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Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

Once again, the community has shown its tremendous support for our efforts to house the growing number of students in our district. I want to thank Town Meeting for authorizing the funds necessary to begin the process of adding classroom space at the Thompson Elementary School. Thompson is already beyond capacity, and the fifth grade is currently meeting in modular classrooms. The school was built for three classrooms at each grade level, except for Kindergarten, which has four. The proposed addition will make four classrooms available per grade. I will keep you informed as we move forward.

We continue to make progress toward improvements to the high school. As reported last month, we are in the Massachusetts School Building Authority's 270-day Eligibility Period in the process to rebuild or renovate Arlington High School. Several required documents will be submitted during this timeframe, and the full list of items and deadlines is now posted on the APS website--view by clicking [here](#).

Significant work on determining the guiding principles for design of the Gibbs sixth grade school occurred during September. A School Faculty Visioning Workshop was held on September 20, and parents and community members had a chance to make their voices heard at an open meeting on September 27. The Leadership Team used this input to create a list of Guiding Principles and priorities for design--a framework of educational and facility related priorities. The firm chosen to design the Gibbs renovations, [Finegold Alexander Architects](#), will be working toward a design that creates a school that encompasses the following:

- Warm, Safe and Inviting
- Creative and Visible Learning
- Neighborhood Clusters
- Community Access
- Flexible and Adaptable
- Building as Teacher
- Outdoor Connections

You may view the notes from all the meetings and see more detail on the Guiding Principles by clicking [here](#).

In closing, I would like to invite you to attend the Community Dialogue on Education being held November 16 at 7:00pm in the AHS Lowe Auditorium. Arlington Public Schools is teaming with the Vision 2020 Education Task Group and the Arlington School Committee to bring the thought provoking documentary [Most Likely to Succeed](#) to the community. The film will be followed by a discussion about the movie's themes and our community's definitions of success and excellence in our public schools. This is the first of many sessions we will hold over the school year in order to create a set of principles to inform the many decisions we face regarding our schools. I know you will find it a very rewarding evening, and I hope many of you will be able to attend.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Headline View

Building Safe and Supportive Schools

Fifth Grade Leadership Program Contributes to Child-Centered Environment at Stratton

Accepting new responsibilities, making decisions, setting agendas and planning and leading meetings are new ways that Stratton fifth grade students can show their P.R.I.D.E. in themselves and their school this year. [Learn more>](#)

"Inside OUT Ottoson: This is Who We Are" Gives Students a Personal and Public Voice

A beautiful and inspiring art installation of over 100 black and white student portraits celebrates the differences among us, and affirms the school's determination to respect all members of the community regardless of race, gender, ethnicity and personal identity. [Read more>](#)

"Be The Best You" Honors Ottoson Students Working to Become Their Best Selves

Our words have power, and Ottoson's new quarterly recognition program will honor students who exhibit qualities and behaviors that demonstrate they are reflecting on how they speak, interact with each other and make decisions as they strive to be the best version of themselves. [Learn more>](#)

"AHS Voices United" Aims to Address Bullying, Bias and Create a More Positive School Culture

Developed out of work conducted over the last year and a half, the *AHS Voices United* initiative will engage student volunteers in leadership workshops designed to help them understand and address instances of bullying, bias, harassment and degrading language among their peers. Their new skills will enable these student leaders to help build a more positive and inclusive school community. [Learn more>](#)

Professional Development

Lesley University Courses Provide Skills to Recognize the Effects of Trauma and Take Action

Courses offered by the [Lesley Institute for Trauma Sensitivity](#) are giving our educators the skills they need to understand what lies behind observed behaviors and identify strategies to mitigate the impact on learning. [Read more>](#)

Grants

New Care Coordinator Serves as Focal Point for Diabetic Students and their Families

Diabetes management is challenging, but with a new Diabetic Care Coordinator to outreach to medical professionals, educate diabetic students and their families and work with our school nurses on diabetes care and management, we should see positive effects on the wellness of this group of students. [Learn more>](#)

Awards & Distinctions

Assistant Superintendent Shares District Use of Technology at SchoolCIO Summit

Dr. Laura Chesson spoke on our use of [SWIVL](#) video recorders in teacher-led professional development and on our efforts to expand equitable access of technology to all students at the invitation-only [SchoolCIO Summit](#) last month. [Learn more>](#)

Dallin Go Green Club Helps to Raise Gas Leak Awareness

After participating in the [town-wide initiative](#) to raise awareness about natural gas leaks, the members of the Go Green Club have a greater understanding of the scope of the issue and the dimensions of the problem. [Read more>](#)

Five AHS Students Achieve Global Competency

Congratulations to the five young people who have completed the rigorous [requirements](#) necessary to

earn a certificate in the [AHS Global Competence Program](#). This program recognizes students who want to develop an expanded knowledge of their relationship to the world and help others embrace multiple perspectives. [Read more>](#)

AHS Student is Master of Ceremonies at AIFF Student Filmmaker's Award Program

The Arlington International Film Festival recognized Gayatri Sundar Rajan for the speaking skills she has developed through her media work by naming her Master of Ceremonies for this year's Student Filmmaker's Award Program. [Learn more>](#)

Academics & Enrichment

Full Option Science System (FOSS) Involves Elementary Students in the Scientific Process

With its emphasis on student engagement and investigation, the [FOSS](#) science curriculum, now implemented in grades 1-5, is a well-rounded program that meets the new [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Curriculum Framework](#). [Read more>](#)

New Pilot Program Aims to Build Bridges Between Dallin Fifth Grade Students and Seniors

The six week [Bridges: Growing Together™](#) program uses discussions and projects to help fifth grade and elder adult participants learn from, and about, each other as they explore aspects of their lives. [Read more>](#)

Bishop Learning Garden Enriches Curriculum and Community

With 11 raised beds, a composting station, outdoor storage shed, water station and various areas for lessons, the Learning Garden creates opportunities for outdoor and hands-on experiential learning, enriching existing curriculum and increasing the agri-literacy of students, teachers, parents and community members. [Learn more>](#)

High School Mentors Help Get OMS Speech & Debate Club Going

After high school Speech & Debate Club members approached an OMS English teacher about starting a feeder program, a new opportunity for interested students to learn speech and debate techniques was created. [Learn more>](#)

Online Courses Respond to AHS Student Requests to Pursue Topics of Interest

Two online [Coursera](#) courses, one on health and nutrition and the other on the emergence of the Middle East, are enabling students to pursue their interests and earn AP credit. [Read more>](#)

French Students Stay with Host Families, Enjoy Boston and Surrounding Areas

The biennial French exchange program, begun in 2006, kicked-off this month with a visit from 28 students and three teachers from Melun, France. The visitors will host our students with reciprocal home stays next April. [Learn more>](#)

Athletic Highlights

Pep Rally, Dig Pink, Operation Hat Trick and Strong Field Performances Mark Fall Athletic Season

A Pep Rally, service projects and faculty competitions helped to make the fall season memorable as boys soccer, girls soccer and golf moved into team tournament play, and boys and girls cross country competitors participated in individual tournaments. [Read more>](#)

Continue to read the full October 2016 newsletter

Building Safe and Supportive Schools

Fifth Grade Leadership Program Contributes to Child-Centered Environment at Stratton

Many of you know that our schools identify and communicate values that set standards of behavior and articulate the culture that each community hopes to achieve. The Stratton Constitution, ratified last May, asks everyone to "Always show P.R.I.D.E towards yourself, others and Stratton School". P.R.I.D.E. stands for Perseverance, Respect/Responsibility, Independence, Dedication and Empowerment. This

year, a new leadership program offers more opportunities for Stratton fifth grade students to act upon these values.

Approximately half the fifth grade class has volunteered to take on additional responsibilities and now perform at least one of nine different jobs that have been identified. Kindergarten, first and second grade students are now escorted to their rooms every morning by a fifth grade student. Others provide the direction necessary to get students going to outside after-school programs where they need to be at the end of the day. Every morning, fifth grade students lead the Pledge of Allegiance, recite the Stratton Constitution, and provide a radio show complete with jokes, news and announcements.

Stratton holds monthly P.R.I.D.E meetings attended by the entire school, and there are now three fifth grade students helping to plan, organize and run these sessions. This past month Principal Michael Hanna needed to be offsite when the meeting was held, but there was no reason to reschedule. The fifth grade leaders had worked with him on the agenda and they were ready to take the helm. The P.R.I.D. E. meeting went off as planned.

Every couple of weeks the entire fifth grade gets together for a meeting, planned and executed by their peers. Brainstorming sessions have led to new ideas for accepting more responsibility, such as tutoring Kindergarten or first grade students during the day, or choosing their own seats in the lunchroom. Three fifth grade students have come forward to use pictures and video to record the experience of being in the modular school. The video yearbook they create will document and preserve the renovation year.

Arlington Public Schools is committed to building child-centered, safe and joyful learning communities in our schools. A child-centered environment calls for collaboration between students and teachers. Educators are asked to allow young people to share in decision-making and to believe in their students' capacity to lead. The new fifth grade leadership program, with students taking on more responsibility, setting agendas, leading meetings and generating and implementing their ideas, is a wonderful example of this. As Mr. Hanna puts it, "Believing in kids in a real way leads to some pretty great things."



"Inside OUT Ottoson: This is Who We Are" Gives Students a Personal and Public Voice

If you were unable to attend the October 29 unveiling ceremony, I hope you drive or walk past the Ottoson to see the amazing new art installation. *Inside OUT Ottoson: This is Who We Are* is a beautiful collection of 100 black and white student portraits, proudly pasted on the outer walls of the building.

The project, initiated by OMS Visual Arts teachers Alecia Serafini, Polly Ford and Kayla McKenna, is a response to the racist and anti-Semitic graffiti found in the school last year. The inspiration comes from

French street artist and 2011 [TED Prize winner JR](#), whose goal is to create a [participatory art project](#) with the potential to change the world. The Arlington Education Foundation awarded their annual Dawn Moses Memorial Innovation Grant to the three teachers and the [OMS World of Difference](#) program to fund the project.

Over 150 students were involved in managing the recruitment and photography, making posters, setting-up social media and finalizing the layouts of *Inside OUT Ottoson*. The OMS student body was introduced to the project during Advisory classes, and discussions were held about the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions and celebrating differences. You will want to spend a few minutes looking at the [Inside OUT Ottoson](#) Facebook page that documents the amazing creation process. Here you will find pictures and links to a local news video and to our story on the global *Inside Out* website.

I want to commend everyone who helped to create this wonderful celebration of diversity at Ottoson. Special thanks go to Ms. Serafini, Ms. Ford and Ms. McKenna and World of Difference advisors English teacher Jessica Keweshan and Special Education teacher Lillian O'Donnell for spearheading this project, and to the town employees who assisted in the installation. I am proud of our students and teachers for coming together to advance the conversation about accepting and respecting all members of our school community regardless of race, gender, ethnicity and personal identity in this beautiful and very public manner.

"Be The Best You" Honors Ottoson Students Working to Become Their Best Selves

- Being respectful, responsible and resilient
- Having a strong work ethic
- Showing kindness and empathy to one another
- Collaborating well in group work
- Meeting high expectations
- Understanding what it means to be an UPSTANDER

How does one become his or her "best self"? The Ottoson community believes that striving to be the best version of yourself that you can be not only benefits the individual, but also is vital to creating and maintaining a supportive culture. That is why OMS has launched the *Be The Best You* recognition program. Each quarter the staff will identify students who have exhibited the qualities and behaviors shown in the six bullets listed above. These students will be honored with a letter, certificate and an UPSTANDER wristband. Since Interim Principal Eileen Woods knows that there are many Ottoson students who are working hard to be the best version of themselves, she is hopeful that 150 young people per quarter will qualify for recognition.

Dr. Woods stresses that being your best self is not restricted to students. While the students must take a leadership role in promoting a positive and safe school environment, the faculty also has an important part to play. Faculty and staff model the best version of themselves during daily interactions with one another by using respectful tones of voice, setting and meeting high expectations for learning and by building winning relationships with the students. Open and honest communication, decision-making, trust, confidence, appreciation and recognition are important norms of the supportive community that Ottoson wants to build and sustain.

Our words have power, and *Be The Best You* is designed to help everyone reflect on how they speak, interact with each other and make decisions. By doing this, students, faculty and staff will be contributing to fostering an inclusive culture of acceptance and respect that celebrates diversity.

"AHS Voices United" Aims to Address Bullying, Bias and Create a More Positive School Culture

All of our schools take the responsibility of providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students very seriously, and I am happy to be able to share another example of this with you. Arlington High School has just launched the *AHS Voices United* initiative. Each month, groups of approximately 30 students will come together in all-day leadership workshops led by trained staff members. This training is

designed to help students understand and address instances of bullying, bias, harassment and degrading language among their peers.

AHS Voices United developed out of work done over the last year and a half that explored the issues of school climate and inclusion. Human rights educator and consultant [Steve Wessler](#) started the process in the spring of 2015. He met with students to gather information about their experiences with bullying, bias, harassment and degrading language within the AHS culture. These conversations uncovered a disturbing level of negative interaction among students within what was described as an overall positive environment.

The next step was to figure out how to use this information and make positive culture changes. The student feedback was shared with department heads and administration. Principal Matthew Janger met with students participating in the Greater Boston Student of Color Achievement Network (GBSOCAN). This group meets monthly for the purpose of engaging young people from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds in conversations on issues of racism, intolerance and discrimination. Two staff meetings were held to share the student feedback with the faculty so that everyone understood the experiences that had been reported and the ways they impacted the education of those involved. The students who had worked with Mr. Wessler were also re-engaged in discussions. It was clear from these meetings that there was a desire for ongoing student trainings and additional professional development - and *AHS Voices United* was born.

Eleven faculty and staff members participated in a 3-day training with Mr. Wessler over the summer and are ready to lead the *AHS Voices United* workshops. Students in all grades have been invited to volunteer and be part of the initiative. Dr. Janger believes that while teacher training and commitment is important, only student leadership can change interactions and climate among students. These workshops will help our young people develop the skills they need to do just that and will help build a school community that is more positive and inclusive. I look forward to sharing more with you as the initiative rolls-out.

Professional Development

Lesley University Courses Provide Skills to Recognize the Effects of Trauma and Take Action

Teachers are often the first adults students turn to when struggling with mental health, but educators are not adequately trained to address the crisis.

--Jessica Lahey, "[The Failing First Line of Defense](#)", *The Atlantic*, 10/18/2016

Teachers and staff members have the responsibility of helping all children learn to the best of their ability. In order to do this effectively, they must be able to recognize when something in a child's life has affected his or her ability to learn. Once the problem is understood, help can be obtained.

Arlington Public Schools is currently offering Professional Development to help our teachers and staff understand and recognize childhood trauma. Trauma lies behind many behavioral and academic problems. Research shows that close to 20% of students have experienced trauma, and a higher percentage have had an adverse childhood experience. Early trauma actually impacts the development of the brain and these changes can and do affect the ability to learn and form relationships. The good news is that there are ways to "retrain" the brain and to build trauma sensitive environments that benefit all students--not just those with a trauma history.

Last spring, the first cohort of 25 individuals completed the Lesley University course [The Impact of Trauma on Learning: An Overview](#). An additional 18 completed this course this month. The participants include teachers, teaching assistants, administrators, related service providers and support staff. They come from all of our schools and represent preschool through high school. The course includes three face-to-face, daylong graduate level classes with online participation in-between. A structured approach to interventions is part of the curriculum, and the final group project involves creating an individual student service plan.

The feedback on the course has been positive, with participants finding the information valuable regardless of the role they play in their schools. There are plans to run the second course from the [Lesley Institute for Trauma Sensitivity](#) among a set of their offerings beginning in November. In the spring, we hope to offer either the *Overview* or the third course in the Lesley series. I want to thank our Special Education Director Alison Elmer for spearheading the effort to bring these courses to our district. This new knowledge about trauma and its effect on learning should help our educators see what lies behind observed behaviors and identify strategies to mitigate the impact.

Grants

New Care Coordinator Serves as Focal Point for Diabetic Students and their Families

The health and well-being of our students is a concern of all of us in the district, but as you might expect, our school nurses play a particularly large role in this area. Their involvement increases when students have a chronic condition such as diabetes. The need to monitor and communicate with medical professionals for these students goes up even more if there are additional coexisting conditions such as eating disorders, celiac disease, or mental health and developmental issues.

Thanks to a [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#) grant, Arlington Public Schools is able to have registered nurse Lauren Connors serve as our Diabetic Care Coordinator this year. Highly knowledgeable in diabetes management, Ms. Connors has access to some of the area's best specialists in endocrinology who serve our diabetic students. As the focal point for diabetes management, she plays a variety of roles, all of which contribute to the students' health.

Although this is only October, Ms. Connors has:

- Researched the most appropriate, evidenced based iPad applications to use for tracking and monitoring, and has taught our school nurses how to use it
- Attended afterschool meetings with students, parents and their doctors to gain knowledge about the students' very specific needs
- Begun educating families on the importance of adhering to medical guidelines
- Begun professional development with our nurses around this serious medical issue
- Shared information with other school Care Coordinators, as well as the Massachusetts DPH Director of School Health, about our efforts

Our use of technology to monitor diabetic students was noted at a recent Massachusetts DPH grant meeting. Natick, a district that has had a diabetic care coordinator grant for several years, is now emulating our work. Our leadership in this area came out of work supported by an [Arlington Education Foundation](#) grant last year.

Diabetes management is challenging, and it is difficult to optimize the best outcomes. It is important that parents understand the long-term morbidity and mortality of having uncontrolled blood sugars. Students with significant volatility of their blood sugars are at high-risk. Through our data collection of blood sugar trends, constant communications with medical professionals and Ms. Connors' work to educate our nurses, students and their families, Nursing Director Susan Franchi believes that we will be able to produce better long-term blood glucose trends for these students.

We currently have 13 diabetic students in our district, an increase from 9 patients within the last month. This is an increasing trend and Dr. Franchi expects the number of students with diabetes to increase. I am proud that we are able to be at the forefront of helping our students and families manage this disease. Having Ms. Connors provide continuous education regarding the medical trends and evidence-based practices to our nurses, students and families should have positive effects on the wellness of this particular group of students.

Awards & Distinctions

Assistant Superintendent Shares District Use of Technology at SchoolCIO Summit

I am happy to report that Assistant Superintendent Laura Chesson was one of the speakers at the [SchoolCIO Summit](#) held in Baltimore last month. Attendance at this prestigious conference is by invitation only, and this is the second year Dr. Chesson has been a speaker. This time she was asked to bring our Chief Technology Officer, David Good, along as an attendee.

Dr. Chesson first spoke on *Using Technology to Support Coaching*. She discussed the work we are doing on distributed teacher leadership and our efforts to involve more teachers in directing and leading their own professional development. Our Literacy Lab initiative was created to allow teachers to visit a colleague who volunteered to host other teachers during a unit of study in writing. Teachers quickly realized how powerful it is to watch their peers in action, but there are limitations in the amount of time they can leave their classrooms during the day to do such visits.

This problem has been solved by using [SWIVL](#) video recorders. These devices allow a teacher set up the equipment, set play, and start teaching. The SWIVL has a Bluetooth connection to a microphone that the teacher wears around his or her neck. The Bluetooth unit connects to the video and controls the camera so that it follows the teacher as he or she moves around the room. It also picks up the teacher's voice. The videos are uploaded to the Arlington district Google drive and made available to teachers throughout the district to view at their convenience.

This method has enabled entire lessons to be recorded, increasing the opportunity for viewers to reinforce their understanding of the content. With the videos available at any time, more teachers are able to see what the lessons look like in actual practice. The feedback has been very positive, and this year Grade 1 and 2 Literacy Leaders are videotaping their entire first unit of study in reading, providing a view of what the new district reading program looks like in the classroom.

District Literacy Coaches Linda Hanson and Tammy McBride, who started the SWIVL project, report that the program has been so successful that five additional teachers have stepped up to join the original group of Literacy Leaders. These individuals have agreed to invite their peers into their classrooms, videotape their lessons for others to watch, answer questions and lead online discussions and debriefs. I am grateful to those who are willing to open up their practice and share their teaching with their peers. I am also grateful to the [Arlington Education Foundation](#) whose grants have supported our efforts to increase teacher-led professional development.

Dr. Chesson also spoke on *Digital Equity*. Our desire to expand equitable access to technology for all students has led the district to be very strategic about device deployment. For example, Thompson, the school with the highest level of economically disadvantaged students in our district, was the first location in which we offered 1-1 iPad access. We have used grant money from METCO to support device access for these students. We continue to explore options for increasing home use of school-issued devices with the hope of piloting this in the sixth grade in the future.

Technology has become a crucial tool in both teacher professional development and student learning. I am pleased that Dr. Chesson and Mr. Good were able to attend this conference and share our experiences with individuals from other school districts.

Dallin Go Green Club Helps to Raise Gas Leak Awareness

The Dallin Go Green Club is off to a good start learning about environmental issues and taking action. Last month, club members participated in a [town-wide initiative](#) to raise awareness about natural gas leaks. Working with a local environmental leader and armed with materials provided by the advocacy organizations behind the initiative, the group visited one of the hundreds of identified gas leak sites in Arlington. They learned about this serious environmental situation, tied a laminated flyer around a telephone pole in the vicinity of the site, planted a bright yellow flag in the ground to alert those passing

by and left some educational door hangers in the neighborhood. The group is now aware of the multiple dimensions of the problem--wasted gas, the impact of methane leaks on our climate, the respiratory illnesses associated with prolonged exposure and the effect on surrounding wildlife. This is just one issue that the active Go Green Club will be considering this year.

GLOBAL COMPETENCE CERTIFICATE

Five AHS Students Achieve Global Competency

Congratulations to Hannah Barrett, Zach deBesche, Bailey Holman, Alexander Klein and Amelia Ostling on successfully completing the [AHS Global Competence Program](#) (GCP). This initiative, announced last spring, is designed to foster students' global awareness and provide our graduates with the skills they need to participate and contribute to an increasingly globalized society. It is open to all students who wish to expand their ability to think globally, communicate effectively across cultures and contribute responsibly with open mindedness, understanding and flexibility in behavior and thinking.

These five students have submitted a portfolio that demonstrates the fulfillment of the rigorous [GCP requirements](#), including a Global Engagement Project. Each individual chose a country and topic of interest, and completed either a video, slide presentation, or essay. Click [here](#) to see the student projects.

Hannah, Zach, Bailey, Alexander and Amelia will be honored for their achievement at a Language Awards dinner in April. Each will be receiving a certificate and a pin to wear on their gowns at graduation. I am pleased that we offer this program at AHS and are able to recognize those students who want to develop an expanded knowledge of their relationship to the world and help others embrace multiple perspectives.

AHS Student is Master of Ceremonies at AIFF Student Filmmaker's Award Program

I am delighted to share the news that AHS junior Gayatri Sundar Rajan recently served as the Master of Ceremonies at the sixth annual Arlington International Film Festival (AIFF) Student Filmmaker's Award Program. Many of you know Gayatri as the newscaster on the [Ponder Scope](#), a program that she has been researching, writing and delivering since spring 2015. She has volunteered at ACMi studios since the sixth grade and describes herself as a digital storyteller. Her projects have included a documentary about women in the workforce created for National History Day and an Arlington Public News series about how body image affects teenagers and the mechanisms they use to cope with this issue. Her invitation to host the AIFF program recognizes the speaking skills she has developed through her media work. Congratulations Gayatri!

Academics & Enrichment



Full Option Science System (FOSS) Involves Elementary Students in the Scientific Process

Our world has never been so complex, and scientific and technological reasoning has never been so necessary to make sense of it all..... All students, regardless of their future education

plan and career path, must have an engaging, relevant, rigorous, and coherent pre-K–12 STE education to be prepared for citizenship, continuing education, and careers.

--2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework, April 2016, p. 3.

An understanding of science, technology and engineering (STE) and the ability to apply critical and analytical thinking skills to complex problems are recognized as necessary for college preparation, career readiness and civic engagement. As the above quote illustrates, this is the thinking behind the new [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Curriculum Framework](#). The new framework places more emphasis on scientific process and on the development of both conceptual understanding and application of STE concepts than the previous science standards.

Recognizing this, Arlington Public Schools introduced the [Full Option Science System™ \(FOSS\)](#) in grades 1, 2 and 3 last year, and we have now added grades 4 and 5. The curriculum was developed by noted researchers and elementary science specialists at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley. It utilizes the most current knowledge about psychometrics and the way students learn and involves hands-on, inquiry based instruction. Students conduct "investigations", then read and write about informational texts. Laboratory notebook writing is also a component.

FOSS professional development specialists worked in conjunction with APS personnel to conduct sessions during early release days and over the summer to get our teachers prepared. Although the introduction and implementation has required significant start-up time, feedback from teachers in grades 1, 2, and 3 is positive. They report that FOSS is very child-friendly and engaging for the students.

FOSS is proving to be a well-rounded program that includes state standards that are implemented through physical, life, and earth sciences as well as engineering design activities. I want to thank Science Director Larry Weathers and AHS Biology teacher Cory Bavuso for their leadership on FOSS implementation. A science curriculum that requires our students to be active participants in the scientific process and emphasizes investigation and analyses will position our young people for success through middle school, high school and beyond.

New Pilot Program Aims to Build Bridges Between Dallin Fifth Grade Students and Seniors

[Bridges: Growing Together™](#) is an exciting new program being piloted at the Dallin Elementary School this fall. Offered by [Bridges Together](#), an organization founded by intergenerational educator Andrea Fonte Weaver, the six week program is designed to promote positive attitudes about aging, expand learning opportunities and strengthen community ties. Intergenerational education aims to empower both children and adults. The hope for the young people is that they will aspire to be active, healthy adults, begin to explore possible careers, develop compassion and respect for elders and experience the joy of being treasured by an older adult. The elders who take part are able to spend time with children in an organized way, share their values and traditions with future generations, take time to reflect on their lives and share their stories, and help support a meaningful and rewarding lifestyle.

Dallin's involvement had an interesting start--a conversation between first grade parent Lisa LaBlanc and a retired teacher when they both had jury duty. The teacher's positive experience with *Bridges: Growing Together™* inspired Ms. LaBlanc to approach Principal Thad Dingman and Librarian Rebecca Aaronson about offering it at the school. All three were struck with how well it encompassed Dallin's core values: Courage, Respect and Responsibility.

The [Arlington Council on Aging \(COA\)](#) has teamed with Dallin to pilot the program in the fifth grade. Ms. Fonte Weaver visited Arlington to conduct an all-day training on the curriculum and help Ms. LaBlanc, Ms. Aaronson and COA representatives understand the program's history. Fourteen elders have volunteered and the group is split between the two fifth grade classes.

Ms. Aaronson is very excited about the program, and hopes that the students not only learn about and interact with Arlington seniors, but that it will also generate conversations within their own families and

expand their "circle of love." She sees this as a tremendous opportunity to share our wonderful students with individuals who may not get a chance to interact with elementary children. The elder participants are able to experience the great things happening in the school first-hand. She hopes that the program will create deeper bonds within the Arlington community and that both generations will be rewarded with respect and understanding of each other.

If the initial sessions go well and more volunteers can be obtained, Ms. Aaronson hopes to continue the program and expand to the lower grades in the spring. I want to thank Ms. LaBlanc and Ms. Aaronson for agreeing to lead this program at Dallin, and I look forward to learning about the experience of the adults and children who participate.



Bishop Learning Garden Enriches Curriculum and Community

At this time of year, the lessons and Open Garden sessions have ended, the radishes have been harvested, beds mulched, composts turned, and the dead plants removed, leaving the Bishop Learning Garden ready for winter. This wonderful outdoor classroom is composed of 11 raised beds and a composting station for cafeteria food waste, garden plants and yard waste. An outdoor storage shed, water station and various areas used for gathering during lessons completes the space.

Last year, when the garden was started, Bishop classroom teachers worked with volunteer garden coordinator Wendy Johncheck and garden educator Abigail Wolf from [Home Harvest LLC](#) to develop standards-based lesson plans. These typically involve multiple sessions with both indoor and outdoor components. The primary goal of the garden and compost curriculum is to enrich already existing class material by creating opportunities for outdoor and hands-on experiential learning. All grades and classrooms use the space and participate in the activities. Ms. Wolf works outside with the teachers to deliver the garden-based lessons, and assists with some of the ongoing maintenance work.

Ms. Wolf also leads the weekly Open Garden activities. During recess, students are free to enter the garden to tend the crops, harvest, and maintain the on-site cafeteria composting program. Between 30 and 60 young people typically taking part in this weekly activity. During the past year there were plenty of plants that needed care as the crops included tomatoes, kale, garlic, various bean varieties, popcorn, radishes, peas, greens, Swiss chard, kale, broccoli, potatoes, cucumbers, carrots, peppers, squash, strawberries, and herbs.

As coordinator, Ms. Johnecheck assists in developing a year-round crop plan, oversees maintenance of the on-site compost system, is the liaison with the PTO and Arlington Parks and Recreation, attends external garden and compost network meetings, and leads fundraising and grant writing. Funding for the garden educator was provided by the [Arlington Education Foundation](#) last year. The Bishop PTO assumed responsibility for this year's funding, and has committed to ensuring that the garden activities remain part of the school curriculum in the future. A garden committee of parents help guide and support the activities, volunteer at weekly Open Garden sessions and help with ongoing maintenance such as weekend watering and building trellises. During the summer, Bishop families and community members harvest vegetables for their own use and maintain the beds for use in the fall.

Ms. Johnecheck indicates that research tells us that children who grown their own food are more likely to try vegetables, and are more willing to try the same vegetable a second or third time once they know what to expect. She has seen students who refuse to try something at the beginning of a harvest lesson willing to try a radish and get in line for their third carrot by the end. Two grades cook as the last session in their lesson plans. The second grade makes kale salad using the kale they planted when they were in the first grade, and the fourth grade uses the potatoes they planted the previous year to make potato salad.

The agri-food literacy of the school community has grown considerably since the start of the program. Students can be seen walking in the garden identifying the crops in the beds and checking periodically to understand when things will be ready to eat. The summer months saw visits from community members who stopped by to learn about what is happening and to gather tips on how to grow their own vegetables or combat garden pests.

The Learning Garden has become a very special place, shared by the Bishop school and wider communities. Next month, there will be a semi-private garden space dedication in the memory of Charlie Buck, a Bishop second grader who passed away last spring. I am grateful to the many stakeholders who have come together to make the Bishop Garden and Compost Program so successful-teachers, Bishop PTO members, parent volunteers, community members and groups such as Arlington Parks and Recreation. Special thanks go to Ms. Johnecheck and Ms. Wolf for their dedication to this project. Weather permitting, the activities will commence again just before spring break.

High School Mentors Help Get OMS Speech & Debate Club Going

AHS has had an active Speech & Debate Club for the last couple of years, taking part in competitions and having some students qualify for State Speech and State Debate Finals. Their competitive experiences helped the enthusiastic club participants to understand that starting in middle school would make the high school team even stronger. Three members approached Ottoson English teacher Judith Packer last June to explore the possibility of her acting as an advisor for an OMS Speech and Debate Club. They designed a poster that Ms. Packer duplicated and gave to her fellow English teachers. She created a pamphlet for the sixth grade Activities Fair, and recruitment began.

The first meeting drew 53 interested students, but some were discouraged by the amount of work that the high school mentors indicated was required. Saturday and Sunday competitions were also problematic for some individuals. There are now 25 weekly participants, with eight choosing the Speech option and the rest interested in Debate. The high school mentors juggle their own competition schedule and other commitments, coming when they can to assist and provide guidance.

Ms. Packer hopes that the Speech students will make it to a competition this year, and her goal is for the Debate participants to be ready in two years. She has also opened the meetings to any student who wants help with any presentation they need to give at OMS. The middle school curriculum includes many opportunities for speaking, but not all students are comfortable with this. Ms. Packer hopes that they will become more confident presenting their work in front of the class after coming to the Speech & Debate Club for assistance.

I want to thank Ms. Packer for her willingness to lead the Speech & Debate Club at Ottoson, and also thank the high school students who recognized the importance of creating opportunities for students to

learn these skills at an earlier level. Their participation is vital to keeping the new club on track. I also want to thank Chris Dangel, AHS English teacher, for providing the leadership to the high school club this year. I look forward to hearing about the progress of both groups.

Online Courses Respond to AHS Student Requests to Pursue Topics of Interest

Once again, Arlington High School is offering students the opportunity to take courses of interest that use alternative learning methods. Both this semester's online courses are in response to student requests.

Five seniors approached Health and Physical Education teacher Jay Lamoureux about the possibility of offering [Stanford Introduction to Food and Health](#). This [Coursera](#) online course offers 1 AP credit, and Mr. Lamoureux says that the course is a good follow-on to the AHS sophomore health nutrition unit. It goes into depth about the current eating trends in the Western world and focuses on how to make healthy eating part of one's life with recipes and alternatives to junk food.

The course lasts five weeks and includes 29 videos and 13 readings as well as quizzes. As the AHS mediator, Mr. Lamoureux meets with the six enrollees every week, going over the quizzes and answering questions. Each student is asked to write down three impact statements--things they learned that shocked them, amazed them, previously didn't know, or things they knew and have an opinion about that they want to share. This leads to a rich discussion.

Two seniors in History and Social Studies teacher Scott Matson's AP US History Class requested Coursera's [The Emergence of the Modern Middle East: Parts I & II](#). Since he had taught standard courses on this topic in the past at AHS and at the college-level, Mr. Matson was definitely interested in being the mediator. This course covers developments in the Middle East from the early 20th century to the present. Students review 27 hours of video, take quizzes and receive 1.5 AP credits. The 26 participants meet with Mr. Matson every Friday at 7:00 am. During these sessions, he answers any questions the group has regarding the weekly online assignments. He also goes over topics from the week's lesson that he believes should be stressed.

These courses are an excellent example of students' taking charge of their learning, and I am pleased that we are able to provide the opportunity to enrich their education in this way. I want to thank Mr. Lamoureux and Mr. Matson for responding to the students' requests and agreeing to serve as the onsite mediators. These are the latest courses we have made available over the last two years. The others include Public Policy, Introduction to Music Production, Learning How to Learn, Philosophy of Science and the History of Education Reform.



French Students Stay with Host Families, Enjoy Boston and Surrounding Areas

It was wonderful to welcome 28 students and three teachers from Melun, France this month. The arrival of these young people from outside Paris kicked-off the French exchange program that occurs every other year. All the visitors stayed with AHS families, so they were able to get a real taste of American life. The itinerary was set-up so that the students arrived on a Friday and spent the weekend with their host

families. This gave everyone a great chance to get to know each other and begin developing the bonds of friendship that deepened throughout the visit.

During their 12-day stay, the French students were able to enjoy much of what Boston has to offer. They spent time at the Museum of Science, New England Aquarium, and Museum of Fine Arts, walked the Freedom Trail and took a Duck Tour. They also ventured beyond the city, going to Plimoth Plantation, seeing the beaches of Cape Cod, and visiting the mansions of Newport. These trips gave them a chance to get a feel for the East Coast and to understand more about the history of the region.

The exchange will continue during April vacation 2017, when our students travel to France and stay with host families there. This program, started by AHS French teacher Véronique Lahey in 2006, is a wonderful way for the young people in both countries to practice their language skills and gain an appreciation of each other's culture and life style. I know that our students are excited about their upcoming visit to France, and I look forward to reporting on that in the spring.

Athletic Highlights



Pep Rally, Dig Pink, Operation Hat Trick and Strong Field Performances Mark Fall Athletic Season

It was another exciting and busy fall season for our AHS athletes, marked by strong performances and a commitment to service. The all-school Pep Rally, held at the end of September, provided a fun opportunity to build unity and pride within the high school community. Everyone enjoyed the great routines from the Cheerleaders and Hip Hop Teams, the incredible performance of the Band led by Instrumental Music Director Sabato D'Agostino, and of course, the tremendous faculty competition (see picture above left). Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki is grateful to English teacher Paul McNight and the Student Council for their help in organizing this fall's Pep Rally.

This month, our athletes joined with those from the other five Middlesex League high schools to support Operation Hat Trick (OHT). This league initiative was created to raise awareness and educate students on the service and sacrifice of our wounded veterans. Competing teams shared a table at the games, and money was raised for the [Wounded Warrior Project](#) through the sale of special camouflage hats emblazoned with both the OHT and school logo. Three teams chose to honor a "warrior", someone who had passed away far too young and is remembered for his or her contribution to our Athletic program and its members. Girls field hockey chose former captain Catherine Malatesta, boys soccer remembered former AHS Spanish teacher and soccer coach Sami Eladhari and girls soccer honored alum and former Dallin Teaching Assistant Katherine Wall. Team captains joined Ms. Dlugolecki in visits to the Arlington Fire Department and the Arlington Police Department to thank members for their service, inform them about Operation Hat Trick and invite them to the games.

Although they didn't qualify for tournament play, the girls volleyball team had a very competitive season. A special highlight was their involvement in Dig Pink[®]. This initiative is the [Side-Out Foundation's](#) October

event that unites volleyball players across the nation to raise funds for breast cancer research, demonstrate the power of teamwork and show support for people who struggle with this disease. Money was collected through sales of admission and raffle tickets, special treats like pink lemonade and homemade baked goods and special breast cancer jewelry. In addition to efforts at both the JV and Varsity matches, the Varsity team hosted a special game against members of the AHS faculty (see picture below.) Although they came in second, Ms. Dlugolecki reports that the faculty team had impressive displays of dives and digs during the game.

It was a building year for the football team, who plays its last game at Thanksgiving. These athletes worked hard on and off the field, and participated in numerous community service activities. Field hockey improved over last year's record and also took time at the beginning of a game to remember Catherine Malatesta. The swim team, which hadn't won a meet for several years, brought home five wins and is a growing program at AHS.

Several teams are continuing into post season play. Boys soccer finished as eighth seed in the league, and hosted Boston Latin in their first tournament game. Girls soccer finished as seventh seed, and began tournament play against East Boston. Both teams were active in service, raising money for breast cancer research.

The golf team qualified for their first tournament in ten years. Even though they didn't go beyond their first match, the team can be very proud of this season's success. Both boys and girls cross country had strong seasons and have runners continuing on in individual tournament competition. Boys cross country came in third in the Middlesex League meet, and Ryan Oosting continued his strong season performance to finish first in varsity league competition. Girls cross country team member Jessie Spigot finished first in the freshman league competition. After hosting the league cheerleading competition, our squad has moved on to Regional competition.

I want to congratulate all the fall athletes for their performances on the field and their dedication to service projects. Winter registration has opened and we all look forward to the new season that begins November 28.

