

# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 31, 2023

AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

AS JANUARY HAS COME TO A CLOSE, WE ARE MORE THAN HALF WAY THROUGH THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE YEAR IS HALFWAY OVER, I CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE OUR FAMILIES TO REACH OUT TO YOUR STUDENT'S SCHOOL IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR IF WE MAY BE OF ASSISTANCE. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SPEAK WITH YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR NEED TO ATTEND SCHOOL, DO THEIR BEST ON THEIR SCHOOL WORK, AND EXHIBIT POSITIVE BEHAVIOR.

THE PAST MONTH HAS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THE ACPS FAMILY AS WE HAVE DEALT WITH THE PASSING OF THREE OF OUR STUDENTS. WE WERE NOTIFIED IN LATE DECEMBER OF AN INCIDENT INVOLVING ONE OF OUR FOSTER PARENTS AND FOUR PASSENGERS ON THE ROCKFISH RIVER. WE HAD INFORMATION THAT THREE OF THE PASSENGERS WERE OUR STUDENTS. IN JANUARY, TWO OF THE PASSENGERS WERE IDENTIFIED AS CHRISTOPHER DOSS (11TH GRADE ACHS) AND JASIAH DAVIS (6TH GRADE AMS). TODAY WE WERE NOTIFIED THAT THE BODY RECOVERED ON JANUARY 27, 2023 WAS MYSON SYLVESTRE (12TH GRADE ACHS). THOUGH WE ARE SADDENED BY THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, WE ARE THANKFUL THAT WE CAN BEGIN TO BRING CLOSURE TO THIS INCIDENT FOR OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY. PLEASE KEEP THE FAMILIES OF CHRISTOPHER, JASIAH, AND MYSON AS WELL AS OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS AS WE CONTINUE TO DEAL WITH THIS TRAGIC SITUATION.

MOTHER NATURE HAS BEEN PROVIDING US WITH PLENTY OF MOISTURE BUT THE COLD TEMPERATURES HAVE NOT BEEN AROUND TO GIVE US MUCH IN THE WAY OF WINTER PRECIPITATION. WE HAVE HAD A FEW MARGINAL MORNINGS WHERE THE TEMPERATURES HAVE BEEN AROUND FREEZING THAT HAS CAUSED US CONCERN. JUST SO YOU ARE AWARE, WE DO OUR BEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH VDOT, THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ADDITION TO CONSULTING WITH OUR INTERNAL TEAM WHEN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING DELAYS OR CLOSURES. THE PROBLEM WE HAVE FACED THIS YEAR IS THE MAJORITY OF OUR WEATHER SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN HITTING AROUND THE 5:00 - 7:00 AM TIME FRAME WHICH PUTS US IN DIFFICULT SITUATION WHEN WE DETERMINE IF WE CAN OPERATE ON A REGULAR SCHEDULE. DUE TO OUR BUS SCHEDULE WE NEED TO MAKE A DECISION BY 5:40 AM. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON THE INFORMATION WE HAVE AT THE TIME. PLEASE KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE SAFETY OF OUR STAFF AND STUDENTS AS THE FOCUS OF EVERY WEATHER RELATED DECISION THAT WE MAKE.

THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT WE WILL OPERATE REMOTELY WHEN WE NEED TO "CLOSE" DUE TO THE WEATHER. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO NOTIFY OUR PARENTS AND STUDENTS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A REMOTE DAY IN ADVANCE. WHEN WE OPERATE REMOTELY, WE ARE STILL REQUIRED TO OFFER MEALS TO OUR STUDENTS. IF WE OPERATE REMOTELY, WE WILL OPERATE THE KITCHENS AT AMHERST COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL AND MONELISON MIDDLE SCHOOL AS FEEDING LOCATIONS. SINCE WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO FEED STUDENTS, WE CAN ONLY OPERATE REMOTELY IF ROAD CONDITIONS ARE SAFE ENOUGH FOR THE CAFETERIA STAFF TO REPORT AND PARENTS CAN ACCESS THE BUILDINGS. WE HAVE INCLUDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON REMOTE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS IN THE NEWSLETTER.

THE "COMMUNITY DINNER" WAS A GREAT SUCCESS AS WE HAD 177 COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND FAMILIES PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENT. I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER A BIG "THANK YOU" TO EVERYONE WHO WAS IN ATTENDANCE AND I HOPE YOU FOUND THE EVENING TO HAVE BEEN BENEFICIAL. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK OUR SHOW UP AMHERST TEAM, IRON LIVES, AND THE AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION FOR ALL THEY DID IN THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE EVENT. ADDITIONALLY, THIS EVENING COULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITH THE GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF GLAD/CLOROX FOR THE EDUCATION FOUNDATION AND THE SHOW UP AMHERST INITIATIVE. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK SHIMILA KEENUM FOR THE INFORMATIVE PRESENTATION SHE PROVIDED AT THE DINNER.

SPEAKING OF SHOW UP AMHERST, WE HAVE OUR NEXT DIVISION WIDE SHOW UP DAY SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 17. WE HAVE ASKED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO WORK WITH THEIR FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS FOR FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT WHEN PLANNING THIS EVENT. PLEASE REACH OUT TO YOUR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER OR SUPPORT THE SCHOOL FOR THIS OR OTHER EVENTS. OUR GOAL IS TO CONTINUE TO BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR STUDENTS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO ATTEND SCHOOL. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR STUDENTS TO GET THE FULL BENEFIT OF THEIR EDUCATION IF THEY ARE NOT IN SCHOOL.

I THANK YOU AGAIN FOR ALL YOU DO FOR ACPS. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME TEAM WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVE WHICH IS TO PROVIDE THE BEST EDUCATION POSSIBLE FOR OUR STUDENTS. I TRULY BELIEVE THAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER TOWARD THAT GOAL. ALTHOUGH WE MAY HAVE SOME DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND MAY DISAGREE AT TIMES WE WILL ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH MORE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY IF WE WORK TOGETHER. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR I MAY BE OF ASSISTANCE.



SINCERELY,

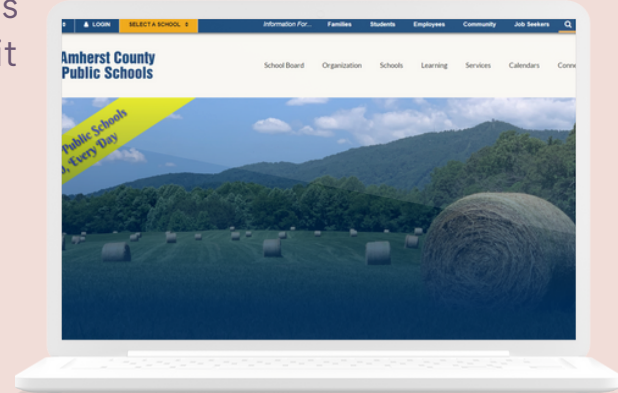
WILLIAM



# Remote Learning Day Information

As we are in the midst of winter months and weather is always problematic we would like to remind you that it is our intention to provide instructional opportunities to all students even in the event that they are not required to report to school.

ACPS will, if deemed appropriate, call for a Remote Learning Day due to weather instead of Closing schools. This means that all students would be required to participate in instruction while at home.



If a Remote Learning Day is called, your students' School Principal will send out a school messenger providing you with instructions for your students participation requirements for the day. This can either be completing work on their Canvas or Google Classrooms using their school-provided Chromebook, or logging into a virtual classroom using a Google Meet link assigned by their teacher. Please ensure that your student brings home their Chromebook each day in order to be prepared for any Remote Learning Days.

The division will be providing bag lunches at designated north end and south end locations of the county. That information will also be sent out by a school messenger so that you may access that for your students. If you have questions please reach out to your school Principal for additional information.



## Upcoming Events

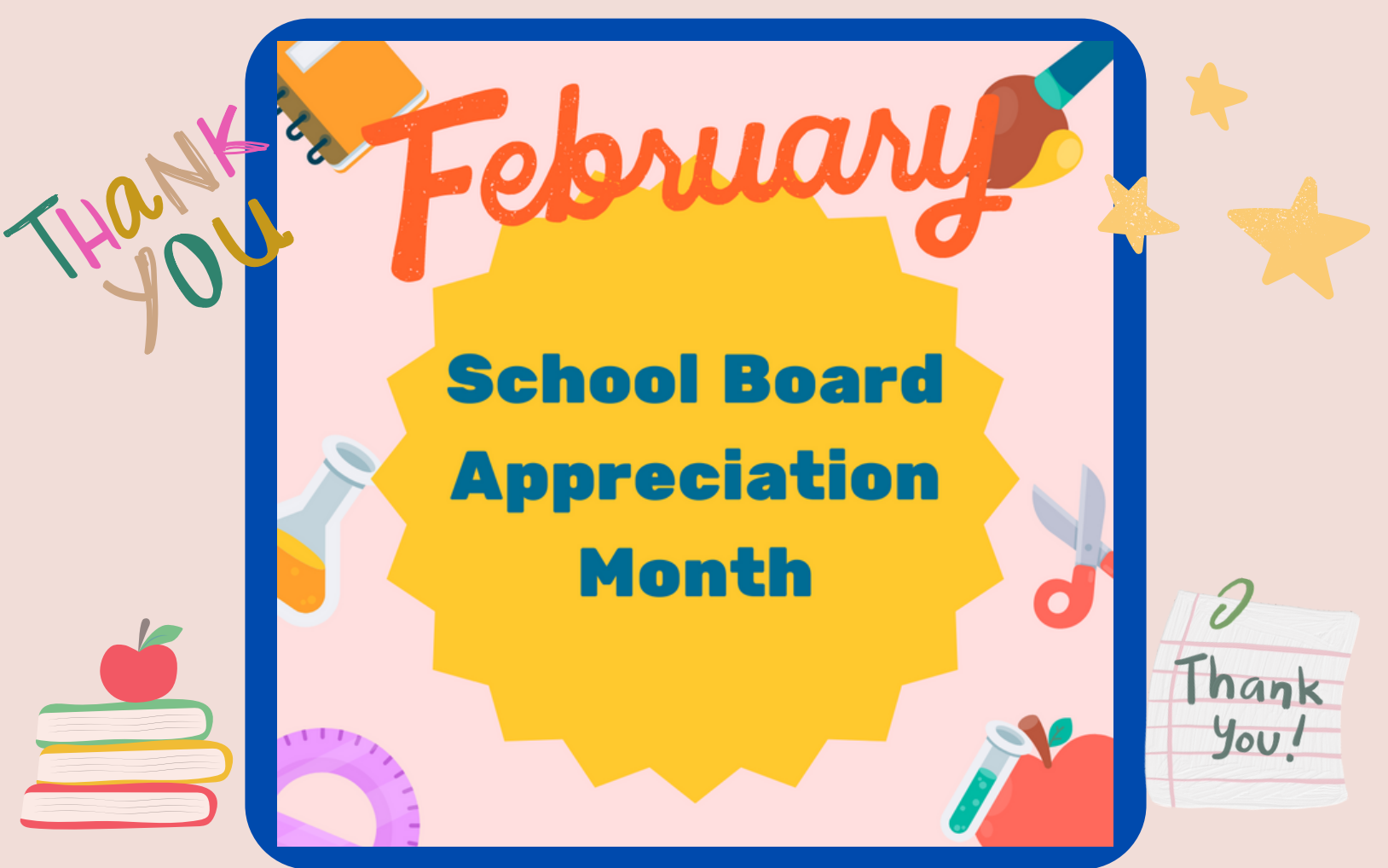
**Friday, February 17: Winter Break  
No School for Staff or Students**

**Monday, February 20: Professional Development Day  
No School for Students**

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS DINNER

Amherst County Public Schools hosted its First Annual Community Connections Dinner on January 19, 2023 at the Madison Heights Community Center. The event was a great success and widely attended by our students, staff, families and community. Our guests were able to enjoy a wonderful meal catered by Merredith's, an interactive and informative presentation from Shimila Keenum, as well as the chance to win several resources and prizes that were donated by members of our community. This event was made possible through the #ShowUpAmherst partnership between Amherst County Public Schools, the Amherst County Public Schools Education Foundation and IRON Lives, which is supported by a generous grant from Glad Manufacturing/Clorox. We are appreciative of all those who volunteered their time and talents for this event. Amherst County Public Schools is dedicated to serving our school community and we look forward to future events that allow us to engage with one another.





**FEBRUARY IS SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH! AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL JOIN SCHOOL DIVISIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE TO CELEBRATE SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY. THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION, "RISING TO THE CHALLENGE," REFLECTS THE LEADERSHIP OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AS THEY SERVE THEIR LOCAL DIVISIONS AND ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LEADERS ON BEHALF OF ALL STUDENTS. OUR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ARE DEDICATED TO SERVING THE STUDENTS OF AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ENSURING THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BENEFIT FROM A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION. THEY ARE TASKED WITH DEVELOPING POLICIES AND MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS ON COMPLEX EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES THAT IMPACT OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY. THEIR DECISIONS AND ACTIONS AFFECT THE PRESENT AND FUTURE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE WELCOME OUR COMMUNITY TO SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE SELFLESS SERVICE OF OUR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS. THANK YOU SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS!**

**AMHERST COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

**CHRIS TERRY**  
**DISTRICT 3 / CHAIR**  
**APPOINTED: 01/01/20**

**ABBY THOMPSON**  
**AT-LARGE / VICE CHAIR**  
**APPOINTED: 01/01/22**

**PRISCILLA LIGGON**  
**DISTRICT 4**  
**APPOINTED: 07/01/97**

**JOHN GRIESER**  
**DISTRICT 1**  
**APPOINTED: 01/01/20**

**GINGER BURG**  
**AT-LARGE**  
**APPOINTED: 01/01/20**

**ERIC ORASI**  
**DISTRICT 5**  
**APPOINTED: 01/02/22**

**DAWN JUSTICE**  
**DISTRICT 2**  
**APPOINTED: 01/01/21**



# FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES NIGHT



In an ever-changing, increasingly complex world, it's more important than ever that Amherst County Public Schools students are prepared with the technical, academic, and employability skills needed to bring forth new knowledge, solve problems, and make sense of information so a better future can be created for themselves and their community.

Come out and learn about all the different pathways available for our students.

Amherst Elementary -March 2nd

Central Elementary -March 9th

Elon Elementary -March 14th

Temperance Elementary -March 16th

Amelon Elementary -March 21st

Madison Heights Elementary -March 28th

5:30-7:00 PM  
AT THE FOLLOWING  
SCHOOLS

STUDENT  
SHOWCASES

HANDS-ON  
ACTIVITIES  
FOR KIDS

## Math 24 Competitions



**Middle @ MMS**

**February 7th**

**Alt Date: February 15th**

**6:00 PM**

2 teams from each school  
Participants report at 5:30 PM  
Competition begins at 6:00 PM

**Elementary @ AES**

**February 21st**

**Alt Date: February 28th**

**6:00 PM**

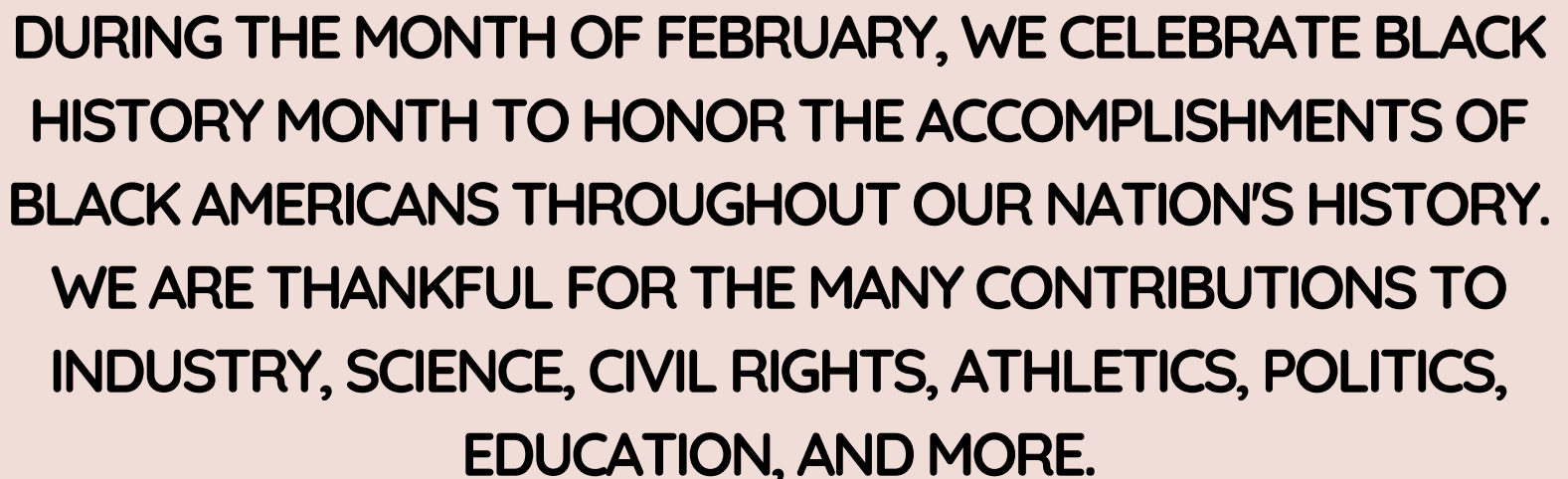
1 team from each school  
Participants report at 5:30 PM  
Competition begins at 6:00 PM



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



**DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, WE CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH TO HONOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BLACK AMERICANS THROUGHOUT OUR NATION'S HISTORY. WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDUSTRY, SCIENCE, CIVIL RIGHTS, ATHLETICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, AND MORE.**



# VA SCHOOL PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION WEEK



## PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION WEEK

**THIS PAST MONTH WE CELEBRATED SCHOOL PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION! WE WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT OUR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WHO SET STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. THROUGH THEIR VISION AND GUIDANCE, THEY NURTURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND STAFF. WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR OUR PRINCIPALS!**

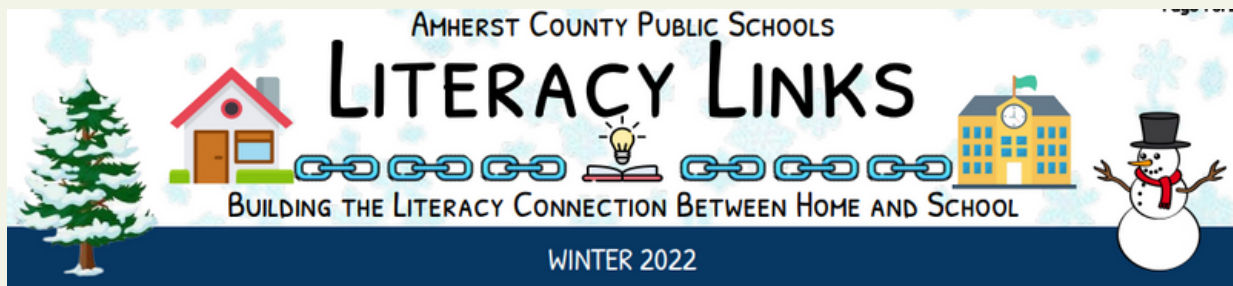
## ACPS TEACHER AND SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ACPS TEACHER OF THE YEAR, MS. ALLISON ASHTON AND OUR ACPS SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR, MS. MELVINE ALEXANDER. IT IS AN HONOR TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THOSE AROUND YOU AS BEING A TRUE DIFFERENCE MAKER IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS AND FOR BEING DEDICATED TO SERVING EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND DEDICATION IN THE MOST HONORABLE AND REWARDING PROFESSION IN THE WORLD. YOU ARE TRULY A VALUED AND APPRECIATED MEMBER OF OUR ACPS FAMILY.**



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ACPS TEACHER OF THE YEAR, MS. ALLISON ASHTON AND ACPS SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR, MS. MELVINE ALEXANDER**





Check out the winter edition of the APCS Literacy Links Newsletter! In this edition, we have included simple games and activities that will help you support your child with each component of literacy at home.

Are you looking for more resources for helping your child with reading at home? This newsletter, as well as other resources to support your child's literacy development, are available on our ACPS webpage under "Parent and Family Literacy Links."

[ACPS WINTER LITERACY LINKS NEWSLETTER](#)

[PARENT AND FAMILY LITERACY LINKS](#)

## AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATION CAREER FAIR

February 25, 2023  
9 AM - 11:30 AM (In-person)  
11:45 AM - 2 PM (Virtual)

Representatives will be available to meet with those interested in careers

as:  
Teachers  
Instructional Assistants  
Bus Drivers/Bus Assistants  
Custodians



Giveaways for those who register and attend

Visit our Career Fair Website to register for our in-person fair or our virtual fair and to schedule an interview

Questions? Contact Us!  
(434) 946-9376 or [hr@amherst.k12.va.us](mailto:hr@amherst.k12.va.us)

JOIN OUR  
TEAM

JOIN ACPS FOR OUR ANNUAL EDUCATION CAREER FAIR AND SEE WHAT #TEAMAMHERST IS ALL ABOUT!!

WE WILL HAVE DRAWINGS TO GIVE AWAY TARGET GIFT CARDS TO CANDIDATES WHO REGISTER AND ATTEND IN-PERSON, OR WHO PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY IN AN INTERVIEW.

WE WILL GIVE AWAY AN IPAD TO ONE LUCKY WINNER WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE IN-PERSON PORTION OF THE FAIR!!

[CLICK HERE VISIT OUR CAREER FAIR WEBSITE TO REGISTER FOR IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL CAREER FAIRS](#)



# Communication

## USING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Children do well when they feel respected and listened to, much of this begins with good communication skills modeled by you.



### CONNECTION

*Is this interaction/communication helping the child feel a sense of connection? Is it meeting their need for belonging and significance?*



### MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL

*Is this interaction/communication both kind AND Firm?  
Respect for yourself and the situation (Firmness)  
Respect for the needs of the child and others (Kindness)*



### EFFECTIVE LONG TERM

*What characteristics and life skills do you want this child to have as they reach adulthood?*

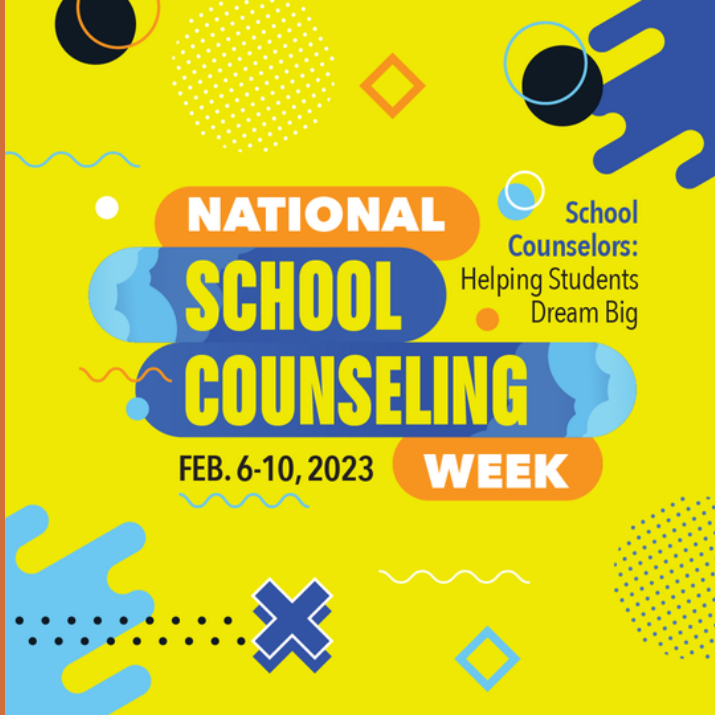


### ENCOURAGEMENT

*Mistakes are opportunities to learn. Respond to mistakes with compassion and kindness instead of shame, blame and lectures. When appropriate, use curiosity questions to help the child explore the consequences of the choices made.*

# National School Counseling Week

2/6/23 - 2/10/23

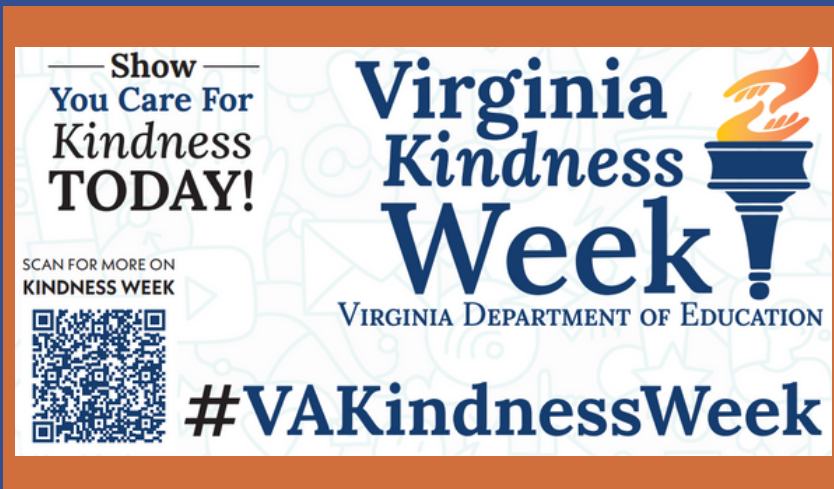


Let's be sure to acknowledge and celebrate our phenomenal school counselors during National School Counseling Week, February 6-10, 2023. The theme this year is "School Counselors: Helping Students Dream Big." National School Counseling Week is the perfect time to thank our school counselors and appreciate all they do to support staff, students, families, and the school community.

# Virginia Kindness Week

2/12/23 - 2/18/23

Kindness Week is to recognize that simple day-to-day acts of kindness enable our schools, communities, and state to be a kinder, safer and healthier place to live, work, learn and play.



Kindness  
MATTERS



# WHAT IS CTE?

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, OR CTE, IS EDUCATION THAT DIRECTLY PREPARES STUDENTS FOR HIGH-WAGE, HIGH-SKILL AND HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS.**

***[CLICK HERE TO VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT CTE](#)***

**CTE MONTH® IS A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN THAT TAKES PLACE EACH FEBRUARY TO CELEBRATE THE VALUE OF CTE AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CTE PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**

Set your child up for success! When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and are more likely to graduate on time.

**#ShowUpAmherst**



## DID YOU KNOW?

School has been in session for more than 90 days, so if your student has been absent 9 days or more, they are considered chronically absent, regardless of the reason for the absences.

**#ShowUpAmherst**

# UPCOMING Job Training

## 1 Personal Care Aide Training

Start your rewarding career in healthcare by becoming a Personal Care Aide! Become a PCA for **FREE\*** with our PCA certification course!

\*Training is FREE with 3-Week Required Commitment and approved eligibility.

## 2 Hospitality Management Training

Begin your hospitality career through the **FREE** hospitality management training program.

Must be 18 years of age or older and be able to attend eight (8) weeks of courses.

## 3 Cyber Security Training

Train to become CompTIA Security Plus and SYO 601 certified for **FREE!**

Requirements needed for this course are 9th grade reading level, no criminal background and an eight (8) week commitment

## 5 CNA and Med Aide Training

Start your career as a Certified Nurse Aide for **FREE!**

Must be 18 years of age, GED or High School Diploma, No Felony Charges, Prior Interest and Income Guidelines

## 4 Class A CDL Training

Become a certified driver with CDL training courses!

This is a six (6) week training course. Free academic support, career essential skills, and assistance to students while obtaining a Commercial Learner's Permit

Total cost of tuition is \$4,500 (includes books) Additional requirements includes DOT physical and drug testing

Grant funding is available to assist



**All training requires sign up/enrollment at Lyn-CAG.**

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and  
dwhite@lyncag.org and dthomas@lyncag.org  
434.455.1601 ext. 303 / 335

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EDUCATION  
**lyncag.org**