

Avenews

News from the Allegheny Valley School District

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District Highlights

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Congratulations to the Springdale Jr-Sr High School Class of 2021. Sixty-one students participated in their graduation ceremony on Friday, May 28. Story on page 2; highlights of the class are listed on pages 6-7.



*In the District...*The District celebrates its students by recognizing three Future Famers...*Story on page 5*



At Acmetonia Elementary... Students participated in the Children's Choice event...*Story on page 4*



*At Springdale Jr-Sr High School...*The District found a special way to celebrate SHS seniors...*Story on page 7.*

SHS Holds 89th Graduation

The 89th graduating class of Springdale High School gathered in Marshall Auditorium on May 28th to celebrate the end of their high school years. Friends and family joined the 61 members of the Class of 2021 as they began their last official event as students in the Allegheny Valley School District.

Tonight marks “one final milestone of the school,” Principal Andrew Leviski told the class. He highlighted connections, care, and commitment. “It’s all about personal connection, find what’s your gift to show people you care, make the promise to yourself - don’t ever give up.”

Valedictorian Haley Bonidie told her classmates about Coke-A-Cola moments, those times showing pure happiness. “We’ve struggled and endured, and come out on top,” she said. Encouraging the class to “remember the Coke-A-Cola moments. Show what’s worth the struggle.”

Salutatorian Duncan Caltagarone called the class one of the most talented and accomplished graduating from SHS, noting that, “the moments I had with these people, these friendships, the journey are part of the gift.” He emphasized to “always remember that the accolades we receive mean nothing without the relationships.”

Superintendent Patrick Graczyk addressed the class, congratulating them on completing the difficult year and encouraging them to “enjoy



Valedictorian Haley Bonidie, left, and salutatorian Duncan Caltagarone, right, led Springdale Jr-Sr High School’s 2021 graduating class.

successes modestly.” He detailed successes that were attained throughout their years in the District.

This class earned more than \$2,914,540 in scholarships, served hundreds of hours in the community, and worked to donate thousands of dollars to charities.

Madalyn Brynes, Senior Class President, reminded her classmates to “squeeze every ounce of happiness from every moment,” with the hope that “each and every one of you has the courage to turn on your light.”

For the pride that they have brought to the District, congratulations and best wishes are extended to all members of the Class of 2021.

Superintendent’s Message

Public education experienced increasingly rapid and unprecedented change in the past two years. For example, at Allegheny Valley, we required our students and staff to wear masks daily at school. The pandemic forced school closures, hybrid schedules, virtual learning, and the cancellation of events without warning. Furthermore, our incredible school district stepped up as a vaccination center for our students, staff, and community.

In addition to adjusting to constant change and in the midst of a national crisis, the Allegheny Valley School District brought our students back for daily in-person instruction when many school districts in our region could not.

Planning for the 2021-2022 school year is fully underway. As a District, we pulled from our experiences during tumultuous times to examine what we learned about our students and school system. To that end, we developed a broader appreciation for differences in how students learn. Also, we understand more deeply that schools need to be a haven



Superintendent Patrick Graczyk speaks at Springdale Jr-Sr High School’s 2021 Graduation Ceremony.

where students feel that they belong.

At the forefront of thought is learning loss, helping our students cope with the aftermath of COVID-19, finances, and responding to the challenges caused by the pandemic. This summer was indicative of our new understandings of education and planning. With the support of the board of directors, our top-notch staff provided unique learn-

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District Highlights

The Successes of 2020-2021

This year, the theme of *Together We Can* highlighted the District's pride in its students, staff, alumni, and community. Emphasis was placed on acknowledging and celebrating accomplishments, achievements, and honors that help build a better Allegheny Valley School District. While the District made its way through the difficult course directed by the pandemic, technology, initiatives, and creative teaching ideas came to the forefront. With the regular school year interrupted many times, staff members created ways to continue education that enabled students and staff to learn together. As Allegheny Valley moves forward, we take heart and encouragement from the innovation, empathy, and support shown by all. The District now takes time to celebrate the following achievements:

- District staff executed a preK-12 academic learning environment that included virtual education and in-person learning.
- Allegheny Valley was awarded over \$1,659,000 in various grants throughout the school year. Grants covered costs stemming from the pandemic and supported food service, safety, and technology.
- Springdale Jr-Sr High School earned high National and metro-area rankings in 2021 Best High Schools



Elena McCutcheon and Molly Hurley received 1st Place rankings at the Pennsylvania Jr. Academy of Science.

by earning a national ranking in the top 40% in the U.S. News Best High School awards.

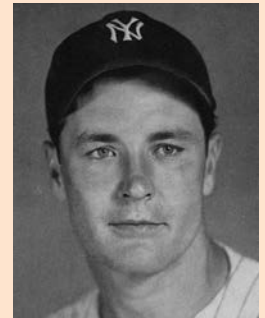
- Acmetonia Elementary School was accepted into the Amazon Future Engineer program in partnership with Project STEM. The program is intended to support students and the school in the expansion of its computer science program.
- Allegheny Valley became a Kindness Certified School District. Presented by The Great Kindness Challenge, which supports a commitment to fostering positive, caring, and respectful school environ-

ments where all students thrive. The certification honors school districts for their positive and proactive approach to improving school climate and increasing student engagement.

- One 9th grade student and one 8th grade student earned 1st place rankings on their science projects at the State Level of the Pennsylvania Jr. Academy

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2021 Alumni Hall of Fame



The 2021 Alumni Hall of Fame inductees from left to right: Kevin Iole and Joseph Page.

The Allegheny Valley School District inducted its Alumni Hall of Fame, Class of 2021, on Saturday, June 12. Developed to recognize, celebrate, and honor those alumni who have distinguished themselves through public service, academic achievement, and professional contributions, the Alumni Hall of Fame honors alumni who serve to enhance the prestige and excellence of the school district.

Kevin Iole (attended 1973-1977) - Kevin Iole graduated from Springdale High School in 1977. He went on to attend Point Park College, graduating with a degree in Journalism and Communications in 1981. Prior to his graduation from Point Park, he began his professional writing career working for the Valley News Dispatch. Iole moved on to work for the Burlington Free Press in Vermont, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, before securing a position with Yahoo Sports in 2007. He began writing about fighting while in college and covered his first major bout at ringside in the WBC Holmes-Snipes heavy-weight title match in 1981. He focuses on combat sports, covering Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and boxing, bringing people to the ring and allowing them to experience a fight. Iole has won numerous awards, including Sportswriter of the Year in Nevada and Vermont from the National Sportswriters & Sportscasters Association. He was chosen as

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Acme Participates in Children's Choice



Acmetonia Elementary students discuss their favorite books in the Children's Choice program.

On Thursday, May 6th, students from Acmetonia Elementary School participated in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and Allegheny County Library Association Children's Choice event featuring books published in 2020.

According to the Allegheny County Library's web site, the program introduces thousands of children to new and quality literature each year. The Children's Choice Awards reaches students in third-sixth grade. Libraries and schools work with the students by facilitating discussion, connecting with the curriculum and encouraging them to vote on their favorite books.

A culminating event is held each year for participants. Usually held in person, this year the event was online with more than 40 schools and 500 students attending. Many of the schools participate each year, with the program an integral part of a District's reading or library curriculum.

For this year's event, the students formed a team dividing the books to be read. Inspirational speakers - author Melissa Savage and cartoonist/illustrator Joe Wos - were featured. The event included a Kahoot Battle of the Books, where fun was had by all who participated. The event became a celebration of all that books can do for us.

Charter Reform Makes Headlines

Many individuals have seen and heard the advertisements offering "free education options." These choices are either "tuition free" or "at no cost" to parents, but many have to stop and wonder just who's paying for those services. People understand that nothing is free, and the fact is local taxpayers are paying those costs, and they come at the expense of local school districts; ones residents believe their tax dollars are supporting.

When you take a hard look at "school choice," the reality is that charter schools, including cyber options, have actually done little to strengthen education or offer effective programs and services for students. What cyber charter schools have done, however, is take public dollars from locally accountable traditional public schools.

Allegheny Valley School District is one of nearly 400 Pennsylvania school districts urging Governor Tom Wolf and the state legislature to support charter school reform. In February 2021, the Governor unveiled a bipartisan Charter School Accountability plan to protect students and tax payers. The plan would hold low-performing charter schools accountable to improve educational quality and protect \$229 million a year in tax dollars. The act would also increase transparency of for-profit companies that operate charter schools in Pennsylvania.

The Allegheny Valley School District, like many Pennsylvania districts, has had increasing numbers of students move to Charter options. Especially through the pandemic, charter school costs have increased over the past three years: 2018-19 - \$379,145 (21 students); 2019-20 - \$544,145 (21 students); and 2020-21 - \$1,052,553 (53 students). The District hopes with schools returning to traditional learning, that the numbers will decrease for the 2021-2022 school year. However, with \$636,000 being the approximate amount that one mill brings to the District, the cost to have so many students

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Future Famers Recognized

Allegheny Valley acknowledges the efforts of students to show support for the areas in which they show innovation, creativity, and dedication. In its fifth year, the Future Famers Program recognizes current students, at any grade level, who consistently demonstrate an outstanding commitment to improve the District through school and community involvement, entrepreneurship, and/or scholastic achievement. An extension of the District's Alumni Hall of Fame, it is a prestigious honor awarded to students who impact the school community.

Students are selected to the program who demonstrate superior leadership, integrity, and achievement through community involvement, participation in school activities, innovation, and/or scholarship. These student leaders distinguish themselves from many other outstanding students by their actions in the classroom and throughout the local communities.

The intent of the program is to encourage and emphasize that students can succeed on whatever path they choose. The 2021 class of Future Famers includes: Bryson Andrews, grade 12; Madalyn Byrnes, grade 12, and Roman Liberati, grade 12.

These students signify a bright future for District alumni, becoming role models at a young age. They

2021 Future Famers

(from left to right)

*Bryson Andrews (grade 12),
Madalyn Byrnes (grade 12),
and Roman Liberati
(grade 12).*

have taken the extra steps necessary to work hard, grow their talents, and continue to go the extra mile to see that their dreams come true. On a daily basis, they remind us that there are no limits to what Allegheny Valley students can achieve. They represent the District in the most positive manner and truly exemplify the meaning of the word Dynamo.

Congratulating Our Seniors

Springdale Jr-Sr High School's Class of 2021 had another year of cancelled or altered events. Although the District tried to continue to hold programs and events as though it were just another school year. Unfortunately, it wasn't just another year, and a number of traditions were unable to be held.

Knowing that the reality would be that the class would not experience all of the activities that would be held during a "normal" school year, a committee was developed at the high school to see what could be done to help students celebrate their last year of high school. Staff members came up with a number of ideas, one of which was an Adopt-A-Senior proj-

ect. The idea was for staff members to adopt a member of the senior class and provide a gift that would be given as a surprise before the end of the year.

The staff volunteered quickly, and each senior was adopted. An assembly was held in May, where the gifts were distributed. Thanks to the Springdale High School Alumni Association and Dynamo Education Foundation, seniors were presented with yard signs. Each senior walked across the Marshall Auditorium stage to collect their gift, then returned to their seat to open their surprise.

Seniors were excited about their presents, and extremely appreciative. Many expressed how much the gifts meant to them and were taken aback that members of the staff would go to the lengths to wish them the best in their futures. "I think this is the epitome of what a small school can do for its kids," commented Principal Andrew Leviski. "Our teachers and staff had a part in making this happen and really showing how much our kids mean to our school community, and that's what makes it special."



Congratulations to the Class of 2021

Daleon Phillip Albo-Hovet
James Wilson Anderson III
Bryson James Anderson
Alexis Rae Arce
Renee Elizabeth Arlotti
Grant William Becker
Nicholas Reno Biagi
Shane Carrington Blanchflower
Haley Marie Bonidie
Theodore Henry Bosshart
Justin Allen Botinovch
Dakota Michael-John Boyce
Madalyn Maxine Byrnes
Alexzander Thomas Caldwell
Duncan Charles Caltagarone
Megan Kathleen Carson

Liam Gregory Dale
Joseph William Dausch
Kylie Sue DiLeo
Kally Ann Dugan
Caleb Nicholas Feltner
Kaleigh Ashton Ferderbar
Demetri Lee Fritch
Gia Marie Galutzi
Lars Robert Gamble
Cheyenne Lee Gaschler
Aidan Michael Harlow
Matthew James Haus
Julie Patricia Hitlan
Natalie Marie Kasavage
Cavin Joseph Kindler
Terrence Joshua Leas

Roman Peter Liberati
Lauren Catherin Lucas
Jacob Bryan McIntire
Kelvin Andres Melendez-Figueroa
Travis Robert Michael
Megan Marie Michaels
Cayly Isabella Mizak
Maria Guadalupe Montano
Samuel Maurice Myers
Benjamin Grant Myford
Anthony Roarke Ord
Julia Rose Parfitt
Kaitlyn Victoria Plocki
Emily Susan Plunkett
Logan Alexander Radovich
Tyler Olivia Rafail

Logan James Reddinger
Zachary Robert Rudolf
Ethan Bowen Sanders
Olivia Ann Schneider
Hunter Dominick Schussmann
Jacob Benjamin Seybert
Miranda Lynn Shock
Cade Michael Siar
Haley Jae Stec
Dylan Scott Szczepanski
Ashon Paul Tyree-Sly
Justin Tyler Walls
Zetta Brier Willias
Natalie Jenna Woitas
Dayna Lee Zezza



Senior Moments...

As the Class of 2021 leaves Springdale Jr-Sr High School, they can be proud of the following:

- Springdale Jr-Sr High School graduated 61 students in 2021.

- Approximately 54 percent of the class received scholarships. The sources were:

College/university/

Post-secondary scholarships \$ 564,400.00

Armed Service Scholarships 2,250,000.00

Local Scholarships 100,142.56

TOTAL: \$2,914,542.56

- Twenty scholarships are offered and awarded by the local community.

- The post-secondary plans of the graduating class:

- 44% pursuing four-year college degrees

- 10% entering a junior college or community college, then planning to transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.

- 10% entering vocational-technical or business schools.

- 10% entering the Armed Services

- 10% entering the job market

- 16% undecided

- Students will attend more than 44 different universities, colleges, and technical schools.

- Students have registered for more than 29 areas of study at post-secondary institutions.



Seniors Honored...Parade Continues

When the Class of 2020 missed out on so many of the highlights of their senior year, the Springdale High School Alumni Association and the Dynamo Education Foundation found a way to make a new memory. The Class of 2021 came along, and their year seemed to be following the same type of road, so the two organizations decided to bring the Senior Parade back to the community.

The committee gathered and with a new team of seniors, coordinated a second parade. On May 25, members of the senior class lined Lincoln Avenue in front of Veterans' Field with chairs, signs, balloons and waved as car after car of parents, students, and community members drove past. The beautiful day allowed cars to drive the parade route over and over again to show their support for the seniors. The parade even included the Springdale police and fire departments, W.L. Roenigk Bus Company, and school staff members. The seniors waved as each



vehicle drove past.

In addition, the District was able to bring back the Senior Stroll, where seniors returned to Acmetonia Elementary school to walk the halls once more while students and staff cheer them on.

It was good to see that even a pandemic could not stop special Dynamo memories from happening.

In Our Schools...

Springdale Jr-Sr High School Seniors Entering Military Honored

Allegheny Valley and the Springdale Veterans' Association annually recognize senior students who will enter military service after graduation. The event was developed to not only congratulate the students, but to provide additional means of support to students and their families as they enter military service. This year, six students were acknowledged. Seniors Nicholas Biagi (Army National Guard), Dakota Boyce (Army National Guard), Joseph Dausch (Army National Guard), Jacob McIntire (Army, National Guard), Benjamin Myford (Army, National Guard), and Kaitlyn Plocki, (Army) are wished the best of luck and given our sincere thanks for their service.

Captain Carl Kusbit recognizes 2021 senior students who will enter military service after graduation.



Senior Athletes Recognized



Each year, Springdale High School has outstanding athletes who represent the District on our fields and courts. These students bring awards and honors to the District; many of these young men and women go on to play their sports at the next level. Two years ago, the District created a reception to recognize the graduating seniors who will continue their athletic careers at the college level. This year, congratulations are extended to seven 2021 SHS seniors - Matt Haus, Zack Rudolf, Roman Liberati, Kylie DiLeo, Bryson Andrews, and Julia Parfit. (Not pictured: Julie Hitlan).

High School Continues Events



Honors Banquet

For the 38th year, Springdale Jr-Sr High School recognized students in grades 7-12 for high academic achievement. At this year's Honors Banquet, 93 students were awarded certificates for achieving 94% or above for each of the first three nine weeks of the school year. Twenty-five seniors were honored, including 14 who were recognized for Honors Achievement each year of their SHS careers - Renee Arlotti, Nicholas Biagi, Haley Bonidie, Madalyn Byrnes, Duncan Caltagarone, Liam Dale, Kylie DiLeo, Kelly Dugan, Lauren Lucas, Jacob McIntire, Julia Parfitt, Olivia Schneider, Miranda Shock, and Dylan Szczepanski.

The school was able to hold this year's program in the Marshall Auditorium, with the seniors celebrated prior to the start of the presentation. Congratulations are extended to all students and their families.

Senior Scholarship Awards

Springdale Jr-Sr High school brought the Senior Scholarship Awards night back to the Marshall Auditorium. With Covid protocols in place, many members of the Class of 2021 were able to receive their awards in person. Students and scholarship sponsors were happy to have these awards once again presented; parents and family members were pleased to watch their seniors walk across the stage to accept the honors. Local scholarships totaled over \$100,000 and a special thank you goes to families and community organizations who support our students.



Acmetonia Elementary School

Butterfly Project

Ms. Slomaka's English Language Arts sixth grade students participated in "The Butterfly Project." The Project is a call to action through education, the arts, and memorial making. It uses the lessons of the Holocaust to educate about the dangers of hatred and bigotry and cultivates empathy and social responsibility. Participants paint ceramic butterflies that are permanently displayed as symbols of resilience and hope; 1.5 million ceramic butterflies in remembrance of the children lost in the Holocaust.



Acme students take time out of their school days to visit with friends and enjoy a frozen treat from Kona Ice.



End of the Year Activities

Acmetonia Elementary School students celebrated the end of the 2020-2021 school year with some fun activities - both in and out of their classrooms. Students and their teachers participated in programs, completed projects, and worked with friends.

In addition, the students welcomed the Kona Ice company, who delivered frozen treats to all students and staff members. Students visited the food truck by homeroom and were given some free time to talk with friends. The day allowed the school year to end on a very positive note. Special thanks to the Allegheny Valley Parent Teacher Association for supporting this activity.



Kindergarten Graduation Held

The end of the school year brings graduation not only for Springdale High seniors but also for the District's youngest students. Continuing an annual tradition, Kindergarten students held their own graduation ceremony.

Family and friends packed the Syria Mosque picnic venue to help celebrate the conclusion of this group's first year of school. Students marched onto the stage to receive their diplomas and end their days in Kindergarten. Elementary Supervisor Gregory Heavner and the Kindergarten teachers helped students on their way. The Class of 2033 has 79 very proud members.

Students Work Together

Merging the elementary buildings brought about opportunities to develop programs that have older students working with and mentoring younger students. The most recent was an activity where sixth grade students from Ms. Slomaka's Language Arts classes worked on reading skills with Kindergarten students. The sixth grade students read books to the younger students, then the Kindergarten students would read to their sixth grade partners. These cross grade-level programs are important for many reasons according to elementary principal Gregory Heavner. "The programs increase motivation for learning and help students take responsibility for their own learning at the same time."



Staff Members Retire

Over the course of the school year, four Allegheny Valley staff members announced their retirements. These individuals dedicated much of their lives to the field of education; the District lost numerous years of experience when these staff members walked out the doors for the last time. Each of these individuals has played a memorable and necessary role for the students of Allegheny Valley. We thank...

Patricia Cole joined Allegheny Valley as a clerical substitute in 2004. She was hired as the Attendance Clerk in 2005 and worked at the Colfax Upper Elementary School for several years before moving to the High School Secretary position. Cole also served as a ticket seller/taker, clock operator, and videographer for athletic events. She retires with 17 years at Allegheny Valley.

Raymond Davis was hired by Allegheny Valley in 1999 as the District's Athletic Director. He also served as Springdale Jr-Sr High School's Baseball Coach from 2000-2006. Prior to his AD position, Davis also worked in several coaching positions. He retires with 22 years with the District.

John McDermott was hired in 1990 as an industrial arts teacher. Over the years, he served as an Assistant Football Coach and Assistant Track Coach. He has been a member of the Middle States Evaluation Committee and the National Technology Student Association Competition. He retires with 31 years with the District.

Doug Ward was hired in 1989 as an art teacher. Throughout his time with the District, he served as an Assistant Football Coach, the Junior High Art Club Sponsor, Senior High Art Club Sponsor, and the Fine Arts Department Chair. Ward also served as the Scholastic Awards Exhibit Show at LaRoche College Chairperson and a mentor for new teachers. He retires with 32 years with the District.

A very big thank you is sent to each of these individuals on behalf of Allegheny Valley staff, students, and community members. They have touched numerous lives, contributed to various District programs, and made Allegheny Valley a better place. While their departures will leave a void, they are wished the best of luck in whatever path they choose to follow. They deserve a happy and healthy retirement, and will truly be missed.

Financial Update:

The 2021-2022 Budget

The Board of Directors of the Allegheny Valley School District at the June voting meeting approved the district's Final General Fund Operating Budget for the 2021-2022 school year in the amount of \$22,873,065. The millage rate is unchanged at 20.8377 mills, one half of 1% earned income tax, one-half of 1% real estate transfer tax and one-half of \$10 occupation privilege tax.

Local revenues are projected to decrease, reflecting the uncertainty with ramping up the local economy as well as impact of other factors such as earnings, hospitality sector rebound and property assessments.

State Revenue is level funded and projected at 2019-20 allocations. In February, the Governor proposed increased funding for education but there has been no confirmation from the state legislature. The state passes its budget after most school districts in the Commonwealth adopt their budgets.

There is a significant increase of federal funding through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) with the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Federal Revenues are projected at 2019-20 levels for Title I and II but an increase of \$400,000 from the new ARP funds. Additional federal funding is available for the district to address learning loss in a joint effort with feedback from families and the community with district staff to review after school programs etc. to support district students.

The operating expenditures reflect a decrease of 0.99% from 2020-21, excluding the transfer for future capital expenditures (\$3.5 million), and the budget is balanced by dipping into reserves of \$300,000.

2020-2021 Final Budget Expenditures By Object

Salaries	40.0%
Employee Benefits	27.0%
Other Purchased Services	12.0%
Debt/Fund Transfers	10.0%
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	4.0%
Supplies, Textbooks, Utilities	4.0%
Purchased Property Services	3.0%

Highlights...continued from page 3

of Science. This competition attracts over two thousand students across Pennsylvania each year.

- A group of three seniors were named as the SHS Stock Market Game Spring Champions placing 18th out of 266 Teams in Western Pennsylvania.
- Two 10th grade students won Bronze Awards for their Distinguished Achievement on the 2021 Level 2 National German Exam.
- One 10th grader won 2nd Place in German Prose Writing at the 2021 Three Rivers German Day Competition.
- One senior and one junior were recognized by Slippery

Bo Anderson, Hunter Schlessman, and Dylan Szczepanski were named as the SHS Stock Market Game Spring Champions.

Rock University for their Instagram Art Contest entries.

- One senior student won a Gold Key and an Honorable Mention at the Scholastic Art Show. Her Gold Key painting, *The Day the Music Died*, went on to the national competition.
- One 10th grade student won a highly competitive summer apprenticeship with CMU affiliate Simcoach Games. An intense program, students are able to work with a team of peers to: playtest video games, run playtest sessions, learn about software development and game development pipelines, design games as solutions, develop promotional strategies, and create and make presentations.
- One 8th grade student won a 3rd place award in the art category for the Waldman International Arts & Writing Competition. The theme for the 2020-21 contest was "Resilience," and the student was inspired by Holocaust survivor, Eva Schloss. After World War II ended, Eva became the step daughter of Otto Frank - the father of Anne Frank.
- One Sophomore student was accepted into the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Apprenticeship Program for Zoo Animal Care. She spent four Saturdays in the spring learning about zoo animal care, the responsibilities of a zoo veterinarian, and the role of keepers.
- One senior was among 33 students inducted into the National Technical Honor Society for Heating/ Ventilation/ Air Conditioning (HVAC).
- One 5th grade student was one of approximately 120 students from area school districts to compete in the AIU 5th-6th CalcuSolve. The problems were challenging to read and required problem solving skills to answer.

- One 8th grade student won 1st Place in the Eastern Suburbs Special Program Association (ESSPA), a gifted consortium, Middle School Public Speaking competition. Students had to conduct research on a topic and record themselves giving a four minute informational speech. Her topic was the importance of good sleeping habits.
- One Sophomore student was nominated for a Gene Kelly Award in the Best Actress Category for her portrayal of Miss Hannigan in Springdale Jr-Sr High School's production of *Annie*. The Gene Kelly Awards for Excellence in High School Musical Theater were launched in 1991 as a means to recognize and encourage student achievement and to focus the attention of the community and school districts on the importance of musical theater and arts education.
- The District honored three high school seniors as 2021 Future Famers. The Future Famers program recognizes current students, at any grade level, who consistently demonstrate an outstanding commitment to improve the District through school and community involvement, entrepreneurship, and/or scholastic achievement.
- One Springdale Jr-Sr High School student was selected for PMEA District 1 Chorus and Regional Chorus.
- Two Springdale Jr-Sr High School students participated in the PMEA Honors Band Festival, auditioning against students from approximately 45 other school districts for selection into the Festival. In addition, four SHS students attended the PMEA District 1 Band Festival. These students had the opportunity to audition for the Regional Band Festival; one student was selected for the Regional Band. That same student continued through the process and was chosen for the state concert band and performed with the best high school musicians across the commonwealth.
- One Springdale Jr-Sr High School student placed 1st among the trumpets at the PMEA District 1 Orchestra Festival and moved on to represent the District at the PMEA Regional Orchestra Festival.
- One student received a letter from Lin-Manuel Miranda. An American actor, singer, songwriter, producer, and

Springdale Jr-Sr High School sophomore Georgia Dale was nominated for a Gene Kelly Award for her participation in musical theater.

playwright, Miranda created and starred in the Broadway musicals *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*. His letter showed his support for the student's interest in the arts.

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Changes to PA Index

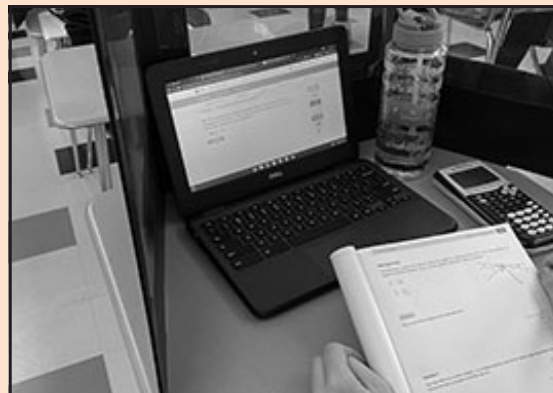


The Future Ready PA Index is a resource for parents and can be accessed at <https://futurereadypa.org>.

The Future Ready PA Index is a collection of school progress measures related to school and student success and can be located on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website at <https://futurereadypa.org>. Along with school and district demographics, the Index includes a range of assessment, on-track, and readiness indicators, that provides general building information about student learning, growth, and success in the classroom and beyond. All public schools in Pennsylvania have an index score that is generated using the same criteria. Since launching in 2018, the Future Ready PA Index has been used as a reference for educators and parents as one more way to measure and compare their schools and their district with others of similar demographics.

Efforts to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted the availability of some longitudinal data for the Future Ready Index. Data from these past two years are incomplete and may not be representative of the make-up of the State, district, or school population, leading to inaccurate comparisons. Therefore, test score information (PSSA's, Keystone scores) and some annual reports stored on the site are not available for the 2019-20 and the 2020-21 school years. In those situations, the default data from the 2018-2019 school year is published. Reliable data for growth measurement requires a collection of scores over three consecutive years. The Future Ready Index will continue to report yearly data as it is available however, the data may reflect low and/or uneven participation rates for some student groups as a result of the pandemic. As always, assessment data should also be viewed alongside other important measures of student outcomes and opportunity to learn data to provide a more complete perspective on school and student progress.

Technology Update: Increasing Skills



Staff and students continued education despite interruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic through various technology programs. Allegheny Valley adapted practices throughout the school year.

To say the difficulties imposed on learning this past year from a global pandemic have been disruptive would be a monumental understatement to say the least. However, despite the massive hardships virtual learning caused, the skills and understanding around technology have grown leaps and bounds for everyone in our community. As the Supervisor of Technology, I was able to witness first hand what it was like for students, families, and staff to make the transition to virtual learning at the drop of a hat. It was hard. With little to no warning, students were being asked to sit in front of video calls for several hours a day, parents and grandparents were learning how to login to a slew of new programs they have never seen before, older brothers and sisters became tech support for their siblings, and neighbors and community members became impromptu support groups to help vent the frustrations that came along with all of this. At times, it felt like the world had been turned upside down. Yet in the face of this, like our community has always done, we persevered. And looking back to March 2020, so much has changed from then until now.

One of the things that has positively changed is how much our technology fluency has grown. Students, parents, grandparents, teachers, staff and everyone in between are now able to navigate and use technology at a more fundamental level than ever before. I have not met anyone that has not learned some new technology skills within the past year, and these new skills will undoubtedly shape how our schools function. The new skills teachers

(continued on page 14)

Alumni Hall of Fame...

continued from page 3

the Outstanding Journalist by the Nevada Press Association in 1999, becoming the first sportswriter to be so honored. In 2007, Iole was selected by past winners as the Nat Fleischer Award winner, given for career excellence in boxing journalism. He serves as a mentor and role model in his field, and has given his time as a baseball coach, at a homeless shelter, with the Animal Rescue League, and through charity events. He holds to high standards and exhibits the qualifications of a great leader and role model for others.

Joseph Page (attended 1922-1933) – Joseph Page attended the Allegheny Valley School District from 1922-1933, leaving school to work in the mines to support his family. He had a goal, though, to become a professional baseball player. His first step was to play baseball with local amateur teams, then semi-professional baseball in 1936. That year, he was struck by a passing automobile and spent eleven months in the hospital. In 1939, he returned to baseball and in 1940 landed a position with the Class D Team of the New York Yankees in Butler, PA. After spending several years in the minor leagues with the Yankee organization, Page was called up to the major league team in 1944. He pitched for the Yankees from 1944-1951, and returned to professional baseball to pitch one season for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1954. Page was an outstanding pitcher, and one of the first ever to perform consistently as a “relief pitcher” in professional baseball. He played with legends such as Joe DiMaggio and Yogi Berra, and appeared in four World Series and three All-Star Games. He was awarded the 1947 Helms Athlete of the Year Award; 1949 Babe Ruth Award, New York Yankees (first recipient); and the 1947 Dapper Dan Award. For his efforts, he has been inducted into the Pittsburgh Hall of Fame, the Alle-Kiski Hall of Fame, and the Washington County Hall of Fame. Page accomplished what few others have in the history of baseball; and arguably is the most accomplished alumnus of Allegheny Valley School District in professional sports.

The District has a great history of successful alumni. Not only do these individuals represent the quality of education provided in the District, they serve as role models for today’s students. Allegheny Valley will soon begin its search for the next class of alumni to be inducted. For more information, visit the District’s web site at www.avsdweb.org.

Highlights...continued from page 11



The SHS Softball team advanced to the WPIAL playoffs in 2021.

- Ten Springdale Jr-Sr High School students were awarded Challenge Program Star Awards for: Excellent Attendance, STEM, Academic Improvement, Community Service, and Academic Excellence. Each student received a \$200 certificate.
- The 61 members of the Class of 2021 earned more than \$2.9 million in scholarships.
- Seventy-nine students in the Class of 2033 participated in this year’s Kindergarten graduation event.
- Ninety-two students were acknowledged at the 38th Annual Honors Banquet for achieving 94% or above for the first three nine weeks of the school year. Twenty-five seniors were honored, including 14 who were recognized for Honors Achievement throughout their time at Springdale Jr-Sr High School.
- SHS Boys’ Soccer, Girls’ Soccer, Football, Boys’ Basketball, Girls’ Basketball, Softball teams were invited to participate in the W.P.I.A.L. playoffs.
- Eleven Allegheny Valley students took place in the Pittsburgh Public Theater’s Shakespeare Competition.
- District students participated in a number of service projects, despite the unusual school year, including volunteering at the Lower Valley Food Bank and a “Souper Bowl” with Riverview High School. The SHS National Honor Society and the Acmetonia Elementary Student Council once again took part in the Lymphoma & Leukemia Society’s *Pasta For Pennies* program; Acmetonia fourth grade participated in the Ecostudent Challenge raising \$8,362.96 for the environment, and staff members supported “Secret Santa” and holiday giving programs. The Allegheny Valley Education Association also continued their annual Dress Down Fridays, which donates funds to the Lower Valley Food Bank.

The District congratulates all of its students and staff members on this year’s accomplishments. They continue to work hard to bring recognition and esteem to Allegheny Valley. Parents, community members, and alumni should be extremely proud of a job well done.

2021-2022 District Calendar

July 5, 2021	Independence Day Holiday (District Closed)
August 16-18, 2021	Staff Development (Teachers Only)
August 19, 2021	Clerical Day (Teachers Only)
August 23, 2021	First Day for Students
September 6, 2021	Labor Day (District Closed)
September 9, 2021	School-Community Night (evening hours, all schools)
October 21, 2021	School-Community Night (evening hours, all schools)
October 22, 2021	Act 80 - Staff Development (Teachers Only)
November 25-29, 2021	Thanksgiving Vacation
December 23, 2021	Staff Development (MOU - Teachers Only)
December 24, 2021 - January 2, 2022	Holiday Break
January 17, 2022	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day/ Clerical Day (Teachers Only)
January 20, 2022	School-Community Night (evening hours, all schools)
February 18, 2022	Staff Development (MOU - Teachers Only)
February 21, 2022	Presidents' Day (District Closed)
March 3, 2022	School-Community Night (Dr. Seuss)
March 18, 2022	Act 80 - Staff Development (Teachers Only)
April 14 -18, 2022	Spring Break (District Closed)
May 27, 2022	Last Day for Students
May 27, 2022	Graduation
May 30, 2022	Memorial Day Break (District Closed)
May 31, 2022	Staff Development
June 1, 2022	Clerical Day (Teachers Only)
June 2, 2022	Staff Development - MOU
June 22, 2022	Kennywood Picnic (District Closed)

Local School Holidays: Nov. 26; Dec. 27, 30, 31; April 15.
Weather/Emergency Make-up Days: Please note the Allegheny Valley School District has been approved by the PA Department of Education to use up to five Flexible Instruction Days (FID) for weather/emergency make-up. If any additional days are needed as make-up days, they will be added to the calendar beginning May 31, 2022.

Thank You...

Special thanks are extended to all staff members who submitted articles and photos for this edition of AVENEWS. Also, thanks to Mike Werries for sharing his photos with the District.

Superintendent's Message... *continued from page 2*

-ing loss programs for our elementary and Jr-Sr high school students.

A word of caution, the Department of Education has not yet provided consistent guidance on how schools will operate next year, so even the best-laid plans to reopen in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year likely will need to adapt to the reality of a rapidly changing pandemic virus.

I am confident that no matter what unknown challenges appear, we will persevere. I am so very excited about the future of Allegheny Valley and thankful that we are on this journey together as *Dynamos*.

Charter Reform... *continued from page 5*

in charter schools affects almost 2 mills of tax money.

For this reason and many more, the District encourages all of its community members to learn more about charter school funding. For information, please see:

- The Pennsylvania School Boards Association's Keystone Center for Charter Change:
<https://www.pacharterchange.org/>

- Pennsylvania School Boards Association:
<https://www.psba.org/issue/charter-school-reform/>

- Pennsylvania Department of Education:
<https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Charter%20Schools/CharterPolicyReform/Pages/default.aspx>

Technology...*continued from page 12*

and students have will unlock new opportunities for learning in classrooms. Caregivers at home have new skills to help support their students through their work. Teachers and administrators have more tools to connect, improve efficiencies, and ignite learning in our schools. So while the transition into virtual learning was tough, disruptive and stress inducing, it did force all of us to grow. And for the resilience, patience, and perseverance that our students, parents and staff have shown this past year, I am so very proud, grateful and inspired. Seeing the strength of our AVSD community makes me so very hopeful for the year to come.

Dynamo Education Foundation

Looking Forward to 2022

As many organizations throughout the country, the Dynamo Education Foundation was not able to hold annual programs and events over the last year. Due to the pandemic, all gatherings were cancelled. However, the Foundation was able to award grants for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

The group also continued its mission to support the Allegheny Valley School District by sponsoring lawn signs for every member of the senior classes and community parades. These projects were greatly appreciated by the students, parents, and members of the school district.

The Foundation is happy to announce that several annual events will return for the 2021-2022 school year. First, planning has started for the third dinner evening at the Harmar House. Planned for February 2022, the program is a wonderful evening of entertainment, becoming the largest fund raiser held by the Foundation. It is hoped to bring back a Silent Auction of student art work, a Chinese Auction, and other activities.

In addition, a committee has also begun discussion for a Soccer Reunion in June 2022. This program has also been very popular, and we thank everyone who has come out to participate in the event. The Foundation will release a date soon to begin to recruit players, with a major effort to encourage younger graduates to participate.

Finally, the annual Street Fair and participation in District events will also return. Obviously all events sponsored by, and participation of, the Foundation will revolve around the continuously changing climate with the pandemic.

The Foundation would like to extend its appreciation to all of the individuals, businesses, and organizations for their continued support. Although the past months have been very difficult for many, the Dynamo family has truly come together to help support the Foundation, the School District, and the students. It is never been more apparent that some of the best things happen through challenging times. The Dynamo Education Foundation will continue to uphold its mission to support Allegheny Valley students and staff in order to help provide the best education possible for students.



(top) Pre-Kindergarten students utilize the kitchen unit and (bottom) junior high students work with their math program, both of which were funded by 2020-2021 Foundation grants.

2021-2022 Grants

The Dynamo Education Foundation is proud to announce the awarding of three grants to Allegheny Valley staff members for the 2021-22 school year:

- **Project 1: Germination, Pollination, and Plant Growth.**

An extension to the current 6th Grade Farm to Table program, the program will teach the science behind the farm to table experience and focus on what it takes to make seeds grow. Enabling and encouraging students to try new and healthy food at school, which will hopefully carry over with choosing healthier options in the cafeteria and at home. *Staff recipient: McCall Emerick, Grade 6 Teacher.*

- **Project 2: LED Pegboard/Engineering Station.** The project includes a hanging peg board design with LED lights that create a fun environment for students to practice skills. Science students will be able to develop and demonstrate science, engineering, problem solving, math as well as social and emotional skills. *Staff recipient: Elizabeth Newill, Grade 4 Teacher.*

- **Project 3: Acme Engineers-Drone Program.** LocoRobo's Pioneer Modules expose elementary school students to the magic behind drone technology -coding, sensors, mechanical design, aerodynamics, and semi-autonomous flight control. The project implementation is used to expose elementary students to how drones can be used and the various career fields that use drones. *Staff recipient: Sheila Reed, Grade 6 Teacher.*

In the eight years of the grant program, the Dynamo Education Foundation has awarded staff members over \$18,600 for 27 classroom projects, activities, and programs. Fundraising is held throughout the year to support and increase these grant awards.



Allegheny Valley School District

300 Pearl Avenue
Cheswick, PA 15024

***Our Mission:** The mission of the Allegheny Valley School District, a group of small traditional communities, is to educate all students to achieve their maximum potential. A dedicated staff, in partnership with school, home, and community, will empower students to become responsible and contributing citizens able to meet challenges in an international society.*

Allegheny Valley School District
300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024
Phone: 724/274-5300 Fax: 724/274-8040
www.avsdweb.org

And Finally...

Unless otherwise noted, the Allegheny Valley Board of School Directors conducts its agenda planning session on the second Tuesday of the month. Regular meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Both meetings are held in the Acmetonia Primary School Forum beginning at 7:00 p.m. (A complete list of the meetings is located on the District's web site: www.avsdweb.org.)

The newsletter is published through the Public Relations Department of the Allegheny Valley School District. Comments and inquiries pertaining to the newsletter should be sent to Ms. Janice Zastawniak, Public Relations Director, 300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024.

The Allegheny Valley School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and others involved with the District who have a complaint of discrimination or harassment or require information about accommodations for disabled individuals, should contact the superintendent of schools by calling 724-274-5300 or writing and mailing a letter addressed to 300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024.

Administration...

Patrick M. Graczyk, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Janice E. Nuzzo, Ed.D.
Director of Student Achievement
Andrew Leviski
Springdale Jr-Sr High School Principal
Peter Simpson
Springdale Jr-Sr High School Assistant Principal
Gregory J. Heavner
Elementary Supervisor
Jennifer L. Vecchio
Elementary School Principal/Transportation Director

Janice Zastawniak
Public Relations Director/Newsletter Editor

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Solicitor	Matt Hoffman, Esq.