



# Alfred-Almond Central School District Newsletter

## November 2024

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## A Message from the Superintendent

**D**ear Alfred-Almond Family,  
As the leaves change and a crispness fills the air, November reminds us to pause and reflect on our cherished values. This month offers several opportunities to express gratitude, appreciation and kindness.

On November 11, we observe Veterans Day. This day is dedicated to honoring the brave men and women who have selflessly served our country. We recognize their patriotism, courage and willingness to sacrifice for our freedom.

In observance of Veterans Day, schools will be closed on Monday, November 11. Please take this opportunity to reflect on our veterans' sacrifices and thank those who have served.

Shortly after Veterans Day, we celebrate World Kindness Day on November 13. This global event promotes the importance of kindness in our daily lives and encourages us to spread compassion and goodwill.

Finally, November culminates with Thanksgiving on November 28. This beloved holiday provides a time to gather with loved ones, express gratitude for our blessings and share in the season's abundance.

Let us embrace the spirit of November by demonstrating appreciation for our veterans, practicing kindness towards others and giving thanks for all we have.

### School Safety:

The safety and well-being of our students and staff remains a top priority. We continue implementing measures to ensure a secure learning environment and appreciate your partnership in these efforts. Please remember the following:

- All visitors must enter through the main entrances of the buildings and present a valid ID.
- Visitors, staff and students are reminded to close doors and are encouraged to report any behavior or conditions that may be observed as threatening.

We will conduct fire, lockdown and emergency go-home drills throughout the year to prepare for various scenarios. Before, during and after these drills, we will engage students in age-appropriate discussions about the protocol and its importance. We encourage you to reinforce the seriousness of these drills at home.

### School Board Appreciation:

October 14-18 marked School Board Appreciation Week. I sincerely thank our five dedicated school board members, who bring more than 30 years of combined experience to their roles. Their commitment to our district is truly commendable. Please join me in acknowledging their tireless efforts on behalf of our students and community.

*Continued on page 2*

## Superintendent's Message (continued)

### Working Together:

Alfred-Almond is an extraordinary place because of the collective efforts of students, staff, families and community members. Your involvement is invaluable to our success. Please don't hesitate to contact the school administration with any questions or concerns.

I am proud to be a part of this remarkable community and wish you all a pleasant remainder of the fall season.

Sincerely,

**Brett Dusinberre**

Superintendent of Schools

## Elementary Art Room News

In October, our UPK artists created a beautiful collection of autumn apple prints. Some of the apples used came from the tree in the yard right outside the art room window! Well done, UPK.



## Firefighters Visit During Fire Safety Week

Students celebrated Fire Safety Week with a visit from local firefighters, safety demonstrations, hands-on learning and a poster contest.



UPK students had a great time trying on fire gear!



Left: Kaia LaPlante, the 2024 Fire Safety Poster Contest Winner. Right: Henry Frechette was excited to test the fire hose.



Teachers practiced their fire extinguishing skills.



THANK YOU to our volunteer firefighters for sharing your knowledge with our staff and students and for all you do in our community.



## Kindergartners Visit Pumpkin Farm

Mrs. Dwyer's and Mrs. Cady's kindergarten classes visited Stokoe Farms on October 17. They had so much fun exploring and trying all of the activities and each student picked out a pumpkin to take home. It was a great trip.



## Students Attend Annual Alfred State Tour

On October 11, Alfred State's Agriculture Farm hosted several area schools at its annual farm tour event. Second-graders visited cows, horses, goats and other farm animals up close and saw how cows are milked. Thank you, Alfred State, for this wonderful day.



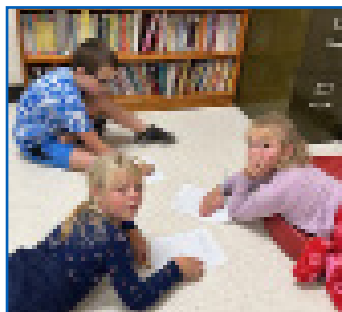
## Sixth-Grade Science Investigations

Sixth-grade scientists and engineers started the year with Variables and Design Investigations. Student groups built air trolleys and explored variables that affected the distance their trollies moved. They collected, graphed and interpreted data to make predications. This investigation was a great kickoff to sixth-grade science.



## Mathletes Have Fun Friday with Dice

Mr. Weller's fourth-grade mathletes spent a fun Friday practicing subtraction with dice. They worked in groups of two or three and everyone did an excellent job.



## Circus Captivates A-A Audience

On October 19, the Cole All-Star Circus came to Alfred-Almond High School gymnasium. Attendees were kept on the edge of their seats throughout the night as they were treated to a mesmerizing display of talent and entertainment.

The event, hosted by the AACS Student Government, under the guidance of advisor Kate Carretto, featured a lineup of dazzling acrobats and fearless trapeze artists who showcased their remarkable skills and artistry. The audience was captivated

by the performers' gravity-defying stunts and awe-inspiring maneuvers.

In addition to the main acts, classic carnival fare such as popcorn, cotton candy and light-up toys and face-painting created a truly immersive and festive atmosphere.

This event was a wonderful opportunity for families to come together and enjoy a night of pure entertainment





## A Note from the Secondary Principal

I hope that the 2024-25 school year is off to a fantastic start for you and your children. I cannot express how excited I am to join a fantastic school and community. I greatly appreciate the warm welcome I have received.

I want to take this opportunity to impress the importance of school attendance. It is paramount that students are in school for instruction to have the greatest opportunity to excel at their academics. New York State categorizes a student as chronically absent if they miss more than ten percent of their class time for the school year. This means if a student is absent from school (excused or unexcused) for 18 or more days for the school year, he/she will be deemed as chronically absent by the state.

In the secondary school, an attendance committee has been established to track the progress of our students' attendance and take steps to ensure that our students stay below that mark. Monthly, the committee will send notification letters home if a student is absent from school more than ten percent of the year-to-date. The committee also will look at strategies for students who are chronically absent and address them accordingly based on the individual situation.

Our school day starts at 8:15 a.m. Any student who arrives after that time is considered tardy. If the student is accompanied by a note from a parent, or documentation of an appointment, that tardy will be listed as excused. If the student does not have a note to document his/her tardiness, it will be marked as unexcused. Students who accumulate more than five unexcused tardies for the year will be addressed by me in a conference and you as the parent will be notified. Excessive tardiness can result in a school consequence which can include up to an after school detention. Like absences, tardies can negatively impact student success in their academics. The focus of this policy is to keep students on time and prepared for every minute of success in the classroom. When students are in school, students are learning.

If your child is sick, he/she should stay home and focus on getting well. Outside of illness, it is imperative that students attend all days of instruction. I appreciate your time, attention and support on this matter.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns at anytime at [ghurley@aacssapps.com](mailto:ghurley@aacssapps.com) or 607-276-6555.

**Geoffrey D. Hurley**  
Secondary Principal

## National Merit Scholarship Program

Congratulations to Alfred-Almond Sseniors Gabriel Fioretto and Brogan Donlon, who were recently recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program for their outstanding performance on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) in 2023.



## Thank you, Board members

School Board Recognition week was held October 16-20 to honor the board for its leadership in education and continuing service to the children of this community.

Thank you to Alfred-Almond Board of Education members: President Maeghen Kuhn, Vice-President John D'Angelo, Gary Acker, Jason Burdick and Heather Miller for your dedication to our district and community.

Alfred Almond Performing Arts presents  
**Meredith Wilson's**  
**The MUSIC Man**  
Book, Music and Lyrics by **MEREDITH WILSON**  
Story by **MEREDITH WILSON and FRANKLIN LACEY**  
**Friday March 14th**  
**Saturday, March 15th**  
**Sunday, March 16th**  
Ticket sales will be online or at the door.  
The Music Man is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)

## Junior and Senior News from the Counseling Office

Juniors are busy working with Mrs. Boone to complete their Junior Interviews and also should be researching post-secondary schools and exploring their career options. Students are being interviewed to find out information on how to use web resources to do their college/career search. They are educated on the importance of college entrance exams (PSAT, SAT and ACT), grade point average and rigor of class schedule (AP classes, Regents classes), as well as involvement in sports and/or clubs and community activities to be a well rounded student. Students are being reminded to utilize the ASVAB program to facilitate their career search/career portfolio. Juniors also are strongly encouraged to attend college tours and open houses, meet with college representatives at school and take the appropriate entrance exams.

The PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) is a comprehensive assessment program that measures college readiness and provides students with the tools they need to plan for the future. The test is offered each year at AACPS in mid-October for juniors. The PSAT measures skills in three academic areas: critical reading, mathematics and writing skills. It also prepares students for the SAT. The PSAT also is used by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as a means of screening entrants in their annual competition for recognition and college scholarships. On the average, students who take the PSAT/NMSQT score 120 points higher on the SAT than those who do not.

Juniors also are encouraged to take the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) in March, May and/or June. Parents of juniors were mailed a letter which stated the deadline dates for this test. The SAT helps colleges and universities identify students who could succeed in their institutions. It also assesses critical reading, mathematical reasoning and writing skills. The SAT is an internationally recognized, accurate measure of college readiness and scholarship potential.

The ACT, another national college admission and placement examination, is similar to the SAT. The ACT covers the subject areas of English, math, reading, science and writing. The ACT is more curriculum-based versus aptitude-based. It is offered year round at designated schools. We encourage retaking both the SAT and ACT to improve your score. Some colleges recommend that students take the SAT subject test(s) as well. Review classes for the SAT will be offered at Alfred-Almond in February/March. All College Board tests are digital.

Test review is available at the following websites:

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org),

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org),

[www.asvabprogram.com](http://www.asvabprogram.com)

[www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

### Suggested Timeline for College and Career Planning

**November:** Consider the characteristics a college or job should have to meet your needs. Think about size, location, cost/earning potential, courses/job requirements, teaching staff/supervisors, facilities and social activities and opportunities.

**December:** E-mail or call colleges and workplaces you are seriously considering and request information (course guide books, application and financial aid). Access virtual college tours and online college information. Investigate scholarship opportunities. Look for your PSAT/NMSQT score report. Start planning to take the SAT. You also may need to take the ACT. Check with the schools you are interested in for specific testing requirements. Ask your high school counselor about registration deadlines. Dates also are posted in the school counseling office (SCO).

**January:** Prepare for college entrance exams (SAT/ACT). The SCO usually arranges for a free SAT preparation course that is team-taught by an English and Math teacher here at AACPS (six evening sessions). There also are online platforms for review on the College Board site. The SCO has SAT preparation programs on its computers. If you have not already, attend financial aid nights. During any college visits, be sure to meet with an admissions counselor and a financial aid officer to find out what types of aid are available. Visit the FAFSA website at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov), the HESC (Higher Education Services Corporation) website at [www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov) and the Federal Student Aid website at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov).

**February:** Start seriously investigating private scholarships and other student aid programs. Ask your teachers and counselor if any local organizations offer free use of a scholarship search program.

**March:** Continue to gather and evaluate information on colleges and jobs. Continue investigating financial aid resources of the colleges you are most interested in. Access online applications. Register for the June ACT.

**April:** If you decide to retake either the SAT or ACT after receiving your scores from the first administration, plan for when you will do so. SAT retake registration may be called in over the phone (fee involved) or submitted online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Begin scheduling visits to the top five schools of your choice. If appropriate, set up an interview and an overnight visit. Begin preparing essays for college admissions and scholarship applications.

*Continued on page 6*

## Counseling Office (continued)

**May:** Look into volunteer work/internships, career-related employment opportunities, on-campus academic experiences at a college or university and travel opportunities. These experiences may provide material for major decisions, college essays and transcript building. Colleges like to see more than just academics on a transcript. Continue researching scholarship opportunities.

**June:** Prepare for Regents and final exams. Take the SAT, if you have not already done so. Start drafting your activities resume. If you have the opportunity, visit as many colleges on your list as possible. Obtain a summer job that might be related to your career interests.

### College Application Tips

Currently, Mr. McAneney is meeting with each senior for their Senior Interviews to assist with and solidify their future plans. For most seniors, this is the time of year when they will begin the important task of applying to colleges. Regardless of the number of colleges you choose to apply to, the following process will help you avoid confusion and unnecessary delays.

#### Step 1:

When registering for the ACT or SAT, designate which colleges are to receive your score reports. Most colleges require that you send official test scores directly from the test center (at an additional cost).

#### Step 2:

Complete college application forms online. The SUNY application site and the Common Application site are good starting places. See Mr. McAneney for info on which colleges accept these applications. Students also can complete applications from college websites. It is a good idea to keep a copy of your applications. If a teacher and/or counselor recommendation is required, arrange for those immediately.

#### Step 3:

Online applications will require a credit card number for the application fee. Students mailing their application will need to enclose a check for the appropriate amount. Do not send cash!

#### Step 4:

An official high school transcript will need to be sent to the college from the school counseling office, either electronically or by mail. Students applying online through Common App can electronically invite counselors and teachers to submit needed information. This information will be uploaded electronically by the teachers and/or Mr. McAneney. Students applying online to SUNY may print a transcript request form that needs to go to the SCO.

If you would like Mr. McAneney to check your online applications before sending them electronically, please see him.

#### Step 5:

Don't delay, act today!

*REMINDER: Seniors should start FAFSA applications at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) beginning December 1.*

### The Importance of Advanced Placement ACE/ Alfred State Classes/College Classes

Alfred-Almond Central School District currently offers eight AP classes, eight ACE classes, one Alfred University class and two Alfred State classes taught at AACS. Classes also are available at Alfred University and online through Alfred State and Corning Community College. If you are planning to go to college you should take advantage of these opportunities. Completing these courses while in high school can be a great benefit during the college application process and undergraduate life.

Four reasons students should consider taking college classes in high school:

#### Strengthen Your High School Transcript

Most colleges would agree that the most important part of your application is your academic record (high school transcript). Admissions offices want to see that students have participated in the most challenging courses available. Success in these courses shows colleges that you are prepared for the next level. At Alfred-Almond, the most challenging courses offered are high school college classes.

#### Develop College-Level Skills

College classes require critical thinking skills that you will encounter as a college student. The ability to write essays and problem solve successfully are just two of the skills necessary to succeed in college.

#### Save Money

By taking several college classes during high school, you may be able to graduate from college a semester or even a year early. This could save you thousands of dollars.

#### Choose a Major Sooner

College courses provide an in-depth introduction to a specific subject area and also may fulfill general education requirements. This means you may have more room in your schedule to explore different fields earlier in your college program.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your counselor if you need assistance with the college and career planning process or if questions arise.



## Outdoor Club Adventures

As we kick off the new school year, Outdoor Adventure Club is thrilled to announce that we will utilize our outdoor teaching space to engage in various team-building and outdoor activities this school year. These activities will strengthen our bond as a club and provide an opportunity for personal growth and development.

One of the activities we started with is the “human knot,” a classic team-building exercise that challenges participants to work together and communicate effectively to untangle themselves from a knot without letting go of each other’s hands. This activity promotes problem-solving, cooperation and trust, all essential skills for any outdoor adventurer.



In addition to the human knot, we also took on the challenge of traversing the climbing wall. This activity is physically demanding and requires mental focus, strategy and trust in our fellow club members. We are excited to see everyone push their limits and conquer this thrilling challenge. By engaging in these team-building activities, we will strengthen our club’s sense of community and camaraderie and develop skills essential for any outdoor enthusiast.



We hope that these activities will ignite a passion for adventure, teamwork and personal growth in each member. We look forward to an exciting year filled with outdoor adventures, new challenges and endless exploration.



## "FAB" Fall Family Festival

The Alfred-Almond Fine Arts Boosters pulled off a pretty “fab” Fine Arts Festival despite the weather and relocating the second annual festival to the high school gym. Students in attendance were offered various creative activities ranging from paper marbling to balloon animals to squeegee painting and everything in between. Our raffle tables were overflowing with generous items donated by the community and this year the Old Mill Mobile Food Truck kept attendees happy and well fed.



Rounding out the festival were several live musical



performances from Alfred University groups including the AU Pop Ensemble and Guzheng Players, several songs from the local talents of AACS music teachers Lisa Karr,

Natalie Kelleher and Tyler Avnet, as well as a few numbers from The Ukuladies: Jami Snyder and Amy Powers.

Several community members dropped off donations of their unused musical instruments to help kick off our band instrument drive. We will continue to accept instruments to allow more students to participate in the AACS band through the years.



Thank you to all the students who volunteered to run activities, to the Fine Arts Boosters members who planned the event, the community members who donated raffle items, Alfred University Music department, AACS Music department, those who donated instruments and all those who showed support by attending the festival. We look forward to hosting this event each fall.



Anyone interested in joining the AACS Fine Arts Boosters should email [jbensley@aacapps.com](mailto:jbensley@aacapps.com) or [apowers@aacapps.com](mailto:apowers@aacapps.com) for more information.

## POSTAL PATRON

Alfred-Almond Central School  
6795 Route. 21  
Almond, New York 14804  
Return Services Requested

US Postage Paid  
Alfred, New York 14802  
Permit No. 20  
Non-Profit Organization

## CONGRATULATIONS

A-A Students, Faculty, and Staff!

**Alfred-Almond High School  
has achieved exceptional rankings, including:**

- #126 out of 1,210 in New York State
- #1 out of 21 component districts in GST BOCES
- #1 ranking in Allegany and Steuben Counties
- #1 ranking in the Southern Tier

**U.S. News and World Report's released the information  
and based the rankings on the following six factors:**

College readiness, state assessment proficiency, state  
assessment performance, under-served student  
performance, college curriculum breadth,  
and graduation rate.

**WE ARE SO PROUD OF OUR SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY AND GRATEFUL FOR THE  
SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT OF OUR  
FACULTY & STAFF, STUDENTS,  
PARENTS, GUARDIANS,  
AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.**

## Important Dates

November 11 ..... No School: Veterans Day  
November 25-26 ..... Parent/Teacher Conferences  
*Elementary Students Dismissed at 11:50 a.m.*  
November 27-29 ..... No School: Thanksgiving Recess  
December 23-January 3 ..... No School: Holiday Recess  
January 20 ..... No School: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
January 29 ..... No School: Asian Lunar New Year  
February 17-21 ..... No School: Winter Recess

## Snow and Emergency Closing Info

**A**s a reminder to parents, with winter weather, it is sometimes necessary to close school because it is not safe for our students to walk or ride to school.

Should it be necessary to close school, you will receive an automated message notifying you of this occurrence.

For additional information on school closings, please listen to one of the following radio or TV stations:

WGRZ-Channel 2

WKBW - Channel 7

WIVB - Channel 4

Spectrum News

WHDL (PIG 95.7)

BIG OLY 107.1

## Concert Preparations Underway

**T**he Alfred-Almond Music Department is hard at work preparing for our 2024-25 school year concerts. We hope you'll join us for the following performances:

December 12: Elementary Holiday Concert

December 18: Secondary Holiday Concert

March 26: Secondary *Music in our Schools Month* Concert

June 3: Elementary Strawberry Festival Concert

June 5: Secondary Senior Night/Strawberry Festival Concert

## Order Your Yearbook Today

**T**he 2025 ALCEN Yearbook is now on sale. Again this year, all yearbooks must be ordered online. The cost is \$60. To order your yearbook:

- Visit [www.jostens.com](http://www.jostens.com);
- Click the link: Order Your Yearbook Today;
- Search for Alfred-Almond Central High School;
- Follow the prompt to input your information.

ALCEN staff members have been hard at work taking pictures in school and at our sporting events and working on designing the yearbook pages.

Thank you for your support!