



# Avonworth School District 2024/25 Annual Report



## Mission Statement

*The Avonworth School District empowers students through authentic experiences to become innovative thinkers and creative contributors to our world.*

## Belief Statements

### We believe:

1. Students' strengths and talents are nurtured in a safe and supportive environment.
2. The school district supports diversity, empathy, and respect.
3. Developing essential skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and communication prepares students to navigate a complex world.
4. Learning takes place within and beyond our school walls.
5. The school district and community partner for mutual benefit.

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## Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Avonworth School Community Members,

I am proud to present you with the Avonworth School District Annual Report. This report arrives at an exciting time for the district. It is an honor to share the successes of our staff and students and the buzz of exciting activities that occurred over the last school year and a half.

In December 2024, the renovation of our high school and the construction of a new two-story middle school addition reached substantial completion. In January 2025, the final aspects of construction were completed, as well as the renovation of the auditorium. At the end of January, our sixth grade staff and students transitioned to the middle school. We are thrilled that our staff and students have access to these new learning spaces designed to create a student-centered learning environment to maximize collaborative learning.

On Tuesday, April 22, 2025, we hosted an open house for the community that approximately four hundred people attended. We kicked things off that evening with a celebratory ribbon-cutting ceremony. Avonworth students were stationed around the building throughout the evening to answer guests' questions. Student performances took place in the auditorium so guests could experience the renovated auditorium while also enjoying the exceptional talent of our drama, choir, and music students.

Another exciting project we are in the process of completing this summer is the District's next strategic plan. In December 2024, a steering committee representing all school community stakeholders met for the first time. The steering committee is charged with using the input and ideas shared by the greater school community through surveys and focus groups to identify the goals, actions, and strategies that will make up the District's strategic plan.

A Graduation 2035 Party took place on January 22, 2025. This unique event, facilitated by KnowledgeWorks, included approximately one hundred stakeholders. It was a fully immersive experience designed to push participants' thinking about what education will look like in the future. This event generated outside-the-box ideas and input that stretched the steering committee's thinking as they worked to create a strategic plan to transform educational practices in the District.

To construct the next strategic plan, the committee reflected on the efforts and successes that resulted from the goals found in our current strategic plan. Highlights include the creation of a strings program, the development of student advisory models at each school building, the implementation of a K-8 career exposure and exploration program called World of Work, the revision of graduation requirements to create more student choice, and a reimagined graduation project that will have our students to share their successful high school journey and plans for their future guided by the Portrait of a Graduate created in our last strategic plan. In the District's next strategic plan, the steering committee focused on building upon our strong foundation of success!

Speaking of success, we strive daily for success in all areas of our students' school experience, including academics, arts, and athletics. As our superintendent, I couldn't be more proud of the ongoing success we see in these areas. These successes are the result of our incredibly talented students and the support provided by our entire school community. Thank you to our teachers, paraprofessionals, staff, coaches, School Board, families, and staff for your continued support of our students and the Avonworth School District!

Respectfully,

Jeffrey M. Hadley, Ed.D.

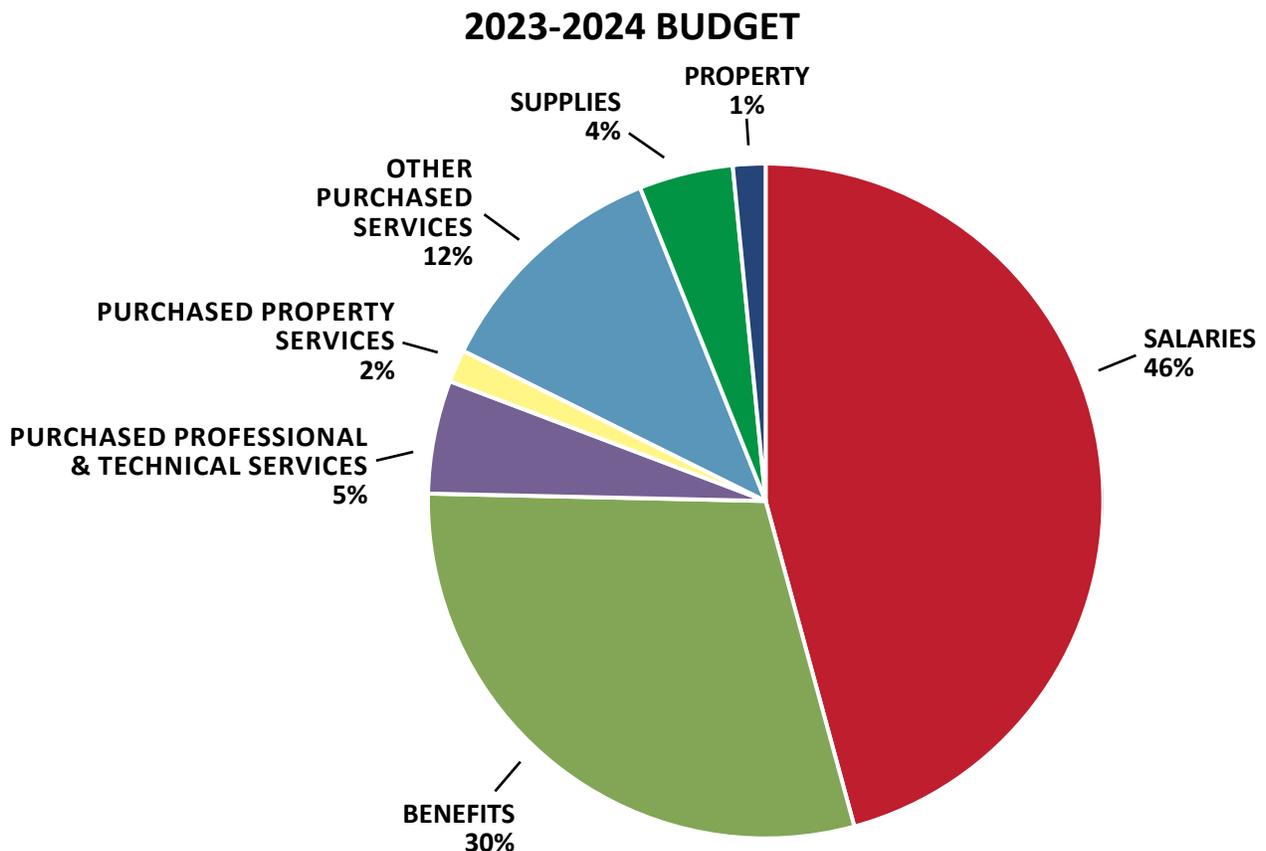
Superintendent of Schools





# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Major Expenditure Categories	Budgeted 2023-2024	Actual Results 2023-2024
<b>Salaries</b>	\$15,870,433	\$15,797,109
<b>Benefits</b>	\$10,618,258	\$10,210,704
<b>Purchased Professional And Technical Services</b> (incl. audit, solicitor, security, AIU, therapies)	\$1,985,982	\$1,871,155
<b>Purchased Property Services</b> (incl. water/sewage, repairs & maint.)	\$646,433	\$541,617
<b>Other Purchased Services</b> (incl. student transportation, insurance, tuition)	\$4,042,675	\$4,002,863
<b>Supplies</b>	\$1,828,247	\$1,555,539
<b>Property</b>	\$521,725	\$536,781
<b>Other</b> (incl. fees, debt service, fund transfers, contingency)	\$4,773,641	\$4,686,657
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$40,287,394</b>	<b>\$39,202,425</b>





## Avonworth School District Safety Overview

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The safety and well-being of our students and staff remain a top priority at Avonworth School District.

We are grateful for our strong, collaborative partnerships with the Ohio Township Police Department (OTPD), the Ohio Township Fire Department (OTFD), and other local municipal agencies. Corporal Chris Simcoviak continues to serve as our full-time School Resource Officer (SRO), a position made possible through a Memorandum of Understanding between the district and OTPD.

This school year, the district has enhanced security by contracting with Capital Asset Protection to provide additional after-school security. A security guard is now stationed on the secondary campus during evening hours to ensure continued safety.

## Proactive Safety Measures

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A proactive approach is key to maintaining a safe and supportive environment. The district actively identifies and supports students and families in need by leveraging available resources and fostering meaningful relationships. Mentoring programs, advisory periods, and connection initiatives help ensure that every student has a trusted adult they can turn to. Through a team-oriented approach, staff members work together to address students' needs and provide timely support.

To further enhance safety, the district implemented a closed-campus policy during the school day last year, which remains in effect. Outdoor spaces, including Lenzner Stadium, are now used exclusively as classroom extensions. We thank the community for respecting this policy by avoiding the secondary campus and Lenzner Field/Track during school hours.

## Mental Health Support

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Avonworth School District continues to prioritize mental health as an essential component of student well-being. Using funds from school safety grants, the district has expanded mental health services by hiring additional support staff, including school-based therapists and a social worker. Each building also has a full-time, highly qualified school counselor who provides classroom lessons, individual consultations, group sessions, and essential contributions to Student Assistance Program teams.

## Facility and Security Upgrades

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Recent construction on the secondary campus has introduced several safety enhancements:

- Improved sightlines throughout the buildings for increased visibility.
- Multiple emergency exits in the new middle school addition.
- A clearly defined separation between middle and high school students.
- Consolidation of entrances to a single main entry point for better access control.

## Safe2Say Something (S2SS) Program

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The Safe2Say Something (S2SS) anonymous reporting system is effectively used district-wide. This program trains students, educators, and administrators to identify and report warning signs of individuals at risk of harming themselves or others. Reports can be submitted anonymously via the Safe2Say app, website, or 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline. All students and staff have been oriented to the system, and a link is available on the district website.



## Safety Training for Staff

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Avonworth staff members participate in ongoing safety training to ensure they are prepared to maintain a secure environment and respond effectively in emergencies. Recent training topics include:

- Run, Hide, Fight
- A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate)
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention
- Stop the Bleed
- NARCAN – Opioid Overdose Treatment
- Association of Threat Assessment Professionals Training
- Managing Bias in Threat Assessment
- Food Allergies, Anaphylaxis, and Diabetes Management

## Staying Vigilant

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We encourage everyone in the Avonworth community to report any concerns to a school official, police officer, or through the Safe2Say system. Thank you for your continued partnership in fostering a safe and supportive environment for our students and staff.



December 2024 marked the substantial completion of the construction and renovation project at Avonworth Middle/High School. A project of this magnitude results from years of planning and due diligence on the part of the District's Board of School Directors and Administration.

The current construction/renovation project analysis began in 2018 with a demographic study to understand the growth the District had been and anticipated to continue to experience. This was followed by a feasibility study and development of a facility master plan that engaged approximately sixty stakeholders in a design process over fourteen months. The primary goal resulting from this design process focused on the need for additional space to accommodate the growing student population. To accomplish this goal, a renovation of the current high school and a two-story addition at the middle school that would accommodate grades six through eight were identified as the primary needs.

The guiding principles identified for the project were:

1. To create flexible, engaging, and inspiring spaces that maximize learning.
2. Consider the overall district impact and long-term future by providing fiscally responsible and efficient solutions.
3. Create spaces that prioritize physical health, mental health, and safety.
4. Provide solutions that celebrate the values of Avonworth and foster a greater sense of community and pride.

The project's design focused on creating student-centered spaces that stress collaboration. The cafeteria/commons space increased significantly and now includes a beautiful collaboration space. The high school hallways were widened and now include two satellite learning lab spaces for collaboration.



The design of the middle school addition focused on utilizing the entire footprint of the space for learning. Classrooms feature garage doors that open to collaboration spaces, and identified rooms have retractable walls to allow for content integration and collaboration. The middle school also includes a satellite library and learning stairs.

Our school community will benefit from the renovated auditorium, where you can see our students' amazing musical and acting talents. The upgraded commons area also includes a new Lopes Lounge/concession stand that will enhance the experience of our fans and guests attending games or events in our gym and auditorium.

All middle and high school spaces were designed using biophilic design, an architectural approach that incorporates natural elements to create a healthier and more productive learning environment for students and staff.

In addition, the project upgraded all of the building's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing components. It also improved the site plan to facilitate more efficient traffic flow during student arrival and dismissal.





# AVONWORTH HIGHLIGHTS

**Avonworth students and teachers have so many incredible accomplishments to share! We're proud to highlight the great work they're doing both in and out of the classroom on our website.**



Visit our highlight page to learn more about our accomplishments:  
<https://www.avonworth.k12.pa.us/about/avonworth-highlights>



Visit our news feed for the latest news and updates:  
[www.avonworth.k12.pa.us/about/view-all-news](http://www.avonworth.k12.pa.us/about/view-all-news)

## Social Media

You can also stay up-to-date by following us on Facebook, Instagram, X or YouTube.



**Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/AvonworthSD/](http://www.facebook.com/AvonworthSD/)



**X**

[www.X.com/avonworthschool](http://www.X.com/avonworthschool)



**Instagram**

[www.instagram.com/avonworthsd/](http://www.instagram.com/avonworthsd/)



**YouTube**

[www.youtube.com/@AvonworthSchoolDistrict](http://www.youtube.com/@AvonworthSchoolDistrict)

## Avonworth Spotlight

The Avonworth Spotlight is a series of student-created videos that highlight Avonworth School District. It covers a variety of topics including academics, athletics, arts, and community initiatives and more, giving students a platform to share their voices. We hope you enjoy!



## Monthly Newsletter

Throughout the school year, Avonworth sends a monthly newsletter that features the latest news, athletic updates, events, and more.



**Sign up to receive our monthly newsletter, important updates and/or event information. You can personalize your preferences on the sign up form.**

<https://forms.gle/KWmN9xc8rAWnRdmr6>



*If you are a parent of a current student, you will automatically receive all district communication. You do NOT need to sign up.*



## Join the 'Lopes Professional Network

In order to best prepare our students for success in an ever changing global society, we must ensure what students are learning in school aligns to current industry standards and needs.

Our goal is to create a professional network of Avonworth alumni and community members who may be willing to partner with the school district and share their expertise with students and staff. Opportunities to get involved may include presenting an overview of your career to students, hosting a job shadow or serving on a career advisory board.

If you are interested or would like to learn more, please sign up! Signing up only lets us know you are interested. It does not automatically commit you to anything.



Sign up: <https://forms.gle/ZZJkPXpxVcFVCCA66>

## Calling 'Lopes Alums!

We're grateful for the years we spent together, and we'd love to stay in touch from time to time. If you'd like to stay connected with the Avonworth network, please complete the form.



Sign up: <https://forms.gle/pu8AZPpActCTGkqH7>

## Volunteer!

Part of what makes our schools so special is the number of parents and community members who are willing to give their time to support our students, staff and schools.

If you would like to volunteer this school year, we recommend that you start the process of getting your clearances if you do not already have them. More information is available on our website.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered over the years. Your support makes a difference!



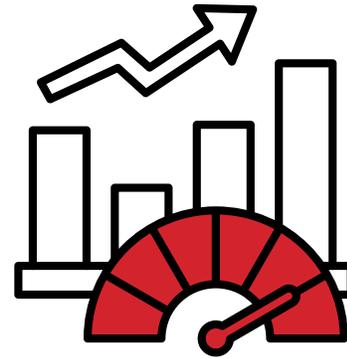


## State Keystone Proficiency

		Percent Advanced	Percent Proficient	Percent Basic	Percent Below Basic
Algebra I	Avonworth	28.8	36.0	24.0	11.2
Algebra I	Pennsylvania	12.8	28.8	38.5	19.9
Biology	Avonworth	24.8	41.4	17.3	16.5
Biology	Pennsylvania	20.6	29.9	26.9	22.6
Literature	Avonworth	24.8	41.4	17.3	16.5
Literature	Pennsylvania	10.3	52.9	24.7	12.1

### Advanced Placement/College in High School Student Achievement

- 120 students took 231 AP exams
- In 2024, 80% of AP exams taken by ASD students received a score of 3 or above of a possible 5.
- 36 students earned AP Scholar awards
  - 21 students were recognized as AP Scholars (earning scores of three or higher on three or more AP exams)
  - 6 students were recognized as AP Scholars with Honor (earning an average score of 3.25 on all exams, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more exams)
  - 9 students were recognized as AP Scholars with Distinction (earning an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams)



### A.W. Beattie Career Center

The NOCTI Exam is the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute Exam. Students who attend A.W. Beattie Career Center during high school take the exam at the end of their program of study to demonstrate competency in the skills needed to perform at a high level in their chosen career.

- **84.3%** of our Beattie students who took the NOCTI exam last year scored Advanced and Competent.



<b>PSSA Proficiency</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent Advanced</b>	<b>Percent Proficient</b>	<b>Percent Basic</b>	<b>Percent Below Basic</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>46.7</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>9.1</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>16.8</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>14.9</b>
<b>Math</b>						
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>11.0</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>26.2</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>24.9</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>25.4</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>9.6</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>31.8</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>21.5</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>37.9</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>19.4</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>45.4</b>
<b>Science</b>						
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Avonworth</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>18.1</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>26</b>

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## AMS Achieves Schools to Watch Designation

Avonworth Middle School has been re-designated for the fifth time as a Pennsylvania Association for Middle-Level Education Don Eichhorn Schools to Watch 2023-24. They are one of 11 in the state selected during the 2023-2024 school year.

This is part of a recognition program developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. PA Schools to Watch leaders selected the schools for academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structure and processes. Each school was also noted to have strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement.

Bruce Vosburgh, PA State STW Director, stated, “We congratulate these schools for being places that do great things for all of their students. These schools demonstrate that high-performing middle-grade schools are places that focus on academic growth and achievement. They are also places that recognize the importance of meeting the needs of all their students and ensuring that every child has access to a challenging, high-quality education. These schools have proven that it is possible to overcome barriers to achieve excellence, and any middle-level school in any state can truly learn from their examples.”

Schools are recognized for three years, and then they need to re-apply to continue to be recognized as an STW school. They must also demonstrate progress on specific goals to be re-designated. Unlike the Blue-Ribbon recognition program, “Schools to Watch” requires schools to not just identify strengths, but also focus on areas for continuous improvement; thus, the three-year re-designation. The re-designation process is based on the school’s continued growth since its last STW recognition.

The schools were recognized at the Pennsylvania Association for Middle-Level Education State Conference in February 2024. They were also recognized at the National Forum’s National Schools to Watch Conference Washington DC in June 2024. In addition, the middle school had a celebration at school in the spring of 2024.



## AHS Students Were Headed to National Finance Competition in 2024

Avonworth High School students – Stuart McAdams, Ryan Hetcko, Brayden Simmons -- went to the Finance Nationals during their senior year of high school in the spring of 2024.

The team of students won the 2024 PA Personal Finance Competition held by the Foundation for Economic Education.

The students competed in the 2023 PA Personal Finance Competition when they were students in Mr. Lincoln’s personal finance class. Although they did well, the team didn’t win. That experience motivated them to enter the competition again their senior year – and win, which is exactly what they did.

The national competition consisted of three rounds. The first round was for a case study. The top 16 teams, as determined by judging panels, advanced to the next round. The next round was a 20 question Quiz Bowl with the top four teams advancing to the final round. The final challenge was a 25 question Quiz Bowl, which determined the winner of the 2024 National Personal Finance Challenge!

Congratulations and good luck to Stuart, Ryan and Brayden!

## 2024 Graduates Earn Silver in the SkillsUSA National Competition

Congratulations to Avonworth 2024 graduates Gennaro Santucci and Leonardo Pacione who recently earned silver in the SkillsUSA National competition for Audio/ Radio Production!

Gennaro and Leonardo combined for the SkillsUSA Pennsylvania state championship in April.

SkillsUSA National competitions were hosted in Atlanta, Georgia.



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## AHS Student Emma Noss Earns National and Statewide Recognition for Academic Excellence

Avonworth High School is proud to recognize Emma Noss, a standout student whose academic achievements have earned her both national and statewide honors.

Emma, a 2025 graduate, was named a semifinalist in the prestigious National Merit Scholarship Competition, placing her among 16,000 high-achieving students nationwide who will now compete for 6,870 scholarships worth nearly \$26 million to be awarded next spring.

In addition to her success on the national stage, Emma has also demonstrated exceptional talent in writing. As a junior, she placed first in both the 2024 PA Scholar Ben Franklin Essay Competition and the Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Essay Competition. For her 750-word essay on a quotation by Ben Franklin, Emma earned a \$6,000 scholarship from the Pennsylvania Society.

Emma's writing accolades extend beyond this year—she also won a state championship in Newspaper News Writing as a sophomore, representing The Avonews at the PA School Press state championships held at Penn State in spring 2023.

To read Emma's winning essay, scan the QR code or visit:  
<https://www.pasociety.com/archive-of-winning-essays>

Congratulations, Emma! Your accomplishments continue to inspire the Avonworth community.



## Avonworth Student Honored at MLK Event

Veronica Garcia, a 2025 graduate, was awarded 2nd place in the Spirit of Unity Award essay contest during her junior year of high school.

The essay contest asked students to reflect on Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and discuss a way to make their school, community, or world a better place. Veronica's essay focused on the inclusion of English as a Second Language students.

She was honored at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Breakfast at LaRoche University. This year, Veronica was an exchange student in Japan through a Rotary Study Abroad Scholarship, so her mother, Angela Garcia, accepted on her behalf.



## Mr. Tuffiash Receives PSBA Innovative Teacher Award

The Avonworth School District is proud to announce that Mr. Scott Tuffiash, a high school English teacher, won the Innovative Teacher Award. Mr. Tuffiash, who has been a dedicated educator since 2007, is also the leader of the English department's curriculum development team.

His journey to this recognition began two years ago, when OpenAI released ChatGPT. As discussions on AI use in education began within the district, Mr. Tuffiash felt a strong need to fully understand this emerging tool before teaching his students. Committed to excellence, he embarked on extensive research, consulting with experts across multiple professions to grasp not only how AI works but also the ethical considerations surrounding its use.

As a result of this research, Mr. Tuffiash developed two groundbreaking courses: "AI & Ethics" and "Human Flourishing," designed to equip students with both technical understanding and ethical insight into artificial intelligence. His work ensures that Avonworth students receive a comprehensive

education on AI, preparing them for success in an increasingly digital world.

Dr. Jillian Bichsel, Avonworth's assistant superintendent who nominated Mr. Tuffiash for the award, highlighted his exceptional dedication to curriculum innovation and student success.

"We're incredibly fortunate to have a teacher like Mr. Tuffiash in our district," Dr. Bichsel remarked. "His commitment to preparing students for the future is truly inspiring."

Congratulations to Mr. Tuffiash on this well deserved honor.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## World of Work Introduced at APC

Primary students have an exciting and valuable learning opportunity with the implementation of RIASEC, a framework that allows students to identify the best career path. RIASEC, which stands for Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, will assess personality traits and preferences. APC joins students in grades 3-8 already using the RIASEC framework this year.

The aim is to empower students with the knowledge and tools to make well-informed decisions about their educational and career paths. Here's how the RIASEC model will benefit them:

**Self-Discovery:** RIASEC will help your child gain insights into their interests, preferences, and strengths. Understanding these aspects of themselves is crucial in setting meaningful goals and pursuing a fulfilling career.

**Career Exploration:** By identifying their primary RIASEC types, your child will have a clearer understanding of which careers align with their personality traits. This knowledge can guide them when choosing their future educational and career paths. Students will explore at minimum six different careers each year that align with each of the six RIASEC types.

**Personal Growth:** Learning about RIASEC is not limited to career choices. It also supports personal growth by encouraging self-awareness and the development of essential life skills.

**Better Decision-Making:** Armed with knowledge about their RIASEC types, your child will be better equipped to make informed decisions regarding their education and career. This can lead to greater satisfaction and success in their chosen paths.

Throughout the school year, teachers and counselors will guide children through various activities related to RIASEC.



## Physics Teacher Serving in CSO Program

Greg Wolfe, high school physics teacher, began serving in the AIU Chief Science Officer (CSO) Program in the fall of 2024. This exciting learning and networking opportunity is geared toward leadership, workplace skill development and STEM advocacy within the communities in our region.

Mr. Wolf participated during the 2024-2025 school year along with Mia Milojevich during her senior year. Mia is now a 2025 graduate!

## Avonworth Teacher Participates in International World Congress of Teachers

Sixth grade teacher, Melissa Costantino-Poruben, was selected as one of 50 delegates of the National Education Association to participate in the 10th International World Congress of Teachers. The event, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, included 800 delegates and 500 observers from over 150 countries. This Congress determines the policies, principles of action, program, and budget of the organization. Delegates listened, learned, and considered the voices of other educational leaders before voting on resolutions that fell under the themes of Defending Democracy, Ensuring Equity, Promoting Peace, Elevating our Profession, and Growing Our Unions.

Mrs. Costantino-Poruben has always had a love of education, politics, and international relations, making this congress the perfect venue for her passions to converge. Reflecting on her experience, she said, "I was most impressed by the respect and support the delegates displayed to one another, even with so much global unrest. The resolutions under the Promoting Peace resolutions included stories of children learning in bunkers, students who have no access to school, and those who are not safe in their own homes. I am so proud to be part of an organization connected to Promoting Peace throughout the world."

Shared experiences helped deepen Mrs. Costantino-Poruben's connection to other educational leaders. Together, they visited UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Argentina and Uruguay, viewed an authentic tango performance, and experienced the inner workings of a Gaucho Ranch.

She would like to thank the entire Avonworth Education Association for their love, support, and guidance as she prepared for the congress.





## Kidsburgh: Accelerating relationships in the Avonworth School District

“Whenever Principal Mike Hall began a new school year, he’d ask the students at Avonworth Middle School one question: Who in this building is your go-to adult?”

Scan the QR code to read more in Kidsburgh.



## Odyssey of the Mind Team Finishes First in the Country!

Congratulations to Avonworth Middle School’s Odyssey of the Mind team for finishing 1st in the country and 4th overall at the World Finals in the spring of 2024.

The team competed against 50 teams from across the US and countries including China, South Korea, Poland, Switzerland, and Germany. Each team was challenged to create a vehicle that travelled within a drive-in movie setting to watch a movie written and performed by the team.

They were judged on creativity, performance quality and various technical components. The team also solved a spontaneous problem where they earned the second highest score amongst the 50 teams.

Congratulations to seventh graders Rosie Glidden, Trinity Klicker, Matilda Mackillop, Kate Paulat, Max Paulat, and Tim Wrona for their phenomenal performance!



## #KindKids Receive Scholarships

Four Avonworth #kindkids were chosen by the Elementary/Primary Center teachers to receive Kindness Awards and \$500 scholarships based on the kindness they show towards their peers and school staff.

Congratulations to Aria Burgoyne, Molly Campbell, Emilie Swartz, and Jacob Goetz!!! We are so proud of you!



## Students See Success at State Journalism Competition

Junior Airah Shafiq finished tied for 3rd and senior Bree Brown placed 3rd outright at the state final competition for PA School Press’s Journalism competition at Penn State’s main campus in April 2024. Airah was a junior while Bree was a senior at the time of the competition.

Both competed in artwork categories, a first for the Avonews since PSPA restarted the competition in 2014.

The competition focused on taking notes, asking questions, and using reporting from a press conference with Assistant Athletic Director Sarah Higgins in Alumni Hall at the student union.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## High School Student Earns Girl Scout Silver Award

During her freshman year, Evelyn Mathie was honored at the Carnegie Science Center for earning her Girl Scout Silver Award with her project “Advocating for Literacy and Supporting Wellness in Pittsburgh-area Children”.

This award requires at least 50 hours of time.

Evelyn sought to educate and empower disadvantaged children. She worked with Reading Ready Pittsburgh and formulated age appropriate yoga stories for age levels from K - 6th grade.

She and her team taught six yoga story sessions to 54 children and provided home materials for continued education. Local teachers expressed interest in using her concept in their classrooms.

She also designed a banner with ‘Reading is a Superpower!’ theme that was shared with 40 Head Starts and Child Care sites.



## Avonworth Teacher Receives National Award

Avonworth math teacher Melissa Costantino-Poruben has been selected by the White House for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) in the Mathematics category, representing the state of Pennsylvania. This highly prestigious honor acknowledges Melissa’s exceptional contributions to the fields of STEM education.

Though Melissa was chosen for this award in 2022, the recognition is being officially presented now. Her unwavering dedication to teaching and her role in shaping the future of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is truly inspiring.

As part of this significant achievement, Melissa will receive a \$10,000 award.

Melissa says, “The Presidential Award is a recognition for my district and the families of the 2,500+ students I have joyfully served, instructed, encouraged, and cared for throughout my career. This award acknowledges my efforts and the dedication of the team of educators who helped me grow. Special appreciation goes to my curious and diligent students who accept my challenge to see themselves as mathematicians every day. I am humbled by this honor.”

Melissa’s career in education spans more than two decades, all within the Avonworth School District. She began her journey at Avonworth High School in 2000, transitioned to Avonworth Middle School to teach eighth grade from 2001 to 2017, and has been teaching sixth-grade mathematics at Avonworth Elementary School since then.

Her teaching approach is rooted in problem-based learning and collaborative practices, with a focus on solving real-world problems. One notable recent project saw her students engaging in a project-based learning experience, where they renovated their elementary school playground. Melissa is passionate about getting her students, particularly girls, excited about problem-solving, engineering, and computer science.

Melissa’s overarching goal is for every student to view themselves as mathematicians by the end of the year. In addition to her classroom achievements, she is a dedicated union activist, working tirelessly at the local, regional, state, and national levels to advocate for educator rights, improve working conditions, and bring racial and social justice into schools.

Please join us in congratulating Melissa for this well-deserved honor and celebrating the incredible impact she continues to make in the lives of her students and the community.



## ASD Paraprofessional Honored as PSEA Dolores McCracken Education Support Professional of the Year!

“Becky Marszalek, a paraprofessional at Avonworth Elementary School in Pittsburgh, is the Pennsylvania State Education Association’s (PSEA) Dolores McCracken Education Support Professional of the Year for the 2024-25 school year.

The announcement came during American Education Week and as schools across the commonwealth prepare to celebrate Education Support Professionals Day on Nov. 20, a day to recognize the hardworking support staff who help meet students’ needs and make our schools run smoothly.”

Scan the QR code to read more from PSEA.org.



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Students Shine in International Marketing Competition

Avonworth High School students recently competed in the International Marketing Competition hosted by the Cultural Communications Alliance and the Global Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

The team—Millie McAdams, Izzy Schuster, and Cami Intriago—was tasked with creating a marketing plan to promote Sarris Chocolate’s Peanut Butter Buckeyes in Quebec, Canada. Their presentation showcased thoughtful research, creativity, and strong business insight.

Congratulations to Millie, Izzy, and Cami on a job well done!

Pictured left to right: Millie McAdams, Izzy Schuster, and Cami Intriago.



## Middle School Student Wins National Silver Medal in Scholastic Writing Awards



During her 8th grade year, Kate Jeon earned a National Silver Medal in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a prestigious national competition that celebrates creative excellence among students in grades 7–12.

Kate received this honor for her Personal Essay & Memoir piece titled “As Seasons Pass By.” This is Kate’s second consecutive year earning a regional Gold Key, and her first time being recognized at the national level. Her achievement places her among the top young writers in the country, and she was invited to attend the national awards ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City in June.

Each year, thousands of students across the country submit original works in a wide range of categories, including flash fiction, poetry, journalism, and personal narrative. Entries that earn Gold Keys at the regional level are considered for national recognition.

This past year, several Avonworth Middle and High School students were honored with regional awards at all three levels: Honorable Mention, Silver Key, and Gold Key. We congratulate Kate and all of our student writers for their creativity, hard work, and dedication to the craft of writing.

## Bavly Naklah Represents Avonworth at LLS Student Visionaries Grand Finale

Bavly Naklah had the honor of representing the Avonworth School District at the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) Student Visionaries Grand Finale event. This inspiring program empowers high school students to take the lead in fundraising efforts to support blood cancer research and patient services.

Over a seven-week campaign, teams of student leaders worked to raise funds and awareness, with each group honoring a local pediatric blood cancer survivor. Bavly’s team made a significant impact, contributing thousands of dollars to the cause.

The Student Visionaries of the Year program is more than just a competition—it’s a movement driven by young leaders dedicated to creating a world without blood cancers. Congratulations to Bavly and all participants for their hard work and commitment to making a difference!



## Students Compete in Student Sustainability Design Challenge

Avonworth High School participated in the Student Sustainability Design Challenge, an initiative organized by the Consortium for Public Education. This challenge empowers students to develop innovative solutions addressing one or more of the United Nations’ Sustainability Goals.

A team of eight students took on the challenge, focusing on Quality Education and Climate Action. Their project centered around

researching the school’s current recycling program and identifying ways to improve efficiency. Through extensive research and collaboration with stakeholders, the students developed a plan to enhance the effectiveness of the recycling efforts within the school community.

To showcase their findings and proposed solutions, the team presented their work in a poster session, demonstrating their commitment to sustainability and positive environmental change.

The participating students included Tessa Burens, Ella Machen, Elena Zimmerman, Abdul Wahab Shuaib, Grace Engel, Abdul Basit Kaijie, Naina Mason, and Noah Quinn.

Congratulations to the Avonworth team for their hard work and innovative thinking in making a difference for both their school and the environment!

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## AHS Student Named National Technology Award Winner

Gbemi Odebo, a 2025 graduate was named a National Center for Women in Technology (NCWIT) Aspirations in Computing (AiC) National High School Award winner her senior year. This prestigious award recognizes high school students in grades 9-12 for their outstanding achievements and passion in computing, encouraging them to further pursue their interests in technology.

The AiC High School Award celebrates students who demonstrate exceptional aptitude and enthusiasm for computing, with selection criteria based on their computing experience, leadership roles, activities, persistence, and future aspirations. Since its inception in 2007, more than 25,000 students have received the AiC Award, and Gbemi is proud to join this distinguished group.

Gbemi was selected as one of just 40 students from over 3,400 applicants nationwide. She was honored in Charlotte, North Carolina, at a special ceremony hosted by Bank of America at the end of February 2025.

Looking ahead, Gbemi is set to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the fall, where she will pursue studies in computational molecular biology and computational cognition. We are excited to see the incredible impact she will undoubtedly make in the world of technology and beyond.

Congratulations, Gbemi!

## Celebrating Excellence: Students Earn Silver Keys in Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

Congratulations to Zori Soles and Ari McC Carson, both 2025 graduates, for earning Silver Keys in the prestigious Scholastic Art & Writing Awards during their senior year! These awards celebrate the creativity and talent of young artists and writers, and Zori and Ari's stunning pieces stood out among the competition.

Ari McC Carson's piece is titled "Decomposition".

Zori Soles's works are titled "Drowning" and "Etched in Time".

These talented artists' works were featured in the Scholastic Art Show at Carnegie Mellon University's Fine Arts Building in March.

Congratulations to Zori and Ari on their outstanding accomplishments!



## Students Earn Prestigious Honors

We are proud to announce the outstanding achievements of Avonworth Middle and High School students in the Scholastic Writing Awards, the nation's longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens. These awards honor the talents of young writers across the country, offering regional recognition followed by consideration for national awards, including scholarships.

Congratulations to the following students for their exceptional work:

Top Row: Kara Yacoski (2 Silver Keys), Catheryn Behr (Silver Key), Matilda MacKillop (Silver Key), Kate Jeon (2 Gold Keys, 1 Silver Key), Timothy Wrona (Honorable Mention) and Xavier Heldt (Honorable Mention).

Middle Row: Sydney Piccolino (Honorable Mention), Grace Caulkins (2 Silver Keys, 1 Honorable Mention), Lyra Klinedinst (1 Silver Key, 1 Honorable Mention), Emma Noss (3 Gold Keys, 1 Silver Key) and Asher Ford (3 Silver Keys).

Bottom Row: Stasia Wessner (Honorable Mention), Lila Caulkins (Silver Key), Lily Stefanik (Silver Key), Nora Schenk (Honorable Mention) and Karthik Pillai (Silver Key).  
Not Pictured: Lyla Sebeck (1 Gold Key, 1 Silver Key)

These accolades are a testament to the students' creativity, hard work, and dedication to their craft. Well done!

## Students Participate in DataJam

Congratulations to these students who took part in the DataJam!

The DataJam is an academic competition for high school students that focuses on teaching about the use of big data to answer a research question.

Students work in teams to formulate a research question, find publicly available data sets, analyze their data, make data visualizations, and present their findings to a panel of judges.

Students learn skills pertaining to the scientific method, data analysis, and how to give scientific presentations. During the 2023-2024 school year, there were three Avonworth Data Jam teams.

Jagger Boyd, Jackson Shields, Brayden Simmons, Sam Cavanaugh, Amelia Hardiman and Madison Hollywood won third place in the spring of 2024. Their project titled "Registered Drinkers" asked - How do alcohol sales per capita in a county compare to the political ideology in that county?



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## School Board Members Honored with Book Donations

January is designated School Director Recognition Month to honor school board directors and their dedication to public education excellence.

In celebration of our school directors, Avonworth students donated books to the district's school libraries in January 2024.

On behalf of PSBA, Dr. Jeff Hadley, Avonworth Superintendent, presented "Memoirs of a Parrot" by Devin Scillian.

2024 Elementary Student Council members Sydney Mangene and Mason Creagh presented "Something Someday" by Amanda Gorman and "Wherever You Go" by Pat Miller for the Primary

Center Library. They also presented "Taylor Swift" (biography) by Rachel Roe as well as "The Official Harry Potter Baking Book" and "The Official Harry Potter Cookbook" by Joanna Farrow for the Elementary School Library.

2024 Middle School Student Council members Charlotte Mary and Mavis Meagher dedicated "Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Chalice of the Gods" by Rick Riordan; Alina Soles dedicated "The Hunger Games" by Suzanne Collins; Ayushi Saxena dedicated "The Fault in our Stars" by John Green; and Ashton Walczak dedicated "The Phantom Tollbooth" by Norton Juster.

2024 High School Student Council President Sarah Pukylo dedicated "Picturing a Nation" by Martin W. Sandler and "How We Got to The Moon" by John Rocco.

On behalf of the Avonworth School District, we would like to thank all of our school board members for their service to and support of our students, staff, and school.

## Food Staff Awarded Child Hunger Hero Award

The Avonworth School District is excited to announce that we are the recipient of the 2024 Child Hunger Hero award from Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

This honor is given to schools and community partners who go above and beyond in feeding kids in our community.

This year's highlights include:

APC collected over 1000 boxes of stuffing for the Light of Light Rescue Mission.

Students collected boxes of snack items to donate to Mary's Gate in honor of a cafeteria staff member's 85th birthday.

Increased breakfast participation from 49,226 in 2022-2023 to 72,314 in 2023-2024!

We are proud of the hard work of our food service staff and are honored that we are one of the 43 winners to receive the award this year.



## Young Inventors Head to the Statewide Invention Convention

Avonworth Elementary School GATE students Eloise Coudriet, Tristan Railing, Isaac Sleasman, and Maclan Ulanowicz earned a spot at the Pennsylvania statewide Invention Convention in Hershey, which took place in February 2025.

The students were selected for their invention of "The Foodie." They created the invention to keep track of food expiration dates, alerting the user to what is about to expire, decrease food waste, and prevent foodborne illness. This incredible opportunity highlights our young innovators' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

This year, the state received 165 online entries, with an additional 200 students participating in regional events and many more engaging in classroom-led innovation activities—totaling nearly 500 student inventors. Out of this talented pool, only 50 inventions were invited to the state competition, making this achievement even more extraordinary. The invitation to Hershey is a testament to the hard work and ingenuity of our students.

We are so proud of their efforts and can't wait to see how they represent Avonworth School District on the state stage. The Invention Convention Worldwide program is an amazing resource, providing curriculum, social media opportunities, and much more to inspire innovation in students everywhere.



# ARTS: PERFORMING & VISUAL

## Spring Musical Wins Big at Gene Kelly Awards

Avonworth’s spring musical production of *Into the Woods* sweeps the Gene Kelly Awards for High School Musical Theater, winning six awards at the ceremony on Saturday, May 25, 2024:

**Best Musical**  
**Best Vocal Ensemble**

**Best Crew/Technical Execution**  
**Best Lighting**

**Best Costume**  
**Best Set Design**

This ties Avonworth’s record wins in 2012, when the production of *Sweeney Todd* garnered the same number and sent two AHS students (Nathan Pool & Brooke Tate) as Best Actor & Actress to the national competition on Broadway. It was also the greatest number of wins across the 33 schools involved this year.

Lucy Myers was also Avonworth’s Best Actress nominee—an incredible feat for a sophomore to even be nominated.

Deborah Frauenholz, Avonworth High School’s Fall Play and Spring Musical Director said, “The kids were spectacular—professional in their behavior, cheerfully supporting other schools, and incredibly focused in performance. They labored tirelessly all day at The Benedum, and their performance was no less than stunning!”

“There is nothing more inspiring than seeing our students take the stage in that immense hall when the lights come up as they click into character and own the moment!” noted Frauenholz, “Please congratulate them on this incredible feat!”

Bravo to all involved!



## ASD Receives Fall Play Nominations

Avonworth students who participated in the Fall Play recently performed at Prime Stage High School Drama Awards as a nominee for Best Production for “*Twelve Angry Jurors*.” In addition to being nominated for Best Production, Ella Ging was nominated for Best Actress.

The students put on another fantastic performance. Congratulations to all!

## Avonworth Choirs Won Overall Best at Kennywood

The Avonworth Middle School and High School Choirs participated in Music In The Parks adjudication at Kennywood in the spring of 2024. Both ensembles received a rating of superior—the highest possible rating!

Both ensembles won 1st place in their category and Overall Best Choir!

Middle School scored 94 out of 100 points and High School scored 97.75 of 100 points.

Congratulations to all of our Avonworth Middle and High School singers!



## Students Shine In Shakespeare Contest





# ARTS: PERFORMING & VISUAL

## Avonworth School District Receives National Recognition

Avonworth School District has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education in 2024.

“This acknowledgment reflects a deep commitment to the music program and the strong backing from our colleagues, administrators, the broader school community, and valued stakeholders,” said Mr. Will Guess, Avonworth’s K-12 Music Curriculum Leader.

“We couldn’t be more proud of our school district’s music programs,” added Dr. Jeffrey Hadley, Avonworth Superintendent. “The growth and excellence of our music programs are easily traced to our amazing professional music educators. This recognition is well-deserved and validates the dedication of our music educators and our talented students and supportive families.”

The schools and communities recognized by Best Communities for Music Education demonstrate a commitment to ensuring music learning opportunities are available for every student and provide an example for other communities to follow.

Congratulations to our Avonworth students as well as the entire ASD music department on this prestigious recognition.



## AMS Student Conducted Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra

In the spring of 2024, Avonworth Middle School’s own Kate Jeon had the opportunity to be a guest conductor with the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Kate, who was in seventh grade at the time, was part of the PYSO’s Enchanted Dance in March 2024 at Heinz Hall. She was the youngest member of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra and won the honor of conducting a piece in a recent competition.

Kate conducted the orchestra in Dvorak’s Slavonic Dance No. 1.

Congratulations Kate! We are so proud of you!



## Students Perform in the Allegheny Valley Honors Band

While the marching band was on their trip, 11 Avonworth band students successfully auditioned for and performed in the Allegheny Valley Honors Band on January 17 at Pine-Richland High School. The students had the opportunity to work with two guest conductors - Robert Sheldon, who is an internationally known composer of wind band music; and Gregory Drane, Director of the Marching Blue Band and Athletic Bands at Penn State University.

Highlights include Gianna Gibson and Vanessa Amayo securing first chair oboe and flute (respectively), and freshmen trumpet players John Ursu, Camden Glasgow and Charlie King securing three of the top four trumpet seats in the junior high band.

Congratulations to Olivia Hanlon (tuba); Gianna Gibson (oboe); Vanessa Amayo (flute); Madelyn Hanlon (flute); Emilia Bechtold (oboe); Riley Adams (flute); Kellen Donovan (euphonium); Camden Glasgow (trumpet); Justin Herleman (alto saxophone); Charlie King (trumpet); and John Ursu (trumpet)!

## Music Grant Will Benefit Students Of All Ages

Congratulations to Mr. Ronnie Ziccardi, Avonworth School District’s K-12 Music Department Leader, on receiving the PARSS (Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools) Grant.

Mr. Ziccardi says it will be used to purchase an Apple MacBook Pro that will give him the tools to successfully create detailed band practice videos with both the video and musical software embedded in the device.

He says, “The goal is to bring families closer to their child’s musical journeys on their instruments by connecting what they learned in class with their at-home practice routines. These videos are aimed to be family-friendly by encouraging parents and caregivers to sit down with their children and enjoy the process of learning an instrument together.”

Ziccardi also says families who may have previously felt unsure of how to help will now have a tool that welcomes them into the music-making process.

Research shows that schools with strong family engagement are 10 times more likely to improve student learning outcomes and I believe this initiative will help to foster family engagement in the band classroom. The grant will benefit hundreds of students in the band program in the Avonworth School District.





## Avonworth Bands Earn Top Honors at PMEA Music Performance Assessment

The musical talent of Avonworth was on full display at Heinz Hall, as both the Middle School 6th Grade Band and the High School Wind Ensemble earned Superior ratings—the highest possible distinction—at the recent PMEA Music Performance Assessment.

Under the direction of Mr. Ziccardi, the 6th Grade Band continued its remarkable run, receiving a Superior rating for the third consecutive year. The High School Wind Ensemble, led by Mr. Neville, not only earned a Superior rating, but also achieved the highest score in the ensemble's history.

Students performed on the prestigious stage of Heinz Hall and were adjudicated by a panel of three collegiate music professors. Following their performances, both groups participated in a clinic with select conductors and musicians from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, gaining invaluable insights from some of the area's top musical professionals.

Congratulations to all our talented student musicians and their directors for their hard work, dedication, and musical excellence. Go Lopes!



## Avonworth Musicians Earn Spots in 2025 PMEA All-State Concert Band

Vanessa Amayo (flute) and Kaleb Amick (horn) represented Avonworth at the PMEA Region I Band Festival 2025, hosted by Ambridge Area High School. Both musicians secured their spots at the festival through a highly competitive audition process last month—and they didn't stop there.

At the event, Vanessa and Kaleb both excelled in the final round of auditions, earning coveted placements in the 2025 PMEA All-State Concert Band, which took place in the Poconos from April 9-12. Vanessa placed second overall among flutists, marking her second time earning a place in a PMEA All-State ensemble. Kaleb, competing against a strong field of horn players, placed fourth overall, securing his first state-level achievement.

While at the Region I Festival, Vanessa and Kaleb had the opportunity to perform under the baton of guest conductor Col. (Ret. USMC) Michael J. Colburn. Col. Colburn is one of only five individuals in the past 50 years to serve as the Director of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. His distinguished career includes roles as Principal Euphonium for the Marine Band, Director of Bands at Butler University, and Adjunct Professor of Euphonium at the University of Vermont. He currently leads the Me2 Orchestra in Burlington, Vermont.

While all PMEA festivals provide students with outstanding musical mentorship, working with Col. Colburn was an especially rare and valuable experience. His unparalleled expertise and leadership offered students a firsthand glimpse into the highest levels of musical excellence.

Vanessa and Kaleb's success reflects the strength of Avonworth's K-12 music program, which continues to produce high-achieving musicians. The PMEA competition circuit is incredibly competitive—as an example, the top four flutists at Region I scored within just five points of each other on a 280-point scale.

Since 2017, Vanessa and Kaleb join an elite group as the fifth and sixth Avonworth students to reach the PMEA All-State level. Their achievement is a proud moment for our school and a reminder of what's possible through passion, perseverance, and high-quality music education.

Congratulations, Vanessa and Kaleb!



# ARTS: PERFORMING & VISUAL



## Students Participate in PMEA District Band and District Orchestra

This past year, seven of our high school band students had the opportunity to attend and compete at PMEA District 1 Band West, hosted by Hampton High School. Students had the privilege of working with guest conductor, Dr. Cheldon Williams--who is the Director of Athletic Bands and Associate Director of Bands at West Virginia University. Vanessa Amayo (flute) and Kaleb Amick (horn) both secured spots to move on to regionals.

Congratulations to Kaleb Amick (horn); Ben Cavanaugh (tuba); Zachary Konieczki (trombone); Colin Anderson (trombone); Evelyn Mathie (clarinet); Madelyn Hanlon (flute); Vanessa Amayo (flute)!

Vanessa and Kaleb were also afforded the opportunity to participate in PMEA District 1 Orchestra hosted by Bethel Park High School. The orchestra was under the direction of guest conductor Dr. Christopher M. Ciccone of the Baltimore Youth Symphony Orchestra and James Madison University.



## Students Shine at 2025 PMEA District 1 Elementary Band Festival

Six dedicated Avonworth students had the honor of participating in the 2025 PMEA District 1 Elementary Band Festival, a prestigious musical event that brought together top young musicians from across several local counties. The festival was held for selected 5th and 6th grade students who were nominated by their school band directors based on their talent, dedication, and potential.

Representing Avonworth at this year's festival were: Clark Laird, Percussion, Vincenzo Pascuzzi, French Horn, James Leuenberger, Euphonium, Elise Coast, Clarinet, Lydia Klein, Trumpet, Veda Shook, Trombone.

The PMEA District 1 Elementary Band Festival is not only a celebration of student achievement, but also a chance for young musicians to grow in confidence and connect with others who share their passion for music.





## SPRING 2024 PMEA

### Honors Wind Ensemble Earns Highest Rating

Congratulations to the Honors Wind Ensemble for earning superior ratings in the PMEA Performance Assessment in 2024.

The students and Mr. Will Guess, the Avonworth School District Director of Bands, earned the ratings on grade 6 literature and sight-reading, the toughest musical level, considered professional music.

The judges were Dr. Kate Ferguson from Youngstown State University, Dr. Travis Weller from Messiah College, and Dr. Tonya Mitchell-Spradlin from Penn State University. The assessment was held at Norwin High School.



### 6th Grade Band Earns Superior Rating

The 6th grade band successfully earned the “Superior” rating at the 2024 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Music Performance Assessment!

This is the highest rating possible.

Avonworth was the only 6th grade band and/or elementary band in the state to also earn this rating during the previous school year.

One judge commented, “Congrats on rocking the house! All of us were floored by what we heard today!”

The adjudicators were music professors from Westminster College, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Carnegie Mellon University.



### Choir Student Makes History

Congratulations to Harmony Karwoski for qualifying for the PMEA All-State Chorus ensemble for the second year in a row in 2024.

Harmony is the first choir student in Avonworth history to qualify for states twice in her high school career. We could not be more proud of her incredible hard work and accomplishment.



### AES Students Participate in PMEA Elementary String Festival

Three Avonworth Elementary School students participated in the PMEA District 1 Elementary Strings Festival in 2024. Congratulations to Duvineel Cabrera, Sam Case and Maya Robertson!



## Fall 2024 PMEA

### Chorus Singers Honored with PMEA Selection

Congratulations to Harmony Karwoski, Stefan Lash, and Kaleb Amick for qualifying for Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District Chorus!

A special congratulations to Harmony for earning 1st Chair in her section—what an incredible achievement. We are so proud of our Singing Lopes!



### Students Participate in PMEA District Band

Seven of our high school band students had the opportunity to attend and compete at PMEA District 1 Band West, hosted by Hampton High School. Students had the privilege of working



with guest conductor, Dr. Cheldon Williams—who is the Director of Athletic Bands and Associate Director of Bands at West Virginia University. Vanessa Amayo (flute) and Kaleb Amick (horn) both secured spots to move on to regionals early next month.

Congratulations to Kaleb Amick (horn); Ben Cavanaugh (tuba); Zachary Konieczki (trombone); Colin Anderson (trombone); Evelyn Mathie (clarinet); Madelyn Hanlon (flute); Vanessa Amayo (flute)!

### Students Participate in PMEA District Orchestra

Vanessa Amayo and Kaleb Amick were afforded the opportunity to participate in PMEA District 1 Orchestra hosted by Bethel Park High School. The orchestra was under the direction of guest conductor Dr. Christopher M. Ciccone of the Baltimore Youth Symphony Orchestra and James Madison University.



### AES Students Participate in PMEA Elementary String Festival

Three Avonworth Elementary School students participated in the PMEA District 1 Elementary Strings Festival. Congratulations to Duvineel Cabrera, Sam Case and Maya Robertson!

## WINTER SPORTS (2023-2024 Winter Season)

### Basketball - Boys

Rowan Carmichael was named Post-Gazette 4A Section 3 All-Section, All WPIAL 4A, & Second Team All-State.

### Basketball - Girls

Section Championships.

WPIAL Runner-Up.

Greta O'Brien was named Post-Gazette 3A Section 2 All-Section. Greta finished her Avonworth basketball career with 1,616 points. She holds the record for career points for the Lady 'Lopes basketball program.

Rebecca Goetz was named Post-Gazette 3A Section 2 All-Section & All WPIAL 3A. Rebecca also broke the 1,000 career points record.

Alessia Padalino, Katie Petrina, Greta O'Brien, and Elena Zimmerman were selected as All-Section representatives.

### Bocce

First Place - Unified Bocce Regional Championship.

### Diving

Lilia MacKenzie - 8th place at the PIAA championship. First diving medal for the program.

### Hockey

The 2023-2024 season ended with the most varsity wins in school history.



## WINTER SPORTS (2023-2024 Winter Season)

### Swimming - Boys

Second consecutive undefeated season.

Sam Cavanaugh - 6th place in the 200 individual medley and 9th place in the 500 freestyle at WPIALS.

Isaac Stoeckle - 9th place in the 100 backstroke at WPIALS.

Zach Schuster - 4th place in the 100 butterfly and 3rd place in the 100 breaststroke at WPIALS. Zach broke his own school records in both events.

200 Medley Relay - (Isaac Stoeckle, Zach Schuster, Sam Cavanaugh, Sam Kohler) - 3rd place at WPIALS. In addition, they broke the school record in this event.

400 Freestyle Relay - (Isaac Stoeckle, Sam Kohler, Sam Cavanaugh, Zach Schuster) - 7th place at WPIALS. In addition, they broke the school record for this event.

### Swimming - Girls

Three-way tie for section championship.

Elise Nardozi - 2nd place in the 100 freestyle and 200 freestyle at WPIALS. Elise broke the school record in the 200 freestyle.

400 Freestyle Relay (Kendall McKelvey (NG), Katie Petrina, Amelia Hardiman and Elise Nardozi) - 1st place at WPIALS.

200 Freestyle Relay (Kendall McKelvey (NG), Rachel Buzzard, Amelia Hardiman, Elise Nardozi) - 4th place at WPIALS.

### Wrestling

Coach Vulcano and Coach Maisner Named AA Northern Section Coaches of the Year.

Auston Kosanovic– 1st place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

Auston Kosanovic – Section Winner.

Justin Beck – 2nd place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

Dimitri Velisaris – 3rd place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

Bryce Metz – 3rd place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

Luke Hollywood – 3rd place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

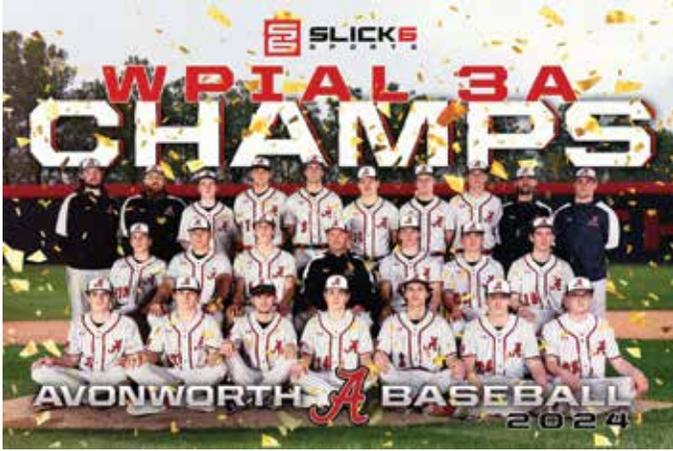
Michael Tabano – 4th place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

Jackson Krul – 4th place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.

Angelo Valeriano – 6th place at the WPIAL AA Individual Tournament.



## SPRING SPORTS (2024 Spring Season)



### Baseball

The boys varsity baseball team won the WPIAL Championship.  
PIAA Runner-Up.

### Track and Field

Hayzes Robinson won gold at the PIAA Championship meet in the 100M.

Girls 4x4 relay (Grace Ermlich, Hayzes Robinson, Gianna Babusci, and Julia Doherty) broke the all-time 2A 4x4 relay record.



### Softball

Section champions.

Rylee Gray had more than 100 hits for the 2024 season.

Alivia Lantzy hit the 600 strikeouts milestone at the WPIAL Class 3A quarterfinals.



## FALL SPORTS (2024 Fall Season)

### Cross Country

Several cross country athletes competed in the WPIAL Championship.

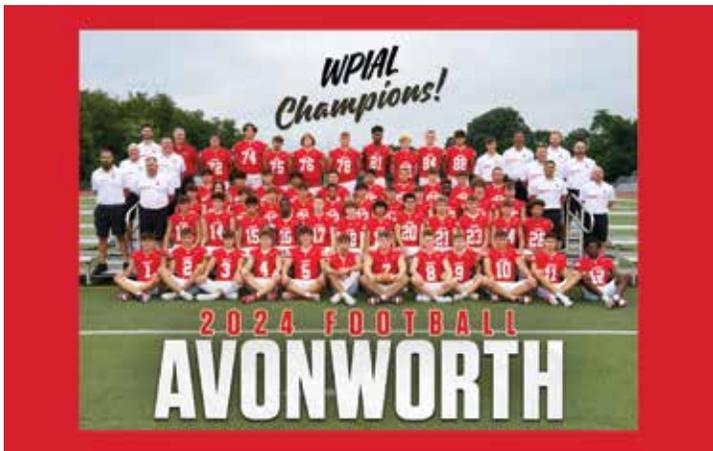
### Football

Section Champions.

The boys varsity football team won the 3A WPIAL championship.

Recognized at a Steeler game on December 8.

Mason Metz was named to the list of the 2024 TribLive HSSN Terrific 25 Football All-Stars!



### Golf

Section Champions.

Charlie Igims qualified for the 2A WPIAL Championship and made it to the final round.

Chase Barzen qualified for the 2A WPIAL Championship.



### Soccer - Boys

Section Champions.

WPIAL Runner-Up.

Abdul Basit, Abdul Wahab, Rowan Carmichael, Carter Berad and Noah Quinn were all-section players.

Alex Rowe was an all-section honorable mention.

Abdul Basit, Abdul Wahab, Rowan Carmichael, and Noah Quinn competed in the WPIAL All-Star Game. Abdul Wahab also made it to the Pennsylvania All-State team.



### Volleyball

Mackenzie Dawson, Clementine Dutot-Lucs, Julia Cernich, Cassidy Johncour, Sydney Shields, Jada Taylor, and Megan Monti all earned all-section nominations for volleyball.

Sydney Shields set a new all-time record for aces.

## WINTER SPORTS (2024-2025 Winter Season)

### Basketball - Boys

Section Champions.

'Lopes varsity basketball coach Joe Frank was named the KDKA Super 7 Coach of the Year for 4A.

Rowan Carmichael became the 38th player in WPIAL history to reach 2,000 career points. He is now Avonworth's all-time scoring leader with 2,342 points.

### Basketball - Girls

Greta O'Brien tied the girls basketball all-time scoring record with 1,589 points, matching Kelli Costa's achievement.

### Hockey

The 2024-2025 season ended by winning the Pens Cup for the first time in school history on March 17, 2025, and finishing as the 2025 State Runner-Up.

Senior Conner Ralston became the teams all-time scoring leader with 66 goals, 68 assists, and a total of 134 points, including 5 goals and 4 assists in 7 postseason games.

### Swimming - Boys

Sam Cavanaugh - 1st place in the 200 IM at WPIALS.

Sam Cavanaugh - 2nd place in the 200 IM at PIAA Championship, 2nd in the 500 freestyle at the PIAA Championships.

Boys swim team took 6th place in PIAA finals out of 59 teams.

### Swimming - Girls

JoAnn Cook - 7th place in the 100 backstroke at the PIAA Championships.

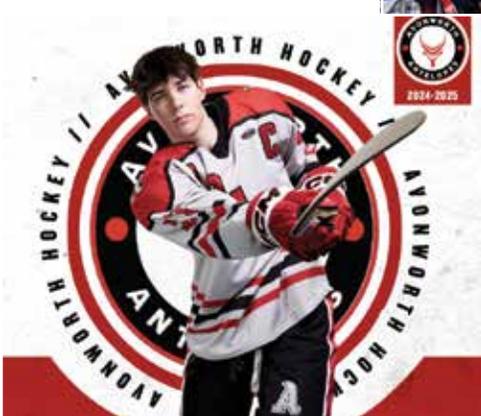
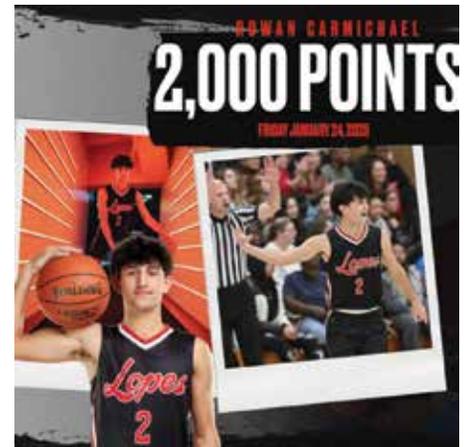
JoAnn Cook - 8th place in the 200 freestyle at the PIAA Championships.

### Wrestling

Auston Kosanovic - first wrestler in Avonworth history to win the WPIAL title. He is also a three time section champion.

Varsity wrestling head coach Zach Maisner was named Section 6 AA Varsity Coach of the Year.

Junior high wrestling head coach Ryan Schmiedlin earned Section 6 AA Junior High Coach of the Year honors!



## SPRING SPORTS (2025 Spring Season)

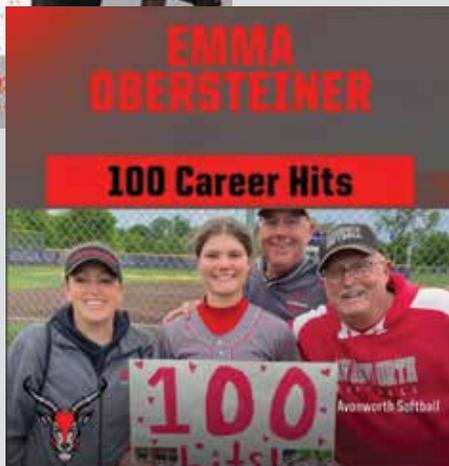
### Softball

Coach Jenna Muncie earned her 150th career win.

Emma Obersteiner earned her 100th career hit.

### Baseball

Section Champions.



### Track and Field

Section Champions.

Boys 4x400m relay (Tyler Harold, Rowan Carmichael, Will Smith, Savian Baptiste): 6th place WPIAL medalists, broke all-time program record.

Girls 4x400m relay (Grace Kuretich, Julia Doherty, Grace Ermlich, Hope Stiteler): 8th place at WPIAL championships.

Tucker Jeremias 5th place at WPIAL championships for long jump.



## GENERAL ATHLETIC UPDATES

### Scholar Athlete Award Winners

Kai Carlson (golf) was selected by the WPIAL as a recipient of the 33rd annual WPIAL James Collins Scholar-Athlete Award.

Amelia Hardiman (cross country, swimming & diving, and track & field) was selected by the WPIAL as a recipient of the 33rd annual WPIAL James Collins Scholar-Athlete Award.

### Tri-Athlete Award

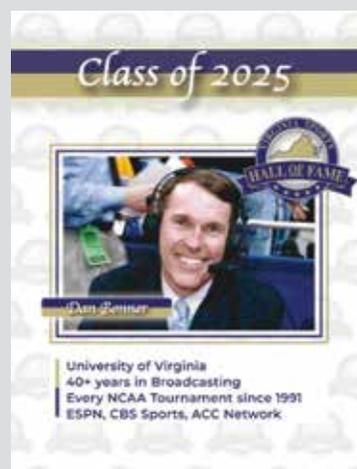
Alivia Lantzy (volleyball, bowling, softball) received the Northern Area Athletic Directors' Association's Tri-Athlete Award.

Brandon Sapolsky (golf, basketball, baseball) received the Northern Area Athletic Directors' Association's Tri-Athlete Award.



### Avonworth Alum Dan Bonner Inducted to the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame

Dan Bonner, ASD Class of 1971, was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2025. After graduating from Avonworth, Bonner attended the University of Virginia where he was a standout basketball player. Following his college career, he coached basketball at UVA for several years. He is also known as a sports broadcaster who widely covered college basketball, including covering March Madness for over 35 years.



### Joe Frank was named KDKA's 4A High School Basketball Coach of the Year



# A VONWORTH

## New District Branding!

During the 2023-2024 school year, the District engaged in a process to refresh and update our athletics and activities branding.

It is important to note that this process did not eliminate the Avonworth “A” we are all familiar with. The “A” with the antelope inside is synonymous with the District’s identity outside our athletics and activities. However, feedback from coaches, parents, and students showed a lack of support for using this “A” on athletics uniforms and apparel.

The impetus for this effort came from recognizing the inconsistencies in athletic uniforms. We lacked consistency in the “A” used on uniforms and the colors used in uniforms. We also wanted to ensure that Avonworth’s brand was uniquely ours and not a variation of another organization’s brand. Our new branding will create consistency and help us ensure Avonworth is undeniably recognizable across all sports and activities!!

The new branding process included focus groups with coaches, students, administration, and our

Board of School Directors. The Board of School Directors approved the services of a designer who took the input and created the new branding.

The process focused on creating an “A,” a script Lopes, and an antelope that could be utilized on uniforms or apparel. The goal was to create consistency and an identifiable brand for Avonworth School District.

At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, we unveiled the updated branding for the District, which included a new “A,” new script Lopes, and antelope. The new branding will be phased in as new uniforms are needed for each sport.

The new branding was already incorporated into the updated high school gym floor. Rave reviews were received from the Class of 1974, which visited during their fiftieth class reunion. One class member commented on Facebook, “That’s the best antelope design Avonworth has used.” Another post said, “Wow! Outstanding . . .Nailed it!” We agree and are happy to share the new branding with the entire school community! Go Lopes!

Lopes



# Avonworth School District Hall of Distinction

Due to the pandemic, we unfortunately experienced a pause in continuing to recognize

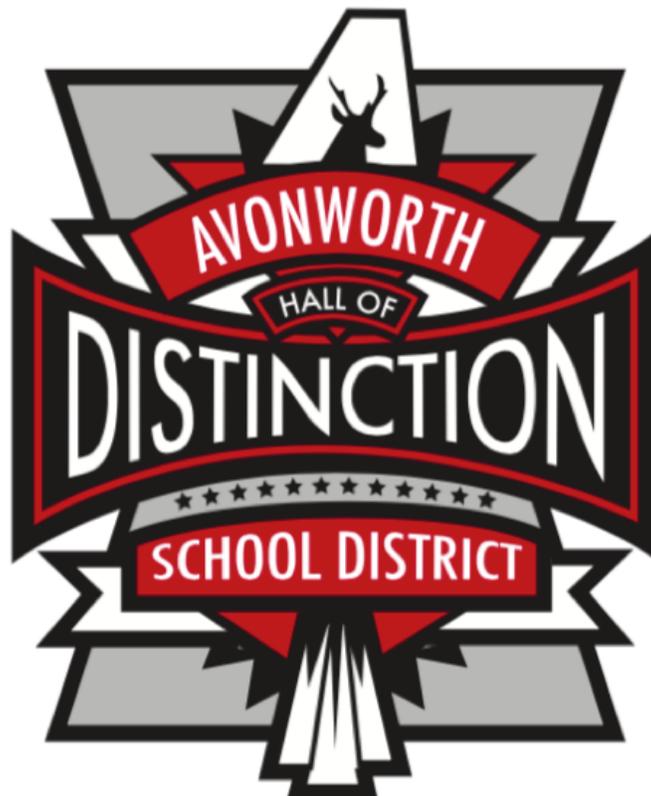
In 2019, the Avonworth School District established a Hall of Distinction to identify and to honor those who have made outstanding achievements in his/her career or in the service of the Avonworth School Community. Additionally, through their accomplishments, these individuals have brought distinction, honor, and excellence to the Avonworth School District Community.

Individuals eligible for the Hall of Distinction must be alumni, staff, or served on the Avonworth Board of School Directors school. Alumni status includes graduates of Ben Avon High School, those that attended the Emsworth School, or the Ohio Township One-Room School Houses.

Current or former community members who have made outstanding contributions to the Avonworth School District Community are eligible for the Hall of Distinction for Special Recognition. The Avonworth School District Hall of Distinction Class of 2024 will be inducted in a ceremony during the first home football game in the fall of 2024.

If you are interested in nominating someone for the Avonworth Hall of Distinction Class of 2024, please complete the nomination form on the reverse side of this perforated page. Once you complete the form, you may mail it to or drop it off at the Avonworth School District Central Office:

258 Josephs Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237



# Avonworth School District Hall of Distinction Nomination Form

Please return this form to:  
**Avonworth School District**  
258 Josephs Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the Avonworth Hall of Distinction is to recognize Avonworth High School alumni, community members, and employees of the Avonworth School District that have made outstanding accomplishments and/or achievements in their career or in service to the school district community.

**Criteria:**

- Anyone can make a nomination.
- Avonworth alumni (including graduates of Ben Avon High School, the Emsworth School, and the Ohio Township One-Room Schoolhouses), community members, and district employees are eligible for nomination.
- Nominees should be ten years beyond graduation for alumni and employees must have completed their employment with the District with five years' separation from the District.
- Posthumous nominations will be accepted.
- Nominations are valid for a period of five years.
- Nominees must be of good character and high moral standards.
- ***Nominations will be accepted until February 28.***

**Nominee Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**How long have you known the nominee?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please describe why you feel this nominee is appropriate for consideration for the Avonworth School District Hall of Distinction.**

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Avonworth School District  
258 Josephs Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

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## AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

**Jeff Hadley, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

**Cindy Donovan**  
Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent

**Jillian Bichsel, Ed.D.**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Jennifer Sheridan**  
Director of Fiscal Management

**Tracey Eck**  
Payroll Manager/Supervisor of Transportation

**Keera Dwulit, Ed.D.**  
High School Principal

**Michael Hall, Ed.D**  
Middle School Principal

**Kaitlin Remensky, Ed.D.**  
Assistant Middle/High School Principal

**William Battistone, Jr., Ph.D.**  
Elementary School Principal

**Robert Eastwood**  
Elementary Assistant Principal

**Scott Miller, Ph.D.**  
Primary Center Principal

**Justin Karam, Ed.D.**  
Director of Student Services

**Kristen Butler**  
Director of Human Resources

**Kurt Kesneck**  
Director of Athletics

**Melissa Schad**  
Food Services Director

**Kevin McCabe**  
Director of Technology

**Brant Colamarino**  
Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

## AVONWORTH BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

**John Brandt**  
President

**Vicki Carlson**  
Board Member

**Amy Tokar**  
Board Member

**Yu-Ling Cheng**  
Vice President

**Jenna Paulat**  
Board Member

**William C. Andrews**  
Solicitor with Andrews & Price

**Danielle White**  
Treasurer

**Nora Silvey**  
Board Member

**Cindy Donovan**  
Board Secretary

**Beau Blaser**  
Board Member

**Patrick Stewart**  
Board Member

Avonworth School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry, complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for disabled persons, should contact Dr. Justin Karam, Director of Student Services, 1310 Roosevelt Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, 412-366-7171, jkaram@avonworth.k12.pa.us.