



# 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



# A Message from the School Board of Directors



Dear Avon Grove Community Members,

We are pleased to share with you our 2023-2024 Annual Report, highlighting the remarkable achievements of the Avon Grove School District (AGSD) from the past school year.

Last year, we reached several milestones that have elevated the district for future success. The renovation of the new middle school and grade realignment ensure that all of our students are in learning environments where they are supported and can reach their full potential. By thoughtfully redesigning our educational spaces and structures, we've created a foundation that will help our students develop the skills, confidence, and opportunities they need to become adaptable, lifelong learners who are prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

The success of these initiatives would not be possible without the support and trust of our community. We recognize that educational excellence is a collaborative journey, and we are grateful for the partnership of parents, educators, and community members who share our commitment to student growth.

As we continue to gear up for future success, we remain focused on creating an educational environment that empowers every student to discover their unique strengths and pursue their highest aspirations.

Sincerely,  
School Board of Directors  
Avon Grove School District

## MISSION

The purpose of Avon Grove School District is to foster a learning environment in which all students are exceptionally well prepared to succeed and lead full and meaningful lives.

## VISION

All Avon Grove students are well prepared to create their futures.

*From left to right: Dr. M. Christopher Marchese, Superintendent; Bonnie Wolff, President; Dorothy Linn, Vice President; Rick Dumont; Ruchira Singh; Ken Roark; Nick Taylor; Herman Engel; Bill Wood; and Mike Woodin.*



# Comprehensive Plan

The 2023-2024 school year marked the midway point of the 2022-2025 Comprehensive Plan. The three overarching goals of the plan are to focus on high-quality academics, foster supportive learning environments, and build healthy systems conditions.

In 2023-2024, the district began preparing to develop the 2025-2028 Comprehensive Plan. Knowing the value of community feedback and engagement, a Future Ready Steering Team comprised of 30 community members and staff was assembled to help determine priorities for long-term planning. The group is made up of diverse stakeholders who will share their perspectives and experiences in order to make informed decisions that will ultimately contribute to the success of our students.



## Goals



### HIGH-QUALITY ACADEMICS

The first goal of achieving high-quality academics aims to cultivate a thriving data culture to ensure that every student has access to the instructional strategies and resources necessary to successfully engage with and master grade-level content.



### SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The second goal, fostering supportive learning environments, places a strong focus on equitable, trauma-informed principles at the core of all planning. Through training and resource development, this will create a safe and inclusive space for learning and form positive and supportive relationships.



### HEALTHY SYSTEMS CONDITIONS

The goal to establish healthy conditions is focused this year on engaging stakeholders to fully understand needs related to staffing, technology, scheduling, and continuous improvement processes that create the conditions for acceleration of learning. This includes streamlining systems and improving accessibility to information.



## High-Quality Academics

The Act 13 Building Level Score for evaluating educator effectiveness is comprised of student growth and assessment data, as well as attendance rate and graduation rate data, and is adjusted based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a school. All three AGSD schools received scores at least five points or higher above the Chester County average.

According to the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System for measuring student growth, AGSD students in grades 4-11 achieved “meets” or “exceeds” in 14 of the 17 areas tested. In addition, student scores were well above the state growth standards in 12 of the areas tested.

### Future Ready PA Index

2023-2024 Act 13 Building Level Score

**84.5**

**Avon Grove High School**

**78.1**

**Avon Grove Middle School**

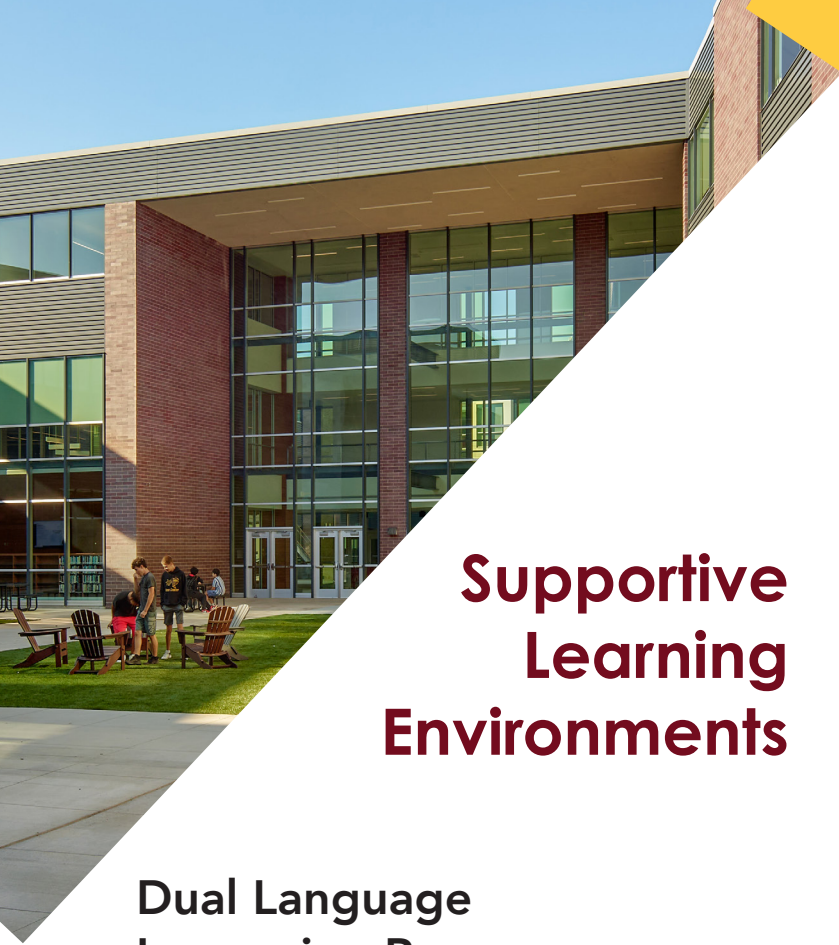
**85.9**

**Avon Grove Intermediate School**

## Profile of a Future Ready Avon Grove Graduate

The Profile of a Future Ready Avon Grove Graduate provides a comprehensive framework of 12 competencies designed to prepare students for diverse 21st-century pathways by equipping them with the essential knowledge, skills, and character traits needed to succeed in an ever-changing educational landscape.

In 2023-2024, the district focused on aligning the Profile competencies with the elementary report card and building common language with students and staff. Integrating these competencies into academic and behavioral goals ensures that our students are consistently building these skills to become well-rounded individuals who are future ready.



## Supportive Learning Environments

### Dual Language Immersion Program

The 2023-2024 school year marked the second year of the Dual Language Immersion Program (DLIP). There were 44 students enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year and the program experienced a successful transition of the inaugural class entering a new grade and continuing with their bilingual studies.

The DLIP is a unique opportunity for students entering kindergarten to experience a 50/50 instructional model, with half of the instructional minutes in English and half of the instructional minutes in Spanish.

### BELIEVE Program

Eight students participated in the BELIEVE program in 2023-2024. BELIEVE is an apartment-simulated classroom in Avon Grove High School where students ages 18-21 participate in the class and learn transition skills with the goal of independent living upon completion of the program.

## Healthy Systems Conditions

### Technology

AGSD's Technology Department provides leadership, innovation, and support for the teaching and learning process. In 2023-2024, the department's major accomplishment was supporting the opening of the newly renovated middle school, which included installing a new computer network and intercom system, as well as providing improved audio-visual technology in the common spaces.

Additionally, the team assisted with the implementation of Namecoach, a technology that enables both students and staff to capture audio recordings of their names and seamlessly integrate them across various platforms.

### Workforce Development

In spring 2024, AGSD introduced the Avon Grove Aspiring Leaders Academy. The goal of the program is to develop future school leaders who are equipped to lead in the 21st century.

Each year, Avon Grove educators will have the opportunity to apply for a position in the program, with ten participants selected for each cohort. The two-year program will provide insight into the administrative work of Avon Grove School District and position educators to prepare for careers in educational leadership. Additionally, the program will serve as an alternative pathway to the Principalship Certificate.





# Points of Pride

## Penn London Elementary School (PLES)

- During the 2023-2024 school year, PLES transitioned to a kindergarten and first grade learning environment. The PLES staff worked to develop a primary learning atmosphere to support our earliest learners. One way this was done was by creating sensory rooms throughout the building to support students in their social emotional learning and self-regulation needs. PLES also created a dramatic play classroom where classes can visit to learn curriculum and standards in a play-based environment.
- Outdoor playhouses sponsored by our PTA were added to one of our playgrounds. Students are able to take on the roles of community helpers by playing in the post office, mail truck, police station, police car, and fire house.
- PLES also completed the indoor garden project. Through grant funding, the school purchased four indoor garden towers utilized to grow lettuces, vegetables, and herbs which are used in student lunches. In connection with our indoor garden project, PLES partnered with the high school art club to paint a mural in the garden area in the cafeteria. High school students designed murals and PLES students voted on which one they wanted. Then throughout the year, PLES students watched high school students paint the mural.

## Avon Grove Intermediate School (AGIS)

- In 2023-2024, AGIS welcomed second graders to our building and wished sixth graders good luck as they transitioned to Avon Grove Middle School. Avon Grove Intermediate is now home to grades 2-5.
- Many Avon Grove Intermediate School teachers are using the Build Thinking Classrooms framework in their math classrooms to promote critical thinking and collaboration.
- At the end of September 2024, AGIS harvested 323 lbs of produce from our school garden, which has been either donated to food pantries or given out at community events held at AGIS.
- The fifth Grade Orchestra and Antiphonos Choir put on a wonderful performance and received Superior ratings at the High Notes Festival in Hershey.

## Avon Grove Middle School (AGMS)

- The newly renovated AGMS opened its doors and welcomed sixth graders back to the middle school.
- 90 AGMS students sat for the Algebra Keystones, with 98% of the students receiving passing scores.
- With World Language courses now available to more 8th graders, 275 students successfully completed Spanish I or French I, earning high school credit.

# Points of Pride

## Avon Grove Middle School (continued)

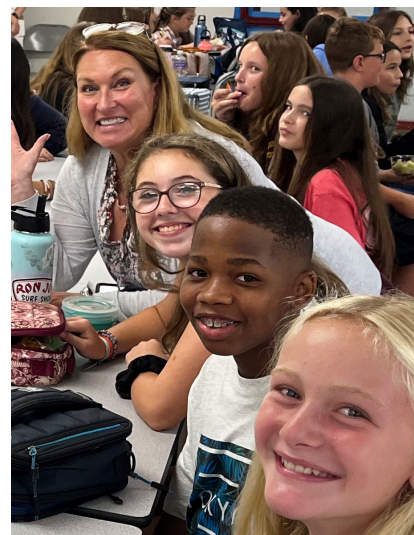
- Over 60 students participated in our Spring Musical, "Seussical, Jr."
- At the High Note Festival, the Choir, Orchestra and Band all received an Excellent rating.
- A group of approximately 65 eighth grade students served as buddies to preschoolers at the Church of the Nazarene, where our students partnered up with students for reading, puzzles, coloring, and gym games. This new partnership will continue next school year.

## Avon Grove High School (AGHS)

- U.S. News and World Report ranked Avon Grove High School (AGHS) as #53 in the Philadelphia, PA, Metro Area high schools.
- For the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program, eight AGHS students received the distinction of Commended Students, one AGHS student received the distinction of Semi-Finalist, and one AGHS student received the distinction of Finalist.
- All members of the 2024 AGHS senior class graduated.
- Many AGHS math teachers (and a few science teachers) are using the Build Thinking Classrooms framework in their classrooms to promote critical thinking and collaboration.
- AGHS was named as a Bronze member of the 2024 AP School Honor Roll! The 2024 AGHS Class had 44% of seniors take at least one AP course during high school, 38% of seniors earned college credit based on their exam score, and 14% of seniors took five or more AP exams.
- The Class of 2024 graduates went on to attend Penn State University, West Chester University, Harvard University, NYU, Princeton University, University of California, University of Pennsylvania, Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, Virginia Tech, University of Pittsburgh, University of Delaware, William & Mary, among other postsecondary institutions.

## Athletics and Activities

- There were 1,516 rostered participants across all AGHS activities.
- There were 535 rostered athletes across all AGMS athletics teams.
- There were 1,021 rostered athletes across all AGHS athletics teams.
- Field Hockey qualified for the PIAA 3A state tournament.
- The Avon Grove Marching Band won the USBands 2023 Group IIIA State Championship.
- The Avon Grove Indoor Percussion won the 2024 Mid-Atlantic Percussion Society Regional A Championship.
- Girls Ice Hockey won the ICSHL Top Division Championship.
- Boys Track And Field won the Ches-Mont National Division Championship.
- Girls Track And Field won the Ches-Mont National Division Championship and the Ches-Mont League Championship.





# Finance

The AGSD General Fund budget supports the educational, administrative, and facilities operations of the District. The 2023-2024 budget was \$109,840,747 and included a 2.49%, or 0.85 mills, increase.

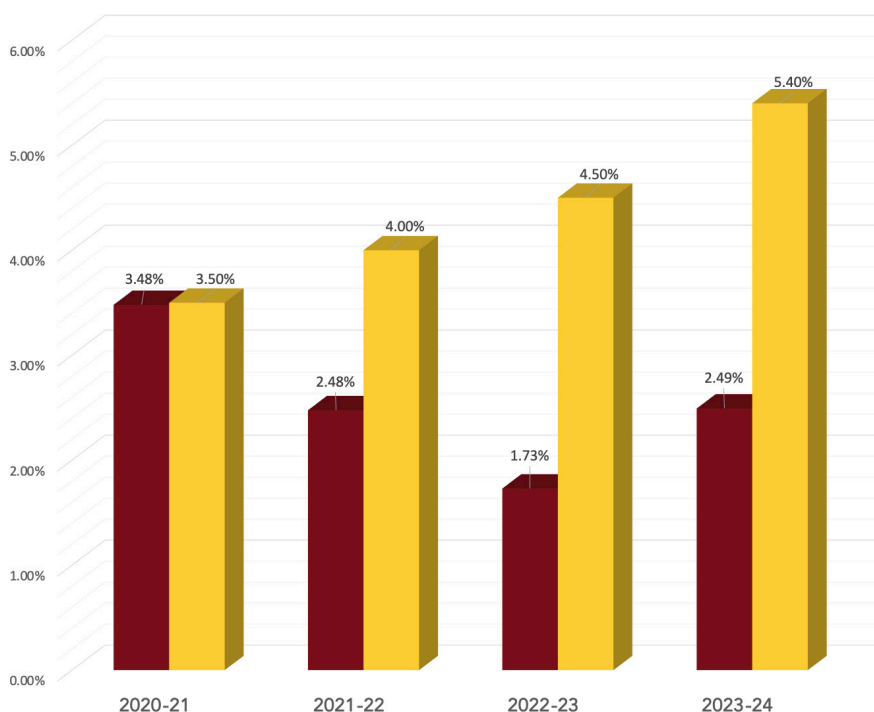
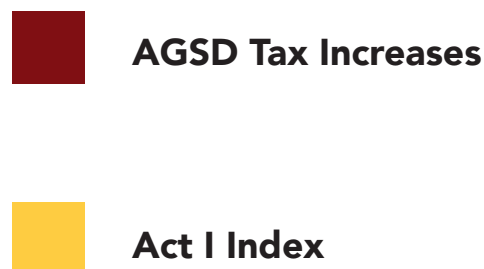
A notable achievement is the zero mill increase required for high school and middle school construction debt service. Initially projected to require a 2.86 mill increase over five years, strategic financial planning, expert consultant efforts, favorable market conditions, and successful PlanCon funding enabled us to complete the necessary millage increase in just four years, culminating in a 28% reduction from initial projections.

The overall 2023-2024 budget has increased by \$3,352,757 (3.15%), with 66% of that increase—approximately \$2,209,606—dedicated to salaries and benefits. This investment underscores our commitment to attracting and retaining top educational talent, ensuring our students receive the highest quality instruction.

Throughout 2023-24, favorable tax collections and the high interest rate environment, coupled with prudent spending practices, resulted in a surplus at year end. The district was able to use the unanticipated surplus to increase the amount transferred to the Capital Projects Fund to support planned future facilities projects, therefore ensuring the district is able to continue improving the state of its schools for our students and staff.

Finally, the district continues to maintain a disciplined approach to financial management and tax increases. The Act 1 index sets the maximum amount that school districts can raise taxes in a given year, and over the past 4 years, this index has reached historic highs. During this period however, AGSD tax increases have been much lower than the Act 1 index allows. Specifically, while the district could have raised taxes a total of 17.4% over the 4-year period, the actual tax increase implemented was only 10.18%, underscoring our commitment to fiscal responsibility and taxpayer relief.

## A Look Back: Act 1 Index vs. Tax Increases Since 2020





# Safety and Security

In 2023, Avon Grove School District prioritized enhancing safety and security through a comprehensive evaluation process. The district engaged specialists to conduct thorough risk assessments and evaluations to determine areas of improvement related to safety and security.

Following this review, the district began a campaign to gather feedback from the community to determine what areas were most important to them. Staff, students, parents, caregivers, and community members were invited to participate in focus groups or share input through an online feedback form. This process proved to be a critical component to gauging the priorities of our community.

Based on these findings, the district approved a strategic multi-year plan to bolster physical security infrastructure, including the creation of new leadership positions such as a Director of Safety and Security and a School Police Officer. The Director of Safety and Security oversees the development, implementation, and management of our school's safety protocols and emergency response plans, ensuring a high standard of preparedness. The School Police Officer (SPO) focuses on maintaining a secure campus through regular patrols, monitoring, and responding to any incidents that may arise. By working closely with school administrators and security personnel, the SPO helps to implement and refine safety protocols.

Complementing these efforts, the district remains committed to expanding mental health resources to support students' holistic well-being, addressing both physical safety and emotional health.

## Facilities

The Facilities Strategic Initiative reached a significant milestone in 2023-2024 with the renovation of the new Avon Grove Middle School. With a growing student population, it was critical that the district evaluate options to expand the capacity for the middle school, ultimately deciding to renovate the old Avon Grove High School. The renovations included enhanced security features and updated furnishings to provide for a refreshed and functional space for students entering into secondary education.

AGSD has entered into a 20-year lease with the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) to operate programs from the Fred S. Engle (FSE) building as a new southern Chester County campus. The campus will be the home of several programs that serve both students in the district and outside of the district, including special education and migrant education services. As part of this partnership, the facility is set to undergo a major renovation. The CCIU is funding the renovation and AGSD families will benefit from access to high-quality services provided right on our campus. Additionally, the district office will be relocated to this site in the summer of 2025.



# Community Engagement

## EMPOWER Program

The EMPOWER program operated for its third year in 2023-2024, serving 26 students. The program helps students transition to adult life by obtaining practical work experience at local businesses. The community partner list also continues to grow with 17 partners last year. EMPOWER celebrated the students' achievements and thanked their partners at an end-of-year appreciation breakfast.

## Padres Latinos

Padres Latinos offers Spanish-speaking families in the district resources and event opportunities to inform them on programs and topics related to their child's education, such as digital literacy and overcoming linguistics barriers. In 2023-2024, Padres Latinos meetings averaged approximately 100 attendees with participants joining in-person and through a livestream.



## Senior Citizen Volunteer Tax Relief Program

AGSD's Senior Citizen Volunteer Tax Relief program provides residents, who are age 60 years or older and pay school taxes, an opportunity to earn a payment of up to \$650 to offset property taxes for volunteering in AGSD schools. Last June, the district hosted an appreciation breakfast for participants in the program.

## AGHS Tour for Township and Borough Officials

Last year, AGSD hosted a tour of the new Avon Grove High School for local township supervisors and borough council members. The tour was an opportunity to connect with local officials and share information about district facilities projects and investments.

## Citadel Heart of Learning Award

AGHS English teacher Robert Gregory was selected as a recipient of the 2024 Citadel Heart of Learning Award. Each year, Citadel recognizes teachers from across the region for demonstrating exceptional dedication to their students, both inside and outside of the classroom. Mr. Gregory has been a teacher at Avon Grove for over 17 years and is known for keeping class fun and engaging.



# Our Students

AGSD serves approximately 5,000 students from: Franklin, London Britain, London Grove, New London and Penn Townships, and Avondale and West Grove Boroughs. We are proud of our diverse community of learners and aim for every student to feel connected, accepted and valued in AGSD.

School	Enrollment
PLES (K-2)	1,012
AGIS (3-6)	1,462
FSEMS (7-8)	819
AGHS (9-12)	1,788
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,081</b>

Student Ethnicity	Percent of Students
American Indian	1.0%
Asian	2.0%
Black	1.6%
Hispanic	26.8%
Multi-racial	1.9%
Pacific Islander	0.0%
Caucasian	67.7%

*Data as of October 1, 2023.*

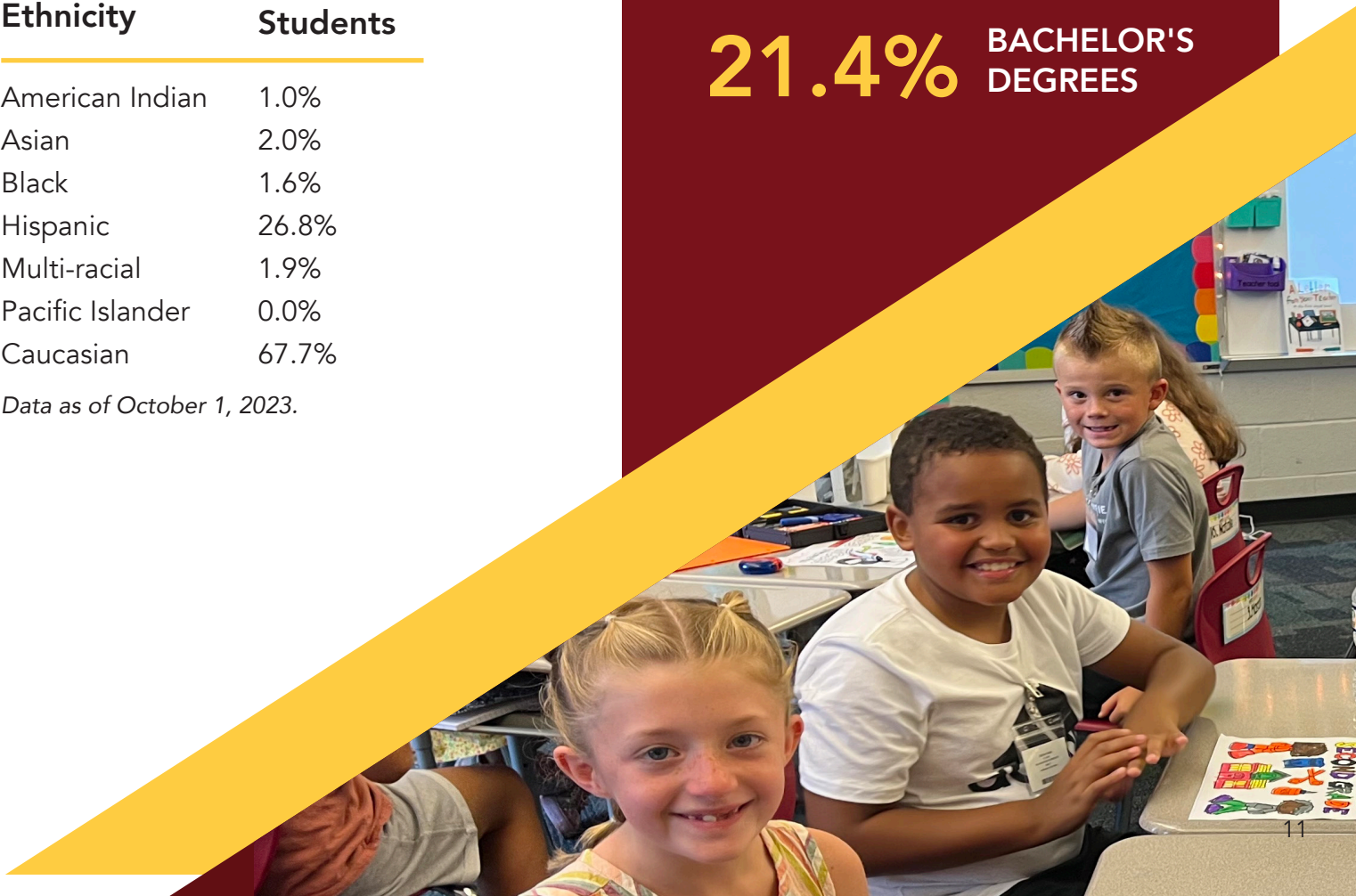
## Our Faculty

In 2023-2024, AGSD employed 318 educators and 37 guidance counselors, school psychologists and nurses, totaling 355 faculty members.

Regarding level of education, 21.4% of faculty members have earned a bachelor's degree; 77.2% have earned a master's degree; and 1.4% have earned a doctoral degree. Regarding tenure, 80.3% of faculty members have three or more years as a contracted teacher.

**77.2%** MASTER'S DEGREES

**21.4%** BACHELOR'S DEGREES





## **AVON GROVE SCHOOL District**

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