

Winter/Spring 2022

Avenews

News from the Allegheny Valley School District

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Allegheny Valley continues to work its way through the residual effects of the pandemic. Programs designed to support students academically and with mental and emotional needs have begun throughout the District. Stories on some of those programs are contained within this newsletter; additional programs continue to be researched.



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Superintendent's Message

The Pandemic thrust uncertainty and stress on our students, staff, and families. Depression, anxiety, and mental health have been topics of conversation in the news, among school leaders, and in homes across the nation. These topics are nothing new; however, the message about seeking help has changed and now is more broadly accepted.

As school administrators, counselors, and teachers, we understand that many of our students struggle socially, emotionally, or academically because we see it on a daily basis. The Allegheny Valley staff makes a concerted effort to hone their practices, expand programs, and provide services that universally address the wellness of our students so that our schools are safe and welcoming.

The Allegheny Valley School District provided professional development to staff about trauma-informed care that helped them to learn more about students' social and emotional needs. As a result, our professional learning opportunities continue to deepen our understanding of students' needs and barriers to learning. Our knowledge of student necessities fundamentally shapes decisions about how to best help our learners.

For example, the Board of Directors hired a school social worker to vertically align supports for students and their families. Aligning available services for students allows for more significant care



Superintendent Dr. Patrick Graczyk reads to Kindergarten students prior to the Holiday Break.

for the well-being of our students. Some of those supports include classroom lessons, programs such as PATHS, and group and individual counseling. In terms of counselling, the District recently utilized learning-loss money to expand school-based counseling services and help more students at school. Also, a District goal is to provide a PK-grade 12 monthly lesson/activity that focuses on well-being to send a message of unity and collective caring about our school community. Some lessons and activities include anti-bullying, kindness, giving back/gratitude, uniqueness, and diversity.

In addition, the District has established Sup-

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District Holds Support Circles

concern is mental health and social and emotional well-being. How to support students has become a priority among administrators and staff. Support Circles are a way for students to have an open and honest discussion with their peers about any of the challenges, stress, and anxieties they may be facing. School Counselors and the District's Social Worker conduct the Circles in both buildings.

At the elementary level, the program opens by reading a book from the "I Am" series by Susan Verde. Questions are posed for the students and a "talking piece" is used, so that one person speaks at a time and there are no interruptions to that speaker. It is a safe space for students to talk, but also just listen if that makes them feel more comfortable. At the high school level, students are encouraged to make a small goal for themselves for either the day or the week.

The idea of the program came from Ms. Rebecca Garbisch, Elementary Counselor, and Ms. Danielle Britton, District Social Worker, who at-

tended a webinar about online support circles in response to social distancing during the pandemic. The pandemic limited people's abilities to be face-to-face

with others, so through the use of online platforms (i.e. Zoom or Google Meets), online support circles were encouraged as a way to build a healthy community during this stressful time. The counseling team thought that organizing support circles for the District would be a good way to connect the students with others and show them they are not alone during this time. "We create that connected community during our Support Circle time and hope that the students take that with them into the



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District Highlights: A Round of Applause for...from page 1

semester, District students received a number of awards. Congratulations are extended to:

- Ten Acmetonia students participated in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and the Heinz History Center's History Bowl. All students did an excellent job of reading the displays and attempting the challenges. Congratulations to Tyler Harpine, Balan Mundok, and Nick Errico for earning 1st Place in the 4-5 grade division, defeating other school districts in attendance such as South Fayette, Woodland Hills, Moon, Montour, Canon Mcmillan, and West Allegheny.

- Springdale Jr-Sr High School's Fall 2021 Stock Market team that finished ninth out of 309 Western Pennsylvania teams from various school districts throughout the area. Congratulations to: Ashton Krebs, Brendan Werries, Zainub Waqas, Chris Savko, and Ricky Martinelli.

- Ten Springdale Jr-Sr High School students who were awarded certificates and \$200 checks from the Challenge Program. Awards were given in five different areas to current Juniors and Seniors for their efforts from the last school year:

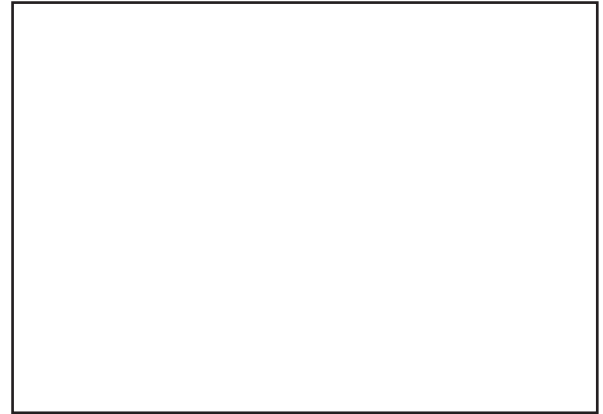
Juniors: Isabella Zahner – Volunteerism; Ashley Spencer - Academic Excellence; Holden Swink - Academic Improvement; Giovanni Savko – STEM; and Joe Wyly - Perfect Attendance

Seniors: Isabella Walsh – Volunteerism; Holly Ihnat Academic Excellence; Kyle Varga - Academic Improvement; Andrew Haus – STEM; and Alexis Hrivank - Perfect Attendance

- Three Springdale Jr-Sr High School students who signed their National Letters of Intent in November. Congratulations and good luck to: Alexis Hrivnak - Softball (Pitt Johnstown); Lilly Iadicicco - Soccer (Cleveland State); and Brianna Thompson - Softball (Geneva).

- Springdale Senior Wyatt Skaugen for his Second Place finish in Impromptu Speaking at the Eastern Suburban Special Programs Association Debate event.

- Senior Isabella Walsh who was named to the Jr. Achievement's 18 Under Eighteen's Class of 2022 - celebrating eighteen extraordinary students that are defining their generation through their entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and service to their communities.



Acmetonia's Tyler Harpine, Nick Errico, and Balan Mundok won First Place in the grade 4-5 division of the History Bowl.

Achievers Club Begins at Acme

closing the learning loss gap in fun and enriching ways. For the 21-22 school year, Acmetonia Elementary School initiated an after-school tutoring program, The Acme After-School Achievers Club or The AAA Club. This past fall, grade 6 piloted the program with a focus on remediation for English language arts and mathematics. During the second semester Acmetonia has expanded its offerings to primary and upper elementary grades.

The program focuses on math remediation and enrichment using game and project-based exploration. The benefits of small group tutoring far exceeds the basic academic skills. Small group tutoring improves student self-esteem and confidence, and

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Ms. Cathy Restauri works with students in the Acme After-School Achievers Club. In the program, students get support in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Rivals Come Together To Help Community

Numerous high schools have competitor schools that they challenge regularly. In other words, many high schools have active rivalries. According to Webster's Dictionary, "the word rival most commonly refers to a person or group that tries to defeat or be more successful than another person or group... Teams, schools, or companies might be longtime rivals if they try over many years to outdo each other."

For Springdale Jr-Sr High School, that rival is Riverview. Students from the buildings often test each other through sports, academics, and activities. However, groups from these schools – The Future Is Mine (TFIM) from Springdale and Riverview's Student Council – have found a way to use that rivalry in a positive way. The groups have developed competitive programs to collect items and donate to local charities. Last year, they began a Stocking Drive for the holidays and a Souper Bowl Food Drive in the winter. The donations benefitted community homeless shelters and local food banks.

For the Stocking Drive, the groups asked students, staff members, and the community to consider donating stockings stuffed with toiletries, non-perishable snacks, socks (the shelters specifically requested socks), and paperback books. This year's Stocking Drive was more successful, with the students collecting over 100 already "stuffed" stockings and other items to be placed in stockings to deliver to homeless shelters in Pittsburgh. This holiday season, their



motto was "Two small schools together making a big difference."

The groups look forward to continuing the Souper Bowl competition in February. The activities uphold the ideals of the organizations. The projects connect students with employers in the community and develop skills needed in a successful workplace. Classroom learning is supported as students work collaboratively to organize and market the programs. The winners get bragging rights. "I truly believe that these students have redefined the nature of the

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Financial Update

The 2022-23 Budget discussions are well underway. Federal funding available to the District with the American Rescue Plan will help offset some of the general fund budgeted expenditures for the year. Three rounds of funding have been provided by the federal government to assist school districts since the pandemic began in 2020.

Allegheny Valley School District share of federal funding includes:

1. ESSER I through the Cares Act of 2020

Allocated \$177,912

Expenditures include: Computers \$107,795.50; Software, supplies, online books and materials \$57,236.45; Services \$8,605; Non-public schools share in the balance of expenditures.

2. ESSER II through CRRSA of 2021

Allocated: \$790,251

Expenditures include: Salaries and benefits of staff providing continuity of operations with food service and staff providing social, emotional learning, and

support \$604,562.64; Professional services and substitutes \$93,320.4; Online programs for credit recovery \$29,050; Supplies, online books, resources, software \$51,176.51; Equipment \$10,876.58.

3. ESSER III ARP of 2021

Allocated: \$ 1,159,962

Estimated expenditures over three years include Social-emotional support programs; After-school programs; Tutoring; Summer School Programs; Programs to address learning loss; Hiring dedicated building substitutes and offsetting expenditures provided by staff; Any approved capital expenditures.

School district budgets are comprised of revenues and expenditures. To generate revenues, three funding streams are available to public school districts in Pennsylvania – revenues from local, state, and federal sources. School districts have no control over the first two sources and frequently have to rely on local effort to raise revenue. Local revenue

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Emergency Management Update

despite the changes brought on by the COVID pandemic. These updates include items supported by state grants. Awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Safe Schools Division, the District received grant funding for approximately \$24,588 in January. These funds will support building check-in kiosks for all offices, additional security cameras, and door locks.

Along with the grants, the District approved a policy to guide the Risk Assessment Team. This team serves as a valuable resource to help prevent or manage incidents. They can assess the nature and reality of the threats, provide valuable information, and offer a realistic view of potential solutions. The team has been active throughout the year as various situations come about in the buildings. It continues to meet throughout the school year.

In addition, the District has received the final reports from the Safety and Security Assessments completed last year. A review of facilities, emotional/behavioral health support, and policy are included in this evaluation. The District's Core Team is evaluating the reports, developing implementation plans, and finding ways to incorporate the findings into the Emergency Management Plan.

Allegheny Valley also continues to schedule trainings and implement parts of Act 44. Various drills are held in both buildings to help instill and better develop protocols. The annual large-scale drill is scheduled to be held this year in the spring. Security, fire, bus, and other drills continue throughout the year. Reviews on ALICE and other response protocols also continue in Pre-K through grade 12 classrooms. The District also is completing updates to its Emergency Management Plan and is finishing a plan for event security. These items are led by the District's School Police Officers.

Finally, the Emergency Management team plays a role in COVID response, by helping to establish best practices and securing needed PPD and other items for safety within the buildings. As regulations change, the team supports decisions made, helping to integrate new procedures.

Allegheny Valley continues to evaluate its Emergency Plan, incident responses, daily protocols, and safety procedures on a regular basis. By state law, all school districts are required to have an Emergency Plan approved by their School Board. In addition, every crisis incident that occurs in the District, around the state, and across the nation provides lessons to learn and implement to improve safety.



Above: Support staff trains in NIMS protocols; Right, local emergency responders help with a drill at Springdale Jr-Sr High School.



Parents Be A Part

- Follow all District safety and emergency procedures.
- Bring identification to the main office any time you are picking up your child.
- Keep all student emergency information forms up-to-date in the building office.
- Notify your child's school with any changes in custody arrangements and bring proper legal documentation to the school when necessary. The school needs to keep this information on file.
- Talk with the building nurse when specific health concerns or special needs arise with your child; this matter includes allergies.
- Notify the school if you notice any unsafe conditions around the facilities and/or building grounds.
- Know that in the event of a lockdown, NO ONE will be allowed to enter or leave District buildings. Parents are asked NOT to go to the schools, but to wait for information and/or directions from the District.
- Report any behavior that would constitute a threat to your child, other children, or adults to District administration.
- Contact a building or District administrator to ask questions or voice concerns about safety matters or procedures in the District.

In Our Schools...

Springdale Jr-Sr High School

Basketball Team Shows Staff Appreciation



The Boys' Basketball Team started a new program in February. Student-Athletes were asked to pick an Allegheny Valley staff member who they wanted to recognize. It could be someone they look up to, someone who inspires them, someone who makes them laugh everyday, or their favorite. These

individuals were recognized before the Varsity game.

Initially the players were apprehensive, as they haven't been apart of something like this before. They even were weary the day of; it all came together whenever they walked down the court with staff member they chose.

"I think it was a great experience from my perspective," commented Coach Kobe Phillipi. "I think the players, staff members, and community were able to feel a sense of togetherness. The benefits of the night were to show how important some of these staff members are to not only the basketball players but the whole school. I can imagine that sometimes when they're extremely busy in their day-to-day duties, it can be hard to take a step back and see all the tremendous work they are doing. Hopefully they were able to see that on Staff Appreciation Night." The team is hoping to make this program the newest tradition at Allegheny Valley.

Crystal Formations in Chemistry

Before the Holiday Break, students in all of Springdale Jr-sr High School's chemistry classes learned about crystal formation and solutions. They used this knowledge to make ornaments to take home for the holidays.



Springdale Hosts Exchange Student

Zainub Waqas celebrates her senior night as part of the Girls' Varsity Basketball Team.

Springdale Jr-Sr High School has a new face in the hallways these days, one that came a rather long distance to attend classes. Zainub Waqas is taking her senior year abroad as part of the U.S. Department of State's Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program.

The program enrolls "high school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to live and study for an academic year in the United States. YES students serve as "youth ambassadors" of their home country, promoting mutual understanding by forming lasting relationships with their host families and communities." (YES web site, <https://www.yesprograms.org/>).

Waqas, or Z as she is known around the school, is from Islamabad, Pakistan. She's excited to be part of the program, but was a bit apprehensive about coming to America. "It was scary, leaving my home," she said. "But everyone has been very welcoming so far." Hosted by the Woodfill family in Springdale, Waqas continues to build a bridge between her two homes. The family found a Pakistani restaurant in the area and visit once a month. "It makes me happy," Waqas says with a smile.

She notes that her family bonds are really strong back home, but speaks with fondness of her host family. She connects with other students in the YES program living in the area and has made many friends at Springdale Jr-Sr High School. "The students are awesome," she laughs.

Waqas is a proud member of the Girls' Basketball team and attends many school events. She made a presentation to various classrooms in the fall to talk about her home country. "She has naturally found her place at Springdale," commented the school's counselor Ms. Becky Dyer.

Acmetonia Elementary School

Students Learn It's Safe2Say Something

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. The program teaches young people and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to "say something" before it is too late.

Allegheny Valley recently held training for grade 5 students on the program. School Police Officers Downing and Gourley explained how and why the program is used. They also answered any questions from students.



Acmetonia Elementary School students listen to Officer Downing provide information on the Safe2Say Something program.

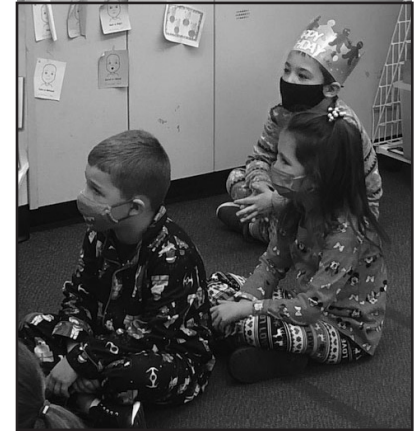


Celebrating 100 Days of School

Students and teachers celebrated the 100th day of school with a number of activities. The day started with Kindergarten students wearing their 100th Day T-shirts and students in grades 1-6 dressing like they were 100. Project displays filled the hallways, and students could be seen and heard participating in a multitude of ways to highlight 100.

The day also provided a special opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate the major milestones in the students' academic achievement - studying for one hundred days.

Kindergarten students continued to hold their annual reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. Superintendent Dr. Patrick Graczyk was the honored reader. Students were able to dress in their pajamas to relax and enjoy the holiday favorite.



Kindergarten Registration 22-23

The Allegheny Valley School District will register Kindergarten students for the 2022-2023 school year in March. To register for Kindergarten, a student must be 5 years old by September 1, 2022. If you have a student who is eligible to begin Kindergarten, and would like to register that child, please see the Kindergarten Registration page on the District's web site. For additional information, please contact Ms. Judy Pribulsky, at 724-274-6500 ext. 6121.

Shop With A Cop

For a number of years, the Harmar Township Police Department has sponsored a Shop With A Cop program for the communities. The goal continues to be for officers to build positive relationships with young students. This year, through a *Heros and Helpers* Grant from Target, all three local police departments - Harmar Township, Allegheny Valley, and Springdale Borough - along with the School District's School Police Officers provided the program for area students.

The program was held for students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 3. Criteria was applied for individuals to participate in the program. Students sent "wish lists" and items were purchased, then arranged in the Acmetonia Forum so that students and officers could "shop" together.



Minding Your Mind

Allegheny Valley has instituted a number of programs in response to health concerns. One that has started at Acmetonia Elementary School is the *Minding Your Mind* program that “use[s] the power of storytelling to provide evidence-based education about mental health challenges in schools, communities, and workplaces. These are stories and experiences with the power to inspire others to take action to help themselves, their peers, and others.” (*Minding Your Mind* web site, <https://minding-yourmind.org/>) According to Counselor Rebecca Garbisch, “I thought it was a valuable program to provide because it is important that we equip our students with the tools they need to take care of their mental health and seek help if they need it.”

For the *Kind Minds* presentation, a virtual speaker visits each classroom Kindergarten – grade 4 and speaks to students about learning to recognize, identify, and express emotions. The presenter shows students how to engage in kind acts through discussions, role plays, and interactive activities. The primary goal of *Kind Minds* is to cultivate positive reactions while providing children with the tools they need to create meaningful connections, leading to consistent emotional wellness. For the *Changing Minds: Stories Over Stigma* Program, a professionally trained young adult virtual speaker

visits each classroom in grades 5-6 and shares his/her challenges with mental health and how they positively cope. The speaker talks about how mental health issues are common and treatable and how to ask for help for themselves or a friend. They also spoke about the similarities between mental and physical health.

“We know that students are unable to learn unless their basic needs are being met first,” explains Garbisch, “If a student is struggling with a mental health concern, it is important that need be met and sometimes that must occur before we are able to fully support a child’s full academic potential.” She continued by explaining that, “It can be powerful for students to hear from others, especially from young adults not much older than they are, who experienced challenges and are now successful and happy.”



After-School Club... *continued from page 3*

student self-esteem and confidence, improves work and study habits, as well as improves a student’s attitude toward school and learning. With encouragement and reinforcement of skills, the student will no longer feel overwhelmed or frustrated with school. Ms. Kelly Slomka, who worked with the grade 6 English language Arts, focused on comprehension skills and strategies that would improve student understanding and build stamina while independently reading. She taught and practiced the skills through games, text based scavenger hunts, and conversation. Slomka said, “Students really seemed to enjoy coming, and I really enjoyed the small group experience with them.” One parent shared that her daughter said [the program] was helpful and fun and is interested in participating again.

The AAA Club is supported by teachers who are available to stay after-school hours to engage identified students. The students who are part of the program have been identified through data review with the building’s Reading Specialist, Ms. Kathryn Regner and administrators. Teachers then contacted

the families to offer the opportunity. Depending on the grade level, the 6-8 week after-school program will target skills including number sense, representation, patterns, and problem solving in conjunction with literacy skills required to understand mathematical concepts.

Additional Information

Over the past few years, research has emerged showing early numeracy skills are critical in predicting student academic achievement in the upper grades. Early numeracy skills include one-to-one correspondence and number sense. Both of these skills can transfer to early literacy learning.

One-to-one correspondence (numbers corresponding to specific quantities) applies to early reading when teachers have students put an x or dot under each word and then count the number of words on a page. This activity aids students in recognizing the differences among letters, words, and sentences. Number sense is a person’s ability

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PASS Program To Begin

A student's well-being is essential to improve academic achievement, reduce absenteeism, increase graduation rates, and reduce discipline issues. Since March 13, 2020, it has become a reality that more Allegheny Valley students have regressed in some or all of these areas for a multitude of reasons.

In an effort to return to happier students who experience more successes, Allegheny Valley will use the PASS program resource, a proactive approach to addressing social and emotional barriers to learning, as one option to identify students who may need additional supports while in the buildings. The twenty-minute student surveys will be used to measure student attitudes towards themselves as learners and their school.

PASS surveys serve as an early indicator and provide data that makes it possible to identify when students are beginning to fall off track. This in turn provides staff time to react with helpful, data driven interventions. The nine factors the survey will measure include feelings about school, perceived learning capability, self-regard, preparedness for learning, attitudes to teachers, general work ethic, confidence in learning, attitudes to attendance, and response to curriculum demands.

Using this resource, staff members can be proactive to social/emotional problems rather than reactive after something happens. In like ways, the District can sort out problems before students begin to underachieve and prevent problems from happening rather than deal with the consequences later.

For additional information on the PASS Program, please contact Dr. Janice Nuzzo, Director of Student Achievement, at jnuzzo@avsd.k12.pa.us or 724-274-5300.

After-School Club...

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to understand, relate and connect numbers. This aligns with phonics in early literacy because phonics explores the relationships between sounds and the letters/letter patterns that make the sounds.

A big part of math through all the grade levels is critical thinking. In math we ask students: "What do you notice?" and "What do you wonder?" when looking at math activities. We ask those same questions when investigating a text.

For additional information on the Acmetonia After-School Achievement Club, please contact Ms. Jennifer Vecchio, principal, at jvecchio@avsd.k12.pa.us or 724-274-6500.

Learning Work Traits



Students build their knowledge and skill levels through a variety of programs and activities at Springdale Jr-Sr High School.

continually searches to find new projects for her students. Projects that help them gain skills and understanding the world around them. The most recent project involves the Springdale Free Public Library. "The library will design, curate, and print a newsletter to be mailed in May and October to upwards of 4,500 residents of the surrounding community," explained Tinker. "The students of the AVSD Special Education program will pick up the newsletters from the library to fold, staple, stamp, and mail."

It may sound simple, but the project actually involves many skills – counting, small motor skills, collaboration, to name a few - all abilities that the students will need as they continue to grow and move out of high school. The idea came from library staff member Stacie Gamble, who reached out to the District to inquire about the high school and Springdale Library working together to produce the bi-annual newsletter. After a Zoom call, that discussed the details, Tinker was excited. "This is a great hands-on learning experience," said Tinker. "It makes the tasks more meaningful for the students."

Tinker's classroom includes students with a number of disabilities. The more projects that can help build their skill base, build confidence, and build relationships gives the students advantages as they approach graduation. This particular partnership allows students to learn important abilities needed for the workforce, both hard and soft skills. Students will learn the process of sending out a bi-annual newsletter and will help to prepare the newsletter for delivery (folding, stapling and stamping the newsletters in preparation). Once the newsletter is ready to be mailed, the students will take a trip to the local post office to complete the process. For the future, the goal is to create more volunteering opportunities with the library.

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

port Circles programs in both buildings, an after-school support program in the upper elementary grades, tutoring throughout the grade levels, has researched a PASS - Positive Approach to Student Success - program to provide educational services within the buildings. The program was recently approved for purchase by the Board of School Directors. We look forward to implementing the program in the coming months. These programs are detailed in articles throughout this newsletter.

The Allegheny Valley family has taken great strides to establish practices that focus on the whole child. We believe that our schools can be the conduit to removing the stigma of receiving social and emotional help while providing guidance and support for our students. We take learning in all forms - academically, socially, and emotionally - very seriously and encourage our students and families to reach out for any type of support necessary. Our teachers, counselors, nurses, social worker, and administrators are available to help wherever needed. We will continue to bring programs to the District that support our students' needs wherever they may lie.

As I look at the recent past and what effects the pandemic has brought to our District, I am excited about these programs and the future of the Allegheny Valley School District. I remain honored to work with such an electrifying student body, staff, school board, and families.

Circles... *continued from page 2*

classroom," stated Britton.

They found that the students who do sign-up to participate look forward to the next Support Circle meeting. There are many students who share their feelings, but many that pass as well. "It is okay if a student chooses to pass the talking piece and just listen," reinforced Britton. "We feel them just being there and actively listening to their peers is enough."

The team believes the program is very beneficial to Allegheny Valley students, not only helping them recognize their own feelings, but also seeing that they connect with others. "[The connection] could be with someone they already have class with or another student who they may have never connected with before," commented Garbisch. "It shows that they are not alone in what they are feeling or experiencing."

The counseling team hopes to continue the Support Circles for years to come. "We want students to

Financial Update... *continued from page 3*

is further restricted to raise taxes above the Index as prescribed by Act 1 of 2006.

At their January regular voting meeting, the Board of School Directors approved a resolution not to raise taxes beyond the Act 1 Index set by the Department of Education at 3.4% for 2022-23. Budgeted expenditures are projected to increase, compounded by staffing shortages and disruption in the supply chain, with rising prices and other inflationary factors. Retirement (employer rate increases from 34.94% to 35.26%) and health care through the Allegheny County School Health Insurance Consortium (current projection of 8% increase) contributions, upward movement in wages due to contractual obligations (the teacher's contract is currently being negotiated), and debt service payments will comprise the bulk of the projected increase in budget expenditures.

Allegheny Administrators will continue to revise the 2022-23 Budget over the coming months. In addition, Governor Wolf will announce the state's budget proposal of increased funding for public school districts in the spring. The School Board will review the 2022-23 budget through May 2022, with updates shared with the Finance Committee and School Board. A preliminary budget will be presented to the Board of School Directors in May, with the 2022-23 Final Budget to be approved and adopted no later than the Board's June Regular Meeting.

The Administration and School Board continue to evaluate a budget in the best interest of the students and the community. It will continue to be a challenging road ahead until a final balanced budget is passed for 2022-23.

have a safe space where they can talk and connect with their peers and maybe even learn a few skills that could help them during a difficult time," explained high school counselor Ms. Andrea Sadowski.

Mrs. Danielle Britton explains Support Circles to a classroom at Acmetonia Elementary School.



Dynamo Education Foundation Update

with its Grant Program. It returns to work on its sponsorship with an Evening Event featuring the Gem-tones. In addition, the Foundation will be sponsoring a Soccer Reunion on June 25, 2022 at the Springdale Jr-Sr High School Soccer Field. The Foundation is truly excited to be able to bring back activities that have such a tremendous support from alumni and the community.

The group remains committed to the Allegheny Valley School District, its students, and its staff, awarding grants for programs and activities that cannot be incorporated into the District's annual budget. "Being able to hold the activities, in person, means the Foundation can support additional programs and projects for Allegheny Valley staff," commented Jan Zastawniak. "We are all looking forward to the events and getting back to as near to normal as possible."

For additional information on Foundation activities or to learn more about the Dynamo Education Foundation or make a donation, please see the Foundation's web page at: www.avsdweb.org.

2021-2022 Grants...

The Dynamo Education Foundation is proud to announce the awarding of three grants to Allegheny Valley staff members for the 2020-21 school year:

- **Project 1: Germination, Pollination, and Plant Growth.** An extension to the current 6th Grade Farm to Table program, the project will teach the science behind the farm to table experience and focus on what it takes to make seeds grow. *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 science students 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.** Lo-coRobo's Pioneer Modules expose elementary students to 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.*

Sixth grade students in Mrs. Emerick's class work on their Farm-to-Table project. The project was awarded a 20-22 Grant from The Dynamo Education Foundation.



Rivalry... continued from page 4

Springdale-Riverview rivalry," commented teacher and TFIM sponsor, Ms. Dayna Hrin. "They've harnessed this historically rooted energy and used it to benefit the less fortunate of both of our communities. I am so proud to witness their cooperation! It's definitely been the good-natured camaraderie the communities need now, more than ever."

Students pack boxes of food for last year's Souper Bowl project. The 2022 competition began in February and runs through March.





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 Elementary 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
Gregory J. Heavner
Elementary Supervisor
Jennifer L. Vecchio
Grades 4-6 Principal/Transportation Director
Melissa Holler
Special Education Supervisor

Janice Zastawniak
Public Relations Director/Newsletter Editor

Board Of School Directors...

President	Larry Pollick
Vice President	Kathleen Haas
Treasurer	Stephen P. Puskar
	Beth Bosco, David Buchman, Salvatore Conte, Jessica Griggle, Paula Jean Moretti, Glenna Renaldi
Secretary	Hamsini Rajgopal
Solicitor	Matt Hoffman, Esq.