

YOUR SCHOOLS

2022

Aurora City School District

From the Superintendent

By MIKE ROBERTO
Superintendent of Schools



Thankfully, the 2022-2023 school year marks the return of school to a more pre-pandemic condition. In particular, we have had the return of concerts in the auditorium, field trips such as our 8th graders heading to Washington

D.C. or our kindergartners to Lake Farm Park, and opportunities for young people to be recognized in person both on the field and in the classroom. In fact, this quarter Aurora High recognized 156 young people who earned an Academic Letter for this past school year. In particular, there were 37 seniors recognized who have, up to this point, earned a 4.0 or higher grade point average in each semester of high school. The reason why I share this is not just to acknowledge the product, though it is very impressive, but also to emphasize the process of learning each young person experienced. One part of the program that had nearly everyone smiling was the anecdotal stories shared about each of the third year lettermen. These stories were based on information provided by the recipients including their self-identified superpower, most memorable moment in high school, or key goals/plans for their future. As each of these stories were shared I looked around the auditorium and observed smiles on not only the faces of young people in the crowd but also of the adults (even when their child was not being discussed). The acknowledgement of the human side of each senior was a great demonstration of the importance of balance that all young people need throughout their educational experience while at school. It is why on-line learning does not equate to an on-line education. You can't get an education, i.e. nurturing of human assets, from a computer. It has to happen in the classroom with caring, highly skilled adults utilizing a student

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ACSD EARNs FIVE STAR RATING ON ODE 2021-22 REPORT CARD

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has released report cards for the 2021-22 school year. Each year the ODE rates each of the 609 districts in the state on six components. The state has made some changes to the report card since it was last released prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Previously, the state report cards rated each component with an A-F letter grade scale. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, the report card instead featured a 5-star rating scale. With this new star scale, a 3-star rating means a district is meeting state requirements and 4-5-star rating means the district is exceeding or significantly exceeding state expectations. The ACSD is one of only 12 school districts out of the total of 609 districts in Ohio that were significantly exceeding expectations in all five components and earned a 5-star rating.

The six report card components include, Achievement, Progress, Gap Closing, Graduation, Early Literacy and College,

Career, Workforce and Military Readiness. The **Achievement** portion of the report card based on the Performance Index which is a function of the state test results in a district. Next, the **Progress** section of the report card demonstrates how much growth young people experienced over the school year. The third component, **Gap Closing**, determines if our most vulnerable learners are having their needs met by the district. The **Graduation** component, is a measure of the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. The next component, **Early Literacy**, is a measure of reading improvement and proficiency for students in kindergarten through third grade. The final component is **College, Career, Workforce and Military Readiness**. This component looks at how well-prepared Ohio's students are for future opportunities, whether training in a technical field or preparing for work or college.

2021-22
School
Report
Cards



LEIGHTON & MILLER SCHOOLS EARN ODE PBIS AWARDS

Following in the footsteps of Aurora City Schools' Miller Elementary School, Leighton Elementary School has also earned a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) award from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Miller Elementary School earned their Silver PBIS Awards in both 2019 and 2020. This is the first year that Leighton School has earned a PBIS Award. Their Bronze Award was given for the 2020-21 school year.

The PBIS program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and has been mandated (House Bill 318) for school districts by the Ohio Department of Education. PBIS describes itself as, "... an evidence based three-tiered framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. PBIS creates schools where all students succeed."

Its goal is to improve, "social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities and students from underrepresented groups." The program's description states, "PBIS seeks to reduce or eliminate poor behavior school-wide through the encouragement of positive behaviors." In other words, "With PBIS, schools teach students about behavior; just as they would teach other subjects like reading or math with the focus being on prevention, not punishment."

Leighton School Principal, Michelle Nizen, explained, "PBIS supports student achievement in the sense of having safe, supportive, equitable, and positive learning environments for students. So PBIS is a

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WHO'S WHO & WHAT'S NEW

Thank you to the **Harmon High PTO** for the new signs that can be seen throughout AHS in the cafeteria, the gym and auditorium.



The Harmon School 6th grade **Water.org** fundraiser link from last spring's project raised a total of \$1,325 (44% of their \$3,000 goal). The funds were used to unlock, "education, work opportunities, and improved health for women, children and families across the world. Every \$25 donated will help provide one family in need with life-changing access to safe water or sanitation." Founded by Gary White and Matt Damon, Water.org pioneers market-driven financial solutions to ensure everyone has access to safe water and sanitation, giving women hope, children health and families a bright future.



Introducing the newest AHS club, **Zonta Club**, or Z-Club for short. The purpose of Z-Club is multi-faceted, including to change the lives of women around the globe through school, community and international service, promote career exploration for women and to stimulate new and meaningful service and advocacy projects while helping to advance the status of women in the world.

Last spring, the Aurora Schools Foundation (ASF) offered scholarship opportunities to deserving seniors who demonstrated a commitment to community service and other outstanding qualities. ASF reviewed 62 essay submissions and awarded the following Class of 2022 scholarships:

June LoGalbo – The City of Aurora Bicentennial Scholarship | \$1,000

Elizabeth Crawford – The Linda Allenspach Scholarship | \$1,000

Brandon Witmer – The ASF Scholarship | \$1,000

Devon Salgado – Special Scholarship in Memory of Jerry Kohanski | \$1,000

The ACSD would like to extend a warm welcome to our new **School Resource Officer** (SRO), **Toni Tritto**. Toni, who is a member of the Aurora Police Department, took over as SRO on September 12, 2022, replacing long-time district SRO, Michelle Ice.



APD and ACSD SRO Toni Tritto

Welcome to our new Assistant Director of Transportation, **Christine Wingler**, who has jumped full steam ahead in her new position with the ACSD.



ACSD Rotary Students of the Month 2022
September – **Leo Diamantis, Medha Kishore**
October – **Kaia Board, Dylan Lancaster**



Congratulations to **AHS 2022 Homecoming King, Charlie Carpenter**, and **Queen, Brooke Miller**.

Thank you to the many area restaurants and community businesses who help our district by donating money back to various district fundraising organizations some of which include: **Buffalo Wild Wings, Chipotle – Twinsburg and Aurora, Heinen's Grocery, Lee Angelo's, Mason Jar, Uncle Spikes, Waterway of Aurora, Evexia, Sean Devins/State Farm, Don Qualters/Balanced Asset Management, Buffalo Wild Wings – Aurora, and Schell Bell Boutique.**

The **AHS Counselors** earned the **Ohio School Counselor Accountability Report (OSCAR) Designation** from the **Ohio School Counselors Association** for their use of data demonstrating the effectiveness of the AHS School Counseling Program. The award was presented on October 18, 2022. The OSCAR recognizes the completion of an exemplary OSCAR. AHS Principal, Mike Hayes, said, "Congratulations to Mrs. Oberlin, Mrs. Miley and Mrs. Nenadal for the revered efforts helping guide learners with exceptionally enriching programming and services!"



AHS Counselor, **April Nenadal**, Accepts the Department's OSCAR Award

The **ACSD Quality Profile 2021-22** has been released and can be found on the district website 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.



YOUR SCHOOLS

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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.

ADAM BONNET RECEIVES U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT CBYX EXCHANGE SCHOLARSHIP



AHS junior, Adam Bonnet, was awarded the prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) Scholarship for the 2022-23 academic year which was announced

by the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). CBYX is a bi-lateral exchange program co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and German Bundestag (Parliament). Bonnet was one of only 250 American high school students from the U.S. to receive this award.

Each year, as a U.S. Department of State partner, CIEE awards the fully funded CBYX scholarship to 100 high-achieving high school students from 18 states, Washington D.C., the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, allowing youth from a diverse array of communities to participate in a full cultural

immersion experience. The CBYX program was created to foster mutual understanding and strengthen ties between Germany and the U.S. through citizen diplomacy. German students also come to live and study in the U.S. in order to promote the same level of understanding on both sides of the Atlantic. The program utilizes partnerships with host families, educational institutions and local communities.

As a CBYX scholar, Bonnet will spend the academic year in Germany living with a host family, attending a German high school, and participating in a language and cultural training program to gain a better understanding of German culture, language, and everyday life. Additionally, there will be the chance to visit the German Bundestag, meet with American and German government officials, participate in intercultural seminars, and explore the country through excursions to nearby cities and historical sites.

AURORA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES 2022

Congratulations to the Aurora Alumni Association's (AAA) Hall of Fame 2022 inductees, David Barnes (Distinguished Alumni) and Mark Godale (Athletic Hall of Fame ~ posthumously) who were inducted into the Hall of Fame at an induction ceremony on October 6, 2022. The AAA honorees were also recognized on October 7, 2022 during the AHS 2022 homecoming football game at Veterans Stadium.

Mark Godale – Athletic Hall of Fame (Posthumously)
Class of 1989

AHS graduate, Mark Godale, was an elite ultra-runner who had a running career that included being an American record holder and a national champion. His impressive running career included approximately 1,000 races, more than 25 100s and he completed 29 consecutive Boston Marathons. Godale's running career began at AHS and continued on at the University of Akron where he participated in cross country and track. He ran his first marathon in college and went on to start running ultramarathons at age 24. In 1999, Godale was named the USA Track & Field (USATF) Ultra Runner of the Year. He was also on the silver medal team that year that ran the 100K Championship in the Netherlands that year. His lifetime best at the Boston Marathon had a finish of 2:30 being the 8th American and 38th overall to finish. More of Godale's impressive records can be found on his USATF page and at ultrarunninghistory.com. Godale passed away in June of 2022, just shy of his 52nd birthday. Godale's brother Stephen accepted his recognition award at the Aurora Alumni Association's inductee ceremony on October 7, 2022.



Inductees **David Barnes** (2nd from Left) and **Mark Godale's Brother Stephen** (2nd from Right ~ Accepted the Award on his Behalf) Were Recognized as Hall of Fame Inductees

David Barnes – Distinguished Hall of Fame Class of 1975

Lifelong Aurora resident, David Barnes, served the City of Aurora for almost 50 years, ultimately retiring as the City of Aurora's Fire Chief in August of 2022. Barnes' career began when he worked in the Aurora Service Department during the summer. From there, he began working with the Aurora Fire Department as a part-time firefighter. After three years, Barnes was promoted to a full-time firefighter and became certified as an EMT and later a paramedic. In 1995, Barnes was named the city's fire lieutenant, and was promoted to assistant fire chief in 1998. He took over as fire chief in 2003. Barnes was also a part-time police officer for the City of Aurora from 1983 until his retirement. Barnes has been one of the city's longest serving public servants and was always a strong leader focusing on keeping the Aurora community and its citizens safe. Barnes and his wife Janice have two children, Brad and Devin.



Craddock School 1st Day of School



SPORT REPORT

A huge thank you goes to **Jeff Gerber** and **Brian Siebenthal** at greenmenfans.smugmug.com for all of their efforts in sharing amazing photos of our Greenmen athletes throughout each season. Their time and efforts are very greatly appreciated and they can't be thanked enough!

Aurora Portage County Players of the Year 2021-22

Connor Zamary | Diver of the Year
Dylan Fishback | Wrestler of the Year
Zach Geier | Soccer Player of the Year
Vincent Cannata | Boys Tennis Player of the Year
Hannah Salgado | Gymnast of the Year
Morgan Schmitt | Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year
Andy Ploskunak | Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year
Mike Mancine | Hockey Player of the Year
Brooklyn Millard | Girls Golfer of the Year
Ryan Weber | Baseball Player of the Year



Greenmen Nation voted and won the **Fox 8 Game of the Week** poll for the **Painesville Riverside vs. Aurora** contest on August 26, 2022. Fox 8 News Sports Anchor, Ken Carman, attended the game and highlights were featured on the Fox 8 evening news sports segment and their website. The winning team will also receive \$2,000 for their football program and at the conclusion of the season, the Browns will announce the High School Coach of the Year, who will earn an additional \$4,000 for their program. Congratulations to **Coach Bob Mihalik** named as the **Coach of the Week** and game **MVP Alex Tenorio #44**. **Bob Mihalik's** career stats: 22 Years Coaching, 183 Wins, 62 Losses as of 8/26/2022.



Mihalik and Tenorio on Cleveland Browns Scoreboard



Max Devin ~ OHSAA District Bound in Golf; 2X District Qualifier; 2nd Place - Player of the Year; 1st Team All American Suburban League; 3X 1st Team 2020-22

The **Fox 8 & Chick-fil-A** canned and non-perishable foods **Football Rivalry Food Drive** week competition with Twinsburg benefited the **Volunteers of America**. Aurora was named the **Food Drive Winner** for the September 2nd "Game of the Week" based on collecting the most food by the number of boxes filled.

AHS Principal **Mike Hayes** with Rivalry Food Drive Donations



Congratulations to AHS senior **Eric Eggett** who won the **Aurora Chevrolet Drug Free Club Field Goal Kicking Contest** on September 16th earning him \$500 donated by **Ganley Chevrolet of Aurora General Manager, James Reinart**.



Eric Eggett Won the Field Goal Kicking Contest



Ganley Chevrolet of Aurora General Manager, James Reinart (center)

The ACSD is extremely grateful to the **Aurora All Sports Boosters** whose Board members presented a generous check for \$45,000 dollars on Friday, October 14 at AHS Veterans Stadium. The donation is to support all 21 district athletic teams.



Aurora All Sports Boosters Board (four on right) Presented a Donation Check

Thank you to **Sean Devins/State Farm** and **Don Qualters/Balanced Asset Management** who sponsored the AHS Safe Decisions Week that was capped off on Friday, September 16th with a **"Grey Out" Football Game**.



Sean Devins (left of center) and **Don Qualters** (right of center) Stand on Both Sides of **Coach Bob Mihalik** (center) with **Greenmen Football Coaching Staff**



The **AHS Boys Golf Team** with **Coach Gus Mehallis** (center).

PBIS - Continued from p.1

framework that explicitly teaches students those skill sets, reinforces them and helps to reshape behavior through positive means. It's for students, but there's also that staff education piece as well. So, there's a mindset from the old fashioned discipline measures to very much restorative practices that are there now."

Nizen went on to say that similar to intervening when a student is struggling academically, "There's a multi-tiered system of support, or a continuum, so if students who we see are struggling in the area of social/emotional learning, we can intervene right away just like we would a student who is having academic concerns...."

"Universally," Nizen added, "as a building we focus on teaching those skill sets and we actually have three pillars that run throughout our K-5 schools. We call those our main expectations. So, it's being respectful, being responsible, being a problem solver."

To earn a building award, Nizen stated that there is an, "application process and a very lengthy evaluation system that you go through to see if you have met the requirements for fulfilling some of those expectations. Leighton had filled 70%. They had a score on their TFI which allowed us to be recognized by the State at the Bronze level."

Nizen explained that at the elementary buildings, "It is a team approach. It is all staff. So all staff, knowing that it's something we all value, really have to be on board and doing this together. However, we do have a PBIS team that meets pretty regularly to help lead the building." As for results Nizen said, "We are definitely seeing office referrals, major and minor, we are definitely seeing a big decrease in that."

Nizen explained that, "Additionally, Miller School, through its three-tiered work to train staff members with the State PBIS support team, was noticed by the state support team. They had noticed our implementation was at that kind of top tier and they really noticed what we were doing was working for our students. So we were asked to be filmed by the ODE to be in training modules that are used across the State. So there's a five-part series on PBIS that teaches other schools about the implementation and the why behind it and you will see all staff members from Miller School throughout this training module that people use across the State. We were pretty honored to be selected as a model school. We had the video cameras in our building a few years ago. And it is a great accomplishment for the hard work of the students, the staff, and the families that help us do what we do each day."

MILLER SCHOOL EARNS 2021-2022 PBIS GOLD AWARD

Additionally, Miller Elementary School recently received news that they are the recipient of the PBIS 2021-22 Gold Medal Award. The award states, "Congratulations to Miller Elementary School on being designated by your State Support Team as a recipient of the Ohio PBIS Gold Award for 2021-2022." The award is given for recognition for Miller School's success with PBIS.



**Ohio
PBIS
Network**

Miller School is one of 375 award-winning schools to be recognized at any of the levels: Gold (41), Silver (80), or Bronze (238). Miller School will be honored at the 2022 Ohio PBIS Showcase, which is held annually in conjunction with the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC). The virtual conference will take place on December 6, 2022.

AURORA SCHOOLS FOUNDATION GRANTS FUNDED

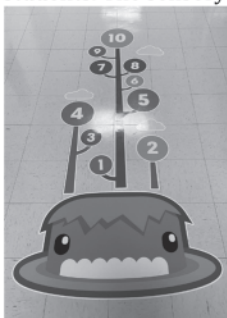
The Aurora Schools Foundation (ASF), founded in 1994, is an independent community-based organization that exists to enhance the educational experience of the Aurora City Schools. Their vision is to fund imaginative and innovative programs beyond the school budget.

According to ACSD Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Paul Milcetic, said, "Typically, the ASF sponsors the National Honor Society Luncheon for new inductees, the annual Veterans Day Celebration, as well as scholarships to Aurora High School seniors in the spring. This past year, ASF also provided roughly \$31,000 in grant funding to a variety of groups and teams at multiple buildings in the district. This amount was second only to 2019 when ASF supported the purchase of new equipment for the Greenworks Lab for the Innovative Design Course at AHS." He explained that the ASF is continuing to seek more involvement from the community, preferably parents at the K-5 age level, in order to further involve these families in ASF throughout their children's experience in the Aurora City Schools.

Some examples of recent grants funded by the ASF include:

Sensory Paths at Craddock School

ASF funded a nearly \$2,500 grant requested by Lindsey Ambrosia, Craddock's guidance counselor, for hallway sensory pathways for students. The sensory pathways enrich the



experience of students by teaching them skills to self-regulate contributing to their overall wellness and ability to attend to tasks within the classroom, as well as contributing to their ability to think clearly, problem-solve, and learn.

Oculus Virtual Reality Headsets

AHS Social Studies teacher, Nick Kukarola, received a grant for nearly \$1,000 from ASF to purchase Oculus Virtual Reality Headsets. Using these headsets allows students to explore cities all over the world, including virtual field trips. The technology can be used for urban planning and development projects and foundational concepts in the AP Geography curriculum. Students can attend interactive expeditions exploring history, geography, arts and the natural world.

**Math Fluency Kits**

Last year, Craddock School educators utilized Math Fluency Kits to see if a more hands-on approach to math facts could be helpful to students. The experiment was a great success and ASF granted math coach, Cara Morelos, \$2,500 to purchase math kits for all 1st- 4th grade classrooms. These kits are an innovative research-based approach to helping children develop good intuition about numbers and their relationships through exploration, visualization in a variety of contexts, noticing patterns and structures and engaging in strategy-based games and rich problem-solving tasks.

Full STEAM Ahead

Gifted Intervention Specialist, Shannon Gagel, received \$2,800 from ASF to fund six SPIKE Prime Robots for Leighton School's Robotics Club. This year, 25 5th graders began meeting before school twice a week to assemble and program these new robots. Students will have access to multiple computer coding languages, as well as challenging problems to solve with the use of the robot.

CLASS ACTS



A sincere thank you goes out to our **HEAD CUSTODIANS, RON BURNS, JOHN EACOTT, DAN FULLER, HARRY HOLT** and **JIM SANATE**, along with our entire custodial staff for all of their

endeavors to get our school buildings ready for this 2022-23 school year. They looked bright and shiny for all our first day smiling faces!

Congratulations to **MEDHA KISHORE** who has once again been chosen as a member of the **SANDY HOOK PROMISE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD** for the 2022-23 school year. This is Medha's second year for this prestigious honor.



Donate



On September 5th, AHS hosted over 55 different book group discussions during their annual **COMMUNITY OF READERS** event. AHS instructor, **MELISSA LINDLEY**, organized the event that offered 933 AHS students a wide selection of choices for their summer reading requirement and allowed them to express their reflections. Many staff and community members, along with students, made this event so successful.

Harmon School Art Instructor, **LEIGH JACOBSON**, received a grant from the ASF for materials for a new presentation system that was then built by Harmon CT Technology teacher, **SHAWN REILLY**. This system projects what teachers are doing on their desks to a screen so that viewers can all clearly see the demonstration, similar to TV cooking shows. The demos can be recorded and replayed in a loop so that students can watch the techniques being done while they try it themselves and allows the teachers to support the students throughout the classroom at the same time. This has helped the entire Art Department throughout the district.

All ACSD school buildings held State of Ohio required (every 3 years) **FULL SCALE EVACUATION DRILLS** during October. The simulated gas leak drill was held in coordination with the Aurora Police and Fire Departments. In the event of an actual emergency, the district will utilize our ALL CALL phone system, Final Forms email system and the district website to keep parents informed.

ACSD SRO'S provided **ALICE TRAINING** updates for all high school students to kick off the 2022-23 school year.

Over 150 sophomores - senior students were recognized at the **LETTERS AND PINS CEREMONY** at AHS on September 29th. Students earn a "letter" for a full year of a 4.0 GPA or higher during each semester, and they

earn a "pin" for each subsequent year they attain this accomplishment. Thirty-six seniors were recognized for having earned a 4.0 GPA each semester from their freshmen year through the conclusion of their junior year. Congratulations to all!

AHS Instructor **MELISSA FOSTER** took her **SERVICE LEARNING CLASS** to **DU-MOR FARM** where students learned about running a business from **NELSON BERNSTEIN**. Bernstein, who has been giving proceeds to various community programs, including the AHS Special Education Department and the AHS Athletic Department, spoke to the students about the value of giving back and the importance of sincere community service.



Service Learning Class Visited Du-Mor Farm

The new **AHS MARKET MATH COURSE** is taught by **JASON BIBZA** and the curriculum provides students with an overview of the stock market and exposure to the probability and statistics used in the stock market. It includes exploring the principles of effective trading, risk management, candlestick chart

analysis and option trading with calls and puts. Challenging activities then expose students to innovative thinking, collaborative discussions, critical thinking/problem solving and the vocabulary that is utilized for the class.



Thank you to **SEAN DEVINS** (4th from left) with **STATE FARM INSURANCE** and **DON QUALTERS** (5th from left) and **BALANCED ASSET MANAGEMENT**, for once again sponsoring their annual AHS Safe Decisions Week. The Aurora Police Department also supported the week of activities. The Safe Decisions Week was held the week of September 12-16, 2022. This week gives students a chance to participate in activities to educate and encourage the use of safe decisions in their everyday lives. Some of this year's activities included a DUI Driving Simulator, Drug Enforcement Agents and Tactical Vehicle, "Share the Road" semi-truck, "Walk the Line" DUI experience while the week was capped off with a "Grey Out" Safe Decisions Week Football Game.

AHS WELCOMES NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SEAN BAKER

- The newest AHS administrator, Assistant Principal, Sean Baker, has spent 17 years in the education field. He has worked the last 10 years as an assistant principal at the Olmsted Falls City School District in Ohio. Before that, he taught World History at Brooklyn High School (2009-12) and was an AP Government teacher at Parma Senior High School from 2006-09.

- Although primarily working previously on the West side of Cleveland, Baker has family on the East side of town and so he was, "researching different places on this side of town and a couple things just kept coming back to me about AHS, or just Aurora in general. I'm going to be more specific probably to the high school, but the opportunities that AHS offers its students is by and far the most I've ever experienced or been a part of. I love the fact that whether its kids jumping into AP [Advanced Placement], kids jumping into after school activities, arts, athletics, whatever the situation is, all of us offer so much at AHS. That was one of the things that if I was possibly going to get into somewhere over on the East side, that's the reason why, and besides the reputation of a great community, great staff, great kids, but really at the end of the day, the opportunity



AHS Assistant Principal, Sean Baker, in the Classroom with Students

to push that academic piece was phenomenal for me."

Baker feels his personal strength is that, "The biggest part is listening a lot. Whether it's with a student, parent, a teacher, because as an assistant principal, I know all of us grew up thinking, they hand out discipline or that's what they do day in and day out, things of that nature, which is a small part of it. But really communicating with all of these groups, working with all those groups, working on those solutions to hopefully getting them resolved, whatever the issue might have been, whether it's an academic piece ... or whatever it is, just working with everyone to facilitate that positive outcome that everyone heard, that everyone feels like they buy into the solution."

Superintendent - Continued from p.1

centered preparation for life model. After all, education is the growth of human beings and not just a simple acquisition of skills. This idea of “growth of human beings” is the difference between receiving instruction and gaining an education. This is also why in the Aurora City School District (ACSD) each of the schools PreK-12 is a place where parents send their children to come to get an education and not just to receive instruction.

The Ohio Department of Education recently recognized this high quality education provided by the ACSD as the home of the Greenmen was one of only 12 districts out of the 609 school districts in Ohio that earned five stars (highest rating) in all five components (Achievement, Progress, Gap Closing, Graduation Rates, and Early Literacy) on our district's state report card.

Achievement

The first of the five components in the report card is Achievement. This rating is based on the Performance Index which is a function of the state test results in a district. As you know, the Aurora City School District staff believe learning is not a product, but a process and so we put our time and energy into designing learning environments that help young people develop the competencies within our strategic vision. This “greenhouse philosophy” that emphasizes “nurturing the roots” of young people helps Aurora Learners to be Future Ready. As an example, by utilizing our Math and ELA frameworks which promote collaboration and developing critical thinking skills through productive struggle in our classrooms, a natural byproduct of this environment is high achievement as demonstrated by the five-star rating for the district in Achievement meaning that the young people in the district significantly exceeded state expectations in this component.

Progress

Where Achievement showed how well the district scored on the test, the second component on the report card which is labeled Progress demonstrates how much growth young people experienced over the school year. We believe that in order to help all young people grow you have to meet them where they are, which means having conversations or utilizing formative assessments to assess understanding, and then adapting the lessons accordingly. As a result, we are being diagnostic in response to the needs of young people. There is also an emphasis on promoting student voice and choice meaning when able we give young people the opportunity to select what and how they go about learning. This leads to innovative approaches that empower young people and ultimately leads to their growth.

Gap Closing

The third component, Gap Closing, digs down to the district details to determine if our

most vulnerable learners are having their needs met by the district. In order to meet these needs, special attention is given to the specific needs of young people both in and out of the classroom. There are supports in place for young people when they struggle in each of our buildings PreK-12. More intensive supports are put in place based on the needs of the young person. We also are sure to offer a continuum of services that allow us to place young people with learning differences in the least restrictive environment. This approach promotes growth for struggling students, while on the other end of the spectrum we extend learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom for our population identified as gifted learners.

Graduation Rate

The vast majority of graduates leave AHS in four years, but the state recognizes that sometimes extra time is needed. Our strategic vision looks to support the whole child and not just in the area of academics. Conditions which promote meeting graduation expectations include social emotional factors, support from school counselors, preparation for college, opportunities to learn a trade as is done in our Excel TECC programs, and a variety of courses to select from at Aurora High.

Early Literacy

Of course, before young people can graduate they have to learn to read starting in kindergarten, so they can then later read to

learn. The Early Literacy component of the report card addresses whether our youngest learners are improving and becoming proficient in their reading in grades K-3. This includes learning letter names and sounds, being able to talk about a story - which promotes comprehension, providing opportunities for young people to select books that interest them that leads to a love of reading, and a guided reading and writing approach which utilizes small groups and one on one conversations.

The State Report Card is a nice affirmation but not necessarily a *confirmation* that Aurora City Schools are excellent. The confirmation comes from the smiles on young people's faces each day, support from the families and community, the increase in efficacy of our staff, the stories of success from our Greenmen graduates and that of them being prepared when they travel beyond the walls of our school buildings. We also understand that there is always room for growth as a district. The practices we put in place are not a result of focusing on outcomes such as good test scores and five star rankings. The five star rankings are a natural byproduct of the philosophy, practices, and pedagogy that are in place. Our goal as educators is not to raise test scores, but to help raise human beings. That is the narrative we would like our families and staff to take away from this report card...a narrative of Aurora Learners who are Future Ready.

MEET LEIGHTON SCHOOL'S NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Leighton School began the 2022-23 school year with a now familiar face, Assistant Principal, Ben Lehman. Lehman, who was most recently worked as an instructional coach for two elementary schools in the Shaker Heights City School District. Prior to that, he was an instructional writing coach and teacher for 4th and 5th grades within the Academy School District in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



Lehman explained that his wife was originally from Ohio and when given the opportunity they returned to the state. He said of the City of Aurora, “Coming from a small community, that community piece was very important to me so as I was looking at opportunities to be an administrator, I was looking for something that was going to be a little bit smaller. As I looked into Aurora, I really started diving into the six competencies and it really did speak to me because it goes along with my philosophy in education how we are supporting that whole student and we want to make sure that we are supporting the whole student in the social emotional learning, as well, as in the academics. That really drove home in the six competencies. Like Mr. Hayes [AHS principal] always says, is that greenhouse ... we want to make sure we foster the

greenhouse atmosphere within the buildings.”

Lehman loves to work with kids and explained, “I love working with kids and being able to build those relationships. Like one of my favorite things would be coming in on Monday morning and we'd talk about their weekend and get to know each other. He added, “Then as a coach I spent a lot of time working with teachers as we tried new things, hearing them reflect and share about their growth and things they've been able to do in the classroom and try out. Again, with the students it's about building relationships and celebrating those successes as we try to grow new things with instruction.”

As far as working in the assistant principal role at Leighton School, Lehman explained, “I have three boys that are at home right at those Leighton ages, a 6th grader, a 5th grader and 3rd grade, so my perspective a lot of the time is from a parent angle, as well, so I'm thinking about what does our instruction look like for our students. I'm also looking at it from that parent lens. So, I feel like I'm bringing that unique perspective of like ok what's best for our kids would this also be best for my boys at home and so I also want to provide that inside the building as well and with the staff. So, I'm looking forward to growing those relationships with the community and with the students on a daily basis.”

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THUNDER OVER AURORA 2022 WAS UPBEAT

The Aurora High School Band Program's annual Marching Band Spectacular entitled, "Thunder Over Aurora" was held on Saturday, September 24, 2022. The upbeat band show featured seven guest marching bands: **Eastlake North, James A. Garfield, Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin, Streetsboro, Tallmadge, West Geauga and Wickliffe**. Our own **Aurora High School Marching Band** ended the evening's entertainment. This annual marching band performance gives guests the unique opportunity to hear bands that they may not normally get a chance to hear

