



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

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Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

Greetings to all this holiday season! I am happy to report that all our schools are involved in a variety of service projects, including the Town-wide Thanksgiving Food Drive and Coats for Kids. Colleen Lloyd's Kindergarten class at Peirce is collecting spare change that will be used to purchase holiday presents for a local family in need. The AHS Senior Class Council sponsored *Putting 4 Patients* this month and collected money for the Jimmy Fund. The event was held in memory of Catherine Malatesta, who succumbed to cancer in 2015. These are just a few examples of the way our students and their families give back to others in our community during the holidays and throughout the year.

Arlington High School was proud to be the site of a Veteran's Day remembrance display between November 1-13. Each American flag on the front lawn was sponsored by a community member in honor of a beloved veteran. Thanks to the Arlington Rotary Club and the students in our Maker Space for creating and installing this meaningful exhibit.

You will want to mark your calendars now for the AHS Winter Concert being held the evening of December 9 at the Lowe Auditorium. I am happy to also share that the AHS Jazz Band and Madrigal Singers will be taking part in a Holiday Show at Town Hall on December 21 as well.

This election season has been notable for the unusual amount of unkind rhetoric, which has led to sadness and concern among our students. In [Academic & Enrichment](#) below, you will see a story about some of the activities that our young people were involved in during this election season, including an amazing Presidential Debate. Under [Building Safe & Supportive Schools](#), you will learn about the Unity Rally held at Arlington High on November 17. Our young people have been joined by their teachers and staff members in emphasizing that everyone in the community, regardless of ethnicity or religion, is welcome and supported in our schools. We encourage students who are struggling, or who are aware of others struggling with the outcome of the election and what it will mean, to reach out to Guidance, AHS House Deans, school Social Workers or Nurses. If additional assistance is required, walk-in evaluation screening is available through Advocates in Waltham from 7:00 am-11:00 pm (781-893-2003). Counseling resources are also available 24 hours a day at the Massachusetts Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-TALK). Additional counseling services are listed in the [Arlington Public Schools Physical and Mental Health Resource Booklet](#) on the APS website.

In closing, I want to acknowledge that our students and staff have also been saddened by the loss of several Arlington young adults to addiction this month. Our hearts are heavy as we continue to confront this heart-breaking problem in our community. The first two articles in this newsletter under [Building Safe & Supportive Schools](#) share information about efforts going on at Ottoson aimed at preventing these tragedies and I urge you to review them. I also urge you to take a few minutes to listen to a short [NPR interview with US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy](#) that describes the scope of the problem and the importance of school-based prevention programs.

The Arlington Police Department has announced that APD Clinical Responder Rebecca Wolfe and AHS alum Mike Duggan from [Wicked Sober](#) are holding walk-in hours for treatment resources every Thursday from 3:00-5:00 pm in the Community Room on the second floor of Police Headquarters at 112 Mystic

Street. The confidential sessions are open to anyone personally struggling with addiction or those who seek to assist loved ones who battle this disease.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Headline View

Department News

Vendors Selected as Work Continues to Address Enrollment Increases

[HMFH Architects](#) will assess the feasibility of temporary modular classrooms versus permanent construction at Hardy Elementary School, and [Shawmut Design and Construction](#) has been brought on early in the process to renovate the Gibbs so they can take part in planning meetings. [Read more>](#)

State Testing Results Show Strong Performance, Science Scores Well Above State Averages

The results of the PARCC tests taken by students in grades 3-8 were strong, with no difference in scores between online and paper administration. Students taking MCAS tests in grades 3, 8 and 10 scored well above state averages. In the spring, grades 3-8 will take the [Next-Gen MCAS](#), with most students taking it online. [Learn more>](#)

Documentary Challenges Traditional Education as Not Adequate for Today or Tomorrow's Workplace

Arlington Public Schools, the Arlington School Committee and the Arlington Vision 2020 Education Task Group came together this month to present [Most Likely to Succeed](#) at the first of a series of open discussions around the educational vision we want for our children. [Read more>](#)

Building Safe & Supportive Schools

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment Begins in Seventh Grade

This month, seventh grade students have been taking part in confidential, pro-active screenings designed to educate them on the dangers and detriments of substance abuse, identify those at-risk and refer them to counseling or treatment. [Learn more>](#)

New Ottoson Club Addresses Prevention of Substance Abuse

A new afterschool club, Ottoson Cares About Prevention, is pursuing activities designed to help keep the student community safe from harmful substances that include tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs. [Learn more>](#)

Unity Rally Bridges Divides, Spreads Message of Hope, Support and Inclusion

Teachers and students responded to the divisive election season with an after school gathering that offered the opportunity to share stories and remind everyone that the values of acceptance and appreciation of diversity, inclusion, respect and love remain strong at Arlington High School. [Read more>](#)

Grant News

New Arlington Education Foundation Grant Funds Ongoing Teacher Leadership Program

This year's [Arlington Education Foundation](#) School Improvement Grant is enabling the district to move to the next level in creating teacher leaders who take charge of their own professional development and lead alongside their colleagues, increasing effectiveness and enhancing satisfaction and accomplishment. [Read more>](#)

Continuing Scholar Awards Support Teachers Traveling to South Africa

With the help of the [Arlington Education Foundation](#), two Arlington High School teachers will experience

the socioeconomic effects of colonization and Apartheid and, through the exploration of three biological hotspots, learn about the issues of managing biodiversity in complex multicultural societies when they lead a trip to Cape Town next February. [Learn more>](#)

Professional Development

History & Social Studies Teachers Visit Museum of World War II

The Professional Development Day trip to the [Museum of World War II](#) Boston gave our 6-12 grade History & Social Studies teachers a chance to reflect on the role that artifacts and primary sources play in teaching. [Read more>](#)

Awards & Distinctions

AHS World Language Teachers Focus on Making Worldwide Connections at MassCue Conference

It was wonderful to have three current and one former World Language teachers share the way they are using Skype, WeChat and WhatsApp to reach out globally at the [Massachusetts Computer Using Educators \(MassCUE\)](#) Conference last month. [Read more>](#)

New Arlington School Sustainability Coordinator Supports Green Efforts and Waste Reduction

In her new role, Rachel Oliveri is using measurement, reporting, education and outreach as she supports our school green teams and clubs, drives our schools to meet district-wide waste reduction goals and keeps our recycling practices in line with the town's mandatory policy. [Learn more>](#)

AHS Jazz Musicians Support AYCC at Town Gala

Four Arlington High School students contributed their musical gifts to the [Arlington Youth Counseling Center](#) and [Board of Youth Services 6th Annual Out on the Town Gala](#) at Town Hall on November 17, sharing the stage with former White House Chief Strategist and Senior Advisor David Axelrod. [Read more>](#)

Academics & Enrichment

Election Learning Experiences Range from Voting to a Televised Presidential Debate

Students at all levels engaged in a variety of activities to help them understand the election process and what it means to be a citizen. These included mock voting, a trip to the [John F. Kennedy Library](#) for an intra-school discussion and a televised [Arlington High School Presidential Debate](#) between members of the Young Democrats and Teenage Republicans. [Learn more>](#)

Creative Highlights

Strong Performances and a Touch of Magic Make "Peter and the Starcatcher" Shine at AHS

Arlington High School became one of the first high schools in Massachusetts to whisk their audiences off to Neverland with the Drama Guild production of *Peter and the Starcatcher* early this month, a contemporary Tony award-winning play that has many wonderful roles for high-energy young performers. [Read more>](#)

Athletic Highlights

Tournament, Sectional and State Competitive Play Close Out the Fall Athletic Season

There was a lot of excitement as the AHS fall athletic season came to a close, with teams and individuals qualifying for tournament, divisional, sectional, and state competition. Almost 350 young people are participating in the winter season that started November 28. [Learn more>](#)

Continue to read the full November 2016 newsletter

Department News

Vendors Selected as Work Continues to Address Enrollment Increases

Since the Hardy Elementary School is reaching capacity and enrollment growth is projected to continue, the time has come to review the options for housing the increased number of students. We have just chosen [HMFH Architects](#) to assess the feasibility of temporary modular classrooms versus permanent construction. Arlington Public Schools has worked with HMFH on several projects, including the recent cost and feasibility study of options to house our middle school students. The scope of the project calls for the firm to:

- Work with APS to define educational space needs
- Assess existing building and site for possible expansion
- Develop site plan diagrams
- Develop addition floor plan diagrams
- Identify code and program-related renovation scope
- Develop budget estimate
- Develop study report document

I look forward to sharing the results of their assessment early next year.

A contractor has been chosen for the renovation of Gibbs to create a sixth grade school. [Shawmut Design and Construction](#) has been brought on early in the process so that they can participate in what is known as Construction Management at Risk. This enables the contractor to be involved in planning meetings, develop an understanding of the educational issues of room placement and submit feedback on cost and trade-offs throughout the process. This provides APS with the best possible understanding of the overall budget, and facilitates early, thoughtful decisions on elements of the project. There will be an opportunity for the public to see the draft design and provide feedback during December. The Gibbs Advisory Committee, consisting of parents, teachers and administrators, will be in place by the end of the year.

State Testing Results Show Strong Performance, Science Scores Well Above State Averages

The results of last year's round of state testing have been released, and I am pleased to report that our district continues to show strong performance. The PARCC tests administered to the students in grades three through eight were new to us. Because school districts did not have any previous experience with these tests, results have been "held harmless"--in other words, they do not affect our accountability scores. I am also happy to report that there was no difference in scores between students taking the test online and those taking it on paper. The feedback from teachers and administrators involved in online testing was very positive.

MCAS science tests were administered in grades 5 and 8, and MCAS English Language Arts and Math exams were taken by tenth grade students. In all cases, our young people scored significantly higher than the state averages.

This spring, all students at Ottoson will take the [Next-Gen MCAS](#) online, along with all fourth grade students, and those in the third and fifth grades at Bishop and Peirce. All third and fifth grade students at the remaining five elementary schools will be taking the test on paper. This is part of our planned effort to ramp up to the point where all our young people are being tested online. I am pleased that our transition to the new test formats and administration method is going smoothly, and I thank all our students and faculty members for their hard work and resilience.

Documentary Challenges Traditional Education as Not Adequate for Today or Tomorrow's Workplace

"If we can compete with other countries, it's got to be in producing citizens capable of innovative thinking--not citizens capable of industrial production, not citizens capable of assembling iPads.

We are going to lose if that's what we think we are producing. The old blue collar model of education is already gone. We are already living in its wake." --Jed Silverstein, English/Philosophy Teacher, Riverside Country School, New York

This quote is one of many statements delivered by educators and researchers in the documentary [Most Likely to Succeed](#)--a film that asks us if it is time to rethink the traditional, 1893-model of education and change it to meet the needs of the modern world. Arlington Public Schools, the Arlington School Committee and the Arlington Vision 2020 Education Task Group came together this month to present the documentary in the first of a series of open discussions around the educational vision we want for our children. The film centers on the experiences of students and teachers at High Tech High, a place that is challenging what are considered the archaic measures of success in most schools today. At High Tech High, "soft skills" like confidence, time management and collaboration are developed through project-based learning.

The documentary asks the audience to consider what people will do when many jobs are replaced by artificial intelligence and robots, and suggests that traditional school models are graduating individuals who have skills the economy cannot use. The theme is that education for today and tomorrow has to focus on skills rather than on a body of knowledge. The Internet has made content ubiquitous and mostly free. The skills that are believed to really make people successful--creativity, perseverance, collaboration, confidence, and self-motivation--are learned through practice over time. As we watch *Most Likely to Succeed*, we see students engaging in challenging projects that their teachers and administrators believe will help them learn what they need for future success.

The showing of the film comes at an important time in Arlington. In order to consider the best designs for the schools we are renovating or rebuilding, we need to understand our vision of education and create spaces that support it. The Massachusetts School Building Authority believes this strongly, and shows the documentary film during its orientation day for all school districts entering their process. As reported previously, we are now in the MSBA 270-day Eligibility Period to rebuild or renovate Arlington High School.

The feeling of many educators, and the key thing that our community needs to keep in mind as we move forward in our building projects, is summed up in another quote from the film. Linda Darling-Hammond, Professor of Education at Stanford, says:

"The kind of people who succeed in various kinds of job setting are those who are resourceful, resilient, will keep at it, will continue to learn, and have a learning growth mindset."

The next community session to consider explore these issues will be held in early December, and I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

Building Safe & Supportive Schools

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment Begins in Seventh Grade

This year we are fortunate to have a new opportunity to educate seventh grade students on the dangers and detriments of substance abuse, and of getting into a car with anyone who may be under the influence of substances or alcohol. We have just rolled-out the [Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment](#) (SBIRT) program. Last year, Nursing Director Dr. Susan Franchi learned that the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#) was offering a one-time grant to train staff to implement this protocol in schools. Since she knew that the state was probably going to make SBIRT mandatory, she immediately applied. This funding has made it possible for us to get our program going as soon as possible.

Coordinator Ivy LaPlante, the Director of the [Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition](#), has been organizing the confidential screenings with the nurses, Physical Education teachers and the Ottoson administration. Each screening lasts from 5-15 minutes, depending upon the outcome. Every student receives individualized information based on the results and risk assessment. Young people who have a

positive screening are referred to treatment or counseling. The results of the screening do not enter a student's medical or any other records. Parents are notified beforehand and they can choose to have their child opt-out if they wish.

Although it is difficult to tell what the long term benefits of SBIRT will be, the screening opens a dialogue and begins a trusting relationship between the student and screener so that effective change can occur. Substance abuse is a health hazard that has no mercy, and I thank everyone who is taking part in this process to keep our children safe.

New Ottoson Club Addresses Prevention of Substance Abuse

"An estimated 20.8 million people in our country are living with a substance use disorder. This is similar to the number of people who have diabetes, and 1.5 times the number of people who have all cancers combined."--US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, NPR interview, November 17, 2016

The quote above comes from this month's [NPR interview with the Surgeon General](#) that all families should take the time to review. In the interview, Mr. Murthy is talking about a broad new report that addresses the addiction and misuse and abuse of chemical substances. In his remarks, he mentions the importance of prevention and cites school-based programs as one of the effective ways we have to address these issues. I am pleased to tell you that we have a new afterschool club at Ottoson that is an example of such an effort.

The mission of Ottoson Cares About Prevention (OCAP), led by OMS Physical Education teacher Maureen Nee and Karen Dillon, Youth and Outreach Coordinator at the [Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition](#), is to keep the student community safe from any substance use and support healthy decisions. The club is jointly sponsored by the [Sanborn Foundation](#), Arlington Public Schools Health and Wellness Department and the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition.

The [Arlington High School Club 84](#) is one of the most active chapters of [The 84 Movement](#) in the state. This group engages in outreach, research, education and activism to fight Big Tobacco and encourage people to stop smoking. OCAP has chosen to pursue a broader approach at Ottoson. Based upon the results of the OMS Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the vast majority of our middle school students are not smoking, drinking or taking illegal drugs. This is wonderful news, and OCAP wants to support these students making choices to protect their health by offering prevention awareness, activities and education. The group will strive to remove the stigmas attached to substance use and mental illness and provide skills and information to lead to a healthy future.

The club has already begun planning their first school-wide activity. Members will gather information to determine what "prevention" means to OMS students. After consolidating the responses, they will create a student guide to substance abuse prevention. Up to ten members plan to attend the *You Lead, Youth Leading Everywhere Abstaining from Drugs Conference* that the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association and Massachusetts Partnership for Youth plan for January 2017. This will help the group learn about the actions other schools are taking and bring back ideas for activities that OMS can implement.

Members of OCAP have designed a logo that they hope will help them spread the message that being knowledgeable, protecting your brain and making healthy choices are the real ways to be "cool" and true to yourself. The club plans to meet every two weeks after school on Wednesdays, and the next meeting is in Room 217 on December 7. Anyone interested in learning more is invited to contact Ms. Nee at mnee@arlington.k12.ma.us. All students are welcome to attend and be part of shaping the club into a fun, informative and supportive institution.

I look forward to reporting on the club's activities as the year unfolds. Thanks to Ms. Nee and Ms. Dillon for leading the group, and to Cindy Bouvier, former Director of Health & Wellness, for promoting the idea of starting the club at OMS.

Unity Rally Bridges Divides, Spreads Message of Hope, Support and Inclusion

After such a divisive national election, many student leaders felt it was important to offer an opportunity for everyone to come together and remind each other that the values of acceptance and appreciation of diversity, inclusion, respect and love remain strong at Arlington High School. On November 17, a large group of students and teachers gathered at a Unity Rally to tell their stories and deliver messages of hope. These are some of the thoughts that our young people shared:

- Dividing into two separate teams won't fix the problems in our country. It only creates more problems.
- Our diversity makes us special.
- Every day we need to love and support each other.
- We must work to create a world that is tolerant and embraces all individuals.
- Even if we are too young to vote, we can still have a say.
- We can create a positive environment by the way we talk to each other every day.
- Many of us share the same struggles.
- Remember the power of empathy, and the way it can bring people together.

It was wonderful to hear so many students willing to express the way they feel included as part of the school community regardless of their sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity or religion. The Rally ended with everyone joining in on the song *Lean On Me*, and many left with Post-it notes on which to write messages of love and acceptance that they could place outside the Media Center for all to read. I am proud that our young people wanted to come forward to speak their values and assure each other that AHS supports and celebrates all students.

Grant News

New Arlington Education Foundation Grant Funds Ongoing Teacher Leadership Program

Teacher leadership is an area that Arlington Public Schools has been pursuing over the last two years. The goals are to help our teachers develop the skills they need to take charge of their own professional development, to lead alongside their colleagues and to create the types of learning experiences that contribute to the most growth in their practice. This work helps teachers increase their effectiveness with students and enhances their sense of satisfaction and accomplishment with their careers in the classroom.

This year's [Arlington Education Foundation](#) School Improvement Grant is enabling the district to move to the next level. In August, ten teachers began a yearlong graduate level Instructional Leadership course offered through collaboration with nonprofit professional development and consulting organization [Teachers21](#). Another cohort will begin this study in December.

Thirteen teachers attended the day-long conference, [Lucy Calkins Leading Implementation of Units of Study](#) in October. This workshop is offered by the Columbia University Teachers College Reading & Writing Project, and is designed to help school leaders support best practices in the teaching of writing and reading. The attendees included eight Literacy Leader classroom teachers, two Literacy Coaches, two Principals and Assistant Superintendent Laura Chesson.

Our Literacy Coaches have been meeting with both new recruits and experienced Literacy Lab teachers to create opportunities to share their work. As I mentioned in my October newsletter, we are now using [SWIVL](#) recorders to create videos of lessons that can be viewed by teachers at their convenience. This allows teachers to see what the lessons look like in actual practice without having to leave their own classrooms to see their peers in action. Four first and second grade teachers are currently videotaping the lessons from the first reading units.

Through these efforts, we will have substantially completed our upgrade of the Common Core literacy units at the elementary level. We will have a cohort of teachers who can branch out to continue leading instruction in other areas and will have a model to share and replicate in other content areas and departments. I am grateful to the Arlington Education Foundation for their continuing support of this work, and to Literacy Coaches Linda Hanson and Tammy McBride and Assistant Superintendent Laura Chesson for leading this important program to create Teacher Leaders.

Continuing Scholar Awards Support Teachers Traveling to South Africa

Thanks to the assistance of the [Arlington Education Foundation](#), AHS History & Social Studies teacher Melanie Konstandakis-Schwartz and Biology teacher Graham Daley will accompany a group of students to Cape Town, South Africa next February. This is a trip that will have broad applications in their teaching.

As a US History teacher, Ms. Konstandakis-Schwartz has worked with her students to understand the connections between Apartheid and US segregation. In her Modern World History classes, she explores the socioeconomic effects of colonization on African history as well as Apartheid in South Africa. The trip will enhance her understanding of the lasting effects of this history.

Ms. Daley is excited about the unique experience the trip offers her to understand the two coastal biomes and two plant biomes unique to Cape Town. The group will visit three biological hotspots accompanied by a local biologist. She will learn about the issues of managing biodiversity in complex multicultural contexts, including how to protect biomes when people live in them and depend upon them for subsistence. Since the trip includes partnering with a South African high school, her observations of the school structure, organization, and lessons and approaches to biology will inform her own teaching.

Both teachers will be sharing what they learn with colleagues upon their return. Ms. Konstandakis-Schwartz participates in a Professional Learning Community made up of other members of the Modern World History teaching team. They are currently reevaluating the curriculum to make it focus more on non-European history and modern events. Ms. Daley believes that the unique combination of biology and the complexities of life in multicultural societies that she will experience will help her show her students the link between caring for others and fixing and addressing the serious problems that face our society and larger world. I thank the Arlington Education Foundation for supporting these teachers.

Professional Development



History & Social Studies Teachers Visit Museum of World War II

The Professional Development Day this month gave our teachers an opportunity to do things they might not otherwise have the time to experience together. One great example of this is the trip our 6-12 History & Social Studies teachers took to the [Museum of World War II](#) Boston in Natick on November 8. This is an amazing research and educational institution. There are over 7,000 artifacts on display and over 500,000 documents and photographs in the archives. The museum is dedicated to showing not only the

military and political realities of the war, but also to making sure the human story comes through. In addition to the primary documents and artifacts such as Sherman tanks and parachutes, the collection also includes possessions of people who lived through the war, making that human connection.

History & Social Studies Director Denny Conklin said that the visit helped our teachers reflect on the role that artifacts and primary sources play in teaching. It also was a time to think about how different museum collections present narratives and perspectives on an event. Mr. Conklin recommends the museum to anyone with an interest in World War II, and visits can be scheduled Tuesday through Saturday by emailing the museum at visit@museumofworldwarII, I am glad that our teachers were able to have this opportunity and I know it will inform their teaching in the days to come.

Awards & Distinctions



AHS World Language Teachers Focus on Making Worldwide Connections at MassCue Conference

It is always gratifying when our teachers are able to share what we are doing at Arlington High school with other educators. This October, World Language Director Catherine Ritz, AHS Spanish teacher Christina Toro, OMS Mandarin teacher Na Lu-Hogan and former OMS Spanish teacher Alexa Finck attended the [Massachusetts Computer Using Educators \(MassCUE\)](#) Conference to present some of the ways they are using technology to move beyond the classroom.

Their *Go Global: Making Digital Connections* presentation focused on how Skype, WeChat and WhatsApp have been used to bring their students together with native speakers in El Salvador, Colombia and China. Our teachers shared the processes and preparation involved in finding collaborators and setting up and conducting the conversations. These tools are a wonderful way to make cultural connections, expand the curriculum, and demonstrate the power of language to bridge barriers and share information. I thank Ms. Ritz, Ms. Toro, Ms. Hogan and Ms. Finck for attending the conference and spreading the word about the innovative ways they are helping their students deepen their understanding of Spanish and Mandarin by reaching out across the globe.

New Arlington School Sustainability Coordinator Supports Green Efforts and Waste Reduction

It has been a busy fall for the new Arlington School Sustainability Coordinator, Rachel Oliveri. She is a regular visitor at all nine schools, observing lunchrooms, and meeting with students, parents, teachers, lunch monitors, custodians, food service personnel and administrators to understand what they are doing

around waste reduction and discuss needs for the coming year. She suggests improvements in recycling sorting station set up and signage, and is getting ready to support the three schools who will be conducting waste audits over the next few months. These efforts, and the amazing work she has planned, are all part of her role to lead APS toward improving our recycling practices in keeping with the town's mandatory policy.

Ms. Oliveri's activities will involve measurement, reporting, education and outreach as she drives our schools to meet district-wide waste reduction goals. She will strive to expand food waste diversion efforts and increase our use of compostable food trays. Supporting our school green teams and environmental clubs is an important part of her role. She plans to work with teachers, parents and students to register their classrooms and groups as [Green Teams](#) through the [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#). This registration provides access to educational resources and equipment. By the end of the school year she wants to create a "green lending library" that will allow all schools to share resource kits containing materials and ideas for activities.

Ms. Oliveri comes to this work inspired by the students, teachers, staff and parents she has met who share their creative ideas and passion for making a difference in our town and for our planet. As a member of the Green Initiative Group (GIG) at Brackett, she worked with a team of dedicated volunteers to start the district's first lunch recycling program in April 2012. After two years, 500-700 garbage bags of waste were being diverted out of the Brackett waste stream each year. When a rough winter caused the tumblers outside the school to freeze, Ms. Oliveri was one of the GIG members who worked with Whole Foods to accept the Brackett lunch waste and add it to their pick-up service, solving the problem.

Over the last four years, we have seen interest in green initiatives grow throughout the district, and we are fortunate to have Ms. Oliveri on board to expand and direct our activities. She indicates that there will be a town-wide Green Team event in March 2017, and I will share those details with you as they become available. Ms. Oliveri is available to do workshops and presentations for classrooms, teacher/staff meetings, and student or parent groups. You may contact her at roliveri@arlington.k12.ma.us for more information. Welcome aboard Ms. Oliveri!



AHS Jazz Musicians Support AYCC at Town Gala

I am delighted that there were four of our talented AHS jazz musicians performing at the [Arlington Youth Counseling Center](#) and [Board of Youth Services](#) 6th Annual Out on the Town Gala at Town Hall on November 17. This evening brings people together to support the work of AYCC and promote the value of community mental health. Over the past year, AYCC has provided over 5,350 counseling and psychiatric sessions to over 350 youth and families, regardless of their ability to pay.

This year's [gala](#) included keynote speaker David Axelrod, formerly the Chief Strategist and Senior Advisor to President Obama. His remarks emphasized the importance of the work done by AYCC as he recounted the story of his father who committed suicide while Mr. Axelrod was a student at the University of Chicago. The musical contribution of our students was much appreciated, and I thank them for taking the time to support the good work of this organization.

Academics and Enrichment



A Day in the Life of the President

Read the schedule to see what the president's day might be like.

TIME	WHAT THE PRESIDENT DOES
6:30 – 7:30 a.m.	Goes jogging with Secret Service agents
8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Meets with the White House staff
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Talks to reporters
11:00 a.m. – noon	Makes phone calls
12:15 – 1:30 p.m.	Has lunch with the vice president
2:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Meets with world leaders
5:30 – 6:15 p.m.	Goes for a walk with the dogs
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Attends a dinner party

...include to answer the questions below.

Election Learning Experiences Range from Voting to a Televised Presidential Debate

The presidential elections offer some excellent opportunities for our young people to understand what it means to be a citizen of the United States, and our teachers and staff work hard to offer many opportunities for participation, reflecting and learning. All of our schools were involved in different activities this years, from mock elections to projects that helped students understand the jobs of our elected officials.

Lisa Clark, who teaches AP US History, US History 2 and American Popular Culture at AHS, accompanied some students to the [John F. Kennedy Library](#) to learn more about the election. Our young people joined those from other schools at the event, and Ms. Clark reports that their enthusiasm was such that the facilitator felt compelled to ask them to allow others to participate!

Understanding the Massachusetts ballot questions was a focus for Ian MacKay's tenth grade US History 1 students. The class researched the issues and then used Arlington Town Meeting procedures to voice their opinions on each of the ballot questions. By insisting that the students craft strong arguments by anticipating counterarguments, Mr. MacKay helped them develop an important higher order of thinking skill.

One very special event this year was the [Arlington High School Presidential Debate](#). The idea for the debate came from two students. Gayatri Sundar Rajan and Tarangana Thapa wanted to create an avenue for other students to express their opinions and views on the issues of interest to young people such as climate change, LGBTQ rights, a woman's right to choose and immigration. A debate between the Young Democrats Club and the Teenage Republicans Club seemed like the best way to hear opposing opinions in the critical days before the election. The goal was a debate on policies and not on the candidates themselves.

Each club received the list of topics, selected two representatives to take part and began their research. For example, Teenage Republican Ben Jacey took notes on each topic, read through the 2016 Republican Platform and based his arguments off that and his own personal views. His research came up with facts and figures that he wanted to include, and he practiced with some "liberal" friends to get ready. Tarangana did research on prior statements made by the candidates and the parties and formulated the questions. Gayatri worked with [ACMi](#) Youth Coordinator, Kevin Wetmore, to design the set, prepare the crew and equipment and did the work required to make technical production at Studio B as smooth as

possible. The debate was held in front of a live audience, a school audience watched on a big screen, and access to the live streamed video was provided to students who couldn't attend the physical happenings. Ben was joined by Erick Tsaousidis on the Republican side and Adam Deakin and Jake Tamir-Pinsky spoke for the Democrats.

There was a lot of excitement after the debate. The participants walked back to AHS laughing and talking about how great the experience was, and received many texts and Snapchats from friends who watched. Other friends and teachers were generous with their complements in person. Both the Young Democrats and Teenage Republicans wanted, and delivered, a civil, meaningful debate. When the idea of an afternoon Unity Rally was raised, both groups agreed to take part.

It can be difficult to be a proponent of a minority set of beliefs. This debate was a chance for both sides to present their arguments with skill, background and solid reasoning. Both clubs take their roles as informed and committed citizens very seriously, and honor political diversity. The Teenage Republicans, for example, have raised over \$5,500 for charities over the past few years. The Wounded Warriors Project has been a recipient and the group's red, white and blue-themed dances have raised money for cancer patients and related charities.

With the help of the AHS administration (and only two weeks' notice), AHS students were given an opportunity to pose questions to the representatives prior to the debate. They also ensured that each student had access to the link for the live stream. The ACMi crew did a great job filming while surrounded by a live audience of about 20 students, parents and friends. This debate is a wonderful example of what can happen when individuals respect each other and work as a team. Congratulations to everyone who took part and helped to make this happen.

Creative Highlights



Strong Performances and a Touch of Magic Make "Peter and the Starcatcher" Shine at AHS

Adults and children alike have been fascinated by the story of Peter Pan and Wendy ever since J.M. Barrie brought the story to readers and theater goers in the early 20th century. But how did Peter become the boy who never grew up? How did he get to Neverland? Authors Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson sought to answer those questions in a 2006 novel that was later adapted to the stage as *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Those who attended the Arlington High School Drama Guild production of this Tony-award winning play got the opportunity to understand Peter, the Lost Boys and Captain Hook (once known as the Black Stache) in a whole new way early this month. *Peter and the Starcatcher* transports the audiences back to 1885, where an orphan boy meets Molly, the daughter of famous Starcatcher Lord Astor, on a mission to save the world. Thanks to a dunk in a golden, starstuff-infused lagoon on a remote island, the orphan becomes Peter--the boy who will be forever young. He remains on the island, and Molly returns to England, where she grows up, marries and raises her daughter, Wendy.

AHS Drama teacher Michael Byrne, who directed and choreographed the production, was glad to find a piece written by a contemporary playwright with many wonderful roles suitable for young performers. The show is very actor-driven with a hip feel that fits well with the high energy of adolescent actors. Our production was one of the first in Massachusetts. Waltham and Amherst High Schools presented it the week before, and several others on the same weekend.

I want to commend Mr. Byrne, the 46 actors and the additional 15 who provided stage management and worked as part of the crew for this excellent production. Kudos also to the three musicians who worked offstage, the 20 students who worked with Maker Space and Wood Technology teacher Frank Tassone on set construction and painting, and to photographer John Soares who took the great pictures of the cast and crew. Thank you all for exercising our imaginations and taking us on a fun-filled trip to Neverland.



Athletic Highlights

Tournament, Sectional and State Competitive Play Close Out the Fall Athletic Season

There was a lot of excitement as the AHS fall athletic season came to a close. Boys soccer went into tournament play as eighth seed in the league. They took the first game against Boston Latin and then fell to Winchester, ending a terrific run. Girls soccer went into tournament play first in Division 2 North, and took it all the way to the state championship. After prevailing over East Boston, Concord-Carlisle, Marblehead and Danvers the girls fell to Hingham in the state finals game, with Hingham breaking the 1-1 tie in overtime play to win at 2-1. Congratulations to the team for a very successful season! Their hard work, team focus and perseverance was very evident all season.

The state ranked boys cross country team ended the season second in the Middlesex League with a 5-2 record. They continued to shine, placing third in the league championship, second in the divisional, and qualifying for the state championship. Congratulations to competitor Ryan Oosting on his stellar performances throughout the season. Ryan ended the season having:

- Broken three course records during regular season
- Won every regular season race he ran
- Won the individual league championship title
- Won the individual division title, beating the next competitor by 50 seconds.

Way to go Ryan!

The swim team had a great season, ending with a 5-5 record and several athletes qualifying for sectional and state competition. Sectional qualifiers included the boys 200 meter medley relay, and 200 and 400 meter freestyle relay teams, as well as individual swimmers--Elizabeth Pokress in 100 meter backstroke, Joey Dalton, Timothy Mahoney and Richard Mclsaac in 100 meter freestyle, Andrew Johnson MacDonald, Richard Mclsaac and Austin Lu in the 50 meter freestyle and Timothy Mahoney in 100 meter

breaststroke. The boys 200 meter medley relay team qualified for state competition as did Richard McIsaac in the 50 meter freestyle.

It was a building year for the football team, but they really came together as the season came to a close, winning every single game in November. The team topped off the season with a Thanksgiving win over Arlington Catholic.

I want to congratulate all the wonderful athletes who competed this fall, and welcome our winter athletes whose season began on November 28. Almost 350 young people will be participating on the boys basketball, ice hockey, indoor track and field and wrestling teams and the girls basketball, ice hockey, indoor track and field, gymnastics and cheering teams. Good luck to everyone!

