

YOUR SCHOOLS

2023

Aurora City School District

From the Superintendent

By MIKE ROBERTO
Superintendent of Schools



In the last edition of *Your Schools* I shared that the Aurora City School District is one of only 12 school districts in Ohio, out of over 600, that earned a perfect score of five stars in all five categories on the Ohio Department of Education

State Report Card. This rating indicated that the district significantly exceeded state expectations in each of the categories measured. However, 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 you to take away from this report card...a narrative of Aurora Learners who are Future Ready. We believe the families and community of Aurora buy into this narrative. They do support the district, but to be honest I believe folks outside the district recognize the value of Aurora Schools as well. Aurora seems to be a popular place lately and this leads me to the main topic of this article, Potential New Construction.

Potential New Construction

On Monday January 23, 2023 we recommended Then Design Architecture or TDA, an architectural firm based in Willoughby, to be approved by the Aurora Board of Education to take the lead on researching potential new school construction in the Aurora City Schools. The Board unanimously approved the hiring of TDA.

The need to look into potential new construction is twofold. The first is a side effect of a strong state report card and a near perfect Special Education Profile. That is to say, young

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AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT DONATES \$10,000

The Aurora Police Department (APD) held their annual golf outing fundraiser in conjunction with the Aurora Rotary Club last fall and raised over \$20,000. The APD generously donated an amazing \$10,000 to the Aurora City Schools. This is the second consecutive year that the APD has donated \$10,000 to the school district. ACSD School Resource Officer, **Tony Tritto**, presented Aurora Board of Education President, **Pam Mehallis**, with the check at the November 28, 2022 Aurora Board of Education meeting. A huge thank you goes to **APD Chief Brian Byard** and the Aurora Police Department for their ongoing commitment and support of the Aurora Schools.



Aurora Schools SRO, **Tony Tritto** (left) presents Aurora BOE President, **Pam Mehallis** (right), with a check for \$10,000

School Board Recognition Month

The State of Ohio Governor and Lieutenant Governor have issued a proclamation recognizing January 2023 as School Board Appreciation Month. The proclamation honors the importance of their role in advocating, “for the best interests of the students served in their districts,” and it is “important that communities support school boards so that students receive the best education and are prepared to be the leaders of tomorrow.”



A big thank you goes to all of Aurora’s hard working Board of Education members, **Pam Mehallis, Miriam Conner, Steve Sabulsky, Tony Zayas** and **Mike Acomb** for all they do to make our district one of the top school districts nationally and in the State of Ohio. They continue to make sure our “Kids Come First.”

ACSD Launches New Website



If you haven’t seen it yet, check out the new and improved Aurora City School District website that was launched on January 10, 2023. The district is excited to welcome users to a website that features not only increased accessibility, but a user-friendly format that still offers important news, announcements and relevant information to help users find what they need when they need it.

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WHO'S WHO & WHAT'S NEW

AHS teacher **Melissa Foster** and AHS seniors **Xaleah Connell** and **Maggie McVicker** attended the **Northeast Ohio Youth Summit** where they presented "How to Honor Veterans within One's Community." They explained how the AHS Veterans' Breakfast was created by the **AHS National Honor Society**, became a drive-thru event during the pandemic, and evolved into a sit down dinner in conjunction with the orchestra/choir programs.



AHS and Harmon School families were asked to voluntarily respond to the "**Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey**" also known as "**OHYES!**" The anonymous survey was administered as a tool designed by the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE), Health/Mental Health and Addiction Services and numerous other programs advocating for youth. Aurora High School and Harmon Middle School have partnered with the ODE to administer this survey in the past with the last time being the spring of 2021.



The annual **AHS Interact Club "Rake and Run"** event took place last fall and continued the tradition of helping Aurora's senior citizen with their lawn care by raking leaves. The event, which is much appreciated by the residents, allows students to interact with area seniors and enjoy stories told by residents, receive thank you sentiments, and

leaves them with a feeling of satisfaction by helping others in need. Interact Club advisor, **Melissa Foster**, said, "It was so awesome to spend this beautiful morning with the students and our community!" Thank you to all of the students who volunteered for this fantastic outreach!

Rotary Students - AHS
November 2022 - **Erin Duguay, Mitchell Ganzhorn**

The **Ohio Department of Education, Office of Assessment**, has selected Leighton 5th grade teacher, **Keri Stoylo**, to be a part of the **Science Grade 5 Content Advisory Committee** that will meet this summer. Every state test has a Content Advisory Committee. The purpose of these committees is to review and evaluate test questions and related test materials to ensure that each question is a valid and appropriate measure of Ohio's learning standards for that particular subject area and grade level. Congratulations to Stoylo who will represent the Aurora City Schools in this important role.

New AHS Curriculum Offerings 2023-24

Advanced Placement Pre-calculus -
(Replaces Honors Integrated 4)
Integrated Math 3A (Revised Curriculum)
Integrated Math 3B (Revised Curriculum)
Social Media Marketing



Harmon Media Specialist, **Mary Beckstrom**, represented the Aurora Schools at the **Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA) Conference 2022** on October 5-7, 2022, where 250 people from libraries and media centers throughout Ohio gathered and gave presentations. Beckstrom's presentation was entitled, "Booktalks Work - Having ALL Students READ ON," which focused on how to reach all readers, even reluctant ones by including all genres.

CALLING ALL AURORA ORCHESTRA ALUMNI

The **Aurora Orchestra Association** has been working for 25 years to support, encourage, and celebrate the Orchestra program in the Aurora City Schools. In order to include past members in future orchestra news, events and opportunities, the AOA is building a master database of ALL alumni. If you have played in the AOA between 1997 and 2022, please fill out the Google form found at the link: <https://forms.gle/fR3nK52iwSv3YvKX6> or visit their website at auroraorchestra.org. Alumni stay tuned for events, information, opportunities, and success stories coming your way!



The **Aurora Police Department's (APD) Officer Vickie Yendriga** retired from the police force in December 2022 after 33 years of service with the APD. Yendriga was instrumental in numerous activities throughout the Aurora Schools. Some of the many important outreach projects she worked with in her role as Community Relations Officer and held in conjunction with the Aurora Schools included, D.A.R.E., None 4 Under 21, Safety Town, Shop with a Cop, Child ID and Fingerprint Program, Bike Rodeo, 3rd Grade Seat Belt Program, and Pinwheels Spin for a Safer Community, to name just a few. City of Aurora Mayor, Ann Womer Benjamin, said, "Officer Yendriga did a tremendous job working with the community and managing a significant number of outreach events and support services for the community." The Aurora Schools thank Yendriga for all of her hard work, commitment and enthusiasm while working with our District and enriching our students. Good luck to her in her retirement.



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.

ACSD CONDUCTS AHS PLANNED DRUG/WEAPON SEARCH

On Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the Aurora Police Department, along with other neighboring police departments, worked in conjunction with the Aurora City School District administrative team to conduct a planned drug and weapon search of Aurora High School (AHS). This was an internally scheduled event that had been in the planning stages for quite some time.

To provide context, police K-9 units comprised of nine dogs and twelve police officers from Aurora, as well as nearby departments, were on site to conduct the search. The search was conducted inside AHS as well as in all AHS student parking lots while students and staff conducted an instructional lockdown. It was reported that no violations occurred.



This measure is one of the district's intentional strategies designed and implemented to ensure a safe school environment and administrators were extremely satisfied with the results. This information was communicated to families via Finalforms to make sure no misinformation was reported in hopes of optimizing a safe and positive learning environment.

LONGTIME CRADDOCK SECRETARY ARLENE BAYER RETIRES

Craddock Elementary School said goodbye and good luck to longtime building secretary Arlene Bayer. Bayer, who worked in the Aurora City School District for over 24 years, was the person in the Craddock School office responsible for the numerous duties that were essential

keeping the building running smoothly. She said of her time in the district, "I feel very fortunate and lucky to be able to work in the Aurora City Schools. Working in this district for 24 years plus has given me the opportunity to know all the children who I deeply love, yes, I love them all! Everyone should know it is easy to come to work when you work with such fabulous people, remembering we are a team and family."

Bayer explained, "When I first moved to Aurora my first volunteer work was being a Girl Scout Leader with Mrs. Holouhan in Troop #1135. "We had about 20 girls and it did keep growing. Next, I was volunteering for a lot of activities through our wonderful PTO. This included a monthly dedication to help supervise the playground and then handling Art Appreciation which involved going to Craddock School and talking about famous paintings with the artists."

Bayer began her career in the ACSD when she began working in the Craddock School kitchen. Then with the district addition of Leighton Elementary School, the Craddock School secretary, Jane Ivons, moved to the new school. Bayer explained then, "I was hired for the best place on earth for me, Secretary to Craddock Elementary School. This position included secretary to the principal, teachers and also the children. I have seen the children grow and I fully understand the process that each school takes to have each child achieve their dreams! That is why we live in Aurora."



Students and Staff Held a Special Goodbye Assembly to Thank Retiring Craddock Secretary Arlene Bayer

Looking back, Bayer said, "As I reflect on this, it has been a long adventure which went by so quickly. Four superintendents and three principals and now I am on my way. One word of advice: if you are thinking of doing something, do it, do not wait. As you can see, time does fly by."

While she will be missed by families, staff and community members Bayer explained of her future, "My time will be very full with kayaking when it gets warmer. I'm looking forward to traveling, and as the children know I want to see the giant Redwood trees and the Sequoia trees. I will be joining the Twinsburg Fitness Center for swimming to get exercise. I will still be living in Aurora and seeing all the wonderful people who make this home." She added, "Goodbye to parents and the Craddock team. I love and will miss you!"



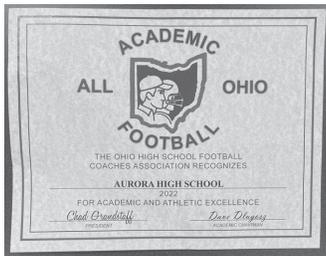
FALL FUN WAS A TREAT!



SPORT REPORT



Construction on the **Kohanski Tennis Pavilion** is currently progressing with a projected completion date of Spring 2023. Funds to build the pavilion were raised by the **Aurora Alumni Association**. The pavilion is named in honor of the late Aurora Board of Education President, **Gerald Kohanski**, who passed away in January 2022 after serving on the Board for 25 years and 22 years as President.



Congratulations to our **AHS Varsity Football Team** for earning the Ohio High School Football Coaches Association **All Ohio Academic Football Award 2022** for academic and athletic excellence in the fall of 2022.

NCAA SIGNING DAY - November 9, 2022

Congratulations to fall NCAA National Signing Day recipients:



BEN SCHECHTERMAN
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
BASEBALL



BAILEY MCGEE
SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY
SOCCER



AHS Girls Tennis Team

Congratulations to the **AHS Girls Tennis Team** who won the **Northeast Ohio Tennis Association's Championship**. Girls singles players, **Gracie Milano** and **Kamy Milano** earned the **Suburban League First Team All-Conference** honors.

It was announced that Aurora City Schools' **Varsity Head Football Coach, Bob Mihalik**, was nominated as a **Cleveland Browns High School Coach of the Year Nominee**. Congratulations and good luck to Mihalik!



Linda Dengate (left) and Mary Beth Tuma (right)

Welcome to new Athletic Department Secretary, **Linda Dengate**, who replaced **Mary Beth Tuma** as the department's secretary beginning January 3, 2023. Dengate has 20 years of athletic office experience and was most recently employed by the Bedford City School District.

Congratulations to the **2023 Suburban League Champion Swimming Teams**. The girls team won their 4th consecutive Suburban League title while the boys team shared the Suburban League title with Kent Roosevelt.

The AHS Greenmen **Wrestling Team** had an outstanding season and earned the **Suburban League Champions** title for 2023. Congratulations to all!

HARMON'S WORLD TOILET DAY CAME OUT A SUCCESS

Harmon Middle School's 6th grade teachers devised a plan. They planned to celebrate World Toilet Day, which fell on Saturday, November 19, 2022 on November 18th instead. Without the students knowing, the teachers announced at the beginning of that day that the students would not have access to water for the entire school day and they would therefore have to plan their day accordingly, without being able to use toilets, wash hands, cook lunch or drink water. The classroom teachers then talked to their students about what they thought that would mean for the day ahead and how they felt about being without water for six hours.

After the initial uncomfortableness of the moment, the teachers then showed a quick video to the students called, "The Wait for Water" by Water.org featuring actor and Water.org co-founder, Matt Damon. In the video, Water.org conducts this same social experiment in restaurants and a hotel to help people put themselves in the shoes of others from around the world who really do have to wait for water. They hope to then share statistics about water consumption

and offer suggestions for how they can save water in their own homes. After the video, students were relieved to find out that they would actually have access to water for the day. Parents had been alerted by Finalforms with details prior to the project.



Some of the student's first responses to learning of the day without water were: "Mr. A and Mr. Beaumont can just make a grocery run," "We can get a bucket of snow and let it melt to use for water," and "The one day I forgot to bring a water bottle. But I can probably make it 6 hours." One of the teacher's relayed that, "A few kids actually WANTED to try the 6 hours to see what it would be like!" Leighton teacher Jessica McDermit, said, "I wish I would have recorded some of their actions, my first period class was actually very empathetic. I was surprised and heart warmed by their reactions. One 6th Grader cried when she saw the video..." World Toilet Day at Harmon School was a solid success!

MARY BETH TUMA TALKS RETIREMENT

Aurora City School District (ACSD) Athletic Department Secretary, **Mary Beth Tuma**, spoke about her recent retirement from the Aurora Schools after 22 years with the district.



Were you employed anywhere else before becoming an employee of the ACSD? **"I was employed at Hudson Schools for 7 years in the Board of Education Office, totaling 29 years between Aurora and Hudson."**

How did you begin your career in Aurora? **"I was hired at Aurora High School as the attendance secretary, stayed in that position for a few months, then applied for the newly created Athletic Department Secretary position."**

What did you like best about working as the Athletic Secretary? **"The people and working on my own."**

What did you like least about the position? **"Any process that slows down the work that needs to get processed, red tape, etc."**

Can you give some of your favorite memories from working for the district? **"Favorite things---the student athletes, the coaches, and the two great athletic directors I worked with. I love seeing the alumni when they stop in to visit and hearing what they thought about high school when they look back and then catching up on where they are now."**

How would you like to be remembered? **"As someone that can always help you out."**

What do you hope you achieved? **"That I always got the job done!"**

What are your future plans? **"Living in Florida for the beautiful weather---I can get in daily long walks and exercise outside. Also, starting up golf and pickleball, along with quilting/crafts. And enjoying the live entertainment/music we have here in The Villages. We also will make trips often to Ohio to see our family."**

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS



Aurora for Others – The 2022 annual district charitable drive took place December 5th – 16th and each year, for the past 15 years, the money raised are given to charities chosen by National Honor Society (NHS) students and district teachers. This year the funds from all of the buildings will be used to purchase an adaptive playground for Leighton Elementary School. An adaptive playground allows all children, including those with a mental or physical disability the opportunity to utilize the playground safely with other children. Over \$30,000 in funds were raised during the "Coin Wars" held at all of the ACSD school buildings!

Nursing Home Caroling - NHS students also brought lots of cheer to area nursing homes while singing holiday carols.



Breakfast with Santa - area event had lots of helpers from the AHS Interact Club.

Shop With a Cop – annual shopping event held between the ACSD and the Aurora Police Department was a success once again.

Giving Tree Campaign – Thanks to the many Aurora families and children, the elementary Giving Tree Campaign collected enough cold weather items to send lots of gear to the Center of Hope.



Ugly Christmas Sweater Charity Run – helped support the Homeless Hook Up CLE with AHS Interact and Service Learning Class students doing their part!



Ugly Sweater Skate - PTO sponsored an Ugly Sweater Skate for district students during the holidays

AHS TEEN BOARD REP CHARLIE CARPENTER



Charlie Carpenter (left), Medha Kishore (right)

Congratulations to AHS student Charlie Carpenter who was named as this year's Portage County Educational Services Center Teen Board. The Board's purpose is to highlight and celebrate the many accomplishments of area high school seniors. Each area high school has one senior serve as the Teen Board Representative for the school district who then advocate for fellow classmates who are deserving of being honored based on their commitment to academics, leadership, service and character. They then work together with school officials to research and ultimately advocate for fellow classmates through monthly presentations at the ESC regarding one male and one female classmate.

In Carpenter's first month as a Board representative, he successfully advocated for well deserving senior Medha Kishore who was named the October 2022 Female Portage County Senior of the Month for her dedicated work in SAVE and Sandy Hook Promise. Congratulations to both AHS students.

HARMON SCHOOL'S WASHINGTON, D.C. TRIP RETURNS

After a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Harmon School 8th grade students were once again on their way to Washington, D.C. in October 2022. A total of 230 8th graders headed to the capital to enjoy the sites, monuments, memorials and to learn so much more about the importance of the center of our nation's government.



CLASS ACTS

Harmon School CT Technology teacher, **SHAWN REILLY'S**, 8th grade rotation classes designed and created over **30 BLENDING BOARDS** (the boards display letter cards so that students know what letters to focus on while practicing blending in phonics) and delivered them to teachers at Miller and Craddock Schools. This was a collaboration between the curriculum office and Reilly's class that will help young students see patterns, make connections and improve their reading fluency. Leftover plexiglass from the pandemic was even recycled for the project.



The ACSD Kindergarten Registration for the 2023-24 school year will begin with a **KICKOFF TO KINDERGARTEN** parent-only meeting on Tuesday, February 21st. Parents picked up registration materials and learned about kindergarten at the meeting. **REGISTRATION DAYS** are set for March 8 and 9, 2023. If parents cannot attend registration, all presentations and registration information will be shared on the district website. Please call Miller School with any questions.

Congratulations to the **ACSD SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**, those who work with students identified as having a disability and **DIRECTOR MIKE MAGLIONICO**. The district was recently notified that they met 28 out of 28 points on seven different indicators which earned them an overall rating of 4, which is the highest special education rating a district can receive.

DOG TREAT SALE



Dog Treat Sale

Intervention Specialist, **NICOLE ISEMAN**, and her students at Leighton School held their annual **DOG TREAT SALE** to raise funds for her class to be used for classroom materials and community outings for her students.

Aurora City Councilman, Aurora Historian, and retired AHS Social Studies teacher, **JOHN KUDLEY**, met with 3rd graders and shared history details about the City of Aurora. Leighton teacher, **LISA LEONE**, facilitated this connection with the community. Kudley also addressed the Aurora Board of Education (BOE) on behalf of the **AURORA HISTORICAL SOCIETY** at the November 2022 meeting and updated/thanked the BOE and administration for the collaboration between the District and the Society.

A shout out goes to **ACSD BUS DRIVERS, GREG BEST** and **TOM HARRISON**, who went above and beyond in exemplifying professionalism to get freshmen students to Playhouse Square to see Romeo and Juliet safely and on time. They calmly dealt with traffic and shared ETA information with teachers.

For first grade families and new-to-Aurora families, Craddock School does not follow the typical quarterly schedule that the rest of the district does due to their reporting system called **GATHER**. Gather is a narrative reporting system that provides an in-depth look at how each student is progressing in regards to standards.



Jidapa 'Jenny' Laowerayothin

Welcome to foreign exchange student, **JIDAPA 'JENNY' LAOWERAYOTHIN**, who arrived from Thailand at the beginning of the school year and is currently a junior at AHS. She will be staying for the 2022-23 school year. Her involvement in activities has included Homecoming, Interact Club, and the JV Cheerleading squad for the AHS boys' basketball team. Her community involvement has also included, Aurora's Boy Scout Troop 7265 for girls.

AHS Kent State All-Star Band Members

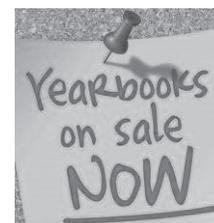


Nine AHS students have been accepted into the **KENT STATE ALL-STAR BAND**: **RYAN KERCHENSKI**, (Alto Sax), **JACK BERENDT** (French Horn), **FRANK BERENDT** (Trumpet), **GRACE BERENDT** (Trombone), **GRANT THIEDING** (Percussion), **KYLIE BRYANT** (Flute), **WILLA SABELKO** (Oboe), **OLIVIA KEYSER** (Oboe), and **SOPHIE FRISORE** (Percussion). **AHS ASSISTANT BAND DIRECTOR, MASON SMITH**, said, "I'm extremely excited as this is a highly selective group of the best high school musicians from all over the country (mostly Ohio and Midwest), and this is the most students we've ever had accepted. I'm quite proud to have so many students potentially representing our band and district." Congratulations to AHS Band Director **EDDIE NABRING, MASON SMITH** and these musicians and families for this prestigious honor.



Don't miss the Community Focus (Spectrum channel 1021) new feature, **STRIVING ARTIST SPOTLIGHT**, on the **Spotlight on Aurora Schools'** program that showcases the amazing art projects created by the Aurora High School art students. It can also be found on the Mycommunityfocus.app.

Thank you to ACSD **SRO TONY TRITTO** who spoke to AHS students on January 12, 2023 about cyber security and more specifically, the topic of Sextortion, in order to help student's stay informed and safe.



Aurora High School **BOREALIS YEARBOOKS** can be ordered now for your high school student. All yearbooks will be mailed to AHS. Please contact Alicia Antol at aantol@aurora-schools.org with any questions.

Class Acts continued on p.7

CLASS ACTS

JAMES MONTAQUILA from the **PORTAGE COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION** presented four ACSD teachers each with \$500 grant money awards at the January 2023 Board of Education meeting. The grant recipients were **JENNIFER BINDUS** (Craddock), **NICK KUKAROLA** (AHS), **KAREN SUNDERHAFT/LAURIE SCHOFIELD-CARTER** (split the \$500 grant award) (Harmon) and **JENNIFER YONALLY** (Miller). Congratulations!



Portage County Retired Teacher Association Grant Award Winners (left to right): **Laurie Schofield-Carter, Karen Sunderhaft, Jennifer Bindus, Jennifer Yonally, James Montaquila** (presenter) and **Nick Kukarola**

TRUNK OR TREAT WAS FRIGHTFULLY FUN!



Superintendent - Continued from p.1

families want to bring their children to Aurora because of the strong school system. The second is centered around the fact that there is now more available housing for families to move into the district. Expansions in existing developments such as Hawthorn, along with several additional new developments throughout the city, have made Aurora a destination district for families with children. As an example, since the end of May, we have had 46 new students move into the district. It appears to be the beginning of enrollment growth similar to the late 1990s which led to the construction of Leighton Intermediate School in 2001.

As a reminder, we began our own research into potential new construction in March 2022 with staff and family surveys followed by staff and community meetings in September 2022. There was overwhelming support to look into the possibility of new construction with the goal of replacing Craddock, which was built in 1911, with either a kindergarten through third grade elementary school or a 9-12 high school. Construction of a 9-12 high school would precipitate a rearrangement of each building as well. For example, grades 6-8 would move to the current high school building if a new high school was built.

As mentioned earlier, the Aurora Board of Education approved TDA, a company that has worked with over 120 school districts in Ohio over the last 70 years, to take the next year to dive into the details for an educational master plan. These plans will include feasibility studies and facility assessments that could lead

to pre-bond assistance and architectural design and construction services.

We have tentatively targeted April or May as the months that the general size, scope, and cost along with a 30,000 ft. graphic view of the buildings will be shared with staff, families, and the Aurora Community as a whole. During these meetings we will be collecting feedback and suggestions which will then be reviewed and shared with the Aurora Board of Education. The goal will be to have a recommendation of a K-3 elementary or a 9-12 high school building to the Board by the May or June Board meeting.

Although we are in the early stages of a long process, we are excited for the journey. Over the next year we, along with TDA, will be holding meetings and completing research to determine if the community is willing to support construction of a new school and if so, what type of school would best fit within our district. Please be sure to keep an eye out for those community meetings coming up in the late spring or early summer. In the meantime, thank you for your continued support and partnership as we all work to nurture the competencies (critical thinking, collaboration, empathy, resilience, balance, and being innovative) within our strategic vision, that will lead to young people in our schools becoming Aurora Learners who are Future Ready.

Go Greenmen!

Mike

MELISSA FOSTER EARNED NCL GIVING JOY TEACHERS AWARD

AHS Spanish teacher, Melissa Foster, was nominated by AHS student, Brandon Wittmer, for the Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) Giving Joy Teachers Award at the end of 2022 year. She received word she was one of only 100 winners with the most votes to have won the prestigious award.

Wittmer wrote in his formal nomination that he had Foster as his Spanish teacher his freshman year and again as his teacher for his Service Learning Class his senior year. He explained, "Nobody I know is more deserving of such an award. Mrs. Foster has always been the first to step up to the plate, inspiring everyone around her. She first spawned my love of volunteering during my freshmen year when she emphasized the idea of branching out and trying new things. On top of teaching, Mrs. Foster has taken it upon herself to lead a plethora of clubs, such as Drug Free Club, Interact Club (a volunteering club), and International Club. She heavily believes in the message of the Sandy Hook Promise Club and also ties this in with another club she is in charge of. This club would be SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere). Within the past few weeks, her mother passed away and

she has been having a rough time with it. However, Mrs. Foster only took a few days off and still attended my senior classes' graduation so she could be surrounded by the students she cares so deeply about. An opportunity at this cruise would help reward Mrs. Foster for her hard work and dedication while getting her mind off her mother's passing."

Foster received her award as part of an exclusive five-day cruise for two aboard NCL's newest record-breaking ship Norwegian Prima. The cruise included a private concert by Kelly Clarkson as it headed to Mexico's Port Progreso in the state of Yucatan. After returning to school after the cruise, Foster said, "I am well rested for Rake and Run, the homeless sleep out, serving dinner at 2100 lakeside men's shelter, Interaction Day at Stow High School and the Veterans Dinner, which will all occur in November and December! I'm BACK!" Congratulations to Foster on her well-deserved recognition.

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Dated Material

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 Michael Acomb
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 William Volosin, Treasurer
 Paul Milcetch, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

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SEVICE LEARNING CLASS HOSTS VETERANS DINNER/CONCERT



The Aurora High School Service Learning Class held their annual Veterans Dinner celebration in appreciation of their service. On December 7, 2022, veterans and a guest were treated to a complimentary dinner with music provided by the members of the AHS orchestra. The evening was then capped off by a wonderful holiday choir concert performance in the AHS auditorium. AHS Junior Achievement students also presented a check for \$1,200 to Hope for the Warriors non-profit organization that provides assistance to combat wounded service members, their families and families of those killed in action. **THANK YOU** to all our area veterans who have served our country.

AHS Junior Achievement Presented Check for \$1,200 to Hope for the Warriors

