

**Academic Magnet High School  
School Improvement Council  
Annual Report to Parents 2017 – 2018**

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In our Annual Report to Parents, the AMHS School Improvement Council (SIC) would like to acknowledge and celebrate another extraordinary year of student and school successes. Since April of last year, we have seen so many accomplishments across academics, community involvement, and sports that it is impossible to list them all. But some highlights include numerous academic achievements such as: 26 seniors named National Merit Scholars, 100% of students passing EOC exams, an average ACT score of 29.2 and SAT combined score of over 1340. Students routinely compete in national academic competitions, are published in national journals, and participate in prestigious research grants. In sports, we have had 4 teams celebrate Division 2 State Championships or Runner-Up and another 4 teams win or be finalists at Lower State or Regional level, 4 students signed to play sports in college, and 12 students named All-state and an additional 25 students named All-Region in their respective sports. And finally, our students have logged over 15,000 hours of community service this year; we have students involved in running charitable foundations and students raising money for and visiting children and schools both locally and overseas to address literacy and poverty.

This year, AMHS has been approved by College Board to offer the AP Capstone program that will replace the junior and senior year coursework for thesis. Students will now get AP credit for thesis preparation, research, and presentation in AP Seminar (G11) and AP Research (G12) courses. All students will prepare and present a thesis under AP guidelines and timelines with both an AMHS teacher advisor, mentor, and the external evaluation of College Board. We expect to be a flagship program with Advanced Placement as we will be the first school nationwide to fully implement Capstone for all students.

Given all these student activities and achievements, it is no surprise that Academic Magnet was ranked #11 nationally by US News and World Report (2017) and #1 in South Carolina. We have been recognized as one of America's most challenging high schools by such prestigious publications as the Washington Post and Business Insider. All of these successes have been supported by the combined effort of students, teachers and staff, parents, and the community. The SIC, a state mandated council made up of each of these constituents, has worked closely all year with PIE (Partners in

Education) and AMF (Academic Magnet Foundation) to address the needs of the school and support future initiatives to propel Magnet students to even greater heights. Below are some of the activities we have focused on this year.

**Peer Mentor Program:** In an effort to further develop a strong student environment at AMHS, the Peer Mentor Program has been created. The program will target academic and social issues of incoming freshmen through support and education provided by trained Peer Mentors. Student mentors are Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors who are role models and leaders at AMHS and are interested in helping the Class of 2022 make the most of their high school years.

**Summer Scholars Program 2017** The Summer Scholars Program for 2017, with financial support from AMF, PIE and several community sponsors, was a four day program for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and included academic awareness sessions, team building activities, and summer fun as a first activity for the new students to begin to understand what it means to be a “high school” student and to make friends for the coming year. The program has been very instrumental in reducing stresses associated with high school unknowns and in building confidence and new friendships. This program will be held again this summer during the first full week of August.

**Philosophy 101:** Students asked for college level electives, and Philosophy 101, sponsored by the College of Charleston and taught by a C of C professor (and AMHS parent), was created and has been quite successful. This year 20 students were enrolled. Taught at AMHS, the class became part of the students’ school day, and it was paid for by the Academic Magnet Foundation. Without the parent support for these classes, students would not have the opportunity for work at this level.

**Professional Development:** This year AMHS, with financial assistance from AMF and PIE, sent teachers to national conferences to learn and share best practices in the areas of science, math, social studies, and English. In addition, our counselors attended national symposiums to understand new ways to support the emotional needs of our students.

**Fundraising Initiatives:** Support for AMHS, its students and faculty, and support for the activities/events listed does require a commitment of dollars, and this year the coalition of parent groups worked together on two fundraising activities. The most recent fundraiser was Celebrate Magnet at The School House in West Ashley, it was an evening of silent and live auctions and socializing. It was well attended by parents, faculty and friends of AMHS. The International Dinner, traditionally held in November, was also a very well attended event featuring the cuisine of over 20 countries representing the ethnicity of our students. These evenings incorporate and celebrate the efforts of parents and the parent leadership groups.

The AMHS School Improvement Council looks forward to even greater cohesiveness as all the parent groups work together to ensure that AMHS can continue to offer its students a high school experience of the highest quality. The SIC has elections for parents, students, and community members in October and is always looking for interested individuals.

Catherine Spencer, Principal

Kristen Odell, SIC Chair (Parent)