



Office of the Superintendent
Arlington High School
P. O. Box 167
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476-0002

Telephone
(781) 316-3500
Fax
(781) 316-3509

News from February 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

I hope that many of you had a chance to see the [Fox News 25 report](#) that featured our amazing young Thompson students swabbing their noses as they participated in COVID-19 pool testing. Our students are doing a terrific job, and as the video shows, seem to understand that this is important and not hard to participate in. You can read more about our pool testing program in ***District News, After Successful Pilot, COVID-19 Pool Testing Moves District-Wide***, in this newsletter. I am proud of how our students, teachers, administrators, and staff have stepped up to make this happen.

I want to remind everyone how important it is to continue COVID-19 testing of our students and staff as our schools open for more in-person learning. We are fortunate to be able to continue the pool testing program throughout the end of the year. If you haven't considered signing your child up to be part of this program, I urge you to do so. The testing is easy and quick so little learning time is lost, and the results provide the information we need to safeguard health. If your child is currently attending school in person, click on the appropriate link below to add your child to the program if you have not already done so. If your child is already in the testing program, you do not need to take further action.

- [K-5 and Gibbs Pool Testing Consent and Registration Link](#)
- [OMS Pool Testing Consent and Registration Link](#)
- [AHS Pool Testing Consent and Registration Link](#)

Now that our pool testing encompasses every school in the district, a central location for COVID-19 information was warranted. The [Arlington Public School COVID-19 Dashboard](#) is a new tool for you to use in order to keep up-to-date on the COVID-19 cases in our district. Both student and staff cases are reported by school, month, and week of the latest month. Remote APS students are not reflected here but appear in the town data. The site will be updated every Friday, and it replaces email notifications.

There is an old saying that goes, "When it rains, it pours." That must be how the Dallin community felt on February 1 upon discovering that a pipe burst, and fast clean-up was required. The main areas affected are the library, where several shelves of books were damaged, the entryway, and the front office. Fortunately, classrooms were largely unaffected. Many thanks to Dallin custodians Mr. Viveiros and Mr. Thibeau and the APS facilities team for springing into action! Plans are underway to replace walls and carpet, repair ceilings, paint, and get electrical work done. Some new books will be needed in the library, as well as some furniture in multiple areas.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome a new member to our team. Greg Walters is the new town Facilities Director. The Arlington [Facilities Department](#) has responsibility for all town and school buildings. Mr. Walters is a professional engineer who joins us after working in several academic campus environments. He also brings the managerial and plant operations experience he gained as Lieutenant Commander Executive Office in the US Navy's Nuclear Submarine Program and as a maintenance manager and senior engineer at a Westar Energy power plant. We are glad to have him on board.

I am pleased to report that we have accepted students in grades K-12 into a remote reading and math tutoring program that is running from February through June. We are able to offer this service thanks to a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The CDBG includes guidelines to ensure that this support goes to the students most in need. Interested families were required to complete an application form and

the FY2020-2021 CDBG Client Beneficiary Form that includes a statement of income level. I thank Program Manager Hannah Dingman for her oversight of this important program that especially benefits low and moderate-income families.

By now you may have received an email from Assistant Superintendent Dr. Roderick MacNeal alerting you to the fact that we are administering a 15-20 minute social and emotional learning pilot survey to our students in grades three through 11 between March 3 and March 16. We are collaborating with the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) (DESE) in this effort. The survey measures students' self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, interpersonal relationship, and responsible decision-making skills. The goal is to help us understand and improve social and emotional and academic supports for students. All responses are confidential. DESE is analyzing the data for validity and reliability and making sure the information that is collected is relevant and supportive of students from all backgrounds and grades. After this analysis, the final survey will be administered in the 2022 school year. There are no known risks to participating in this study, but the survey is voluntary, and families may opt-out if they choose. If you have any questions you may email Laura Rodriguez (lrodriguez@arlington.k12.ma.us) or Social Emotional Learning and Counseling Director Sarah Burd (sburd@arlington.k12.ma.us).

During these times it can feel hard to look toward the future, especially a new school year. But time marches on, and I want our families to know that they can now register their children for Kindergarten in the fall. Children that will be five years old by August 31, 2021 are eligible to enter Kindergarten in September 2021. [Visit this webpage](#) where you will find the new student registration form for Fall 2021, a letter to Kindergarten families, and an FAQ section that covers everything you need to know to register.

This month our schools continued to encourage activities that promote community. Here are just a few examples of the innovative ways our students, staff, and families celebrate and support town residents and each other.

- Dallin families are encouraged to visit the chain-link fence in front of the Florence Field and weave yarn through the links to create colorful hearts this month and next.
- Any Hardy family who wishes to participate can sign-up and be paired with a buddy family that has children in the same grade level.
- Art exhibits have gone digital! Using Padlet, Pierce Visual Art teacher Molly Atryzek created a wonderful virtual art exhibit of the work that students in Kindergarten through second grade had completed this quarter. Alecia Serafini created a Google presentation of the terrific work done by her students at Gibbs. Polly Ford and Kayla McKenna also created a presentation to showcase the wonderful artwork of their seventh and eighth grade students.
- Stratton celebrated spirit with photos of staff and students in Stratton-themed clothing.
- Thompson hybrid and remote students from all grade levels created 169 valentines for seniors which were delivered to Sunrise and the Arlington Council on Aging. Sunrise residents received theirs on Valentine's Day via an "enrichment cart", while the Council gave them out at the local vaccine clinics. You can see one of these valentine presentations [here](#).



- Gibbs librarian Nicole Doliner got students enthused about books by creating a [March Book Madness](#) virtual bracket that she built from student entries and she posted video book talks about all of them in order to generate excitement about the contenders.

- Ottoson collected shelf-stable food items from each hybrid and remote Learning Community that [Arlington Eats](#) could use in the food pantry.
- AHS National Honor Society is offering free tutoring from AHS juniors and seniors, with flexible hours and meeting methods based on what the family and students are most comfortable with. The program is totally student-run and interested students can sign-up to be matched with a tutor using this [form](#).
- The AHS Gender Sexuality Alliance raised over \$1,900 for the [Transgender Emergency Fund](#) of Massachusetts by selling t-shirts.

In closing I want to be sure that everyone knows that all Arlington children ages 0-18 are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at no cost. This applies to students who are attending classes in school or virtual classes at home, or a hybrid combination of these models. This program is regardless of income and you do not have to pre-register. Weekly home meal kits may be picked up at the Thompson School on Wednesdays from 7-9 am and 11-2 pm. These kits contain fresh produce, sandwiches, frozen meals, milk, juice, and assorted breakfast items. Please email schoollunch@arlington.k12.ma.us or call 781-316-3643 for more information. Families experiencing food insecurity are encouraged to contact [Arlington EATS](#) for food delivery.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Headline View

Safe & Supportive Schools

Peirce Week of Kindness Focuses on Connection, Giving Back, and Caring for Others

After a week of daily activities and acts of kindness, the Peirce community enjoyed a beautiful neighborhood display of lanterns and donated food and toiletries to two food pantries, as they shared and celebrated their hopes for 2021. [Read more>](#)

Dallin Fifth Grade Students Learn to Recognize, Report, and Refuse Bullying

Second Step® Bullying Prevention is a four-week program with structured lessons, homework, and online parent information that helps young people develop research-based skills and strategies to understand and deal with bullying. [Learn more>](#)

Sixth "The Colors of STEM" Poster Unveiled at Brackett

Click on this [video](#) to learn more about distinguished climate scientist [Dr. Warren Washington](#), the latest person profiled in the *Colors of STEM* series that celebrates role models of color, helping to promote diversity, inclusion, and tolerance among elementary students. [Read more>](#)

District News

After Successful Pilot, COVID-19 Pool Testing Moves District-Wide

Bi-weekly, voluntary COVID-19 pool testing, an important component in keeping our students, teachers, and staff safe, is now rolling out to every school in Arlington and will continue through the end of the school year. [Learn more>](#)

Arlington High School Welcomes More Students Back in Person for Semester 2

Improvements to ventilation, the purchase of extra equipment, and the implementation of departmental shifts have made it possible for students to attend two in-person classes every week beginning in February, and to invite a small number of students who struggle with remote instruction to come in-person for specialized coursework. [Learn more>](#)

Sora Provides Access to Free Audiobooks and eBooks for Students and Staff

[Sora](#) makes it possible to borrow free age-appropriate audiobooks and ebooks from the Arlington Public Schools and the Robbins Library Minuteman Library Network. [Read more>](#)

“Bridging Two Communities” Brings Arlington and Boston Resident Student Families Together
Whether they were scavenging for something sticky or answering the question “What three things would you bring with you if you were stranded on a desert island?”, the families of Arlington and Boston resident students that attended this year’s winter METCO event were able to strengthen connections and foster friendships. [Learn more>](#)

Arlington Community Education Offers VacationFun! and SummerFun!

I am pleased to report that Arlington Community Education continues to offer vacation programming for our young people, and you will want to check the [website](#) in March so you can register for April VacationFun! and SummerFun! [Learn more>](#)

Professional Development

Seven Visual Art Teachers to Attend National Art Education Association Virtual Convention

Next month’s [National Art Education Association virtual convention](#) will enable our art educators to explore best practices in art education that includes [Teaching for Artistic Behavior](#), a philosophy we have been studying and implementing over the last two years. [Read more>](#)

Grants

New Arlington Education Foundation Grants Support School-Wide Enrichment

Two new Arlington Education Foundation grants will bring science and music enrichments to all Bishop and Peirce students, enhancing the curriculums and providing a communal experience. [Read more>](#)

Awards & Distinctions

OMS and AHS Student Banner Designs Chosen to Fly in Arlington Center

Six OMS students and 14 from AHS will have their visual representations of issues that matter to them enlarged into banners that will be hung outdoors along Mass Ave in Arlington Center this spring. [Read more>](#)

Academics & Enrichment

APS Celebrates Black History Month Inside and Outside the Classroom

Across the district, resources enabled teachers to integrate Black History messages and learnings into their classrooms, and activities for students and their families helped everyone celebrate “...change makers, barrier breakers, cultural curators, and innovators of the Black community.” [Learn more>](#)

Creative Highlights

“Love and Information” Explores the Intersections of Information, Relationships, & Technology

The third virtual offering from the AHS drama department this season was an exploration of our desire to receive, process, and reject information and the associated ramifications. [Learn more>](#)

Continue to read the full News from February 2021

Safe & Supportive Schools



Peirce Week of Kindness Focuses on Connection, Giving Back, and Caring for Others

It was a beautiful display of love and solidarity on Saturday, February 6 when 120 members of the Peirce community lit the night with lanterns. This beautiful event marked the end of Kindness Week, a series of daily activities and acts designed to spread hope and light. Members of the Peirce PTO had been trying to find creative and safe ways to take the place of the usual community events that bring people together. Co-president Megan Fitzpatrick knew that Winchester and other neighboring communities often hold lantern events in December, and she concluded that this was a perfect time to try it out at Peirce—safe, socially distanced, and as she says, “...it feels like we can all use a little extra light right now.”

On February 1, the first day of Kindness Week, community members were asked to think about ordering or picking up some food or toiletry products that could be dropped off on Lantern Night. These gifts were to go to [Arlington Eats](#) and the [Bread of Life Food Pantry](#) in Malden. February 2 was the day for picking up litter during walks to and from school, to the park, or around the neighborhood. On February 3 anyone who wished to participate could stop by Peirce and pick up a motivational postcard to use to write a note of appreciation to a friend, teacher, neighbor, loved one, health care worker, or favorite grocery store staff member. Videos of students sharing “...my hope for 2021 is...” were requested on February 4 to become part of a larger celebration video. The last weekday, February 5, encouraged everyone to call a friend or family member and find out about their 2021 hopes.

Lantern Night was a wonderful end to a week of thinking about connecting, giving back, and caring for others. Not only did families enjoy walking or driving throughout the neighborhood to see the beautiful display, but they also donated a tremendous amount of food and toiletries for the food pantries. Kindness Week is an excellent example of how our schools are finding innovative ways to come together during what has been a difficult and unusual winter. I thank the members of the Peirce PTO who planned and executed this event, and all those who took part. The light of hope for 2021 has been lit!



Dallin Fifth Grade Students Learn to Recognize, Report, and Refuse Bullying

“It was fun. We learned about cyberbullying and how to treat people.”

“It was interesting and fun. We learned how to deal with bullying if it ever happens.”

These comments come from some Dallin fifth grade students who have just completed the Second Step® Bullying Prevention program. Dallin has offered this four week curriculum for four years as part of the

social emotional learning that each grade participates in. The program is structured for one lesson a week with a homework component that encourages students to include their parents and guardians in the conversations. Each lesson focuses on a different aspect of bullying—learning to *Recognize* bullying and cyberbullying, how to *Report* bullying, how to *Refuse* bullying in a respectful way, and the power of being a bystander. Additional information is available to parents online. The fifth grade students who participate in the hybrid program completed the lessons which they attended virtually. Remote Academy students will also be taking part.

Social Workers Jenny Loop and Meagan Burke led the classes, and they describe the program as “super engaging”. Each lesson includes a video (very popular with the students) and research-based skills and strategies. Having social workers teach the classes allows students to develop a relationship with additional adults in the building, expanding their network of safe-trusting individuals at school. The home component provides resources for parents to help them distinguish between peer conflict and bullying. Additionally, it provides a common language between home and school.

As the quotes above illustrate, the fifth grade students seem to enjoy the curriculum. Ms. Loop and Ms. Burke report that they are usually very involved in the discussions and the two teachers try to make it as much fun as possible. At Dallin, this curriculum is typically also used in the third grade. Other social emotional curriculums like Social Thinking or Mindfulness are used in other grades. *Second Step Bullying Prevention* is also taught in other elementary schools.

[Second Step](#) social emotional programs, created by the [Committee for Children](#), are described on their website as “A holistic approach to building supportive communities for every child through social emotional learning.” Students need a positive school climate in order to thrive. I am glad that we can offer programs such as *Bullying Prevention* and help our young people develop the skills they need to feel safe.



Sixth “The Colors of STEM” Poster Unveiled at Brackett

The latest poster in *The Colors of STEM* collection has been unveiled at Brackett. The poster presents a portrait of [Dr. Warren Washington](#), an African-American climate scientist from Portland, Oregon. Co-creators and former Brackett parents Dr. Atwood Cheung and Nancy Chew interviewed Dr. Washington to learn firsthand about his background and contributions to climate science. Because everyone is not in school and social distancing makes it difficult for students to visit the poster, a wonderful five minute [video](#) describing Dr. Warren and the overall project was created.

[The Colors of STEM](#) began with the approval of an [Arlington Education Foundation](#) (AEF) [Innovations in Education Grant](#) in 2017. The first poster featuring astronomer and head of the Hayden Planetarium Neil deGrasse Tyson was displayed in March 2018. With the support of Brackett Principal Stephanie Zerchykov, Dr. Cheung, and Ms. Chew, who were Brackett parents at the time, were joined by fourth grade teacher Nicole Schwartz in spearheading the AEF proposal. The project aims to help promote appreciation for diversity and inclusion among Kindergarten through fifth grade students and provide them with role models of color who are generally under-represented.

The other notable scientists, technologists, engineers, and mathematicians who have been featured in *The Colors of STEM* posters are computer scientist and founder of YouTube Stephen Chen, architect and engineer I.M. Pei, NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson, and MIT biomedical engineer/physician Sangeeta Bhatia. This continues to be a wonderful way for our young people to learn about the diverse individuals who have made tremendous contributions through their work and love of learning. I thank everyone who has been involved with this project.

District News

After Successful Pilot, COVID-19 Pool Testing Moves District-Wide

Frequent COVID-19 testing is critical in order to keep our students, teachers, and staff safe and I am pleased that our district was accepted into the state pool testing program that will run through the end of the school year. This enables us to identify and isolate cases quickly to help stop the spread.

By February 8, Thompson, Bishop, Dallin, Peirce, and Ottoson had all participated in a pool test pilot. The pilot included testing of 330 staff members as well as the students. The district is working with [Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks](#), and they have been very helpful in terms of making sure we had all the information we needed to get going. A voluntary parent information session was offered via Zoom on February 9.

Pool testing involves a nasal swab placed by each individual just inside their nostrils on both sides of the nose. The swabs are collected and placed together in a “batch” or “pool” that is sent to the laboratory. Results are generally available within 48 hours. If a classroom is identified as having a positive result during the school day, all students in school at that time are tested with the [BinaxNow](#) rapid test before their classroom cohort is sent home to being remote learning. They must remain home for 11 days after the test. If pool test results arrive outside of school hours, a drive-up or walk-through BinaxNow test will be arranged by the building principal and nurse. If a positive test is not identified by a rapid test, the district will arrange for individual PCR tests.

The pilot testing went very well. Significant effort went into making sure the students and staff knew how to do their own swabbing. In most schools, the nurses took the lead on the demo, and sometimes the principal or teachers got involved. Dallin Principal Thad Dingman created a video so the students could see him taking the test. At Brackett, videos of the school nurse and a teacher doing the swabbing were sent home in addition to the in-person demos done by the nurse. As a result, most students were able to handle their own swabbing.

Full district testing began the week of February 22. Our plan is to run the testing bi-weekly so that all students in school can be tested twice a month. Names of participants are not shared with Concentric by Ginkgo but kept confidential with building leadership. Pool testing is a very important tool to help us protect our school communities, and I thank everyone who has worked to get this program up and running in our district. We appreciate the cooperation of our families in making this a success.

Arlington High School Welcomes More Students Back in Person for Semester 2

In the fall of 2020, it was necessary for Arlington High School to offer remote instruction only to most students due to space and ventilation concerns. In order to provide opportunities to build relationships, check-in with teachers and peers, and have social interaction with classmates, each course offered *reverse field trips*. Students came to the high school for these trips but doing so required completing all the steps necessary for a regular off-campus field trip.

I am happy to report that repairs have been done on the ventilation systems in those areas that can be fixed, and we will use these, outfitted with medical-grade HEPA filters, for in-person classrooms. We can maintain six-foot distancing by using large spaces like the gym and cafeteria (between 3,000 and 12,000 square feet) for classes of 25-30 students. Additionally, we have outfitted all adjoining lab spaces to accommodate lab classes in science, arts, and family and consumer sciences. In most cases, a single

class will occupy two rooms to accommodate distancing. Extra equipment means that items don't have to be shared between classes, and plexiglass has been installed to separate students. With these changes, it is now possible to bring students back safely for defined periods of time.

Beginning this month, AHS students who wish to participate can attend one in-person class for each course every other week. These periods are shorter than remote class periods to allow time for students to come from home after a remote class and return home to continue their day if they wish. Students are also able to attend their remote classes in designated study hall locations at the high school on the days they are there in-person. Doing this means that they must bring their computers and headphones with them. There are study halls in the library as well for small numbers of students and seats must be reserved. Library books may be requested for pickup, either when the student comes into the building to attend a class or via a contactless AHS Curbside Library option on Wednesday afternoons.

We have added a third bus to help our Boston resident students take advantage of the in-person classes if they choose. A new mid-day bus gives them the ability to come on the morning bus and leave at 11:30 am after their morning in-person classes. Their regularly scheduled bus still picks up at 3:15 pm, so they can remain throughout the day and go to the afternoon classes.

This number of in-person classes per week for each student will vary depending upon their schedule. Each student will have at least six in-person classes per course during a semester, providing special requirements such as MCAS don't interfere. We are able to schedule this by implementing department shifts that look like this:

By Department (large spaces and classrooms)

M/T	Th/Fr	M/T	Th/Fr
English	History	Math	W. Language

Lab classes will have individualized schedules. The departmental shifts allow for a minimum of teachers and students to be in the building at any one time. Students who choose to remain all remote can do so and will receive alternate assignments for the class period where the teachers are working in-person.

Another change for the second semester is the creation of an In-Person Academy for identified students who can benefit from face-to-face instruction in core classwork. The following classes are being offered: Curriculum A credit in Grade 9/10 and Grade 11/12 English; Curriculum A and Honors credit in Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Statistics; Curriculum A credit in Senior Math and World History; and Curriculum A and Honors credit in US History 1 and 2, and Physical Science. Students can request consideration for the Academy and will be admitted on a priority basis. Classes are being held four days a week.

A relatively small number of AHS students, including those who attend specific programs, have been accessing the building since the school year began. These young people will continue to attend school as they have been.

For more detailed information on the new AHS semester 2 schedule, please see this [video](#) and the [Arlington High School FAQ](#). Planning and implementing this new schedule has taken a tremendous amount of work and I want to thank Principal Matthew Janger and his administrative and educational team for making it possible for our high school students to attend some classes in-person.

Sora Provides Access to Free Audiobooks and eBooks for Students and Staff

This month our library team announced that students and staff now have the use of an application that provides free access to ebooks and audiobooks. [Sora](#) provides access to collections of digital books curated for schools, and it can be used to read and listen to books in the Arlington Public Schools libraries

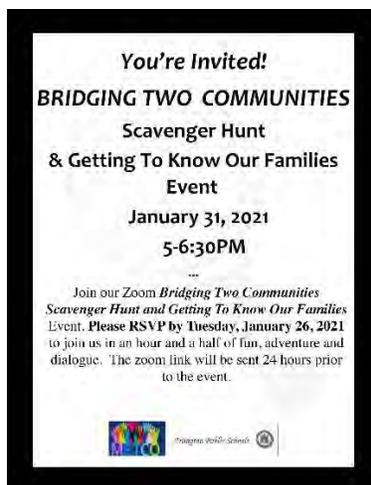
and Robbins Library. All you need is an Arlington Public Schools account—no library account is required. Access to content is differentiated for elementary, middle, and high school readers.

When connected to the Minuteman Library Network, Sora provides a wide array of fiction and non-fiction books that can be used for free choice reading or research. The application has built-in tools to improve reading comprehension and accessibility including customizable fonts, pop-up definitions, highlighting, and annotation.

Sora has been added to the Clever launch page for students in grades K-8. Arlington High School students can access Sora through the AHS Media Center website. In the application you find and click-on Arlington Public Schools and students then need to log-in with their Spynders account and password. The first books that come up are the free books that are accessible from the school account. Borrowing audiobooks and ebooks from the Minuteman Library Network is possible by choosing *Add a Library* in the right-hand navigation column and clicking-on Robbins Library. The AHS Media Center, which began piloting Sora in June, is also a member of the Commonwealth eBook Collections, a shared collection through the Massachusetts Library System.

Digital books that have been borrowed are automatically returned on their due dates. Sora may also be installed on a phone or tablet via the Apple App store, Google Play Store, or sorapp.com. If asked for a setup code, students in Kindergarten through eighth grade should enter “arlingtonma”. AHS students should enter “masslibma”. For further assistance in setting up Sora, see the [step-by-step directions for K-8 students](#) or the [Sora guide for AHS students](#).

Sora is a wonderful resource for our students and staff. I thank Elementary Professional Librarian Jennifer Lauchlan, AHS Library and K-12 Library Coordinator Stacy Kitsis, and our library staff for their efforts to make this available to us. I also thank Robbins Library for partnering with us so that we have the resources of the Minuteman Library Network included.



“Bridging Two Communities” Brings Arlington and Boston Resident Student Families Together

This winter the METCO team had to come up with something innovative if they were going to be able to have the families of Arlington and Boston resident students come together to foster friendships and strengthen relationships as they have in the past. The creative solution the group decided on was the Zoom *Bridging Two Communities Scavenger Hunt and Getting to Know Our Families Event* held on January 31. Two fun activities got the group of about 20 families talking and sharing, and attendees report that it was great fun.

During the Scavenger Hunt the families searched for items that met particular descriptions such as something sticky, that has five colors, makes you laugh, or starts with the letter of one of your student's

names. As items were accumulated the scavengers put them in the chat. Then the participants were placed into virtual breakout rooms so that they could work together. Each team had to answer the question "What three things would you bring with you if you were stranded on a desert island?"

I want to thank METCO Director Margaret Credle Thomas, METCO program Family Liaison Nikecia Gadson, and Social Work Intern Richelle Smith for planning and executing such an engaging evening. I am happy to report that another event is coming up. On March 14, a Councilor at Large will be in attendance to discuss Boston resources available to families and students.

We are fortunate to have 73 Boston students in our program this year. Arlington was one of the first seven districts in Massachusetts to embrace the [Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity \(METCO\)](#), and our participation spans over 50 years. Our Boston resident 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 an integral part of our community.

Arlington Community Education Offers VacationFun! and SummerFun!

[Arlington Community Education \(ACE\)](#) has just concluded February VacationFun!, offered both in-person and virtually for students in grades K-8. Classes held at Ottoson Middle School enabled students to try their hand at acting, do some hands-on engineering, and explore STEM with Legos. The three virtual programs explored animals around the world, presented recipes for new breakfast treats, and enabled attendees to build Minecraft add-ons. VacationFun! will also be offered during April vacation, so watch for details on the ACE website.

Plans to hold the popular [SummerFun!](#) program are well underway and registration will open in March. Classes will be held in-person. Students in grades 1-9 (as of Fall 2021) are eligible to take part. As in past summers, students will be able to choose from a variety of arts and crafts classes, STEM programs, sports and active games, strategy games, exploring nature, taking day-trips, and participating in Summer Stock Musical Theater and LARP. Classes will run from July 6 through August 13.

I want to thank ACE Director Jen Rothenberg and her dedicated staff for offering creative vacation programming for our young people.

Professional Development

Seven Visual Art Teachers to Attend National Art Education Association Virtual Convention

I am happy to share the news that the following Visual Art teachers will be taking part in the seminars and workshops about best practices in art education during next month's [National Art Education Association virtual convention](#): Molly Atryzek, Peirce; Deborah Campagna, Thompson; Deborah Fleming, Hardy; Polly Ford, Ottoson; Nicole McCulloch, Arlington High School; and Alecia Serafini, Gibbs. The convention enables attendees to work with nationally known art education professionals in meetings informed by the latest pedagogical research.

One of the philosophies that our educators will explore further is [Teaching for Artistic Behavior \(TAB\)](#), something that we have been studying and implementing in the district over the last two years. I reported on the 2021 Teaching for Behavior Institute that nine of our teachers attended last month in my News from January Newsletter.

Participating in professional conventions and hearing from both experts and peers is an important way for our educators to learn new things and keep up to date in their field of instruction. I am glad that so many of our Visual Art teachers are able to take part.

Grants

New Arlington Education Foundation Grants Support School-Wide Enrichment

Providing school-wide enrichment this year can be challenging, but thanks to some creative thinking on the part of our teachers and funding from the [Arlington Education Foundation](#), this will happen at Bishop and Peirce. AEF has approved the following [Innovations in Education Grants](#):

- *Eyes on Owls* will continue the tradition of bringing live owls to Bishop for presentations and discussions that connect to the [Massachusetts Science Frameworks](#) at each grade level. The program will be available to remote and hybrid students in both cohorts.
- *Interactive Virtual Music Workshops with Guest Artist David Ladon* brings two professionally produced sets of programs to Peirce students. *We Are One* will encourage Kindergarten, first, and second grade students to sing along during an interactive performance that focuses heavily on themes of empathy, compassion, and self-expression. *Collaborative Composition* will enable third, fourth, and fifth grade students to explore song writing.

These programs will enhance the science and music curriculums for our young people and provide a rich communal experience. I thank AEF for supporting our teachers in their desire to provide meaningful enrichment experiences during this particularly difficult time.

Awards & Distinctions

OMS and AHS Student Banner Designs Chosen to Fly in Arlington Center

The choices have been made, and six Ottoson students and 14 from AHS have had their designs chosen to be enlarged to banner-size and hung outdoors along Mass Ave in Arlington Center. The 20 banners were chosen from over 100 entries in the [2020-2021 Youth Banner Project](#). It was clear from the designs that the young artists took the theme of *Protest: Lifting Voices* to heart. Several designs incorporate environmental themes including waste and climate change. Others use love and equality as a theme, including racial and LGBTQ+ justice.

Congratulations to the following young artists whose banner designs have been chosen.

OMS	AHS	AHS
Ellie Baird	Rachel Barglow	Emma Cox
Ana Gonzalez-Smith	Anamika Biswas	Felix Diaz
Lucia Grunko	Sabine Bohnert	Emma Dodge
Oona Kathan	Allyson Brown	A.K.
Ezinne Marie Onyemah	Charlotte Cheung	Julia McNeil
Kira Pontes	Mara Colosimo	Sam Pirone
	Norah Conti	Grace Purinton

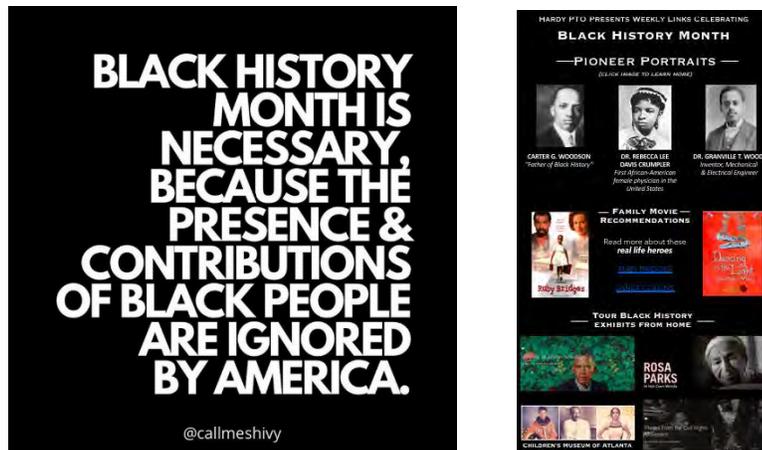
This year's panel of judges are arts professionals who reside in Arlington. Their statements are so meaningful that I think it is worthwhile to share them here.

- Rob Davison, graphic designer—"I was very impressed with the range of concepts that were explored in the submissions. They were thoughtful, well-considered, and speak to the passion and engagement of middle school and high school students in our community. I was quite inspired."
- Laurie Bogdan, public artist and environmental activist—"...I am honored to have had the opportunity to review your impressive contributions to Arlington's banner project. I am humbled by your bold and creative expression of protest through art. I feel your passion. Your work gives me hope that there will be change in our future and a new generation driving it. I urge you to take advantage of the many opportunities that exist in our communities and use your art as an outlet for protest. Continue to stand up for what you believe in!"
- Molly Scannell, graphic designer and collage artist—"I love having the opportunity to be involved in any capacity with the art of our next generations. In this particular call for "Protest", the

submissions were invigorating, enlightening, and humbling. It's truly amazing to see how much these kids are involved and care about what is happening in not only their own communities, but also the world. Their sentiment put into visual art has been very moving and powerful."

The Banner Project is sponsored by the [Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture](#) and done in collaboration with the Arlington Public Schools Visual Art Department. Funding is provided by the Gracie James Foundation. I look forward to seeing these beautiful visual representations of issues that matter to the artists and see how they are using their artistic "voice" for change.

Academics & Enrichment



APS Celebrates Black History Month Inside and Outside the Classroom

"While it is important that this history is taught, it is only part of the story. We hope that you find resources that you can integrate into your teaching way beyond the month of February. While February gives us a moment to reflect and celebrate Black History, it is our long-term goal to fully revise and update our curriculum to ensure these voices, and many others, are heard year-long."

These words come from a message sent to teachers and staff from K-12 Social Studies Director Denny Conklin and Social Studies Coach Crystal Power that included Black History resources to use with their students and for their own enrichment during the month of February. The list ranged from the article [Black History Month: Teaching the Complete History](#), to a Periodic Table of Black History well-suited to use during Morning Meeting, free, printable posters of Black scientists and innovators, and Choice Boards of ideas so that classes could celebrate "...change makers, barrier breakers, cultural curators, and innovators of the Black community." With these resources, teachers were able to integrate Black history lessons into their classrooms throughout the month.

Across our district, PTO's and Diversity and Inclusion Groups (DIG) got involved in creating informational resources and activities that students and their families could use to celebrate the month. The Bishop Diversity and Inclusion Group created a [Black History Month Bingo](#) board with 29 activities such as "Watch a movie with great African American characters" or "Learn about a notable African American musician and listen to their music by searching for an online performance". Each was linked to articles or videos. Once a Bishop student had a "bingo", five completed activities in a row, they could email the DIG and be entered into a raffle to win a prize. Other schools shared this card with their families as well.

Peirce encouraged students to play [Picture Book Bingo](#). Each square suggested a type of book to find and read such as "A book illustrated by an African-American woman" or "A book about the Underground Railroad". Students were able to check-in at the K-3 or 4-5 Library Google Classrooms for read-aloud videos to help them mark the squares. Books read and the number of the squares that described them were recorded on the back of the card. The goal was to create as many bingos as possible in the four

weeks of the month and return the bingo card to Librarian Renae Nichols for "...praise, bragging rights, and maybe even a prize!"

The Hardy PTO sent out a poster of links every Monday that included Pioneer Portraits, Civil Rights leaders, family movies, and Black history exhibits, among others. The monthly school challenge for February was to choose one of five identified African American artists (or choose one of your own) and submit original work that was inspired by their art. The grade sending in the most submissions (one per student) was able to vote on a special Hardy Spirit Day theme to be celebrated throughout the school in March.

The month was a good time for educators to reflect on the issue of equity in our schools. For example, Dallin teachers, administrators, and staff gathered for a meeting early in February to consider Black History month in the context of 2021, why the month is still important, and to reflect on how one's individual identity affects the choices they make and how it connects to their work with students. AHS students could consider the meaning and necessity for Black History month by reading the segment called *This Moment in History* in the [February Anti-racism Working Group newsletter](#).

These are only a few examples of how our schools integrated Black history messages and learnings into classrooms and school communities this month. I want to thank everyone who was involved in creating and sharing interesting and meaningful ways to celebrate Black History Month. USA Today's Enterprise Editor for Racism and History, Nichelle Smith, has commented that "This Black History Month is just a little bit different because we can see, everybody can see really clearly, history coming full circle and history repeating itself." I am glad that our district presented many opportunities for reflection and education on the past, present, and how we can move forward in the future.

Creative Highlights

"Love and Information" Explores the Intersections of Information, Relationships, & Technology

What information do we know? What should we share? What should we do with information we receive? How does information affect friendships? How does it affect love? What has technology done to the way we share and understand information? These are some of the questions that came to mind while watching the wonderful AHS production of Caryl Churchill's, *Love and Information* this month. The fast-moving play, premiered at London's Royal Court Theater in 2012, consists of over 50 microplays that deal with our desire to receive, process, and reject information and the associated ramifications.

The cast of 15 did a masterful job moving through about 100 different characters engaged in short conversations that covered all types of exchanges. For example, a woman decides to tell a young man that she isn't his sister but is really his mother and together they consider whether to tell "mom". A woman on trial is grilled by an attorney who is trying to determine what it means that God told her to commit the crime. A doctor is pushed to make a guess on how long a terminally ill patient will live. A couple remembers a past relationship and as they talk, realize that their memories don't always match. One friend tries to convince another that since his virtual relationship isn't "real", it can't be meaningful. Characters discover how hard it is to explain pain and fear to others who lack the ability to feel them.

Love and Information has an unusual script that specifies none of the characters and provides little stage direction. As the microplays unfolded on the screen, it was clear that Director Lauren ZefTel, AHS alum ('09) and NYU Tisch School of the Arts ('13), and the cast were up to the challenge of interpreting the play and creating a meaningful virtual performance. Auditions, rehearsals, and the final performances were all done remotely.

This play was the third offering in a wonderful virtual season being presented by the AHS Drama Department this school year. Next up is *A Devised Theatre Presentation About the Narratives We Construct* directed by AHS alum ('09) Aaron Aptaker (DePaul University '13). This takes place on March 25-27. Aaron works at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago and does a lot of advocacy work to make theater more accessible. He suggested that closed captions be added to the streamed performances, and a

professional captioner is working with the students to generate these. It is industry standard to have a person control this, and not just have it generated by voice recognition. Additionally, a professional captioner can control the timing to allow a joke to land or capture when music is in counterpoint. This is a new and exciting process for our actors to be involved with.

The spring musical *Amour* closes the season in April. Captioning is planned for this production as well, thanks to a grant from the Arlington Education Foundation. I thank AHS Drama teacher Michael Byrne for spearheading the season and congratulate the cast and crew of *Love and Information* on bringing us such engaging theater.