

# YOUR SCHOOLS

2022

Aurora City School District

## From the Superintendent

By MIKE ROBERTO  
Superintendent of Schools



We are well into the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year and though we continue to adapt to changes due to the pandemic, the one constant of both the young people and staff in the district is their

strong resilience exhibited throughout the last two years. I am very honored to work with such a dedicated staff and proud of the young people for doing their best to learn and grow week in and week out while at school. Thankfully, we are starting to turn some corners as we begin to see and feel some pre-pandemic normalcy return to the classrooms.

As our COVID numbers improve we continue to look for more opportunities to allow young people to collaborate as we believe learning is social and should be thought of as a process rather than final product. What hasn't changed both before and during the pandemic is our focus on nurturing the roots of young people on a daily basis. You might recall from previous messages that we refer to the "roots" of students as the six competencies of **resilience, empathy, balance, collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking** found within our strategic vision. We are committed to focusing on nurturing the "roots" of young people and when these essential skills, or "roots", are nurtured, a natural byproduct will be strong quantitative outputs of data. Ultimately the success of any school should be measured by how healthy, how strong, and how "deeply rooted" the

*See Superintendent p. 7*



## IN REMEMBRANCE OF GERALD KOHANSKI

The Aurora City School District is remembering longtime Aurora Board of Education (BOE) President Gerald Kohanski who passed away on January 24, 2022. Kohanski, who was a member of the Board for the past 25 years, held the position as president for 22 of those years. Throughout those years, Kohanski was a committed, caring and tireless advocate for Aurora's children and their educational opportunities.

Kohanski first became interested in the position as a school board member after he and his wife, Mary, moved to Aurora with their three children, Tara, Courtney and Derek. He was elected in 1998 and went on to become an integral part of the Board. Kohanski brought his experience in aerospace, mining, energy, special

machinery and retail industries, along with his knowledge as a business executive at Cleveland Cliffs, to the Board. His numerous professional accomplishments were highlighted by his ability to build the Aurora City School District into one of the top rated school districts in the State of Ohio.

Aurora Schools' Superintendent, Mike Roberto, explained, "When Jerry started serving on the Board in the late 90s, Aurora was coming out of some financial struggles from the late 80s and was starting to rapidly grow as a district. Jerry helped us to continue to right the ship and led us to be not only financially stable but also to grow in academic excellence as well."

*See Kohanski p. 3*

## CELEBRATING SCHOOL BOARDS School Board Recognition Month - January 2022



**Pam Mehallis, President**  
**Miriam Conner, Vice President**  
**Stephen Sabulsky**  
**Amy Dolzine**  
**Michael Acomb**

The month of January 2022 has been proclaimed School Board Appreciation Month in Ohio by Governor Mike DeWine. The proclamation honors school board members for their important role in

"creating and monitoring district plans to make sure students have the tools and skills to reach their full potential," and for playing "an important role in providing safe, ongoing instruction to students" throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to each of our dedicated, hard-working, and selfless Aurora BOE members.

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## ACSD Quality Profile 2020-21 Now Available Online

The Aurora City School District's 2020-21 Quality Profile (QP) is now available on the District's website at [aurora-schools.org](http://aurora-schools.org). It can be found on the homepage under Quick Links.

The QP characterizes the overall educational value of our school district while highlighting areas that matter most to our community. It elaborates on topics that are not included in the annual State of Ohio Report Card and spotlights areas

where Aurora Schools' staff, students, families and community members can feel a sense of pride. Highlights include **21st Century Learning, Academics, Arts, Student & Staff Leadership, Parent & Community Involvement, Athletics, Student Services, Fiscal Stewardship** and **Safety**. Please take a moment to see what our ACSD has to offer and how much our community has to be proud of.

## Brandon Witmer Senior Citizen Project



AHS senior, Brandon Witmer, came up with a contest idea that highlighted local senior citizens and allowed AHS students get to know these area senior citizens. Witmer has spent the last four

years volunteering at the Independence Village Senior Living Community in Aurora participating in Bingo, serving snacks, etc. Witmer said, "During my freshman and sophomore years at the high school, I volunteered often at Independence Village (typically 2-3 times a week for 1-2 hours each time)."

Witmer went on to explain how his project idea came about saying, "I began to know several of the residents very well. Once COVID-19 hit, volunteers were banned at the home. When volunteers were officially allowed to return, I did. Upon returning, I noticed that some residents had passed away. Others told me to my face that they appreciated me coming back because some of their family wouldn't even come back. Many told me that they hadn't seen their family in over a year and they felt like they were wasting away in the home to die, with their stories fading."

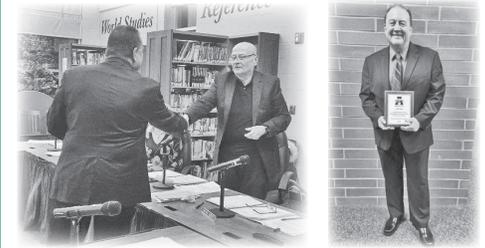
He then explained that, "I decided I would try to interview the residents so that they

could finally speak with someone about their experiences. I met with about ten of them and we held an open discussion where I asked about 15 questions. For example, I asked them what their favorite invention was in their lifetime. Several answered the rocket to the moon. From there, other residents would chime in and jump off of these answers, talking about how they were in Florida for the rocket launch or how excited they were watching it from the TV." Witmer then made posters of the residents he questioned that included their photos with their answers. He hung the posters throughout the high school and made a questionnaire that students could answer based on the posters. Witmer then proceeded to randomly pull the name of one student that had all of the answers to the questionnaire correct and they were awarded \$50 in cash. Interact Club Advisor, Melissa Foster, said that, "This was a fantastic collaboration between young people and senior citizens."



*Independence Village Residents Alice (left) and Shirley (right)*

## Community Focus' Jeff Cole Retires



Congratulations to Jeff Cole, Community Focus' cable television commentator, as he retires after completing his football announcing role for the last 40 years. Cole, who retired as Executive Director at Community Focus in 2020 and moved to a part-time role within the organization, continued on in his capacity as the Friday Night Football color announcer.

The Greenmen Football Twitter account said, "Jeff, you have helped thousands of students have video memories of their high school extra-curricular activities. I can't thank you enough for what you have done for the Aurora football program! You will be missed!" Aurora Athletics tweeted, "We thank Jeff Cole for his 40 years of service in telling the Aurora City Schools story! Arts. Sports. Academics, Community WELL DONE!" Cole sent out a tweet stating, "Love and thanks to all the wonderful People, Athletes, Mayors, Musical Forces, and Support... The community of Aurora is one special place and always will be with me."

The Aurora Board of Education recognized Cole and presented him with a plaque at the November 22, 2021 Board meeting. The Board resolution stated that, "The Aurora Board of Education is proud to recognize Jeff Cole from Community Focus for his long time service to the Aurora Schools." Good luck to Cole as he has been greatly appreciated and will be missed in the Aurora community.



## YOUR SCHOOLS

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Editor: Stacey DeAnna

*Your Schools* is a publication of the Aurora City School District. Its purpose is to keep residents of Aurora informed of current events and progress in the Aurora City Schools and to foster pride and a continuous communication link between the schools and the community.

*Your Schools* has been awarded the "Mark of Excellence" and "Best of the Best" Awards by the Ohio Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for service as a school district newsletter. *Your Schools* is a quarterly publication, mailed to all residents of Aurora. For information, comments, or story ideas, e-mail Editor Stacey DeAnna at: [yourschools@aurora-schools.org](mailto:yourschools@aurora-schools.org).

*Kohanski- Continued from p. 1*

In my opinion, one of the biggest impacts Jerry had on the Aurora City Schools was through the hiring process of four different superintendents under his watch, a number of building administrators, and a countless number of certified and classified staff who all bought into the school culture that 'Kids Come First.' Jerry believed strongly in this motto and was not afraid to follow this belief over being popular. His opinions and decisions were based on what was best for kids from his perspective and he kept to that standard throughout his service to the kids and community of Aurora."

Current Aurora BOE President, Pam Mehallis, stated, "Jerry will be remembered for his deep commitment to the Aurora City Schools. For nearly a quarter of a century, he strove for excellence and succeeded in leading our district to be one of the best in the State of Ohio. Jerry understood that effective leadership meant keeping the students his top priority. He remained focused on that, despite what might have been trending in surrounding districts and even throughout our community. He wanted for our schools to be a place where the children felt nurtured and where they learned to think critically. He felt strongly that if we could accomplish these two things, then our students would be well-served once they graduated and went on to a university, trade school, or the workplace."

Kohanski was honored for his leadership, service and commitment to the District, and to the many city committees that he volunteered and served on, with numerous prominent awards and accolades. Several of these prestigious recognitions included being named the City of Aurora's Fourth of July 2017 Parade Grand Marshall and earning the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year title in 2003.

After retiring from Cleveland Cliffs in 2012, Kohanski was able to pursue his passion of the English language as an adjunct professor of English at Kent State University where he enjoyed working with and guiding students until his passing. Kohanski influenced and touched the lives of every student who passed through the ACSD doors during his tenure with the high quality education they received made possible through his commitment and leadership at the helm.

Kohanski's invaluable gifts of knowledge, vision, guidance, and dedication will be sorely missed.

## Welcome to New Board Member – Amy Dolzine



Welcome to our newest elected Aurora Board of Education (BOE) Member, Amy Dolzine, who was elected in the November 2, 2021 election. She was sworn in for her 4-year term during the BOE Organizational Meeting that took place on January 6, 2022. Dolzine is a resident of Aurora and has lived in the city with her husband and two daughters since 2013.

Dolzine earned a B.A. in Psychology from Denison University and an MBA with a concentration in Marketing and Organization Behavior from the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Professionally, Dolzine is an alliance relationship director for a large accounting and business consulting firm.



From the holiday concerts that were a prelude to the ACSD winter break, to the numerous giving projects held throughout the district, the spirit of warmth and giving was first and foremost to our students/families and staff members.

Each year our students and staff together create a wonderful atmosphere of helping others less fortunate and in need during the holidays. Each of the district buildings offer a variety of ways to involve their students, families and staff in philanthropic endeavors. Below are just a few of the ways they made the holidays brighter.

### AHS AURORA FOR OTHERS

For the 12th year, the AHS Aurora for Others Coin War campaign has been collecting donations and distributing them to local charities that are selected by the students. The campaign went district wide in 2021 and resulted in the most donations ever raised totaling \$15,700! This year's charities which included, The Aurora Food Pantry, A Kid Again, The Paulie McGhee Memorial Scholarship Fund, How Can We Help Initiative (Church of Aurora) and The Ronald McDonald House, will each receive \$3,140. AHS instructors/advisors Jen Simmerman and Kasie Burroughs, along with Kat Berry (AHS Library Assistant) and National Honor Society students, all pitched in to count and roll donations in an inspiring group effort.

### HARMON SCHOOL COAT DRIVE

The Harmon School yearly holiday Coat Drive collected 959 items (coats, towels, and blankets) in total that were delivered to the Phyllis Zumkehr County Clothing Shelter. The winning classes for

most donations were Schofield and Kish (145), McDermit (88) and Dixon (29 items).

### LEIGHTON SCHOOL BACK PACK PROJECT

Each year Leighton School Counselor, Tami Mazzella, runs The Back Pack Program to help those in need with school supplies, winter wear, food items and the holidays. Area groups and individuals generously help with donations for the project throughout the year.

### CRADDOCK/MILLER SCHOOL GIVING TREE

Craddock School and Miller School team up to hold their annual Giving Tree Project which supported the Center of Hope by providing gifts and gift cards for their holiday distribution to families in Portage County. Many thanks to parent and PTO member, Mrs. Winkler, for spearheading this wonderful holiday opportunity.

### MILLER SCHOOL REPLAY FOR KIDS

Miller School partnered with RePlay for Kids, a non-profit organization that is sustained by donations and provides adapted toys and assistive devices for children with disabilities. They create, repair and distribute toys free of charge to children and school programs, including Miller School. Miller School received a large donation of adapted toys that are easily accessible by any child and specifically children with disabilities. The toy drive asked families to donate gently used battery operated toys to this organization to be adapted for new children.

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

If you missed **Kindergarten Registration** on March 2 & 3, 2022, please contact Miller School for more information regarding registration.



Rotary Club International Students of the Month:

October: Harmon School - **Xavier Board, Abigail Dalessandro**

November: AHS - **Elizabeth Hartenburg, Devon Salgado**

December: Harmon School - **Dominic Colello, Amelia Kilway**

January: AHS - **Maria Parks, Brandon Witmer**

Last summer, AHS administrators and other local high school leaders collaborated with representatives from the **Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS)** about leadership roles in LLS. After a rigorous nomination and application process, AHS students **Cameron Custer, Gianna "Lulu" McGhee** and **Brandon Witmer** were accepted into the LLS 2022 Students of the Year campaign and will lead a candidate team with LLS to help raise funds for a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma while seeking to improve the quality of life for patients and their families.



The student run **AHS Greenmen Café** is up and running again offering morning breakfast to AHS students and staff members.



The **AHS Interact Club** and the **Sandy Hook Save Promise Club** visited Aurora first responders to thank them and provided them with bakery goods.

To view the Ohio Department of Education's, **KNOW! Teachable Moment** newsletter link, please go to AHS Principal, Mike Hayes, Principal's Message on the high school webpage. These topical parent newsletters cover a variety of subjects

## Who's Who & What's New

some of which have included, *How to Handle Holiday Stress, TikTok Bathroom Challenge, Thrive in Uncertain Times*, and are created to empower parents and help them promote health and wellness and protect their children from unhealthy behaviors.

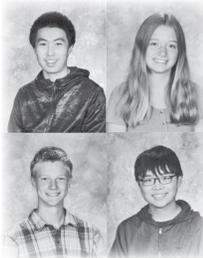


The **AHS After Prom Committee** is looking for volunteers and donations for After Prom 2022. The parent letter/donor form can be found in the News section of the ACSD website.

Congratulations to new Aurora BOE member **Michael Acomb** who was voted in by the Aurora BOE on February 9, 2022 to serve for a 2-year term on the Board.



The **AHS Chess Club** has increased in popularity with a need for more boards and clocks thanks to AHS Science Instructor **Dmitri Kourennyi**.



Congrats to AHS students (left to right) **David Bian, Antoinette Walter, Nate Ruehr** and **Philip Yao** for advancing in the **Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics**

**Tournament!** Walter and Yao advanced to the Ohio Math Olympiad completing three more rounds with Yao placing 9th in the State.



**Habitat for Humanity Construction in Ravenna, Ohio**

The weekend prior to Thanksgiving, Aurora High School's **Interact Club** and **Service Learning Class** students gave their time and energy to better the lives of others by working on a new-construction house with **Habitat for Humanity** in Ravenna while others were collecting donations for the Afghan refugees at **The Church of Aurora**. Students from these groups also volunteered their time at the **Aurora Historical Museum** and **Independence Village** in Aurora.

AHS Senior **Medha Kishore** made a virtual presentation on the importance of "**See Something, Say Something**" while pushing for background checks before the purchase of a firearm to approximately 100 students, adult supporters, donors and partners of the Sandy Hook Promise and legislative offices about the prevention of gun violence. Her goal was to educate and empower more youth while driving awareness and making a difference in our community.

## AHS Fall Play – Museum



# Thank You!

I wanted to be sure to thank you for choosing to support the Aurora City Schools through the passage of our 7.33 mill Operating Levy on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. The renewal of this levy will help us to continue to provide an excellent education for the young people in Aurora, as well as, provide the ability for us to maintain success in athletics, the fine arts, and the many other co-curricular opportunities for students. We would not be able to meet the needs of the young people who attend the Aurora City Schools without the unwavering support of this great community. Thank you for your support and Go Greenmen!

**Mike Roberto**  
Superintendent Aurora City Schools

## CLASS ACTS



AHS Staff Members **JEN HILTY, KELLY SMITH, LAURIE BERGER** and **MICHELLE LUKASIK** Helped Seal AHS Spirit Week with a **KISS!**

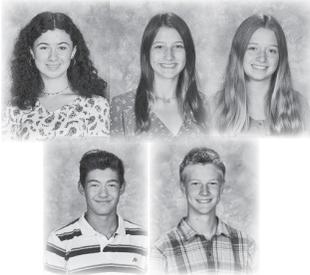


## Homecoming King & Queen 10-21



Congratulations to AHS 2021 Homecoming King **ALEX MOORE** and Queen **MADISON BURICK**

## National Merit Scholarship Program



Congratulations to **MIA BRYANT, AVERY HENDL, NATE RUEHR, ANTOINETTE WALTER,** and **CONNOR ZAMARY** who represent the **AHS 2022 NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED STUDENTS.**

**BROOKE GOLDHAMMER'S 2nd GRADE CLASS** thanked their custodians **RON BURNS, WALLEY FROELICH** and **JOSH TINCH** by cleaning their classroom themselves and then left the custodians a note of thanks. A great example by our young students being inspired by the hard work of others and acknowledging it.



Congratulations to AHS photography student, **RYLEY WISNIEWSKI,** who won the staff votes for "**ART TO REMEMBER**" for her picture of the AHS main entrance.



AHS Library Assistant, **KAT BERRY'S, AURORA SCHOOLS FOUNDATION GRANT** for a living library project is giving students

the opportunity to practice horticulture by nurturing plants from seeds in their new artificial greenhouse.



The **AHS CHOIR NIGHT WITH THE CLEVELAND CAVALIERS** took place on January 31, 2022 when the AHS Choir performed the national anthem at the Cleveland Cavaliers vs. New Orleans Pelicans basketball game.



The **SCHOLASTIC ART & WRITING AWARDS** have been announced and the **AHS ART DEPARTMENT** congratulates the AHS award winners in the categories of Gold Portfolio Medal, Gold Key, Silver Key and Honorable Mention. For a complete listing of all high school award winners, please go the ACSD website to view the News story.



Getting ready for **Thanksgiving** at Craddock School in November 2021

## ASF Grant Funds Pretend Play Kits Grant

Lauren Barker, ACSD Preschool Coordinator and Interventionist, and Sarah Abell, a Preschool Interventionist at Miller Elementary School, submitted a grant proposal approved by the Aurora Schools Foundation (ASF) to create pretend play kits to foster play skills, communication skills, and teach children about community helpers and services they provide to the community. The ASF offers grants to ACSD educators that have ideas that go beyond the school budget.

The pretend play kits included a grocery store, a veterinarian office, a construction zone, and an ice cream shop, in addition to a variety of other pretend play kits. According to Abell, pretend play is one of the most significant ways that students develop communication and social skills. Abell said that research shows that when young children learn through play, skills are learned at a faster rate than when skills are taught using other methods. She explained that play teaches executive functioning skills like creating and executing a plan in play and assigning roles and responsibilities. Play kits teach social and communication skills through vocabulary usage, making requests, and problem-solving.



## Veterans Day Salute 2021 AHS Service Learning Class Veterans Dinner

The Aurora High School's Service Learning Class hosted a complimentary dinner and orchestra concert on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at AHS. The class adjusted their traditional Veterans Day breakfast to an evening ceremony. The event was sponsored by the Aurora City Schools Foundation and Aurora High School Alumni Association in honor of those who have served our country.

Ms. McArthur's 1st Grade Class celebrated Veterans Day 2021 by making a special Veterans Day Salute project.



## SPORT REPORT



Congratulations to the Aurora **VARSITY GIRLS GOLF TEAM** consisting of

**BROOKLYNN MILLARD, ANJALI MISHRA, EMILY PIERCE, KAYLA TEJADA** and **GRACYN VIDOVIC**, who advanced to Districts for the second consecutive year. They came in 6th place at Districts with a historic combined 18-hole score of 342.

The **GREENMEN FOOTBALL TEAM** earned the **GREENMEN FOOTBALL PROGRAM** an **ALL OHIO ACADEMIC AWARD** for the 2021 football season.



ACSD Athletic Director, **Paul Powers** (center) Recognized **Brooklyn Millard** (upper left) and **Max**

**Devins** (upper right) Along with **Coach Snider** (left) and **Doc Munson** (right) as they Headed to State for Golf



**BROOKLYNN MILLARD** placed 2nd at the **OHSAA 2021 STATE GOLF** competition. Congratulations on a job extremely well done!

Congratulations to sophomore **MAX DEVINS** who was named **OHIO'S YOUNGEST DIVISION 1 INDIVIDUAL STATE TOURNAMENT QUALIFIER 2021**. He finished T37 out of 72 golfers.



**CROSS COUNTRY** members, **MORGAN SCHMITT, GRACE BARTO** and **ANDY PLOSKUNAK** all made **STATE COMPETITION** with **BARTO** finishing 33rd out of 182 competitors and **PLOSKUNAK** finishing 32nd. **SCHMITT** came in 14th overall as the first Lady Greenmen to make it to the top 20. Congratulations to **COACH LAURA BELL-PETERS** on a record-setting season.



Big congratulations to **DYLAN FISHBACK** who earned the

**OUTSTANDING WRESTLER AWARD DIVISION II**, won the **DIVISION II STATE WRESTLING TITLE**, and won the **2021 IRONMAN TITLE** in his 195# weight class! He was also given the **BOB BARGER OUTSTANDING WRESTLER AWARD** for the tournament. What outstanding accomplishments!



BACK TO BACK CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to the **AURORA BOYS GOLF TEAM** who won **BACK TO BACK SUBURBAN LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS**.



### AHS Highlights

Congratulations to AHS 165# wrestler **TY LILLARD** who took 4th place in the **2021 IRONMAN TOURNAMENT**. What an amazing effort!

The **GIRLS SOCCER LADY GREENMEN AWARD**, selected by the **COACHING STAFF**, is given to the player who best represents the AHS Women's Soccer Program on and off the playing field. This honor went to varsity player, **ALYSSA MAROTTA** and junior varsity player, **MADLINE DALESSANDRO**.



**ALEX MOORE** was named the **COMMUNITY FOCUS FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR** from Aurora.

### ATHLETIC SIGNING DAYS 2021

Congratulations to the following Athletic Signing Day 2021 Honorees:



Left to Right: **Dylan Fishback**, North Carolina State University - Wrestling; **Tyler Lillard**, Indiana University - Wrestling; **Colin Skolaris**, Ashland University - Baseball; **Chase Gerbrick**, Lipscomb University - Baseball; **Kepler Rhoden**, Seton Hill University - Baseball; **Mackenzie Krafcik**, Bowling Green State University - Softball



Front, Left to Right: **Lauren Vonderhaar**, Slippery Rock University - Volleyball and **Codie Cuerdo**, University of Pittsburgh - Wrestling

The Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association Inland All-District Football Teams 1st Team Honorees included: **JACK CARDAMAN, AIDEN HENDERSON, ALEX MOORE** and **KEVIN PAUL**. The 2nd Team Honoree was: **RYAN PAPESH** and Honorable Mentions went to: **DEREK BLUM, MATT HAUPTNER, JACOB MATOUSEK** and **RYAN WEBER**.

The **ALL GREATER CLEVELAND SCHOLASTIC SOCCER COACHES ASSOCIATION RECOGNITIONS** for the **AHS LADY GREENMEN** included **ALL GREATER CLEVELAND 2nd TEAM MEMBER, SAMANTHA STERN**, and an **HONORABLE MENTION** for **MADISON BURICK, ALYSSA MAROTTA** and **BRIGID BOYLE**.

## Justin Montello Day at AHS

AHS Instructors Heidi McKenzie and Alicia Antol assisted the Business Management Class in organizing a day to recognize and support ACSD teacher, Justin Montello. The class held a sweatshirt and bracelet fundraiser that raised \$5,470. The students presented a check in the amount of \$4,500 to the Montello family and another check for \$970 to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society on December 10, 2021. Thank you to all who supported the fundraiser and the Montello family.



**AHS Business Management Students Presented a Check to ACSD Teacher Justin Montello's Brother (front left- holding check) and Sister (front right- holding flowers)**

*Superintendent – Continued from p. 1*

individuals are when they leave the school rather than by only their test scores or grades. Those young people that leave the schools bearing strong roots, which allow them to anchor into new environments and contribute to the benefit of all outside of the school, will find success no matter if they choose to set down their roots through enrolling in college, enlisting in the military, or finding employment straight out of high school. In short, they will be Aurora Learners who are Future Ready.

In order to continue to nurture these competencies within our strategic vision, our PK-5 classrooms utilize both Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Frameworks developed by the ACSD staff. Within our Math Framework we have moved from a *teacher centered* answer driven environment to a *learner centered* process and thinking driven environment. There is no singular math expert in the room delivering content (knowledge) directly to students for them to see and practice indiscriminately. Instead, teachers are trained experts, dedicated to putting young people in situations where learners look for patterns and relationships between the things they already know and the things they are trying to know. This approach is known as Cognitively Guided Instruction, and through this framework focused on fluency, building number sense, and purposeful application, young mathematicians develop conceptual understanding as opposed to getting answers based on rules. A similar, learner centered approach can also be seen in our ELA Framework.

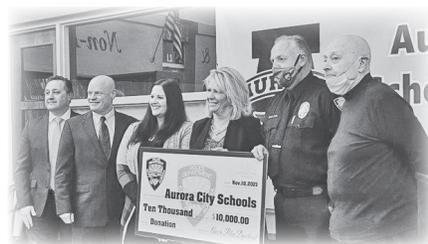
Our PK-5 ELA Framework, again developed by our staff, provides time for teachers to confer with young people through interactive read alouds which promotes opportunities for exposure and discussion of new vocabulary, nurtures comprehension strategies, and engages young people in the practice of phonics. During the reading workshop, part of our ELA framework provides time for young people to work with their teacher in small groups for instruction and to confer through authentic texts. Young people then have the opportunity to grow as writers during the writer's workshop portion of the framework. During this time young people write about what they are reading, teachers model writing skills and conference with the students, and then these young writers share their final products. One belief in all of our classrooms is that the more young people read and write the better they get at both. As an example, I recently was invited to come to a writing celebration with our kindergartners where they read to me

from the books they wrote. I personally learned more about making a snowman, brushing my teeth, how to feed the dog, and making a peanut butter sandwich, to name just a few of the many stories created. It was the highlight of my day.

Young people in grades 6-12 are experiencing similar learning opportunities relative to their grade level, but I also wanted to share that February is especially busy for them as it is the scheduling season. Believe it or not, our school counselors are already having one-on-one meetings with each high school and middle school student to discuss what they believe would be the best learning opportunities for them in the 2022-2023 school year. These meetings are preceded by a teacher conference in which recommendations are made for each student through a short one-on-one meeting. The students can then take home the recommendations to their parents to discuss the big picture before heading into the conferences with the school counselors who will help young people create a balanced schedule that is appropriate for each individual. This process, and the personal connections it entails, is not done like this in every school district. We are fortunate to have school counselors and teachers who take the time and have the ability to set young people up for future success. It is just one more example of helping Aurora Learners to be Future Ready.

## Aurora Police Department Donates \$10,000

Thank you to the Aurora Police Department (APD) who presented a generous \$10,000 donation to the Aurora City School District at the Aurora Board of Education meeting on December 20, 2021. Aurora Police Chief, Brian Byard, was on hand to present the check to the Board. The funds were raised by the APD as part of their annual golf outing.



**City of Aurora Police Chief (second from right) Presents a Donation Check for \$10,000 to the Aurora Board of Education**

## Aurora Alumni Association 2021 Hall of Fame Inductees

Congratulations to the Aurora Alumni Association's Hall of Fame 2021 inductees, Joe Cech ('07), Wes Miller ('07) and Ken Mitroff. Cech and Miller were both honored as the association's Athletic Hall of Fame recipients, while Ken Mitroff was recognized as the Honored Educator award winner. The Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony 2021 was held as a part of the AHS Homecoming festivities the weekend of October 1, 2021.

Each year, the Aurora Alumni Association, in cooperation with the Aurora Schools' administration, "inducts outstanding individuals," into their Hall of Fame. The association states on their website that it inducts, "Alumni who have distinguished themselves as outstanding athletes, alumni who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in their career, professions, or in society or revered retired teachers and staff members."



**Aurora Alumni Association Hall of Fame 2021 Inductees (left to right): Joe Cech, Ken Mitroff and Wes Miller**



Ms. Katie McArthur's first grade class shared their dreams as they learned about Martin Luther King Jr.



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**Rake & Run 2021**

AHS Instructor and Advisor, Melissa Foster, and over 50 AHS Interact Club and Service Learning Class students including, Coach Erika Greenberg and the Lady Greenmen Basketball team, participated in the annual AHS Rake and Run event. Each year participating students travel throughout the community to help area senior citizens by raking the leaves on their lawns. Many area recipients of this event have contacted administrators and staff with their heartfelt appreciation for making such a difference.

**HAUNTINGLY GOOD TIMES**

AHS National Honor Society (NHS) students sponsored a Trunk or Treat event for elementary school students on Thursday, October 21, 2021 NHS students shared treats from the trunk of decorated cars in the AHS parking lot. The \$5.00 family donations went to the NHS Scholarship Fund.



Harmon School students sponsored, Operation Gratitude, which is a "nation-wide nonprofit providing Americans with opportunities to honor our military, veterans, and first responders through hands-on volunteerism." Thank you to all of the Harmon School families and students who contributed their leftover Halloween candy, all 207 pounds, that was then sent to U.S. troops overseas and to a children's shelter.

**HALLOWEEN HAUNTS**

