Amherst County Public Schools

February 29 2024

STAFF NEWSLETTER

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. Let us all remain focused on our students and continue to provide them with the best education possible as we move into the waning stages of the year.

As stated in my email after the budget presentation, we are currently basing our 2024-2025 budget off of the governor's proposed budget. However, both the Virginia house and Senate call for increased spending and a 3% raise. I anticipate amending the budget to include the 3% raise once we receive the calculation tool from the VDOE. As part of the budget we have absorbed the increase in health care costs for our employees. As a result, employees will not see an increase in their insurance premiums this year.

The high school addition/renovation project continues to move forward and we should start seeing some walls going up in the near future. The grading and storm water system for the new parking lot has been completed and the crews have begun installing the concrete curbing along the perimeter of the parking lot. Additionally, we have been working with our contractors on the interior door work at MMS and MHES and hope to begin those projects in the near future.

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 be in contact with staff regarding plans to close or operate remotely if a weather event is forecast for our area that would impact our ability to operate schools safely.

We held our recruiting fair in early February and had a very good turnout. We have also been attending recruiting fairs at colleges and universities in Virginia and surrounding states. Additionally, we have begun the interview process for the 2024-2025 school year. If you know of any candidates who are interested in joining the ACPS team, please encourage them to apply so we can include them in the interview process. We have already had fourteen applicants accept positions for the 2024-2025 school year.

Last week the state released information regarding Federally Identified Schools. These schools are required to receive additional support and monitoring. I am pleased to announce that ACPS does not have any schools that are Federally Identified. This is something that you should be very proud of and is indicative of your hard work and dedicated service to our students. Several other school divisions in our area had schools that were identified to include Lynchburg, Campbell, Bedford, and Nelson.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for all you do for our students on daily basis. I encourage to continue to keep the students the focus of your decisions. Please continue to support each other at work and in life. If we continue to work 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

2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The calendar for the 2024-2025 school year has been approved. Please click the link below to access the calendar.

2024-2025 School Calendar

Mickey Crouch Memorial Event

A Memorial Event for Mickey Crouch will be held on March 16, 2024 at the Madison Heights Community Center. Former players, coaches, and those who were impacted by Coach Crouch are invited to celebrate his life, his outstanding coaching ability, and his invaluable contributions to building young men and women.

5:00pm - 6:00pm
Arrive and Social

6:00pm - 7:00pm
Dinner

7:00pm - 9:00
Fellowship and Mickey Crouch Stories

Please click here to RSVP by: March 8, 2024

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

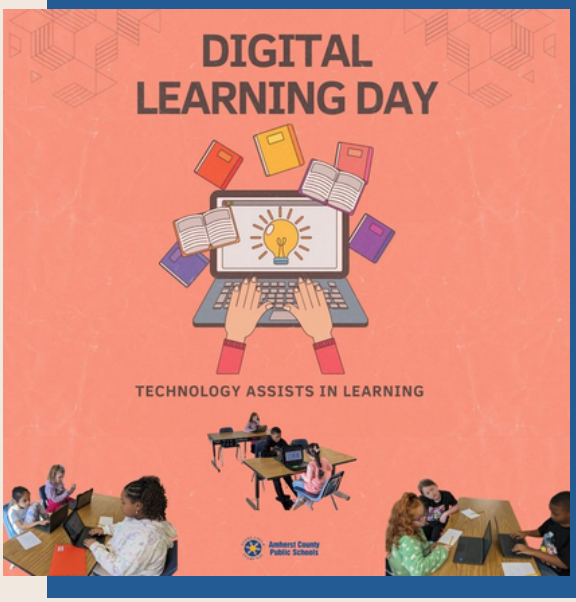
Superintendent's Presentation of the Budget

Amherst County Public Schools FY25 Proposed Budget

FY25 Approved Budget Calendar

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.

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.

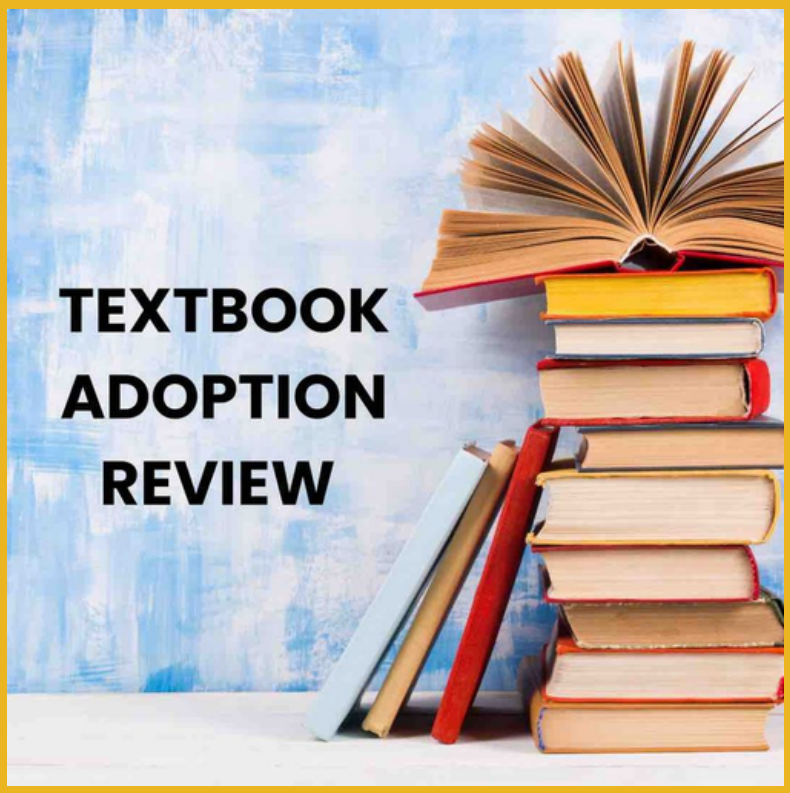
Dr. Wells and the School Board recognized the student of the month from each school: Caitlyn Baxter-ACHS, Xavier Loving-AEC, Nevaeh England-AMS, Rachel Vullamparthi-MMS, Addison Grieser-AMEL, Rosalind Riner-AES, Dallas Johnson-CES, Carrissa Rice-EES, Mason Milton-MHES, Brinlee Gunter-TES.

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.

Grades K-5 English and History Textbook Adoption Review



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

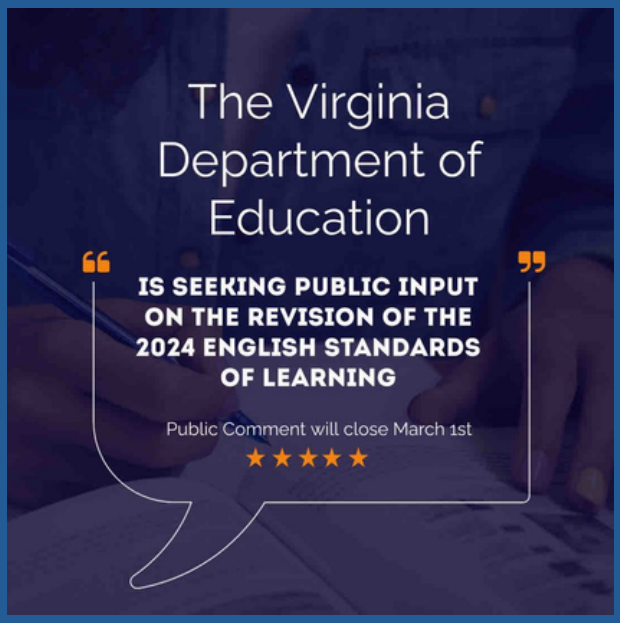
AP Psychology Textbook Survey

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

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.

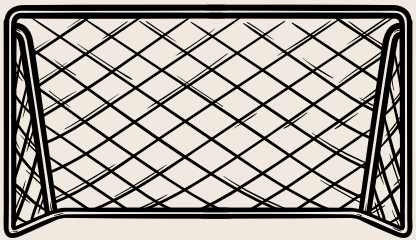
More Information!



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.

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



Learning to love the body you're in

In a near-constant stream of social media images from friends, influencers, celebrities, and brands, it's all too easy to compare ourselves to an ideal of perfection and beauty. That can make it challenging to have a healthy body image, whether we're big or small.

If you find yourself with a poor self-image, it's time to change the negative self-talk and be thankful for everything that's right with your body.

Body positive — learning what healthy means for you

Body positive is a movement that promotes acceptance of all bodies, regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities. It encourages a positive body image that's based on treating yourself and your body with respect and appreciation. Building body acceptance is vital because having a negative body image can lead to eating disorders, mental health conditions, performance-enhancing substance use, and depression or suicide.

How to build a positive body image

Most people don't love all of their body all of the time, but it is possible to like and appreciate your body more.

- **Practice gratitude.** Be thankful for all your body does for you every day.
- **Scrub your social media feed.** If certain apps or people make you feel bad, remove or unfollow them.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** They'll support and love you for who you are, not how you look.
- **Give yourself encouragement.** Post inspiring quotes on your mirror or repeat a positive saying each morning.
- **Focus on yourself as a whole person.** Make a list of all you do for family, friends, and your community.
- **Shift your energy when you're feeling bad.** Go for a walk, write in a journal, or meditate.

Anthem.

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Tips for parents

Kids pick up a lot of cues from their parents, but advertising and social media also play a role in poor body image. To help your child(ren):*

DO:

- Love and accept them for who they are.
- Keep an eye on their social media feed and talk with them about what they see.
- Be aware of changes in eating or exercise habits.
- Listen for negative comments about themselves.

DON'T:

- Comment or focus on their (or your own) weight.
- Shame your child for eating certain foods.
- Over-control their eating.

Additional resources:

The Body Positive: **thebodypositive.org**
Mental Health America: **mhanational.org**
National Eating Disorders Association: **nationaleatingdisorders.org**

Article: Learning To Love The Body You're In

Finding help

Talking with a doctor or therapist can be helpful. To find one in your plan's network, use the Find Care feature on our Sydney℠ Health mobile app or **anthem.com/find-care**.

Sources
Cleveland Clinic. *7 Tips for Building a Better Body Image As an Adult* (accessed May 2023): health.clevelandclinic.org.
National Eating Disorders Association: *10 Steps to Positive Body Image* (accessed May 2023): nationaleatingdisorders.org.
National Eating Disorders Association: *Developing & Modeling Positive Body Image* (accessed May 2023): nationaleatingdisorders.org.
National Institutes of Health: *The impact of the media on eating disorders in children and adolescents* (accessed May 2023): ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

* Mental Health America: How to Teach Your Child Body Positivity (accessed May 2023): mhanational.org.

Sydney Health is offered through an arrangement with Carelon Digital Platforms, a separate company offering mobile application services on behalf of your health plan.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. Copies of Colorado network access plans are available on request from member services or can be obtained by going to anthem.com/co/networkaccess. In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Georgia: Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. and Community Care Health Plan of Georgia, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc., dba HMO Nevada. In New Hampshire: Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. HMO plans are administered by Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. and underwritten by Matthew Thornton Health Plan, Inc. In 17 southeastern counties of New York: Anthem Healthchoice Assurance, Inc., and Anthem Healthchoice HMO, Inc. In these same counties Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield HP is the trade name of Anthem HP, LLC. In Ohio: Community Insurance Company. In Virginia: Anthem Health Plans of Virginia, Inc. trades as Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and its affiliate HealthKeepers, Inc. trades as Anthem HealthKeepers providing HMO coverage, and their service area is all of Virginia except for the City of Fairfax, the Town of Vienna, and the area east of State Route 123. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWi), underwrites or administers PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out-of-network benefits in POS policies offered by Compcare Health Services Insurance Corporation (Compcare) or Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Corporation (WCIC). Compcare underwrites or administers HMO or POS policies; WCIC underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.

Shaun Derik
Keynote Speaker

PEACE-LOVE

POSITIVE VIBES ONLY

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

- **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**

chap

HORIZON

CENTRA

Jubilee

DBHDS

HYPE

SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER

Sponsorship : Contact Barbara Woodson at **434.944.1373** • More Information: Contact Chairman Debra Jefferson at **434.841.2260**