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News from October 2017

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

I am happy to report that the renovation/rebuild of Arlington High School continues with the announcement of [HMFH Architects, Inc.](#) as the design firm for the project. Many of you will remember that HMFH designed the Thompson School, and is currently working on the six classroom addition there. As the designer, the firm will play a key role in gathering the information needed to create a final design, as well as complete plans and oversee the building process. More detail about this selection can be found in the [press release](#) on the APS website, as well as on the [Arlington High School Building Project website](#). The latter site contains both background and up-to-date information on the project.

School building news: On December 6, an open forum will take place to update the community on the progress of creating a sixth grade school at Gibbs from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Stratton Elementary School library. We expect to fully occupy the new classrooms at Thompson before the end of November. The Stratton Ribbon Cutting has been rescheduled to December 13 at 2:00 pm followed by a public open house until 4:00 pm. I hope that many of you who were unable to tour the newly renovated Stratton School on Sunday, November 19 will be able to visit the school on December 13. It is exciting to see how our building projects are proceeding, and we are grateful for the community support that makes them possible.

The following newsletter contains many examples of how our students and staff are coming together to support each other and to create safe spaces where young people can grow emotionally as well as academically. Initiatives and activities that create community and foster kindness and inclusion are an important part of our school cultures, and I know you will enjoy reading about what has been happening this fall. I am proud of the way the APS community embraces efforts that honor differences and celebrate connections.

It is also wonderful to see how our students and staff take the time to remember the needs of others, and I want to close by sharing two examples of this. The Ottoson community recently collected non-perishable items such as canned goods, water and unopened diapers in support of the Arlington Firefighters Local 1297 Puerto Rican relief effort. Additionally, the Arlington High School Class of 2018 hosted the third annual *Putting for Patients* event in the Toz Gym. Everyone was invited to come and play the 18-hole miniature golf course, participate in the long-putt contest, compete in a march-Madness style mini-golf tournament and enter a drawing. All proceeds from the event were donated to the [Jimmy Fund](#). In the [Athletic Section](#), you will find more examples of how our young people take time to support many worthy causes. I want to thank everyone involved in these initiatives, and the many other service activities that our community engages in throughout the year.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

[Headline View](#)

Safe & Supportive Schools

Diversity, Inclusion and Kindness Celebrated by the Ottoson Community

Recognition of [National Bullying Protection Month](#) at OMS included *Project Connect* and *Random Acts of Kindness*, two powerful school-wide activities designed to promote community, celebrate differences and build positive relationships. [Learn more>](#)

"Wings" Collaborative Art Project Creates Unity and Delivers Positive Messages

Taking inspiration from interactive street artist [Kelsey Montague](#), two Visual Arts teachers at AHS led their students in a collaborative project that asked them to consider unity, inclusion, safe spaces and ways to convey positive messages symbolically, metaphorically or realistically as they created feathers for a giant set of wings. [Read more>](#)

Gender Support Group and Jive Turkeys Provide Safe Spaces to Share Experiences at AHS

One optional drop-in discussion group at Arlington High School brings peers together to solve problems and seek support around dealing with a binary and gendered society, and the other uses a harm reduction model to focus on substance use and related decision-making. [Learn more>](#)

Experts at Parent Forums Share Knowledge and Resources to Help Us Keep Children Safe

Our series of free [Parent Forums](#) on topics such as cyber and dating safety extends information and resources to the community, educating all of us so that we can work together to help our young people recognize dangers and make healthy choices. [Read more>](#)

Survey Results Demonstrate High Level of Parental Understanding of Alcohol Use Dangers

Responses to the spring 2016 Parent Norm Survey conducted by the [Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition](#) indicate that families understand that alcohol use by young people under 21 is not acceptable, even with parental supervision. [Learn more>](#)

Department News

Fall A.L.i.C.E. Safety Drills Completed

In accordance with our adoption of the [A.L.i.C.E.](#) protocol, students and staff have completed the fall schedule of safety drills, demonstrating their understanding of option based response and preparedness to react appropriately to an important emergency situation. [Learn more>](#)

MCAS Results Include Next-Generation Tests Taken in Third through Eighth Grade

Arlington students continue to perform above state averages, whether they are taking the legacy Science and tenth grade MCAS tests or the Next-Generation English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS tests administered in grades three through eight. [Read more>](#)

Grants

AHS Unity Project Illustrates Connections and Strength in Diversity

Thanks to a grant from the [Arlington Education Foundation](#), students, faculty and parents kicked-off the new school year by creating a beautiful [Unity](#) canopy that was a visual reminder of the interconnectedness of the diverse AHS community. [Read more>](#)

Academics and Enrichment

Arlington High School Selected to Receive Summer Study Abroad Scholarships

Applications for Global Navigator Scholarships to attend [summer study abroad programs](#) in language, service or discovery offered by the [Council on International Educational Exchange](#) are due by December 1, 2017. [Learn more>](#)

District Implementation of Personalized Education Includes "Teaching for Artistic Behavior"

Our participation in the [Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech \(MAPLE\) Consortium](#) supports our

efforts to implement personalized learning across the district, and [Teaching for Artistic Behavior \(TAB\)](#) is a wonderful example of "choice-based education" currently being introduced in Visual Arts classrooms. Read more>

Creative Highlights

OMS and AHS Visual Arts Students Learn from Visiting Artists and DeCordova Trip

Collaborating on an outdoor installation, seeing demonstrations on painting techniques and touring the [DeCordova Museum](#) were enriching experiences that helped Arlington students think about the creative process and their own personal work. Read more>

Athletic Highlights

Service, Spirit and Success on the Field Characterize Fall Season

This season was exciting and fast moving, with our captain's attending MIAA Leadership Training, the school community coming together to celebrate Ponder Pride during Spirit Week, multiple opportunities for service and outstanding individual and team performances that led to tournament play for many athletes. Learn more>

Continue to read the full News from October 2017 Newsletter

Safe & Supportive Schools



Diversity, Inclusion and Kindness Celebrated by the Ottoson Community

"Even though we are all different, we are all a part of the Ottoson community."

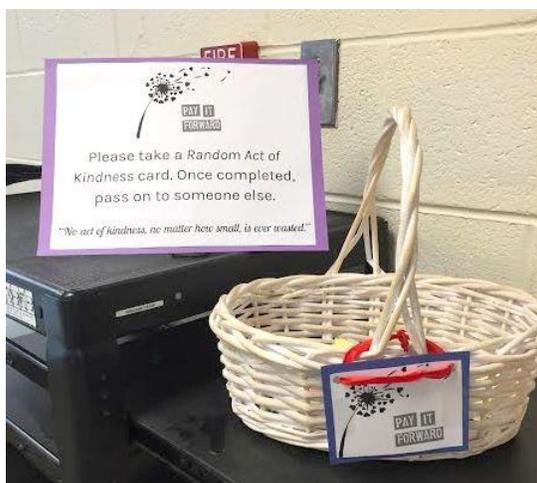
This month there were two important school-wide activities at Ottoson designed to promote community and build culture. During the first week of October, the OMS Guidance Counselors kicked-off [National Bullying Protection Month](#) by inviting students and staff to participate in *Project Connect* and celebrate the differences among them. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, a table holding colorful strips of paper was set up in the lobby during lunch. Everyone was encouraged to choose a strip and write their name and a quality that makes them unique and proud of who they are as individuals on the paper. The strips were then glued together to create the beautiful chain that now hangs in the lobby.

Even though *Project Connect* was only available as students were hurrying to and from lunch, excitement around participation was high. Many individuals wanted to create a number of links for the chain. Throughout the year, the completed chain will serve as a visual, ongoing reminder of the power of diversity and inclusiveness in the OMS community. This year's chain goes back and forth across the hallway about six times. Organizers Bryan Christie and Mandi Bistran are considering having Project Connect available at other times during the day in the future, so we may see an even longer one next year.

The second week in October saw the kick-off of *Random Acts of Kindness*. Guidance Counselors visited sixth grade Advisory classes and distributed cards that each held an act of kindness. Students were encouraged to complete the task and then pass it on to someone else so they could do the same. The following week, the activity was introduced in the seventh grade, and a basket was set up in the hallway so students could choose a card. The opportunity was presented to eighth grade students in the last week of the month.

By the end of October, acts of kindness were spreading throughout the school. Principal Eileen Woods emphasizes that when kindness is practiced in schools, adults and children become more responsive, caring and socially aware of themselves as individuals who have the ability to make a difference in their shared experience. It does not matter whether the act of kindness is small or large, the effect is the same. Our world is full of stress, violence and intense competition that can cause us to feel disconnected. As we think about doing something nice for someone else, we come together in fulfillment and joy. All human beings need affection to thrive and even small acts of kindness can touch someone deeply and make their day.

I want to thank Mr. Christie and Ms. Bistran for their leadership in both these initiatives that help build positive emotional connections between students and teachers, and create healthy relationships. Such relationships ease anxiety and bring a sense of belonging that allows students to focus and engage in learning. Mr. Christie and Ms. Bistran will be considering ways to improve student and teacher involvement in what they hope will become annual activities.



"Wings" Collaborative Art Project Creates Unity and Delivers Positive Messages

Creating unity among AHS Visual Arts students was one of the goals for the beautiful collaborative project undertaken during the first week of school. Visual Arts teacher Nikki McCulloch was aware of interactive street artist [Kelsey Montague's *What Lifts You Campaign*](#), and she thought that an effort like this would be

a great way to create community. She teamed up with colleague Annie Rebola-Thompson, and all of the students in their classes, including Mixed Media, Studio Art I and II and Painting, were asked to create a feather to become part of a giant set of wings. The 250 young people wrestled with the ideas of unity, inclusion, safe spaces and ways to communicate a positive message through their feathers. They considered what lifts their spirits up as an individual as well as what inspires and motivates them within the art community. Some chose to work in charcoal and others in colored pencil, paint or mixed media. Ms. McCulloch and Ms. Rebola-Thompson provided guidance on how to symbolically, metaphorically or realistically depict the idea of what motivates or lifts them up within the school, but the young artists had complete ownership of their designs.

Once the feathers were completed, K-12 Director of Visual Art David Ardito and AHS teacher David Moore lent a hand to create two beautiful wings in the Teacher's Cafe. The space between the wings is an area where students and staff can pose. Displayed as wings, the feathers deliver positive messages about unity, diversity, inclusion and supportive learning environments while encouraging acceptance and open dialogue about community and social structures. *Wings* definitely lifts the spirits of all of us who view the display and pose within it and I thank Ms. McCulloch and Ms. Rebola-Thompson for leading this project. I am delighted to tell you that *Wings* will be featured in a social justice art show for students at the Massachusetts College of Art in December. Congratulations to everyone who participated.

Gender Support Group and Jive Turkeys Provide Safe Spaces to Share Experiences

Intervention Coordinator and Social Worker Andrea Razi believes it is important that all students have spaces where they can feel safe and respected, and where they can connect with each other and form a positive relationship with adults. These thoughts guide her facilitation of two optional drop-in groups at Arlington High School--the Gender Support Group and Jive Turkeys.

The Gender Support Group enables gender bending, transgender or non-binary students to find each other. The students have a safe space to be with peers to solve problems and seek support around the struggles and discomforts that arise from not fitting into our binary and gendered society with ease. These young people often feel as if they are on the outskirts socially, or believe that it is hard for them to fit in. The Gender Support Group is a place where they find other students and an adult who understand them and their experience. Ms. Razi says that the students who attend are affirmed in their identities, and that coming together places them in the majority, if only for a short time. She believes this will lead to a feeling of strength and hope.

At Jive Turkeys, the focus is substance use and related decision making. The group operates on a harm reduction model. The intention is to reduce the negative consequences associated with drinking and the use of other drugs. This model is often used with individuals who are pre-contemplative or contemplative (ambivalent) about making changes in their patterns of alcohol or drug use. Teens often resist entering into discussions about something they may enjoy if they are simply told not to do it. With that in mind, the conversation at JIVE TURKEYS centers on making safe decisions and reducing any existing substance abuse. If a participant shares something that indicates an immediate safety threat, the issue is reported to the parents and treatment is sought. The goal is to meet the students where they are, offer guidance and connect them to possible treatment if they need or are interested in substance abuse or mental health supports.

Like the Gender Support Group, Jive Turkeys is a way to create positive associations with adults. Ms. Razi hopes that students will view social workers as approachable or helpful, and be more willing to access supports now or down the road if they need them. She works hard to create an atmosphere where the young people are treated with respect and are valued as members of the AHS student body and community. I want to thank Ms. Razi for providing safe spaces for students to feel supported as they discuss critical issues that affect their safety and achievement of their personal goals. The Gender Support Group meets every second and fourth Friday at 10:00 am and Jive Turkeys meets every Friday at 11:30 am. Both meet in Ms. Razi's office, Room 307.

Experts at Parent Forums Share Knowledge and Resources to Help Us Keep Children Safe

In the Arlington Public Schools, we understand that keeping our children safe goes beyond what our staff can do during school hours. It also means providing parents and community members with the resources they need to assist in this effort, and with the opportunity to learn more about topics of concern. That is why we sponsor and support a series of Parent Forums throughout the school year, and we are fortunate to have dedicated professionals to lead and participate in this effort.

Director of Wellness Cindy Bouvier and K-6 Health Educator Carlene Newell are the Parent Forum Co-chairs. They work with a planning committee that includes parents, school staff representatives, [Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition](#) Director Ivy Schmalzried and [Arlington Youth Counseling Center](#) Executive Director Colleen Legere. The group reviews possible topics--suggesting some themselves, evaluating others that are submitted by parents and community members and by reviewing the Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) that are done among Ottoson and Arlington High School students. (I reported on the results of the latest AHS YRBS in the [Safe & Supportive Schools](#) section of my [September newsletter](#)).

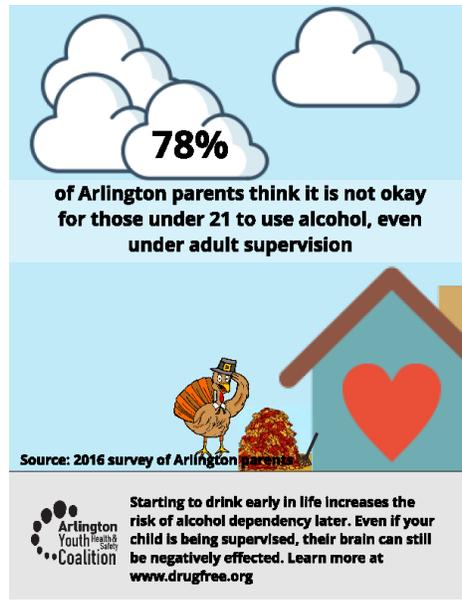
The Committee also researches and chooses speakers, using their own knowledge, evaluating recommendations from parents and reviewing the information that they receive from professionals who are willing to share their expertise. Funding to support the Forums comes from a variety of sources including contributions from school PTOs, Arlington Public Schools (particularly for space and custodial support for the events), the [Sanborn Foundation](#) and from various grants. Sometimes a speaker will offer their services without charge.

Ms. Bouvier and Ms. Newell have hosted four Parent Forums this year, all held at Ottoson.

- *Navigating the Cyber World*--issues and consequences from cyber bullying, sexting and the dangers of the Internet
- *Training Active Bystanders*--teaching bystanders how to interrupt harm and generate positive actions by others
- *Supporting Healthy, Loving Relationships for Teens*--a session including interactive, improvisational drama to share dating risks and ways to support teens
- *The Talk*--tips for talking about and preventing sexual abuse

Guiding Good Choices, a free, 5-week parent workshop run by Court Liaison, Attendance and Diversion Coordinator Cindy Sheridan Curran, is currently underway as well. This program meets at the Whittemore Robbins House.

All Forums are open to the entire community, although some may require pre-registration or limit the number of participants due to the workshop nature of the session. Please review the [list of Parent Forums](#) where active links enable you to learn more about the content and speakers of those that have taken place and understand the Forums to come. You are also invited to contact Ms. Bouvier at cbouvier@arlington.k12.ma.us and Ms. Newell at cnewell@arlington.k12.ma.us to get more information or submit ideas and comments. I thank Ms. Bouvier, Ms. Newell and the members of their Committee who make it possible for us to hear from talented professionals who help us understand the ways we can all work together to keep our children safe.



Survey Results Demonstrate High Level of Parental Understanding of Alcohol Use Dangers

This month the [Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition](#) (AYHSC) is sharing another positive result from the Parent Norm Survey conducted in spring 2016. There were 587 responses from parents of school-age children across Arlington. Their answers increase our knowledge of parental awareness, attitudes and understanding of youth substance abuse in our community.

As you can see from the graphic above, over three-quarters of respondents report that they believe alcohol use is not appropriate for young people under 21, even with adult supervision. Research has shown that early use of alcohol can lead to dependency later in life. I am happy to see that so many parents are aware of the dangers of early alcohol use. Arlington Public Schools and the AYHSC will continue to support our families as we work together on behalf of children.

Department News

Fall A.L.i.C.E. Safety Drills Completed at All Schools

During the 2014-2015 school year, Arlington Public Schools adopted [A.L.I.C.E.](#), a safety protocol that prepares students and staff to use an option based response to a critical incident. The acronym stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate. This protocol is considered "best practice" for K-12 schools, and has been adopted throughout the U.S. The decision to use A.L.i.C.E. was reached after reviewing the Massachusetts Task Force on School Safety and Security [report](#).

I am pleased to report that our fall schedule of safety drills has been completed at all nine schools and that staff and students successfully demonstrated their understanding of option based response. The first step in our elementary schools is to have the students review the safety procedure with their teachers and discuss what they will be experiencing. Everyone is reminded that they must be a *PAL*, which means they must *Pause*, look for a safe *Adult* and *Listen* to instructions. On the day of the exercise, an all-school announcement indicates that "This is a drill", and a scenario is read. Depending upon the scenario, classes either stay in their rooms or leave the building. Two scenarios are read per drill, and it takes 15 minutes on average to complete the exercise. Students have the opportunity to talk about the drill before and after it is completed.

A.L.i.C.E. drills are always referred to as Safety Drills at the elementary level, and positioned within the context of other exercises, such as Fire Drills, that are designed to keep students safe. Every effort is

made to create a stress free experience in which to practice how to respond to an important emergency situation. We emphasize that safety drills are practiced so that everyone will be prepared and be able to feel safe and calm. You are invited to view a copy of the [APS Elementary PALs presentation](#) that is given to the students prior to the drills. At Ottoson and Arlington High School, the drills are referred to as A.L.i.C.E. drills and the language is more descriptive and bold, but the essence of the exercise remains the same.

Another round of drills will be scheduled in the spring, and each principal will notify parents of the event at their school. Please contact Cindy Sheridan-Curran at csheridancurran@arlington.l12.ma.us or 781-316-3541 for more information. I also invite you to review the [Creating Safe Schools](#) pages on the APS website.

MCAS Results Include Next-Generation Tests Taken in Grades Three through Eight

The 2017 MCAS scores that were released this month include both the legacy Science and tenth grade test results, as well as those from the Next-Generation MCAS English Language Arts and Mathematics tests taken by students in grades three through eight. The Next-Generation MCAS will eventually replace the legacy test for all grades. The MCAS test has been updated to measure critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge and the ability to make connections between reading and writing. I am pleased to report that Arlington students continue to perform above state averages across all grades.

As they receive and review individual scores, parents and guardians of our grade three through eight students who have taken previous MCAS tests will notice that the achievement levels have changed. The new levels of achievement are Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations. In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are more rigorous than the standards for reaching the Proficient level in the legacy tests. State educators have done this because they believe the new standards will better signal a student's readiness for moving into the next grade.

It is important to remember that spring 2017 is a baseline year for the new test, and that it is not appropriate to compare the scores to those of previous years. Across the state, we are seeing that fewer students are achieving in the higher categories, but this does not mean that learning has been lost. Scores are expected to change over time, as they did when MCAS was first introduced. A review of the new scores will help us to consider various barriers to learning and identify students who could use additional help to reach their full potential.

MCAS tests are only one of many measures we use to understand how to help our students achieve academically. Since spring 2017 is considered a baseline year, time is being provided for adjustment to the new test and standards. Thus, individual growth scores are not being reported for those students who took the Next-Generation MCAS. Additionally, Ottoson and the elementary schools will not receive accountability levels. Arlington High School, where the legacy test was administered, remains a Level 1 school. I urge you to visit the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website](#) for more information about the Next-Generation MCAS test, and to view the [2017 MCAS Report for Arlington Public Schools](#) that was presented to the School Committee this month.

Grants



AHS Unity Project Illustrates Connections and Strength in Diversity

Last spring, AHS Drama teacher Michael Byrne and Mathematics teacher Joanna Begin started thinking about ways to get the student body engaged in a unifying activity at the beginning of the upcoming school year. They wanted something visual that could involve the whole school, and something that could start a conversation about what makes us unique while promoting community. They also hoped for a project that would let students express who they really are without judgment.

The two teachers decided that [Unity](#), an interactive public art project, would be perfect. *Unity* begins as a large circle of 32 poles, each labeled with an identifying characteristic. Each participant chooses a starting point, attaches yarn, and then moves around the circle, putting the yarn around each identifier that expresses who they are. The resulting canopy is a visual representation of both the differences and commonalities among all the participants that make up a rich, diverse community such as the one at Arlington High School.

Thanks to an Innovations in Education grant from the [Arlington Education Foundation](#) (AEF), and generous support from over 80 AHS students and faculty members, the *Unity Project* kicked-off the fall semester on the front lawn of the school on September 11. Students, faculty and parents wound their yarn around identifiers that included statements such as "I'm an introvert", "I have been discriminated against", "I identify as LGBTQIA", "I love Math/Science", and "I believe in a higher power". A chalkboard where students could write additional identifiers that had not been included was beside one of the poles. By the time the project ended on September 18, approximately 1500 participants had used over 30 miles of yarn to create a beautiful canopy that demonstrated the connections among them.

It was a joy for Mr. Byrne and Ms. Begin to lead a project that was enthusiastically received by the AHS community. It also was a wonderful way for the two teachers to collaborate since *Unity* allowed each of them to utilize their own personal strengths. Ms. Begin used her mathematics skills as she concentrated on organization and implementation and Mr. Byrne's background in performing arts served him well as he focused on bringing meaning to the creation of the structure, encouraging students to have what can be difficult conversations and on the events themselves.

I want to thank both teachers for leading this project that so clearly demonstrated the web of interconnectedness in the AHS community. I am also grateful to the Arlington Education Foundation for their support. The project has been named as the AEF [Dawn Moses Memorial Innovations Grant](#) for 2016-2017, an award that pays tribute to the creative spirit of a former board member. I invite you to learn more about what the *Unity Project* meant to the participants by reading the article that appeared in the [Arlington Advocate](#), and viewing the ACMi [video](#).

Academics and Enrichment

Arlington High School Selected to Receive Summer Study Abroad Scholarships

I am delighted to tell you that Arlington High School was one of 90 U.S. secondary schools chosen to receive summer study abroad scholarships offered by the [Council on International Educational Exchange](#) (CIEE). Three types of [summer study abroad programs](#) in over 30 destinations are offered by CIEE.

- Language & Culture--language and cultural immersion programs in Spanish, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Japanese, Italian or Arabic
- Service & Leadership--service projects focusing on community development, children's rights or education in countries that include the Dominican Republic, Ghana or Morocco, among others
- Global Discovery--programs such as *Filmmaking & Documentary*, *Global Entrepreneurship* or *Marine Science* in countries such as Thailand, Costa Rica or South Africa

The organization has earmarked \$25,000 in Global Navigator Scholarships for Arlington students in recognition of our commitment to preparing our young people for success as global citizens. All aspects

of the program and travel are handled by CIEE from start to finish, including insurance, attention to safety and 24/7 support lines. Depending upon the program, students may elect to receive college credit or will receive a certificate for 45 hours of international community service.

Funds will be awarded based on merit and financial need, and students graduating in 2019, 2020 or 2021 are eligible to apply. The AHS application deadline is December 1, 2017. Interested students should apply online at <https://www.ciee.org/high-school-summer-abroad/myaccount/>. Please reach out to Kerry Palleschi, at 207-553--4232 or kpalleschi@ciee.org if you have questions or would like additional information.

District Implementation of Personalized Education Includes "Teaching for Artistic Behavior"

Last December I shared the news that Arlington Public Schools is one of 12 innovative districts chosen to help Massachusetts move forward in developing and implementing personalized education. Personalized education is a way to provide multiple points of access to a curriculum, with a range of possible assignments students can do to demonstrate their competency, all in the context of educational standards. The catalyst districts who are members of the [Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech \(MAPLE\) Consortium](#) share what they are doing and learn from each other as they move forward in implementing this approach. This month, an [article](#) in the educational publication [The Journal](#) talks about MAPLE's recent report about the progress in this area. The report finds "...while traditional classroom practices still dominate most schools, some districts are blazing ahead."

Our district is proud to be a part of MAPLE and fortunate to be in a state that is "...leading the way in personalized education." We believe that increasing personalization improves student engagement and educational outcomes for all students, and participation in this educational collaborative is an incredible opportunity for us to build on, and improve, the work we have been doing.

[Teaching for Artistic Behavior \(TAB\)](#) is one example of how personalized learning is being implemented in the Arlington Public Schools. TAB is "choice-based education" that "...supports multiple modes of learning and assessment for the diverse needs of students." Research done at the Massachusetts College of Art has supported the development of this approach to art education over the last 35 years. The K-12 Visual Art staff recently attended a Professional Development workshop with arts educator Katherine Douglas, co-author of [Engaging Learners Through Artmaking: Choice-based Art Education in the Classroom](#). Several Visual Art teachers are now introducing TAB into their curriculum.

In a TAB classroom, students are free to follow the teacher's lead, or to experiment and explore their own ideas using different materials. They can choose to work alone or with others. They discuss their artwork and celebrate the work of their classmates. With everyone pursuing self-directed work, the teacher can move around, meeting diverse needs by working directly with individuals or groups of students.

TAB offers a variety of benefits for our young people. It supports the [Responsive Classroom](#) approach now implemented in several of our schools, as well as our initiatives to increase social and emotional learning and create more culturally proficient classrooms. I am delighted that K-12 Visual Art Director David Ardito has taken the lead in bringing TAB, which "...regards students as artists and offers them real choices for responding to their own ideas and interests through the making of art.", to our classrooms.

Creative Highlights

OMS and AHS Visual Arts Students Learn from Visiting Artists and DeCordova Trip

Working directly with an artist can help students gain a deeper understanding of the process of creating art and give them insight into the world of professional art. I am happy to report that two groups of students have recently had this wonderful experience. Over 30 Ottoson art students participated in a public art collaboration with visiting Provincetown artist, Frank Vasello. Over a three-day period, Mr. Vasello and the students worked on an [art installation](#) in the wooded area behind the school. In one of the clearings, the team of artists worked together to create a long rambling sculptural river of tree branches

and twigs. Mr. Vasello has also created an [installation along the Minuteman Bikeway](#) as part of the Pathways Public Art project of Arlington Public Art.

This month, the students in AHS Visual Arts teacher Nikki McCulloch's Painting I class heard from visiting artist [Chanel Thervil](#). Ms. Thervil presented [her work](#) and gave demonstrations about advanced painting techniques. Her artwork deals with issues of personal identity and social justice. Prior to her visit, the students had completed self-portrait drawings on wood panels. Ms. Thervil was able to [guide the students through new painting techniques](#) while discussing ways to personalize these portraits.

Additionally this month, 57 AHS Studio Art II students visited the [DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum](#) in Lincoln. The group participated in guided tours of the galleries and took a self-guided tour of the outdoor sculpture park. The exhibit entitled *Bodies in Water* was particularly interesting to the students since *Water* is the theme of an upcoming collaboration with Arlington Public Art's annual Youth Banner project. The students who visited DeCordova and others will submit designs for consideration as six-foot banners to hang outdoors in Arlington Center.

In additional news, David Ardito, K-12 Visual Art Director, indicates that APS Visual Arts teachers Deborah Campagna and Melody Thomas will be attending the [Massachusetts Art Education Association](#) conference next month. I look forward to sharing information about their experience in my next newsletter.

Athletic Highlights



Service, Spirit and Success on the Field Characterize Fall Season

It continues to be an exciting and fast-moving time for our fall athletes. Each season involves enormous dedication and personal commitment, and it is always gratifying to see the way our young people find the time to honor others and raise money to support charities that mean a lot to them. The September 27 girls field hockey game began with a short ceremony to recognize former captain Catherine Malatesta, who lost a hard fought battle to cancer in August of 2015. Alumnus and former Dallin Teaching Assistant Katherine Wall, who also succumbed to cancer, was remembered by the girls soccer team at the October 17 game. Two girls volleyball games supported Dig Pink[®], an initiative of the [Side-Out Foundation](#) that funds breast cancer research. The first game pitted the varsity girls against the AHS faculty and fall coaches and the second was a joint effort between AHS and Burlington High School.

Arlington High School was well represented at MIAA Leadership Training this month. This session had many of the fall captains sharing their thoughts on being Spy Ponders, assessing effective leadership skills and talking about different strategies and challenges involved in employing these skills. One of the discussions stressed that thorough communication depends upon not assuming that others share your experiences or perceptions. Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki is pleased to report that AHS senior captain Holly Russell was chosen to model this important point.

Spirit and Homecoming Week began on October 16, and each day offered fun ways for the entire school community to celebrate Ponder Pride. Multiple groups participated, from the Student Council, to the Captains' Council, Jazz Band, Madrigal Singers, Cheerleaders, Hip Hop Team and costumed faculty

members, to make the culminating Pep Rally a great success. Congratulations to AHS English teacher Rebecca Walsh Bradley on winning the dino-relay race, the freshmen for winning the class relays, the sophomores for winning the three-point competition and the seniors for becoming two time tug of war champions.

Other activities included home night games, including the Homecoming football game, and a Courtyard Dance. Spirit Week is a wonderful way for everyone to come together with the understanding that you don't have to be an athlete or a musician or part of any other group to identify as a Spy Ponder. This title, and the pride that accompanies it, unites everyone at AHS.

Ms. Dlugolecki is happy to report that boys soccer and boys cross country clinched their first Middlesex Liberty League Championships, making both eligible for tournament competition. The AHS football team clinched the fourth seed in Division North, qualifying them for tournament play as well. This is especially notable since last year was a building year for the team. The golf team came close to qualifying for the Division 2 North sectionals, but fell to Melrose to end the season at 5-6.

Girls volleyball went into the first round of tournament play as the seventh seed, and beat Revere 3-0 in their first game. This enables them to advance to the Division 1 Central-East Quarterfinals. Girls soccer was seeded eighth, and topped Tewksbury 4-0 in their first game. They move on to the Division 2 North Quarterfinals. Boys soccer, seeded sixth, took their first game with a 5-0 win over Shawsheen, enabling them to move on to the Division 2 North Quarterfinals as well.

Ms. Dlugolecki also wants to share two personal achievements. Ryan Oosting, junior boys cross country team captain, broke another course record during the season. Ryan set a record for the second time in two years, finishing the 3-mile race in 15 minutes and 1 second and winning the meet by 24 seconds. This race, part of the team's win over Lexington, saw Ryan come in first with teammates Jeff Candell in second and Miles Harrison in third. Additional good news is that Ryan took first place in the League at the Middlesex League Cross Country meet. Congratulations Ryan!

Congratulations to junior golf team captain Mark DeCoursey as well. He set a new AHS record with a 33 on the front nine of the Winchester Country Club. His overall excellent performance this season earned him the right to compete in the Golf Individual State Tournament where he shot a 77 and qualified for State Finals.

Winter registration is open and you can find all the information you need on the [Registration page](#) of the Athletics website. I look forward to updating you on the close of the fall season in a future newsletter.

