

Summer 2022

Avenews

News from the Allegheny Valley School District

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2022 Hall of Fame

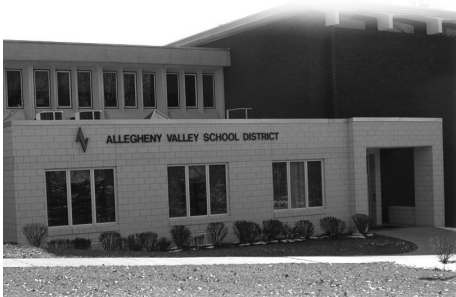
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Congratulations to the Springdale Jr-Sr High School Class of 2022. Seventy-three students participated in their graduation ceremony on Friday, May 28. Story on page 2; highlights of the class are listed on pages 6-7.



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At Springdale Jr-Sr High School... Allegheny Valley continued several annual celebrations for the Class of 2022...*Story on page 7.*

SHS Holds 90th Graduation

The 90th graduating class of Springdale High School gathered in Marshall Auditorium on May 27th to celebrate the end of their high school years. Friends and family joined the 73 members of the Class of 2022 as they began their last official event as students in the Allegheny Valley School District.

Graduation marked the final milestone of the school for they year. Principal Andrew Leviski hosted the event for the class, highlighting their move through the school system. He wished them the best of luck as they move on to the next steps of their lives.

Valedictorian August Tabacheck told his classmates to look back on the journey to see how fast the past four years have gone. "Take the time to appreciate high school," he encouraged. Going one step further to "make a legacy you can be proud of."

Salutatorian Alexis Hrivnak told the group to be "grateful for things in your life when they might be taken away." She emphasized for students to be present in the moment and live their lives to the fullest. "Live every day like it's your last," she told them. "You only live once."

Superintendent Patrick Graczyk addressed the class, congratulating them on completing the difficult year and encouraging them to be grateful. He detailed successes that were attained throughout their years in the District.



Salutatorian Alexis Hrivnak, left, and valedictorian August Tabacheck, right, led Springdale Jr-Sr High School's 2022 graduating class.

The class earned more than \$1,057,650 in scholarships, served hundreds of hours in the community, and worked to donate thousands of dollars to charities.

Isabella Walsh, Senior Class President, commented that graduation "makes us want to slow things down a little bit." She thanked all the teachers and staff who helped the class and encouraged the students to "enjoy the final moments" and to "leave a legacy."

For the pride that they have brought to the District, congratulations and best wishes are extended to all members of the Class of 2022.

Superintendent's Message

The Allegheny Valley team is humbled by the opportunity to lead our incredible School District when it mattered the most to our learners, families, and community. We appreciate and revere that you put your children under our careful care.

Instructional guidance continued to blossom throughout the District this year. A notable example was the District-wide focus on instructional learning targets in our PreK-12 classrooms. Additionally, we enhanced our reading program with University of Pittsburgh reading interns. When learners were isolated or under quarantine, teachers provided concurrent virtual instruction to maintain a continuity of education. Lastly, as a District, we are proud of expanded clubs for our learners, such as TFIM, The Gay-Straight Alliance, and the History Club.

Our classrooms and programs remained operational through the year, which stemmed from a thoughtfully written Health & Safety Plan. Consequently, our Dynamo family celebrated all capstone events such as the prom, kindergarten graduation, the Honors Banquet, and many others.



Superintendent Patrick Graczyk speaks at Graduation.

Finally, the Board of Directors approved a balanced budget that includes a newly signed five-year agreement with the teachers' union and increased technological equipment and teaching positions.

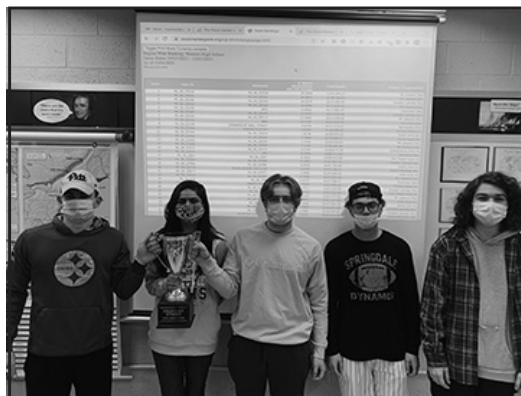
As we celebrate our success, we simultaneously plan and embrace that the future of education requires change because society has changed. We will continue to nurture all our students, to be all they can be, no matter the circumstance. We are thankful for the support from our school board, families, and community; without it, we would not be the incredible School District we are.

District Highlights

The Successes of 2021-2022

This year, the theme of Rethink-Reset-Reignite highlights the District's commitment to move forward, even with the challenges currently in society. This year, emphasis was placed on taking the education provided, setting a new standard, and reigniting enthusiasm to build a better Allegheny Valley School District. While the District continued through the difficult course directed by the pandemic, technology, initiatives, and creative teaching ideas came to the forefront. With the regular school year interrupted for various issues, 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 Health & Safety Plan that governed the preK-12 academic learning environment that included virtual education and in-person learning throughout the 2021-22 school year.
- Allegheny Valley was awarded over \$2.1 million in various grants throughout the school year. Grants covered costs stemming from the pandemic and supported learning loss, safety, and technology.



Springdale Jr-Sr High School's Fall 2021 Stock Market team finished 9th out of 309 Western Pennsylvania Teams.

- Springdale Jr-Sr High School earned National and metro-area rankings in 2022 Best High Schools according to U.S. News & World Report. Nearly 18,000 schools were ranked on six factors based on their performances on state assessments and how well they prepare students for college.
- Acmetonia Elementary School held its second Summer Camp to provide students with a STEAM program to help learning loss.
- The Allegheny Valley School District was awarded a Golden Achievement Award from the National

School Public Relations Association for its pandemic communications.

- Springdale Jr-Sr High School's Fall 2021 Stock Market team finished 9th out of 309 Western Pennsylvania Teams from various school districts.
- One Acmetonia Elementary School three-person

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2022 Alumni Hall of Fame



The 2022 Alumni Hall of Fame inductees from left to right: Melinda Suzensky and Dean Zanella.

The Allegheny Valley School District inducted its Alumni Hall of Fame, Class of 2022, on Saturday, April 30. 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.

Melinda Kutchenreiter Suzensky (attended 1982-1987) graduated from Springdale High School in 1987. She went on to secure a degree in Elementary Education and a Masters of Curriculum and Instruction. She currently is an active Diversity Inclusion Chair with AMS local. Suzensky has also been part of Championship Mindset a group that goes into schools to talk with students about staying on the right path, making good choices, and doing the right thing. In January 2020, Suzensky became a published author with her book "I Fit In With The Skin I'm In." The book tells the story of a biracial young girl struggling to find a way to fit in. For her efforts, Suzensky has been honored by a number of publications. She volunteers for the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Carnegie and Avalon Libraries, the Charlie Batch Foundation, her local church, and is an active PTO member and Liaison for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Suzensky also participates in various volunteer activities with the Jack and Jill Pittsburgh Chapter, supporting programs that create opportunities and challenges for children to learn

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New In Education...

Acmetonia Holds Summer Program

Acmetonia Elementary students participate in Acmetonia Elementary School's 2022 Summer Camp.



For the second year, Acmetonia Elementary School sponsored a Summer Camp in June. Eighty-four students, from those who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall to those finishing grade 5, traveled to the building for a week of fun learning. Free lunches were offered to all students, with cafeteria staff helping throughout.

The program was STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) based and included reading and writing infused in the activities. In addition, mindfulness activities with the guidance counselor and social worker were also held. "Mindfulness refers to the process of focusing your attention in the present. The idea of a mindful mindset is to help ground yourself in your surroundings while dealing with stressful or overwhelming experiences." (waterford.org)

The camp focused on lessons of force and energy, camping, rockets, weather, great outdoors, lots of focus areas. Projects ranged from making insects to launching rockets to building a golf course. Through several of the projects, older students worked with the younger children for socialization. The program was very successful according to principal Jennifer Vecchio. A survey will be going out to parents to collect feedback for future planning.

AVSD: Mindful and More

Social emotional cognitive learning skills are critical to school, career development, and life success. At Allegheny Valley, administrators are working to enrich the school environment to one where students and staff can thrive.

Five staff members recently participated in a program through the Western PA Learning Alliance to help identify positive areas in the School District and throughout the region and build on progress already made in the school system. The program brought together administrators from across the area to help identify successes and help shape a more positive atmosphere for students in all districts.

Supported by AASA (The School Superintendents' Association) and the Grabel Foundation, the idea begins planning in student-centered education. It looks beyond today's education system to what learning may look like in 2025, tailoring it to the individual needs of students. With changes in education happening rather quickly, planning must also find ways to transform and adjust at the same rate. As many discovered through the pandemic, today's learning takes place in many ways through various forms. Many factors must be taken into consideration.

For student success, Allegheny Valley continues building lessons and experiences for students to learn and practice soft skills like growth mindset, self-efficacy, social awareness, and self-management. Through some current programs, such as PATHS® and the Power of Hello, the District looks to build upon the school climate, which directly impacts students' academic success and abilities. Ultimately, the project will work to bring about a more positive, equitable, and supportive environment for all students.



Students work on mindful practices during Acmetonia Elementary School's Summer Camp.

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 2022 class of Future Famers includes: August Tabacheck, grade 12; Georgia Dale, grade 11, and Isabella Walsh, grade 12.

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

2022 Future Famers

(from left to right)

*August Tabacheck (grade 12),
Georgia Dale (grade 11), and
Isabella Walsh
(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.

The Power of Hello

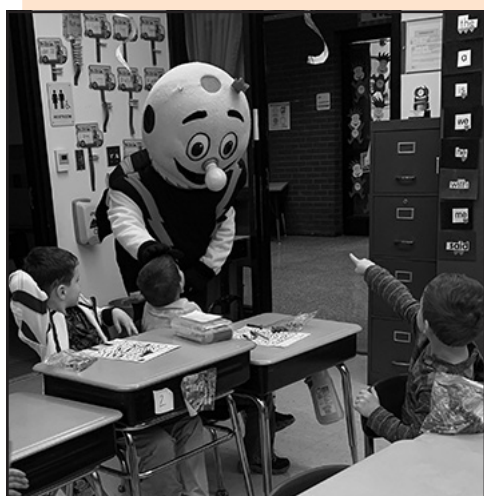
"Hello" is more than just a simple greeting...it's a way to reach out, to open the lines of communication, to begin new friendships. Hello is an easy way to acknowledge another person, who may be sitting beside us, the teammate with us on the field, or the lone individual walking down the hall.

The pandemic brought about a number of concerns with which schools now have to manage. Students come to school with a different mindset. They had been isolated from their peers, had to wear

masks that physically created a barrier to others, just to name a few. The consequences come to the forefront as mental and behavioral health concerns. Through the many comments in the news and on the Internet, we know that student well-being – physical, behavioral, and mental – has become a top priority.

To help enhance the school environment, Allegheny Valley developed "The Power of Hello," an idea to assist with changing this trend. The thought is simple: students and staff say hello to those they come upon throughout the school day. In class, in the hallways, at lunch, wherever they are around the buildings and on campus. The program began in both buildings at the end of March

"The *Power of Hello* is about accepting all Dynamos for who they are so that they feel that they belong," explained Superintendent Patrick Graczyk. "We want all of our Dynamos to know that they are important to us. Often a kind gesture such as saying hello can make a difference in someone's day. Saying hello conveys the message that I see you."



*Reddy Kilowatt
visits students
at Acmetonia
Elementary to
help kick-off the
Power of Hello
program.*

Congratulations to the Class of 2022

Meghan Alberti
Brooke Ansell
Legend Ausk
Devon Baer
Leah Borland
Erika Brown
Taylor Brzezinski
Marie Carey
Shane Cassidy-Brazin
Issac Charlton
Tyler Cickavage
Brody Conroy
Madilyn Cummings
Quinlin Davis
Brynn Densmore
Logan Dexter
Caleb Duncan

Margaret Dvorsak
Morgan Fitzgerald
Christopher Fraser
Joshua Fraser
Daniel Gabrielli
Jacob Glessner
Andrew Haus
Gage Howard
Alexis Hrivnak
Lilly Iadicicco
holly Ihnat
Molly Ihnat
Hunter Jackson
Emmett Jaronski
Breann Jazbinsek
Jakeb Kaminski
Joshua Kaminski

Brayden Kindler
Reese Kline
Ashton Krebs
Kalynn Kutchta
Richard Martinelli
Justice Matisz
Zaner Mele
Dustin Mendenhall
Mikayla Miller
Colin O'Day
Abbie Orbin
Kayla Papanastasiou
Alanna Pate
Ryan Pribulsky
Ryan Reinsfelder
Joseph Rogers
Christopher Savko

Giovanni Savko
Krista Sgambati
Emily Shoop
Kaitlyn Simmen
Wyatt Skaugen
Autumn Sprouse
August Tabacheck
Brianna Thompson
John Utiss
Kyle Varga
Isabella Walsh
Serena Walsh
Zainub Waqas
Jodi Wargo
Emily Wilhelm
Jason Yang
Matthew Yungwirth
Ethan Zahner



Senior Moments...

As the Class of 2022 leaves Springdale Jr-Sr High School, they can be proud of the following:

- Springdale Jr-Sr High School graduated 73 students in 2022.

- Approximately 68 percent of the class received scholarships. The sources were:

College/university/

Post-secondary scholarships \$ 277,550

Armed Service Scholarships 750,000

Local Scholarships 30,000

TOTAL: \$1,057,650

- Thirty-eight scholarships are offered and awarded by the local community.

- The post-secondary plans of the graduating class:

- 52% pursuing four-year college degrees

- 16% entering a junior college or community college, then planning to transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.

- 1% entering vocational-technical or business schools.

- 3% entering the Armed Services

- 8% entering the job market

- 20% undecided

- Students will attend more than 27 different universities, colleges, and technical schools.

- Students have registered for more than 35 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 the two organizations brought back the Senior Parade; and the Class of 2022 continued the tradition.

The committee gathered with a new team of seniors to coordinated the 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, Springdale and Allegheny Valley Regional fire departments, W.L. Roenigk Bus Company, and school staff members. Reddy Kilowatt also made an ap-



pearance at this year's event.

In addition, the District was able to continue the Senior Stroll at Acmetonia Elementary School, where seniors returned to walk the halls once more while students and staff cheer them on. These events have become the newest traditions at Allegheny Valley, one students, staff, and community are happy to support.

In Our Schools...

Springdale Jr-Sr High School Thirty-ninth Honors Banquet Held

For the 39th 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-nine seniors were honored, including four who were recognized for Honors Achievement each year of their SHS careers - Alexis Hrivnak, August Tabachedk, John Utiss, and Isabella Walsh.

The school was able to return this year's program back to the Harmar House, surrounded by family and friends. Congratulations are extended to all students and their families.

Four students were recognized at this year's Honors Banquet for attending the event each of their high school years.



Senior Scholarship Awards



In April, Springdale Jr-Sr High school held its Senior Scholarship Awards night in the Marshall Auditorium. Many members of the Class of 2022 were happy to once again receive their awards from scholarship representatives. Parents and family members were pleased to watch their seniors walk across the stage to accept the honors. Local scholarships totaled over \$30,000. (Due to changes in their program, scholarships provided through the Pittsburgh Foundation will not be released until July.) A special thank you goes to the families and community organizations who support our students.

Softball Team



"I knew since the girls were freshmen that we had a special group," commented coach Anthony Pototo. "Each year we improved and felt that this was the year we had the opportunity to do great things."

How correct that thinking was. Springdale High School's Softball Team has had an impressive run over the past four years. This year, they finished 13 and 3 overall, and 10 and 0 in the section. They won the section for the first time since 1998.

"The season was difficult with all the weather cancellations and the practices in the gym," continued Pototo. "We only played three home games and Senior Night was at Valley against Saint Joes." The girls, however, were resilient and stayed focused.

"I was extremely proud of them and emphasized to them that they accomplished something that hasn't been done in 20 plus years. I told them that when they walk in the gym that the banner will have 2022 section champs on it. They will know they were apart of that."

The team truly has much of which to be proud. They have made a mark on SHS athletics. Several players will also go on to compete at the college level: Alexis Hrivank will be playing at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and Brianna Thompson will be playing at Geneva.

"I am very appreciative of the support and help from my assistant coaches (Dean and Tracy Acheson), parents (send offs for playoff games from the fire department and police were cool), the boosters were amazing, and the community and school district support," said Pototo.



Acmetonia Elementary School

Student Gamer

Acmetonia student Owen Gamble was selected as a Finalist in the Games for Change Student Challenge. Gamble's game was created in SCRATCH, free software from MIT, and entered into the "Shaping the World for Difference" category. The virtual awards program on June 16th named him as the Junior Division Regional Champion (Northeast) for his game "Undestined," which teaches us all about the challenges individuals face when their dominant hand is impacted by a physical obstacle.

Grade 4 students continued their EcoChallenge program that has raised over \$19,000 for marine wildlife over the past three years.



EcoStudent Challenge

Acmetonia Elementary's fourth-grade students raised \$7,009.91 in their EcoStudent Challenge. The Challenge encourages students to learn 100 facts about the environment, and secure sponsors to pay amounts for each fact the students get correct on a test. Eighteen of the 63 students had perfect scores; no student scored below 90 points.

The proceeds go to Cape Clasp, a purpose-driven brand with a mission to #makewaves for marine life causes. Through their efforts, Acme students support sea wildlife such as sharks, sea turtles, and whales. Over the three years the students have been participate in the project, they have raised a total of \$19,132.14.

After-School Programs

During March 2022, eight Acmetonia students volunteered to try out the STEM (science, technology, education, mathematics) Design process. The students signed up in teams, and the group had to have a project idea in order to get an invite to the after-school meeting time.

By completing the idea form, these students exhibited self-motivation, which is key to any extra-curricular project. The students demonstrated their first attempt at a design brief in which a solution to a problem is identified. Students must then identify criteria to be met and constraints.

After-school programs are voluntary for District students.



Kindergarten Graduation Held

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

Family and friends packed the Syria Mosque to help celebrate the conclusion of this group's first full-day 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 2034 has 79 very proud members.



Staff Members Retire

At the end of the 2021-22 school year, four Allegheny Valley staff members announced their retirements. These individuals dedicated much of their lives to the field of education; the District loses numerous years of experience when these staff members walk 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...

Leonard Herrington who joined Allegheny Valley as a social studies teacher in 1991. Over the years, he has served as an Assistant Football Coach, Secondary Student Council Sponsor, Assistant Track Coach, Junior High Boys' Basketball Coach, Foreign Travel Sponsor, Saturday In-School Suspension Sponsor, SADD Sponsor, and Assistant Secondary Academic Games Sponsor. In addition, he was a Department Chair and Teacher Mentor. Herrington retires with 31 years at Allegheny Valley.

Kenneth Miller was hired by Allegheny Valley in 1991 as a Secondary Science Teacher. He also served as the Boys' Junior High Basketball Coach, Girls' Junior High Basketball Coach, Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach, 9th Grade Boys' Basketball Coach, National Honor Society Co-Sponsor, Assistant Track Coach, and Assistant Basketball Coach. Miller was also a Mentor Teacher. He retires with 31 years with the District.

Janice Nuzzo joined the Allegheny Valley staff in 2002 as the High School Principal after working in several other local school districts. Over the years, she also served as the Colax Upper Elementary School Principal and the Director of Student Achievement. She coordinated the Professional Development and Curriculum areas, while also directing the PIMS, Federal Programs, and Induction areas. Nuzzo retires with 20 years with the District.

Cesareo Sanchez was hired in 2010 as the Boys' Varsity Soccer Coach. Then, in 2012, was employed as the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, bringing with him years of experience in facilities management. Throughout his time with the District, he directed two District renovation projects and coordinated upgrades to digital services within his area of responsibility. He retires with 10 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 2022-2023 Budget

The Allegheny Valley School District's Final General Fund Operating Budget for the 2022-2023 school year was approved by the School Directors in the amount of \$23,808,722. 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 increase, reflecting economic projections with higher than anticipated wages and earned income. However, interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve can impact local revenue collections.

State Revenue is level, funded and projected at 2021-22 allocations. The Governor has proposed a historic increase for public education funding, but it competes with other agencies including publicly funded charter schools. Key incumbent losses in the May primaries now bring new priorities to the state budget negotiating table. So, while an increase in Basic and Special Education is anticipated, 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 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Federal Revenues are projected at 2021-22 levels for Title I and II, with an overall federal funding estimate of \$785,000 including the ARP funds. A key stipulation of the funding is to address student learning loss with after-school programs, summer programs etc.

The 4% increase in operating expenditures compared to the 2021-22 Budget, relates to additional personnel and programs related to federal funding; contractual obligations; significant healthcare increases; and mandated costs.

2022-2023 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	3.6%
Supplies, Textbooks, Utilities	4.5%
Purchased Property Services	2.9%

Highlights...continued from page 3

team won 1st Place (grade 4-5 division) in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and the Heinz History Center's History Bowl.

- One SHS Senior won 2nd Place in Impromptu Speaking at the Eastern Suburban Special Programs Association Debate event.
- 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.



Academic Games students brought home awards from their National Competition.

- Four Acmetonia 5th and 4th grade student entries were named "Judges Choice" in the Elementary division of the Fairchild Challenge Contest "Plant Love Stories."
- Springdale Jr-Sr High School Boys' Basketball Team created a Staff Appreciation event where student-athletes selected an Allegheny Valley staff member - someone they look up to, someone who inspires them, someone who makes them laugh everyday, etc. - to recognize. These individuals were then honored before a varsity game.
- SHS German students and members of the German Club won 2nd Place - Art (Proverb Posters); 2nd Place - Drama Performance; and 3rd Place - Poetry Writing at the 22nd Annual Three Rivers German Day at Washington & Jefferson College.
- Twenty-four students from grades 3-6 participated in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Children's Choice Reading Festival remotely in the Acmetonia Forum.
- One junior was among 17 students inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at Forbes Road East CTC for Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC).
- Two 11th grade students won a Bronze Medal (scoring in the 70th percentile) and a Gold Medal (scoring in the 90th percentile) for their Distinguished Achievement on the 2021 Level 3 National German Exam. The exam is a standardized test taken by high school students across the U.S. studying German.
- Seven SHS students attended the University of Pittsburgh's Law Day.
- Fourteen students participated in the Future Business Leaders of America's State Leadership Conference in

April.

- Five Springdale Jr-Sr High School students completed their investigations and created presentations for remote scoring for the Pennsylvania Jr. Academy of Science competition. All earned a "Second" in the event. Students' work is judged against a rubric and is rated as first, second, third, or honorable mention.
- Three of Allegheny Valley's Academic Games elementary students placed in the national competition: one placed in the Top Ten in Theme; one placed in the Top Ten in Propaganda; and a third student won a Three-Time Qualifier Award and placed in the Top Ten in Presidents, Current Events, and Propaganda. In addition, one student was 6th in the nation in Current Events; and one placed 6th in the nation for the Research Theme game. The research theme for 2022 was "The Gilded Age." The students' excellent performance helped their Western PA Academic Games League (WPAGL) teams take 3rd Place in the nation.
- Two SHS students won 1st Place finishes in 2D Art in the 2022 Waldman International Arts & Writing competition. For the competition, students are given a prompt and are required to research the topic to highlight the lesser known stories of the Holocaust through art. One student won 1st Place as the middle school winner, and the second won 1st Place as the high school winner.
- Eight 4th and 5th grade boys participated in a STEM Design after-school program.
- Five students were selected for the Celebrating Art Competition. These students were chosen to have their artwork published in the Celebrating Art Book.
- Two 7th grade students won 3rd Place in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's PA Media and Design Competition in the Digital Movie Category. The students made a video that highlighted the service and sacrifice of two Springdale veterans.
- One Acmetonia Elementary School 5th grader won recognition in the Phipps Conservatory Fairchild Challenge. Fifth grade students were tasked to research seed dispersal

Owen Argue received a Bronze Medal and Jack Arlotti received a Gold Medal on Level 3 of the National German Exam.

and write a comic strip story based on the research. The best student stories were submitted to the Challenge. The Acme student was one of five elementary students

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Students Congratulate Seniors



Springdale High students extend their best wishes to some of the Senior Class during their last week of classes.

At Springdale Jr-Sr High School, Mr. Dan Pschirer's homeroom students wanted to do something special for several of this year's seniors. They wanted to give the seniors something exceptional to remember their years at Springdale High. The students used their talents to create specially designed banners, tailor made to highlight the interest of each senior. Pschirer's students then went around the building to get the banners signed. His hope was to have as many, if not all, students and staff sign the back of each banner.

He got his wish. Over a couple of weeks, through AP testing, Keystones, and PSSAs, students placed their signatures on the banners to wish the best of luck to their classmates.

During the last week of school, the seniors were presented with the banners and a bag of gifts, including t-shirts, snacks, and other items that supported their individual activities. The seniors were very excited to receive the items, which only helped to make their last days at the high school very memorable.



Virtual Learning Plans



District students participated in virtual learning throughout the Covid pandemic.

The Covid pandemic brought about many changes in school districts. One very obvious modification was virtual education. At Allegheny Valley, the program is called the Dynamo Virtual Academy (DVA). For the 2021-22 school year, 70 students were provided education through the DVA.

Some students were part-time (taking one course), while others took classes on a full time basis. Parent and student feedback listed the program flexibility, with good pacing for individual students, and interesting courses as good qualities. The drawbacks however listed challenges with the program's connection to the School District, slow response time from teachers, and difficult to navigate.

With the goal of improving virtual education in the District, Dr. Melissa Holler will coordinate a program to better support student learning. Currently in discussion for the 2022-2023 school year are working conversations with teachers on the Distance Learning facilitator role. Allegheny Valley sets expectations that District teachers will serve as Distance Learning Facilitators to check on attendance, monitor progress, answer any immediate questions, and connect students to the Waterfront/DVA teacher of record. Training for staff will occur from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and with Dr. Holler.

In January 2023, the District will launch a pilot program for Special Education and Encore courses. Canned curriculum through Waterfront Learning will be used. However, Allegheny Valley teachers will grade assignments and interact with students.

(continued on page 14)

Highlights...continued from page 11



SHS consumer science and art students held the Empty Bowls program to raise funds for the Food Bank.

honored on the competition blog.

- Five students from SHS participated in the Northern Area Gifted Consortium's Middle School Writing Workshop. For more than a decade, Pine Richland HS students have planned a workshop highlighting different types of writing. The 2022 theme was "The Future." Students from 14 area school districts wrote and shared their writing with students from the other schools.
- Twenty-four students in grades 3-6 participated in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Children's Choice Reading Festival remotely in the Acme Forum. Keynote Author Victoria Jamieson (winner of the 2021 Children's Choice Awards for *When Stars are Scattered*), Illustrator Joe Wos, musical comedy duo Josh and Gab, and a Battle of the Books competition were part of the program.
- One senior student won a "Special Merit" acknowledgement in the Phipps Conservatory's Fairchild Challenge #4 Competition. Students created a poster featuring a green career that highlighted a geographical region that benefits from this career. Springdale's winner developed a poster featuring "Environmental Lawyer" and how this career is helping the Marshall Islands.
- One Acmetonia 6th grade student was named a "Finalist" in the Games for Change Student Challenge. The virtual awards program on June 16th, named him as the Junior Division Regional Champion (Northeast) for his game "Undestined," which teaches us all about the challenges individuals face when their dominant hand is impacted by a physical obstacle.
- Three Springdale Jr-Sr High School students competed in the Westinghouse Science Honors Institute during the 2021-22 school year. The students earned certificates for this well-known and prestigious program. On select Saturdays from

October through March, qualified high school juniors from Western Pennsylvania and the surrounding communities participated in STEM inspired lectures.

- One 6th grade student received an "Honorable Mention" in the "Nature's Way" category for the Northern Area Gifted Consortium's (NAGC) Middle School Photography contest.
- The District honored three high school students as 2022 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.
- One Springdale Jr-Sr High School student participated in the Alle-Kiski Valley Honors Band and the PMEA District Band.
- The 73 members of the Class of 2022 earned more than \$1 million in scholarships.
- Seventy-nine students in the Class of 2034 participated in this year's Kindergarten graduation event.
- Ninety-three students were acknowledged at the 39th Annual Honors Banquet for achieving 94% or above for the first three nine weeks of the school year. Twenty-nine seniors were honored, including four 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.
- 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 \$7,009.91 for the environment, the high school art and consumer science programs joined together to host the *Empty Bowls* program to benefit the local food bank, 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.

2022-2023 District Calendar

July 4, 2022	Independence Day Holiday (District Closed)
August 17, 2022	Professional Development (Teachers Only)
August 18, 2022	Clerical Day (Teachers Only)
August 22, 2022	First Day for Students
September 1, 2022	School-Community Night (evening hours, all schools)
September 5, 2022	Labor Day (District Closed)
September 23, 2022	Professional Development (Teachers Only)
October 20, 2022	School-Community Night (evening hours, all schools)
October 21, 2022	Act 80 - Staff Development (Teachers Only)
November 14, 2022	Professional Development (Teachers Only)
November 24-28, 2022	Thanksgiving Vacation
December 23, 2022	Staff Development (MOU-Teachers Only)
December 24, 2022 - January 1, 2023	Holiday Break
January 16, 2023	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day/ Clerical Day (Teachers Only)
January 26, 2023	School-Community Night (evening hours, all schools)
January 27, 2023	Professional Development (Teachers Only)
February 17, 2023	Staff Development (MOU-Teachers Only)
February 20, 2023	Presidents' Day (District Closed)
March 2, 2023	School-Community Night (Dr. Seuss)
March 3, 2023	Act 80 - Staff Development (Teachers Only)
April 6-10, 2023	Spring Break (District Closed)
May 26, 2023	Graduation
May 29, 2023	Memorial Day Break (District Closed)
May 31, 2023	Last Day for Students
June 1, 2023	Clerical Day (Teachers Only)
June 2, 2023	Staff Development - (MOU-Teachers Only)
June 21, 2023	Kennywood Picnic (District Closed)

Local School Holidays: Nov. 25; Dec. 26, 29, 30; April 7.
Weather/Emergency Make-up Days: Please note AVSD 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 June 1, 2023.

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 and Gavin Zahner for sharing their photos with the District.

Alumni Hall of Fame...

continued from page 3

and practice leadership skills and building character. She has shown the importance of passing on life's lessons.

Dean M. Zanella (attended 1969-1982) graduated from Springdale High School in 1982. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Vincent College and went on to work as a certified psychiatric rehabilitation practitioner at Bedford-Somerset Developmental & Behavioral Health Services. Over the course of his career, Zanella has helped numerous adults and their families with mental illness and developmental and behavioral challenges, establishing himself as an authority in his field. With the sport of soccer, he served on the AYSO regional board to bring the sport to Bedford County, holding coaching and referee clinics to develop the program in the area. Zanella emphasizes giving back to the community as a youth soccer coach, a church youth group leader, and with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. He has received many honors for his service, including Brigade Soldier of the Year, Albert Deluca Award, and the St. Vincent College Athletic Hall of Fame. He inspires others through his service, giving back to his community, and his generous spirit to help others.

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.

Virtual Learning...continued

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In other words, the Waterfront/DVA will provide the online platform and curriculum, while the District will interact with the students.

The program also provides Concurrent Learning for students. Similar to what occurred throughout the 2021-22 school year, this type of program is offered for students to work remotely with their Allegheny Valley teacher while at home due to COVID or other extenuating circumstances. The District is also working with the AVEA to expand concurrent options.

"It is our hope," commented Dr. Holler, "that the Dynamo Virtual Academy can continue to bring an excellent educational opportunity to qualifying students through the integrity of the program and the quality of the academic experience."

Dynamo Education Foundation

Continuing Its Mission

The Dynamo Education Foundation renewed its efforts in 2021-22, holding some of its annual programs and events. Due to the pandemic, many gatherings were still on hold. However, the Foundation was able to hold its Gemtones event and award grants for 2021-2022 school year.

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

The Foundation is happy to announce that several additional events will return for the 2022-2023 school year. First, planning has started for the fourth annual dinner evening at the Harmar House. Planned for February 2023, 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 2023. Unable to hold this event in 2022, the program has also been very popular, and the Foundation thanks everyone who has come out to participate in the event. The Board will release a date soon to begin to recruit players, with a major effort to encourage younger graduates to participate.

The Foundation's Board will also reach out to local businesses and organizations to rebuild its Partner Program. Obviously all events sponsored by, and the participation of, the Foundation will revolve around the continuously changing climate with the pandemic. The Foundation is proud of its ability to assist Allegheny Valley throughout the past two years.

The Foundation would like to extend its appreciation to all of the individuals, businesses, and organizations for their continued support. Although the past years have been rather difficult for many, the Dynamo family has truly come together to help the Foundation, the School District, and the students. It is never been more apparent that some of the best things happen through challenging times.



(top) Acme students build drones, one of the projects funded by a 21-22 Foundation Grant (bottom) one of the Foundation grants awarded to an Acmetonia classroom.



2022-2023 Grants

The Dynamo Education Foundation is proud to announce the awarding of four grants to Allegheny Valley staff members for the 2022-23 school year:

- **Project 1: The Edible Classroom Kitchen.** An extension of the current 6th Grade Farm-to-Table program, the Kitchen program will allow students to cook and prepare the vegetables grown in the classroom. *Staff recipient: McCall Emerick, Grade 6 Teacher.*
- **Project 2: Parenting Challenge and Infant Care.** The project will support the SHS child development class and provide Real Care Baby simulators to teach students basic infant care, parenting, and child development lessons. *Staff recipient: Melissa Leger, Food/Consumer Science Teacher.*
- **Project 3: Effects of pH on Plants.** Using greenhouse kits and pH monitors, the program will introduce students to planting and allow them to observe the effects that pH has on the soil for different plants. *Staff recipient: Nicole Tryon, Chemistry Teacher.*
- **Project 4: Communication Outreach.** The project will add the PeachJar program to extend District communication effort - a platform to organize and simplify the process to distribute fliers to families. *Staff recipient: Jan Zastawniak, Public Relations Director*

In the nine years of the grant program, the Dynamo Education Foundation has awarded staff members over \$24,900 for 31 classroom projects, activities, and programs. Fundraising is held throughout the year to support the program. The Dynamo Education Foundation is proud to be able to present these grants and increase the grant awards each year.



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
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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.

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Superintendent

Janice E. Nuzzo, Ed.D.

Director of Student Achievement

Andrew Leviski

Springdale Jr-Sr High School Principal

Melissa Gibbon

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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