

AMHERST COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Family Newsletter

MARCH
29
2024

A Message from the Superintendent

Spring is in the air as we close out the month of March. The trees are beginning to bud and flowers are starting to bloom, the “rebirth” of the plants in spring makes this a great time of year. As we end the month, we also begin a much needed spring break for students and staff. When we return from the break in April we will be in the home stretch of the school year with less than 45 days of school remaining. Our school staff will be finalizing our preparation for the end of year SOL tests and other end of year activities. I ask our families to have your students attend school and participate in our before/after school remediation and tutoring sessions. We realize this is a busy time of year but we need our students in school and focused on finishing the year strong.

There is a solar eclipse on Monday April 8. Totality for our part of the country will be around 3:15 PM and we will have all but a small sliver of the sun blocked out during the eclipse. We need to be careful viewing the eclipse as it can cause eye damage if viewed without proper eyewear. For the protection of our students, we have purchased glasses for all students and they have been given to them to bring home. I encourage you to make sure your students use the glasses if viewing the eclipse.

On March 3, 2024 we were saddened to hear of the passing of Ms. Kathy Stone. Kathy served as a Special Education Teacher at ACHS from January 2017 through the time of her death. Ms. Stone continued to work through a long battle with cancer. She fought the good fight but in the end her cancer proved to be terminal. Ms. Stone continued to work as much as possible even though she was suffering from the effects of her battle with cancer. We want to keep her memory with us especially the strength she showed during the final months of her life.

As the weather begins to warm, it is important for students to follow the dress code. Historically, during the spring season, students begin to push the limits of the dress code and wear clothing that is not appropriate for school. I encourage you to talk with your students about wearing clothing that is appropriate for school.

March was a busy month for ACPS staff, students, and families. Amherst County Public Schools continued its dominance at the State Archery Tournament. Several students placed in the top 10 of the state and Elon Elementary School won the elementary division State Title for the second year in a row. A special congratulations goes to EES Students Carissa Rice and Jase Owen. Carissa had the highest score of any female archer in the state. She outscored all female elementary, middle and high school archers and Jase was the highest scoring male elementary archer and was 18th overall in the state. I also want to recognize Central Elementary for finishing 2nd in the State Archery Tournament.

The spring sports season has begun and our teams are off to a good start. Our Band and Show Choir students are in their performance season and have won many recognitions in their competitions. The ACHS Theatre team is preparing for their performance of Beauty and the Beast which they will perform April 11-13 at the ACHS Auditorium. I ask you to try and find some time to attend some of the spring events and support our students. Finally, I want to congratulate all of our students and sponsors/coaches for a job well done thus far and we are looking forward to a great spring season.

With Easter being early this year, our spring break will be the first week of April (this week). I hope that all of our students and their families have an enjoyable break and our students come back to school refreshed and ready to end the year strong. I want to make sure our families are aware that the Amherst County School Board approved Monday, April 8 as a teacher work day. As a result of this decision, students will get an additional day of Spring Break on April 8.

The #ShowUpAmherst team will be hosting a Spring Community Tailgate at ACHS on April 19 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM. This will be a free event and open to the public. We are encouraging families and community members to attend and enjoy some fellowship along with some freshly grilled food. While you are there, I hope you can take a few minutes to view the high school baseball, softball, and girls' soccer teams in action as we host Jefferson Forest High School. It should be a great event and a good way to spend a Friday evening in April.

In light of the drug incident at Central Elementary and the number of secondary students that are being found in possession of THC/marijuana based substances at school, I felt it important to discuss the drug issues that are facing our schools and community. We have a problem with underage people gaining access to THC/CBD based products. We have a problem with the amount of Methamphetamine that is poisoning our community. We have a problem with other recreational drugs and pills that have infiltrated our community. Many of these drugs are being laced with Fentanyl. We need to be aware of this issue and start taking some type of action. I am asking our families to start having serious conversations about the dangers of these drugs with our students and community.

I was in a meeting this week with U.S. Senator Mark Warner regarding the Fentanyl epidemic that is affecting our community, state, and nation. During the meeting it was shared that seven out ten pills that are being confiscated by authorities have lethal amounts of Fentanyl. This really caught my attention because many of the people taking these pills do not even realize the pills contain Fentanyl. Teenagers and young adults are sharing pills that they believe are “safe”, but in actuality they are being poisoned and killed by lethal amounts of Fentanyl. Virginia averages five Fentanyl related deaths a day. These deaths are not just in the big cities, they are happening all across the state, even here in Amherst County.

Virginia has recently started a Fentanyl awareness campaign labeled “It Only Takes One.” The campaign is designed to educate everyone on the dangers of Fentanyl and the Opioid Crisis. The premise is that it only takes one pill to be lethal. One pill can kill. We can also take this messaging campaign in a different direction. “It Only Takes One” can also be our call for individuals to act. I am only one person, but if I make it a point to educate our students and community on the dangers associated with Fentanyl and other drug use, maybe I can make a difference. For our families and community, I am asking you as individuals to take on this challenge and be the one that makes a difference and does something about this crisis. If we all act, we will make a difference.

As we start the final nine weeks of the year, I want to thank our families for everything you have done to support your students. It has been a long haul for your students since the Christmas break but the spring break is finally here. I hope our families are able to spend some quality time together and our students enjoy the time away from their schools. I urge you to be the one to make a difference in someone's life. Let us continue to work together to ensure the best education possible for our students.

Sincerely,

William

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1-5
Spring Break (No school for students or staff)

April 8
Teacher Work Day (No school for students)

April 24-25
Kindergarten Registration



PUBLIC HEARINGS

During the April 11 Regular School Board Meeting, two public hearings will be held. One public hearing will be held for the proposed 2024-2030 Comprehensive Plan and another public hearing will be held for the proposed Textbook Adoption for K-5 Reading, World Geography, and AP Psychology.

All interested citizens are invited to attend and express their views on the Comprehensive Plan and the textbook adoption process and selection.

Preschool Opportunities

The years before a child enters kindergarten directly impact a child's ability to thrive in kindergarten and beyond. School Readiness means preparing all children for kindergarten by supporting birth-to-age-five programming, including the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI/Smart Start). Virginia's focus includes key classroom practices such as the use of high-quality curriculum and assessment, teacher-child interactions and individualized professional development. It also includes strengthening family engagement.

Through generous grant funding provided by the Virginia Department of Education, Amherst County Public Schools is able to provide programming for eligible four year olds. Amherst County Public Schools also partners with Ready Region Southside and Lyn-CAG Head Start in order to provide various preschool opportunities for three and four year olds as well. Acceptance for all programs are based on eligibility and availability of slots. We are excited to announce our coordinated preschool enrollment applications are posted.

APPLY TODAY!

During the March 14th Regular School Board meeting the School Board approved a change to their meeting calendar. The June 2024 Regular School Board meeting will now take place on Thursday, June 6, 2024. The meeting is scheduled for 6:00 pm at the School Administration Offices.



During the regular scheduled board meeting on March 14, 2024, the School Board approved a change to the current 2023–2024 school calendar. April 8, 2024 was originally scheduled as an instructional day for students, but it has now been changed to a teacher work day. Students will not report to school on April 8 and remote learning will NOT take place. This change will provide valuable time for our staff to prepare for our students as we approach end of year assessments.

Transportation Specialist Appreciation Day

During the month of March we celebrated our amazing transportation drivers and aides! These individuals see the sun rise and set each day as they safely transport our students from home to school and back again. They can be relied upon for field trips, after school activities, and sporting events. These faithful employees make it possible for our children to have the opportunities that education and extra curricular activities provide.



VSBA ART CONTEST

Each spring at the VSBA Regional Spring Networking Forums, an art contest is held to showcase art from the region. The VSBA Regional Art Contest was started in 1989 to promote the artistic talents of Virginia's public school students. For each of the nine VSBA regions, a winner is chosen for the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The winning art is framed and displayed in the offices of the VSBA in Charlottesville.



ACPS proudly acknowledges our division-level contest winners:

Elementary: William Curd with "Caribou in the Early Morning"

High School: Cameron Feyerherd with "Thelma's Homage"

We're delighted to announce that Cameron's artwork has achieved distinction as the 1st Place winner at both the district and regional levels in the High School category! Congratulations, Cameron!



YOUTH ART MONTH

During the month of March we celebrated and highlighted the important role of art in our schools.

We are so thankful for our art educators who allow students to express creatively. Check out artwork from each of our schools on display at 2nd Stage!

ELEMENTARY MATH 24 COMPETITION

3rd, 4th, and 5th graders from across the division competed in the annual Math 24 tournament last night. Students added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided to solve for 24 at rapid speeds.

Congratulations to winner, Finley Nipper, from Amelon Elementary!



Congratulations!

EES Archery State Champions!

MARCH IS
Women's History
Month



During the month of March, we celebrated the vital role women have played in our nation's history. Did you know that the windshield wiper, medical syringe, & refrigerator were all invented by women? Let's spend time learning more so that our past may inspire our future.

MARCH 14, 2024 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Our March 14 School Board meeting was full of recognitions! Dr. Wells recognized the Student and Staff of the Month from each school. Thank you to the ACPS Education Foundation and Sonny Merryman for sponsoring the program! The Real World Design Challenge team from ACHS was also recognized for their State Championship. Dr. Wells also recognized Ms. Brandy Hall-Matson as a recipient of the Lynchburg Living Top Teacher award.

MARCH 14,
2024
SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING



Student of the Month: Casey Harvey (ACHS), Kaylyn Gunter (AEC), Terrance Martin (AMS), Lyla Hayes (MMS), Charlie Murray (AMEL), Wren Campbell (AES), Timothy Fridley (CES), Keelan Richardson (EES), Anakin Berger (MHES), Abigail Etter (TES)

Staff of the Month: Christy Fore (ACHS), Kristen Braswell (AEC), Lisa Laub (AMS), Landon Fielder (MMS), Laura Tomlin (AMEL), Becky Johnson (AES), Audrey Tock (CES), Sara Primm (EES), Kandi Austin (MHES), Alexa Parrish (TES), Cleo Freeman (Transportation), Gwen Ellis (School Administration)

Real World Design Challenge Team: Violet Miller, Lillie Ryder, James Camp, Jeremiah Burford, Carter Hansen, Victoria Freeman, Phoebe Camp

➤➤➤ NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK



During the month of March we celebrated the rich tradition of breakfast during National School Breakfast Week from March 4-8. We ensure every child had access to a nutritious meal at school. Let's spread the spirit of ohana and foster a community where every child can thrive.



*This is
a free
event!*

April 19 @ 5-7 pm
Amherst County
High School
139 Lancer Lane
Outdoor Classroom



RSVP

ACPS Staff
receive free
admission with
their ID
badge!

SHOWUP
AMHERST

**COMMUNITY
TAILGATE**



MAINTENANCE STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

During the month of March, we also celebrated Maintenance Staff Appreciation Day! These hard-working individuals are problem solvers! They keep our buildings functioning properly & ensure that students & staff have a great environment to learn & grow in. Thank you, maintenance crew!

MAINTENANCE STAFF APPRECIATION DAY





Kitchen Chemistry-Part 1

Students began a 2-part lesson using household kitchen items to observe scientific processes. Elementary students discussed matter in the three forms of solid, liquid, and gas before conducting the “dancing raisin” experiment to see all three in action. Middle school students explored the topic of physical and chemical changes using Skittles and water.



Kitchen Chemistry Part 2

Students continued hands-on experiments with kitchen chemistry by creating lava lamps using water, oil, Alka-Seltzer, & food coloring. Middle-schoolers experimented with chemical changes using baking soda and vinegar. Science is truly fascinating!



Physical and Chemical Changes

Today in Bridges to Success, we got our hands messy with this science lesson on physical and chemical changes. Some students created oobleck, which can behave like both a solid and liquid depending on the amount of pressure applied to it. Grasp it firmly and it will feel hard like a ball. Relax your palm and it will flow through your fingers like slime!

Saltwater/Freshwater

This week students in Bridges to Success explored the rivers, watersheds, and estuaries of Virginia! Students reflected on how pollutants can impact important fresh and saltwater habitats. A colored topographical map and key demonstrated the students’ learning on this important topic.



Saltwater/Freshwater

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

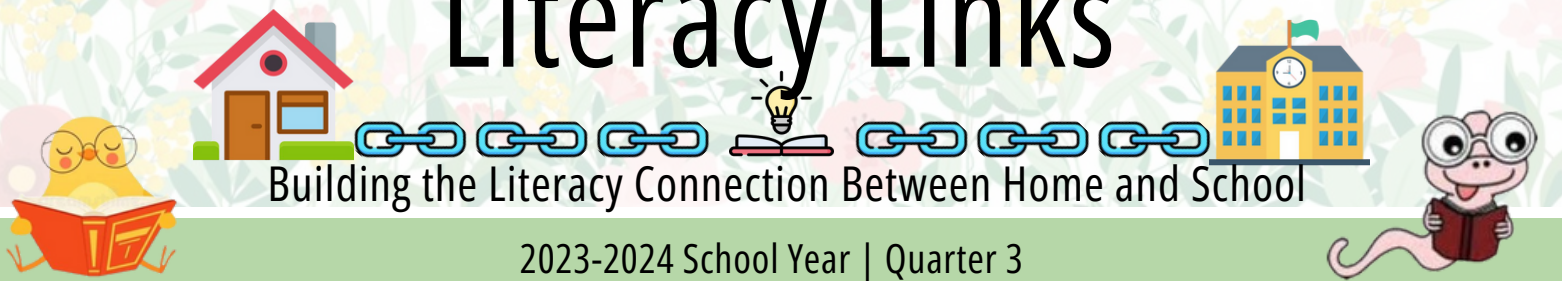
This summer academy is for rising 6th, rising 7th, rising 8th grade students, and current 8th grade students needing remediation based on the 8th grade reading and math SOLs.



Elementary Power Scholars Academy Registration 2024

This summer academy is for rising K - rising 5th grades.

Amherst County Public Schools Literacy Links



Building the Literacy Connection Between Home and School

2023-2024 School Year | Quarter 3

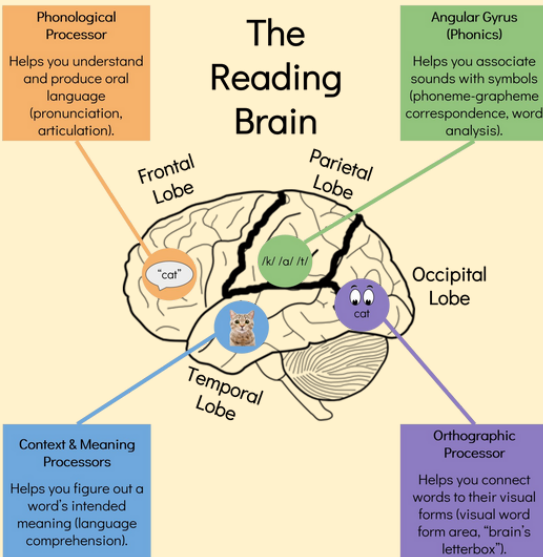
Reading doesn't happen naturally! While our brains are wired for spoken language and we learn to speak through exposure, we must be taught how to read.



Reading instruction changes our brains' structure and how they work. Once we learn to read, we can't turn it off! Our brains automatically process print that we see with no conscious effort on our part.

In learning to read, our brain works to:

- perceive letters and words,
- map sounds to letters,
- store word meanings, and
- understand the rules and structure of sentences



Virginia Literacy Act

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is supporting school divisions such as ours in the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA). This legislation provides our students with the necessary instruction to become proficient readers. More information about the VLA can be found on the [VDOE website](#) or by scanning the QR code.



Supporting the Four Language Processors

Phonological Processor:

- ☐ Practice phonemic awareness activities such as rhyming games, blending and segmenting sounds, and identifying beginning and ending sounds in words.
- ☐ Read aloud to your child, emphasizing sounds and pronunciations, and encourage them to echo your reading.

Orthographic Processor:

- ☐ Show your child how letters match the sounds they make. When reading together, point out how certain letters or letter combinations represent different sounds. Practice this by playing simple word games where they match sounds to letters.
- ☐ Encourage your child to identify common prefixes, suffixes, and root words in their reading and discuss how these contribute to word meanings.

Meaning Processor:

- ☐ Encourage your child to use context clues to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words and discuss how context contributes to understanding.
- ☐ Connect reading material to real-life experiences, encouraging your child to relate what they read to their own lives and the world around them.

Context Processor:

- ☐ Help your child understand the context of a text by discussing the setting, characters, and events. Encourage them to make connections between different parts of the text.
- ☐ Teach your child strategies for understanding unfamiliar vocabulary from context, such as looking for synonyms or antonyms, or examining surrounding sentences for clues.
- ☐ Encourage your child to consider the author's purpose, point of view, and tone when interpreting the context of a text.



When Reading At Home

- ☐ Provide opportunities for your child to practice reading a variety of texts, including both fiction and nonfiction, to help them develop their comprehension and analytical skills.
- ☐ Encourage your child to compare and contrast different texts on the same topic to help them develop their synthesis skills. This can be done by discussing similarities and differences between the texts, as well as identifying key themes and ideas that are present in both.
- ☐ Ask your child open-ended questions that require them to think critically about the text they are reading. For example, you could ask them to explain why a character made a certain choice or to analyze the impact of a specific event on the overall plot.
- ☐ Encourage your child to make connections between the text they are reading and their own personal experiences or other things they have read. This helps them to deepen their understanding of the material and make meaningful connections between different pieces of information.

7 Ways to Practice Synthetic & Analytic Skills

Synthetic Skills:
Encoding/spelling; write down what you hear

Analytic skills:
Decoding/reading; read text out loud

<p>Help a younger sibling write a letter; they dictate, you write</p> <p>Synthetic: Listening & Spelling</p>	<p>Read a storybook out loud to your family</p> <p>Analytic: Reading & Speaking</p>	
<p>Read a book and summarize it at dinner</p> <p>Analytic: Reading & Speaking</p>	<p>Write out the lyrics to your favorite song</p> <p>Synthetic: Listening & Spelling</p>	<p>Find and perform a reader's theatre script</p> <p>Analytic: Reading & Speaking</p>
<p>Take a trip in the car and read all the road signs you see</p> <p>Analytic: Reading & Speaking</p>	<p>Listen to an audiobook and write a response</p> <p>Synthetic: Listening & Spelling</p>	

Taken from Iowa Reading Research Center



Amherst County Public Schools offers school-wide Title I Programs at each of our elementary schools. For more information about our Title I Programs or for more ways to help your child at home, please visit our [ACPS Title I webpage](#) or contact your school's reading specialists. Don't forget to check out the [ACPS Parent and Family Literacy Links](#) website for more resources!



Math Moments

Meaningful Math Experiences Can Happen Anywhere!

2023-2024 School Year | Quarter 3



How Can I Help My Child With Math Homework?



As a parent, focus on asking questions. This approach helps your child navigate problems independently by prompting them to explain concepts out loud. Encourage them to show their work, including written descriptions of their thought process, to understand and correct mistakes. Asking questions might be the best thing you can do to help your child make sense of mathematics, build self confidence, and encourage mathematical thinking and communication, even if you're not comfortable with math yourself. Here are some questions to try; none can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." Ask as many questions as your child needs—there's no need to ask them all.

Getting Started

- What do the instructions or directions say?
- What do you need to know or find out?
- Where do you think you should begin?
- How can you get the information?
- What math terms or words do you understand or not understand?
- Have you solved similar problems that would help?

While Working on a Problem

- What have you done so far?
- Is there anything you already know that can help you work through the problem?
- How can you organize the information?
- Can you make a drawing (model) to explain your thinking?
- Can you describe an approach (strategy) you can use to solve this?
- What do you need to do next?
- What did you try that did not work?

Reflecting About the Solution

- How do you know your solution (conclusion) is reasonable?
- How did you arrive at your answer?
- How can you convince me that your answer makes sense?
- Has the question been answered?

Responding—Helping Your Child to Clarify and Extend His/Her Thinking

- Tell me more.
- Can you explain it in a different way?
- Is there another possibility or strategy that would work?
- Help me understand this part.

Remember, don't do homework for your child—support it! Support your child by acknowledging that sometimes progress is made by not giving up.



"Knock off the Clock" (Grades K+ for 1-2 players)

Knock off the Clock is a fun, fast-paced math game that can be used for addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. If you are playing with younger children, use addition and subtraction only. Older students can use any operation.

Materials Needed: Watch

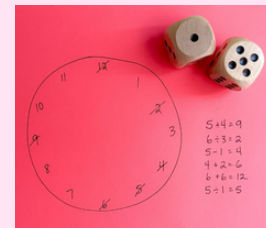
- 2 dice (virtual dice option: <https://g.co/kgs/U9WkKeA>) how to
- paper play!
- pencil



Objective: Eliminate all the numbers on your clock as quickly as possible (or, if playing with two players, before your opponent).

How to Play:

- Have each player draw a clock on their paper, with the numbers 1-12 labelled as shown here.
- Players roll two dice and add, subtract, multiply, or divide them (or just add and subtract for younger players). They write the full equation on their paper and then cross the answer off of their clock, "knocking" out one of the numbers.
- Play continues until all the numbers have been "knocked off the clock." If you are playing in pairs rather than individually, players can compete to see who can be the first one to knock all the numbers off their clock.



Grocery Math

Turn your trip to the grocery store into a math adventure! Here are some ideas for adding math into your shopping routine.

Add to Cart! (PreK-K):

- Have your child help you count items as you put them into the shopping cart. For example, you could ask your child to count how many apples you're buying or how many cans of soup are on the shelf. You can also turn it into a game by asking them to find a certain number of items, like "Let's find five oranges." This not only reinforces counting skills but also makes the shopping trip more interactive and engaging for your child.



Price Comparison Adventure (1st-2nd)

- While shopping, encourage your first grader to compare prices of similar items. For example, ask them to find two different brands of pasta and compare their prices. Discuss which one is the more affordable option and discuss why it might be a better choice. This activity helps develop basic math skills such as understanding numbers and comparing quantities.

Check It Out (3rd+)

- As you wait in a grocery checkout lane, use the time to have your child estimate what the total cost of your groceries will be. Tell her/him that one easy way to estimate a total is to round off numbers. That is, if an item cost 98 cents, round it off to \$1. Explain that the answer she/he gets won't be the exact cost, but it will be about that number. Tell her/him that the word about shows that the amount you say is just an estimate.
- Using the estimated total, ask your child: "If the groceries cost \$16 and I have a \$20 bill, how much change should the cashier give back to me? If the cost is \$17.25, what coins is the cashier likely to give me?"
- At the checkout counter, ask your child to watch as the items are rung up. What's the actual total cost of the groceries? How does this amount compare to the estimate? When you pay for the items, will you get change back from your \$20 bill, or will you have to give the cashier more money? If you receive change, have your child count it to make sure the amount is correct.

Language Lens

Supporting Language Acquisition

2023-2024 School Year | Quarter 3



Mark Your Calendar!

You are invited to an English Learner's Family event on evening of May 17th in the outdoor classroom at Amherst County High School. Our high school English Learners are super excited to begin planning our event which will include dinner and an evening of fun for you and your child. This program will also allow you the opportunity to meet other families and learn more about how you can support your child. Please be on the lookout for an official invitation that will be sent home with your child in the coming days.

For more information contact:

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

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

Melissa Fox - mmfox@amherst.k12.va.us



Visit our ACPS Website to learn more about our English Learner Program



Supporting Your Student At Home

- ❑ Talk about different word meanings – Play games with words. You can talk about how jam means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other words can your child think of that sound the same but have different meanings and spelling? When kids know what a word means, they have less difficulty when reading it.
- ❑ Use a children's dictionary – Show your child how to use it to look up the meaning of words.
- ❑ Read together every day.
- ❑ Explain to your child how things work and what things are. Talk about music, politics, sports, history, or whatever interests you both. Conversations with adults help children build understanding.
- ❑ Ask questions – Ask questions that make your child think about what he or she just read. Say something like, "Why do you think he did that?" or "What's happening now?"
- ❑ Ask your child to retell a story in just a few sentences (summarize). Ask him or her to guess what might happen next (predict).
- ❑ Show your child how to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word based on other words and pictures around it (context).

Adult ESL Support - Are you looking for support in learning English? As your child learns English, you can too! English Language classes introduce participants to basic and advanced grammar and vocabulary of the English language through the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.



Learn more about this program by visiting <https://www.centralvaadulted.com/programs/ell> or scanning the QR code.



ACPS Education foundation Student Showcase Luncheon

The Amherst County Public Schools Education Foundation hosted their annual Student Showcase Luncheon on March 25! Guests enjoyed a delicious meal & informative presentations by ACPS educators. Guests toured the construction site with Dr. Wells and participated in guided tours of the CTE classrooms led by several of our ACHS students. Thank you to Glad for their generous financial support of the Education Foundation! Their support has a direct impact on the students in our community.



Why you should stop texting your kids at school



FILE - A ninth grader places her cellphone in to a phone holder as she enters class at Delta High School, Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, in Delta, Utah. Most schools have policies regulating student cellphone use at school. But the reality is kids don't always follow the rules and schools enforce them sporadically. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer, File)

BY JOCELYN GECKER

Updated 12:11 AM EDT, March 10, 2024

Virginia high school teacher Joe Clement keeps track of the text messages parents have sent students sitting in his economics and government classes:

- “What did you get on your test?”
- “Did you get the field trip form signed?”
- “Do you want chicken or hamburgers for dinner tonight?”

Clement has a plea for parents: Stop texting your kids at school.

Parents are distressingly aware of the distractions and the mental health issues associated with smartphones and social media. But teachers say parents might not realize how much those struggles [play out at school](#).

One culprit? Mom and Dad themselves, whose stream-of-consciousness questions add to a climate of constant interruption and distraction from learning. Even when schools regulate or ban cellphones, it's hard for teachers to enforce it. And the constant buzzes on watches and phones are occupying critical brain space regardless of whether kids are sneaking a peek.

A few changes in parents' behavior can help make phones less distracting at school. Here's what teachers and experts recommend.

TRY IT: STOP TEXTING YOUR KID AT SCHOOL

Many parents stay in touch with their child by texting, but school is a place for focusing on learning and developing independence. Teachers say you can still reach your child if you have a change in plans or a family emergency: Just contact the front office.

If the message is not urgent, it can probably wait.

Think of it this way: “If you came to school and said, ‘Can you pull my child out of calculus so I can tell them something not important?’ we would say no,” central Virginia school counselor Erin Rettig said.

Teachers emphasized: They are not saying parents are to blame for school cellphone battles, just that parents can do more to help. Tell your kids, for example, not to text home unless it is urgent. And if they do, ignore it.

“When your children are texting you stuff that can wait — like, ‘Can I go to Brett’s house five days from now?’ — don’t respond,” said Sabine Polak, one of three mothers who co-founded the Phone-Free Schools Movement. “You have to stop engaging. That’s just feeding the problem.”

CUT THE CORD FROM 8 TO 3

Many parents got used to being in constant contact during the COVID-19 pandemic, when kids were home doing online school. They have kept that communication going as life has otherwise returned to normal.

“We call it the digital umbilical cord. Parents can’t let go. And they need to,” Clement said.

Parents might not expect their kids to respond immediately to texts (though many do). But when students pull out their phones to reply, it opens the door to other social media distractions.

ANXIETY VIA TEXT MESSAGE

At parent workshops, Rettig, the school counselor in Virginia, tells parents they are contributing to children’s anxiety by sending messages, tracking their whereabouts and checking grades daily, which doesn’t give kids space to be independent at school.

Some teachers say they get emails from parents right after returning graded exams, before the class is over, because kids feel the need (or are told) to report grades immediately to parents.

Dr. Libby Milkovich, a developmental and behavioral pediatrician at Children’s Mercy Kansas City, says she asks parents to consider what kids miss out on by having parents at arms’ reach during school hours.

“By texting back and forth with a parent, a child is unable to practice either self-calming or problem-solving skills,” Milkovich said. “It’s easy to text, but if I don’t have a phone, I have to go ask the teacher or I have to figure it out on my own.”

Some kids who oppose school cellphone bans say it’s helpful to reach out to parents when they’re feeling anxious or worried at school. For children with serious anxiety who are accustomed to texting parents for reassurance, Milkovich suggests phasing in limits so the child can gradually practice having more independence. She urges parents to ask themselves: Why does my child need constant access to a phone?

“Often parents say, ‘I want to be able to reach my child at any time,’ which has nothing to do with the child’s outcome. It’s because of the parents’ anxiety,” she said.

TAKE AWAY THAT OLD PHONE

Beth Black, a high school English teacher in the San Francisco Bay Area, tells parents to consider confiscating their child's old phones.

Her school requires students to put phones in a special cellphone holder when they enter classrooms. But she has seen students stash their old, inactive phone there, and hold onto the phone that works.

Like many teachers, she says phones aren't the only problem. There's also the earbud issue.

"Forty percent of my students have at least one earbud in when they walk into class," Black said. "The kids will set their phone in the holder to music and they'll listen to music in class in one earbud."

TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS

Parents' reining in their texts will only go so far. So work with your kids to turn off some or all of their attention-stealing notifications.

To prove just how distracting smartphones are, Clement ran an in-class experiment where he asked students to take their phones off silent and switch on notifications for two minutes.

"It sounded like an old-time video arcade — bizzing, buzzing, dinging and ringing for two solid minutes," he said.

Many studies have found students check their phones frequently during class. A study last year from Common Sense Media found teens get bombarded with as many as 237 notifications a day. About 25% of them pop up during the school day, mostly from friends on social media.

"Every time our focus is interrupted, it takes a lot of brain power and energy to get back on task," said Emily Cherkin, a Seattle-based teacher-turned-consultant who specializes in screen-time management.

Teachers say the best school cellphone policy is one that physically removes the phone from the child. Otherwise, it's hard to compete.

"When the phone vibrates in their pocket, now their focus is on their pocket. And they're wondering, 'How do I get it out to the table? How do I check it?'" said Randy Freiman, a high school chemistry teacher in upstate New York. "You ask them a question and they haven't heard a word you've said. Their brain is elsewhere."



Amherst County Public Schools

Kindergarten Registration 2024-2025 School Year

Registration days for Amherst County children eligible to enroll in kindergarten in the Amherst County Public Schools for the 2024-2025 school year will be held on the dates listed below. Children have to be age 5 on or before September 30, 2024, in order to enroll in kindergarten for the 2024-2025 school year.

Online registration forms can be completed at <https://amherst.psisjs.com/public/formbuilder/form.html?formid=10940353>. Please also schedule an appointment in your child's school to complete the in-person screening on one of the dates below.

REGISTRATION will be: **Wednesday, April 24, 2024 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**
 Thursday, April 25, 2024 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

***All children entering kindergarten must register at the school in the attendance zone in which they reside.*

Amelon Elementary School
Lea Gray, Principal
Phone: 528-6498

Amherst Elementary School
Amanda Cassise, Principal
Phone: 946-9704

Central Elementary School
Ron Proffitt, Principal
Phone: 946-9700

Elon Elementary School
Lelia Saunders, Principal
Phone: 528-6496

Madison Heights Elementary School
Jeremy Hutchinson, Principal
Phone: 846-2151

Temperance Elementary School
Lantz Martin, Principal
Phone: 946-2811

To find your attendance zone, visit the Amherst County Schools website (under Families > Bus Routes).

www.amherst.k12.va.us

Prior to entering school, the following will need to be provided to the school:

- 1) Proof of Residency (for example: electric, water, or cable bill)
- 2) Child's Birth Certificate
- 3) Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form (MCH 213 G) from your doctor. This form must be completed within the 12 months prior to the first day of school and include the child's complete immunization record and well-child check (*Code of Virginia § 22.1-270*).
- 4) Proof of required immunizations listed below:
 - Four DPT (1 DPT must be after 4th birthday)
 - Four Polio (1 dose must be after 4th birthday)
 - Two MMR (1st dose must be after 1st birthday)
 - Three Hepatitis B
 - Two Varicella (Chicken Pox vaccine) or doctor's documentation that child has had chicken pox
 - Two or Three Rotavirus
 - Two Hepatitis A



Join the ACPS Team



Become a Volunteer!

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

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
ENGLISH TEACHER
SPANISH TEACHER
MATHEMATICS TEACHER
READING SPECIALIST
SCIENCE TEACHER

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



What Every Parent and Caregiver Needs to Know About **FAKE PILLS**



DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION • Public Safety Alert

What is fentanyl?

- It is a deadly synthetic opioid that is being pressed into fake pills or cut into heroin, cocaine, and other street drugs to drive addiction.

FENTANYL IS
50 x
MORE POTENT
THAN HEROIN

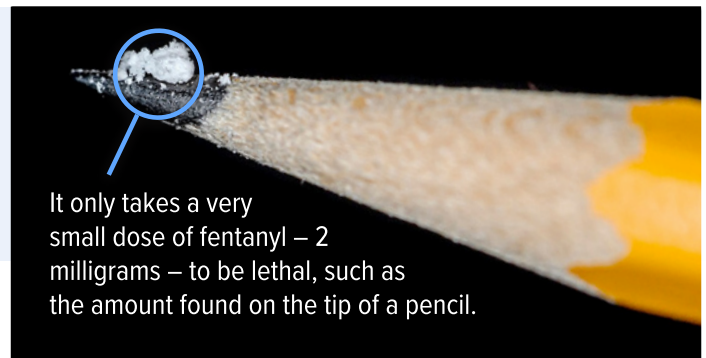
What are fake pills?

- The Sinaloa Cartel and Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion are making fentanyl and pressing it into fake pills. Fake pills are made to look like OxyContin®, Xanax®, Adderall®, and other pharmaceuticals. These fake pills contain no legitimate medicine.
- Fentanyl is also made in a rainbow of colors so it looks like candy.



Why is fentanyl so dangerous?

- DEA lab testing reveals that seven out of every ten fake pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose.



What are the physical and mental effects of fentanyl?

- Fentanyl use can cause confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, changes in pupil size, cold and clammy skin, coma, and respiratory failure leading to death.

Visit www.dea.gov/onepill for more information and resources for parents and caregivers

**Photos of fake pills do not represent all available fake pills.*

**ONE
PILL CAN
KILL**

Data as of September 2023

How would my child get fentanyl?

- Drug traffickers are using social media to advertise drugs and conduct sales. If you have a smartphone and a social media account, then a drug trafficker can find you. This also means they are finding your kids who have social media accounts.
- To learn about emoji codes used on social media, visit Emoji Drug Code Decoded on www.dea.gov/onepill.

PERCOCET® & OXYCODONE



XANAX®



ADDERALL®



Why you should be concerned.

- The drug landscape is dramatically different from when you grew up, or even from just a few years ago.
- All parents and caregivers need to be educated on current drug threats to be able to have informed talks with their kids.

Tips for Parents and Caregivers

- Encourage open and honest communication
- Explain what fentanyl is and why it is so dangerous
- Stress not to take any pills that were not prescribed to you from a doctor
- No pill purchased on social media is safe
- Make sure they know fentanyl has been found in most illegal drugs
- Create an “exit plan” to help your child know what to do if they’re pressured to take a pill or use drugs

Free: A

Parent’s Guide to Substance Use Prevention at www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/publications



Visit www.dea.gov/onepill for more information and resources for parents and caregivers

**ONE
PILL CAN
KILL**

Department of Justice | Drug Enforcement Administration
FAKE PILLS FACT SHEET

FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILLS • WIDELY AVAILABLE • INCREASINGLY LETHAL

DEA LAB TESTING REVEALS THAT
7 OUT OF EVERY 10 PILLS
WITH FENTANYL CONTAIN A POTENTIALLY
LETHAL DOSE



Fake pills often contain fentanyl and are more lethal than ever before.

DEA officials report a dramatic rise in the number of fake pills containing at least 2 mg of fentanyl, which is considered a potentially lethal dose.

Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. In 2022, an estimated 110,757 people died by drug poisoning in the United States.

Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most commonly found in fake pills, is the primary driver in this alarming increase in poisoning deaths.

Criminal drug networks are flooding the U.S. with deadly fake pills.

- Criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills and falsely marketing them as legitimate prescription pills to deceive the American public.
- Fake pills are easy to purchase, widely available, often contain fentanyl or methamphetamine, and can be deadly.
- Fake prescription pills are easily accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms, making them available to anyone with a smartphone.
- Many fake pills are made to look like prescription opioids such as oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and alprazolam (Xanax®); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall®).



For more information about fake pills, go to [DEA.gov/OnePill](https://www.dea.gov/OnePill)

Data as of September 2023

*Photos of fake pills do not represent all available fake pills.



Fake pills are widely available across every state in the Country.

- DEA and its law enforcement partners are seizing deadly fake pills at record rates.
- Fake pills have been seized in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- Drug trafficking is also inextricably linked with violence.
- In 2022, DEA seized more than 59.6 million fentanyl pills and more than 13,000 pounds of fentanyl powder.
- Visit www.DEA.gov for the latest DEA fentanyl seizures.



Learn More



The only safe medications are ones that come from licensed and accredited medical professionals.

DEA warns that pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous, and potentially lethal.

For more information about fake pills, go to DEA.gov/OnePill

Data as of September 2023



The Drug Enforcement Administration ensures the safety and health of the American public by fighting against violent criminal drug networks and foreign cartels trafficking in illicit drugs. To accomplish that mission, the Drug Enforcement Administration employs approximately 10,000 men and women throughout the world — Special Agents, diversion investigators, intelligence analysts, and chemists — across more than 250 domestic offices in 23 U.S. divisions and more than 90 foreign offices in nearly 70 countries.

You've Got a Friend Day

June 8th
1pm-5pm
City Stadium

3176 Fort Avenue • Lynchburg, VA 24501

You've Got A Friend Foundation Signature Event, fostering Police building positive relationships with youth and the communities they serve.

FREE Event
Inflatables

Meet "Moe" The VMI Mascot
K9 and Police Drones Demonstrations
Finger Print IDs
Police Vehicles and Police Displays
Dunk Crime in the Dunking Tank
Games



Limited Edition
Police Trading
Cards





VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



Putting Healthy Food
Within Reach

USDA
Supplemental
Nutrition
Assistance
Program



Can't afford to buy groceries?

SNAP can help!

What is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)? SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of families so they can purchase healthy food.

- » SNAP benefits are calculated based on household size, income, expenses and other nonfinancial criteria.
- » You may be eligible even if you are working.
- » SNAP does not make you a public charge and will not be considered in a public charge determination.

It's easy to apply!

Online: commonhelp.virginia.gov

Call: 833-522-5582

Visit: **Your local department of social services**

Am I eligible?



Scan the QR code below to go to CommonHelp.virginia.gov to check your eligibility, apply online and, if you are a current customer, manage your account - all in one place!



From the CommonHelp homepage:

1. Click "Get Started"
2. Click "Check eligibility"
3. Answer short questions to check your eligibility.

This project has been funded at least in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Amherst County Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc. hosts the

21st Annual Captain's Choice

Golf Tournament

Friday, June 7th

Winton Golf Course

Morning Flight Only: 8am

\$90 per player

includes:

On-Course Snacks/Drinks and Lunch!

Golf Cart!

One Mulligan per player!

Great Sponsor Swag!

REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!

To register, contact the
Education Foundation at
434-316-3900, email
educationfoundation@amherst.k12.va.us
or **REGISTER ONLINE** at
www.ACPSEducationFoundation.org

GREAT PRIZES IN EACH FLIGHT!

**Swing for a great cause and
support Amherst County
Public Schools!**

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

\$2,000 TITLE Sponsor

Title sponsor recognition!
Golf tournament entry for EIGHT players!
Large sponsor sign at golf tournament registration
Winter luncheon attendance
Exposure at all annual events
Public recognition in newspaper twice per year

\$1,000 Gold Sponsor

Golf tournament entry for FOUR players!
Large sponsor sign at golf tournament registration
Exposure at all annual events
Public recognition in newspaper twice per year

\$500 Silver Sponsor

Small sponsor sign at golf tournament registration
Hole sponsor sign on the course
Exposure at all annual events

\$250 Bronze Sponsor

Small sponsor sign at golf tournament registration
Hole sponsor sign at golf tournament

\$200 Hole-in-One Sponsor

Sponsor the designated \$5,000 Hole-in-One on the
course (selected by Winton management)
Small sponsor sign at designated hole

\$200 Longest Drive Sponsor

Sponsor the designated Longest Drive prize hole
(selected by Winton management)
Small sponsor sign at designated hole

\$100 Hole Sponsor

Hole sponsor sign on the course

\$50 Green Sponsor

A green sponsor sign in honor or memory of a
teacher, bus driver, etc.



WINTON
F A R M





James
River
ASSOCIATION



5 Days of River Fun!



On-the-water
explorations



Outdoor River Camp at our Upper James River Center

James River Association's Outdoor River Camp is located at the Upper James River Center located at Riveredge Park in Amherst County - directly across the river from Historic Downtown Lynchburg!

Campers will have the opportunity to kayak, canoe, paddle board, and float in tubes! Our on-the-water explorations engage students with new skills, scientific techniques, and historical insight to better understand and enjoy our waterways.

Fishing &
Paddling

2024 Camp Dates: Details:

Week 1: June 3rd - 7th

Week 2: June 10th-14th

Week 3: June 17th - 21st

Week 4: July 8th-12th

Week 5: July 15th - 19th

Week 6: July 22nd - 26th

- Camp runs 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- 5-day camp is \$300
- Optional 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. extended care is an additional \$50 per week.

Register:

Visit www.JamesRiverAdventures.org
Questions? Contact Sarah Coleman
at scoleman@thejamesriver.org



River Science



Sunday
May 5, 2024
3:00pm

*Starts and finishes at
Amherst County High School.
Runs through the Town of Amherst.*



SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER TODAY!

runsignup.com/Race/VA/Amherst/IRON5k



ironlives.org