to go!

Tip: Make sure that you complete the steps early, and that you are aware of deadlines. You never want to rush an appointment, as pediatricians are usually busy in the days leading up to a deadline. Don't be the one stuck!

Senior Reflections

The Tower's Senior Editors share what they learned over their years at PHS!

Design by Daniel Guo, Editor-in-Chief

Daniel Guo '25, Editor-in-Chief

When I went outside for a walk the summer before 8th grade under the fading sunlight down the block, past the high school, and around the Westminster Music College, I thought of high school as a distant obstacle to tackle. When I first ducked under the flap to the giant tent set up on the grass lawn in front of the flagpole entrance for first period band class, I thought it was the beginning of a long, four-year journey. That it would be a slog, a slow grind to college. Now, entering my senior year, I look back wistfully, and realize it was a transient experience.

As Andy Bernard from *The Office* said, "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them." Luckily, I haven't left them yet, and you have just started.

Once it becomes October, then November of your freshman year, it is easy to see your difficult teachers, poor sleep, or relationship building as obstacles that you must face in order to succeed. It might seem like a dreary cycle. But, there is work that you will find fulfilling, and it will drive you through the sticky messes that seem to hold life at a standstill.

Midway through my first year, I became a staff writer for *The Tower*. I joined the Euro Challenge team. I dove into the varsity swim team.

Each one of those activities offered weekly, monthly, seasonal dates to look forward to and fond memories that now populate my camera roll. I stayed well past the three hours required of a staff writer for newspaper production because I found laughter and fulfillment in editing and laying pages. Every few days at a Euro Challenge meeting, I learned about economics, how sore your face can be after smiling so much, and even more about what was happening around the school, connecting with those senior to me. I learned what team spirit was, how it can motivate you to new physical heights, and got hugs galore after my races.

I mentioned to the staff at Tower a few months ago that full-day productions were a happy escape from school work. A time where I could work with others toward a common goal, be criticized for my music taste, and feel a home away from home. Every one of the activities above offered the same feeling. And you'll find it too.

The high school experience will consume your life. The trick is to maximize your enjoyment in the work that you do.

"Find a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

Even later on, if feelings change, don't feel trapped just because you've been doing something for so long. Take a leap of faith into something new. And find things you love. Now and beyond.

If you have trouble, others are more than willing to introduce you and welcome you to their own homes. Just ask! I am so grateful for those that did for me.

I promise this wasn't an advertisement for the activities above. Your homes will look different. And whatever it looks like, you can outgrow it and pursue greater things, because you want to, not because it sounds or looks good.



Tamar Assayag '25, Managing Editor



My 8th grade was a confusing mess of a year, filled with what felt like an early identity crisis and somehow simultaneously a return to normality, after a year and a half of remote school due to COVID. I believed freshman year would be a clean slate, one which would kick off four years of focusing in school, meeting dozens of new people, and attending every club meeting under the sun. But I didn't know how to do any of that, not alone anyway. Here is where I tell you one of my core beliefs about teenagehood: friendship is the backbone to surviving high school.

I wouldn't be where I am right now without my friends—literally. I wouldn't be in room 173, the Tower production room, typing out this reflection, if my friend from freshman English class didn't encourage me to sign up to write for the Opinions section in February 2022. I wouldn't have continued to write month after month without persuasion from my friend from Arts & Entertainment, since our breaks from production, walking around the school had quickly turned into our own Tower routine.

I wouldn't have the confidence to ask my teachers for extra help if it wasn't for one of my best friends from elementary school coming with me to see our chemistry teacher every single Tiger Time in sophomore year.

I wouldn't be the (somewhat) stable person I am today without the long debriefs I had with my friend on our

near-daily after school walks in freshman year.

I wouldn't have stayed in band through all four years of high school without encouragement from my friends, both old and new. The experiences I've gotten through the band program, from performing in Honolulu, Hawaii to bonding with my section over pizza and music preferences, are ones I wouldn't trade for anything.

Ironically and arguably most importantly, my friendships have given me the assurance to be independent. I've implemented this in my academic life in so many different ways, from choosing to take a class none of my friends have ever taken and overcoming that initial fear and hesitation, to finding comfort in walking alone in the hallway without feeling the need to stare down at my phone, pretending to be engaged in some revolutionary text conversation.

Sometimes it feels like the safest way to traverse through high school is by following a list of dos and don'ts passed down by those who have crossed this path prior. But corniness aside, forging your own path is so much more fulfilling. Sure, you can take advice from friends, family, and upperclassmen, but the trick is learning to apply that advice to your life, your interests, and your ambitions. So to the PHS class of '28, I offer you this piece of advice: keep your friends close, make some new ones, and hopefully, through these friendships you will learn a little bit more about yourself.

Matthew Chen '25, Managing Editor

Entering high school in itself holds its own excitement and allure, but a pinch of I-can't-believe-we're-going-to-high-school followed by the realization of no-way-we're-going-to-high-school makes this new experience all the more appealing.

Boarding the yellow bus, walking, or biking on the first day to school, you'll be left with more than enough time to take in what used to be years away but is now a reality.

"I could be in the same class as people older than me?"

"I got to pick an elective!"

"My classes are spread across three different floors?"

But at the center of the whirlwind of concerns, questions, and hopes that circulate your mind, there will be one that sticks out unlike the rest:

"I'm going to meet new people?!"

Walking through the glass doors of the PAC, your previous 50-person cohorts or 350-person classes that you and your friends shared will suddenly expand to 1600 people, 400 per grade. A step through those doors means no turning back, and the world that you know will suddenly become much bigger.

Whether it was from across the street, a few blocks away, or a completely different town, you are all a part of one class now: the class of '28.

I understand that it can be daunting and I get that you'll feel overwhelmed by everything happening. But remember that it's all of your first times tackling this huge step in your lives, and at some point, it was ours too.

I, like you, were thrown into this massive pool of people and opportunities not too long ago, and I will admit that it was a lot to take on at once. But I found my way by involving myself in as many groups and areas that I could.

I joined the Tower my freshman year, and through the last four years I've formed a tight community in this part of my life.

I'm a part of the school's band program, and that in itself is like my home away from home, full of great people that I can rely on.

I'm on the tennis team at school, and within this group of around 20 people I've managed to find my place on and off the court.

For us Cranbury kids, graduating 8th grade on the black top behind the school means only one thing: next year, you won't be returning to the small, one-story, building that symbolized a tight-knit community. In fact, school will be in a completely new town.

For PMS kids, your graduation took place close to where you'll be spending your next four years. In fact, the switch to high school won't be far from where you're used to spending your weekdays.

For Charter kids, you won't be far from home either. Your move to high school won't be far off from where you've already been going to school, but the small communities you're used to are bound to grow.

And finally, for any of you who aren't from the area, don't worry. PHS is home to a very large and diverse community, and you're going to find your place.

There is no short supply of great people and opportunities at PHS, and I urge you to all reach out and find your place. Don't get too caught up in sacrificing the future for the present or the present for the future, as everything you do starting now to four years later will be part of who you are. Get involved in your new community.

