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**FINAL** 

# Penn Hills schools graduate

District rebounds after years of financial turmoil, exit from Pa. recovery program

By Megan Tomasic Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Daniel Matsook describes the Penn Hills School District of today as a "different place" from when he started as chief recovery officer in 2019

At the time, the district reported a negative fund balance.

Officials were taking out loans to pay teacher salaries. And the district quickly ran out of money when they paid those loans back, forcing them to ask the Pennsylvania Department of Education for its yearly subsidy early.

But this month the district painted a drastically different picture The Penn Hills School District last week celebrated the one-year anniversary of exiting Pennsylvania's financial recovery program, a move the school board topped off by passing a proposed \$106 million balanced budget that does not raise taxes.

"There's a positive vibe in the district. ... Whenever I come in and I see it from a different lens, from a different height, I just see and feel a different place," Mr. Matsook told the Post-Gazette.

The update followed years of

upheaval in the district of more than 3,000 students.

Problems largely started in 2007 when the district was contending with \$400,000 in debt. At the time, the state stepped in with the goal of reducing costs by downsizing the high school. But rather than following through with the plan, district leaders instead chose to design a new elementary and high school featuring high-end materials such as

SEE **PENN HILLS**, PAGE A-2

## TOP COURT REMOVES PROTECTED STATUS

### 350,000 Venezuelans at risk for deportation

By Abbie Vansickle and Adam Liptak
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday let the Trump administration, for now, remove protections from nearly 350,000 Venezuelan immigrants who had been allowed to remain in the United States without risk of deportation under a program known as Temporary Protected Status.

The court's brief order was unsigned and gave no reasons, which is typical when the justices rule on emergency applications. No vote count was listed, although Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson noted that she would have denied the administration's request.

The justices announced they would allow the Trump administration to end the protections pending appeal of the case, potentially allowing the administration to move ahead with deportations. The justices also clarified, however, that they would preserve the ability of individual immigrants to bring legal challenges in some instances, including if the government tried to cancel their work permits.

In a separate case, the justices Friday

SEE COURT, PAGE A-7



VETSROLL TOUR STOP

Lucy Schaly/Post-Gazette photos

Fran Reiland, 80, of Carnegie, back to camera, embraces a veteran with VetsRoll, a program that provides bus trips to Washington, D.C., for veterans, on Monday. More than 400 veterans and volunteers made a stop for lunch at Cefalo's Banquet & Event Center in Carnegie.

# GRATITUDE, RESPECT

#### Nonprofit provides free trip for veterans to visit war memorials

By Stephana Ocneanu Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Dozens of schoolchildren lined Lydia Street in Carnegie on Monday, their arms raised high and waving American flags as tour buses carrying more than 400 veterans and volunteers rolled into the borough.

Carnegie served as the second stop on the annual "Closure, Gratitude, Respect" tour for VetsRoll, a Wisconsin-based non-profit which provides free trips to Washington, D.C., for World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans to visit war memorials and other sights ahead of Memorial Day weekend. The tour started Sunday in Wisconsin.

"A lot of this is about closure because these guys did not get closure when they came out of Korea and Vietnam, and they were not respected," said Mark Strassar, a 12-year volunteer with the program. "But this gives them the respect they deserve."

Robert Casagranda, a Korean War Army veteran, said he was overwhelmed by the community support. "When I came out of service

"When I came out of service and I was in California, it was terrible. Gee, people would come out and be so mistreated," Mr. Casagranda said. "To see the kids out and people waving their flags, it really makes you feel good."

Mark Finnegan, president and co-founder of VetsRoll, started the program in 2010 as a way to honor his parents, Cy and Barbara

SEE **VETERANS**, PAGE A-3



Volunteer Rick Cantley, of Carnegie, waves goodbye to veterans and volunteers from VetsRoll as they leave after lunch at Cefalo's Banquet & Event Center on Monday.

# Mayor, key court seats on the ballot

High-stakes primary leaves voters with critical choices

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

As polls open across Pennsylvania this morning, voters in Allegheny County are facing critical choices that could shape their courts, the county's legislature and the future of Pittsburgh for years to come.

The high-stakes
Democratic primary
between Mayor Ed
Gainey and Allegheny County Controller Corey O'Connor has drawn an unprecedented amount
of spending — including from
wealthy outside



groups — at a time when the city faces dire challenges to its finances and a housing crisis that has put homeownership out of reach for many young families.

For months, the candidates have clashed sharply over Mr. Gainey's stewardship during the three years since he beat former Mayor Bill Peduto during a time of national political upheaval and massive protests over racial justice across

SEE **ELECTION**, PAGE A-2



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#### Weather

Clouds and sun. Daytime high, 68; tonight's low, 56. **Page B-6** 

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