

# ACPS Staff Newsletter

AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS-FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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.

The past couple of months have been difficult for us as we have dealt with the deaths of students and a staff member. The incident on the Rockfish River in December resulted in the loss of three of our students: Myson Sylvester, 12 grade ACHS, Christopher Doss, 11th grade ACHS, and Jasiah Davis, 6th grade AMS. The body of another 12 year old juvenile who did not attend ACPS was recovered last week. We were also notified that a former student who attended CES and AMS before transferring to Lynchburg was a victim of a gunshot wound in Lynchburg last Friday and succumbed to her injuries while at the hospital. Finally, we had the passing of Mr. Keith Coley, an employee in our maintenance department. Keith passed away unexpectedly on February 19, 2023. Please keep the families, friends, and the staff members who worked with the students and Keith in your thoughts and prayers as we continue to work through their loss.

We have proposed a budget to the ACPS School Board that calls for a 7% pay increase for all staff and substitutes. We also proposed an 8% increase for our employees of the transportation department, moving the custodial pay scale to the same as grounds which will result in an 8%-10% increase for custodians, and a 15% increase for food service. It is important to note that every 1% increase in salaries requires us to allocate \$390,000 in local funds. Although the state is proposing a 7% pay increase for educators they only fund the Standards of Quality (SOQ) funded positions. We have approximately 400 SOQ funded staff and 350 staff who are funded through local dollars. As a result of the state funding formula, I have had to build a budget that requires me to ask the Board of Supervisors for an additional \$2.5 million in local funding. Although we believe we are in a good place with our budget we still need the budget to be approved by the School Board and the Board of Supervisors before it will be finalized. We have a budget retreat scheduled for the Thursday, March 2, 2023 to work through the budget with the School Board and I am scheduled to present our budget to the Board of Supervisors on March 21. I will update you on the budget process as it moves forward. There is more information on the budget, to include my presentation to the board, in the newsletter.

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 last weekend and had a very good turnout. We interviewed several prospective employees that we hope will join Team Amherst for the 2023-2024 school year. I would like to thank everyone who was a part of the recruiting fair, I especially want to recognize Madison Massie, Wendy Sale, and Jim Gallagher for their work in the planning and execution of the event.

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*

This month our staff experienced the devastating loss of one of our fellow colleagues and friends, Keith Coley. Keith worked in our maintenance department and passed away unexpectedly on February 19. We ask that you please continue to keep Keith's family, friends, and co-workers in your thoughts and prayers.



# Upcoming Events

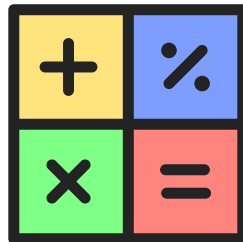
*March 10: Teacher Work Day-No School for Students*

*March 24: Grading Period Ends*

*March 27: Teacher Work Day-No School for Students*

*March 31: Report Cards*

**+ Math 24 - Competition**



**Congratulations to our Math 24 competition winners!**

**Ania Thompson, eighth grader from Monelison Middle School and Zander Simpson, fifth grader from Temperance Elementary School finished in first place at the two division level competitions.**

**Congratulations to all of our middle school and elementary mathletes!**

**#TeamAmherst**







**STOP and thank a bus driver! We celebrated National School Bus Driver Appreciation day this month, and we want to thank our drivers for transporting our children to and from school safely each day! They care about their passengers and are the first smiling face many of our students see. We hope they all know how much we appreciate them! #TeamAmherst**



## **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. Join us for our future opportunities nights in March!

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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

**2023-2024**

**AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Proposed School Operational Budget**

A special School Board meeting was held on February 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm, for the presentation of the 2023-2024 School Operational Budget. The proposed budget, budget presentation, and the recording of the meeting can all be accessed at the Amherst County Public Schools website. Direct links to the documents have been included below for ease of access. A public hearing on the 2023-2024 School Operational Budget will be held on March 9, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the School Administration Offices. Anyone wishing to address the School Board concerning the 2023-2024 School Operational Budget may do so at that time.

**ACPS 2023-2024 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

**ACPS FY24 PROPOSED BUDGET**

**ACPS SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET FEBRUARY 23, 2023**  
**(MEETING RECORDING)**

# Digital Learning DAY



**February 23rd**

Digital Learning Day is an ongoing initiative by the Alliance for Excellent Education to engage students and empower educators through the effective use of digital tools.



ON THE LAST WEDNESDAY OF FEBRUARY, THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ANNUALLY CELEBRATES DIGITAL LEARNING DAY! THIS DAY IS RECOGNIZED BY ALL4ED AS A WAY TO HIGHLIGHT HOW EDUCATORS CAN UTILIZE DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS TO CREATE AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS. DIGITAL TOOLS HELP US CLOSE LEARNING GAPS, BUILD CONNECTIONS, AND PROVIDE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CONTENT. #DLDAY

**IN FEBRUARY WE CELEBRATED SRO APPRECIATION DAY! WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO OUR SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AS THEY SERVE AND PROTECT OUR STUDENTS. OUR SRO'S ARE WONDERFUL ROLE MODELS WHO ENGAGE WITH STUDENTS, EDUCATE THROUGH PROGRAMS SUCH AS D.A.R.E. AND UPHOLD THE LAWS WHICH KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE. THANK YOU, SRO'S, FOR ALL YOU DO FOR ACPS! #TEAMAMHERST**

SRO  
Appreciation  
Day

February 15th



Amherst County  
Public Schools

## ENGAGE Virginia

Helping students be their best, stay on track in school and navigate life's challenges!



Amherst County Public Schools is providing K-12 students with free coaching support through a program called ENGAGE Virginia. This program is designed to help students be their best by helping them stay on track in school and navigate life's challenges. You can learn more about this program and sign up at [registervva.graduationalliance.com](http://registervva.graduationalliance.com).

When you sign up, your family will get connected to a personal Academic Success Coach who works with both students and parents to:

- Help students create an education plan to catch up on or stay on track with assignments
- Provide resources to strengthen math and reading skills
  - Answer questions about technical and teacher access
  - Coach students on time management, study skills, and post-graduate plans

If you have any questions, you can reach out to the ENGAGE Virginia team by emailing [ENGAGEVA@graduationalliance.com](mailto:ENGAGEVA@graduationalliance.com) or calling 804.548.4844.



# WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

As humans we have a basic need for love and belonging. One of the best ways we can meet this need in our children is to model using words of affirmation and help them develop positive self-talk.

Say something like one of these phrases to your child:  
"You are...  
loved.  
powerful.  
blessed."

"I can do hard things."

"I am strong and brave."

Try a call and response (you say the words and have your child repeat them to you.)

"I am enough"  
"I am lovable"  
"I am smart"  
"I am capable"

"It's okay to make mistakes."

"It's okay to ask for help."

"I can make good choices."

"I am important."

"I believe in myself and my abilities."

"Today is going to be an awesome day."

Often we (and our children) say things to ourselves that are negative or hurtful. We can work to change this pattern through awareness and modeling for our children how to encourage ourselves with our words.

Adapted from pathway2success's *How to Teach Positive Self-Talk* & Counselor Chelsey's *5 Easy Ways to Encourage Positive Self-Talk in Your Students*

