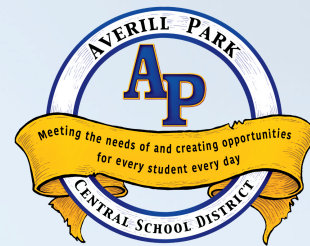


# Averill Park

DECEMBER 2022



## District Strives for Continuous Improvement

If you have a chance to walk around our school campuses, you will notice that it looks as though everything is back to normal. While pandemic measures have been removed, the Averill Park Central School District has not returned to the same as it was in 2019. We're better.

This year marks the beginning of our first-ever Universal Pre-Kindergarten program. The High School posted a record high graduation rate in 2022. A capital project has begun and a contract that properly recognizes the high



Students rush the doors during the first day of school at Algonquin Middle School.

value and importance of our dedicated CSEA professionals was agreed upon. Two athletic teams won state championships and the Odyssey of the Mind team went to Worlds. We have two new ELA curriculums at the elementary level. Students are engaging in a higher level of learning in technology at the middle school. At the high school, the largest number of college credit bearing courses is being offered. The 1:1 computer initiative has been implemented for grades 5-12. New state-of-the-art security cameras have been installed throughout the district.

Simply put, we are not content with going back to how things were pre-pandemic. The Averill Park Central School District strives to move forward, progress, and provide an outstanding education to each and every student that walks through our doors.



## Capital Project Work Gets Underway

The Capital Project is well underway. Construction on Phase 1 started in September at the bus garage with the initial phase of roofing restoration. Work also got underway at each of the other district buildings with the installation of security door hardware (the first of 2 security-related improvements planned). The security hardware work completed in October and the bus garage roofing project has suspended for the winter season, restarting in the Spring. Additionally, the original overhead doors at the bus garage installed more than 25 years ago are planned to be removed and replaced starting in March 2023.

Phase 2 focuses on major building conditions renovation, and health and safety-related work at APHS and AMS. This work has been fully designed and construction documents submitted for plan review and permitting to the State Education Department. Work will predominantly occur during the summer of 2023, 2024 and be completed in the fall of 2025. Phase 3 of the Capital Project focuses on similar types of improvements at each of the elementary schools.



Elementary School students read 'Poppy' in ELA and then did classroom projects related to the book.

## APHS Continues to Expand College in the High School Course List

Juniors and Seniors at Averill Park High School (APHS) can take advantage of access to college-level courses, earn college-credit, and potentially save thousands of dollars while getting a head start on their post-secondary education. This is being offered through extensive, and growing, partnerships with the College Board, as well as a variety of local colleges and universities through the College in the High School (CIHS) program.

APHS is working to continue to expand its AP and CIHS offerings, which have already increased from 18 to 25 courses over the past 3 years. Most recently, the High School Leadership team partnered with their colleagues at Hudson Valley Community College to add the AP Biology course to the CIHS roster. Beginning this year, while students taking AP Biology will continue to have access to College Board credit, they are now also able to earn up to 8 credits through HVCC, for Biology 150 and Biology 151.

"Not only do these partnerships allow our students to gain access to rigorous, college-level courses, but they also allow students to save a tremendous amount of money in the long-run," HS Principal, Heath Quiles said. According to bestcolleges.com, the average cost of one college credit in the United States is \$600. Through the CIHS program, students and their families only pay between \$66.00 and \$195.00 per credit, depending on the accrediting school.

Additionally, the outcome and awarding of credits through CIHS is based on a student's successful completion of coursework, instead of performance on a single assessment. This means that more students will successfully be awarded credit, and in ways that align better with the way that credits are earned in the real post-secondary environment.

"Our goal, as we continue to grow forward," Quiles said, "is to strategically expand our offerings across multiple disciplines so that, if a student plans well, s/he could be well on the way to attaining an affordable Associate's Degree before graduating from high school."

## Elementary Schools Embark on New ELA curriculum

Starting in September, students in grades K-5 have been experiencing new English Language Arts instruction through the implementation of two new literacy programs.

Beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through second grade, students are using the Superkids Reading Program. This program provides teachers with research-based practices that follow a systematic and explicit instructional path to develop literacy skills that integrate reading, spelling, writing, grammar, listening, and speaking. The program features characters called 'Superkids' who mirror the developmental stages and interests of children themselves, making them relatable to our K-2 students.

The skills being learned will result in more proficient readers by the time our students enter third grade.

In third grade and continuing through fifth grade, teachers are using the Read Side By Side program, a literature-rich curriculum that provides opportunities for students to read numerous books throughout the year.

Through Read Side by Side, students experience a dual approach of a teacher-led read aloud that models literacy skill development and book clubs during which groups of students reading the same book apply the skills they have learned through discussion and activities. Teachers and students alike are enjoying the opportunities to read more books, more often.



Students work on a centers project at the Universal Pre-K program.

## Pre-K Program Starts Strong

Universal Pre-Kindergarten is in its first year at Averill Park CSD, thanks to a federal grant that fully funds the program.

This year, enrollment was capped at 18 students and due to very strong interest, a lottery was needed to determine who was selected to participate in the class. The program follows a theme-based curriculum which assigns a theme to each week of the school year. Students are assessed four times per year on the four-year-old New York State standards.

"The biggest benefit to students that attend the preschool program is socialization with children their own age in a structured environment," preschool Principal Kris Hoffay said. "We find that students that attend a preschool program are more ready to begin their Kindergarten year, both academically and socially. They also learn life skills like sharing, cooperation, respect, and routine."

# School-Wide Assemblies Help Build Community

Students at all three elementary schools are learning what it means to be a part of a school community thanks, in part, to Character Education Team-driven events, including building-wide assemblies.

The COVID-19 pandemic shut down many events and students in third grade are now experiencing these events for the first time.

In addition to the assemblies, students are enjoying Spirit Weeks, Veterans Day parades, Pink-Outs, and much more.

Schoolwide community-building events link students, parents and teachers together in frequent collaboration and social interaction, helping to foster school traditions and promote inclusiveness.



Large scale assemblies have returned, including the PES Pride assembly at Poestenkill Elementary School (shown above).

# Sports Teams Keep Winning

The 2021-22 school year saw two athletic teams win state championships and many others claim sectional titles. This year, the Warriors are off to a strong start, as well.

The boys golf team won its first Section 2 title in program history. Raegan O'Brien, Colin Brunelle and Logan Barsalow qualified for State Meets in their respective sports of swimming and boys and girls cross country. The football team advanced to the Section 2, Class A Super Bowl.

Thank you to our student-athletes and coaches who continue to represent our district extremely well, both on and off the playing field. As a reminder all home contests are free to the community.



The girls varsity basketball team was presented with state championship rings this fall.

# District, Town Join Together to Create New Community Space



The new basketball court with pickleball lines is being built near the playground at Poestenkill Elementary School.

The Town of Poestenkill has secured donations for materials to create the new basketball court with pickleball lines at Poestenkill Elementary School at zero impact to taxpayers. During the day, students will utilize the new court. When school is not in session, on evenings, and on weekends, the community will be allowed to use the space.

Ground was broken recently on the construction of the new court, which will be located near the playground on Veterans Street.

We thank the many community members, organizations and the Town of Poestenkill for coming together to bring this project to life.

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# Averill Park Central Schools

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Averill Park, NY 12018

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ORGANIZATION  
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Averill Park, NY  
Permit No. 11

To: BOX HOLDER  
POSTAL PATRON  
RURAL ROUTE  
STAR ROUTE



## Stop-Arm Cameras to be Installed

While school buses tend to be very safe, students are most vulnerable when they are outside the bus, crossing the street while entering or exiting.

In early 2023, our school buses will see security enhancements in the form of additional cameras thanks to a partnership with Rensselaer County and local law enforcement at no cost to taxpayers.

At the moment, all 75 District school buses are equipped with cameras. Large buses have two cameras while small buses have one camera apiece. With this enhancement, depending on the size of the school buses in the District fleet, some will be outfitted with five cameras on the interior and four on the exterior, including stop-arm cameras.

The stop-arm cameras will automatically record a vehicle that runs through the flashing red lights when the stop sign is activated for students boarding or exiting a bus. The video will be sent to local law enforcement and the registered owner of the vehicle will receive a summons in the mail.

The new cameras will provide better viewing angles, both inside and outside the buses, and the footage will be web-based, allowing for quicker access.

## AMS Continues Service Learning Tradition With Patroon Farm

In 2016, Algonquin Middle School staff recognized a need among the student body to experience service learning at each grade level and developed a relationship with the Patroon Farm, which is run by the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York. The Farm grows fruits and vegetables, which are provided to families in need throughout the greater Capital Region.

Each fall, AMS sends Grades 6 and 7 students to plant seedlings and then in the spring, Grade 8 students help harvest crops. With so many students involved, AMS has been one of the largest providers of volunteer service hours to the Regional Food Bank Farm.

During the trips to the farm, students learn about farming, the role of the Northeast Regional Food Bank, and the Patroon Farm. Additionally, students engage in pre-trip discussion activities that focus on the prevalence of hunger and food insecurity and upon return, students participate in service reflection activities, where they are prompted to think about the impact of their work at the farm.

"AMS students enjoy their morning at the farm, working together to help the school community, and enjoy each others' company. The trip is equal parts team building and service to our community. It is always great to see students helping others," AMS Principal Rob Messia said.

