

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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November 2015

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

November brings the start of the holiday season, and the tremendous generosity of our community is again evident. All of our elementary schools and Ottoson collected food and gift cards during Thanksgiving food drives. Several schools have already started purchasing gifts for the Holiday Help program run through [Arlington Health & Human Services](#). Peirce has begun to collect used coats and started a pajama drive. One Peirce parent came up with a unique way to assist the refugees in Europe. She is collecting baby carriers to go to families that need them through [Carry the Future](#). It is heart-warming to see how our young people and their families come forward to help others in these different ways, and I thank all the teachers and parents who assist in these efforts.

Our community has also been generous in the ways they are remembering the students we have lost this year. Last month, our athletes encouraged fans to join them in *White Out Cancer*, selling raffle tickets and gear to raise money for the Catherine Malatesta scholarship fund. Another AHS student who left us is Jeremy Kremer-McNeil. Jeremy was in the Concert Band and he will be remembered at the December 11 Winter Concert. His family is reminding us of Jeremy's strong wish to put an end to human trafficking. They ask those who want to make a memorial contribution to [donate](#) to [The Polaris Project](#), an organization dedicated to fighting this global scourge.

We know that many of our students struggle with social and emotional issues, and I want to take a moment to remind everyone that there are many resources available to seek support. Students can reach out to guidance counselors, house deans, school social workers or nurses. Walk-in evaluation screening is available through [Advocates](#) in Waltham from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm. Counseling resources are also available 24 hours a day at the [Massachusetts Suicide Prevention](#) Hotline. We must all work together to support and identify struggling students.

The School Enrollment Task Force Committee had its first meeting on November 30, and will meet again on December 9 and December 22 at 7:00 pm in the Lyons Hearing Room at Town Hall. The meetings are open to the public and there will time at each meeting for public comment. Documents reviewed at the meetings are available [here](#).

In closing, I am encouraging you to mark your calendars for the AHS production of *A Christmas Carol*, being presented December 18 at 7:30 pm and December 19 at 3:00 and 7:30 pm. There is also a "sensory friendly" performance on December 19 at 11:00, offering a non-judgmental environment that is more comfortable for those with autism. Tickets are available in advance from [Mktix.com](#) or from cast members, or at the door before the performances. The \$10 price drops to \$8 if you bring a donation of nonperishable food for the Arlington Food Pantry. The play offers a message of love that we can all use in this time of world strife and pain, and I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

I wish you safe and happy holidays and I look forward to sharing more news about our students, teachers and staff in 2016.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D

Headline View

Professional Development

Teachers and Staff Dedicate Days to Learning and Performance Improvement

Teachers and staff in world languages, history and social studies, reading, special education and mathematics devoted time to learning about topics and tools that will foster continuous improvement in our classrooms and among our students. These are just a few examples of the work that has gone on in this area this year. [Learn more>](#)

Awards & Distinctions

Eight AHS Musicians Chosen for District, All-State Auditions

Congratulations to our instrumentalists and vocalists who have been chosen to participate in the Massachusetts Music Educators Association ([MMEA](#)) [Northeastern District Senior Festival](#) to be held in January. The eight musicians will also be auditioning for the MMEA All-State Festival and Concert that will be held at Symphony Hall next March. [Read more>](#)

Cross Country Freshman Ties Record and Wins the Phil Riley Award

One of the notable individual accomplishments on the boys cross country team this year was Ryan Oosting's win at the November 2 league meet. Congratulations on tying the record in the freshman race and winning the Phil Riley award. [Learn more>](#)

AHS Musicians and Teacher Demonstrate String Improvisation at National Conference

Three AHS string players joined Instrumental Music Director Sabato D'Agostino at the [National Association for Music Education](#) conference in presenting *A Fun Approach to Teach Improvisation with Strings*—a clinic that was well received by the teachers, administrators and young musicians that attended. [Learn more>](#)

Arlington High School Wins MIAA District B "Sportsmanship" Award

Congratulations to our AHS athletes, coaches and administration on receiving the District B *Sportsmanship* award. This honor recognizes the many ways our young people make positive contributions to our community, on and off the field. [Read more>](#)

AP French Students Share "Café Parisien" at Project-Based Learning Conference

The presentation made by four AP French students describing *Café Parisien* captured the attention of the conference keynote speaker, who would like to be a judge for this award-winning class project next year. [Read more>](#)

Athletic Director Wins MSSADA/NIAAA Ted Damko Award

Congratulations to Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki on winning the statewide [Ted Damko award](#), which she will receive at the annual Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association conference in March. This is well-deserved recognition for the positive work she has done with our coaches and athletes during the three years she has been part of our administrative team. [Learn more>](#)

World Language Teachers Share Ideas and Gather Knowledge at MaFLA Fall Conference

Two teachers joined World Language Director Catherine Ritz to deliver presentations and attend workshops at the [Massachusetts Foreign Language Association \(MaFLA\)](#) Fall Conference. Ms. Ritz is also serving as the MaFLA President, a position she will hold for two years. [Read more>](#)

World Language Interpersonal Speaking Assessment Recognized as State Model

Arlington's Interpersonal Speaking assessment was presented as a model for other districts at the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#) Fall Convening. The assessment is now on the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association website as a model [District Determined Measure \(DDM\)](#), and will be posted on the DESE website as well. [Learn more>](#)

Academic & Enrichment Highlights

Thompson Third Grade Students Flex Their Civic Muscles in Mock Town Meeting

Taking part in a mock Arlington Town Meeting gave students the chance to experience government, work on listening and speaking skills, create and present an argument and understand that democracy is more than winning or losing—it is about making change. [Read more>](#)

Dallin Go Green Club Fall Harvest Yields Butterfly Weed Seeds and Sunflower Heads

Thanks to the wonderful garden maintained by Go Green Club members, sunflower heads are now available for class projects or bird feeders, and milkweed seeds from Butterfly Weed have been packaged for use by community members who want to attract butterflies to their yards. [Learn more>](#)

OMS Math Club Develops Problem Solving Skills and Prepares for MATHCOUNTS Competition

Through weekly practice sessions and participation in medium and high-difficulty national tests, Ottoson students challenge themselves to tackle increasingly difficult mathematics problems and look for creative ways to solve them. Besides developing problem solving skills and discovering that mathematics isn't boring, the students are getting ready for the [MATHCOUNTS](#) competitions coming up early next year. [Learn more>](#)

New Online Course Introduces Music Production

[Introduction to Music Production](#), a Berklee College of Music course offered through [Coursera](#), is giving students a way to explore that side of the business and improve both what, and how, they record. The new Arlington High School recording studio makes it possible for participants to practice what they've learned and get hands-on experience. [Learn more>](#)

French Dessert Competition Highlights National French Week for AHS Students

French 4 and AP French students celebrated National French Week this year with a pastry competition judged by the owners of [MA-France](#), the gourmet store in Lexington that offers desserts from some of the best pâtissiers in Boston and France. [Learn more>](#)

Athletic Highlights

Strong Performances and Tournament Play Capped an Exciting Fall Sports Season

Over 500 athletes took part in the fall sports season, with several teams moving on to tournament play and others exhibiting improvement throughout the season. Growth in the AHS program continues, with winter registrations up by about 30% over last year. [Read more>](#)

Creative Highlights

Novel Ways to Navigate High School Leads to Laughter in Ottoson Fall Play

A cast of 28 supported by a crew of about a dozen brought laughter to an enthusiastic audience during the performance of *How to Succeed in High School without Really Trying*. This is the second year that OMS has produced a fall play. [Read more>](#)

Ottoson Art Show Features the Work of First Quarter Artists

The results of a new curriculum that has young people exploring digital media, three-dimensional art, murals and mixed media processes were on display November 5 at the first of four Ottoson art shows. [Learn more>](#)

Jazz Musicians Provide the Beat at the AYCC Gala

Three talented AHS musicians joined another student from Lexington to create a quartet that performed at the [Arlington Youth Counseling Center](#) annual fundraiser last month. [Learn more>](#)

AHS "A Christmas Carol" Coming in December, Including a "Sensory Friendly" Performance

Forty-two actors and 15 crewmembers are reminding us that we have a responsibility to meet anger and negativity with love, acceptance and positive behavior during their performances of *A Christmas Carol* at

7:30 pm on December 18, and 3:00 and 7:30 pm on December 19. This year a "sensory" or "autistic friendly" performance will be held December 19 at 11:00 am. Tickets are available from Mktix.com or cast members in advance, and can be purchased at the door. [Read more>](#)

Jury Reviewing Submissions to Art Youth Banner Project

The deadline for student artists to submit artwork for consideration has passed, and the jury will now select 30 designs to be digitized, printed on vinyl banners and hung along Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center, East Arlington, and Arlington Heights from April through May 2016. We can look forward to the winning designs in this exciting project from the Arlington Public Art Youth Initiative. [Learn more>](#)

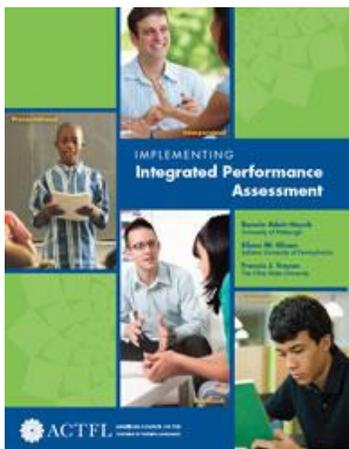
Special Events

Children's Grief Awareness Day Observed to Share Messages of Support and Understanding

With assistance from [The Children's Room](#), Ottoson and Arlington High School observed [Children's Grief Awareness Day](#), providing time to remember and honor the people we care about and let anyone who feels isolated in their grief know that they are not alone. [Read more>](#)

Continue to read the November 2015 Newsletter

Professional Development



Teachers and Staff Dedicate Days to Learning and Performance Improvement

Although it is still early in the school year, our teachers and staff have been heavily engaged in professional development. Staff Excellence and Professional Development is one of the overarching goals of Arlington Public Schools. We are committed to provide high quality professional development that fosters continuous improvement. In the next few paragraphs, I will share a some examples of what has gone on in this area so far.

This month our World Language teachers spent a day with international expert and author Bonnie Adair-Hauck focused on developing [Integrated Performance Assessments](#). This training is part of a long-term vision to shift the curriculum toward developing student proficiency through authentic, real-world language use.

Members of the 6-12 History and Social Studies Department spent a day at the JFK Library and Museum. In the morning, OMS teachers attended a workshop on President Kennedy's connections to different parts of the world, while AHS teachers explored the question, "Did JFK's policies heighten or de-escalate Cold War tensions?" The afternoon included an introduction to the website [Zaption](#), which enables teachers to create customized videos using existing video clips, with the ability to add title cards, assess students with questions or display additional maps or images. Teachers later took part in a "Big Paper,

Silent Conversation" activity to discuss the significance of different historical thinking skills and how to integrate them into the classroom.

Reading Specialists and Title I Tutors devoted a day to learning, sharing, reflecting and setting goals for future work together as a Reading Department. They looked at the use of Leveled Literacy Intervention, reviewed the MCAS English Language Arts data protocol, and talked about repurposing the literacy closets to use the items more effectively.

Supporting all students with math difficulties was the focus of a day for fourth and fifth grade teaching assistants, general education, special education and SLC classroom teachers. Time was spent on building a shared language and starting to work collaboratively. Six through 12th mathematics teachers explored communications and technology. Different activities facilitated an understanding of the difficulty of vocabulary, word choices and communication when solving a problem. Some of the lessons were extended to [DESMOS](#), an online graphing tool that has several built-in explorations that encourage conversation, communication and questioning techniques.

Awards & Distinctions

Eight AHS Musicians Chosen for District, All-State Auditions

Once again we have several excellent high school instrumentalists and vocalists representing Arlington at the Massachusetts Music Educators Association ([MMEA Northeastern District Senior Festival](#)). The performance takes place at Lowell High School on Saturday, January 9, 2016.

Hannah Alton, Henri Choi, Jacob Deck, Olivia Graceffa and Adrian Verspyck will be participating in the District Chorus. Giulia Haible, Fiona Lessel and Isabel Vik-Sheehy will be playing in the Orchestra. Greg Foley will be part of the Band. These young people were among the many outstanding high school musicians from 58 cities and towns who auditioned on November 14. Being chosen is a tremendous honor, and a testament to their skill and dedication to excellence.

Additionally, all eight musicians have been chosen to audition for the MMEA All-State Festival and Concert that will be held at Symphony Hall in March 2016. Congratulations to everyone, and good luck as you enter the All-State Auditions.

Cross Country Freshman Ties Record and Wins the Phil Riley Award

The boys cross country team had an excellent season, marked by many strong performances. One of particular note came at the league meet on November 2. At this meet, freshman Ryan Oosting not only won the freshmen race, he also tied the all-time record with a finish of 6:39 on a 1.5-mile course. This earned him the Phil Riley award. Congratulations Ryan!



AHS Musicians and Teacher Demonstrate String Improvisation at National Conference

Welcome home to AHS Instrumental Music Director Sabato D'Agostino and the three string players who accompanied him to the [National Association for Music Education](#) Conference in Nashville last month.

Sophomore violinist Caroline Dressler, senior violist Cooper Gould and sophomore cellist Giulia Haible were a critical part of Mr. D'Agostino's clinic, *A Fun Approach to Teach Improvisation with Strings*. The music teachers, administrators and the other young players who attended the clinic experienced our students playing beautifully and heard them demonstrating and talking about technique, improvisation and other topics.

Many teachers came forward after the clinic to comment on the students' preparation and professionalism. Mr. D'Agostino was especially touched by comments from a Pennsylvania teacher who said: "Thank you for sharing your ideas with us. This was really enlightening and helpful, and this was the best clinic I have observed so far. Please thank the administrators and parents for supporting this project."

This was a wonderful opportunity for our young people to share their skills, and learn from others by attending informational clinics and band, orchestra, jazz band and choral performances presented by exceptional groups from across the country. Thanks to Caroline, Cooper, Giulia and Mr. D'Agostino for representing Arlington so beautifully at this national conference.



Arlington High School Wins MIAA District B "Sportsmanship" Award

On November 21, Arlington High School received the District B Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) [Sportsmanship](#) award. Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki, AHS Principal Dr. Matthew Janger, Captain's Council representatives and one of our dedicated coaches attended the 21st Annual MIAA Sportsmanship Summit to accept this honor.

This award recognizes the efforts of the AHS teams and coaches to influence the community in a positive way. In addition to displaying sportsmanship and grace on the field, all our teams participate in multiple service activities. These range from unloading Christmas trees and volunteering at the Boys and Girls

Club, to assisting at the Council on Aging and spearheading fundraising and memorial events such as the recent *White Out Cancer* campaign. Our athletes take part in these activities with enthusiasm, pride and the knowledge that they can make a difference.

I want to thank the District B committee that represents the 44 member schools for deciding to honor Arlington High School's athletes, coaches and administration with this award. Congratulations to everyone, and thank you for your contributions to the Arlington community on and off the field.



AP French Students Share "Café Parisien" at Project-Based Learning Conference

Members of Véronique Lahey's AP French class joined her at the [Project-Based Learning Conference 6.0](#) held at Regis College last month. The group was invited to present Ms. Lahey's award-winning class project *Café Parisien*. All AHS French 4 students work in collaborative teams to develop a business proposal for launching a restaurant in Paris. Students Alice Tracey, Sam O'Keefe, Kiran Gite and Vignesh Chockalingham shared their experiences with the project, and Ms. Lahey reports that they did a wonderful job.

Their presentation captured the attention of keynote speaker Sam Seidel, [Director of the Student Experience Lab at the Business Innovation Factory](#). He spent time talking with the students and indicated that he would be interested in being a judge for the *Café Parisien* project next June. The picture above shows Ms. Lahey and all the students with Mr. Seidel in the center. Congratulations to everyone and thank you for sharing this special project with the wider community.

Athletic Director Wins MSSADA/NIAAA Ted Damko Award

The Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA) and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) recognize outstanding athletic administrators in the state every year. I am pleased to share the news that our Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki has won the statewide [Ted Damko award](#). Presentation of the award will be made at the annual conference in March.

There are 370 member schools in the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), divided into eight districts. Each district selects a winner, and makes recommendations to the Executive Board regarding who should receive statewide recognition. The Executive Board makes the final determination.

Upon receiving the news this month, Ms. Dlugolecki reflected upon what an honor it is to be recognized from among the many dedicated and talented athletic directors across the state. She is proud to work with the coaches, athletes and members of the community here in Arlington, and is happy to be a part of the great work they are doing together to move toward a shared vision.

Ms. Dlugolecki has been a part of the Arlington administrative team for three years, during which we have seen significant growth in program participation at Arlington High School. The Captain's Council, which she instituted, was awarded the MIAA Educational Athletics Award in *Leadership* last month. It is gratifying to see her positive efforts recognized with the Ted Damko award, and I offer my sincere congratulations.



World Language Teachers Share Ideas and Gather Knowledge at MaFLA Fall Conference

One again the APS World Language Department was well represented at the [Massachusetts Foreign Language Association \(MaFLA\)](#) Fall Conference. I am pleased to report that two teachers and our World Language Director Catherine Ritz were able to share their knowledge with attendees from across the state. Three 75-minute sessions were presented:

- *Art as a Means to Cultural and Linguistic Learning*, delivered by OMS French teacher Anne Zachary
- *The Proficiency Cohort: Making Shift Happen*, co-led by OMS Mandarin teacher Na Lu-Hogan and Catherine Ritz
- *Assessing Performance: Moving from Chapter Tests to Authentic Assessments*, delivered by Catherine Ritz

Additionally, Na Lu-Hogan led *Integrate Engaging Activities to Advance Mandarin Chinese Proficiency*, a 3-hour workshop for Chinese teachers.

I am delighted that Ms. Zachary, Ms. Lu-Hogan and Ms. Ritz were able to attend this annual conference to share the wonderful work going on at APS and to learn from others by attending additional workshops and sessions. I am also pleased to report that Ms. Ritz is currently serving as the President of MaFLA.

World Language Interpersonal Speaking Assessment Recognized as State Model

In the Professional Development section of this newsletter, I talked about the day our World Language teachers devoted to learning more about developing [Integrated Performance Assessments](#). One of the assessments that the Department has created over the last five years covers Interpersonal Speaking. I am pleased to report that World Language Director Catherine Ritz was invited to present this assessment at the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#) Fall Convening as a model for other districts. Ms. Ritz shared the assessment, discussed the process Arlington went through to develop it, and explained the process for scoring the assessment using a department rubric. Ms. Ritz made the presentation as part of a small group led by Craig Waterman of DESE Educator Development.

The assessment can be viewed on the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association website as a model [District Determined Measure \(DDM\)](#), and will be posted on the DESE website as well. I want to commend all the World Language teachers for their excellent work on developing the assessments, and I am pleased to see their efforts recognized at the state level.

Academic & Enrichment Highlights

Thompson Third Grade Students Flex Their Civic Muscles in Mock Town Meeting

The best way for young people to understand how democracy and governance works is to have them experience it for themselves. This is exactly what Thompson third grade students did this month when they took part in a mock Arlington Town Meeting.

Once at Town Hall, everyone checked-in according to their voting precincts before saying the Pledge of Allegiance and taking the Town Meeting Oath together. There were four different warrants for the group to consider, each of which pertained to their school or the area around it:

- Adding more trash cans to parks and fields
- Building a pedestrian walkway over Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway
- Adding a maze and monkey bars to the playground
- Eliminating Styrofoam trays in the cafeteria

Each issue was introduced by a student reading the warrant. Other young people then took turns coming to the microphone to present arguments for or against the warrant.

There were over 50 parents and community members in attendance and they were able to witness the students fully engaged in authentic, experiential learning about town government. The young people were working hard on their writing, listening and speaking skills. Teachers were proud watching them create an argument and weigh the pros and cons of each issue. The students were very supportive and encouraging of each other as they went up to speak. One important lesson about democracy was learned: It is not a matter of winners or losers when voting, but about making change.

I want to thank the Thompson teachers who helped make it possible for their third grade students to flex their civic muscles. I understand that Stratton students will also be holding a mock Town Meeting as well, and I look forward to learning about their experience.



Dallin Go Green Club Fall Harvest Yields Butterfly Weed Seeds and Sunflower Heads

This fall the award-winning Dallin Go Green Club has been busy harvesting the last of the garden riches. There were about 50 tomatoes left—48 green and two red. There were also wonderful sunflower heads and some very special milkweed pods.

The sunflower heads are each about a foot in size and contain about 50 seeds. These will either be dried to be used in projects by the Kindergarten, or become bird feeders.

The milkweed pods come from *Asclepias Tuberosa*, commonly known as Butterfly Weed. This native milkweed is a favorite food source and host plant for a variety of butterflies—including the threatened Monarch. Club members discovered that it only took a few minutes to garner over 8,000 seeds from the pods! They packaged them in envelopes containing 20-30 seeds, and the packets are now available to

anyone who is interested in attracting butterflies to their yard. You may pick them up at the Department of Public Works, 51 Grove Street, during normal business hours--M, T, W, and F from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm and Thursday from 8:00 m to 7:00 pm. The seeds can be strewn in the fall or started as seedlings indoors and planted in the spring. If you have any questions about starting the seeds, please get in touch with Go Green parent Jeremy Marin at jeremyarlington@marinstrategies.com.

The Go Green Club, open to second through fifth graders, meets every Friday at 7:30 am. The group was honored by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs last year with the Excellence in Energy and Environmental Education [award](#). In addition to their garden, Club members engage in a variety of conservation projects throughout the school year.

OMS Math Club Develops Problem Solving Skills and Prepares for MATHCOUNTS Competition

How do we help students understand the creativity that underlies mathematics, and keep them from seeing the topic as boring? How do we enable interested students to handle more challenging mathematics problems than they get in class? Parent and math tutor Jonathan McIntyre and OMS mathematics teacher Jennifer Rice, co-leaders of the Ottoson Math Club, believe the way to do this is to provide opportunities for students of all levels to tackle challenging math problems and develop creative problem solving skills by always asking if they can find better way.

These are the goals of the weekly Math Club practices, generally attended by approximately 30 students. Participants choose whether to work at the JV level, (slightly easier), or the Varsity level. Each group tackles 20 problems, finishing about half in school and the rest at home. At each practice, the group takes time to go over one or two problem solving techniques. This may involve working through a particularly difficult problem, or asking students to suggest different ways to solve a sample problem. Mr. McIntyre also prepares "hint sheets" that give tips on how to look at a problem creatively.

As the year progresses, the problems get harder. This helps the group get ready to tackle the [MATHCOUNTS](#) competitions coming up in January and February. MATHCOUNTS begins with an in-school meet to determine the ten students that will advance to regional competition, and then hopefully to the state meet. This is the second year that Ottoson students will be participating in MATHCOUNTS.

MATHCOUNTS is one of two large, and very challenging, national mathematics contests for middle school students. [American Mathematical Competitions \(AMC\)](#) is the other one. Participation in the 25 question, 40-minute AMC 8 exam is capped at 100 young people per school. On November 17, 97 OMS students chose to take part. The tests are scored nationally, and various school and individual certificates will be awarded based on performance. AMC 8 tests serve as good practice for those students who wish to go on to AMC 10 and 12 that Mathematics Department Head Matt Coleman administers at Arlington High School. This is very high-level competition, with the top performers going on to the American Invitational Math Exam.

The Math Club also makes the [Continental Mathematics League](#) (CML) tests available to interested OMS students. These consist of six problems of medium to high difficulty to be completed in 30 minutes, and testing is held once a month from November through March. Less intense than MATHCOUNTS or AMC 8, CML tests are a great way to build confidence and give less advanced students a positive competitive experience.

I want to thank Mr. McIntyre and Ms. Rice for their direction of the Math Club, and for giving interested Ottoson students the change to advance mathematically and experience competitions. I am pleased to see so many students interested in taking on these challenges, and I look forward to following your progress throughout the school year.

New Online Course Introduces Music Production

The current online course being led by Music Technology teacher John DiTomaso is a great example of how these opportunities offer academic enrichment to our students. Six students are now enrolled in

[Introduction to Music Production](#), a Berklee College of Music course offered through [Coursera](#). Mr. DiTomaso was drawn to this course by the quality of the curriculum and the online presentation format. The pace is well suited to our students who are interested in developing skill in music production and in possibly pursuing this in college. The six-week course offers 1.25 AP credits.

The students meet with Mr. DiTomaso for an hour each week to discuss and explore the topics covered in the weekly online lesson. Every student completes the lecture and demonstration videos and quizzes, and then submits an instructional tutorial of their own which demonstrates an understanding of one of the topics being covered. The tutorials are shared with the other members of the class, and with online peers. Finishing peer assessment on five tutorials for completeness, accuracy and effectiveness as well as presentation quality is required to earn completed grades on the assignments.

AHS student Tom Barvick describes Music Technology as one of his favorite classes because it enables him to create something that is truly "his". A musician who plays drums, guitar and bass, Tom likes to record musical ideas and songs in his free time. *Introduction to Music Production* appealed to him as a way to improve his skills in this area. He believes that the course has given him tricks and techniques on how to improve what he will record, and he has learned ways to improve the sound after the recording is done. Tom hopes to follow a musical path, and enter a similar program in college. Down the road, he is looking toward a career as a musician, performing and recording his own and other bands in a studio setting.

The new AHS recording studio makes it possible for students to practice the skills taught in each online lesson and get real hands-on experience. Finalizing the studio has been a two-year project, and it is exciting to see the students able to use it for their class work. Mr. DiTomaso hopes to hold a Grand Opening event to introduce the studio, and the opportunities it offers, to the community.



French Dessert Competition Highlights National French Week for AHS Students

Today, from Paris to Dakar to Montreal, and everywhere in between, French is essential to international diplomacy and integral to literature and the arts. By coming together around efforts to expand the teaching and speaking of French, you are helping add to that storied legacy.

--taken from President Barak Obama's message marking National French Week

National French Week took on a special significance for the AP and French 4 students in Arlington High School teacher Véronique Lahey's classes this year. On November 6, about 45 students became pastry chefs and competed against each other to win a free crêpe from [MA-France](#), the French gourmet store in Lexington. The young people presented flan au caramel, tartes aux pommes, tarte a la poire, mousse au chocolat, a specialty dessert each from Corsica and Alsace and various other cakes and cookies. The owners of the store, who offer a pastry assortment from some of the best pâtisseries in Boston and France, judged the competition and were very impressed by the students' desserts. The flan au caramel and the fiadone, a Corsican specialty, tied for the top honor of Prix d'Excellence. First, second and third prize winners were also named. Félicitations to all for creating such délicieuses pâtisseries.

Athletic Highlights

Strong Performances and Tournament Play Capped an Exciting Fall Sports Season

The fall season, with over 500 athletes participating, really set the tone for the year. Both boys and girls cross country teams performed very well, with the girls ending the season with a winning record for the first time since 2012. This was a notable improvement over last year, and since the team is young, the future looks bright. The season ended with boys cross country placing fifth in the division and the girls team placing eighth.

The football team, playing with Coach Ryan Gendron for the first season, had a strong run, and went into the league championship game with a 5-0 record, losing to Reading. Injuries took a toll after that, with the team losing to Wayland in the first round of the Division 3 playoffs. After winning in the closing moments of the annual Thanksgiving game, the team ended the season with a 6-5 record.

Tournament play for both the boys and girls soccer teams ended with shootouts in the Division 2 North quarterfinals. Boys soccer fell to Beverly, and ended the season with ten wins, six losses and four ties. After capturing the Middlesex League title, the girls fell to Woburn.

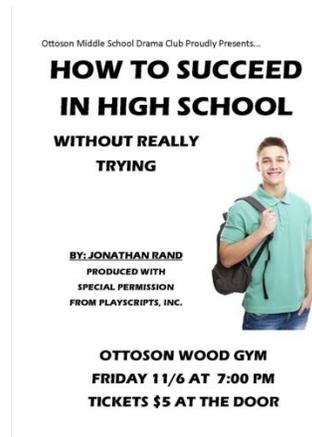
The loss of Captain Catherine Malatesta to cancer before the start of the year was a blow to the field hockey team. They pulled together and the season was particularly notable for the way they spearheaded the *White Out Cancer* initiative and for the number of community service and volunteer activities they participated in.

Girls volleyball, working with new coach Ali Martin, went from last year's record of 3-17 to making the state tournament, where they were defeated in the Division 2 North Quarterfinals. Making it to the state tournament for the first time since 2008 was a tremendous achievement.

This was the first year the swimming team participated in the Middlesex League, competing at a higher level than in the past and taking part in a full schedule. Their season was marked by improvement with every meet. The golf team also did very well this season, missing tournament play by only one point.

Congratulations to all the dedicated athletes who brought us such an exciting fall season. The winter season is shaping up well, with registrations 30% over last year. We can look forward to strong play as basketball, ice hockey, indoor track and field, wrestling and gymnastics get underway.

Creative Highlights



Novel Ways to Navigate High School Leads to Laughter in Ottoson Fall Play

The APS drama season began on November 6 with the OMS production of *How to Succeed in High School without Really Trying*. The play presents an exaggerated look at an average school day that includes grains of truth, and is appealing to both adults and young people. [Jonathan Rand](#), an award-

winning playwright whose work includes comedies and mystery parodies popular with American middle and high schools, is the author.

Since relatively little was required in terms of costumes or sets, this play was particularly well suited to the compressed period of a fall production. The 28 cast members took to the stage after only 15 rehearsals and their efforts were well received by an enthusiastic audience of over 200. Around a dozen additional students assisted the cast by making props, handling make-up and handing out programs, among other tasks.

This is only the second year that Ottoson has done a fall play, and I am delighted to see this becoming an annual tradition. Congratulations to English teacher and Director Jenna Fernandes, and to the cast and crew for giving their audience a delightful evening of laughter.



Ottoson Art Show Features the Work of First Quarter Artists

On November 5, parents and students enjoyed the first of four Ottoson art exhibit receptions that will be held this school year. Every student who had taken art during the first quarter had at least one artwork on display. Ottoson's dynamic team of visual art teachers, Alecia Serafini, Polly Ford and Kayla McKenna, are creating a new curriculum that has young people exploring digital media, three-dimensional art, murals and mixed media processes. With contemporary art forms and artists as their inspiration, the teaching team is engaging students in projects that encourage them to express personal ideas and feelings, and require problem solving and creative thinking while also developing skills in technology.





Jazz Musicians Provide the Beat at the AYCC Gala

I am always pleased to hear that our talented musicians are sharing their gifts with the wider community. Last month a small jazz group made up of three AHS students and one from Lexington came together to perform at the [Arlington Youth Counseling Center](#) (AYCC) annual fundraiser. The organizers were very grateful to bass player Michael Morrisette, guitarist Kevin Lefleur and saxophonist Rahul Sompuram for helping to make the event a success. Thanks to all of you for taking part in this important evening that helps AYCC provide valuable counseling services to benefit Arlington residents.

AHS "A Christmas Carol" Coming in December, Including a "Sensory Friendly" Performance

This year's AHS fall play, *A Christmas Carol*, comes at a time when we are confronted with a lot of anger and negativity in the world. All of us are wondering how we should respond to issues such as the Syrian refugee crisis, the cruelty of ISIS, the rising gun violence in the United States, the opioid epidemic in our own community, and so many other issues that trouble and sadden us. Arlington High School drama teacher Michael Byrne believes that this is the right play for this time because it reminds us that it is our responsibility to meet anger and negativity with love, acceptance and positive behavior.

Forty-two actors and 15 crewmembers will bring us this message on December 18 at 7:30 pm, and again on December 19 at 3:00 and 7:30 pm. There will be a "sensory friendly" performance on December 19 at 11:00 am. Also known as "autistic friendly", these performances use techniques such as reduced sounds and increased lighting to make it more comfortable for audience members with autism. The most important element, however, is a non-judgmental environment, where the audience is able to move around and make noise without fear of complaints.

This year's play is a collaborative effort, with Instrumental Music Director Sabato D'Agostino leading the pit orchestra, Choral Director Madelyn Kitchen coordinating the singing, art teacher Annie Rebola working with students to create a giant puppet, and AHS speech therapist Lauren Peterson helping with the "sensory friendly" performance. Shawn Boyle, AHS class of 1999 who holds a BFA in lighting design and MFA in projection design, is designing the projections for the show. It is wonderful to have an alumnus bringing his professional skills to this production.

Tickets are available in advance from Mktix.com or from cast members. They will also be available at the door. The price is \$10, but this drops to \$8 if you arrive with a donation of a nonperishable food item for the Arlington Food Pantry.

Jury Reviewing Submissions to Art Youth Banner Project

In last month's newsletter, I mentioned that the Arlington Public Art Youth Initiative had placed a [call for all local student artists](#) in grades 7-12 to submit artwork that interprets the theme *Resplendent Nature*. Students from Arlington Catholic, The Children's Room, Germaine Lawrence School and Minuteman High School as well as Arlington High and Ottoson were invited to submit work. The deadline for submission has passed, and the jury will be selecting 30 artworks to be digitized, printed on vinyl banners and hung

along Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center, East Arlington, and Arlington Heights from April through May 2016. A reception to honor the selected artists will be held in April.

I want to thank all students who submitted work for consideration, and I look forward to seeing the winning designs. This is a great opportunity for our young people to share their gifts with the community and we hope this will become an annual event.

Special Events

National Grief Awareness Day Observed to Share Messages of Support and Understanding

In my September newsletter, I shared the fact that our school community was particularly hard hit by the loss of current and former students this year. Many among us are still grieving these losses. In acknowledgement of this, both Ottoson and Arlington High School observed [Children's Grief Awareness Day](#) this month. The day was first created in 2008 by the Highmark Caring Place, and is now observed every year on the Thursday before Thanksgiving. It is a time to remember and honor the people we care about, and feel less alone in our grief.

[The Children's Room](#), a nonprofit organization in Arlington that provides grief support services for children, teens and their families, set up a table at both schools during lunch. This provided a place to share messages of support and learn more about the local resources and programs available to grieving children and teens. AHS students, teachers and staff were encouraged to wear blue to honor the day and let anyone who feels isolated in their grief know that others stand with them.

The holidays can be a particularly difficult time for individuals who have experienced loss, and children often take longer to deal with their grief than we expect. Observing Children's Grief Awareness Day shares this knowledge, and provides a time for us to work together to provide support and care.