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News from February 2018

I am pleased to begin this newsletter by welcoming Brian Meringer, the [new Ottoson Principal](#). Mr. Meringer joins us after serving as the Assistant Headmaster of the Dover Sherborn Middle School for the last five years. He has a strong record of working with sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. His background includes middle school teaching in Wellesley, Rockport and Concord, and serving as the Housemaster of the Philip O. Coakley Middle School in Norwood. I am delighted that Mr. Meringer has agreed to lead the transition of Ottoson to a seventh and eighth grade school next year. He will officially begin as Principal on July 1, 2018, replacing Dr. Eileen Woods who has been acting in an interim capacity. I sincerely thank Dr. Woods for her leadership over the last two years, and look forward to working with Mr. Meringer.

Our work to renovate/rebuild Arlington High School has continued throughout February. The second AHS Project Community Forum took place on February 13, led by educational design consultant, [David Stephen](#), founder of [New Vista](#). The skills that young people need to develop during their high school years and the ways that the learning environment can be designed to meet these needs was the focus of the discussion. The audience included current teachers and students as well as community members, and it was wonderful to have everyone's input. I hope that many of you will be able to join us at Arlington High School on March 5 to take a tour of the building and discuss potential design patterns for the future school. Tours begin at 7:00 pm. Another Community Forum will take place on April 4 as well, and I hope you can join us in Town Hall at 7:00 pm to hear an update from [HMFH Architects](#) on potential building concepts and a review of possible building sites. During the Feasibility Study, the options of renovation, renovation/addition and new construction are required to be studied with the goal of determining the preferred option for the town.

In addition, the 60-member AHS Educational Visioning Committee has met three times for a total of 12 hours to discuss the educational and design principles that will guide the renovation/rebuild project. This group included educators, students, parents of children of all ages, town officials, AHS Building Committee members and others from the community. To learn more about the AHS project, and to sign-up to receive updates by email, visit www.ahsbuilding.org. You may also follow the progress on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ahsbuilding/. For specific information about the Feasibility Phase of the project, visit <https://ahsbuilding.org/blog/feasibility-study-overview/>. You may also view the Arlington Public News coverage of the [January 10 AHS Project Community Forum](#).

I want to thank the parents and members of the cafeteria and custodial staff who worked hard to get Stratton ready to become the sixth school conducting lunchroom food scrap and tray composting. A lunch waste audit was conducted early in February to establish a baseline, and daily composting began after winter break. During the day of the audit, 46 pounds of trash were diverted to compost. This is 80% of what would have gone into a landfill. Keeping food scraps out of landfills reduces the amount of methane, a greenhouse gas with 23 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide, from being released into the atmosphere. The resulting compost improves the quality of soil, and is a wonderful addition to any garden. I am proud that our students have learned about the importance of reducing food waste, and are actively participating in these efforts.

Our school communities remained engaged in both service and environmental efforts this month. The Bishop fourth grade collected food and gift cards to local markets for the Arlington Food Pantry. At Hardy, used markers are being collected and returned to Crayola as the school takes part in the [Crayola ColorCycle](#) recycling program. Money was collected for the Catherine J. Malatesta scholarship at the

Boys Hockey game on February 11. Two scholarships are awarded each year in memory of Catherine who succumbed to cancer right before the start of school in 2015. These are just three examples of the caring efforts taking place in our schools during the year, and I want to thank everyone who participates.

As you can see, February was full of many wonderful activities and events in our district. Unfortunately, this month also left us saddened and shocked by the tragic loss of life that resulted from the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. I want to emphasize that Arlington Public Schools places top-priority on the safety and well-being of our students. We have worked closely with our local police, fire and emergency management departments on our emergency protocols and regular practice drills. Our counselors and social workers are available for any student who needs support as they struggle with feeling safe in the face of such a violent act. The American Psychological Association offers [guidance](#) on how to talk with your children, and you will find additional information and resources on the APS [website](#).

I want to suggest that you mark your calendars now for the upcoming student musicals. Arlington High School is presenting *Wonderful Town* in the Lowe Auditorium at 7:30 pm March 23 and 24, and at 3:00 pm on March 25. This performance coincides with [Leonard Bernstein at 100](#), a global celebration of the composer's 100th birthday. Ottoson will present *Bye, Bye Birdie* on April 27 and 28 at 7:00 pm. I know you will want to be in the audience.

In closing, please also mark your calendar for Saturday, March 10 when [Arlington EATS](#) will be hosting "Beats For Eats" at Town Hall at 7:00 pm to raise funds to provide food for children who live in food-insecure homes in Arlington. Arlington EATS provided 4,000 lunches last summer! Working with Food Link & Food For Free, EATS provided another 6,000 meals worth of fresh produce for families to take home. Snacks are available for any child who is hungry at every public school in Arlington. We are grateful to Arlington EATS for their important and vital contribution to our students who might otherwise be hungry during the school day. Students who are hungry cannot learn as well as those who are not. Thanks to Arlington EATS, no student need be hungry.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Headline View

Safe & Supportive Schools

First Group of Educators Trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid

An initial 27 administrators and staff members have attended the [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) program that is being offered in the district. This is the first step toward enabling the district to react proactively and help our adolescent students stay mentally and behaviorally healthy. [Read more>](#)

Peirce Students Learn How to React to Bullying at "Power of One" Performance

Actors portraying the different roles and types of bullying helped Peirce students understand not to bully others, not to stand by while others are bullied, and to report and deal with bullying whenever it appears--all because they have [The Power of One™](#). [Learn more>](#)

Large Majority of AYHSC Survey Respondents Support Social Host Law Enforcement

It is gratifying to know that over 90% of respondents to the spring 2016 [Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition](#) (AYHSC) Parent Norm Survey want to see Arlington Police enforce the social host law. [Read more>](#)

Department News

Draft "Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework" Available for Comment

Members of the public are invited to review a [revision of the current curriculum framework](#) and submit

[feedback](#) to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary & Secondary Education before April 2. Read more>

METCO Bridging Two Communities Dinner Deepens Boston, Arlington Relationships

Food, conversation and a relaxed atmosphere enabled the families of young Arlington and Boston resident friends to socialize and get to know each other. Learn more>

Register Now for Arlington Community Education SummerFun!, KidZone and TeenZone

It's time to review the [SummerFun! 2018 catalog](#) and [register](#) for half or full-day programs, and register for *KidZone and TeenZone* enrichment classes. Learn more>

Professional Development

Special Educators Focus on Early Reading Disorder Identification and Target Intervention

An increase in referrals for reading concerns in the third, fourth and fifth grades has led our Special Education professionals to focus on targeting new interventions in order to identify problems as soon as possible and target instruction to remediate reading difficulties. Read more>

Elementary Social Studies Professional Development Focuses on Sister Cities, Primary Sources

Winter professional development included second grade teachers hearing from Arlington's Sister City representatives and fifth grade teachers learning from [Primary Source](#) as they continued their work to identify a core set of readings for all students. Learn more>

Awards & Distinctions

AHS Students Earn National Merit Commendations and Finalist Designations

Congratulations to the 17 Commended students and the four Finalists in the [National Merit Scholarship Program](#). Learn more>

Three OMS Students Attend Yale Model United Nations Conference as Part of ARMUN Team

After completing intense committee debate preparation, writing research papers, learning debate rules, and practicing oral and written skills, three eighth grade Ottoson students were ready to participate in the [Yale Model United Nations Conference](#) team mounted by the [Arlington Regional Model United Nations Club \(ARMUN\)](#). Read more>

Arlington's Eighth Grade Project 351 Ambassadors Begin a Year of Service and Learning

Congratulations to the two young women who are beginning their year of leadership development and service as Arlington's representatives to [Project 351](#), a statewide organization that fosters values and citizenship through experiential learning. Read more>

OMS and AHS Students Chosen to Perform in MMEA Junior Festival Concert

Congratulations to the 28 musicians and vocalists who will be performing in the Orchestra, Concert Band, Girls Chorus and Boys Chorus at the [Massachusetts Music Educators' Association \(MMEA\) Northeastern District Junior Festival](#) next month. Learn more>

Arlington High School Violinist Wins BYSO Concerto Contest

I am happy to share the news that sophomore Liam Barthelmy performed with the Boston Youth Symphony Repertory Orchestra this month, playing the piece he performed to win the BYSO Concerto Competition. Learn more>

Academics & Enrichment

Fifth Grade Stratton Store Sells Supplies, Teaches Responsibility, and Remembers Others

After creating their business plan and determining what to stock, the hard working fifth grade "employees" of the Stratton School Store spend the year running the operation and determining what to do with the profits. Read more>

Food, Fashion, Performances and Displays Celebrate the World at the Hardy International Festival

An old tradition returned to the Hardy Elementary School this month, as the International Festival celebrated the cultures of 27 countries with entertainment, a fashion show, fabulous food, and colorful displays. [Learn more>](#)

Girls' Angle Math Collaboration Provides a Challenging Immersive Mathematics Experience

A spirit of cooperation and appreciation was present when 22 seventh and eighth grade girls came together in the first ever Ottoson [Math Collaboration](#) where success required teamwork and perseverance. [Read more>](#)

OMS and AHS Students Challenge Themselves with AMC 10 and AMC 12

I commend the 115 students in grades 8-10 who came forward to take part in the difficult American Mathematics Competitions, [AMC 10 and AMC 12](#), this month. [Read more>](#)

US History Students Travel to World War II Locations with Google Expeditions

With [Google Expeditions](#), AHS juniors were able to visit the beaches of Normandy and much more, enhancing their understanding of World War II. [Learn more>](#)

Athletic Highlights

Winter Athletes Move into Tournament Play as Season Ends

Tournament play begins as an exciting winter season of personal and team accomplishment comes to a close. The New England Hockey Journal has an excellent [video](#) that begins with last year's Boys Hockey Super 8 win, and the team prepares to compete in this post-season contest for the second time in a row. [Read more>](#)

Continue to read the full News from February 2018 Newsletter

Safe & Supportive Schools

First Group of Educators Trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid

In the Grants section of my November newsletter, I shared the news that the [Arlington Education Foundation](#) (AEF) awarded us a grant to bring the [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) (YMHFA) program to our district. I am happy to report that we now have 27 members of our staff trained in how to recognize mental health risk factors and warning signs in adolescents, and take action if they see a problem or crisis developing. The information covered in YMHFA includes depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis and addiction disorders, among others.

As reported on [mentalhealth.gov](#), 50% of all mental health disorders appear before the age of 14, and 75% before age 24. Less than 20% of children and adolescents, however, receive the treatment they need. Early diagnosis and support is necessary to prevent the problems from interfering with other developmental needs. The YMHFA training provides the tools necessary for our educators to respond and steer affected young people toward treatment and recovery.

I am pleased that we are on the way to providing the additional information our teachers and staff need in order to proactively support students. In March, local APS staff will be trained as trainers to continue the educational process in the district. For more information about the AEF grant that is making this training possible, please see the [AEF press release](#).

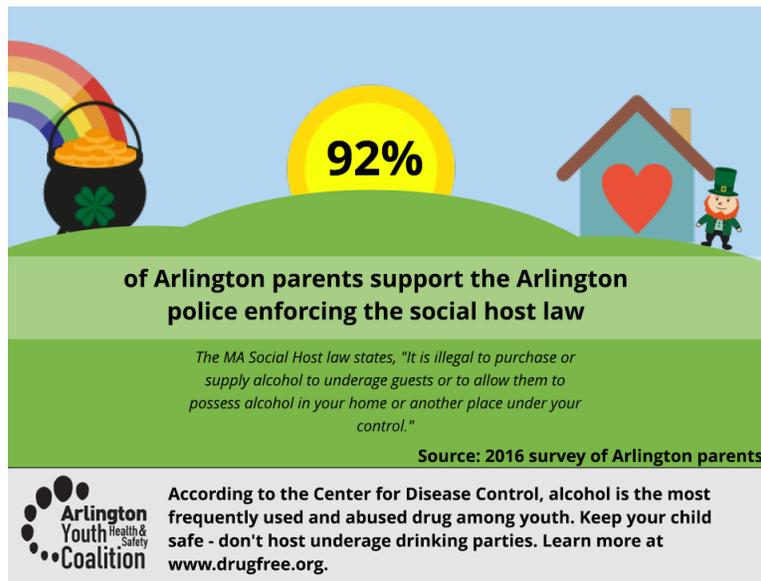
Peirce Students Learn How to React to Bullying at "Power of One" Performance

When it comes to bullying, we all have power--the power to not be a bully, not be a bystander, not be a cheerleader to a bully and to report bullying when we see it. This is the message that was delivered to Peirce students during [The Power of One™](#) assembly this month. This is the second year that the school

has invited [Soren Bennick Productions](#) to deliver a series of skits that illustrate what bullying is and what each of us can do about it.

Chronic bullying is often a three-way dynamic between a Bully, a Target and a Bystander. Sometimes standing by and observing can be worse than the actual bullying. All children need to understand that bystanders who do not act can play a role in amplifying the harmful and lasting effects of bullying. *The Power of One* helps children realize that they can take action by reporting bullying, intervening and assisting the Target. When they exercise their *power*, they become Upstanders.

Seeing actors portray the different roles and types of bullying leaves a lasting impression and drives home the important anti-bullying messages in a way that is clear and easy to understand. I hope that all Peirce students will remember the oath they took to not bully others, not stand by while others are bullied, and to report and deal with bullying whenever they see it--all because they have *The Power of One*.



Large Majority of AYHSC Survey Respondents Support Social Host Law Enforcement

It is gratifying to learn that over 90% of respondents to the spring 2016 [Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition](#) (AYHSC) Parent Norm Survey recognize the wisdom of the Massachusetts social host law and support its enforcement. Hosting an underage drinking party places young people at risk, and those who purchase or supply alcohol, or allow partygoers to possess alcohol in their homes, are subject to prosecution. The AYHSC survey has greatly increased our knowledge of parental awareness and attitudes around youth substance abuse, and I am happy to feature one of the many positive findings each month. Arlington Public Schools works closely with AYHSC to combat alcohol usage among Arlington's young people, and it is wonderful to know that parents reinforce these efforts at home.

Department News

Draft "Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework" Available for Comment

Denny Conklin, K-12 History & Social Sciences Director, wants you to know that the Massachusetts Board of Elementary & Secondary Education has released a [revision of the current curriculum framework](#) for public comment. Participation by members of the public is welcome and you may learn more about the outreach activities [here](#). After reviewing the frameworks, you have until April 2 to submit comments via a [survey](#). This feedback will be used to make revisions and the Board will vote on whether or not to adopt a new History and Social Science Curriculum Framework at their June meeting.

Mr. Conklin is not expecting to make any changes to our K-12 social studies curriculum for the 2018-2019 school year. He also wants us to be aware that districts will have substantial autonomy in choosing how to implement any new standards. As discussed in the article *Elementary Social Studies Professional Development Focuses on Sister Cities, Primary Sources*, in the [Professional Development](#) section of this newsletter, our teachers are already thinking about ways to accomplish this. I hope that interested parents and guardians will take the time to review the proposed frameworks and submit comments.

METCO Bridging Two Communities Dinner Deepens Boston, Arlington Relationships

I was pleased to be part of the group that came together at the end of January to foster friendships and strengthen relationships between Arlington and Boston resident students and their families. Approximately 15 families attended the second annual Bridging Two Communities dinner along with representatives from the School Committee and the APS Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee. Held at Ottoson, the event was limited to families who have students attending Peirce, Hardy and Bishop.

The [Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity \(METCO\)](#), founded in 1966, is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity and reduce racial isolation by permitting students in certain cities to attend public school in other communities who agree to participate. Arlington was one of the first seven districts in Massachusetts to embrace the program, and today there are 75 Boston resident students attending schools in our town. Funding comes from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Bridging Two Communities event is a way for the families of young Arlington and Boston friends to socialize and get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere. This year, the dinner was held in Arlington, providing a way for the Boston families to experience our town. Events in the future will have Arlington families visiting Boston, giving them a sense of what every day is like for our Boston resident students as they travel back and forth.

Arlington Public Schools' participation in the METCO program has enriched our town for over 50 years. Our Boston students travel significant distances to attend school here. Events that bring these students and their families together with the families of the friends they have made in Arlington help build the connections necessary to make them feel an integral part of our community. I want to thank APS METCO Director Margaret Credle-Thomas, School Committee member Bill Hayner and Nikecia Gadson for organizing and leading the evening. I also thank the Watertown Savings Bank for donating the food.

Register Now for Arlington Community Education SummerFun!, KidZone and TeenZone

Registration is now open for over 100 full and half-day *SummerFun!* programs offered by [Arlington Community Education](#). There are arts and crafts, fitness programs, fantasy and games, language studies, literature and drama, explorations of nature, and plenty of STEM courses for children in grades one through nine. I think you will be amazed by the opportunities for fun, creativity, adventure and learning that you will find in the [SummerFun! 2018 catalog](#). This year's middle school selections are particularly exciting. In addition to astronomy, 3D printing, candy making, Parkour, guitar and ukulele, filmmaking and babysitting basics, students in grades seven, eight and nine can become Adventure, Marine, Art, History or Boston DayTrippers. Eighth and ninth grade students can go on a weeklong Amazing Maine Adventure and a two-week musical theater program is available for young people in grades six through ten. Be sure to [register](#) soon!

Registration is also open for the *Kidzone and TeenZone* enrichment classes. Most of these sessions begin April 2 and run for 60-90 minutes immediately after school. *Fit Girls* and the *Ottoson Running Club* begin on March 26. Please review the [Spring 2018 Catalog](#) beginning on page 39 to see all the different activities that are available and [register](#).

Professional Development

Special Educators Focus on Early Reading Disorder Identification and Target Intervention

"Children are wired for sound, but print is an optional accessory that must be painstakingly bolted on."--Harvard Psychologist Steven Pinker

These words come from a presentation delivered to all members of the APS Special Education staff during a Professional Development (PD) session last year. In spite of having a robust [Response to Intervention](#) system in place for reading intervention, it had become apparent that students were being referred to Special Education for emerging reading concerns and/or persistent reading issues in grades three, four and five. After grade three, reading becomes the main pathway for learning. At this point, young people go from "learning to read to reading to learn". Without the necessary skills in place, they are limited in their access to grade level content and knowledge. This can create frustration and anxiety around learning in general. With early identification and targeted instruction, most reading difficulties can be remediated.

Special Education Director Alison Elmer and the staff began to work with [Dr. Melissa Orkin](#), a distinguished Program Director at the Tufts University Center for Reading and Language Development. Dr. Orkin brings her extensive background as a reading teacher and remedial reading instruction researcher to the PD she offers for administrators, teachers and psychologists. Last year, she helped our staff understand the science behind reading circuit development in the brain, the ways this circuit can go awry, and how to identify the most common subtypes of dyslexia. Dr. Orkin covered the need for early identification and support, and worked with the group on using assessment tools to differentiate between subtypes and then match a remediation approach to each one. An exploration of how our assessment battery was reflecting the processes involved in the reading circuit and an inventory of our assessment tools ended the year.

The current work is focused around how to interpret assessment data in order to improve early identification and target intervention. This has been discussed in meetings with Learning Specialists, School Psychologists, and Speech and Language Pathologists across the district. Efforts around interpreting psychological assessment data and looking at the impact of oral and written language data on formulating learning profiles are ongoing. Matching specific interventions to these profiles will follow.

It is wonderful that Special Education Director Alison Elmer and our talented team of teachers, paraprofessional educators, occupational therapists, social workers, speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, school psychologists and Board Certified Behavior Analysts have been taking part in this important work. It is critical that we are able to identify reading disorders as early as possible, and be able to match remediation to the needs of our students. Poor reading limits opportunities for success in school and beyond. Early and targeted intervention can prevent reading problems for most children.



Elementary Social Studies Professional Development Focuses on Sister Cities, Primary Sources

Our second grade students spend significant time focusing on El Salvador and Japan, two nations that have long relationships with Arlington. Nagaokakyo, Japan became a Sister City in 1984 and Teosinte, El

Salvador was recognized with the same designation in 1988. Last month, second grade teacher professional development was devoted to learning more about each location. Elizabeth Dray, leader of the [Teosinte Sister City](#) project, shared resources on home life, education, culture and games. She also spent time answering questions about Teosinte that the teachers had been receiving from their students. Sue Sheffler, leader of the [Nagaokakyo Exchange](#), used specific examples to describe how the city compares to Japan as a whole. Our teachers will share this knowledge with their students, getting them ready to work collaboratively on an end-of-year cumulative assessment to compare and contrast Teosinte, Nagaokakyo and Arlington. Thank you to Ms. Dray and Ms. Sheffler for spending time with our teachers to help them understand more about these two very different cities.

This year, our fifth grade teachers have been working to revise the Social Studies curriculum map in anticipation of the new Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Framework. Time has been devoted to identifying a series of anchor texts and primary sources that will be resources for fifth grade students to complete a close reading activity using the materials. The goal is to strengthen historical thinking skills and provide a common experience around a core set of readings. [Primary Source](#), an organization devoted to advancing global and cultural learning in schools, has been assisting with this project. On a recent professional development day, fifth grade teachers had the opportunity to hear from Senior Program Director Deborah Cunningham. Ms. Cunningham led the audience through the document lessons that had been developed and gave an overview of the organization's *Straight from the Source* program. The day ended with the teachers examining a set of documents related to the education of slaves during colonial times, and brainstorming around how they can be integrated into the classroom. For more information on the proposed framework revision, see *Draft "Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework" Available for Comment* in the [Academics & Enrichment](#) section of this newsletter.

These examples of professional development illustrate how our teachers are constantly striving to enhance their knowledge and deliver improved instruction to our students. Education is a never-ending process. It is important that we are able to offer rich learning opportunities such as these to our teachers and staff members.

Awards & Distinctions

AHS Students Earn National Merit Commendations and Finalist Designations

I am happy to announce that this year we have 17 Class of 2018 Commended Scholars and four Finalists in the [National Merit[®] Scholarship Program](#). These designations were determined from the 2016 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT[®]), taken by approximately 1.6 million entrants. Commended students are those whose scores place them in the top 2-3%. Scholarship winners are chosen from a group of 15,000 Finalists. Congratulations to all of the students who have achieved National Merit designations. These are outstanding achievements. I also extend my thanks to their teachers whose hard work supports them in their quest for academic excellence.

Three OMS Students Attend Yale Model United Nations Conference as Part of ARMUN Team

Congratulations to eighth grade students Maya Krishnan, Juliette Ortiz and Henar Maillo on their participation at the [Yale Model United Nations Conference](#) (YMUN) last month. Maya, Juliette and Henar were part of a 12-person team that consisted of middle and high school students from across the region, including Medford, Waltham, Winchester, Watertown, and Quincy. They all take part in either the [Middle School Club](#) or the [High School Club](#) in the overall [Arlington Regional Model United Nations Club \(ARMUN\)](#). YMUN team members were chosen through an application process that considered their answers to several essay questions, their performance, enthusiasm and commitment to the individual Clubs and any previous work that demonstrated their ability and willingness to do the intense and rigorous preparation that is required.

Between the end of October and the beginning of January, YMUN readiness demands an incredible level of commitment. During these months, Maya, Juliette and Henar were involved in a variety of activities:

- Committee debate preparation on two topics that required reading dense background guides, researching each of the issues and their assigned country, determining how their country stands on the issues domestically and internationally and generating solution ideas
- Formal, academic research paper writing that presented their position on the topics, and submission to the committee Chair in early January
- Learning the rules for debate that the conference would follow
- Skills practice in areas that included giving Opening Statements, speaking in a Moderated Caucus, participating in an Unmoderated Caucus, effective note writing and alliance building.

At the same time, the three OMS students were participating in the [United Nations Association of Greater Boston's](#) Middle School Model UN Conference held at Northeastern in December. Juliette and Maya are also Middle School Club leaders this year, so they were assisting others who were getting ready for conferences and staying an extra 40 minutes each Thursday after the regular Club meeting. There were also High School Club Meetings to attend on Sunday during the preparation period.

This year's team is also to be commended for winning the *Breaking Boundaries Scholarship*, awarded to one school or organization annually by the YMUN leadership. The application included eight essay questions completed by each team member, five more done by the ARMUN Director and team Coach, Kim Holt, two letters of recommendation and a conference budget. Arlington was chosen from the pool of over 50 schools/organizations that applied. The decision reflects the belief of YMUN leadership that this group of students would contribute and add value to the overall conference experience and quality, would gain significantly from their participation, and would be able to return to Arlington with information that benefits their Model UN program and the community.

The YMUN Conference draws teams from all over the world, giving students a chance to interact and connect with young people from many different countries. Director Holt indicates that the Committee work is first-rate, making the overall experience extremely meaningful. The ARMUN Middle School Club is open to fifth through eighth grade students, and the High School Club to those in ninth through twelfth grade. Both Clubs participate in Model UN Conferences (mostly local, one-day events for the younger group), do meaningful community service projects in the community, take part in advocacy and take on an annual legislative project. Active attention is paid to leadership and individual development, with the goal of preparing the students to be active and effective citizens at all levels, helping to bring about positive change now and in the future. I commend Maya, Juliette and Henar for their involvement in ARMUN and pleased that they were able to be part of the YMUN team this year.

Arlington's Eighth Grade Project 351 Ambassadors Begin a Year of Service and Learning

Begun seven years ago, [Project 351](#) has grown from a daylong event into a youth-driven organization that celebrates and develops young service leaders. Eighth grade Ambassadors from each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts meet annually at a statewide Launch Day, kicking off a year of experiential learning. I want to congratulate the two Ottoson students who were nominated by the school administration as this year's representatives from Arlington.

Our Ambassadors will take part in Unity Events where the full 2018 class comes together in full day programs that include team building, leadership skills development and issue awareness. Additionally, they will engage in local projects. They will work with mentors who are alumni of the program as they act upon the values of kindness, compassion, humility and gratitude. The two young women are currently putting together a service project for all Ottoson students that will launch this spring. I look forward to reporting on their progress over the course of the year.

OMS and AHS Students Chosen to Perform in MMEA Junior Festival Concert

I am pleased to share the news that 28 talented musicians and vocalists have been selected to take part in the [Massachusetts Music Educators' Association \(MMEA\) Northeastern District Junior Festival](#) next month. The audition process is very competitive and it is a great honor to be chosen to participate. The following students will be performing at the Galvin Middle School in Wakefield on March 17:

Group	Student	Instrument	Grade	Group	Student	Instrument	Grade
Orchestra	Eleanor Freed	Viola	9	Band	Quinn Liu	Trumpet	9
	Valerie Saykina	Violin	9		Margaret Zimmer	Flute	9
	Victor Chen	Clarinet	8		Ryan Beck	Trumpet	8
	Julian Frank	Cello	8				

Group	Student	Grade	Group	Student	Grade
Boys Chorus	Joey Caradonna	8	Girls Chorus	Rachel Barglow	8
	Caleb Choi	6		Gemma Conway	8
	Emmet Cohen	8		Gabrielle Grau	8
	Elliot Elkin	6		Samantha Hoppe	8
	Ian Horsburgh	6		Cheryl Kohl	9
	Elliot Johnson	8		Sarah Nascimento	8
	Alexander Owczarek	7		Charlotte Olander	7
	Kyle Pritchett	7		Tess O'Shaughnessy	8
	Gabriel Rothenberg	8		Maya Qazilbash	8
	Dylan Scopetski	8		Mila Popovic	8
	Owen Shi	7			
	Eli Young	7			

I commend all the students who auditioned, and congratulate those that are taking part in the Junior Festival. For those of you who would like to attend the Concert, the Choruses will be performing at 1:00 pm and the Orchestra and Concert Bands will perform at 3:00 pm.

Arlington High School Violinist Wins BYSO Concerto Competition

Congratulations to AHS violinist Liam Barthelmy on his performance with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra Repertory Orchestra (BYSO) this month. Liam was one of two first-place finishers in the 2018 BYSO Concerto Competition, and on February 11, he performed his winning piece, the first movement of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*. Liam keeps very busy with his music, and his commitments include the AHS Symphony and the Honors String Orchestras. He is interested in composition and arranging as well, and he directed the world premier of his *Quartet in C Major* at the AHS Winter Concert. Additionally, Liam was one of the 15 young people selected to represent Arlington at the [Music Educators Association \(MMEA\) Northeastern District Senior Festival](#) held in January. Since Liam is a sophomore, we will be able to hear him play and appreciate his musical accomplishments in the future.

Academics & Enrichment

Fifth Grade Stratton Store Sells Supplies, Teaches Responsibility, and Remembers Others

About five years ago, it was clear to Stratton fourth grade teacher Marea Mullen that some of her students were interested in engaging in a challenging project. That spring, the young people worked with Ms. Mullen to create plans for a store that would open in the fall. Four fifth grade students participated the first year, and the store is still going strong. Fifteen students now rotate shifts every Friday so that three or four young people are ready to sell products costing from five cents to \$1.00. A lot of the same students and teachers show up each week to buy pencils, grippies, erasers, pencil sharpeners, tattoos and small fidget toys.

Participation is open to all fifth grade students, and those who are interested meet with Ms. Mullen in September to get things moving. As a group, they come up with a business plan, research products and their cost, and determine what to stock, how much to charge, and how much profit they will make. The group creates a work schedule, and figures out what publicity (posters, morning announcements, etc.) they will need. Once everything is in place, the students take turns rotating as cashiers, sales people and

tally takers. They do all the set-up and clean-up. Each Wednesday morning they meet to determine the profits garnered the previous Friday.

Ms. Mullen reports that this has been a tremendous way for the young people to learn how to work as a team, take on a great deal of responsibility, and increase their mental math abilities and communications skills. The students take great pride in knowing that they are in charge of something exciting and positive. They also like showing younger students what they can look forward to when they reach fifth grade. The store has enabled Ms. Mullen to develop a wonderful rapport with the students, extending the relationships that were formed during fourth grade. Everyone looks forward to the end of the year when Ms. Mullen takes them out for ice cream to celebrate a job well done.

Normally, the profits go back into the business. This year, however, the group was very touched by the loss of the father of a fifth grade friend. After thinking about what they might do, they decided to donate December's profits to the family. During a subsequent Wednesday meeting, they decided to donate January's profits to help the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico. I hope that some of you will be able to stop by the store between 2:35 and 3:00 pm some Friday and support this great effort. I thank Ms. Mullen for providing this "real world" learning opportunity for our young people, and I applaud all the participants.



Food, Fashion, Performances and Displays Celebrate the World at the Hardy International Festival

The Hardy gym or cafeteria was the place to be on February 3 if you wanted to explore the cultures of 27 different countries. On that afternoon, the Hardy Elementary School revived their tradition of holding an International Festival, and there was so much to learn, experience, taste, smell, hear, see, and enjoy! Each student carried a "passport" and collected stamps as they visited the country displays. Those who traveled to every nation were rewarded with a scratch-off world map.

The International Cafe featured food from around the world, donated by 55 families, Arlington's [Quebrada Bakery](#) and [Tom's Bao Bao](#) of Cambridge. Hardy students and their parents participated in a fashion show that celebrated the traditional clothing from 18 countries. The entertainment included performers from [Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts](#), [Sinha Capoeira](#) and the [Teosinte Sister City Project](#), the HS Fiddling Group featuring Hardy alums and a Hardy first grade student.

The fact that over 350 passports were distributed speaks to the level of attendance and the interest in the event. I want to thank organizers Aimee Miller, Doris Pfaffinger, Hetal Verma, Solange Grangeat, Sarah Evans, Bruce Macindoe, Ann Chhabra and the many volunteers who made the International Festival such a success. Celebrating in this way helps all of us appreciate the diversity and beauty of the cultures that make our community and our world such a vibrant and exciting place.

Girls' Angle Math Collaboration Provides a Challenging Immersive Mathematics Experience

The first ever [Math Collaboration](#) was held at Ottoson on February 6, and the 22 seventh and eighth grade girls who came together were ready to tackle any task. During their afternoon adventure, the girls solved problems that ranged from eighth grade to college-level mathematics. The solutions formed

coordinates that, when traced in the correct order, wrote a code that unlocked a treasure chest holding the prize for all of their hard work.

[Girls' Angle](#), a math club of mentors, whose support network consists of professional women who use mathematics in their work and want to foster and nurture girls' interest in the discipline, developed the event. Unlike a competition, a Math Collaboration requires working together. Participants win or lose as a unit, and have every incentive to share their ideas. OMS Mathematics teacher Jennifer Buckley reports that no hints from the adults in the room were allowed. In describing the experience, Ms. Buckley says "...the girls assembled, divided and conquered, reassembled, shared information and knowledge, and persevered in ways that would have impressed anyone. Never has the word "together" more accurately described a group's efforts."

Communication and trust are important elements of success in a Math Collaboration, and Ms. Buckley observed a wonderful spirit of cooperation and appreciation. It was clear that, in her words, "...the individual talents and strengths of each girl in the room were not only welcomed but needed and skillfully utilized to reach the goal." Thank you to everyone involved in bringing this challenging event to Ottoson that enabled interested young women to challenge themselves in a fun, intense immersive mathematics experience.

OMS and AHS Students Challenge Themselves with AMC 10 and AMC 12

It is wonderful that so many students came forward this year to take part in the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC) offered by the [Mathematical Association of America](#). As I reported in my November newsletter, 60 interested young people took the middle level test. This month it was time for the [AMC 10 and AMC 12](#). Eighty-five eighth, ninth and tenth grade students sat for the AMC 10, and 30 students from the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades took the AMC12. Participation is open to anyone who wishes to take part.

These tests are designed to be difficult. The format is multiple choice, and only 75 minutes are provided to answer 30 questions. Matt Coleman, K-12 Mathematics Director, indicates that the contest can be a bit of a shock to some participants. There is a strategy to not answering all of the questions, and this can be unnerving to students who are used to flying through assessments. He expects to have the results in early March and at that time we will know whether any of our young people qualify to move on to the [American Invitational Mathematics Exam](#). This test is much more challenging than the AMC 10 and AMC 12, and consists of a 3-hour exam of 15 questions. I am pleased to say that we have had approximately three students qualify annually during the years we have offered these tests

Mr. Coleman considers the AMC exams as great opportunities to see mathematics through a different lens. Often, students view the discipline as a tool to solve interesting "real world" problems. In these contests, mathematics is done for the sake of solving interesting problems that highlight mathematical structure. I want to congratulate everyone who took part.

US History Students Travel to World War II Locations with Google Expeditions

History came to life for AHS juniors when they used [Google Expeditions](#) and iPads to "visit" famous World War II locations. This application delivers a virtual, immersive experience that allows students to take field trips without leaving the classroom. The young people taking US History 2 boarded an aircraft carrier at Pearl Harbor, walked around inside a military training center for the Tuskegee Airmen, and wandered the beaches of Normandy to get a better understanding of the huge scope of D-Day. Talking points are provided and the teacher is able to use a "guide" iPad to draw students' attention to specific parts of a scene, draw on the scenes to explain things, pose questions and allow primary source images to pop up for further analysis. As our students, I appreciate that our History & Social Sciences teachers are enriching the curriculum with the use of Google Expeditions that allows the students to "travel" to the places they are studying.

Athletic Highlights

Winter Athletes Move into Tournament Play as Season Ends

As this newsletter goes to print, regular season play is ending for our winter athletes, and tournament play is getting underway. Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki reports that our programs continue to grow and improve. Boys Swimming is now a cooperative team with Watertown, and the team had a very good inaugural season, placing fourth in the Middlesex League Meet.

In their recent Middlesex League Meets, Girls Indoor Track quadrupled their points scored, and Boys Indoor Track moved up seven spots from last year to place fifth. Ryan Oosting's win in the 1-mile and Noah Arons first place in the high jump were highlights from the boys meet. In addition, the Boys Indoor Track Team was selected for the Coach Bill O'Connor Memorial Sportsmanship Award.

As of this writing, Ryan Oosting has captured two state titles. First, Ryan ran the one mile in 4:12:75, which is five seconds faster than the second place finisher. Next, he ran the 2-mile in 9:08.34 to capture that state title. In fact, this time is the fastest high school indoor 2-mile time in the country! Of the eight finishers listed in both these events, Ryan was the only runner to compete in both. He now moves on to the New England Championship meet.

Several of our wrestlers were top finishers in the Sectional round of the MIAA Tournament. Chan Kim placed third in his weight class and Shaikh Prolay, David Lopes, John Bowen and Charles Gillis all placed second in their weight classes.

Many of you will remember last year's incredible Super 8 win by Boys Hockey in the TD Garden. In 2017, the Spy Ponders became only the third public high school in over 25 years to win this tournament. Ms. Dlugolecki reports that the team has been chosen to take part in the Super 8 for the third year in a row. This is considered Division 1A play, and the Spy Ponders are one of 10 teams that will compete. There is an excellent New England Hockey Journal [story](#) about our program that talks about the history of the sport in Arlington and how teammates can accomplish great things on and off the field. You will want to watch this excellent video and hear from Coach John Messuri.

Two other teams are also moving into tournament play. Girls Hockey is seeded 26th in Division 1. Boys Basketball continues on after securing the Middlesex League Championship and racking up over 40 regular-season consecutive wins at home. They enter tournament play as second seed in Division 2 North.

I want to commend all our winter athletes and coaches for their hard work and wonderful accomplishments. I look forward to wrapping up this exciting season by reporting on tournament play in my next newsletter.