



ACPS Staff Newsletter

November 30, 2023



A Message from Dr. Wells

It is hard to believe that we are already at the end of November. I trust everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable Thanksgiving holiday and you were able to spend some quality time with family and friends. As we move into December, we are ten school days away from the Christmas Holiday break. This also means you only have 24 days to take care of all of your shopping for the holiday.

The Town of Amherst is hosting the annual Christmas parade this evening at 6:30 PM on Main Street in Amherst. Mayor Tuggle and yours truly will be serving as the masters of ceremony for the parade. We should have decent weather as the rain is forecast to push out of the area by the start of the parade. I encourage you to #Show Up and support your community at the parade tonight.

ACHS will be hosting Winterfest on December 4 and 5, 2023 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM both nights. There will also be a band concert on Monday December 4 at 7:00 PM and a Choral concert on Tuesday December 5 at 7:00. Winterfest is open to all students in the county and the activities are focused around our younger students. I encourage you to try and attend Winterfest one or both nights and stay around for the concerts that will follow.

As we move closer to the colder days of the year and better opportunities for winter weather, I wanted to remind everyone of the school closure codes we will be using as well as the process we use to determine a school closure or two-hour delay. When we have forecast that is calling for winter precipitation our snow team (Dr. Wells, Dr. Hoden, Mr. Roakes and Mrs. Campbell) begins discussions on how we will monitor road conditions. If a storm is imminent or precipitation is falling, we begin checking roads around 4:00 AM. Our goal is to make a decision by 5:30 AM so we can notify families and personnel in a timely manner. However, sometimes Mother Nature does not cooperate with our timeline and we have to make judgement calls based on the forecast. We will err on the side of caution as much as possible when we believe a storm is imminent. Once a storm has passed, we begin snow clearing operations as soon as it safe to do so. Our first priority is clear parking lots and sidewalks to ensure that staff and students have safe access to the buildings. At the same time, we begin checking area roads to determine if they are clear for travel. Our goal is to make a decision by 4:00 PM so we can alert families and staff of any changes to our operational schedule.

It is important to realize the size and elevations changes in the county. There are times when some areas of the county will be experiencing winter weather while other areas are not. We have to take into account all of the roads in the county and if we have areas of the county that are not deemed safe for travel we will opt to alter our operational schedule. When a decision has been made to alter our normal operational schedule, ACPS will utilize our social media channels, School Messenger, school email, and local broadcast stations. We will make every effort to notify staff and families in a timely manner.

ACPS has four basic options when we determine the need to alter our operational schedule:

1. Two Hour Delay - ACPS will operate on a two-hour delay. Staff and students should report two hours after their normal report time. Essential personnel (grounds, maintenance, custodians, building administration) should report on time.
2. Closed Code 1 - Students, Teachers, teacher assistants, child nutrition workers, bus drivers, and bus aides, do not report. All 12 month and 11 month administrative employees should report as usual or as soon as they can. Those who do not report are required to utilize a day of leave.
3. Closed Code 2 - The school division is closed to staff and students. The following personnel are expected to report. Those who do not report are required to utilize a day of leave.
 - a. Division Level Administration - Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Supervisors, Directors, and the CFO.
 - b. Building Level Administrators - All principals and assistant principals.
 - c. Designated Emergency Personnel - maintenance, mechanics, grounds, and custodians.
4. Closed Code 3 - All schools and administrative offices are closed. Principals and Supervisors will contact emergency personnel to discuss reporting.

However, there may be some times when we opt for a remote learning day. The decision to utilize a remote learning day will be situational and event dependent. We will do our best to notify staff in a timely manner if we anticipate the need to utilize a remote learning day.

As we approach the holiday break, I ask you to remain focused on providing quality instruction and a safe and supportive learning environments for our students. Also remember that this is the time of year to give to those who are less fortunate and offer thanks for all that we have been fortunate enough to receive. Thank you for you all do for our students and the greater Amherst Community.

Sincerely,

William



Upcoming Events

December 4

Interim Report Distribution

December 18-29

Winter Break-No School for students and most staff

January 1

New Year's Day - No School for students or staff



In November we celebrated Native American Heritage Month! We are fortunate to live in an area with a bounty of Native American history. Check out our local Monacan Indian Museum this month or read book about our local history.



Congratulations to our Supervisor of Math, Science, Gifted, and Elective Programs, Ms. Wanda Rose Smith! Ms. Smith was honored for her leadership as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated Gamma Iota Omega Chapter President at The Legacy Museum of African American History's 2023 Annual Banquet. The chapter implements many service initiatives in the Lynchburg Area and surrounding counties. We're thankful to Ms. Smith for being a community leader and advocate!

Students of the Month

October 2023



Taylor Guill-Amherst County High School

Jay Mullen-Amherst Education Center

Annie Carver-Amherst Middle School

Jeron Harden-Monelison Middle School

Payton Davis-Amelon Elementary School

Rafe Mason-Amherst Elementary School

Emerson Davis-Central Elementary School

Liam Fix-Elon Elementary School

Danna Quintas-Salinas-Madison Heights Elementary School

Rachel Argenbright-Temperance Elementary School

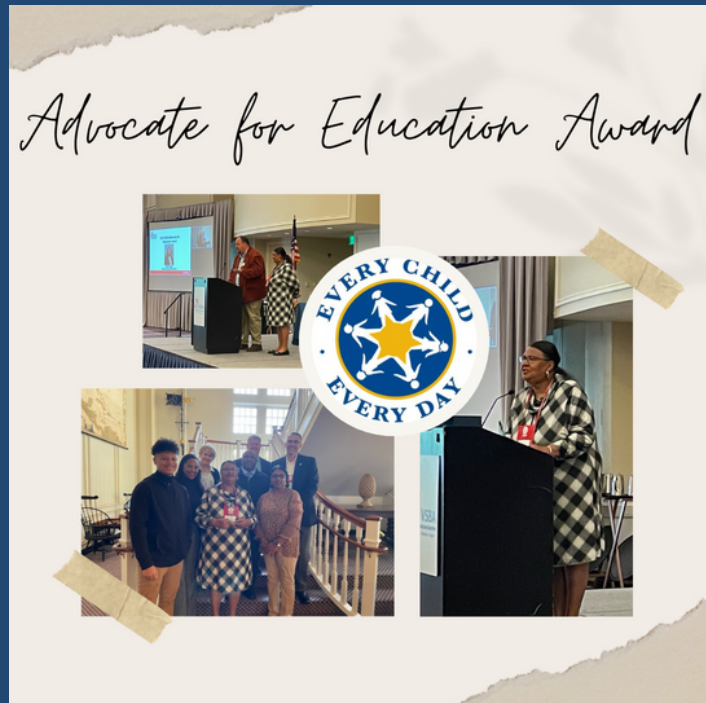
This program is sponsored by the ACPS Education Foundation with generous funding support from Sonny Merryman!



Longtime Amherst County School Board Member Receives Prestigious Honor

Amherst County Public Schools is proud to announce that on Friday, November 17, 2023, Mrs. Priscilla Liggon was awarded the Virginia School Boards Association's Advocate for Education Award. Mrs. Liggon was honored at the VSBA Annual Convention in Williamsburg, VA where she was joined by fellow educational leaders and her family.

Mrs. Liggon is a dedicated school board member and has emerged as a beacon of exemplary leadership in the realm of public education. Through her visionary leadership, she recognizes that our future rests upon the shoulders of our youth. The hallmark of Mrs. Liggon's leadership is her unyielding commitment to providing a quality education to every student, regardless of their background or circumstances. Recognizing that a well-rounded education is the cornerstone of a thriving society, she champions initiatives to enhance curriculum standards, encourages teacher professional development, and ensures equitable access to educational resources. By pushing for advanced placement programs, vocational training opportunities, and arts and music education, she demonstrates a holistic understanding of students' needs and potential.



Amherst School Board Chairman, Mr. Chris Terry, stated, "No one exemplifies dedication to a school system like Mrs. Priscilla Liggon. She always puts students before any other agenda. She has dedicated the last 24 years to making Amherst County Schools a better place for the students and is primed to give at least four more years. Mrs. Liggon is a pillar in her church and is a mainstay at school sporting events. She attends the school plays and volunteers in the schools every chance she gets. It has been a great pleasure for me to serve with her on the board and it is my honor to call her Friend."

At the local level, Mrs. Liggon fosters strong ties with the community, making education a collaborative endeavor. She works with local churches and civic organizations to engage parents, educators, and stakeholders in meaningful conversations about the direction of public education. By actively listening to concerns and incorporating feedback, she not only demonstrates effective leadership but also strengthens the bonds between the school division and the community.

Dr. William Wells, Superintendent of Amherst County Public Schools stated, "Mrs. Liggon has been a mainstay in the Amherst County community and has been a voice of reason on the Amherst County School Board. During her tenure she has served as a mentor to other board members not only on our board but others in the region and state. She has worked with six superintendents and has remained steadfast on ensuring that the school division stays focused on putting our students first in every decision we make. She remains committed to our division motto of Every Child, Every Day."

Understanding that the challenges faced by her school division are not unique, Mrs. Liggon advocates for education beyond local boundaries. She has taken an active role in state education policy discussions, and has served as the school division policy representative with the Virginia Schools Board Association for over fifteen years. She collaborates with fellow board members across Virginia to address common issues such as funding disparities, standardized testing, and at-risk students.

Mrs. Abby Thompson, Amherst School Board Vice-Chair, stated, "Mrs. Liggon exudes her love and commitment to God and the children in Amherst county in all aspects of her life and service. I have known Mrs. Liggon for about 25 years and served with her on our school board for the past seven years. In that time, she has never wavered from her commitment to our children and she upholds the value of education, hard work, respect, and God. She knows our students and our community very well, and is respected by all. She attends the school events, spending time just talking with students and asking them about what is going on in their lives. Personally, I have learned much from her servant leadership on our board and I know that I am a better board member because of her collaboration and heartfelt care. In short, Mrs. Liggon is the consummate board member who makes the tough strategic decisions with the board yet, walks among the students and props them up for success. We love her, appreciate her, and respect her greatly!"

Mrs. Liggon's exceptional leadership, commitment, and contributions have left an indelible mark on Amherst County Public Schools and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through her unwavering dedication to quality education, active involvement in advocacy, and commitment to the Virginia School Board Association, she has demonstrated the power of passionate leadership in transforming public education and uplifting communities.

Remote Learning Day Information

As we are in the midst of winter months, and weather can be problematic, we would like to remind you that it is our intention to provide instructional opportunities to all students even in the event that they are not required to report to school. If deemed appropriate, ACPS will call for a Remote Learning Day due to weather instead of closing schools. This means that all teachers and students would be required to participate in instruction while at home.

If a Remote Learning Day is called, your school principal will send out an email providing you with instructions based on the requirements for the day. This can either be staying at home and offering students a module of work on their Canvas or Google Classrooms using your school provided laptop or coming into the school building and logging into a virtual classroom using a Google Meet link you have provided to your students.

Please ensure that you take home your laptop or school issued device each day in order to be prepared for any Remote Learning Days. All staff are to participate in the workday whether you are contracted as a teacher, IA, or classified employee. If you have questions please reach out to your school principal for additional information so that you are clear regarding the expectations and responsibilities you have for that day.



Amherst County Public Schools

COMMUNITY FORUMS

NOVEMBER 28

Amherst County High School
139 Lancer Lane, Amherst
Cafeteria

Please park at the front of the school

DECEMBER 6

Monelison Middle School
257 Trojan Road, Madison Heights
Cafeteria

FORUMS @ 6:00

All community stakeholders are invited to attend and provide their thoughts on the direction of the school division and the priorities of the next comprehensive plan. If you are not able to attend either of the community forums, please click the link below to complete a survey regarding the development of the next comprehensive plan. If needed, paper copies will also be available at all of our buildings. The survey will close on Friday, December 8, 2023, at 5:00 pm. We are looking forward to engaging with all of our stakeholders throughout this process!

Survey



Prepare for your next appointment

Going to the doctor is an important part of staying healthy. Whether you're going for a regular checkup or seeing the doctor because you're sick, preparing for your appointment can help ensure you get the help and information you need and feel confident about your care plan moving forward.



Before your visit

Whether you're having an in-person or virtual visit, experiencing symptoms, or completing an annual physical, it helps your appointment run smoothly if you do the following things beforehand:

▢ **Make a list of everything you take.** This can include prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Be sure to include how much you take each day.

▢ **Think about including a family member or friend.** They can help you think of questions for your doctor, review information with you after your appointment, or maybe even participate in a virtual visit.

▢ **Write down questions you want to ask your doctor.** You can include questions like:

- What can I do to prevent or delay health problems?
- Should I make any changes to improve my health?
- Are there tests or screenings I should have, based on my age or other risk factors?
- Do I need to come back for another visit?

If you need help finding a doctor, you can use the SydneySM Health mobile app or log in to **anthem.com** and search for doctors in your plan's network with the *Find Care and Cost* tool.



Visit [anthem.com/preventive-care](https://www.anthem.com/preventive-care) to learn what preventive care you should get and when before talking to your doctor.



Preventive care vs. diagnostic care

Preventive care can be scheduled when you're feeling well to help keep your health on track. Annual physicals and preventive screenings can help detect health problems early. Plus, they're covered by your health plan.

Diagnostic care is used to determine the cause of any symptoms you're experiencing. This type of care may include appointments with your doctor and tests used to diagnose an issue so it can be treated.



Understanding a diagnosis

If you go to the doctor for diagnostic care, make sure you understand your condition and your doctor's plan of care before leaving. Asking your doctor the following questions may help you better understand your diagnosis:¹

- What's the name of the condition?
- What may have caused this condition?
- How long is this condition expected to last?
- How will this problem affect me long-term?
- How can this issue be treated or managed?
- Where can I learn more about this condition?



Don't leave until you feel confident

If your appointment is ending and you're still unsure about your condition

or what you're supposed to do next, don't leave without knowing the answers to these questions:²

1. What is the main issue?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important that I do this?

It's important that you understand what's happening so you can feel confident in how to move forward.

Choosing a doctor is an important part of your health and well-being.

[Click here for an article on tips for choosing the right doctor!](#)



¹ National Institute on Aging website, [What Should I Ask My Doctor During a Checkup?](#) (accessed July 2022); nia.nih.gov.
² Institute for Healthcare Improvement website, [Ask Me 3: Good Questions for Your Good Health](#) (accessed July 2022); ihi.org.

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CONGRATULATIONS AMHERST THEATRE

1st place

**4D South Champions at the one act
play festival held at Salem HS Nov 4th
BEST ACTRESS KAYDEN FIFER AND REAGAN TYREE
WITH SPECIAL AWARD: BEST ENSEMBLE**

AMHERST THEATRE 2023

Amherst Theatre WON the 4D South One Act Play competition this past weekend at Salem High School. They also received three incredible awards: Best Acting for Reagan Tyree and Kayden Fifer and BEST Ensemble. We performed with professionalism and grace and represented ACHS in a most positive way.

Special thanks to Gary Roakes for acquiring a vehicle to get the set there safely

Winterfest Celebration

***You are invited to a Community Event
for all Amherst County children
and their families.***

Sponsored by Amherst County High School Lancer Support Team, partnering with local businesses and organizations

***Monday, December 4, 2023
and Tuesday, December 5, 2023***

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Amherst County High School Cafeteria

Free Fun Activities Free Dinner
Crafts & Games Hot dogs, chips and water

Family Pictures taken by ACHS FCCLA Club
Digital and printed pictures will be available for \$1.00.

You are invited to winter concerts
in the ACHS auditorium at 7:00 pm.
Monday, December 4 – Band Concert - FREE
Tuesday, December 5 – Choral Concert - \$5.00

Donations of food items for *Amherst Cares* will also be collected.



**2023 TOWN OF AMHERST CHRISTMAS PARADE
COUNTDOWN**

When: December 1, 2023

Time: 6:30 PM

Where: Town of Amherst S. Main Street

Theme: Cartoon Christmas

**COOKIES and CRAFTS WITH SANTA AND LIVE MUSIC AT
TOWN HALL**

Prior to the Christmas Parade, the Town will hold its annual Cookies and Crafts with Santa and have live music at Town Hall.

LIVE BROADCAST

YouTube link to Live Streaming of the event will be made available at amherstva.gov.

Dr. Wells and Mayor Tuggle will be emceeing the event!