

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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June 2017

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

I want to begin by sharing several staff announcements with you this month. I am happy to tell you that Roderick MacNeal, Jr., has accepted our offer to become the Assistant Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools. Mr. MacNeal is currently the Principal of the John Eliot Elementary School in Needham. His previous positions include Principal of the Gertrude Ealy Elementary School as well as Assistant Principal of two middle schools, all in Michigan. He received a Master of Arts in Teaching from Wayne State University after earning his undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan, and is currently completing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Boston College. Mr. MacNeal replaces our current Assistant Superintendent, Laura Chesson. Dr. Chesson spearheaded our advancement in technology, among many other things, over the last five years. She is assuming the position of Superintendent of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School system, and we wish her much success in the future.

I am also pleased to announce our new K-12 Director of Performing Arts. William Pappazisis served as the Director of Fine and Performing Arts in the Belmont Public Schools for 11 years. His previous work includes administrative positions in Fine Arts and Music in Westborough, and teaching music in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Most recently, he has been directing education programs for the Handel and Haydn Society. I am delighted to welcome Mr. Pappazisis to our district.

Additionally, Dr. Eileen Woods, who has been serving as the Interim Principal at the Ottoson Middle School, will continue in this role during 2017-2018. I am grateful that Dr. Woods is able to continue her strong leadership as we resume our search for a permanent principal in the fall.

As announced in earlier [press releases](#) and newsletters, we are also welcoming Dawn Carney, Director of World Languages 6-12, Sara Fernandes Burd, Director of Guidance and Social Emotional Learning, and John Danizio, Chief Financial Officer.

In the [Department News](#) section below, you will find an update on the building projects currently being undertaken to ensure that we have sufficient space in our schools to house our growing student population. The Stratton renovation, undertaken this year, is nearing closure. The Stratton community wanted to thank the construction and management crew who worked diligently to ensure that the building is ready for use in September. Members of the fifth grade decided to create a short "thank you" video, and the on-site crew, the Owner's Project Manager and supervisors were invited to a PRIDE assembly to watch the film and receive applause. Please watch the [video](#) that includes a rap, individual student and staff statements of things they were thankful for, and a great song. I want to commend the Stratton fifth grade students for creating this wonderful video that celebrates the school improvements and honors the individuals who made them possible.

The Arlington High School Building Committee (AHSBC) chose Skanska USA Building, Inc as the Owners Project Manager for the high school project. The selection of Skanska was recently affirmed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Skanska will help the AHSBC select an architect for the project, which is expected to be completed in October. The Communications Subcommittee of the AHSBC has posted an [FAQ](#) on the APS website regarding the high school project. Additional documents regarding the project can be found at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/ahsfacilities/>.

I want to be sure that the community knows that [Arlington EATS](#), the local nonprofit organization that fights food insecurity in our town, is hosting Summer Vacation lunches between July 10 and August 17. The hot lunches are provided Monday-Thursday in the Thompson cafeteria from noon until 1:00 pm. Many people do not realize that over 500 students receive free or reduced price lunches during the school year. The mission of Arlington EATS is to make sure that all children whose families face stretched resources receive a nutritious lunch during school vacations. All your child needs to do is come to Thompson as there is no sign-up required. Individuals interested in volunteering to assist in the Summer Vacation lunch program, or make a donation, can find more information on the Arlington EATS website.

Arlington EATS is just one of the many ways our community comes together to support each other. I would like to share two other examples. Every spring [A Kid's Brain Tumor Cure](#) holds a fundraiser to support research into finding answers to this devastating disease. As it has done in the past, the Brackett community came together to donate over \$1,600 as part of *Sock It to Brain Tumors Day* in honor of a student who has been challenged with this disease for several years. The *Geared Up for Kids* initiative included a walk, and first grade teacher Christine Skidmore and second grade teacher Melanie Cormier and their families were part of Team Nathan.

Burst water pipes have caused damage to several locations in Arlington over the last couple of years, and this month the problem hit the stores on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Mill Street. The owner of Laura's Sewing School put out a *Facebook* call for help to get everything moved out of the store. She soon heard from AHS Football Coach Ryan Gendron that several team members would be over to assist. You can learn more and see a picture of the students who came to the rescue on [Wicked Local Arlington](#).

June is a month of many transitions. We will miss those who will be retiring or moving on to other districts, as well as the AHS graduates who are starting the next phase of their lives. At the same time, we welcome the professionals who have chosen to join us and the new incoming Kindergarten students and their families. As the school year ends, we treasure the memories while looking forward to creating new ones.

I want to thank Debbie Botos, Julie Dunn, Claudia Bertoli and Karen Tassone for their work all year in support of this monthly newsletter.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy summer.

Best regards,

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Headline View

Department News

New OMS Mission Affirms Commitment to Providing a Strong, Supportive Learning Environment

The new Ottoson mission created by Interim Principal Eileen Woods and her leadership team addresses the academic, instructional and social emotional environment necessary to ensure a culture that supports learning, health and wellness. [Read more>](#)

Progress Continues on Building Renovations and Additions

As the renovation work at Stratton ends, the district is moving forward with creating the Gibbs 6th Grade School, adding to Thompson and Hardy, and completing the next steps in the process to renovate or rebuild Arlington High School. [Learn more>](#)

With Appreciation, APS Honors Staff Milestones, Accomplishments and Changes

Last month we honored over 40 individuals for their years of service, for attaining professional status or for choosing to enter into the retirement phase of their lives. We thank all of them for their dedication to our children and our district. [Learn more>](#)

Graduation Notes

Class of 2017 Ready to Embrace Life's Challenges, Tackle Problems and Follow Dreams

The student speakers at this year's graduation ceremony made it clear that the 305 members of the Class of 2017 understand the challenges ahead, the world problems they must tackle and the responsibilities of citizenship that they must accept as they move forward in their life journeys. [Read more>](#)

Awards & Distinctions

Elementary, Ottoson and AHS Music Groups Perform at the State House, Brookhaven

Whether they were performing at the State House or at the retirement community Brookhaven At Lexington, the members of the 4th and 5th Grade Treble Chorus, Elementary Chamber Orchestra, 6th Grade Orchestra, 6th Grade Chorus and AHS Jazz Band received great praise as they shared their musical gifts beyond our school community. [Learn more>](#)

Prose, Poetry and Pictures Fill the Pages of 2017 OMS Literary Magazine

I invite you to read the *Mirabile Scriptu 2017 Edition*, a beautiful collection of original creative writing and artwork produced by student writers, artists and editors that is available to view or download on the Ottoson website. [Read more>](#)

Ottoson Has Most Successful Year Ever at National History Day Finals Competition

All of our [National History Day](#) competitors represented Arlington beautifully at the National level in Maryland, where one of the five projects earned 10th place in Individual Documentary and another took second place in Junior Group Website. [Learn more>](#)

Five OMS Performing Arts Groups Shine at Great East Festivals

It was gold and platinum status for the four Ottoson choral groups and the Orchestra that performed in front of adjudicators at the [Great East Music Festivals](#). [Learn more>](#)

Academic Highlights

K-8 Music Curriculum Calls Students to Create, Perform, Respond and Connect

Our elementary and middle school Music teachers have created a cohesive and comprehensive curriculum that addresses the four major national standards of Creating, Performing, Responding and Connecting, using overarching grade themes and units that build on previous knowledge and affirm our district philosophy on the Arts. [Read more>](#)

Creative Highlights

Student Musicians Explore "Inspirations" During Yearlong OMS Band Festival

After reflecting on their personal sources of inspiration, Ottoson band students had the pleasure of working with Dr. David W. Rox, the middle school teacher who inspired Woodwind, Brass and Percussion teacher Paula Demetrio, when he served as the Guest Clinician for the group's own Band Festival. [Learn more>](#)

Ottoson Student Showcase Expands to Full Day Festival, with Six Plays and Twelve Directors

The OMS drama season ended with twelve eighth grade directors presenting six one act plays in a day-long festival, capping an exciting season that featured the largest musical ever produced and a Drama Club trip to New York City to see a Broadway play. [Read more>](#)

Special Events

Assemblies Help Ottoson Students Understand and Appreciate the Sacrifices of Others

A presentation from a Holocaust survivor and the annual Memorial Day Assembly provided time for all OMS students to understand and honor the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform and the courage of those who survived horrific persecution. [Read more>](#)

Athletic Highlights

Exciting Spring Season Ends Year of Accomplishments for AHS Athletes

Tournament play for Softball and Boys and Girls tennis, competition in the Individual Tennis State Championship and first and second place National track titles brought the 2016-2017 athletic year to an exciting finish. [Learn more>](#)

Continue to read the June 2017 Newsletter

Department News

New OMS Mission Affirms Commitment to Providing a Strong, Supportive Learning Environment

Interim Principal Eileen Woods reports that the Ottoson leadership team has revised the school mission statement and I would like to share this with you.

"The OMS mission is to provide a student-centered academically challenging community for early adolescents. We demonstrate a commitment to enriched teaching methods through an integrated curricula of academic and exploratory offerings. In our school, students develop respect for self and others, an appreciation for lifelong learning, and the skills necessary for participating in a diverse and changing world.

At our middle school, we affirm that:

- All learners are provided with a rigorous, interdisciplinary academic program.
- All learners are exposed to a variety of disciplines that complement and enrich academic curricula.
- All students develop a sense of community within a supportive school culture.
- All teachers are skilled at educating young adolescents, including developing cultural proficiency in their practice.
- All adult members of the school community recognize the varied academic, social, and emotional developmental needs of young adolescents.
- All teachers and administrators work collaboratively across disciplines and grade levels.
- Social-emotional learning along with health and wellness are promoted as integral components of the learning experience.
- Families are recognized as essential partners in the school community.
- The community plays an important role in supporting and enriching curricula offerings through collaborative and partnership activities."

I want to thank Dr. Woods and her team for the work that led to this clear statement of purpose for the Ottoson community.

Progress Continues on Building Renovations and Additions

As the school year comes to a close, I want to update you on the status of the work being done to ensure that we have sufficient space to house our growing student population. Arlington Public Schools is grateful for the tremendous support we have received from the town administration and the people of Arlington that is making these projects possible.

The Vision 2020 Education Task Force joined the district and the Gibbs Parent Advisory Committee to hold an open discussion and overview of the planning for the Gibbs 6th Grade School this month. The well-attended meeting enabled the audience to understand the current state of plans for the building interior, as well as the progress that is being made on operational and instructional issues. Substantial time was allotted to take questions and input from the attendees. There will be at least two additional meetings to share information and hear from the community next year. I am grateful to the Arlington Education Foundation for their [\\$30,000 School Improvement Grant](#) that provides funds to help develop this new educational environment. I am also grateful to the Vision 2020 Education Subcommittee, who has joined us in sponsoring several community conversations designed to understand our collective values and definitions of education.

As I stated in my introduction, the Stratton renovation is nearing completion and we will welcome students into the new space this September. Construction has begun on the six additional classrooms at Thompson, and we have started the process to solicit proposals to do the same at Hardy. Adding to the Hardy presents problems that we have not encountered at our other schools, since there is very little unused space surrounding the building.

We are in the Feasibility Phase of the [Massachusetts School Building Authority \(MSBA\)](#) process to renovate and/or rebuild Arlington High School. We have reviewed applications for an Owner's Project Manager and selected Skanska USA Building Inc. MSBA approved the selection of Skanska at their July 10 meeting. The next step is to work with the town and MSBA to hire an architect. Once the architect is hired, we can begin to collect input from the community. An additional 18-24 months will be required to complete the Feasibility Study and Schematic Design. Our goal is to begin renovation/construction during the 2019-2020 school year.

With Appreciation, APS Honors Staff Milestones, Accomplishments and Changes

Spring is a time of celebrations, and every year we pause to recognize the special milestones in our community. At our Staff Appreciation event last month, we honored two individuals who have served our district for 30 years and nine staff members who are retiring. We also recognized the 32 staff members who have achieved professional status. This group includes teachers, a guidance counselor, psychologists, occupational therapists, and others. All of these individuals serve our young people with dedication and dignity, and we are grateful that they have chosen Arlington as their home district. We will miss those who are departing, and send our best wishes for their well-deserved retirement. I look forward to continuing to work with all of those who will be returning in the fall. Thank you for your contributions to our children and our district.

Graduation Notes

Class of 2017 Ready to Embrace Life's Challenges, Tackle Problems and Follow Dreams

It is always inspiring to hear the bagpiper begin and watch the AHS graduation procession enter Peirce Field. This year over 300 young men and women filed into their seats to celebrate the end of their education here in Arlington and start down paths that sometimes will take them far from home. During the ceremony, the graduates honored their elementary teachers and heard stories of hope and perseverance from Faculty Speaker and History and Social Sciences teacher Michael Sandler. Several student speakers delivered remarks, and it was clear that the members of this graduating class have a solid understanding of the challenges that await them, the problems in our world and the need for them to be active and caring citizens. The Class of 2017 has a strong sense of community and giving back, having logged 23,138 hours of service during the last four years. I want to share some of the major ideas that they presented, which I believe illustrate the way these young people are embracing their futures.

- Take risks
- Talk to people outside your comfort zone
- Embrace the diversity of perspectives and opinions
- Recognize injustice, talk about it, and stand up for what is right
- Show respect to those around you

- Remember that healthy disagreements are a foundation of democracy
- What we choose to do in moments of insecurity will define who we are
- Success is measured by how we take on the global responsibilities of adulthood to spread opportunity and justice to every corner of the planet.

The Class of 2017 graduated with 98.6% of students having a post-graduate plan. In addition to college, these plans include college preparatory schools, college evening classes, the military, Gap Year programs, and employment. Just over 91.3% of the graduates are attending college, with 83.2% going on to four-year institutions and 8.1% electing to attend two-year colleges. What has been a move toward attending college beyond the scope of New England in previous years has definitely changed with the Class of 2017. Among those students who are college bound, 75% are electing to attend school in New England, and only 25% will move beyond this region, as compared to 36% in 2016 and 33% in 2015. Next fall, five students will attend four Ivy League schools and MIT, and twelve students will matriculate to colleges in Canada. A large number of students are pursuing their love of STEM fields, music and the arts at specialized schools, and others are pursuing the excitement of travel and aesthetics through programs such as airline flight attendant training and beautician school. Wherever life takes them, our hopes, dreams, and wishes for accomplishment and happiness will follow. We wish our graduates a successful college environment, and a future work environment where they will feel fulfilled. May their future life in this vast and wonderful world be filled with joy!

Awards & Distinctions



Elementary, Ottoson and AHS Music Groups Perform at the State House, Brookhaven

I am always delighted when our young instrumentalists and vocalists are invited to share their talents outside of Arlington. This spring there were several examples of this. Kudos to all the students and teachers involved in these events, and thank you for representing Arlington with your music.

On May 31, the 4th and 5th Grade Treble Chorus, led by Music teacher Jenna Havelin, and the Elementary Chamber Orchestra, conducted by String teacher Jing-Huey Wei, presented a concert at the State House. The Treble Chorus performed seven numbers that included American traditional, Panamanian and Newfoundland folk songs, as well as the lovely *Da Pacem Domine* by Melchior Franck. The Chamber Orchestra presented pieces by Handel and Mozart, as well as music from *Beauty and the Beast* and the traditional *Turkey in the Straw*. There were several school groups touring the State House who stopped to listen, and their teachers came up to our students to congratulate them on a wonderful concert and recognize our excellent music department. Representative Sean Garballey joined the group for photographs after the concert. Our teachers and young people dedicated the concert to the late Senator Ken Donnelly in honor of his work, support and campaigning for art and music in our schools.

The 6th Grade Orchestra, conducted by Ms. Wei, and the 6th Grade Chorus, led by Music teacher Justin Moore, traveled to the retirement community Brookhaven At Lexington to share their musical gifts with the residents there. This visit is always a very special one for our instrumentalists and vocalists, as the residents are a very enthusiastic audience and enjoy seeing and hearing our students.

This month the AHS Jazz Band also played at the State House, this time as part of the *La Fiesta della Repubblica*, a celebration of the Italian National Day hosted by the Consul General of Italy. On this date in 1946, the Italian people voted by universal suffrage to determine the form of government they would embrace. The choice was to create a republic instead of a monarchy, and modern Italy was born. Dr. Nicola DeSantis, Italian Consul General, made mention of the long and successful collaboration between the Consulate and the Arlington Public Schools as he thanked our administrators and band parents for making it possible for the Jazz Band to appear. Additionally, the event was attended by the Director of the [Centro Attivita Scholastiche Italiane \(C.A.S.IT\)](#), Dr. Gioconda Motta, as well as Karyn Polito, the Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor, and both praised the talent and passion of our young musicians. We are grateful to C.A.S.IT, whose grant support has been critical to our ability to offer Italian language classes at Arlington High School.

Prose, Poetry and Pictures Fill the Pages of 2017 OMS Literary Magazine

I am happy to announce that *Mirabile Scriptu 2017 Edition* has been published and is available to view or download on the Ottoson website. Any student at Ottoson is welcome to submit creative writing and/or black and white artwork for consideration by student editors who are part of the OMS Literary Magazine afterschool club. Nineteen young editors have been working under the direction of ACE teacher Amy Duke this spring to produce the current 107-page edition. The beautiful magazine contains 76 pieces of prose or poetry and 28 artworks, and is a wonderful example of the writing and artistic talent among our middle school students.

I want to congratulate the writers, artists and editors of this year's amazing edition of *Mirabile Scriptu*. I also thank Ms. Duke for providing the leadership that makes it possible for all of us to experience the creative thinking of our young people in this way.

Ottoson Has Most Successful Year Ever at National History Day Finals Competition

This has been an amazing year for the members of the Ottoson National History Day (NHD) Club. In March, I reported that Ottoson was the only school in Massachusetts to be sending more than two [National History Day](#) projects on to the National competition. This year's theme was *Taking a Stand in History*, and the five projects that moved on to compete in Maryland are shown in the next chart.

Student(s)	Category	Project Title
Grace Walters	Individual Documentary	The Massachusetts Seven: Goodridge v. The Department of Public Health
Sagar Rastogi & Connor Rempe	Group Website	Don't Tinker with my Free Speech: Tinker v. Des Moines and Student Rights
Nathan Pokress	Individual Performance	Seuss, Social Justice and Saving the World Through Children
Genevieve Baldwin & Eleanor Freed	Group Website	Death: How ACT UP New York Changed the Public View of the AIDS Crisis
Louisa Baldwin	Individual Performance	Alan Turing: The Brains to Britain's Brawn

I am pleased to report that two of these projects earned significant national standing. Grace Walters placed 10th nationally in Junior Individual Documentary, while the team of Genevieve Baldwin and Eleanor Freed took second place in Junior Group Website. You may view Genevieve and Eleanor's website [here](#). All our students represented Arlington and OMS beautifully, receiving compliments from judges on their performance and topic knowledge.

I asked History and Social Sciences teacher Jason Levy, who advises the NHD Club along with fellow teacher Tom Bushell, to help us understand the reasons these students chose their topic and category. The following words come from the Process Papers that accompany all projects, and I present them here as I think they illustrate the level of sophistication and attention that our NHD students put into this work. Grace had this to say about her choices:

"Because *Taking a Stand* has long been associated with the struggle for equality, I knew from the beginning of this project that I wanted to pursue a topic addressing people's civil liberties. An awareness of LGBTQ rights has become more prevalent throughout recent decades, and I have grown up in a time of increasing acceptance, specifically for same-sex marriage. *Goodridge v. The Department of Public Health* was a groundbreaking legal case that had a far-reaching impact, not just in Massachusetts, but across the United States. I chose this topic for my documentary because I wanted to further educate myself and ultimately teach others about this important example of fighting for civil rights.

Because I appreciate visually stimulating means to illustrate an idea, I chose the documentary medium for this project. Doing so enabled me to convey my thesis statement, not only on a factual basis, but also with the assistance of cinematic elements such as imagery, framing, compelling music, and other sensory applications.

Harvey Milk once said, "It takes no compromise to give people their rights... it takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no political deal to give people their freedom. It takes no survey to remove repression." Milk's words, eloquent and truthful as they are, present an irony. In spite of the fact that the United States Constitution affirms the fundamental rights of all people, groups that have faced ongoing and unlawful discrimination such as women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ community have had to fight and stand up for their rights throughout history. In this case, the seven plaintiff couples and pro-same-sex marriage attorneys involved in *Goodridge v. The Department of Public Health* took the ultimate stand, not just for themselves, but for gays and lesbians across Massachusetts. Although they may not have anticipated it, the plaintiffs who took a stand for marriage equality in their own state ignited national progress towards acceptance; the decision to make same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states can largely be attributed to Massachusetts's efforts."

Genevieve and Eleanor described their choices this way:

"We chose the topic of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) because we wanted to do LGBTQ+ history. We found out about ACT UP while watching a YouTube video on social activism. After looking into it more, we saw that what they accomplished was extremely powerful and important and decided to make our project on them. We focused on their effect on the public to show how their actions really reached everyone, and we mainly covered the New York City chapter of the organization because ACT UP formed in New York City and this chapter seemed to be well-known.

Our project relates to the theme because ACT UP stood for what they thought was right, pushed for change, and never backed down in the face of hate from the public and neglect from the government. In most cases, they wouldn't take no for an answer and at least wanted a compromise. They made life better for people with AIDS and HIV. Even when the organization began to have internal struggles between different groups of members they soldiered on and worked for the same cause. They improved how the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approves drugs and how medicines are distributed. Another important part of their motivation was fighting homophobia, a goal which has helped to set the foundation for that battle today. They really took a stand against the government's neglect of the AIDS epidemic."

Mr. Levy states that our students do well at National History Day for several reasons. Some schools make these projects a class assignment, but at OMS the students choose to join an extracurricular club. Our students make a personal choice to participate, and put in about 100 hours after school and on weekends to do their research and work on their projects. They choose their topic and it is one they want to learn more about and are passionate about. It is his belief that this passion and dedication has led to their success at NHD district, state and national levels. I want to congratulate all the students who took part this year, and thank Mr. Levy and Mr. Bushell for their leadership.

Five OMS Performing Arts Groups Shine at Great East Festivals

The [Great East Music Festivals](#) are non-competitive performance opportunities for vocalists and instrumentalists. The judges are music educators who watch and listen intently, and then offer a mini-clinic where feedback and suggestions for improvement are provided. Each group receives recorded comments, a score sheet and a rating.

This year four, OMS choral groups and the 7th and 8th Grade Orchestra took part in the festival. All of the groups did an outstanding job. The Girls' Ensemble and The Acoustics, both led by Music teacher Cori Gaffney, received the status of "high gold" from the adjudicators. The Boys' Chorus and the Show Choir, both conducted by Music teacher Greg Condakes, and the Orchestra, led by String teacher Jing-HueyWei, achieved platinum status. Mr. Condakes is assisted by Special Education teacher Randi Flynn who does choreography for the Show Choir.

Congratulations to everyone who participated, and to the dedicated teachers who lead these groups. The Ottoson [Performing Arts](#) program has grown significantly over the last few years, and the Great East results are a testimony to the talent and passion our young people bring to the groups they join. Rather than participating in Great East this year, the Ottoson Band, conducted by Woodwind, Brass and Percussion teacher Paula Demetrio, participated in a year-long project that culminated with a workshop led by a visiting Guest Clinician. You can read more about that in the [Creative Highlights](#) section below.

Academic Highlights

K-8 Music Curriculum Calls Students to Create, Perform, Respond and Connect

I sometimes hear a parent or guardian ask, "What is it that teachers actually do on Tuesday early release days"? This time has been invaluable for our teachers to get together for planning, professional development and idea sharing. These afternoons also provide time for our educators to work on aspects of the curriculum, and our K-8 Music curriculum is an excellent example of this.

Over the last few years, our Music teachers have spent time together on Tuesday afternoons writing and refining a new curriculum, one based on both [state](#) and [national](#) standards. They were assisted in this effort by Music Educator [Dr. Sandra Nicolucci](#), who helped develop the first *Arts Curriculum Framework* for Massachusetts. The goal is to place the performing arts in a wide social, cultural and historical perspective, drawing connections between the arts, the world and the lives of students. The curriculum has been developed around a philosophy that affirms:

- The Arts are a way of knowing, a vehicle of self-expression and communication with others
- The Arts provide personal fulfillment and have value and significance for daily life
- The methods and modes of thinking in the Arts illuminate creative solutions in other disciplines
- Self-discipline, perseverance, and the collaborative spirit so necessary in the Arts, transfer to other aspects of life

The current K-8 music curriculum includes an overarching theme for each grade that carries throughout the year with units within the theme. For example there are three units each for grades K-4 and two for grade five, which include three basic components: Unit Rationale, Enduring Understandings and Essential Guiding Questions. Each unit addresses the four major standards of Creating, Performing, Responding and Connecting. Each unit also includes a Musical Skills Inventory, Required Music Vocabulary, Important Names, World Languages, Required and Supplemental Song Repertoire, resource lists that may include books, audio and video, Interdisciplinary Connections and School-to-Home and School-to-Community Connections. An important aspect of the K-8 curriculum is that each unit spirals into the next unit and then into the next grade, building upon all previous knowledge. This chart lists the overarching themes that are being addressed by grade.

Grade	Overarching Theme
Kindergarten	First Discoveries in Music
One	People Everywhere Sing, Dance and Play
Two	Adventures in Music
Three	Instruments and Heritage
Four	Music of American Regions
Five	The Composer in Me
Six	Pachelbeatles!
Seven	Roots of Jazz and Jazz!

While all of our teachers use this curriculum, there are some variations in the way the material is taught. At Ottoson, for example, one music room has keyboards and the other has guitars. All sixth grade students will be learning to play the same song, but the instruments will differ. Teachers have the flexibility to introduce instruments such as the ukuleles that Music teacher James Ham uses at Hardy and Bishop. They also can bring in special guests. Among the guests that Thompson Music teacher Jenna Havelin brought in from the community include a folk musician who plays mandolin, guitar and banjo, a music producer who worked on a Grammy winning album with Yo-Yo Ma, and a classical Chinese Opera singer-songwriter who created an original song with the class.

This flexibility extends to concerts, with each teacher choosing what will be included. For example, Brackett and Peirce Music teacher Gina-Esile Sylva works with Visual Arts teacher Deborah Chisholm to choose a theme that runs through the concert and the companion art exhibit. At Thompson, the concert stands alone. This year, Ms. Havelin chose *A Whale of a Tale*, and the program featured animal themed songs. The [New York State School Music Association \(NYSSMA[®]\) Manual](#), which contains an extensive repertoire list of instrumental and vocal music, is a resource that many teachers use to find performance music.

We are fortunate to have such dedicated music educators who continue to update and enrich the curriculum they have developed. They think long and hard about what they hope our students will take with them into their adult lives. When I asked Ms. Esile-Sylva what she hopes our students will do in the future, she answered this way: "Sing a lullaby in tune to their own child, dance at their wedding with some beat competence, be knowledgeable consumers who know what music they like and what they don't, play or sing music for life-long enjoyment, develop a connection and understanding with people and cultures across the globe through music, and basically be a well-rounded person!"

Creative Highlights

Student Musicians Explore "Inspirations" During Yearlong OMS Band Festival

Woodwind, Brass and Percussion teacher Paula Demetrio discovered her vocation early. Her choice to devote her life to helping young people discover the joy of playing music was inspired by her own middle school band director Dr. David W. Rox. She decided to create an OMS Band Festival around the theme of *Inspirations*. Ms. Demetrio shared her own inspirations, and then asked band members to think about who or what inspires them to do what they do and asked them to write short papers on the topic. The students also had the opportunity to participate in a contest to create a design that depicted the theme.

The Band Festival came to a close with a special visit from Dr. Rox. The day before the final OMS instrumental concert, several band students stayed after school to create a *Welcome Dr. Rox!* banner. At the concert, Ms. Demetrio shared her story along with some of the student inspirations, introduced Dr. Rox and his wife Margot, and presented them with bouquet of thanks. On June 1, Dr. Rox served as the Festival Guest Clinician, giving the students wonderful tips on performing their band literature and helping the group try the ideas. The Festival included a celebratory trip to Canobie Lake, with all the band members wearing the Festival T-shirt that sported the winning *Inspiration* graphic, designed by a seventh grade student.

Ms. Demetrio compiled the students' papers into a booklet given to each band member. Dr. Rox generously donated the time he spent working with our young people, so the group presented him with a beautiful [Mollard Conducting Baton](#) in an engraved wooden case inscribed "Thank you Dr. Rox for inspiring us", as well as a gift certificate to his favorite restaurant. I want to thank Ms. Demetrio for implementing this innovative project that asked band members to reflect on the different inspirations in their lives, and also enabled them to learn from the band director who inspired her when she was in middle school.

Ottoson Student Showcase Expands to Full Day Festival, with Six Plays and Twelve Directors

The excitement and interest in the Ottoson drama program continues to build, with English teacher and Producer Jenna Fernandes reporting that this year's presentation of student-directed one act plays was "...bigger and better than ever!." Twelve eighth grade directors brought forth six shows this month that included participation by 80 students.

- [*It's Not You, It's Me*](#) by Don Zolidis directed by Chandler Betts, Milo Kiely-Song and Lucy Kitchenka
- [*Complaint Department and Lemonade*](#) by Kamron Klitggard directed by Khalil Waldron
- [*Almost, Maine*](#) by John Cariani directed by Gabby Ruberto and Amy Scoggins
- [*Rejection!*](#) by Ian McWethy directed by Sabrina Liberatore and Maia Patel-Masini
- [*Common Ground*](#) by Brendon Votipka directed by Sam Dieringer and Aliza Kopans
- [*A Simple Task*](#) by Alan Haehnel directed by Maya Baranoff and Mia Cohen

There were so many good directors that the Student Showcase became a two-part Saturday festival, with lunch provided in between for cast, directors and audience members. Parents and teacher volunteers helped make day's logistics successful.

Students who are interested in directing find a play and then submit a proposal that speaks to what they would like to do. They also respond to questions about how they would handle scheduling, communication and being an authority while still being a peer. Once they are chosen, all directors attend a meeting before auditions are held that helps to prepare them for the ups and downs and gives them some strategies for success.

Ms. Fernandes believes that one act plays create more opportunities for young actors to be featured than is possible in the fall drama or spring musical. They also allow the directors to help students who might not have a lot of stage experience learn the fundamentals. Ms. Fernandes supports them from the sidelines all along the way. They check in frequently to talk through issues that arise, and brainstorm solutions around any difficulty they are having with things like props, sets or costumes. She says that watching the young directors develop the skills they need to be successful is one of the highlights of her year. The rehearsals are fun, and the younger cast members enjoy the relationship they are able to have with eighth grade students.

During the festival, Ms. Fernandes enjoyed stepping back and watching the "drama family" all eating and laughing together. She reports that the casts really supported each other. Producing so many plays presented rehearsal challenges, such as finding enough rooms and supervising and mentoring all six casts when they rehearsed on the same days.

Next year OMS will be presenting an ensemble comedy called *Super Scary* by Tim Kochenderfer on November 3, *Bye, Bye Birdie* on April 27, 28, and the sixth annual Student Showcase of One Act Plays in June. The Ottoson drama program has really taken off. This year's musical, *Beauty and the Beast*, was the largest production ever attempted. Auditions drew 150 students, resulting in a final cast of 80 and a crew of 40. Fifty members of the Drama Club took a day-trip to New York City in May, visiting Times Square, attending a performance of *Wicked*, and eating at Ellen's Stardust Diner that features a singing wait staff. I want to congratulate all the student directors, actors and volunteers who made the One Act Festival so successful this year, and I look forward to all of next year's performances.

Special Events

Assemblies Help Ottoson Students Understand and Appreciate the Sacrifices of Others

Remembrance and understanding were the themes of two very special events attended by all Ottoson students this spring. The first was a visit from Holocaust survivor [Aron Greenfield](#), who shared his moving story of hope and perseverance. Mr. Greenfield's visit was prompted by a request from an OMS family who believe that it is important for everyone to understand the impact of this terrible time in world history.

Interim Principal Eileen Wood reports that the students were very moved, and that they wrote beautiful thank you notes to the speaker that shared their thoughts on his visit.

The second was the Memorial Day Assembly, an event that has been taking place annually for approximately 20 years. Veterans from all branches of the service were invited to have lunch and participate in the ceremony. Eighth grade students escorted the guests to the Wood Gym for the assembly, and led them down the center aisle as they were announced. The program included an Honor Guard display of flags, military music performed by the Ottoson Band, war-related poems read by various students, a keynote speech, and several videos, before ending with *Taps*.

This year, students were asked to submit a photo of a family member or friend who is currently serving in the military or has served in the past. These pictures became part of a Wall of Honor, located in the front hall of the school. This was the first time that the Memorial Day event had included a Wall of Honor, and it proved to be very moving and important to the students. The Wall was posted a few days before the ceremony, and Administrative Assistant Caryn Gillis, who coordinated the Assembly, reports that she was inundated with new photos to include. The veterans who attended were also very pleased with this addition.

Ms. Gillis says she tries to recruit new veterans to be part of the Assembly every year, and she is grateful to Jeff Chunglo, Director of Arlington Veterans Affairs, for his assistance in this. I want to thank Ms. Gillis, Mr. Chunglo, and all those involved in planning and participating in the Memorial Day Assembly. I also am grateful to the family who came forward to suggest that our young people hear from a Holocaust survivor. It is important for our children to understand and honor the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform, and the courage of those who survived horrific persecution and now come forward to share their stories. We all must remember.

Athletic Highlights



LIVE Webcast - New Balance Nationals Outdoors 2017			
NEW BALANCE NATIONALS		IN	OUT
HOME	INFO	NEWS	VIDEOS
PHOTOS	SCHEDULE	RESULTS	RECORDS
LIVE WEBCAST			
NBN Boys 3000 Meter Run Championship			
Results		Heat 2	Wind: -0.8
1	Ryan Oosting	Oosting-Ryan-MA-Arlington	14:36.1
2	Ben Varghese	Varghese-Joseph-TN-Daniel Boon	14:37.2
3	Ryan Murphy	Murphy-Ryan-IA-Linn-Mar	14:42.8
4	Hunter Moore	Olentangy Orange Tc-Oh	14:44.4
5	Ian Shanklin	Greensboro Blackhawks-NC	14:52.1
6	Matthew Meinke	Meinke-Matthew-WI-Neenah	14:54.0
7	Devin Hart	Hart-Devin-NJ-Point Pleasant B	14:57.8
8	Philip Lambert	Lambert-Philip-VA-Stafford	14:58.9

Exciting Spring Season Ends Year of Accomplishments for AHS Athletes

This has been an incredible year for AHS Athletics. Over 1,000 student athletes participated during the three seasons, as the department grew, the improved programming reached new competitive milestones. I encourage you to spend some time reviewing the excellent [presentation](#) that Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki delivered to the School Committee recently. The slides illustrate clearly that our educational athletic program focuses beyond the playing field, sports specific skills and the wins and losses, encompassing leadership, unity, pride, service and community involvement.

Outstanding team and individual achievements marked this month's tournament season. Softball went into the Division 2 North competition as the #7 seed. The Spy Ponders bested Watertown 8-7 in their first game, then fell to #2 seed Dracut in the quarterfinals. The team appreciated the online note they received from a *Boston Herald* sports reporter that said, "Proved me wrong from the outset, great season."

The Division 2 North matches that the Boys and Girls Tennis teams were involved in went back and forth, with both teams playing well. Boys tennis entered their match as the #10 seed, and after four hours, lost to Melrose. Girls tennis, seeded #12, battled to the end before falling to Burlington.

Ryan Oosting continued his amazing individual performances this month. At the Outdoor Track All-State championship, he set a new personal record of 9:05:85 in the 2-mile event, and then went on to capture another state title, taking the 1-mile at 4:14 after a short recovery time. The New England competition was next, where Ryan placed first in the 1-mile. Then it was on to the Nationals in Greensboro, North Carolina for this amazing athlete. Ryan captured first place in the United States in the 5K in an amazing final lap performance that you can see [here](#), beating the indoor 5K champion. The next day Ryan came in second in the 2-mile.

Mia Wallace ended her outstanding AHS tennis career by competing in the Individual Tennis State Championship. Next year she will be playing for Division 1 Elon University in North Carolina. Click [here](#) to read the details of Mia's final match as a Spy Ponder.

I am proud to report that Arlington sent six young women to the [MSTCA](#) Heptathlon this month. I also want to note that the AHS Frisbee Club had a great season, placing second in the Amherst Individual Tournament that included 32 teams from across the U.S. While all this was going on, the Cross Country team found time to host their annual [5K Fun Run](#) in support of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in memory of Catherine Malatesta who lost her battle with cancer in 2015.

Athletic Director Melissa Dlugolecki wants to remind everyone that the summer hours for the Fitness Room are posted on the [website](#). All users must be current students at Arlington High School, sign-in and out when using the Room and bring a [Permission Form](#) signed by parent/guardian. Research indicates that athletes are significantly more vulnerable to injuries if they do not prepare in advance for a competitive season. By working different muscle groups and building endurance, bodies are better positioned to execute varying skills safely over the course of a season. All athletes are encouraged to work with their coaches and our athletic trainer to implement an effective program. Note that for some athletes, this may mean including a period of rest if there has not been any for quite some time. We are grateful to the volunteer coaches who make it possible for us to have the Fitness Room open during the summer.

Ms. Dlugolecki also wants all athletes to remember that [ImPact Testing](#) and the online [NFHS Concussion Course](#) are two different requirements that must be completed for athletes to maintain eligibility. The concussion course is required annually, and the ImPact test needs to be completed every two years. ImPact testing measures the baseline off each individual so if ever faced with a concussion, our trainer is best able to help the team assess appropriate steps of care. The concussion course teaches how to identify and treat a concussion. Please use the links above to get more information.

Congratulations to all our athletes and coaches on a wonderful 2016-2017 season. I heartily agree with Ms. Dlugolecki who says that it takes the combined efforts of many in the Spy Ponder family to create and sustain such a dynamic and successful program. Thank you to the coaches, teachers, parents, students, fans, members of the Arlington Department of Public Works, the district custodial team, the School Committee, local businesses, transportation and many others who come together in support of our student athletes. Looking ahead, Ms. Dlugolecki has set September 6, 2017 as the date for the annual Athletics Night that kicks-off the new season by bringing together coaches, athletes and parents. I look forward to another exciting year.