

# Family Newsletter

## A Message from the Superintendent

We have completed another month of school as February is coming to close. We have three more months of school left before the end of the year. Although the end is getting near, we have a tremendous amount of work left to do. Our goal is to provide the best education possible to your students. In order for us to do that we need them attending school and being focused when they are in class. These next three months are vital to your students' academic success as we begin to review and prepare for the end of year SOL testing.

We continue to see students in our middle schools and high school being in possession and/or under the influence of THC/CBD products to include vapes and gummies. Although the state of Virginia legalized marijuana consumption/possession for those over 21 years of age in their own households, it is still illegal for anyone under 21 to use or possess marijuana or marijuana based products. It is also illegal for an adult or juvenile to possess alcohol or drugs on school property. Please have conversations with your students about the use of the products and the consequences associated with their use on school property.

Besides the legal and disciplinary implications, the main concern for me are the medical complications. Many of the THC and marijuana based vapes and gummies are not regulated and may contain materials that could be fatal, to include Fentanyl. As you are aware, we had a Fentanyl scare at Central Elementary School in December in which seven students were affected. I spoke with an investigator with the Amherst County Sheriff's Office in January and he informed me that majority of the drugs being confiscated by their office contain some amount of Fentanyl. It is important to note that the only regulated drugs are those people get from registered pharmacies. Any other drugs/pills people are getting are not regulated and may be deadly. This is not just a problem here in Amherst County, school superintendents and law enforcement agencies from across the state indicate they are facing the same issues. I encourage you to speak with your students about the risks associated with using THC/CBD based substances as well as other drugs. If you or your student need support in dealing with substance abuse, please seek help. The last thing any of us want is to lose one of our parents/caregivers or students due to a negative interaction with an illegal substance.

The winter weather continues to evade us this year. We have had conditions that are more in line with spring than winter and I hope you have been able to enjoy the warm weather. We still have the opportunity for winter weather through mid-March so don't give up hope yet but the opportunities are going to diminish the closer we get to April. Now that we are closer to spring we have to be on the lookout for severe weather as well. We will notify families and staff if there is a need to alter our schedules based on severe/inclement weather as soon as possible.

Beginning Tuesday March 5, all of our schools will be offering tutoring sessions before and/or after school. Our focus in March is on students who have missed six or more days from school this year.

This program will provide your student with an opportunity to get caught up on concepts or information they may have missed due to being absent. There may also be an opportunity for students to make up missing assignments. Each school has developed their own schedule so please contact your student's school for more information or if you would like for your student attend.

In closing, I want to thank all of our families and community members for your support of our students. It takes our families, community, and schools to provide our students with the skill sets they need to be successful in life after high school. By working together, we can overcome any obstacle that is in our path.



Sincerely,

*William*



# Upcoming Events

March 22-Grading Period Ends

March 25-Teacher Work Day (No school for students)

March 29-Report Card Distribution

April 1-5-Spring Break



# ACPS 2024-2025 Proposed Budget

Dr. Wells presented the 2024-2025 Proposed Budget to the School Board on February 22, 2024. Information regarding the Budget can be accessed via the links below.

[ACPS 2024-2025 Budget Presentation](#)

[Superintendent's Presentation of the Budget](#)

[Amherst County Public Schools FY25 Proposed Budget](#)

[FY25 Approved Budget Calendar](#)

# BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING PROGRAM



Dear ACPS Families:

As part of our ongoing commitment to the academic success and well-being of our students, I am pleased to introduce a new initiative aimed at supporting students who have experienced extended absences from school: ACPS Before/After School Tutoring Program for Recovery and Achievement.

We understand that when students miss school, they not only fall behind in their studies but may also experience feelings of frustration and anxiety about catching up with missed lessons and assignments. Our goal with this program is to provide targeted academic support to help students bridge the gap in their learning and regain their confidence in their normal classroom interactions.

## Here are some key details about the Before/After School Tutoring Program:

1. **Purpose:** The primary objective of the program is to assist students who have been absent and need catching up with missed lessons, assignments, and assessments. We aim to provide personalized instruction to address individual learning needs and facilitate a smooth transition back to regular classroom learning.
2. **Focus on Student Achievement:** The Before/After School Tutoring sessions will be led by our teachers. Our teachers will work closely with students to identify areas of academic challenge and develop tailored learning plans to address those areas. Whether it's revisiting key concepts or preparing for upcoming assessments, our teachers in the tutoring program are committed to helping students achieve academic success.
3. **Flexible Scheduling:** Recognizing the unique circumstances of each student's recovery process, we offer flexible scheduling options for tutoring sessions. Whether before or after school, we strive to accommodate the needs of both students and parents to ensure accessibility and convenience.
4. **Qualified Tutors:** Our tutors are experienced educators with a deep understanding of the curriculum and instructional strategies tailored to meet the needs of students. They are dedicated to providing compassionate support and encouragement to help students overcome academic challenges.
5. **Parental Involvement:** We believe that parental involvement is crucial to the success of our students, especially during times the students need to miss school. We encourage parents to communicate with their students' teachers, provide input on their child's learning goals, and support their child's participation in the program.
6. **Cost:** We are pleased to inform you that there will be no cost for students to participate in the Before/After School Tutoring Program. Our priority is to ensure that all students have access to the support they need to succeed academically.

We believe that by providing targeted academic support to students, we can help them not only catch up with missed work, but also thrive academically and emotionally in their school communities. We encourage you to discuss this opportunity with your child and consider having them in the program if you believe it would benefit their recovery and academic achievement.

### **Elementary Programs**

Our Elementary Before/After School Tutoring program will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays March 4 – May 9, 2024. Due to staffing, each elementary school will determine if they are offering before school tutoring, after school tutoring, or both. Before school programs will operate from 7:45 – 8:45 AM and after school programs will operate from 4:00 – 5:00 PM. During the month of March our elementary schools will focus their programs on students who have missed more than five days of school. If you have an elementary student who has missed more than five days of school, your students' school will be contacting you about the program and encouraging your student to attend. After Spring Break, the program will be open to all elementary students to help them with understanding essential skills and concepts.

Amelon Elementary: Before and After School  
Amherst Elementary: After School Only  
Central Elementary: Before School Only  
Elon Elementary: Before and After School  
Madison Heights Elementary: Before and After School  
Temperance Elementary: Before and After School

### **Middle School Programs**

Amherst Middle: Amherst Middle School is offering an after school tutoring program on the dates below. School staff will contact students' families regarding participation in the program.

6th Grade- Math on Thursday, Reading on Wednesday, Cougar Academy on Tuesday

7th grade- Math on Tuesday, Reading on Thursday, and Cougar Academy on Wednesday

8th Grade- Math on Monday, Reading on Tuesday, Cougar Academy on Thursday

Monelison Middle: The after school tutoring program will be on held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 – 5:00 PM beginning Tuesday March 5, 2024. Students who have missed more than five days of school will be invited to attend. Families will be contacted by letter and a phone call with specific details of the program.

### **High School Program**

ACHS is offering their after school tutoring program on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 – 5:15. Staff will be contacting students who have missed more than five days of school and encouraging them to participate in the program.

You will receive additional information from your students' school. I encourage all identified students to participate in this program and to take advantage of the opportunity. If you have any questions or require further information about the Before/After School Tutoring Program, please do not hesitate to contact your students' school or my office.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in your child's education.

Sincerely,

William

# Summer Programs

Registration for the 2024 ACPS Summer Programs is open! Please click the images below for more information and to register.



## ACHS Summer Academy 2024 Course Registration

This program is for rising 9th - 12th graders. Registration for new courses closes on Friday, May 17, 2024 and credit recovery close on Monday, June 10, 2024.



## Middle School Power Scholars Academy Registration 2024

This summer academy is for rising 6th, rising 7th, rising 8th grade students, and current 8th grade students needing remediation based on the 8th grade reading and math SOLs.



## Elementary Power Scholars Academy Registration 2024

This summer academy is for rising 3rd, rising 4th and rising 5th grade students. Note. if funding is available, the program will be opened to rising 1st and rising 2nd. Parents of rising 1st and rising 2nd graders can also register now.

# Building Bridges to Success

## SUN, MOON, AND STARS

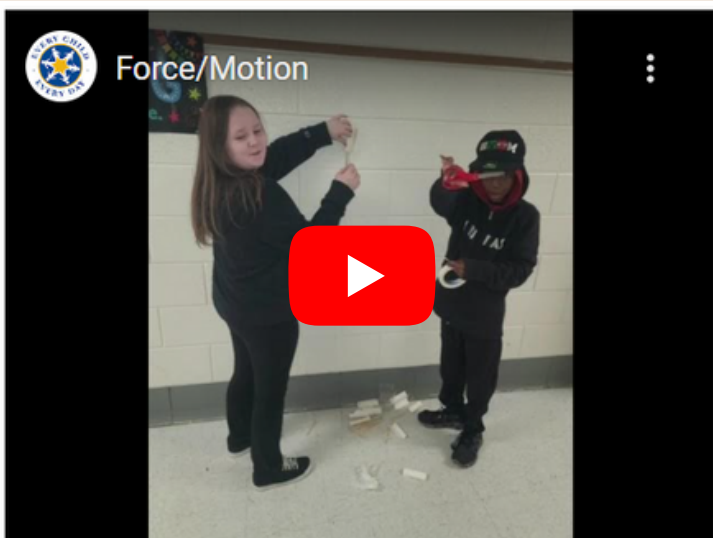


## Sun, Moon, and Stars

Today students in Bridges to Success finished a two-part science lesson that explored the relationship between the earth and sun. Students learned about the effects of the tilt/rotation/revolution of the sun, photosynthesis, and angle of the sun's rays.

## Sound

Do you hear what I hear? Today students in Bridges to Success could be heard testing their windpipes throughout the building. After learning about sound, they varied the volume and pitch of their voices or speaker to see how the vibrations made salt move/jump.



## Force/Motion

A weeklong study of force and motion touched on topics like inertia, friction, and potential/kinetic energy. Students enjoyed these hands-on experiments! Take a peek at what they accomplished this week in Bridges to Success.

# Black History Month

During the month of February we celebrated Black History Month! We celebrated and recognized the incredible contributions that black Americans have had on our country. We honor the triumphs and struggles that have shaped our nation. This year, let's set our minds to learning new facts and developing new understandings about our history.



## JOIN TEAM AMHERST

### Professional Openings

APPLY NOW



Check back frequently for position updates

ELEMENTARY  
K-5 TEACHER  
SCHOOL COUNSELOR

MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ENGLISH TEACHER  
MATHEMATICS TEACHER  
AG SCIENCE  
ALTERNATIVE ED PROGRAM (AEC)

HIGH SCHOOL  
SCIENCE TEACHER  
ENGLISH TEACHER  
MATHEMATICS TEACHER  
READING SPECIALIST

TEACHER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
K-12 PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
K-12 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
(GENERAL CURRICULUM & ADAPTIVE ENDORSEMENTS)

### Classified Openings

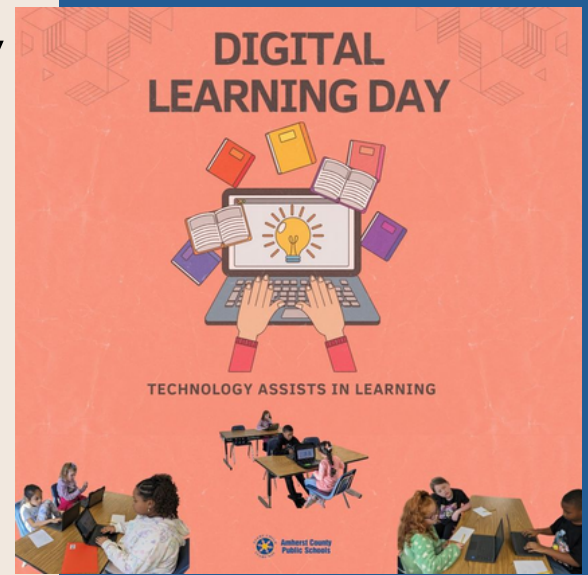
BUS DRIVERS  
INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT  
MAINTENANCE  
CNP ASSISTANT  
CNP MANAGER

Questions?  
hr@amherst.k12.va.us  
434-946-9376



# Digital Learning Day

During the month of February we celebrated Digital Learning Day. DLD is dedicated to engaging students and empowering educators to use digital tools effectively. We are thankful for our ITRTs and others who train educators and students in innovative ways.



February 15 is designated as School Resource Appreciation Day. Amherst County Public recognizes the exemplary dedication, unwavering commitment, and outstanding service our School Resource Officers provide for our school community. In recognition of their tireless efforts to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff, we express our deepest gratitude and appreciation. Their presence has not only fostered a sense of security, but also promoted a positive and nurturing environment conducive to learning and growth. Through their professionalism, compassion, and proactive engagement they have become an integral part of our school community. We thank them for all they do each and every day.



# 2024-2025 School Calendar

The 2024-2025 School Calendar has been approved. Please click the link below to access the calendar on the ACPS website.

[2024-2025 School Calendar](#)

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Amherst County Public Schools values and promotes the active engagement of the community in our schools. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact the building administration at any of our schools to discuss opportunities.

If you have questions, please contact 434-943-9387 or by email at [bmcnerney@amherst.k12.va.us](mailto:bmcnerney@amherst.k12.va.us). We appreciate your willingness to support the schools in our community!

[Please click here to visit our website for more information!](#)

February 8,  
2024  
School  
Board  
Meeting



Our February 8th School Board meeting was full of recognitions! Dr. Wells recognized the School Board as February is School Board Appreciation Month. The Board was surprised with a video compilation of thank you messages from staff and students, and wonderful performances by the choral groups from AMS & MMS. Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized Black History Month, School Counseling Week, National Kindness Week, and CTE month.

Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized the choral students who were selected for the District 13 All District Chorus: Teegan Cherry, 7th, MMS, Rayna Drummond, 8th, MMS, Phoebe Hayes, 7th, MMS, Cheyenne Johns, 12th, ACHS, Jayda Kelly, 7th, MMS, Myah Mays, 8th, MMS, Lindsay Merida Toscano, 7th, MMS, Chloe Perutelli, 8th, MMS, Kelly Ware, 8th MMS, and Nelson Washington, 8th, MMS.

Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized the student of the month from each school: Caitlyn Baxter-ACHS, Xavier Loving-AEC, Nevaeh England-AMS, Rachel Vullamparthi-MMS, Addison Grieser-AMEL, Rosalind Riner-AES, Dallas Johnson-CES, Carrissa Rice-EES, Mason Milton-MHES, Brinlee Gunter-TES.

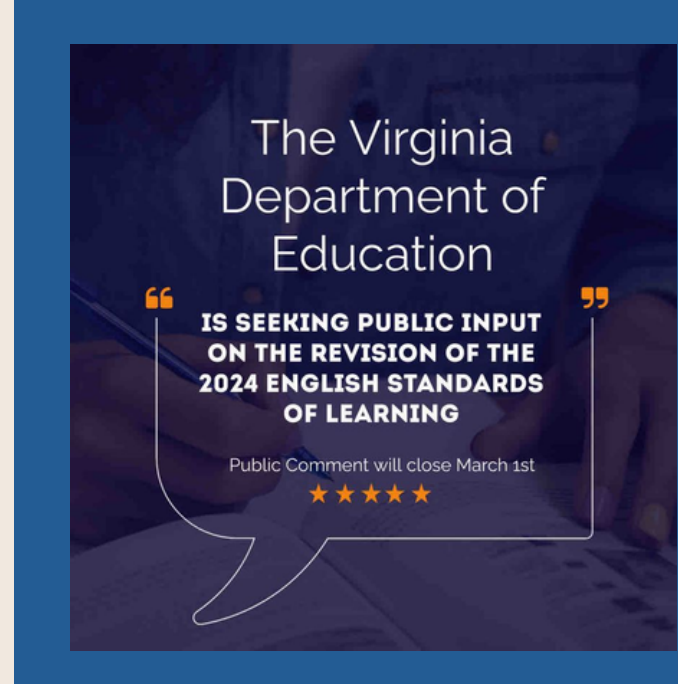
Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized Ms. Erica Maddox, School Health Assistant at CES, Ms. Blair Payne, ACPS Lead Nurse and School Nurse at AMS, and Deputy Brandon Payne, School Resource Officer, for their response to the fentanyl incident at CES in December 2023.

Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized the Support Staff of the Year nominees for each school and department. They also recognized the winner, Ms. Bobbie Campbell, secretary at TES.

Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized the Teacher of the Year nominees for each school. They also recognized the winner, Ms. Donna Ratliff, teacher at ACHS. Dr. Wells, the School Board, and Mr. Joey Crawford, principal of ACHS, recognized Mr. John Andrew Fister, as he was the Co-Teacher of the Year for ACHS, along with Ms. Ratliff. Mr. Fister passed away on September 21, 2023 and his family was present as he was honored.

The Virginia Department of Education is seeking public input on the revision of the 2024 English Standards of Learning. More information about this process can be found by clicking the link below. Public comment will close on March 1, 2024.

[\*\*More Information!\*\*](#)



Do you have a 3 or 4 year old Who Needs Preschool? There are openings!

What: Head Start 3 and 4 year old class  
Where: Amherst Elementary  
Madison Heights Elementary

Contact Information:  
Ms. Yvonne Paige, Enrollment Coordinator  
Lyn-CAG Head Start  
(434) 849-7542  
ypaige@lyn-cag.org

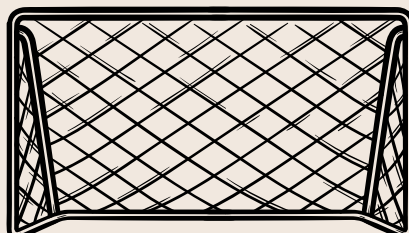
[Apply today!](#)

We have openings for 3 and 4-year-old preschool at Amherst Elementary and Madison Heights Elementary.

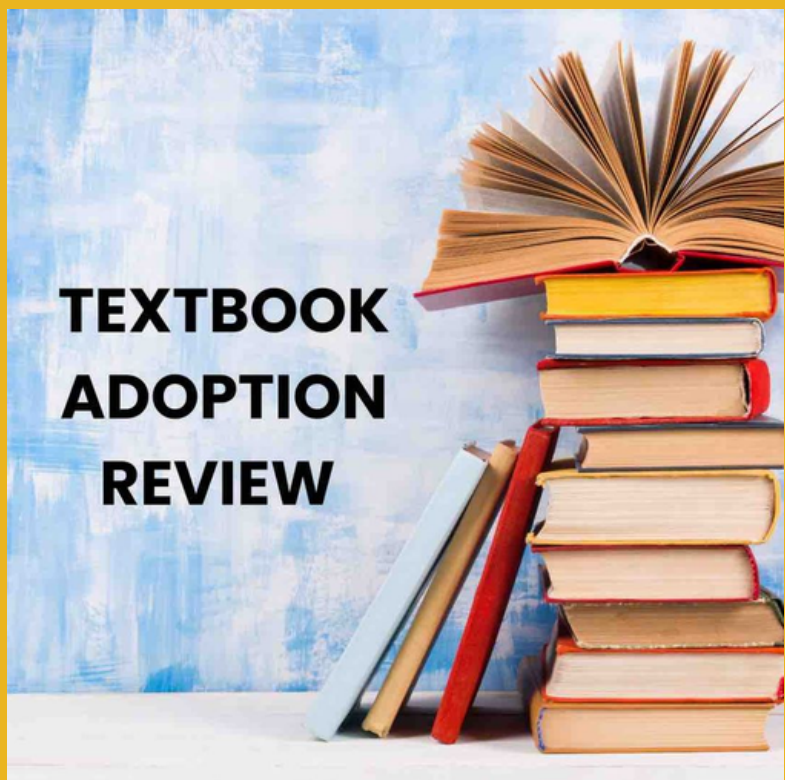
[Click here to apply today!](#)



Our students and staff are actively involved in a variety of extracurricular activities throughout the division. Please show your support for our students and staff by attending events, participating, or volunteering!



# Grades K-5 English and History Textbook Adoption Review



Parents and Guardians,  
The ACPS World Geography, AP Psychology, and K-5 English/Reading new textbook adoption process is underway. You may stop by the School Administrative Office during normal business hours, 8:00-4:30, from February 12 - March 12 to review the textbooks approved by VDOE for each grade level.

After reviewing the textbooks, we ask that you please complete the following surveys to provide us with your input as we move through the adoption process.

**Elementary  
English  
Textbook  
Survey**

**World  
Geography  
Textbook  
Survey**

**AP  
Psychology  
Textbook  
Survey**

In the event that you are unable to come in person to review textbooks, we are able to offer an online review opportunity for the K-5 English/Reading texts. You may use the link below to access those resources.

**Online Review Access  
k-5 English/Reading Texts**



**Shaun Derik**  
Keynote Speaker



- **1st 25** to register will win a gift card (must be present at opening to win)
  - **3-Point Basketball Contest** (must be pre-registered to participate)  
2 Age groups (11-14 and 15-18)
  - **Prizes** 1st - **\$250** • 2nd - **\$150**  
(must be present at opening to win)
- Random gift cards and prizes given throughout the Youth Summit. Food, snacks, entertainment, and vendors will be available.

**Breakout Sessions:**

- Mindful Movement: Hip-Hop Dance
- Bring It Out, Bring it Out: Tackling Negative Self-Talk Rap Battle
- Positive Vibes: Spoken Word Poetry for Effective Communication
- No Puffing on my Peace: Education on vapes, marijuana, and fentanyl
- Standin' on Business: Navigating School Challenges
- Inner Harmony: Journaling Craft

• **Parents Corner**

**03.16.24**

Saturday • 9am - 3pm

Jubilee Family  
Development Center

For Middle and High School Students

Music By DJ Mega Mil  
FREE HIV and Hepatitis C testing

Logos for sponsors: chap, HORIZON, CENTRA, DBHDS, and THE H.Y.P.E. Below the logos is a QR code and the text "SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER".