

# Averill Park

DECEMBER 2021



## New School Year Brings a Sense of Normalcy for Students

The 2021-22 school year has brought with it a feeling of normalcy. Students in grades K-12 are coming to school every day and they are engaged, having fun, and learning. In-person events, such as the National Honor Society Induction, indoor interscholastic athletics, and performances with spectators, have resumed.

In this newsletter, we are showcasing some of the great things that have happened throughout the District, at each level, so far this year.



High school students launch pumpkins as part of a Physics project.

The Averill Park Central School District continues to do everything it can to fulfill its mission of meeting the needs of and creating opportunities for every student every day. In that vein, social-emotional learning is one of the top priorities, and a portion of the federal funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic has gone to boosting our offerings in this area. For a breakdown of where stimulus money is going, see page 4.

We hope you find this newsletter informative. The District plans on making this an annual publication, giving you a look at new initiatives, long-standing traditions, and more.

## District Launches New Podcast Online

The Every Student Every Day Podcast is a new communication tool that gives community members a look inside the Averill Park Central School District.

The podcast launched in March 2021 with new episodes being released every other Monday. Episodes have highlighted various departments throughout the District, budget-related information, the Averill Park Education Foundation, athletic teams, student spotlights, and more.

“The podcast is a way to showcase the people, departments, and events that make our School District such a special place. This is a different way to communicate with our community and give stakeholders more information,” Superintendent Dr. James Franchini said. “I hope that our listeners enjoy the interviews and that they learn something new from each episode.”

Dr. Franchini hosts the podcast. Each episode runs between 20-30 minutes and can be found anywhere you listen to podcasts, including iTunes, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and more. Just search for “Every Student Every Day.”



Averill Park Boys Soccer

# Section 2 Class A Champions

#WINNERSINTHECS





APHS students at their job shadowing placements.

## APHS Students Prepare for the Future With Job Shadowing

Many college students spend thousands of dollars taking classes to prepare for a job that they, ultimately, are not interested in. In the High School, Mrs. Rosemarino's Career Explorations and Job Shadowing class is giving students a look at potential career paths prior to enrolling in college.

"One connection I think that can sometimes get lost in the day-to-day responsibilities of students is they are preparing for their future. I want to make sure that students understand that there is a purpose in their education and I want them to be exposed to 'real world' experiences; this course allows them to do that," Rosemarino said.

Students job shadow for 25 hours throughout the school year. They can break up observation hours into different semesters and observe different career fields they are interested in. Over the years, students have observed with local veterinarian offices, physical therapist offices, dental offices, Albany Medical Center, preschools, elementary schools, law offices, New School of Media, Albany Police Department, and the Theater Institute at Sage College, among many others.

In addition to observation hours, students discover their strengths, career preferences, research careers, develop a resume, practice interview skills, and learn soft business skills.

"Each year, I have prior students (recent AP graduates) guest speak to the class and they inform students about their freshman college experience," Rosemarino said. "The feedback I get is that this course is very helpful, and it should be offered to more students as numbers are limited and it fills up quickly."

Rosemarino noted that students enjoy getting out of the classroom and observing fields that they are interested in. Businesses also provide positive feedback, stating that many students are quick learners and are very professional.

## Literacy a Focus at AP

As the District returns from the pandemic, it has renewed its focus on literacy for students in grades K-8.

At the K-5 level, APCSD has partnered with the Reading League, which focuses on teaching the science behind how children learn to read. As part of this work, every K-5 teacher will be spending four 1/2 days at various times throughout the year with a trainer from the Reading League learning about what research states about how a child's brain learns to read. With that knowledge, they will learn about strategies they can use in their classrooms to work with students who are struggling with the foundational skills of reading. Knowledge gained in these sessions will become the foundation for literacy instruction as APCSD adopts new ELA curriculums in grades K-2 and 3-5 for the 2022-23 school year.

At the grade 6-8 level, a group of teachers at Algonquin Middle School are currently participating in grant-funded Reading Apprenticeship training, which began over the summer and will continue throughout the school year.

Reading Apprenticeship is a framework of four dimensions of learning that supports students' academic and social-emotional development through reading: Social, Personal, Cognitive, and Knowledge-Building. Each one of these dimensions are integrated into subject-area teaching and developed through metacognitive conversations that teach students to explore their thinking process as they learn.

AMS Literacy Interventionist Barbara Glasser stated that one of the biggest challenges for middle school students is to "overcome the obstacle of receiving reading intervention and the stigma attached."

With the Reading Apprenticeship Framework, the class works together to create a safe environment where students become aware of who they are as a reader. Key strategies are taught to improve students' literacy skills, as well as be able to transfer the strategies they learned into their other academic classes.



The blue gym at Algonquin Middle School was completely re-done.

## Rebuilding From the Flood

In July 2021, the Averill Park CSD community was hit hard by a flood. The High School and Middle School suffered substantial damage, with water entering both buildings.

At AMS, the blue gym floor had to be replaced, while classrooms and the cafeteria also suffered damage. Multiple classrooms, offices, and the library at APHS were damaged.

Floors and walls were torn apart to prepare for construction. Furniture throughout the District is also being replaced, though supply chain issues are occurring and slowing the rebuilding process.



Students at Miller Hill-Sand Lake Elementary School participated in the annual Fun Run Boosterthon Fundraiser.

## Students Stay Active, Raise Funds, Awareness

Students at the West Sand Lake, Miller Hill-Sand Lake and Poestenkill Elementary Schools have laced up their sneakers and hit the ground running this school year.

At PES and MHS�, students participated in Boosterthon Fun Runs, which serve as the main fundraising activity for the year. The PTA-sponsored events raised more than \$30,000 each with funds expected to go toward author visits, plays, dances, and other enrichment activities.

West Sand Lake held its first Harvest Run. Students brought in donations of food items to benefit local food pantries and ran laps around the bus loop after watching a video that taught them about food insecurities in schools.

## A New Twist on an Old Tradition

American flags fluttered, music played, and students and staff cheered. All three of the elementary schools brought back Veterans Day events this year. Instead of hosting our veterans inside the walls of each school, though, lines of cars wound their way through parking lots while students and staff members showed their appreciation for those who served in the military.

Veterans Day has long been a staple on the school calendar, being one of the most well-attended events throughout the year. As always, we were excited to show our gratitude, this year in a COVID-friendly way.



Students and staff members at West Sand Lake Elementary School greet a parade of cars during a Veterans Day vehicle parade.

## Out With the Old, In With the New at Poestenkill Elementary School



The trailer at PES (top) has been removed. Pictured (bottom right) is a new office space located inside the elementary school.

The trailer at Poestenkill Elementary School has been around for many years. Over that time it served a number of different purposes, from guidance services to storage. Although it was once useful, in recent years it deteriorated and became an eye sore. In September, it was removed.

A new Student Support Center was built inside the school that contains a Guidance Counselor office, a School Psychologist office, storage space, and a Kindness Closet. PES has also created a new conference room, faculty room and two new small group classrooms. All of the work was done by AP's Buildings and Grounds Department.

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# Averill Park

## Central Schools

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To: BOX HOLDER  
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## Stimulus Funds Put to Work

APCSD received stimulus funds as part of the American Rescue Plan and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations. A large portion of these funds must be used for specific state-regulated purposes. The district presented its plan publicly at its June Board of Education meeting.

More than half of the \$4.6 million has been earmarked for Student Academic Growth. This will fund programs such as a K-8 Summer School program (2021&2022), additional AIS Staff, purchasing an academic universal screening tool, and more.

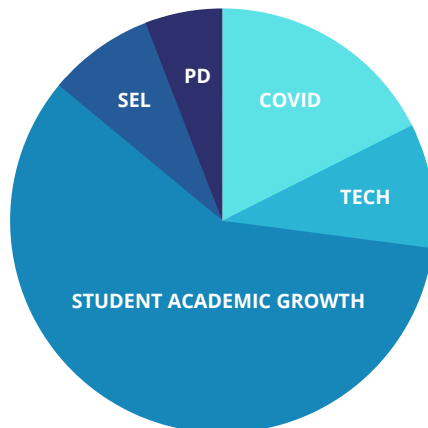
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) efforts include adding two K-12 SEL coordinator positions, purchasing an SEL screening tool to better identify and support the SEL needs of our students, and materials to support new SEL initiatives being added in all schools.

COVID-19 funds are going toward providing alternative education settings for students who are unable to attend in-person learning this school year, classroom furniture to support social distancing measures, academic support for students in quarantine, PPE Equipment, a module for our transportation system to better track school bus attendance, and a special education teacher dedicated to providing support for virtual and quarantined students.

Professional Development and Classroom Technology are two other areas where funding is going. For more information, please visit our dedicated Federal Stimulus Funds page on our website. The link can be found in the District Information section of our homepage.

**Distribution of Funds**

- Student Growth: 59.0%
- COVID: 17.6%
- Technology: 9.5%
- SEL: 8.1%
- Professional Dev: 5.9%



## Algonquin Middle School Reinstates CARES Program

Algonquin Middle School has reinstated the C.A.R.E.S. Program, which stands for "Committed to Achieving Results for Every Student." This afterschool program runs twice each week and has a mission of deepening the connection between students and their school, and to improve students' academic performance in their current grade level.

The program is being offered, free of charge, to AMS families of students thanks to federal stimulus funding.

"Since the budget cuts about 10-12 years ago and the loss of late buses during that same time, we saw struggling students who in the past were able to engage after school really falter," AMS Social Worker Linda Bille said. "Additionally, in light of recent events, where making connections has been more difficult due to social distancing and mask use, and the previous year's hybrid schedule, we felt this would be a good way to bring back a program that could increase connections, assist with the increased rigor of daily school and work expectations, and also assist students who struggle with some deficits in skills."

The program has capacity for 48 students and prior to the first parent-teacher conferences of the year, C.A.R.E.S. had 24 students enrolled.

"As the year progresses, some of the academic deficits that we predicted are apparent, but even more so are the social struggles students are facing," Bille said. "The increased screen time, increased reliance on electronics for socialization and lack of contact with friends has led to some stunted social skills. We are addressing that in our C.A.R.E.S program through the use of weekly community circles."

The C.A.R.E.S. team is monitoring the success of the program by using two specific criteria: connection to school and improvement in academic performance. An increase in each student's grades by at least 10% is expected.