

# THE TALON



**THE NEW  
CHROMEBOOK POLICY**  
HOW STUDENTS ADAPT  
TO SCHOOL-ONLY  
CHROMEBOOKS  
**PAGE 4**

**FALL FESTIVITIES**  
FUN ACTIVITIES TO BRING  
OUT THE FALL SPIRIT  
**PAGE 6**

**FOOTBALL SEASON  
OVERVIEW**  
A CHECK-IN TO THE  
JV AND VARSITY  
FOOTBALL TEAMS  
**PAGE 11**



# The Vote That Affects Students' Lives

## An overview of the AACPS school board.

Elsa Webster | Editor-in-Chief

Elections for all offices are coming up in November, but one in particular will affect students. The School Board, which makes all of the decisions regarding this county's school system, will be on the ballot.

"My race, county council, state delegates, comptroller, governor, we all have to file to run with the local board of elections and I think that's also true for Kamala and Trump," incumbent member and school board candidate Dana Schallheim said. "So we have to file paperwork to get ourselves on the ballot, we have to raise money, which is super hard. And then you have to doorknock and you have to have campaign events and do all of the things and then just like when a student or when an adult goes and casts their ballot, I'm on that same ballot that the president, and all these other folks are on."

While people in Anne Arundel County can vote now on which people they want to be on the school board, this was not always the case. The AACPS board had been a fully appointed board but switched to a fully elected board in 2020. This was one of many changes the school board has experienced in recent

years.

"And so moving from a fully appointed body to a fully elected one was one thing and then the people who came on didn't hire that superintendent, a lot of the preceding Superintendents. And so working with him when we never really saw him as our leader because we weren't the ones who hired him was stressful and it turned out a lot of our views didn't align very much and then we didn't renew his contract and now we have a new superintendent, Dr. Bedell. So it's really changed drastically in the last six years," Schallheim said.

While effects on the school board itself have been occurring in the past couple of years, the effects that the school board has on the students, teachers and families of AACPS have stayed important.

"It affects everything. So it'll affect whether or not Mark Bedell stays as our superintendent because if the board flips, he's told us publicly he will leave so it will affect the whole school system from the wonderful things we've gotten done under his leadership to what could creep in in terms of policy moving forward," Schallheim

said. "The school board and the elections can play an enormous role in the lives of students. In your experience, because my job is to make sure you're able to pursue whatever path you choose after graduation. I believe it will heavily impact it."

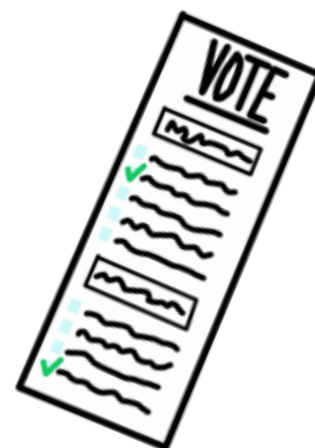
The effects on students and the schools can also depend on the members. With the upcoming elections, there is bound to be some change in the members and with the new members, some policy.

"Hopefully we're able to keep a majority of us on the school board, myself included, that want to focus on student outcomes and that's it. Just the students. I don't have time for the distractions and the culture wars and the partisan politics and all that stuff because the decisions I make impact the 13 years we have, you and other students, that then can really affect the trajectory of your lives and what you end up doing and what college you're able to get into to and if you join the military or not," Schallheim said.

The school board, like any election, does have a political aspect and agenda. But while this can affect the policy passed, politics are not the primary reason for the school board.

"My role in the school board is developing policy, passing policy, developing a budget or taking the recommended budget, amending it, passing it and oversight of our employees and in this case, those are our executive assistant, the superintendent of schools and the director of the internal auditing department," Schallheim said. "And so that is the role of this board and any other board in Maryland are those things and the superintendent we hired to manage the daily school operations which is everything else, transportation, food and service nutrition, curriculum."

Not all school board



A ballot, which will be cast for some SPHS students on Nov. 5. On this day, anyone over 18 will vote for a number of offices, one of them being District 5's representative for the school board. "If you're sixteen in the state of Maryland, when you get your driver's license or when you turn sixteen and get your ID card, you can register to vote on the spot. If you are going to be eighteen by Nov. 5th, you can vote in that Nov. 5th election." School board candidate and member Dana Schallheim said. Graphic taken by: Elsa Webster

members are getting elected or reelected this November. Last year, students at Severna Park High School voted for the student member of the board, also called SMOB. This is a position completely unique to AACPS.

"We are the only school system in this country, period, full-stop, that has a student member of the board with full voting rights. No where else in the country, more conservative, more progressive places, nowhere else has a student with full voting rights," Schallheim said.

With this unique position comes benefits. Not only to the school board but to the students who want to have their voices heard. This election was separate from the upcoming one on Nov. 5 and occurred last year in SPHS.



The exterior of Severna Park High School, which lies in District 5 of Anne Arundel County. Schools across all districts are influenced by the choices of the school board which can include curriculum, staff and redistricting. "So when I vote to redo Meade High School or to build Severn Run High School, or to redistrict a portion of our schools, in this case it will be Severna Park coming up in the spring, that directly impacts you and your peers," school board candidate and member Dana Schallheim said. Photo taken by Elsa Webster

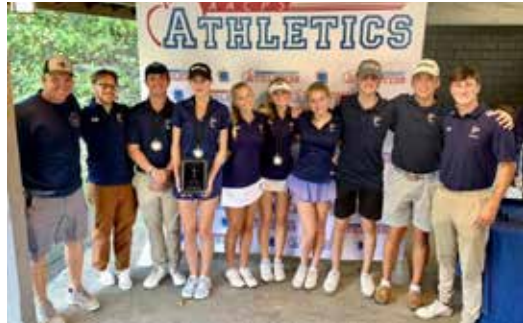
Continued on page 4

# NEWS IN BRIEF

On Oct. 19 the Severna Park marching band had a home show at George Roberts field at SPSHS, the Maryland Marching Band Association (MMBA) bands performed their shows and competed for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, ect. "We make sure we're good hosts and provide them with a good experience," Band director Mr. Kilby said. Photo taken by Katerina Day



Junior Nicol Chovanec won the golf county championship on Oct. 7. "It was a great feeling just because it was a stressful day. And I just remember when it was all over all the happy emotions coming in and it was, it was honestly just amazing to win again because I had a bad year last year," said Chovanec Photo taken by Peter Buck



SkillsUSA partnered with SP Football raising over \$1200 for NFL's Crucial Catch initiative, adviser Ms. Angerer said. All four admins were dumped in Gatorade to support the kids raising over \$800 during lunches. AP Staci Cassarino and senior football player Ryder Halloran at the Crucial Catch. Photo taken by Mimi Connolly



FRONT COVER: Senior Gavin Gonyeau recently went to New York to watch a hot-air balloon show. "There was like 80 hot air balloons that went up," Gonyeau said. All the hot air balloons were privately owned and took off in a large open field for easy visibility from the ground. "It was cool." Photo by Gavin Gonyeau

EDITOR IN CHIEF: ELSA WEBSTER

PHOTO AND GRAPHICS EDITOR:

RUBY HOWLAND

ONLINE EDITOR: SAMANTHA POLK

SPORTS EDITOR: EMERSON SCOTT

BUSINESS: PAYTON GERWIG

STAFF WRITERS: AILEEN JETER, ARTIN TARPINIAN, BROOKE BARNES,

MILLIE KNOEPFLE, TEDDY CARNS

GUEST WRITERS: CHARLEIGH GORMAN, ELIZABETH ST. ANDRIE, ELLA STOUTDT, JOLENE ROBERTSON, JON NEAL, NICOLE CHOVANEC,

ADVISER: VALERIE EARTHART

**WHO WE ARE:** The Talon is the principle news publication and public forum of Severna Park High School, which is located on 60 Robinson Road, Severna Park, Maryland 21146. Phone: 410-544-0900

**ASSOCIATIONS:** The Talon is a member of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and Quill & Scroll International Journalism Association. It has won Gold and Silver Medals from CSPA.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Staff members typically distribute 200 papers to the student body. Magazines are available to pick up in the hallways, the main office and throughout the English department. Subscribers may pay \$40 to have the publication mailed to their home. PDF copies of The Talon are found under Past Print at [www.sptalon.com](http://www.sptalon.com).

**OPINIONS:** Views expressed in The Talon do not reflect those of the Severna Park High School administration or the Anne Arundel County Public School Board of Education. Signed columns or reviews represent only the opinion of the author.

**EDITORIALS:** The Talon's editorials will reflect a consensus of the members of the student editorial board. The subjects of the editorials will be determined by the editorial board. The editorial board, which consists of the staff's student editors, will determine the content, including all unsigned editorials. Editorial ideas may be submitted to the editorial board by all members of the staff. Editorials should be sent to [thesptalon@gmail.com](mailto:thesptalon@gmail.com) or dropped off in the publication lab, 245, during school hours. No material will be published for which there is evidence that the author is using the paper for inappropriate personal gain.

**ADVERTISING:** Any student, parent, staff member or organization will be allowed to purchase ads. Non-students, businesses or any person not currently attending or related to an attending student may purchase ads, but the publication asks that those ads be business-related ads or be used to congratulate student or school successes. No ads will be placed in any publication until payment is made. Any business wishing to advertise in The Talon must meet district guidelines for obscene or offensive material. All copy or art will be judged by these standards. Any ad found to be in violation must be changed or it will not be published. The publication reserves the right to refuse any ad that is libelous, illegal, obscene, irresponsible, inappropriate or in poor taste. The publication also reserves the right to edit any ad before publication to ensure the standards and quality of the product. The publication may limit the number of type styles offered to ad customers and set guidelines for format and style. The publication reserves the right to edit all submitted copy or photographs.

**BYLINES:** All articles, graphics, photos, art, columns, pages, reviews, and other material creatively conceived, with the exception of staff editorials, mug shots and cut-outs will be bylined with the producer's name. All bylined writers will be held accountable for their work. When more than one person has contributed creatively to a piece of work, any person who has contributed to the work must be bylined as a producer.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Vote That Affects Students' Lives	3
Return of the Chromebooks Carts	4
<i>Continued</i> The Vote That Affects Students' Lives	4
Frustrations Over New School Policies and Schedules	5
Fall Festivities	6
Pumpkin Spice Lattes In Severna Park	7
How to Make Senior Year More Memorable	8
Falcon Mascot	9
<i>Continued</i> How to Make Senior Year More Memorable	9
The JV Football Fantasy	10
Nutrition as a Runner	10
Football Season Overview	11
The Hidden Joys of Cross Country	12



# The New Chromebook Policy

School-only Chromebooks have brought changes for students and teachers and how they do things.

Elizabeth St. Andrie and Emerson Scott | Guest Writer and Sports Editor

The 2024-2025 school year so far has been accompanied with many changes in school policy as well as operational changes too. Although all these alterations have all been extremely impactful in the daily lives of students, the one that definitely takes the cake for biggest change is the removal of personal chromebooks issued by the school. This is something that has transformed what many students had relied on for an at home connection to school and have grown attached too over the years of having one.

"We only have one computer, and it's a family computer," freshman Lilliana Nunes said. "It's more like a laptop, and so I have to share that with my siblings, and sometimes I don't have access to the computer when I have homework to do." She also said that "having a computer with a camera is another issue," because her camera was "really bad," making some assignments difficult.

Due to this issue, the school and AACPS as a whole have started a system where kids without access, or have limited access, would be able to borrow a chromebook due to the lack of an at home device.

Senior Jake Allen said, "I have heard of instances where if you don't have a PC at home, they will provide a Chromebook -- if you ask nicely."

This loaner program can benefit students with homework if there are problems at home with computer access.

"If approved for participation in the program, students will be assigned a Chromebook," AACPS wrote on its website (aacps.org). "Once all information is received, your application will be reviewed by a School Administrator and approved or denied based on demonstrated need." E-mails were also sent out to parents.

Mrs. Kraft said, "I had heard that the number of computers -- excuse me, Chromebooks, --- that were broken or never returned was in the 40% range."

"I'd want to get an exact number," she said. "But even so, to replace that, and make -- to have that maintenance cost, that not only am I going to have to supply Chromebooks for everybody, but I'm going to have to supply a hundred and forty -- have forty percent of them not come back and not be us-

able..." She says that it was "a very high rate of attrition," and "a problem."

Allen described what some students have done. "They purposefully destroy the Chromebooks for no reason," Allen said. "I have seen keys taken off, I've seen screens cracked, I've seen the frame of the Chromebook -- torn off. Like, they just tear it off."

The increased amount of student-made problems seems to have been one of the main contributing factors in the removal of personal issued chromebooks. The costs of repair as well as upkeep proved to be a large problem, and now chromebooks are housed in carts in classrooms and used if needed instead of when wanted. But there have been some positive impacts from the removal of personal chromebooks, such as in math teacher Mrs. Kraft's classes.

"DeltaMath isn't as good, so paper homework is better," she said for her geometry classes, "and with the new



homework policy, that is, just, no late homework, they're actually doing the homework. And so my homework rates are much better this year, much better. So they get the paper homework, and Honors Algebra 2, almost 100% homework rate" Kraft said.

Without chromebooks, the increase in paper material homework and classwork has become much more prevalent, and as Mrs. Kraft highlighted, it seems that it is showing many positive qualities in student homework abilities.

So what at first seemed like a huge culture shock, has turned into something that students are able to adapt to along with the teachers who have gotten used to using tech in the classroom over the past years. The chromebook carts have allowed for in school use of chromebooks, while paper is now dominating the rest.

Chromebook carts are in many of the classrooms, now doubling as a storage and charging area. These smaller carts tend to house 30 chromebooks that are used upon teacher instruction. Photo taken by Emerson Scott.

# Frustration Over New School Policies

Recent changes to school policies and schedule changes, spark concern in the student body.

Millie Knoepfle | Staff Writer

New school year, new changes, new schedules. Many wonder why can't we ever just keep something the same for more than one school year? The constant changes in schedules, extended class periods, Google classroom to Brightspace to now thrill share, the new phone policies, students begin to think that is it all starting to be too much.

The new policies may seem to be doing more harm to the students than good. With an increasing list of academic responsibilities, being a student-athlete, and having extracurricular activities and personal activities, many believe a shorter Falcon Block is not enough to manage these work tasks. With the decrease in Falcon Block time, busy students are finding themselves overwhelmed by the lack of time to focus on their studies. Many students depend on Falcon Block to complete school assignments.

"The Falcon block being switched from 45 minutes to 30 minutes is terrible." Junior Anna Willis said, "As a junior and student athlete I desperately need that time to complete homework assignments and 30 minutes is not enough. To add 5 minutes to each class just to take away 15 minutes of Falcon block is ridiculous when kids can barely pay attention for that long anyway."

This opinion looks to be a shared opinion that weighs heavy on the minds of students on a day to day basis. Student dislike of these changes allude to the possible need for the restoration of old policies that students have gotten used to and can rely on.

Although some students do believe that the previous year's Falcon block policy is

better, other students are also able to see the flip side, and have come to like some new policies. One of these students is junior Ty Maddox. Maddox said, "I like this Falcon block because it is the same as last year. I can still see my friends and go to different teachers to get extra help. I have heard about Falcon 60 and I don't really know how it is going to work."

Aside from Falcon block, a new change in the schedule has many students finding it harder to maintain focus during longer class periods. The increase of class time is leading some students to a decline in attention span and overall focus. "I'm not a fan of the 80 minute classes. I can't stand sitting down for long periods of time" freshman Lucy Knoepfle said. While longer classes are aiming to improve and have more in depth learning, the decrease of Falcon block time for students to relax and complete assignments is actually resulting in higher stress levels and difficulty in maintaining focus according to the student population.

In this age where phones play a huge part in daily life, the teachers and staff have increasingly imposed stricter rules on phone usage during school hours. Recently, Severna Park has introduced a much stricter phone policy than years prior. This new phone policy has sparked conversation and debates among the students. While the intention of the new policy is to reduce distractions during class time, this shift in the policy may have unforeseen negative effects on students. The recent tightening of the phone policy has left many students feeling restricted and disconnected. While schools are justified in keeping control of the

distractions, enforcing harsher consequences for the usage of phones has created tension in the student body.

"I think the phone policy was probably necessary but it has been a little too strict in my opinion" junior Norah Cornwall said, "I get not using your phone during class because it is a distraction from your learning but like in the hallways and during falcon 30 is quite excessive."

While the aim is to promote focus and reduce distractions, students argue that the stricter phone policies can backfire. "I understand why phones can be distracting, but basically not being able to use them at all is kind of overkill. Sometimes I need to check in on my family, now I can't even do that" junior Angela Reed said. "We used to be able to

use our phones during Falcon block to relax or catch up on assignments, but now we're stuck without that." While reducing phone distractions is a valid concern, a stricter phone policy may not be as productive as intended.

Overall, the combination of a shorter Falcon block, longer classes and a stricter phone policy has been perceived to have significant negative impacts on students academic and mental well-being. With limited time to complete assignments, get help from teachers, and decompress between classes, students are increasingly feeling more overwhelmed than ever.



Junior Abby Peacoc completes her work in Mr. Witner's classroom. As school policies were changed, the day to day operations of SPHS changed as well. Students now have less redos, more work on paper due to the lack of chromebooks, and have no opportunity to turn in late homework. Photo taken by Millie Knoepfle.

## The Vote That Affects Student Lives

## Continued from page 3

"What they bring to our board is tremendous. Usually they are the most articulate in the room, really bring into focus the student experience and really bring what students want and don't want when he, or she, or they cast their vote on any number of things from our budget, to policies, to new course approvals, contracts, the whole thing," Schallheim said. "I really love their presence on the board and their voices and really listening to the students. No one knows them better than them because they live it

day in and day out, and hopefully they're talking to folk that hopefully they're accessible. I learn so much from each and every one of them every year."

Students' lives and education are very much tied to the School Board. And while not every student gets a chance to vote for the members, although more can vote for the student member of the board, some upperclassmen are able to cast their ballot.

"The school board, although we sit in the board room and we're a step removed from

the school building in some cases, has a large impact on what your experience is, including the budget which is a statement of values. So if we fund more teachers to reduce class size, if we hire more school counselors to combat the mental health crisis in our youth, if we hire the right teachers that have the experience to be able to give you a good experience. All of those things have a direct impact on the students," Schallheim said.

GO TO  
WWW.SPTALON.COM  
FOR ONLINE CONTENT  
AND COVERAGE





# Fall Festivities

What are the best activities to participate in during the fall season?

Brooke Barnes | Staff Writer

The hot and humid summer days begin to fade away as the 2024-2025 school season has kicked off. But just because school is back in routine doesn't mean the fun has to come to an end. The fall season brings a lot to the table too; the weather is nicer and more tolerable than the intense summer heat, holidays begin to creep up right around the corner and a diverse selection of fall festivities is available to people of all ages and interests.

Temperatures drop between the fifties and low seventies starting the breakthrough of fall fashion: boots, denim, cozy sweaters, sweatshirts and sweatpants. To accompany the feeling of fall, quick-service restaurants pop out with pumpkin spice and cinnamon everything.

"I recommend the local Starbucks to try fall flavored treats. I like the way Starbucks makes different choices so I can switch things up while still getting that taste of fall. They have really good cinnamon flavored options and the pumpkin isn't too overpowering" junior Kendall Williams said.

A big symbol of the fall season is pumpkins. Pumpkins play a part in a lot of activities as there are various ways they can be utilized. Visiting pumpkin patches, carving jack-o-lanterns, baking pumpkin flavored treats, painted pumpkin competitions and decorating areas of homes bring the 'symbol of fall' to action.

"...the pumpkin patch at Homestead Gardens in Davidsonville is great because they have a huge selection, serving donuts and apple cider flavored drinks," Williams said. Likewise, "...going to a pumpkin patch with friends or family members is a good experience to have fun and enjoy the weather" sophomore Michael



Junior Rio Miguez at the Maryland Renaissance Festival on Oct. 20. October 20 was the last day of the fair for 2024 but they come back every year and it can be a great experience for students and families due to the fair's abundance of food, games and shows. Photo taken by Elsa Webster

Pastine said.

Similar to pumpkin patches, corn mazes are also a popular choice for many families, as there are different maze routes from advanced to beginner to choose from. Live music bands, hay rides, petting zoos, face painting and more can also be seen depending on which location you choose to visit.

"...everyone should try and visit a corn maze this fall, it is a great spot to take pictures at different areas of the maze and make good memories" junior Grace Lopez said.

Carving jack-o-lanterns or visiting a corn maze might not be everybody's cup of tea; another big puzzle piece to fall with memorable experiences is football. All the way from the professional NFL, to college football, to high school teams, to recreational teams, with ages anywhere from toddlers to adult leagues play to entertain fans.

"One of the best things about the fall season is football. On Fridays, I have games and then I'll stick around to watch the varsity team, Saturdays I watch the college games and Sundays I dedicate to watching the NFL - Ravens specifically. The competition is great,

the food and snacks are great, spending time watching with my loved ones is great," Pastine said.

Another benefit to the beautiful fall weather is it attracts people who want to be outside and soak it up by going for walks with a furry friend, raking leaves in the yard and getting the benefit of jumping in the huge piles when done, or going camping for a weekend. Going camping can be fun and peaceful. You can build a campfire and roast delicious s'mores, enjoy the scenery, fish in lakes, hike, and much more. Pastine and Lopez both recommend this.

"...that families should

go camping together because while connecting with nature, you can also connect with each other," Pastine said.

The fall season brings opportunities for fun festivities to participate in solo, with a friend, or with family members. With local sights in Severna Park and all around Maryland, your fall can be packed with memorable moments.

Carving pumpkins is a classic fall and Halloween tradition that many families partake in every year. Families flock to grocery stores or farm festivals in order to buy this craft and decoration to spruce up their porches and front doors all season long. Graphics by Ruby Howland.



## More Fall Activities In Maryland

In Maryland there is no shortage of fun fall activities for people of all ages to enjoy during the season.

### 1. Deep Creek Trails

One of the most beautiful things about fall is seeing the leaves change colors. Deep Creek Lake State Park trails offer a view of these leaves in trials such as Beckman's Trail, 1.7 miles,

Swallow Falls, 1 mile loop and Snakeroot Nature Trail, 1/4 mile. These trails will be open all fall but you might want to go sooner rather than later to see the leaves.

### 2. Maryland Corn Maze

This year, the Maryland Corn Maze is Taylor Swift themed. But this isn't the only activity to do. They also have hayrides, corn pits, petting

zoos, ziplines and a hay pyramid. The last day to attend the Maryland Corn Maze is November third and the day arm-bands are priced at \$19.95 at gate and \$17.95 online. Other pricing can be found on thier website.

### 3. Field of Screams

For those a bit older looking for less of a family activity and more of a scary

# Pumpkin Spice Lattes in Severna Park

Which fall themed drink is the best.

Jolene Robertson | Guest Writer

During the fall season as the temperature drops and hot drinks are ordered more regularly, the popular flavor of pumpkin spice returns in any way it can from scones, cookies, and perhaps most frequently, lattes. Well, pumpkin spice is back in Severna Park this fall. Over the course of September, different coffee shops were visited and rated based on taste, price, customer service and more.

### 1. Starbucks

Starbucks is known for their pumpkin spice so they were really put to the test. Starbucks is generally very expensive, with their tall iced pumpkin spice latte priced at \$5.25. Their hours are 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. which is very good accessibility for people that are working and need coffee early in the morning. The customer service was great, I got the drink in under a minute and the person working there brought my drink to me. The drink itself is delicious and really pretty. The overall rating for Starbucks is a 4 out of 5.

### 2. Dunkin

Dunkin may be Starbucks' biggest rival. Although



Pumpkin spice has long been a staple of the fall season and the weather becomes colder and hot drinks are being ordered more regularly. In Severna Park, there is a plethora of coffee shops serving this drink this season though they cannot all have the best pumpkin spice lattes. Graphics by Ruby Howland.

Starbucks was rated a 4 out of 5, Dunkin is very close because of things like pricing. Dunkin's small iced pumpkin spice latte is the same as Starbucks, \$5.25. Their hours are more accessible for people working and who need more hours. Customer service was overall good but could have been better. The drink took around 1-2 minutes and was not very cute in the store. The drink itself was good but not amazing, although it came with whipped cream which was very nice. The total rating for Dunkin was a 3 out of 5.

### 3. Rise Up

Rise Up coffee lives up to its name and rises above both Dunkin and Starbucks. Although it cost 58 more cents than Dunkin and Starbucks at \$5.83, you get more for your money. Like the others, the hours are accessible, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Customer service was great, I got the sense the workers enjoyed working there which added to the experience. I got my drink in around 30 seconds. The ambiance is the best part of the entire experience. It is very cute

and aesthetically pleasing with a cool rustic vibe to it. The drink itself was delicious and came in a cute cup. The final rating for Rise Up is a 4 out of 5.

### 4. The Big Bean

Last on our Severna Park pumpkin spice list is The Big Bean. The latte itself was not as good as it was at any of the other coffee shops. It was also \$5.25 but a small at the Big Bean is 16 oz so you get more for your money. My latte took a few minutes to come out which brought the rating down by a little bit. The Big Bean itself is very cute inside, although it is a small space. Lastly, customer service was great. The final rating for The Big Bean is a 3 out of 5.

While all of the coffee shops visited were great in their own ways, the best overall shop was Rise Up, with its ambiance, the latte itself, and more. In the end, for those looking to partake in the seasonal drink, Rise Up Coffee and Starbucks were the winners for the best pumpkin spice latte in Severna Park with both of the shops earning a 4 out of 5.





# Falcon Mascot

SPHS Mascot attends all home football games to build school spirit, as their true identity stays a mystery.

Charleigh Gorman | Guest Writer

The Falcon's job is to build school spirit and here are a variety of reasons people choose to put on the Falcon costume. As in year's past, the identity of the Falcon mascot is kept a secret from students and teachers.

"My favorite part is getting to interact and talk with all the different people with anonymity, and getting to see all the people get excited and have a good time," the Falcon mascot said.

Being the falcon also comes with challenges, "The hardest part is not being able to see and trying to find all of the high fives because you always feel like you're leaving people out which sucks because you wanna be able to" the Falcon mascot said. Some additional difficulties include "knowing how to hype up the crowd, because with the limited vision you don't know what the score is usually, you don't know what the mood is. You have to figure out how to let people enjoy the game, while also trying to hype them up so you have to like, so

you have to know when to time that, you have to know what like... 'emotes' to do. What your body language should be, it's difficult to read the crowd."

On top of their job as the Falcon, they also have to "go through, make sure everyone is having a good time, it's really like an additional joy to the game, so maybe you walk in, you see the Falcon, people get excited, it brings school spirit to the games and it's really nice especially for people who bring little siblings and I just think it makes it more of a good time" the Falcon said.

The Falcon needs an assistant because of the bulkiness of the costume and inability of the Falcon to see well because of the mask.

"I can't see anything, I have very little idea of what's going on, it's really difficult to read the room and theirs. Just a lot of challenges and if I need something I can't talk so they can do that for me, as we have signals to each other. It's really difficult to navigate on your own and you feel like having a

panic attack if you don't have someone who can be like 'this is what we are doing, this is where we are going, it's ok' and it's really helpful to have that guide. Especially someone who knows you" the Falcon said.

Ms. Hendler, is in charge of the mascot and the costume. "Last year we bought the new mascot costume...we just want to build school spirit as the mascot. Through athletics and all different departments, it can be more than one person. Ultimately I would love for little kids who come to visit to be comfortable, to take pictures, to interact in the stands, to be part of maybe a half time show if it's working with the cheerleaders, or the dances there, if we do giveaways, but it's just about bringing school spirit" Hendler said.

How does the Falcon feel like being the Falcon? "I especially like taking pictures with the little ones because you can see they're faces light up as you get near or when they are talking quietly but you can hear it because noises echo so as it



The Falcon mascot is at every home game. "...taking pictures with the little ones because you can see they're faces light up..." the Falcon mascot said as they adventure around the football games. Photo taken by Charleigh Gorman.

comes in it echos so I hear it delayed basically but I hear things much better, it makes people happy and also being on the background of peoples phones as the Falcon is also really funny" the Falcon mascot said.

## How To Make Senior Year More Memorable Continued from page 8

that include a costume show where there are rewards given to "Most Creative" or "Funniest."

- Themed refreshments will add to the atmosphere.

### 10. Talent Show

Overview: The students are to put on a talent show as a means of showcasing their special skills and hobbies.

Details:

- The students will perform their talents in music, dances, and stand-up comedy, among others, before their peers.
- Voting by the audience with regard to favorite acts should be allowed.
- Award some fun awards and prizes in different categories for such an unforgettable evening.

With these fun and engaging activity ideas, faculty members can make this year very memorable for the Class of 2025. These activities create community, moments of celebration for times together, and memories to last a lifetime. With a focus on fun and creativity, senior year can be an even more exciting and engaging time.

**HOLD ON TO  
EVERY AMAZING  
MOMENT**

**ORDER YOUR YEARBOOK**



# How to Make Senior Year More Memorable

A list of event ideas for the class of 2025 to hopefully be considered in the future.

Samatha Polk | Online Editor



Samantha Polk, Abby Jeffers and Katie Flynn all take a picture at senior sunrise. Which was an event created by Mrs. Henler who is in charge of all senior events. There were balloons and music. Photo taken by Samantha Polk.

As the Class of 2025 approaches the final year of school, bringing enjoyment and vibrancy into it sounds more appealing than not trying at all, which has unfortunately been the case for many years before us. Various events may be put together by faculty, which could sound scary to some but with the right help these events can bring people closer together. Hopefully some of these great event ideas shall be put in place to make senior year joyful and memorable for everyone.

## 1. Senior Carnival

**Overview:** A vibrant carnival shall be staged on campus, with games, food and entertainment.

**Details:**

- Host booths of classic carnival games including ring toss, balloon darts, and dunk tanks with teachers or administrators.
- Provide food concession fun: cotton candy, popcorn and food trucks.
- Host contests, including a pie-eating contest or talent show, where students can display their talents.

## 2. Outdoor Movie Night

**Overview:** The school grounds get converted into an outdoor movie theater as the night brightens up with stars.

**Details:**

- Set up a big screen and have

comfortable seating with blankets and lawn chairs.

- Show a favorite movie that was voted on by the students, with popcorn and snacks.

- Make it even more exciting by organizing a pre-movie trivia about the movie.

## 3. Senior Spirit Week

**Overview:** Plan a week of themed dress-up days and events in order to get seniors hyped about graduation.

**Details:**

- Incorporate themes like "Throwback Day," "Twin Day" and "Future Career Day."
- Hold a pep rally that includes music, dance-offs, and some light-hearted class competitions.
- Finally, end the week with a big party with music and food, along with different games.

## 4. Glow-in-the-Dark Dance Party

**Overview:** Organize a vibrant glow-in-the-dark dance party to inspire creativity and fun.

**Details:**

- Decorate the space with black lights, neon decorations, and glow sticks.
- Incorporate a DJ or student bands playing music that will engage participants in dancing.
- Further entertainment may include neon color face painting and a photo booth with ac-

cessories.

## 5. Senior Road Trip

**Overview:** Plan a day trip to a destination of choice for seniors, for example, an amusement park, a beach, or any fun local attraction.

**Details:**

- Organize transportation to and from the destination, and prepare a packed lunch for the day.
- Activities range from team games, scavenger hunts, beach volleyball, etc.
- Leave some time for relaxation, mingling over burgers, dogs, and snacks to make it a fun-filled laughter-and-memory-packed day.

## 6. Mystery Dinner Theater

**Overview:** Organize an interactive mystery dinner in which the participants - that is the students - are the story.

**Details:**

- Interact with your drama students to create a really fun and engaging mystery script.
- Hold the dinner in a decorated space where students will be able to take in a meal while trying to solve the mystery.
- Invite students to come dressed according to the mystery for added fun.

## 7. Senior Olympics



Seniors Aaron Morrison, Jack Nugent, Daniel Nikitin and Victor Mesa all pose for a picture after getting snacks at the concession stand at the USA game on Sept. 13 to support Severna Park Falcons football. Photo taken by Samantha Polk.

**Overview:** Host a light-hearted sports day full of challenges.

**Details:**

- Events like three-legged races, tug-of-war, obstacle courses
- Team challenges that promote teamwork and friendly competition.
- Medal or prize distribution for winners followed by the closing ceremony.

## 8. Karaoke Night

**Overview:** A vibrant night of karaoke allows students to show off their talent to sing.

**Details:**

- Prepare a stage with a karaoke machine and ask the students to sing their favorite songs.
- Encourage group performances and different themed rounds, like 80s hits or movie soundtracks.
- Give fun prizes for categories such as "Best Duet" or "Most Creative Performance."

## 9. Themed Costume Party

**Overview:** Host a costume party in any fun theme imaginable, such as "Hollywood Glam" or "Fantasy Night."

**Details:**

- Request the students to come in appropriate costumes for the theme. Include a catwalk for the display of costumes.
- Organize some funny activities



# JV Football's Future

The JV football team is on track to have one of their best seasons.

Jon Neal|Guest Writer

The boys JV football team has started the fall 2024 season with a 4-3 record. They started their season with three game win streak and have just recovered from a three game losing streak with a massive 44-6 win against Severn Run.

Within a year or two, almost all of the players from the JV teams will be on varsity, as Head Coach N. Marks predicts, "I would expect 90% of the players on the team to try out for varsity next year." For freshmen and sophomores 90% of the team will be representing as the varsity team.

Even though their season is coming to an end, they still work hard. Training at 10 hours a week, the team is preparing for every game, and some are even taking fitness classes. This helps ensure that the athletes are prepared for the field.

"Strength and conditioning definitely, for football"

sophomore running back Lucas Zyvoloski said. All four captains of the team said that strength and conditioning helps them on the football team.

Football has remained popular at Severna Park throughout the years which leads many Falcons to rush to the stands to cheer on their fellow classmates from the bleachers. Even though it's a JV team, large numbers of these fans attend home games. "100-300 people depending on the opponent and day of the game" Mr. Ward said. Ward is a CTE teacher that helps out with the football team. Even though football is a dangerous sport, there have not been many injuries. Unfortunately for the team, a player broke his collarbone and a quarterback got a concussion, which he recovered from and is fit to play again.

Their last two games of the season are at home on Friday, Oct. 25 at 4:30 p.m

against Crofton and away on Monday, Nov. 4 at 5 p.m against Glen Burnie.

Falcons are rushing the Seahawks as the run the play. Final score was 26-6 taking home a win for the Falcons. Photo taken by Katarina Day



GO TO  
[WWW.SPTALON.COM](http://WWW.SPTALON.COM)  
FOR ONLINE CONTENT  
AND COVERAGE



## Nutrition as a Runner

The importance of fueling your body as an athlete.

Anya Diggs|Guest Writer

Varsity cross country runners explain how certain foods could affect the performance of a race and the importance of nutrition as a runner.

It is essential for a runner to know how to fuel their body to perform to their full potential. The nutritional aspects of different foods have differing effects on the human body. Certain food groups are better fuel such as simple sugars which are good to get "quick energy right before a race," sophomore varsity cross country runner Josie Kamas said. On the other hand, carbohydrates like bread are "not good right before a race."

If a runner does end

up eating the wrong foods prior to racing there are consequences. A runner may not be able to race to their full potential. For instance, if Kamas has fast food right before a run she will feel "sluggish and gross," she said. In contrast, if she fuels her body effectively with good carbohydrates and sugars, "I'll have more energy and I'll feel stronger," Kamas said.

It is also important for a runner to know what to eat after they run in addition to what they eat prior. Coach Alcombright advises his runners to have a good meal such as chicken and rice after a big workout or race to "get that protein in to build our muscles back," senior

varsity cross country runner, Cooper Alahverdian said. A new runner with nutrition questions should listen to their coach because "they know what they're talking about," Alahverdian said.

In addition to knowing what to eat, it is essential to also know when to eat before running. Being careful about when a runner is fueling their body in relation to when they are racing is a huge part of being an effective runner. Junior varsity cross country runner Kate Murphy usually eats "no more than an hour before my race, I don't want to get a cramp," Murphy said.

Ultimately, a runner needs to go on their own jour-

ney to find effective snacks for them. Everybody's body is different and should be treated so too. "Figure out what works best for you and don't listen to other people if they're telling you what to eat. It's all about personal preference," Kamas said.



Severna Park Falcons cross country team ran against schools across the county during the summer. Photo taken by Legacy

# Football Season Overview

What to expect and how the season is going so far.

Emerson Scott | Sports Editor

Every Friday night, the school population ecstatically pours into the student section bleachers to watch and cheer on the Severna Park football team. With themes to dress for and fun to be had, Friday has become celebrated for more than the fact that school is over, but also for the joy of the football game and to soak up its atmosphere. The game fosters a fun environment to be in with friends and classmates, food from the concession stand as well as the recently added festivities before the game on the tennis courts titled Friday night lights.

The 2024 football season is almost over with seven games down and two more regular season games to go. This year the team is looking stronger than ever and has been working hard to try and advance Severna Park even further in the playoffs this season, which begin in November. Like the other athletic teams, the players practice everyday except for game day and Sunday, in order to fine tune their skills, practice runs and plays, as well as drill in the fundamentals they already know.

You might be wondering, what makes this year's team different from last year, or how are they planning to make a dent in the playoffs? Second year varsity head coach Nick Marks has the answer. Marks said, "We put in a lot of work in the offseason. Workouts began in December and were very well attended. We are definitely stronger and tougher than we have been in the past."

With strong players such as senior quarterback Vince Nguyen, and players like senior Joey Tramontana, junior Landon Williams, and junior Cole Cavanaugh the team is looking to be on the up and up in terms of player ability.

Marks also said, "Last year we were very young; we started 10 sophomores at different points in the season last year. Those guys gained a lot of varsity experience and that experience has shown so far this season."

From the player point of view, the team continues to work hard and find that spark to make this season a great season. The team is doing this in many ways, but a major point on the team is leadership. Senior play-

want to win together. "We have worked hard to become a tough team, and that toughness should show up during our games this year."

At this point in the season, the Falcons record is looking not bad at all with an opening win over Glenelg and an unfortunate loss to the football team at South River. Last season, the Falcons beat South River with a near end of game pick six from sophomore at the time



Severna Park varsity football plays against Glen Elg on Sept. 6. The running back is narrowly evading a defensive player from Glen Elg. Final score was 14-9. Photo taken by Katatrina Day

er Charlie Hartman said, "Our leadership is one of our biggest strong suits. We have a lot of leaders on both offense and defense. It really helps bring the team together and get everybody fired up for practice."

Leadership definitely goes a long way, and that's across the board for all sports. But for a team as large as football, leaders can take a spread out team and turn it into a close knit group that is able to then trust each other and work together to secure wins for the team and for our school. Coach Marks elaborates on this when stating, "These guys trust each other and

Williams, so this year the Seahawks were lucky to bite back this time. Although the Falcons didn't leave with the win, the game was 33 - 26 and a game that close goes to show Severna Park has the fight in them to be a contender with other talented teams in the county.

Another positive for this season is the student section. With the help of Severna Park's new principal Mr. Johnson, the students are continuing to find new and fun ways to support our football team in a fun and respectful way, including spirit pep rallies on game days as students are leaving.



WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS  
SUBMIT PHOTOS OF YOUR  
STUDENT TO THE YEARBOOK. SEND TO SPHSEMEMBERS@GMAIL.COM



UPLOAD  
PHOTOS



# The Hidden Joys of Cross Country

Two varsity juniors head into the 2024 cross country season with optimism and excitement.

Aileen Jeter | Staff Writer

Every autumn, SPHS begins their fall sports season, a stressful yet exciting time for many student-athletes. One of the most popular fall sports, cross country, actually kicks off in early June, where students wake up bright and early to beat the heat and get their miles in. Now that the season is officially in full swing, the runners continue to manage their busy school schedules on top of keeping up with their endurance at practice.

“Being on this team has taught me so much mental strength,” junior Lila Sandel said. “Pretty much everyday we have to do things we don’t want to, but we get it done anyway, and honestly it has just made me a lot tougher.”

Sandel, who is going into her third cross country season and third consecutive year on varsity, believes the discipline she has learned from her time on the team has expanded into other aspects of her life.

“When I’m forced to run, my life just gets so much better,” Sandel said.

Cross country practices typically last around two hours everyday after school as well as on the weekends. The location can vary depending on the type of training needed that day. If there’s a holiday, the girls still get out to run even when they can’t meet up formally.

“Our team is just so close,” junior Jocelyn DiAngelo, a three-time school record breaker, said. “The longer we’re on the team, the more intertwined we all get. Running everyday with such a big team has just taught me so many life skills.” DiAngelo believes that although you



Varsity runners Jocelyn DiAngelo (Left) and Lila Sandel (Right) at a cross country team camp at Shippensburg University this past July. The camp, which many team members have nicknamed “ship camp,” is a popular week-long cross country camp that is held every summer. Ship camp aids with team building and helping the runners break the limits of what they believe they can run. Photo taken by Aileen Jeter.

run by yourself, cross country is a team-oriented sport. Sticking together through the thick and thin of each practice gives the runners more confidence in their capabilities and a better mindset going into tough races.

Further emphasizing the importance of teamwork, head coach Josh Alcombright gives the runners a new motto each year to remember during their difficult race days. Last year, the team shirts read, “Be A Better Fire Walker,” an ode to Matt Fitzgerald’s book, “How Bad Do You Want It? Mastering the Psychology of Mind over Muscle.” This season, the runner’s shirts read, “Train Like You’ve Never Won, Compete Like You’ve Never Lost.” The phrases are strategically placed on the back of the shirts, so when a runner is lacking motivation they can seek out their teammates and remember their goals.

With all the hard work this massive team puts in each year, many still do not recognize cross country as a sport or find it to be worth supporting. “I think because our coach isn’t a teacher here the cross country

announcements would be really beneficial.”

The Severna Park cross country team has been breezing through state champion titles year after year, continuing to send numerous athletes to regionals, and for some, to the national level. Many of these athletes go on to run D1, with some being recruited by Ivy Leagues, and others by prestigious institutions, like the United States Naval Academy. Although the work is hard, and the recognition is scarce, the outcome makes it all worth it.

team gets overlooked a lot,” Sandel said. “There’s really no one to tell the announcements about what’s happening and what’s going on, so I think being included with all the other sports on the

Varsity runners Lila Sandel (Left), Jocelyn DiAngelo (Middle), and Kate Murphy (Right) at a famous meet in Virginia, the Virginia Showcase. SPHS runners attend this meet yearly after cross country season, historically placing in the top percentiles for runners their age. These girls are no exception, with Kate Murphy having placed 9th nationally in the 3200m run, and Jocelyn DiAngelo having placed 32nd nationally in the 1600m run. Photo taken by Aileen Jeter.

