

# ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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News from September 2019

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

The school year is off to a great start, and we are delighted to have new teachers, staff, and administrators to welcome to our district. This fall we are able to fill additional positions, both full and part time, thanks to the generous voter support for the override last June. Seventy-one new teachers, Team Chairs, and Specialists have joined us. The teachers are distributed throughout the system and cover all levels--6 at the high school, 15 at our middle schools, and 40 dedicated to single elementary schools or split between schools.

Every year I am impressed by the credentials of our new educators. The vast majority hold advanced degrees. Others have taken part in certificate programs or other forms of post-baccalaureate education, and several are currently enrolled in master's programs. Our increased operations budget has enabled us to add Visual Art, Music, and Physical Education teachers and other Specialists and improve the elementary schedule. You may read more about this in ***Elementary Schedule Changes Support Improved Student Achievement and Equity*** in the **Department News** section of this newsletter.

Three new administrators have joined us. Our new K-12 Science Director is Samantha Hoyo, who comes to us after teaching chemistry, physics, physical science and AP seminar, and chairing the Science Department at Rockland High School. Ms. Hoyo is currently a PhD Candidate in Urban Education, Leadership and Policy Studies at U Mass Boston. Eva Liner has joined the administrative team at Bishop as a half-time Assistant Principal. Ms. Liner's experience includes teaching Social Studies and serving as the Assistant Principal at schools in Needham and Walpole. We also welcome John Bowler as the new Athletic Director. Mr. Bowler is an AHS graduate who has served as the Boys Varsity Basketball coach. He assumes his position after being the Operations Manager at the Arlington Boys and Girls Club.

Officer Bryan White is the new School Resource Officer. Officer White is a 2004 graduate of AHS who filled several roles, including special education teacher, at Minuteman High School before joining the Arlington Police Department. He has coached ice hockey and lacrosse at Minuteman and Arlington High Schools. It is wonderful to welcome an AHS alum with such a strong background in education and working with youth to this position. Prevention is an important role played by our School Resource Officer and working to reduce risky behavior and help all students feel safe and supported will be among his many duties.

It is hopeful to see the worldwide attention that climate change has been receiving this month, and I want to take a moment to remind everyone about the district commitment to this issue. Along with our school Green Teams, we support the Town of Arlington's goal of zero net emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from all sources by 2050. The new Arlington High School is planned to use roughly half of the energy of the current building. All electric heating, ventilation, and climate control will be based on electric heat pump technologies which are the most efficient options for heating and cooling. By expanding solar arrays, we will be able to maximize onsite renewable energy production. This is in addition to the work that has already been done—composting lunchroom food waste, placing solar panels on six school buildings, LED exterior lighting, kitchen upgrades, and environmental science classes at all levels. Please see ***Arlington Public Schools Active in Environmental Education and Action*** in the **Department News** section of this newsletter to learn more about what is happening in our schools.

A great way to learn more about the plans for the new Arlington High School is to attend the next Community Forum being held on October 23 at 7:00 pm in Town Hall. Please see ***AHS Rebuild Construction Manager Chosen, Design Development Phase in Progress*** in the **Department News** section of this newsletter for a quick update on the overall building project.

I am always impressed by how quickly our educators get things rolling at the beginning of the new year. As I write this, our schools have already held their curriculum nights and Open Houses, the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) has held a Meet and Greet where parents and guardians met the Special Education Administrative Team, the AHS fall athletic season is well underway, elementary students have picked up their instruments and the lessons have begun, and auditions have been completed at OMS for the special music groups. These are just a few examples of how our students and teachers hit the ground running and get the school year off to a strong start.

The Drama programs at Ottoson and Arlington High School are also well underway, and there are two exciting fall performances. OMS has been offering fall shows since 2014, and two plays will be presented in the Wood Gym/Auditorium on October 25: *Door to Door*, featuring 12 actors, at 6:30 pm and *Small Actors*, featuring a cast of 17, at 7:15 pm. The first play is a series of vignettes about both everyday and pivotal moments in our lives tied together through the motif of the literal and figurative doors around us. The second is a more traditional play about a girl in high school who wants to be Juliet in her school's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. When she gets the role of second servant, she fears she will always be stuck in the small roles in life and never have her moment to shine. Learning that her parents will be on vacation during her performance, she tells them she is playing Juliet, and watches her life change around her. What could go wrong? Tickets that cover both shows are \$10.

The fall production of *The Three Musketeers* is being held in Arlington High School's Lowe Auditorium on November 15 at 7:30 pm and November 16 at 2:00 and 7:30 pm. This updated adaptation by Ken Ludwig premiered in 2008, and it features a new character: Sabine, D'Artagnan's sister, who aspires to be a musketeer. I am delighted to share the news that AHS alumni Nathan Malin will be choreographing the stage combat again this year. Nathan is studying Fine Arts at Boston University and has recently served as the Assistant Director on Bedlam Theater Company's *The Crucible* performed at the Central Square Theater. He is currently featured as a [StageSource Member of the Week](#) where he is described as an "...actor, director, and theater artist!" that "...can be seen in [SpeakEasy Stage Company's](#) upcoming production of *Admissions...*" The fight scenes that Nathan choreographed for last year's production of *Macbeth* were amazing, and it is wonderful to have him back to work on *The Three Musketeers*.

I hope this introduction has given you a sense of all the amazing things already going on in our schools this year and I hope you will enjoy learning more in the following newsletter. For a list of the upcoming musical events at Arlington High School this fall, please see ***AHS Jazz Band and Madrigal Singers Begin Performance Schedule at Town Day*** in the **Creative Highlights** section.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D  
Superintendent of Schools

## **Headline View**

### **Safe & Supportive Schools**

#### ***APS Responds Swiftly to Hate Speech Incident at Ottoson***

School leaders and district administrators notified parents and the Arlington Human Rights Commission and addressed OMS students when anti-Semitic graffiti was found in a bathroom, emphasizing that hate speech is not tolerated in the Arlington Public Schools. [Learn more>](#)

#### ***Evidence of Health Risks from E-cigarettes/vaping Continue to Grow***

The emergence of over 1,000 lung injury cases in the U.S. and the rising e-cigarette/vaping usage among

our high school students means that we must continue to educate ourselves as to the risks associated with this behavior and talk openly and often about it with our children. [Read more>](#)

### ***No Longer Called "Guidance Counselors": School Counselor Title Reflects Expanded Role in Student Wellbeing***

Changing from the outdated title Guidance Counselor to School Counselor recognizes the expanded role these professionals play in addressing social emotional development, mental health, and wellness in addition to academics, advanced education, and careers. [Learn more>](#)

### ***Artist Residency Leaves Lasting Legacy of Kindness at Dallin***

During his time at Dallin, artist [Bren Bataclan](#) helped students learn how to create visual representations of the ideas behind words, and used their drawings to create a beautiful mural that emphasizes school values and the importance of social emotional learning. [Read more>](#)

## **Department News**

### ***METCO Program Apple-picking Kicks-off the Year for Boston Resident Families and Friends***

Whether they were eating cider doughnuts, finding their way out of the maze, or interacting with farm animals, Boston resident families from the Arlington, Cohasset, Foxboro, Hingham, Melrose, Scituate, and Walpole METCO programs and Cohasset and Arlington resident families had a great time sharing experiences during the annual apple-picking trip to [Honeypot Hill Orchards](#) in Stowe, Massachusetts. [Read more>](#)

### ***Elementary Schedule Changes Support Improved Student Achievement and Equity***

The increased operating budget that resulted from the favorable June override vote enabled the district to make important changes to the elementary school specialist schedule to support improved student achievement. [Learn more>](#)

### ***AHS Rebuild Construction Manager Chosen, Design Development Phase in Progress***

Work is progressing toward beginning construction of the first two wings of the new Arlington High School with the selection of [Consigli Construction Co., Inc.](#) as the construction manager and the efforts to move from schematics to final design. [Read more>](#)

### ***Arlington Public Schools Active in Environmental Education and Action***

Sustainability education and action including paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum, glass, and textile recycling, lunchroom composting and waste sorting, and Green Team activities demonstrate the commitment our students, staff, and their families have to reducing our environmental impact. [Read more>](#)

### ***Opportunities for Learning and Enrichment Abound in Successful SummerFun! Program***

The exciting *SummerFun!* Program offered by [Arlington Community Education](#) completed its 11<sup>th</sup> year of creative programming, offering 135 diverse and dynamic courses attended by nearly 1,200 students. [Learn more>](#)

## **Grants**

### ***Every Third Grade Student Receives a Dictionary Thanks to the Arlington Lodge of Elks***

As they have for the last 13 years, members and friends of the Arlington Lodge of Elks #1435 are visiting every third grade classroom to present a copy of [The Best Dictionary for Students](#) to every child—theirs to keep and use. [Learn more>](#)

### ***School Leadership and Wise Data Grant Supports Educational Equity***

The generous support of the [Arlington Educational Foundation](#) is making it possible to train 60 administrators, curriculum leads, and others, resulting in the formation of data teams and the implementation of the [Harvard Data Wise Project](#) processes and practices at each school to support our goal of educational equity for all students. [Read more>](#)

## **Professional Development**

### ***Summer Learning Opportunities Support Academic Goals and Instructional Excellence***

Workshops and training offered this summer covered topics in the areas of Social Emotional and Digital Learning, elementary and high school Mathematics, Physical Education, Social Studies, Visual Art, all levels of English, Crisis Intervention and Mental Health, Cultural Competency, Special Education, and Pediatric Health Assessment. Learn more>

## **Awards & Distinctions**

### ***Ottoson Media Group Reaches Finals in MPY Public Service Announcement Project***

Having their Public Service Announcement video included among the six finalists in the [Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth \(MPY\)](#) contest was the latest in a series of distinctions earned by the Ottoson Media Group in 2018 and 2019. Read more>

### ***AHS Students Earn National Merit Scholarship and AP Scholar Distinctions***

Congratulations to the young people who achieved [National Merit Scholarship Program](#) Commended Student, Semifinalist, and Finalist Distinctions in the Classes of 2019 and 2020, and to those who took Advanced Placement exams last spring and received [AP Scholar Awards](#). Learn more>

## **Academics & Enrichment**

### ***CIEE Scholarships Earmarked for High School Summer Study Abroad***

Application for 10-100% tuition scholarship awards to attend one of the three types of [summer study abroad programs](#) offered by [the Council on International Educational Exchange](#) (CIEE) is now open to any AHS student in grades nine, 10, or 11. Read more>

## **Creative Highlights**

### ***AHS Jazz Band and Madrigal Singers Begin Performance Schedule at Town Day***

Dedication, talent, and professionalism were on display as the Arlington High School Jazz Band and Madrigal Singers took the stage at Town Day on September 14 after only two weeks of rehearsals, getting what will be a terrific season of musical performances off to a strong start. Learn more>

## **Continue to read the full News from September 2019 Newsletter**

## **Safe & Supportive Schools**

### ***APS Responds Swiftly to Hate Speech Incident at Ottoson***

The presence of derogatory remarks or images about race, religion and/or sexual preference and gender are not tolerated in Arlington Public Schools. When anti-Semitic graffiti and meme were found in an Ottoson Middle School bathroom in early October, response was swift. Parents and the Arlington Human Rights Commission were notified and plans to speak with our students and make it clear that all members of our school community have a right to be safe from this kind of abuse were executed.

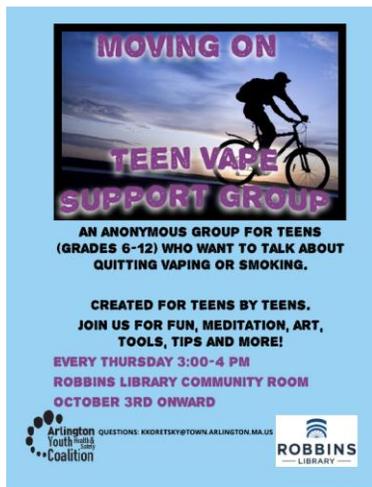
- Seventh grade students met together during ASPIRE class where they learned what had occurred. School leadership emphasized that hate speech is not tolerated, or acceptable, in our schools or elsewhere.
- Eighth grade students met with administrators to receive the same information.
- Videos were shown to illustrate how groups have responded to hate speech.

These immediate actions are in addition to efforts that took place at OMS last year to help our young people understand the ramifications of insensitive and inappropriate actions. Eighth grade students learned about the use of the “n-word” before reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The *No Place for Hate* soccer clinic and classroom sessions on the dangers of anti-Semitism run by the Chelsea Football Club took

place. A group of students raised money to paint a gender-neutral bathroom in the hope that graffiti would be prevented. Additionally, school and district officials met with the Arlington Police and the Human Rights Commission to document procedures to respond to hate speech and bias.

It is important to remember that middle school students make mistakes, and our obligation is to help them learn from this incident. Our hope is that through education we will discourage copycat actions and prevent future incidents. We will not be releasing information about the students who have been found responsible or the consequences they face.

Hate crimes are on the rise in the U.S., and it is up to all of us to help our children understand the impact that such incidents have. I encourage all parents and guardians to have conversations about this with your children. The safety of our students and staff is of the highest priority, and the district will continue our education efforts in this area and respond swiftly to any incidents that occur.



**Evidence of Health Risks from E-cigarettes/vaping Continue to Grow**

By now most of us are aware that vaping can lead to serious medical consequences. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reports that “As of October 1, 2019, 1,080 lung injury cases associated with using e-cigarettes, or vaping, products have been reported to CDC from 48 states and 1 U.S. territory.” and “Eighteen deaths have been confirmed in 15 states.” This is truly frightening, and Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker has suspended all sales of vaping products through the end of the year as research into the cause of this disease continues.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General " E-cigarette use poses a significant – and avoidable – health risk to young people in the United States. Besides increasing the possibility of addiction and long-term harm to brain development and respiratory health, e-cigarette use is associated with the use of other tobacco products that can do even more damage to the body. Even breathing e-cigarette aerosol that someone else has exhaled poses potential health risks."

Teen vaping is creating a public health emergency. A review of the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Study illustrates that our young people are aware of, and are using, e-cigarettes/vapes. Consider these 2019 responses:

AHS	Current e-cigarette/vaping usage rate	22.6%
	Have ever vaped	37.7%
	Have ever vaped on school property	8.8%
OMS	Currently use vapes	3.5%
	Have ever used a vape	7.4%

The first result, current AHS e-cigarette/vaping usage rate, has increased 15% from 8.3% reported in 2017.

Please remember two important things. First, as AHS Principal Matthew Janger explained in his letter to parents and students on September 2, "Using these devices is unhealthy, illegal, and against school rules. Vaping in school is disruptive of school safety and discipline. **Students found using or possessing e-cigarettes of any kind face immediate consequences that may include expulsion, suspension, and athletics consequences.**"

Second, I want to stress the need for all parents and guardians to educate themselves and talk to their children about the dangers of vaping. Our young people will continue to receive information at school but talking with parents or another trusted adult remains the most effective method for preventing student substance abuse. Karen Koretsky, Coalition Director of the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition, suggests the following resources from the Partnership™ for Drug-Free Kids:

- [\*The Teen Vaping Trend—What Parents Need to Know\*](#)
- [\*How to Talk with Your Kids About Vaping\*](#)
- [\*E-cigarettes/Vaping\*](#)

Ms. Koretsky is a community resource and any adult with concerns about youth vaping use is invited to contact her at 781-316-3179. She wants us to also be aware of additional support available in the community.

- Vaping cessation support group for teens
  - Anonymous group for young people in grades 6-12 who want to talk about quitting vaping or smoking
  - Every Thursday, 2:00-4:00 in the Robbins Library Community Room
- Parent/Community Forum: *The Vaping Alarm Has Rung*
  - Pediatricians Dr. Lester Hartman and Dr. Carole Allen will discuss the growing use of nicotine and the issues around adolescent vaping
  - Wednesday, October 16, 7:00-9:00 pm, Ottoson Middle School Cafeteria

Data from 889 lung injury patients includes the fact that "16% of patients are under 18 years old." (CDC) We must all work together to keep our children safe.

### ***No Longer Called "Guidance Counselors": School Counselor Title Reflects Expanded Role in Student Wellbeing***

Across the country, professional counselors in schools have adopted new nomenclature for their roles. Traditionally known as "guidance counselors" these professionals no longer bear this outdated title and instead proudly own the title of "School Counselor". This brings the title into alignment with the fact that today's counseling professionals handle significantly more than college and career coaching. While these traditional college and career readiness responsibilities remain, the role of the School Counselor has evolved to include the wellbeing and mental health of students. This is what Sara Burd, Director of School Counseling and Social Emotional Learning, had to say in the September AHS School Counseling Department Newsletter regarding the expanded role today's counselors play:

"Students speak with their counselors about their own health and wellness, their social lives and home lives, areas of challenge and growth, as well as their passions and strengths. They gain access to resources and enrichment opportunities, and connect with the community through service initiatives and extracurricular activities. Should they ever be in crisis, their counselors would meet with them, ensure their safety and get them connected to the appropriate level of care, be it the school nurse, a social worker, a mobile crisis unit, or even emergency services if necessary. Counselors spend more time collaborating with families to surround students with caring adults who

are aligned in purpose and working as a team.”

In addition, Ms. Burd notes that “Today’s school counselors play an integral role in addressing academics, advanced education and careers, social emotional development, mental health, and wellness. They are highly trained professionals, required to complete their master’s degrees. They complete hundreds of internship hours before being certified, and over 60 credit hours as a professionally licensed counselor. I am pleased that we are adopting the title of School Counselor to reflect the wide and important role these individuals play in our schools.”



### ***Artist Residency Leaves Lasting Legacy of Kindness at Dallin***

The Dallin school community had been thinking about doing a large project for some time, one that would touch every student and staff member and achieve several goals. They knew that the entryway and hallway leading to the cafeteria could use “sprucing up”, but it was important that whatever was done aligned with the school values of Courage, Respect, and Responsibility. They also wanted the chosen project to reflect the importance of social emotional learning, a key component of education at Dallin. After considering many ideas, it became clear that [Bren Bataclan](#) was the right person to engage the community in a beautiful, loving project that would leave a lasting impression.

Mr. Bataclan is known as an artist who spreads kindness. Starting in Boston, he began leaving paintings in public places and inviting people to take for them for free providing they would promise to smile at random people more often. He warmly describes the project, now global in scope, in his [2017 TED talk](#). He also works in schools to create special, kindness-related murals that incorporate student and staff ideas. His work is colorful, fun, and meaningful for the young people.

Mr. Bataclan’s week-long artist residency at Dallin began with two assemblies, one for grades K-2 and another for grades 3-5. He shared information about himself, showed some of his work, and demonstrated how the students could draw their own cartoonish characters. The next step was to begin creating a mural.

Prior to Mr. Bataclan’s visit, Dallin staff members had generated a list of words that reflected the school culture and what they wanted to emphasize, describing different images that they believed would represent these words. They chose 36 to be part of the project. The fifth grade students were divided into groups of three, and each group received one of the descriptions. Mr. Bataclan worked with the groups to convert the descriptions into pictures. He then grouped the pictures into general themes and got to work.

The artist first drew the characters on the walls using pencil. He went over this with black line, and then added brilliant colors. He worked throughout each day, and as the students passed by, he talked with them, remembering their names, and continuing to spread messages of kindness. He invited some of the staff, including Principal Thad Dingman, to paint along with him.

Mr. Dingman describes Mr. Bataclan as a “warm presence” and a “unique individual” who quickly became part of the Dallin community. He wanted to get to know everyone and asked a lot of questions. Parents and staff had lunch with him, and he was happy to share his personal story and vision for the world. His gentle style made everyone feel part of the process.

Fifth grade students assisted Mr. Bataclan in unveiling the finished mural during an all-school assembly at the end of the residency. He returned subsequently for another assembly where he revisited his message of kindness. Time was allowed for students to share their thoughts about the project and the impact his visit had made, and the presentation of a Dallin sweatshirt emphasized his membership into the Dallin community.

I want to thank the Dallin PTO for funding this remarkable project, and thank those who brought the idea forward and helped to make it happen—Librarian Rebecca Aaronson, who first introduced the idea some time ago, and Dallin parent Candace Cruz Dintino, an artist who knows Mr. Bataclan and believed that he was just what they were looking for. The project is a wonderful illustration of the power of art to deliver messages and serves as a beautiful legacy for the departing fifth grade students. Mr. Bataclan was in residency at Hardy last year, and I am pleased that we now have two elementary school communities that have been touched by his work and his message.



## **Department News**



### ***METCO Program Apple-picking Kicks-off the Year for Boston Resident Families and Friends***

Starting the new school year with a fun-filled day at [Honey Pot Hill Orchards](#) in Stowe, Massachusetts has become an annual tradition for the APS METCO program. This year we joined forces with Cohasset,

Foxboro, Hingham, Melrose, Scituate, and Walpole. Boston resident families from the seven communities and Cohasset and Arlington resident families had a wonderful day discovering the maze, interacting with farm animals, eating apple cider doughnuts and different apple varieties, and sharing their experiences. Transportation for those who needed it was provided from METCO Headquarters in Roxbury.

The Arlington METCO program has been starting the year with apple picking since 2012, and APS METCO Director Margaret Credle Thomas says it is a great way to connect. She reports that the event on September 21 was amazing, and that the bus ride home was pretty quiet since the students were exhausted from all of the fun.

The next event of the school year will be the Building Two Communities dinner. This provides time for families of Arlington and Boston friends to socialize and strengthen their relationships. The dinner location alternates between the two communities, and this year it will be held in Arlington. A date for the dinner is forthcoming.

Arlington Public Schools' participation in the [Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity \(METCO\)](#) program has enriched our town for over 50 years. I am happy to tell you that for the second year we have received the funding necessary to run a late bus for our high school students. This makes it easier for our Boston residents to stay after school and take part in extra-curricular activities such as clubs, sports, etc. Our Boston students travel significant distances to attend school here and having access to a late bus makes it possible for them to fully participate in the AHS community.

I want to thank Ms. Credle Thomas for the leadership she provides to our METCO program and the wonderful events that bring our two communities closer together. I also thank parent liaison Nikecia Gadson for her contributions to the program and the events. We are grateful to State Senator Cindy Friedman for her efforts to secure the funding needed for the late bus.



### ***Elementary Schedule Changes Support Improved Student Achievement and Equity***

We are always looking for ways to improve student learning outcomes and address equity issues and the achievement gaps we see between different sub-groups of students and the student body at large. Thanks to last June's favorable override vote and the increased operating budget that resulted, we are able to make changes to the elementary school specialist schedule that will help us progress in these areas. Here are the major elements of the new schedule and the ways they will assist in achieving our vision:

- Dedicated specialists in each elementary building creates more schedule flexibility
- Common instructional blocks for ELA and Math provides more seamless and efficient instructional support and opportunities for flexible groupings
- Weekly team meeting time for grade-level teams to analyze data, look at student work, and develop instructional goals with building administrators leads to student achievement improvement
- Having grade-level teams meet weekly at common planning times provides consistency and aids scheduling

- Keyboarding practice for grades 3-5 and direct instruction in digital literacy for students in grades 4-5 support student achievement improvement. The grade four keyboarding/digital literacy class is being taught by our new elementary technology specialist, while the grade five class is being taught by our new certified librarian/technology teacher.

Accommodating these important elements required us to adjust the schedule in the following ways:

- An additional five minutes of transitional time between specialist classes ensures that we meet our goals for actual instructional time
- Time for K-3 grade-level team meetings is being provided by having these students attend an additional art, music, library, and physical education class on a rotating schedule of 4, 45-day rotations
- Fourth and fifth grade students who take instrumental music will receive their lessons during their classroom teacher team meeting time to the extent that this is possible. Other students will rotate between a chorus and keyboarding/digital literacy class.

The district Data Bank was updated so that formal assessment data will be easily accessible to teachers at grade-level meetings. The Data Bank gives our teachers and staff a foundation for having deeper discussions about student achievement. I want to refer you to the article ***School Leadership and Wise Data Use Grant Supports the Goal of Educational Equity*** in the ***Grants*** section of this newsletter to learn more about the [Data Wise](#) professional development taking place. The outcome of this training is that all schools will create a building-wide Data Team that will facilitate better data analysis and planning of instructional improvements.

I am grateful to Arlington voters for approving the funds that enable us to implement these changes and move forward with our [Mission](#) of having every student succeed to their academic and social emotional potential.

### ***AHS Rebuild Construction Manager Chosen, Design Development Phase in Progress***

The work of rebuilding Arlington High School continues toward the goal of starting construction in the spring. In July the Town of Arlington announced that [Consigli Construction Co., Inc.](#) has been chosen as the construction manager. The company has significant experience in building K-12 educational buildings, and the Arlington High School Building Committee was impressed by their innovative phasing approach. Please see the town [press release](#) for more information about this choice.

We are currently in the Design Development phase, when exact details of the design will be finalized. The first phase of building will be the construction of the new Performing Arts and STEAM wings in front of the existing school. The goal is to have these available to students in early 2022. The two additional wings will follow, and the goal is to complete construction of the entire facility in 2024. The work on athletic fields, roads, landscaping, etc., will be completed the following year.

All members of the community are invited to the next **Community Forum on October 30 from 7:00-8:30 pm** in the Arlington Town Hall. Topics that will be covered include a project overview, a design update presented by HMFH Architects, and timeline, phasing plans and student impact presented by Consigli Construction.

Information about the design, educational vision, and cost can be found on the AHS Building Committee [website](#) and Facebook [page](#). We are grateful to the voters of Arlington for supporting the rebuilding of the outdated Arlington High School with the positive override vote last June, and I look forward to sharing our progress throughout this year.

### ***Arlington Public Schools Active in Environmental Education and Action***

Recycling, composting, and opportunities for environmental science education and action are going

strong in our district with wonderful guidance and support from Rachel Oliveri, the Arlington School Sustainability Coordinator. She recently sent an update on these issues and I would like to share some of her points here.

- Recycling
  - All classrooms should have at least one recycling bin, and teachers are encouraged to place this bin next to the trash receptacle to emphasize correct sorting of materials and waste reduction. Additional bins are available, and Ms. Oliveri has created a sign that can be printed and posted to remind everyone to recycle.
  - All schools except Arlington High School have a textile recycling bin on their grounds. [Bay State Textiles](#) is our partner in this endeavor, and the district receives money for every ton of worn or torn textiles that are donated. We have received over \$8,000 to date. Click [here](#) for a list of acceptable items.
- Lunchroom composting and waste sorting
  - All schools have waste sorting stations in the lunchrooms which include trash, recycling, food waste collection, and liquid pour off.
  - Our audits indicate that the district is diverting approximately 122,000 pounds of food waste from the incinerator each school year. This is a 12% decrease in the weight of trash transported to incineration and landfills.
- Green Teams and sustainability resources
  - Green Teams are active at all the schools, and members routinely engage their communities in environmental learning and action.
  - Click [here](#) to find more information on school sustainability and links to resources.

I am grateful that our school community has embraced both environmental education and action, and very proud that we received the 2018 [U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Award](#). Ms. Oliveri invites anyone who wants to learn more about the Green Team activities at their children's school to contact her at [roliveri@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:roliveri@arlington.k12.ma.us). Parents and teachers are also asked to contact her if you would like to bring an environmental science activity or local sustainability expert to your school or classroom. Thank you, Ms. Oliveri for leading these important efforts in our schools.

### ***Opportunities for Learning and Enrichment Abound in Successful SummerFun! Program***

For the 11th year, the Arlington Public Schools *SummerFun!* program provided educational and recreational opportunities throughout the summer for children entering first through ninth grades. Experienced teachers, including 50 from APS, designed and led their own classes in this self-sustaining program offered by [Arlington Community Education](#).

Our district teaching staff includes talented cooks, skilled crafters, outdoor enthusiasts, masters of improvisation, singers, and dancers. *SummerFun!* provides the opportunity for them to share these areas of interest with students.

Whether they were coding, painting, writing graphic novels, playing chess, cooking, or hiking in the Blue Hills of Boston, nearly 1,200 students took advantage of the 135 classes offered this summer, including:

- Fine Arts—APS Art teachers Deb Flemming, Samantha Kasle, Kayla McKenna, and Annie Rebola-Thompson taught a variety of classes for students of all ages, including painting, drawing, clay sculpture, and cartooning.
- Cooking—Kim Connors taught her 11th session of the popular *Way Cool Cooking*, plus OMS staffer Paul DeCamp led an ambitious culinary class called *Cook Like a Pro*, where middle schooler students learned essential cooking and knife skills using fresh, seasonal ingredients.
- Sport & Fitness—Andrew Scopa, Hayley Finn, Calie Russo, Vicki Hill, Michell Fraser, James Paras, and Jay Barry were just some of the APS teachers who shared their athletic talents through classes in baseball, basketball, field games and gymnastics.

- EarthCORE: Environmental Leadership—Rachel Oliveri, School Sustainability Coordinator and Charlotte Milan, Town Recycling Coordinator, led an innovative new program on how to plan and communicate a vision to protect and improve our environment on a local level.
- Summer Stock Musical Theater—For the second year, OMS teachers Cori Smith, Jenna Fernandes, and Randi Flynn ran a successful summer musical theater program. After two immersive weeks, 40 students put on a full junior production of *Seussical Jr.*

In addition to staff, *SummerFun!* hired 50 Arlington High School students to work as counselors. These teens were integral to all aspects of the program, performing functions that included assisting teachers in the classroom, co-leading field trips, and running recess and lunch periods.

I want to thank APS teachers Christine Capaldo and Christine Fanciullo for serving as the on-site SummerFun! Co-Directors and providing the leadership of this great program. Thank you also to Arlington Community Education Director Jen Rothenberg and Youth & Teen Programs Manager, Andrea Loeb who, along with their hard-working staff, are already planning for next summer while running the fall session of [KidZone](#), [TeenZone](#), [High School/College Prep](#), and [adult education classes](#).

I would like to close with some words from one of the satisfied parents: “We absolutely LOVE *SummerFun!* We look forward to getting the catalog in February and helping our daughter choose her classes. It's always a wonderful experience for her and she has enjoyed every single class she has taken. She is excited to learn something new each summer!”

## **Grants**

### ***Every Third Grade Student Receives a Dictionary Thanks to the Arlington Lodge of Elks***

“noun: **dictionary**; plural noun: **dictionaries**  
a book or electronic resource that lists the words of a language (typically in alphabetical order) and gives their meaning, or gives the equivalent words in a different language, often also providing information about pronunciation, origin, and usage.”

Every third grade student in Arlington will soon be able to look up the word shown above in their own personal dictionary thanks to the generosity of Arlington Lodge of Elks #1435. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> year that Elks members and friends are visiting third grade classrooms to distribute [The Best Dictionary for Students](#), a volume that is theirs to keep and use. Arthur Edgecomb, district and local Chairman of the Dictionary Drive, reports that this is a [national initiative](#) of The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks fraternal organization, and that the local lodge has donated over 6,200 volumes to Arlington students. Collectively the Elks lodges in Massachusetts rank third behind California and New York in the number of books donated.

Mr. Edgecomb says that third grade students were chosen as the recipients because this is the year that the young people are really expanding their reading and writing. At this time, they are building a foundation that they will use throughout their lives. And while it is certainly possible to look up words online, there is something intimate and personal about having a physical dictionary. Students can keep it beside them as they read, write, and study. A physical dictionary gives the owner a sense of the scope of language, and generally contains more than just lists of words. In addition to 32,000 words with simple, child-friendly definitions, pronunciation, and parts of speech, *The Best Dictionary for Students*, contains Roman numerals, sign language, Braille, a periodic table of elements, a map of the United States, and fun things like the longest English word.

Personal book presentations are done every fall and take from 20 to 30 minutes. Mr. Edgecomb visits each third grade classroom with four or five helpers so that there are several people available to interact with the children. He talks about why we need a dictionary and asks students to tell him what they can find there. He also makes sure that the young people know how to use it. Everyone looks up the first word of his group (benevolent) and the first word of the title for the group's leader (exalted).

Mr. Edgecomb, a retired middle school mathematics teacher who now occasionally substitutes at Ottoson, really enjoys it when seventh and eighth grade students he meets remember that he is “the dictionary man” and tell him that they still have their book. One mother recently informed him that the dictionary accompanied her daughter to college. While it would be wonderful to be able to give every student a larger dictionary suitable for seventh grade and older when they reach middle school, that is just not possible. Instead, the Elks lodge has purchased several copies of [Webster’s American English Dictionary: Expanded Edition](#) for each English Language Arts classroom at Ottoson, and the young people can use them there.

I want to thank Mr. Edgecomb and the members of the Arlington lodge for their participation in this wonderful project. This gift is a wonderful demonstration of dedication to our young people, and a tremendous service to our community.

### ***School Leadership and Wise Data Use Grant Supports the Goal of Educational Equity***

The first District Goal, *Student Achievement*, states “The Arlington Public Schools will ensure that every graduate is prepared to enter and complete a post-secondary degree program, pursue a career, and be an active citizen in an everchanging world...” This is both a lofty and important goal. But how does a district make sure that the curriculum, instruction, assessment system, and level of social, emotional , and wellness support is there to meet the needs of EVERY student? How does the district understand each student and their individual needs sufficiently to provide equity, to give each one what is needed to achieve at their highest academic and social emotional level?

To achieve equity, we must promote and implement a culture that uses data to make decisions. Student data comes to us from a variety of sources, and in a variety of formats--formative and summative, quantitative and qualitative. Current literature such as reports from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the National Association of Elementary School Principals point to the connection between improved data use and improved student outcomes. While our teachers always used data to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms, they desire to have a more consistent and effective process for evaluating students’ achievement, one that better supports planning and the decisions to adjust teaching practice in the classroom. An iterative improvement cycle to identify opportunities for improvement in teaching practice, creating plans to address problems, and circling back to evaluate and update approaches as students move forward is required.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Roderick MacNeal, Jr., knew that implementing a consistent approach to district data use meant training administrators. He has been working with [Teachers 21](#) and they have designed a 12-hour class that trains administrators to implement the [Harvard Data Wise Project](#) practices and processes. Our district is the first one in Massachusetts to partner with Teachers 21 to train administrators in this manner. Dr. MacNeal applied for a [District Investment Grant](#) to support this training, and the [Arlington Education Foundation](#) responded with an award of \$14,574 .Training for two cohorts, consisting of 60 administrators, curriculum leads, and others at each school is being provided. The training will enable our administrators to create school-based data teams and implement the Data Wise process. The Data Wise improvement cycle will enable our educators to learn deeply about each student, and support decision-making around additional interventions, instruction, and challenge.

Thank you, Dr. MacNeal for taking the lead on this important project, and to the Arlington Education Foundation for recognizing its importance. This is a meaningful step toward our goal to provide educational equity. Please click [here](#) to read the full District Goals 2019-2020.

### **Professional Development**

#### ***Summer Learning Opportunities Support Academic Goals and Instructional Excellence***

District Goal 2, *Staff Excellence and Professional Development* calls out our commitment to provide the kind of support our educators and administrators need to continually improve and offer our young people

a rich, standards-based education. This year's summer Professional Development offerings demonstrate this commitment. Training and workshops were offered in the areas of Social Emotional Learning, Digital Learning, elementary and high school Mathematics, elementary English Language Arts, Physical Education, Social Studies, Visual Art, Cultural Competency, 6-12 grade English, Crisis Intervention and Mental Health, Special Education, and Pediatric Health Assessment. I would like to share some examples.

- **[Responsive Classroom](#)**—Basic level training was offered for elementary teachers, administrators, and Teaching Assistants and advanced level training was available for the first time. This enabled those who had been previously trained to deepen their existing knowledge of building classroom communities.
- **Pertinent topics in the English Language Arts curriculum**
  - Third grade teachers created “snapshot” lessons with summaries for each component of the Reader’s Workshop to get ready to implement the [Lucy Calkins](#) non-fiction unit being offered in our elementary schools for the first time. Grade four teachers researched diverse book titles to support the Historical Fiction unit and met with the public librarians to discuss which choices would be most appropriate for the unit and our students. Lucy Calkins units of study and the Reader’s Workshop model are now implemented in grades 1-5, and these workshops supported the alignment of this curriculum in grades 3-5.
  - Grade five teachers explored the Interpretation Book Club unit of study being implemented for the first time this year, breaking down the lessons and tying them to State Common Core Standards.
- **New Social Studies curriculum**
  - During July and August, seventh grade teachers worked on converting the current World Geography curriculum to Global Studies, which focuses on world cultures and belief systems, geography, economics, and thematic issues such as health, energy, and human rights that intersect in multiple places.
  - Eighth grade teachers worked throughout June, July, and August to plan the curriculum for the new *Civics: Power, People, and Progress* course. This included exploration of the Civics textbook and the “We the People” books.
  - Kindergarten teachers contrasted the [2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks](#) with the current [Tools of the Mind](#) curriculum and created new resources in the areas where Social Studies instruction needs to be extended.
- **EDCO IDEAS Cultural Competency Workshop**—This course introduced a teacher, social worker, and nurse to the complex issues raised by race and racism and how they impact student engagement and achievement. Attendees left with an understanding of racial identity and the importance of building authentic relationships with their students. The intersectionality with gender identity and socioeconomic status was also explored.
- **English and Special Education teacher collaboration**—These colleagues worked together to make explicit connections between grades nine and 10 in reading and writing and investigated alternate and supplemental titles for these students.
- **[Youth Mental Health First Aid](#)** (YMHFA)—Offered in our district since 2017, this program enables individuals to recognize mental health risk factors and warning signs and act if they see a problem or crisis developing. At the end of last year, there were 300 faculty and staff who had completed the program and achieved certification. This summer, YMHFA was available as an elective during new teacher days.

These examples illustrate how our summer Professional Development program enables us, as it states in Goal Objective 2.1, to “...reinforce targeted components of the academic curriculum, social emotional competencies and pedagogy, and will emphasize culturally competent and data-informed instructional practices that support student learning and growth.” I am grateful that our teachers take advantage of

these opportunities and we are fortunate to be able to offer the types of instruction that supports continuous personal improvement. Please click [here](#) to read the full District Goals 2019-2020.

### **Awards & Distinctions**

#### ***Ottoson Media Group Reaches Finals in MPY Public Service Announcement Project***

The Ottoson Media Group was one of six finalists in the 2018-2019 Public Service Announcement Project of the [Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth \(MPY\)](#). *Endure & Persevere*, the selected video, was the only middle school entry to be chosen. The contest was open to all students in schools that participate in MPY. The six student creators, Ilya Sharonov, Veronica Barton, Elena Huegel-Munoz, Spencer Quick, Andrew Simcoe, and Leo Young, participated in the acting. Ilya did the filming and Veronica was the Director and provided the voiceover.

A big chart table was used to create the storyboard. Filming, which took two weeks, was done at OMS using the Media Group's DSLR camera and equipment from [ACMi](#). Retakes were done after watching the clips and analyzing the content, and an editing plan was created. After creating a rough draft, some clips were filmed again to make the video more powerful. Media Group Adviser and OMS Librarian and Media Assistant Edith Moisand reports that it took several edits before the students were satisfied with the product. Once it was final, the voiceover was added. Music was purchased after the group decided what would fit the video. It took about a month to produce this 45 second [video](#). Congratulations to Ilya, Veronica, Elena, Spencer, Andrew, and Leo on creating such a powerful video under the theme *Be a Voice, Not an Echo*.

Last year was very exciting for the Ottoson Media Group. Their nine minute mini documentary, *LARP is Forever*, won the Popular Award at the [ATown Teen Film Festival](#) in March. The creators spent months interviewing staff members, middle and high school students, and APS alumni about their [LARP](#) experience and how it impacted their lives, studies, etc. Ms. Moisand taught the group members the different ways to create a documentary, and they stuck to a plan, analyzing over 600 interviews, clips, and A and B rolls. Together they decided on a story line that led to the surprise ending. The participants were so pleased with their experience they decided to work on a mini documentary again this year. The subject is the OMS Drama Club, and work has already begun with filming during the fall audition process this month. Teacher interviews are also underway, and the group is very excited about the effort.

The cooking show *Teens Cook: French Edition* produced by the Ottoson Media group is now entering its fourth season. I am proud to announce that the series won the award as *ACMi* Best Youth Programming in June 2018. The group also films all the OMS concerts and assemblies and if they get the rights to film, records the musicals in the spring. I want to thank Ms. Moisand for leading this talented and creative group.

#### ***AHS Students Earn National Merit Scholarship and AP Scholar Distinctions***

I am proud to share the news that 23 young men and women of the Class of 2019 were named National Merit Commended Students in the 2019 [National Merit Scholarship Program](#). One of these students was a winner and awarded a scholarship. Additionally, 20 students from the Class of 2020 were Commended, with five moving on to the Semifinalist category. Commended students are those in the top 3% of the approximately 1.6 million U.S. high school students who participated in the 2018 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®). From this group, approximately 16,000 students become Semifinalists and 15,000 young people go on to the Finalist category. Finalists in the Class of 2020 will be named later.

Arlington High School has a robust Advanced Placement program and is now offering AP classes in 23 subjects. Last spring, 454 students took Advanced Placement exams, resulting in 1,045 reported scores and the following [AP Scholar Awards](#) in the Class of 2019.

Award	Number of students	Definition
AP Scholar	90	Scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams
AP Scholar with Honor	35	Average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams
AP Scholar with Distinction	74	Average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams
National AP Scholar	1	Average score of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on five or more of these exams
AP <a href="#">International Diploma</a>	1	Scores of 3 or higher on five or more AP exams in three or more identified subject areas

These are wonderful achievements and I congratulate each of these students. I also want to extend my thanks their teachers whose hard work supports them in their quest for academic excellence.

### **Academics & Enrichment**

#### ***Council on International Educational Exchange Scholarships Earmarked for Summer Study***

The [Council on International Educational Exchange](#) (CIEE) has once again earmarked \$25,000 in Global Navigator Scholarships for Arlington students who wish to take part in summer travel and learning opportunities. Three types of [summer study abroad programs](#) in over 30 destinations are offered by CIEE.

- Language & Culture--language and cultural immersion programs in Spanish, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Japanese, Italian or Arabic
- Service & Leadership--service projects focusing on children's rights, mentoring youth, leadership, environmental justice, and empowering girls in countries that include the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Thailand, Morocco, and others
- Global Discovery--programs in the areas of arts, entrepreneurship, STEM, or international relations in countries that include South Korea, Czech Republic, Costa Rica, Australia, Netherlands, and others

Mary Villano, International Travel and Foreign Exchange Program Coordinator, reports that several AHS students have participated in these programs over the past couple of summers. The feedback has been positive, with the students excited about their experiences and happy they chose to apply. Any AHS student in grades nine, 10, or 11 may complete an application for 10-100% tuition scholarship awards. The deadline to submit the completed application is December 6, 2019.

Ms. Villano reports that students who put strong effort into their applications, select Language & Culture programs, and qualify financially have a better chance of being accepted and receiving a scholarship. Interested students across socio-economic levels are encouraged to apply. More information is provided in this short [video](#), and questions about the trips, scholarships, or the application process can be directed to Gail Harris at CIEE, [gharris@ciee.org](mailto:gharris@ciee.org).

### **Creative Highlights**

#### ***AHS Jazz Band and Madrigal Singers Begin Performance Schedule at Town Day***

It means getting ready quickly, but the 23 members of the AHS Jazz Band and 29 vocalists of the AHS Madrigal Singers would not want to miss the chance to delight the crowd at Town Day every year. Taking the stage after only having a few days of school is a challenge, but the talented students who take part in these groups have the dedication and professionalism to make it happen.

This year's Town Day appearance was the 15<sup>th</sup> for the Jazz Band, and their set included old favorites like *The Chicken* by Pee Wee Ellis and Dizzy Gillespie's *A Night in Tunisia*. One of the numbers presented by the Madrigal Singers, performing for their seventh year, is the traditional Zulu South African peace hymn, *Ukuthula*. This song is part of the group's participation in the [AVoice4Peace](#) movement which asks thousands of choirs from all over the world to sing it together on September 21, the International Day of Peace. AHS Choral Director Mara Walker used *Ukuthula* to spark discussions on how each individual can be a voice for peace in our world. To spread kindness and positivity in the school and community, all the AHS choirs came together and sang the song in the main lobby on September 21.

Reflecting on the Town Day event, AHS Instrumental Director Sabato D'Agostino, Jazz Band Director, had this to say: "It was wonderful to see the collaboration between the two groups. It was also wonderful to see what the students could accomplish in only two weeks of rehearsals. I may be biased, but both groups were absolutely outstanding." Ms. Walker also noted that she was "...very pleased with the amount of work the students were able to accomplish in only two weeks." She is new to both AHS and New England, and she observes that "It takes time for singers and their conductor to build relationships and meld together as a choir, but we had a great time getting to know one another quickly and were able to produce a diverse set of repertoire for Town Day."

The Town Day performance by the Madrigal Singers was a great way to introduce Ms. Walker to Arlington and for the community to have a chance to welcome her. Ms. Walker has relocated to Massachusetts after spending six years as Choral Director at Freedom High School in Morganton, North Carolina.

I want to thank Mr. D'Agostino, Ms. Walker, and all the amazing musicians and vocalists who started off the school year sharing their music with our community this month. You may want to mark your calendars now, so you don't miss these next Performing Arts musical events:

- *An Evening of A Cappella*, Fall Chorus Concert featuring all AHS Choirs, October 29, Arlington Town Hall, 7:00 pm
- Choral and Music Tech Collaborative Concert featuring Music Technology students, the AHS Chorale, and Madrigal Singers November 7, AHS Old Hall, 7:00 pm
- Jazz Festival Concert featuring the AHS Jazz Band. November 24, AHS Old Hall, 7:00 pm.