

Welcome Inside



AVON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Connecticut

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Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla Appointed Superintendent of Schools by Avon Board of Education



At a special meeting held on the evening of December 12, 2017, the Avon Board of Education appointed Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla to the position of Avon Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Carnemolla has been the Superintendent of Watertown schools since 2014. Her educational career began as a Social Studies teacher in Bridgeport, has transitioned to assistant principal and principal positions in the state's technical high school system and has also been an adjunct professor at Post University in Waterbury. Dr. Carnemolla is a graduate of the University of Bridgeport where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Literature & Civilization, majoring in History and minoring in English. She went on to receive her Master of Science in Education at the University of Bridgeport, her Administrative Certification at Sacred Heart University, and her Doctorate of Education and Superintendent Certification from the University of Connecticut.

Avon Board of Education Chair Houston Putnam Lowry stated, "Dr. Carnemolla is well-credentialed and fully qualified. We could have picked anyone who is fully qualified but what we wanted is someone who is collaborative, will devote themselves heart and soul to Avon and is excited at the prospect of working with us and the staff. We found that in spades."

Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla will begin her position as Avon's Superintendent of Schools on March 6, 2018. Please join us in offering her a very warm welcome aboard.



Pine Grove Students Participate in Service Learning Projects

Throughout the course of the school year, students at Pine Grove School work to build and strengthen their understanding of good character. Each month, the school focuses on one Pillar of Character. These pillars include: respect, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, fairness, and citizenship. Each pillar is introduced at a whole school assembly and then follow-up activities are completed in each classroom.

To strengthen this experience, the school has implemented service learning projects at each grade level. Principal Jess Giannini says the service learning projects involve two main components, “First, each student is actively involved in volunteering or supporting the community. Next, the student has time to reflect on the experience. The concept of



service learning is grounded in experiential education – or learning by doing.”



Most recently, kindergarteners at Pine Grove School spent part of their afternoon preparing comfort bags for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

First, each child collected items to be included in the bags. This included a combination of self-care items, books, and a toy. Next, they worked together with their classmates to arrange the bags.

On Tuesday, December 19, a member of DCF’s organization visited the kindergarteners to talk about how the bags they created would



benefit children in need this holiday season. Finally, at an all school assembly held on Friday, December 22, the kindergarteners



shared a slide show presentation that highlighted their service learning project for students in grades 1–3 to see.

Responsibility Builds Success at Roaring Brook School



An elementary school is made up of many things: learning, caring, and connecting with others. This fall, Roaring Brook School staff have put a concerted focus on responsibility, being a community of giving, and perhaps most significantly, an emphasis on student leadership. A long-held belief at RBS is that **Responsibility Builds Success**, and this belief is especially powerful when one considers how it can and should impact *all* students, regardless of grade, interests, or talents – *everyone* can and does grow when given responsibilities and leadership opportunities.

Principal Noam Sturm says, “If you walked around the RBS hallways these past few weeks, you’d find students demonstrating leadership in a multitude of ways. You might see fourth graders out in the hallways reading sight words with first graders – providing needed practice in a fashion that makes both members of that team feel successful! You would see our Roaring Morning Crew – the student-led creators of our daily, on-line morning announcements streamed into all of our classrooms each morning.” The Crew consists of RBS students who “share out” our birthdays, celebrations, challenges, and new topics, in a fun and enthusiastic fashion, and permitting students to have true “camera time” while demonstrating wonderful leadership and skill building.

And over the past few months, if you visited the office in the morning, or saw the dismissal process in the afternoon, Principal Sturm says, “You’d see what an integral part our students themselves have in a safe, efficient, and fun dismissal! RBS revamped its entire dismissal procedure this year to make it safer and more enjoyable for our students, and an intentional side-benefit has been how our students are demonstrating leadership via serving in a variety of ways. First, they serve as Bus Ambassadors (see photos below) each afternoon, collecting and then leading down the hallways our younger-grade students, ensuring a safe and fun trip from classroom to bus. And the following morning, a different set of Bus Organizers comes up to the office conference room to sort all our bus tags



(which each student uses as their “pass” onto the bus) into the correct grade and class, to ensure that the coming afternoon runs just as smoothly.”



Enrichment Clusters Help Thompson Brook School Students Take Charge of Learning

Thompson Brook School recently completed its second venture into *Enrichment Clusters*. “Clusters,” as staff and students affectionately refer to it, is part of a program called The School Wide Enrichment Model, designed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli, an expert in the area of gifted education since the 1970’s. This enrichment experience reflects the district mission to *inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility*.

Principal Michael Renkawitz says, “The ultimate goal is for students to take charge of their own learning, with only guidance from the teacher. The direction of the learning is to come from the students as they begin to explore a new topic or to expand their current understanding. Through research, discussions, and for some topics, experts as guest speakers, student focus may shift directions over the seven week period. The goal is similar to formal gifted and talented programs. The difference is we include all students, as each student has his or her own talents.”

Students completed an interest survey of general topics they would like to study or explore using this model. From this list, TBS teachers selected a topic in which they are comfortable facilitating a group of students in their study. Students next selected four “Clusters” of interest from the list and each was placed in one of those four offerings.

Areas of study ranged from community ser-



vice type studies, to learning a new skill, to exploring activities for outside of school, varieties of art, and much more.

Each area tries to focus on a product or service from which the school and/or community may benefit. Outcomes include: Book Buddies going to classrooms at PGS; students signing the Pledge of Allegiance at a town meeting; Kindness Rocks (painted with inspirational messages or words of encouragement) appearing in a variety of places throughout the school; a community service project to benefit children at CCMC; a community service project to provide school supplies for students in Hartford who have been displaced from their homes in Puerto Rico; students leading friends in “old” games at recess; and the creation of Dream Catchers and Talking Sticks, to name a few.



Avon Middle School Students Demonstrate Compassion and More



December 2017 was a busy month at Avon Middle School. AMS was the hub of the Connecticut Education Association sponsored “Holiday Bear” gift-giving campaign. This event began in October, and culminated with Avon families donating items for sponsored children around the state of Connecticut. Prior to the winter break, students finished collecting items and helped to load the U-Haul truck that took all the donated gifts from the Avon Public Schools Community to their lucky recipients.

Student Council sponsored a pajama day fundraiser and donated \$300 to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. CCMC works to improve the physical and emotional health of children through family-centered care, research, education, and advocacy. It is always wonderful to see and support student-led initiatives such as this.

Principal Dave Kimball says, “Over thirty students were recognized by faculty members through our AMS Shoutouts program. Our mission is to inspire, challenge, and empower students to develop compassion, curiosity, responsibility, and resilience. This program recognizes students who demonstrate compassion, responsibility, intellectual curiosity, and resilience both in and out of the classroom. Students can be nominated for one or more of our four pillars of character. We are proud of how our students conduct themselves on a daily basis, and it is always a pleasure to recognize their efforts in making our AMS community exceptional.”





Avon High School Students and Faculty Receive State and National Recognitions

Avon High School has received several state and national recognitions this year. All of them speak to the expanding opportunities for AHS students in the classroom and beyond.

National Merit Scholarship Commended Students and Semifinalists

Congratulations to the following AHS students who have been named Commended Students in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program: **Carly Carpino, Tanvi Chadha, Luke A. Kimball, Benjamin R. Lampert, Angela M. Martinez, Catherine Martinez, Mohsin Mirza, Ryan J. Ollestad, Daniel I. Oprica, Manus Prasad, Jack H. Stokesbury, Shekar R. Sunderesh, Jennifer L. Wall, Humza Zaidi and Jason Zheng** AND to the AHS National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists: **John H. Carroll, Ayushi U. Hegde, Caroline S. Nisbet, Maitreya Vyas, Alec Wang, Erin T. Weston and Kelly Y. Zheng.**



Avon High Statewide Testing - Avon High School is #6!

In last year's statewide SAT day exams, given to all members of the junior class, Avon High School placed sixth overall in the state of Connecticut. There are 179 school districts in Connecticut and 230 high schools.

College Board District Honor Roll

Avon High School was also one of ten high schools in the state of Connecticut to be named to the 8th Annual AP District Honor Roll. It is the first time that Avon High School has earned this distinction.



Avon High School Students and Faculty Receive State and National Recognitions



AHS Students Win the 2017 Congressional App Challenge for the 5th District

Over the last four months, over 4,100 students throughout the United States participated in the 14-week regional competition of the 2017 Congressional App Challenge submitting over 1,270 original student-created apps. The Congressional App Challenge is an official initiative of the U.S. House of Representatives, managed by the Internet Education Foundation which aims to engage students in coding and computer science. One hundred ninety Congressional districts hosted app challenges throughout 42 states, including Avon's 5th Congressional District with Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty.

Avon Public Schools is proud to announce CT's 5th Congressional District winners and creators of the Virtual Forensics Chemical Lab Simulation App (for Liquids, Metals, and Non-metal Solids) are AHS 10th grade students and sisters **Dheepa Hari** and **Jaya Hari**. Dheepa and Jaya's app simulates a forensic lab, allowing students to perform virtual forensics lab experiments that are free, mobile, user friendly and robust while still following detailed safety procedures. Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty presented certificates to Dheepa and Jaya at AHS on December 4, 2017. Both Dheepa and Jaya are also active in Girls Who Code, an extra curricular club under the direction of AHS math and computer science teacher, Jeanine LaBrosse. Jaya and Dheepa will join other winners across the country to showcase their apps to the members of Congress and members of the technology community at a reception on Capitol Hill to be held in April 2018. The list of the 2017 Congressional App Challenge winners can be viewed online at CongressionalAppChallenge.us.



Congratulations to the Girls' Cross Country Team who won the Class M state championship and the **AHS Field Hockey Team** that has been honored with the 2017 Lucy Goodridge Sportsmanship Award for demonstrating fundamental values of respect, fairness, honesty and responsibility as positive role models.



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University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE) Recognition

In December AHS was recognized by the University of Connecticut for having the greatest growth (#1 in CT) and the tenth greatest participation in Connecticut.

Faculty Recognitions

Congratulations to: **Luke Rosnick**, AHS physics teacher, who recently received an **Educational Testing Service Recognition of Excellence award** for Physics Content Knowledge by scoring in the top 15% of all test takers who have taken the State Physics Certification test in recent years; **Dr. Eileen O'Neil** for completing her doctorate last summer; and to longtime Avon High School girls' cross country coach, **Al Dadario**, who was among ten coaches honored at the 41st annual CT High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame induction ceremony on November 16th, 2017.



Avon Board of Education Welcomes New Members and Elects Officers

The Avon Board of Education welcomed three new Board members, **David Cavanaugh**, **Jeffrey S. Fleischman** and **Bogdan Oprica**, at its regularly scheduled meeting on January 16, 2018. The Board also elected new officers: **Debra Chute**, **Chair**; **Jay Spivak**, **Vice-Chair**; and **Jeffrey S. Fleischman**, **Secretary**.



Seated left to right: Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Debra Chute, Jackie Blea, Laura Young
Back row: Jay Spivak, David Cavanaugh, Jason Indomenico, Houston Putnam Lowry, Bogdan Oprica

AVON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Leadership

JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Donna Nestler-Rusack, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for
Teaching and Learning

Jodi Kryzanski
Program Director

Kimberly Mearman, Ph.D.
Director of Pupil Services

Tiffany Fox
Supervisor of Special Education

Heather Michaud
Director of Fiscal Affairs

Maggie Dreher
Director of Nutrition Services

Myles Altimus
Director of Operations

James Connelly
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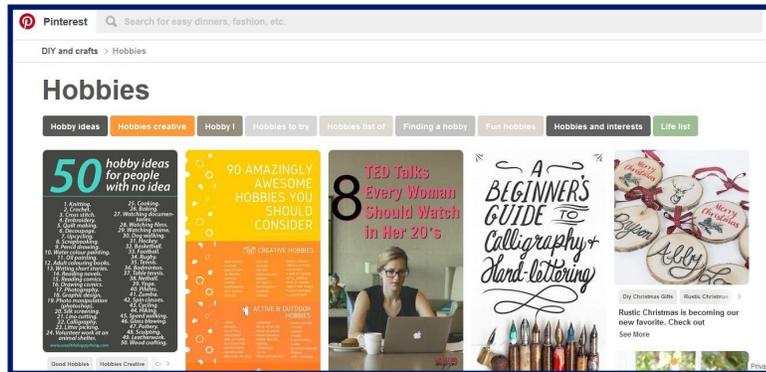
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National Hobby Month



If you haven't made any new year resolutions yet this January, National Hobby Month provides the perfect excuse to try one. Hobbies, by their very definition, are something we do just because we like them. Did you know that practicing a hobby can lead you to live a happier, healthier and more meaningful life? Hobbies have been known to decrease anxiety and provide increased concentration levels over time. To celebrate this month, go out and try a new hobby or take your current hobby to the next level.

Looking for ideas?

Are you an outdoors person? Interested in starting a blog? Looking at that miscellaneous drawer at home and thinking maybe it is time to start a collection? Curious about that strange bird in your backyard? Ever wonder how the magician really does that trick? Or are you just one of those crafty people?

There are hobbies for children and families, for the nature lover, science lover, history buff, collector, crafter, music lover, and social butterfly. There is a hobby for everyone! If you are looking for suggestions, type hobby into your favorite search engine or visit your local library for a book of ideas. Who knows, maybe reading will become your new hobby?

January

Our Mission: To inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility.