

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Superintendent

As January is coming to a close, we are more than half way through the 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 or if we may be of assistance. Please continue to speak with your students about the need to attend school, do their best on their school work, and exhibit positive behavior.

Construction for the new auditorium and dining commons at Amherst County High School is in full swing. The majority of the grading work for the addition and the parking area has been completed and the contractors anticipate that work on the footers will begin within the next two weeks. It will not be long before we start seeing the walls of the new auditorium beginning to take shape. From a timeline perspective, we anticipate being able to occupy the new auditorium and commons around this time next year.

Mother Nature has been providing us with plenty of moisture and a little snow. With an active storm track and temperatures that have been cold enough to support wintry weather, we anticipate a few more days where we will be delayed or closed. 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. On mornings when there is a chance of inclement weather, we begin checking roads between 4:00 and 4:30 AM. 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 students and staff at the forefront of every weather related decision.

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 families and students of the possibility of a remote day in advance. We try not to use remote learning for single day events but to use them more if we anticipate being out of school for multiple days. However, if we have multiple single day events we may need to begin utilizing remote instruction on days when schools are closed.

The "Community Dinner" was a great success as we had 120 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 without the generous financial support of Glad/Clorox for the Education Foundation and the Show Up Amherst initiative.

Speaking of Show Up Amherst, we have our next division wide Show Up Day scheduled for March 29. 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.

I thank you again for all you do for your students and 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. 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

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Presented by: Law Enforcement and Horizon Behavioral Health

WHAT EVERY PARENT, CAREGIVER & PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO KNOW

Join parents, teachers, coaches, and other caring adults for an immersive experience designed to give you the skills needed to recognize and address risky behaviors in young people.

- In this presentation, you will learn:
- The latest drug trends, including how to recognize items that may be contaminated with fentanyl
 - Common items found in a teens room that may indicate risky behaviors
 - Signs of mental health challenges
 - Technology risks
 - Available resources
 - How to get help

MOCK TEEN BEDROOM

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH
MADISON HEIGHTS LIBRARY
200 RIVER JAMES
SHOPPING CENTER,
MADISON HEIGHTS, VA

6PM - 7PM

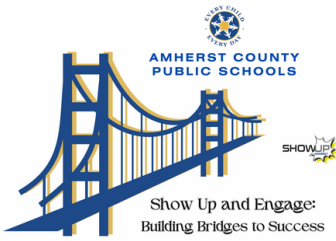
FREE NARCAN AND OTHER GIVEAWAYS PROVIDED!

**HORIZON**

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 19 - Professional Development Day-No School for Students

February 20 - Interim Report Distribution



BUILDING BRIDGES TO SUCCESS



LIGHT & DARK



Students began day 1 of the “Light & Dark” science extend lesson. Students identified objects using the vocabulary words: translucent, transparent, and opaque. Students also explored how light travels through different objects by making predictions and recording observations. #



On Friday, students completed part 2 of their Building Bridges to Success “Light and Dark” lesson. Students explored the concepts of light reflection, refraction, and absorption. They observed the “bent” straw, the flipping arrow, and the way white light disperses into the colors of the rainbow. Ask an ACPS student in pre-k through 8th grades what he/she has learned about light!

UP ON THE ROOFTOP



Students wrapped up a week long project called “Up on the Rooftop” during their Building Bridges to Success time. Students learned about different roof styles and how weather such as snow can impact those structures. Students tested different materials and eventually built their own roofs with a frame, roof style, and material of their choice. It “snowed” on their rooftops to see if any would collect precipitation or collapse from the weight.

SNOWFLAKES



ANIMAL SURVIVAL



Students spent their 45 minute daily Bridge sessions studying how animals survive. They explored topics such as the types of beaks birds have to animal adaptations that may be found in the Arctic. Students enjoyed the hands-on experiments of testing bird beaks as well as learning how blubber can provide insulation for warmth.

We are dreaming of snow! In Bridges to Success, students continued to learn about snowflakes. They used watercolor paints and salt to create a chemical reaction that looks like ice. Hopefully we'll see the beauty of some real snow soon!

➤➤➤ PRESCHOOL

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

Click here to apply today!
<https://ow.ly/9i5w50Q8k20>

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) 899-7542
Ypaige@lyncaag.org

Apply today!



➤➤➤ VIRGINIA PRINCIPAL APPRECIATION WEEK

During the week of January 14-20 has been designated as Virginia Principal Appreciation Week. Please join us in recognizing our amazing principals across all of our exceptional schools in ACPS! We are grateful for their focused leadership, intentional efforts to support our staff, students, and families in Amherst County, and their unwavering dedication to providing an excellent education to Every Child, Every Day!




DID YOU KNOW?

Your child might be eligible for a waiver.



Did you know that students with disabilities receiving services through an individualized education program may be eligible for various waiver programs in Virginia designed to provide resources to support students and their families?

The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services administers the three available developmental disabilities waivers jointly with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. There is a waiting list for these waivers, and the slots are assigned based on urgency of need. Additional information regarding waivers is available on the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services website.

Families can apply for a waiver by contacting their local Community Services Board (CSB) or by visiting the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards website to locate the CSB in their community.

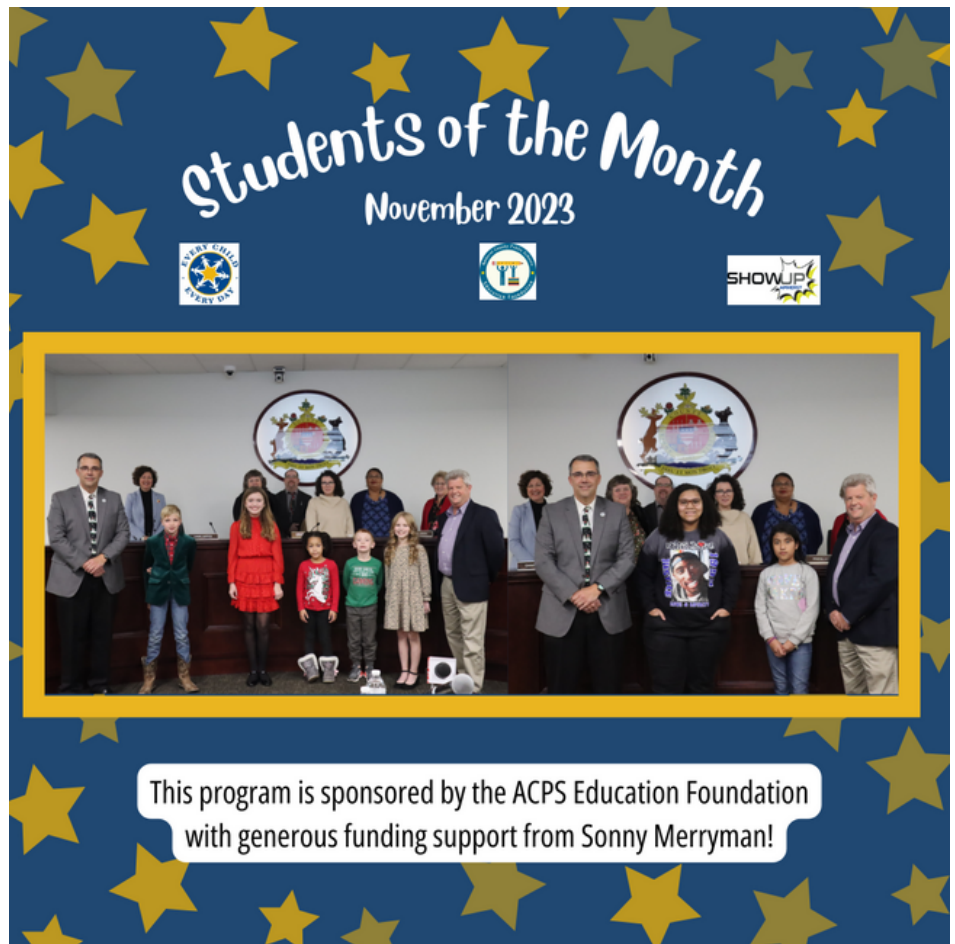
[Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services](#)

[Virginia Association of Community Services Boards](#)

NOVEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

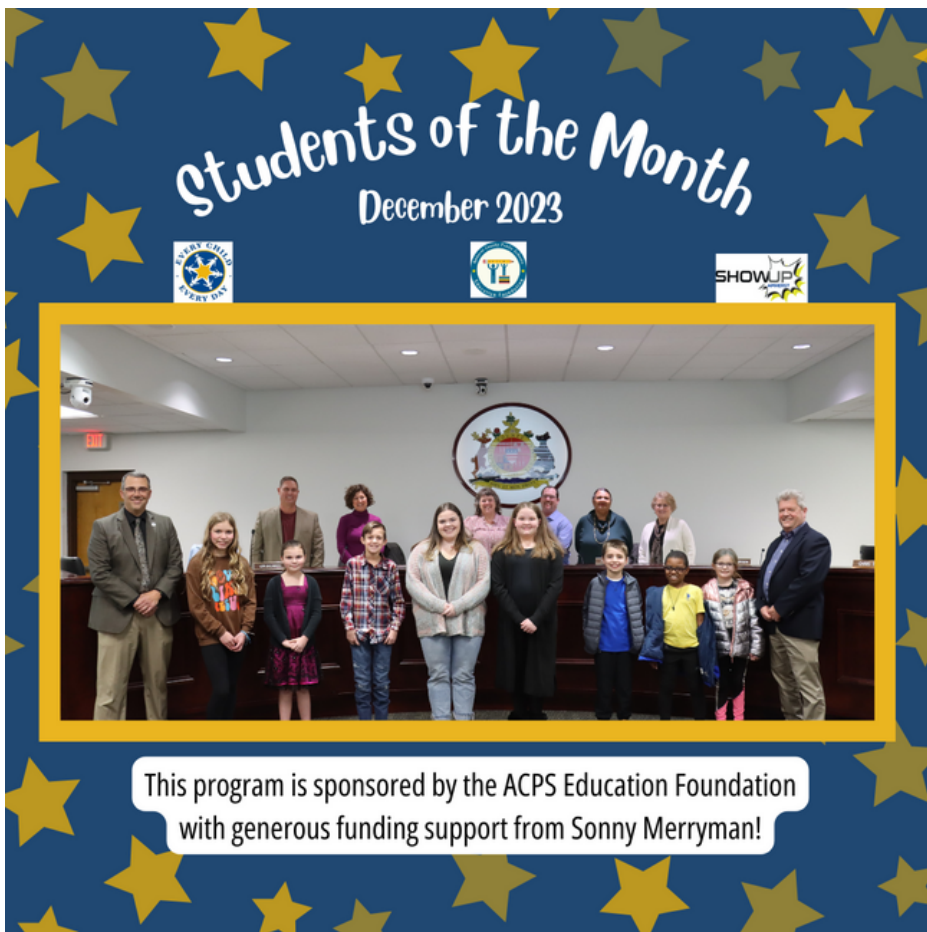
Congratulations to our November Students of the Month!

ACHS - Alyiah Winfield
AEC - Noah Rees
AMS - Robert Hamilton
MMS - Mason Cariaga
AMEL - Viridiana Altunar
AES - Josie Wright
CES - Tenley Tomlin
EES - Mazi Thomas
MHES - Berkley Peters
TES - Karlym Fitzgerald



A banner for November Students of the Month. The background is blue with yellow stars. At the top, it says "Students of the Month" in white cursive, with "November 2023" below it. There are three logos: "EVERY CHILD EVERY DAY", "L", and "SHOW UP". Below the logos is a photo of a group of students and adults standing in front of a stage with two school seals. At the bottom, a white box contains the text: "This program is sponsored by the ACPS Education Foundation with generous funding support from Sonny Merryman!"

DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



A banner for December Students of the Month. The background is blue with yellow stars. At the top, it says "Students of the Month" in white cursive, with "December 2023" below it. There are three logos: "EVERY CHILD EVERY DAY", "L", and "SHOW UP". Below the logos is a photo of a group of students and adults standing in front of a stage with two school seals. At the bottom, a white box contains the text: "This program is sponsored by the ACPS Education Foundation with generous funding support from Sonny Merryman!"

Congratulations to our December Students of the Month!

ACHS - Reagan Tyree
AEC - Jazmine Walkes
AMS - Lilyanna Fickle
MMS - Kaelynd Ramsey
AMEL - Grayson Harrell
AES - Maurice Banks
CES - Wyatt Lloyd
EES - Evelyn Meador
MHES - MyKayla Clements
TES - Lila Stinnett

HAPPY



NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

FEBRUARY 5-9, 2024

SCHOOL COUNSELING:
STANDARDS-BASED,
STUDENT-FOCUSED



National School Counseling Week 2024 (#NSCW24) is Feb. 5-9, 2024, to focus public attention on the unique contribution of school counselors within U.S. school systems. National School Counseling Week, sponsored by ASCA, highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. National School Counseling Week is always celebrated the first full week in February. The 2024 theme is “School Counseling: Standards-Based, Student-Focused.”

We appreciate the hard work of our school counselors who are champions for our students. They are advocates and positive contributors to their students' lives and school communities.



➤➤➤ VIRGINIA KINDNESS WEEK

What is Virginia Kindness Week?

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

Why Kindness?

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

Why Kindness?

- Kindness has proven that kindness helps us to form meaningful connections with others, which are reported to be a strong factor in increasing happiness. Kindness has been proven to boost serotonin, reduce stress, increase positive affect, release endorphins and the hormone oxytocin in numerous scientific studies.
- Teaching and recognizing kindness in schools and communities fosters empathy, builds community, reduces bullying and nurtures a safe and welcoming environment (Currie, 2015).
- By promoting kindness, we are promoting inclusivity by extending an opportunity for grace, empathy, dignity and acceptance across Virginia (Layous, Nelson, Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, Lyubomirsky, 2012).



Join Team Amherst!

Professional openings:

English Teacher (AMS and AEC)
Agricultural Science Teacher (MMS)
Elementary Teacher (MHES)
Teaching Positions for the 2024-2025 SY

Classified openings:

Custodian
Part-time Parking Lot Attendant (ACHS)
Child Nutrition Program Assistant
Instructional Assistant
Maintenance Worker (x2)
Bus Drivers



APPLY NOW

Questions? Contact us!

hr@amherst.k12.va.us

434-946-9376

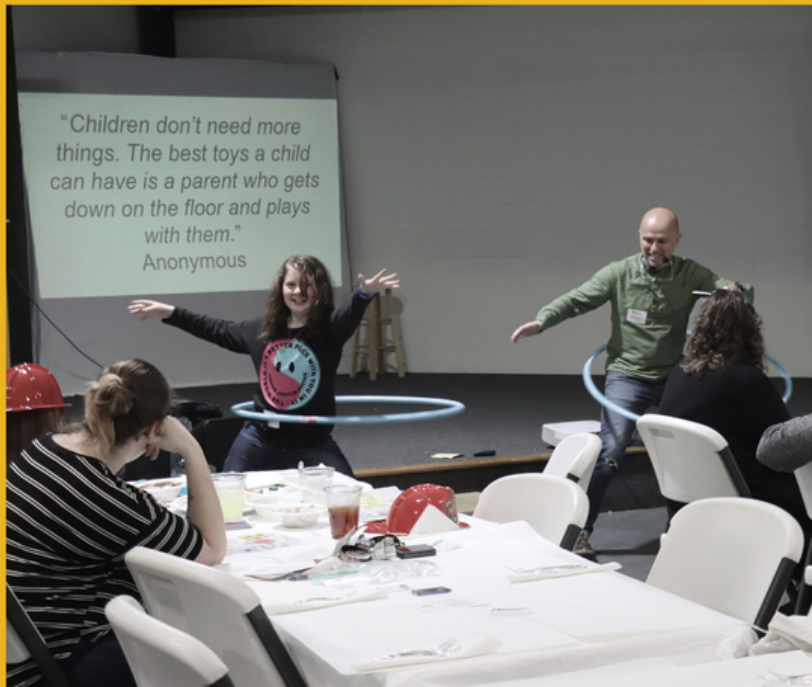




Community Connections Dinner



2024





**SCAN
HERE TO
REGISTER**

Amherst County Public Schools

EDUCATION CAREER FAIR

February 3, 2024

9 AM - 11:30 AM (In-person)

12 PM - 1 PM (Virtual)

Representatives will be available to meet with those interested in careers as:

Teachers

Instructional Assistants

Maintenance Technicians

Bus Drivers/Bus Assistants

Custodians / Child Nutrition

Other Professional and Support Staff Positions

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

Scan the QR code above or visit amherst.k12.va.us to find the career fair site under What's New?

Questions?
Contact us!

(434)946-9376 or
hr@amherst.k12.va.us

**GIVEAWAYS
FOR THOSE
WHO REGISTER
AND ATTEND**

Amherst County Public Schools Literacy Links



Building the Literacy Connection Between Home and School

2023-2024 School Year | Quarter 2

Importance of Vocabulary

Children need to have a rich vocabulary that continually grows through language and literacy experiences, in order to comprehend and construct increasingly complex texts, and engage in oral language for a variety of social purposes.

Vocabulary refers to the knowledge of words, including:

Structure - Morphology, or the study of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language is important to understanding a word's meaning. Morphemes can be as simple as the "s" added to a word to indicate it is plural or as complex as the addition of a Greek or Latin prefix (un, re) or suffix (ion) to change the meaning of the word.

Use or semantic meanings of a word, also known as grammar can also impact the meaning of a word. Think of the word break. This word depending on its place in a sentence can alter the meaning. I can break a bone by falling or I may need to take a break from my homework.

It should be noted that vocabulary words are not the same as words that students can decode (word recognition), since we can decode words without knowing their meanings.

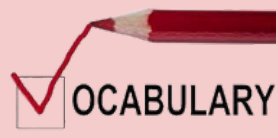
Here are some activities that you can do at home to help support your child's vocabulary development as they read and spell words at home.



Learning New Vocabulary (Grades K-5+)

This activity can help support your child in not only learning the meaning of a new vocabulary word, but also in decoding the word in order to read it on his or her own.

- Introduce the word's pronunciation.
 - How many syllables does the word have? Break the word into syllables and model blending those syllables together.
- *Helpful tip: When looking for syllables, identify how many vowels are used in the word.
- Say the word aloud. Have your child repeat the word.
- Introduce the word's meaning.
- If found in context, use the context of the story/passage to find clues that might assist in the determining the meaning.
- Provide a student friendly definition of the word.
- Have students repeat the meaning back to you.
- Illustrate the word.
- Give concrete examples of the word.
- Use gestures to model the meaning of the word.
- Show pictures/images of the meaning.
- Check for understanding.
- Ask your child to use the word in a sentence or give an example using the word.



Word Elaboration (Grades 4+)

This strategy uses talking, listening and writing to support vocabulary by asking your child to identify 8-10 words that relate to a single topic or concept. After making a list of those word, encourage your child to have a conversation using as many words as they can.

Plants

- stems
- photosynthesis
- nutrients
- life cycle
- seeds
- vegetables
- flowers
- annual



Shades of Meaning (Grades K+)

Shades of meaning as related to vocabulary is the subtle differences between words. When students study shades of meaning, they learn to better express how they are feeling or what they are thinking and can show command of more precise vocabulary. For example, the adjectives "happy" and "ecstatic" both show an emotion, but one packs a bigger punch than the other. Helping students to understand when to use precise language or why an author has chosen certain words in their writing can support their overall understanding.



said	scared	nice
stated	afraid	lovely
announced	horrified	pleasant
whispered	petrified	admirable
declared	frenzied	swell

Provide your child with 4-5 words that are related to each other. Encourage your child to sort the words from those with the weakest meaning to the strongest meaning. Have conversations with your child about how the meaning of the word varies as it moves or changes the "shade" of meaning.





Math Moments

Meaningful Math Experiences Can Happen Anywhere!



2023-2024 School Year | Quarter 2

Bedtime Math



Parents often read to their kids at night, but what about math? Bedtime Math was created with a simple premise: to make math a fun part of kids' everyday lives, as beloved as the bedtime story.

Bedtime Math sends parents a fun, new math problem every day by email, or problems are available on their website and free app. Targeted for kids ages 3-9, it begins with a quick, fun set-up story, followed by math problems at multiple levels of challenge. The website also provides parents with explanations and possible answers.



Website



Cheetah Sample

Check out a this sample:

Cheetahs are big cats covered with cool-looking spots. So how many spots do they have? Scientists have tried to guess, but one said 456 spots, while another said between 2,000 and 3,000. So we at Bedtime Math tried counting spots on a picture of a cheetah. We counted 460 on one side, which would be 920 for the whole cat. Here's a trick for counting lots of things: count the number in one little chunk, then guess how many of those chunks cover the whole area!



Wee ones: If you count 7 cheetah spots and then keep counting, what are the next 2 numbers you say?

Little kids: If you count 60 spots on a cheetah in sets of 10, what numbers do you say? Bonus: At least how many more sets would you have to count to say 90?

Big kids: If you've counted 20 spots in one patch and there are 4 of those patches on the cheetah's right side, how many spots would that come to? Bonus: If the cheetah's front right leg has 56 spots, the back right leg has 86, and the front left leg is exactly in between, how many does the front left leg have?

The sky's the limit: Suppose 3 cheetahs have different numbers of spots. Chiquita and Chuck have 50 spots together; Chuck and Chandra have 90 spots together; and Chiquita and Chandra have 60 spots together, how many spots does each cheetah have?

"Pig" (Grades 1- for 2-6 players)

Math games are a fun way to practice math skills. Playing games can help your child feel less anxious about math. "Pig" is a simple addition game of risk and reward. Keep rolling a single die to improve your score. But get too piggy, roll a 1, and lose all your points for that turn! The objective of the pig dice game is to score 100 points before your opponents, by rolling a single die to earn points.

Materials Needed:

- 1 die (virtual die option: (<https://g.co/kgs/U9WkKeA>))
- paper for scoring
- pencil



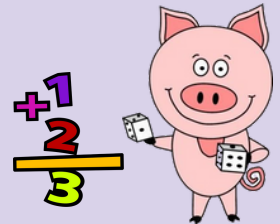
How to Play
"Pig"



How to Play
"Big Pig"



How to Play
"Odd Pig Out"



Scoring:

- Numbers 2-6 on the die score their respective numbers and add to a running total, with a target of 100 points.
- Roll a 1 and lose all your points for that round (but not points earned in previous rounds).
- Scoring is cumulative across all rounds and the first player to achieve 100 points wins the game. Rolling a 1 does not wipe out points banked in previous rounds.

How to Play:

Determine who goes first. We suggest doing a roll-off to determine who goes first. The person with the highest roll starts the game.

The first player rolls a single die to begin the game. Their goal is to roll a number 2-6 to score points, and avoid rolling a one, which ends their turn. If the player has a scoring roll, they're faced with a decision!

- **ROLL AGAIN** - Players may choose to improve their score during a turn by continuing to roll after any scoring roll and accumulating more points. For example:
 - 1st roll: player rolls a 4 and has 4 (temporary) points. They choose to roll again.
 - 2nd roll: player rolls a 6 and now has 10 (temporary) points (4 + 6). They choose to roll again.
 - If, on their 3rd roll, they roll a 1, all the points for that turn are wiped out and they score a zero.
- **BANK** - After any scoring roll, the player can choose to "bank" their score, which ends their turn, while also locking in all the cumulative points scored during the round. Points are not added to the score sheet until they are banked. For example:
 - 1st roll: player rolls a 4 and has 4 (temporary) points. They choose to reroll
 - 2nd roll: player rolls a 6 and now has 10 (temporary) points (4 + 6). They choose to bank to points and add 10 points to their scoresheet. Their turn is over.

Every turn ends in one of three ways. A player rolls a one during the turn and scores zero points for the turn, or the player banks their score after a point scoring roll (2-6). Players alternate turns with two players, or rotate clockwise with three or more players. Continue taking turns until one player earns 100 points and wins the game!

Variations:

- Vary to the Point Goal: For beginners, you may make the goal 50 points. For more of a challenge, increase the point goal...200? 300?
- "Big Pig" (advanced addition): Use two dice instead of one - On your turn, roll the dice and determine the sum. You can either stop and record that sum or continue rolling and add the new sums together. Roll a 1 on EITHER die and you lose the points for that turn and your turn ends. Roll a 1 on BOTH dice and you lose the points for ALL points from not only that turn, but previous turns as well. And your turn ends.
- "Odd Pig Out" (multiplication, recommended for Grades 3+): Roll two dice instead of 1. Multiply the two numbers together to get the product. If the product of the two dice is even, score the product and decide whether to roll again or bank your points for the turn. If the product is odd, lose your unbanked points and end your turn. Play to 300 points or more.

Language Lens

Supporting Language Acquisition

2023-2024 School Year | Quarter 2



Happy New Year 2024

As we begin 2024, we hope that this newsletter finds you and your family well! During February and March, we will begin completing our WIDA Assessments. Language testing helps teachers understand the language skills students have in order to listen, speak, read, and write in order to learn academic content, share information, and discuss ideas.

As a parent, there are many ways that you can help your child succeed every single day and acquire these skills! These tips can help your child learn to read, succeed in school, and learn a new language.

For more information contact:

Sandra Goldman - sgoldman@amherst.k12.va.us

Lisa Schoener - lschoener@amherst.k12.va.us



Visit our ACPS Website to learn more about our English Learner Program as well as previous newsletters



Importance of Writing

- Writing is practical.
- Writing is important in your child's education.
- Writing is an important form of communication.
- Writing can provide an outlet for your child to express ideas.

Writing At Home

There are lots of ways for kids to practice writing at home, whether helping to make a grocery list, writing a story, or typing an email to a friend or relative.

Provide Location & Materials

It's important for your child to have a good place to write, such as a desk or table with a smooth, flat surface. Provide plenty of paper (lined and unlined) and things to write with, including pencils, pens, and crayons.

Brainstorm Together

Talk with your child as much as possible about her ideas and impressions, and encourage her to describe people and events to you.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Writing well takes lots of practice, so make sure your child doesn't get discouraged too easily. It's not easy! Give him/her plenty of opportunities to practice so that there is an opportunity to improve.

Reading NonFiction Books:

Lots of kids love non-fiction books because they are about the world they know and see around them. Books about topics like animals, sports, other countries, volcanoes, bugs, dinosaurs, and famous people may be just the thing to get your child excited about reading! Here are some tips about reading and choosing non-fiction books.

- Take a Book Walk** - Readers can get a sense about a topic by taking a look at the front and back cover, the index, table of contents, the glossary, and the photographs or other images. This scanning and skimming helps set the expectation for the reading. Take the time to walk through the book before starting to read.
- Ask Questions** - encourage your child to be an active reader who asks lots of questions by using the images or words on the page. For example, "when I see the photograph, I wonder if all plants have the same parts?"



Don't forget.... You can check your student's grades through your Powerschool **Parent Portal** account.





Join us at the Amherst Library for
Pirate Palooza:

A Family Friendly Event

Saturday, February 3rd in Amherst
from 10:30am to 11:30am





LEARN THE SIGNS OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE AND HOW TO...

SAVE A LIFE!



FREE VIRTUAL REVIVE TRAINING DATES

10-11AM & 6-7PM ON:
FEB. 21ST
MAR. 20TH
APR. 24TH
MAY 22ND

The day after each training attendees can pick up their free Narcan and REVIVE kit from 12pm - 1pm at
Horizon Behavioral Health
2235 Landover Place, Lynchburg (Lower Level)

To register or schedule a training for school, church, work, civic, community groups or teams, email mhealth@horizonbh.org.

Register Today:

<https://forms.gle/2XH7zndfCV5zoTJi6>



TRAINING OPEN TO
EVERYONE
INCLUDES:
**FREE REVIVE KIT
& NARCAN**

Margaret's Deception



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

PATRICIA EMMERT

(MYSTERY THRILLER, BLACK BOX THEATRE)

FEBRUARY 7TH-10TH

LIMITED SEATING

PURCHASE TICKETS [HERE](#)

SNOW DATES 15TH-18TH

CHILDREN UNDER 13 NOT RECOMMENDED

HOUSE OPENS AT 6:30PM, SHOW STARTS AT 7PM