



# Alfred-Almond Central School District Newsletter

## November 2025

### Inside this issue...

Principals' Messages;  
BOE Appreciation ..... 2

Dir. of Educational  
Technology Message;  
Honoring a Legacy;  
Tune in to Literacy ..... 3

Students Celebrate  
Culture and Connection;  
Class Soaks Up Scientific  
Research ..... 4

Fourth-Grade Research  
and Collaboration;  
Variables and Design  
Investigations; In-depth  
State Exploration ..... 5

Sky-High Autumn  
Adventure; Stokoe  
Farms Trip ..... 6

Fall Family Fest;  
Outdoor Adventures in  
PE; 2025-26 Yearbook  
Ordering ..... 7

Emergency Closing  
Info; Important Dates;  
Performing Arts Events;  
Elementary Musical .... 8

## A message from the Superintendent

Dear Alfred-Almond family,  
As the crisp autumn air settles in and the leaves begin to turn, I am filled with immense pride for the energy and enthusiasm that have defined the start of our school year. Our hallways are buzzing with the excitement of learning, a testament to the dedication and spirit of our entire school community.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our incredible faculty and staff. Their unwavering commitment to our students is the foundation of our success. This year, we have embarked on significant curriculum work to further enhance the educational experience for every child. In our elementary school, we are deepening our focus on literacy, implementing new strategies and resources to build strong, confident readers and writers. At the secondary level, our teachers are engaged in collaborative work across all subject areas to ensure our curriculum is rigorous, relevant and prepares our students for the opportunities of the future.

Our students continue to be a source of inspiration. They come to school each day ready to learn, to be challenged and to grow. This was especially evident on our athletic fields this fall. I was consistently impressed not just by our teams' effort and skill, but by their outstanding sportsmanship. Our student-athletes, coaches and fans represented Alfred-Almond with class and integrity; we are incredibly proud of them.

As we look ahead, please take note of the following important dates for the upcoming holiday season in November 2025:

- **Tuesday, November 11th: Veterans Day - No School**
- **Wednesday, November 26th - Friday, November 28th: Thanksgiving Recess - No School**

We hope you enjoy this time with family and friends, reflecting on all we have to be thankful for.

Thank you for your continued partnership in education. It is a privilege to be a part of a community that so deeply values its school and its children. Let's look forward to a successful and rewarding remainder of the school year.

In Education,

**Brett Dusinberre**

Superintendent of Schools

## From the Elementary Principal

The 2025-2026 school year is off to a successful start. We appreciate the extended warm weather this fall, which has allowed us to maximize outdoor learning. We are always happy to take advantage of opportunities to get outside and learn during the day.

We have successfully launched several new experiences this fall for students and our community:

- **Elementary Musical:** The inaugural elementary musical, *The High Seas*, led by Ms. Karr, involves more than 40 participating students.
- **Wrestling Club:** Mr. Cook has reinstated the elementary wrestling club for students in second through sixth grade.
- **Veterans Day Celebration:** The Elementary Kindness Club has organized a celebration to honor service members, past and present and their families. We extend our sincere gratitude to Wegmans for its generous donation of a \$200 gift card for the event.

We are pleased to announce a new partnership with Cummings Nature Center, allowing our kindergarten, first- and second-grade students to participate in Forest School on school grounds. Approximately once a month, students participate in outdoor learning, which fosters crucial development in cooperation, imaginative play and problem-solving within the natural environment. This initiative represents our commitment to expanding high-impact learning experiences for our students.

The holiday season is quickly approaching and we look forward to a successful close to the calendar year. We thank you for your continued support of AAE students and wish your family a safe and joyful holiday season.

---

## Board of Education Appreciation

October 13-17 was School Board Recognition Week. Thank you to Alfred-Almond Board of Education: Maeghen Kuhn, President; John D'Angelo, Vice-President; Jason Burdick, Andrew Diestler and Heather Miller for your dedicated leadership in public education and your continuing service to the children of this community.



## From the Secondary Principal

Alfred-Almond Secondary School is off to a great start for the 2025-26 school year. Now entering my second year as principal, it is wonderful to be able to see the growth of our students from year to year. In the Secondary School, our focus is targeted:

- Maintain high attendance rates for students;
- Maintain a positive school culture;
- Provide students with creative outlets for cognitive growth inside and outside the classroom;
- Expand our robust academic programming through a collaborative culture.

This September's spirit week saw one of our highest participation rates the school has seen in many years, culminating in a homecoming dance with a record breaking number of tickets sold. The excitement and enthusiasm is palpable and it has been wonderful to experience it with our students.

Our attendance rate for the month of September was more than one percent higher than last year, with attendance staying around 96.3 percent. It is somewhat silly to say but still important: when kids are here, they learn, they progress and they grow. We want every student here every day and we are glad that they want to be here.

As we progress into the winter months, our instructional staff will continue to meet in academic departments and take a look at our assessment data to identify and make plans to work on any student deficits. However, if you ever feel that your student is struggling, please reach out to the school and let us know. We want to help.

Lastly, as reported in the news, NYSED has adopted the Portrait of a Graduate which will be the basis of new graduation requirements in the years to come. However, at this time, all current high school students will follow the current graduation requirements that are set by the state. New York State will be putting out new guidance to school districts for the next two years, detailing any specific changes to high school credit requirements and diploma credentials. As a district, we are preparing for these changes by looking at our current curricula and ensuring that our instruction is in full alignment with New York State Learning Standards. Our number one priority is to ensure that all students will not fall behind.

Never hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you may have during the school year. When parents and the school collaborate, it leads to better results for our students and culture. You can reach me by phone at 607-276-6555 or email at [ghurley@aacapps.com](mailto:ghurley@aacapps.com).

It has been a great start to the school year and we plan to continue the positive momentum.

*Geoff Hurley*

## From the Dir. of Educational Technology

As the new Director of Educational Technology, my goal is to support our talented educators and empower our students by thoughtfully integrating technology into the curriculum. I am passionate about leveraging innovative tools to enhance learning, foster creativity and ensure our students develop the essential skills they need to succeed in an ever-evolving digital world.

I am thrilled to take on this role and look forward to collaborating with staff, students and families to continue Alfred-Almond's tradition of excellence and prepare our learners for the future.

Chris Danny

## Honoring a Legacy of Love and Kindness

This past spring, the AACCS family celebrated the retirement of two extraordinary members of our community: Kilroy, our beloved therapy dog, and his devoted handler, Mrs. Kathi Chambliss.

For years, Kilroy's gentle presence and Mrs. Chambliss's unwavering dedication brought comfort, joy and healing to countless students and staff. Together, they were more than a team—they were a source of kindness and love.

In recognition of their profound impact, a Buddy Bench will be placed on the elementary playground as a permanent tribute. Just as Kilroy always seemed to know who needed a little extra love, the Buddy Bench will now offer that same quiet invitation: "Come sit. You're not alone." It will stand as a joyful reminder of how small acts of kindness—whether from a therapy dog or a friend on the playground—can make a big difference.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to this special project. In honoring Kilroy and Mrs. Chambliss, we also celebrate the heart of our school community—where friendship, support and care for one another never retire.

## Tune in to Literacy

What are you reading? Keep Reading for 20 minutes every day Alfred-Almond families! Pairing the audio with the text in front of your child will improve their comprehension or understanding of the text by 76%.

**HOW AUDIO PROMOTES LITERACY**  
BENEFITS OF AUDIO TO LEARNING HOW TO READ

The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.  
—Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading

**INCREASES READING ACCURACY BY 52%**

**IMPROVES COMPREHENSION BY 76%**  
Provides context, helping children decode words and comprehend challenging text.

**TEACHES** INCREASES READING SPEED

PRUH • NUHN • SEE • YE • SHUN EXPANDS VOCABULARY

BENEFITS OF AUDIO TO OTHER TYPES OF LEARNING

Children who are better listeners are also better learners.  
—North University of Texas professor emeritus Sara Lundsteen

**85%** of what we learn, we learn by listening.

TEST SCORES INCREASED **21%** when engaged in multi-modal learning versus single-mode.

Combining print and audio increases recall **40%** over print alone.

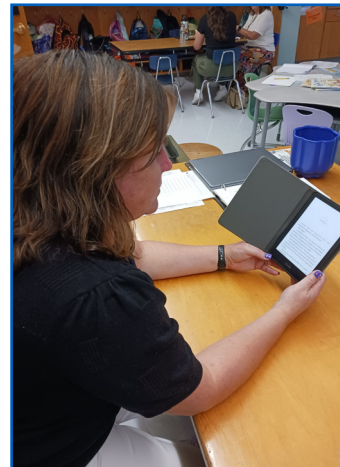
**2 GRADE LEVELS** Students can listen and comprehend 2 grade levels above their reading level.

**INCREASES MOTIVATION BY 67%**

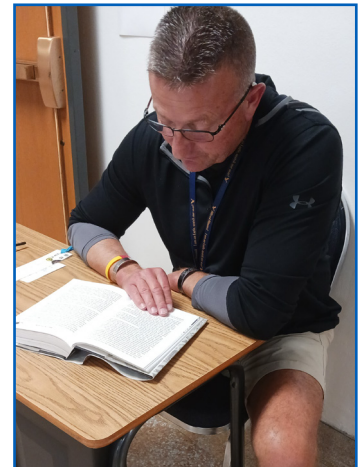
**27%** of the K-12 population are auditory learners.

Sources available at [soundlearningapa.org/docs/bibliography.pdf](http://soundlearningapa.org/docs/bibliography.pdf)

One way to expand vocabulary and expose your child to millions of new words is by reading to them or having an audio or ebook readily available for daily reading habits and routines.



Left: Mrs. Forshee reads daily on her Kindle.



Right: School Resource Officer Smith takes time to read each day.

## Students Celebrate Culture and Connection

The school year has begun with great enthusiasm and energy for our Spanish students and World Languages Club members. Taking advantage of the warm sunshine, students have participated in engaging outdoor activities that had them moving, interacting and learning in a fun way.

In Spanish 1, students began the year practicing greetings, good byes and courtesy expressions through creative partner skits. Their performances brought language to life, allowing them to use new vocabulary in real conversations while sharing plenty of laughs along the way. Students also expanded their vocabulary by labeling different parts of the school with Spanish words, a fun and interactive way to practice classroom and school-related terms.

Meanwhile, the World Languages Club kicked off the year with its annual field trip to Rochester's Community Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. Students explored exhibits featuring unique animals native to South America such as the degu and the armadillo, and immersed themselves in the rich rhythms of Latin American culture. The day was filled with lively music, colorful dances and the unmistakable heartbeat of Hispanic heritage.

Back in the classroom, the cultural experience continued as club members put on their aprons to make arepas, a traditional Venezuelan and Colombian dish. They made enough to share with the Spanish 1 students, giving everyone a delicious taste of Latin American flavor.

It's been an exciting and inspiring start to the year — ¡qué buen comienzo!



Top: Spanish students performing partner skits in the classroom.  
Bottom left: One of the presentations at the Rochester Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration.  
Bottom right: World Language Club members making arepas.

## Class Soaks Up Scientific Research

Mrs. Gaias's Environmental Science class recently participated in an innovative, hands-on project to test the absorbency of brand-name and generic paper towels.

This experiment allowed the students to apply their scientific skills while encouraging critical thinking about consumer choices and environmental impacts. Working in small groups, students investigated different paper towel brands.

After meticulously conducting absorbency tests by measuring how much liquid each towel could hold within a set time frame and carefully recording the data to ensure accuracy and consistency, students compared absorbency with cost per roll to determine which brands offered the best value for money.

Their findings were both practical and eye-opening: some generic brands matched or even outperformed more expensive ones, showing that consumers can make budget-friendly choices without sacrificing quality.

In addition to honing scientific analysis skills, the project encouraged considering broader themes in environmental science, such as sustainability and resource management. By understanding the relationship between cost, quality and environmental impact, the students gained valuable insight into informed consumerism. Mrs. Gaias emphasized the importance of critical thinking and collaboration and stated, "This hands-on experiment allowed students to engage with real-world data and think about their roles in environmental stewardship."

Through the teamwork and rigorous analysis of this experience, the students are more prepared to engage with environmental issues and consumer choices in their daily lives. The class looks forward to sharing their findings with anyone who is interested.

Bravo to Mrs. Gaias and her students for a successful and impactful project.



Juniors Layla Shelley and Alexandra Gagne measuring and collecting data.

## Fourth-grade Research and Collaboration

Have you ever heard of an Aye-Aye, a Pink Fairy Armadillo, a Goblin Shark or a Babirusa? The Alfred-Almond fourth-graders have!

They are diving into the wild world of animals as they work on their animal research projects. Each student has been assigned a truly unique and fascinating creature to study. For the next few weeks, students will be researching, writing essays and creating slide shows to share what they have learned about their animal's habitats, diets, adaptations and more. The research project will wrap up with class presentations – a favorite highlight every year.

Not only does the project build writing and presentation skills, it also sparks curiosity about the incredible diversity of life on our planet.

Mr. Weller's fourth-grade students recently focused on collaboration. These future scientists and engineers were given a set of complicated instructions and then worked together to solve a puzzle.



All four groups did an amazing job demonstrating teamwork and problem-solving skills.

## Variables and Design Investigations

Sixth-grade scientists kicked off the year with an investigation into variables and design. They built air trolleys, measured the distances they traveled, identified variables that could affect their flight distance and changed those variables to create new experiments.



## In-depth Exploration of the U.S.

Sixth-grade students have been hard at work researching individual U.S. states as part of an in-depth geography and social studies unit.

Each student was assigned a state and conducted extensive research covering everything from state symbols and landmarks to history, climate, famous figures and unique cultural features.

To bring their learning to life, students transformed their research into a creative "State Float" project. These floats, designed using shoeboxes, cardboard, craft supplies and plenty of imagination represented their assigned state. From miniature waterfalls and mountain ranges to tiny cacti and moose, the floats captured the essence of each state in fun and meaningful ways.



## An Unforgettable Autumn Adventure takes the A-A Eagles Sky High

On a beautiful October day, the Alfred-Almond Outdoor Adventure Club embarked on an exhilarating trip to Sky High Adventure in Ellicottville, NY, home to the largest high ropes course in New York State and the third largest in the entire United States.

Emphasizing teamwork, problem solving, agility and a spirit of adventure, club members took to the treetops, gaining unforgettable memories amidst the stunning backdrop of fall foliage. The participants, affectionately known as “eagles,” began their adventure with team-building exercises that encouraged collaboration among members. The ropes course, which features various elements that challenge both physical and mental capabilities, provided an ideal setting for the club’s members to test



their limits. Navigating the high wires, obstacles and zip lines required not just individual bravery but also trust and support from teammates. It was amazing to see everyone encouraging one another, cheering each other on as they scaled the heights and faced personal challenges.

This camaraderie made the experience more meaningful, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. The breathtaking views from the treetops offered a unique perspective of the changing leaves painting the landscape below. Many members took a moment to



appreciate the beauty of nature surrounding them, marveling at how rewarding it felt to conquer both the obstacles and their own fears.

After a day filled with adventure, laughter and plenty of “eagle” spirit, the club returned home energized and inspired, with many already looking forward to their next outing.

A special thank you to the chaperones and all the participants who made it such a success. The Alfred-Almond Outdoor Adventure Club encourages all students to get outside, connect with nature and take part in these amazing adventures. We can’t wait to see where the next adventure will take us!



*Sky High Adventure trip participants. 2025-26 Alfred-Almond Adventure Club logo designed by eighth-grader Camden Rao.*

## Students Enjoy Trip to Stokoe Farms

On October 10, students in fourth- through seventh-grade took a trip to Stokoe Farms. They enjoyed the bounce pads, the petting zoo and a train ride. This was a fun way to spend a perfect fall day!



*Pictured above: (1) Eighth-grader Naomi Benfeld is preparing to traverse an obstacle. (2) Eighth-graders Wyatt Stuart and Jacob Cox show off their safety equipment. (3) Eighth-grader Landis Stearns and seventh-graders Cooper Bossie and Joel McGraw prepare to start their adventure.*

## Fine Arts Boosters Fall Family Fest

With warm fall temperatures and sunny skies, the Alfred-Almond Fine Arts Boosters hosted the third annual Fall Family Fest in the AACCS courtyard on September 20.

Students in attendance were offered 10 different creative activities ranging from henna painting to bubble art, face painting to pumpkin decorating and everything in between. Our raffle tables were overflowing with generous items donated from the community and the boosters grilled up some hot dogs for the crowd, alongside dessert offerings from Frost Bites Frozen Treats.

Rounding out the festival were caricatures drawn by twelfth-grade art student, Eleanor Drozeski, live music performances from our resident teacher duo, The Ukuladies (Jami Snyder and Amy Powers) and an engaging musical guessing game performance by Lisa Karr and Tyler Avnett.

Thank you to all of the students who volunteered to run activities, sell tickets and prepare food, the Fine Arts Boosters members who planned the event, the community members who donated raffle items, AACCS Music department, Chris Parry for sound system setup, the AACCS Cafeteria team for the food prep and all those who showed support by attending the festival. We look forward to bringing this event to AACCS every fall.

Anyone interested in joining the AACCS Fine Arts Boosters should email [jbensley@aacapps.com](mailto:jbensley@aacapps.com) or [apowers@aacapps.com](mailto:apowers@aacapps.com) for more information.



Top left: Students enjoying various activities.

Top right: Senior Eleanor Drozeski creating caricatures.

Bottom left: Tyler Avnett and Lisa Karr's musical guessing game.

Bottom right: The Ukuladies perform.

## Outdoor Adventures in Elementary PE

The Elementary Physical Education Department has been making the most of the beautiful fall weather by utilizing the entire campus for their activities. Elementary students have been learning about trust, challenge, risk assessment, teamwork and problem-solving through their Project Adventure curriculum. The Whale Watch, Triangle Tension Traverse and Traverse Wall have all been big hits—and the views of the Almond Valley aren't too bad either.



## Order Your 2025-26 Yearbook

The Alcen staff have been hard at work and this year's Alfred-Almond Yearbook is now on sale. Save \$5 when you order by November 15. (Price will increase from \$60 to \$65 after that date.) Again this year, all yearbooks must be ordered online.

Visit [www.jostens.com](http://www.jostens.com); Click the link: Order Your Yearbook Today; Search for Alfred-Almond Central High School; Follow the prompt to input your information.

POSTAL PATRON

Alfred-Almond Central School  
6795 Route 21  
Almond, New York 14804

US Postage Paid  
Alfred, New York 14802  
Permit No. 20  
Non-Profit Organization

**Important Dates**

November 11 ..... NO SCHOOL: Veterans Day  
November 24 & 25.....Parent-Teacher Conferences  
Elementary Dismissal at 11:50 a.m.  
November 26-28 .....NO SCHOOL: Thanksgiving Recess  
December 22-January 2 .....NO SCHOOL: Holiday Recess  
January 19 .....NO SCHOOL: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
January 26 ..... NO SCHOOL for Students:  
Superintendent’s Conference Day  
February 16-20.....NO SCHOOL: Winter Recess

**2025-26 Performing Arts Events**

December 11 .....Elementary Holiday Concert  
December 14 ..... Caroling at Alfred Farmers Market  
December 17 ..... Secondary Holiday Concert  
March 13-15.....*The Addams Family* Musical  
March 31 ..... Music in our Schools Month Concert  
May 19 ..... Select Performances at the Art Show  
May 21 .....Senior Night Concert  
June 1 ..... Elementary Strawberry Festival Concert

**Emergency Closing Information**

As a reminder to parents, it is sometimes necessary to close school because it is not safe for our students to walk or ride to school, such as in the event of inclement winter weather.

Should it be necessary to close school, you will receive an automated message notifying you of this occurrence. Please be sure we have your accurate and updated contact information to ensure you receive messages.

For additional information on school closings, please listen to one of the following TV or radio or stations:

- WGRZ - Channel 2      WKBW - Channel 7
- WIVB - Channel 4      Spectrum News
- WHDL - PIG 95.7      BIG OLY 107.1

**Download the ParentSquare app today!**

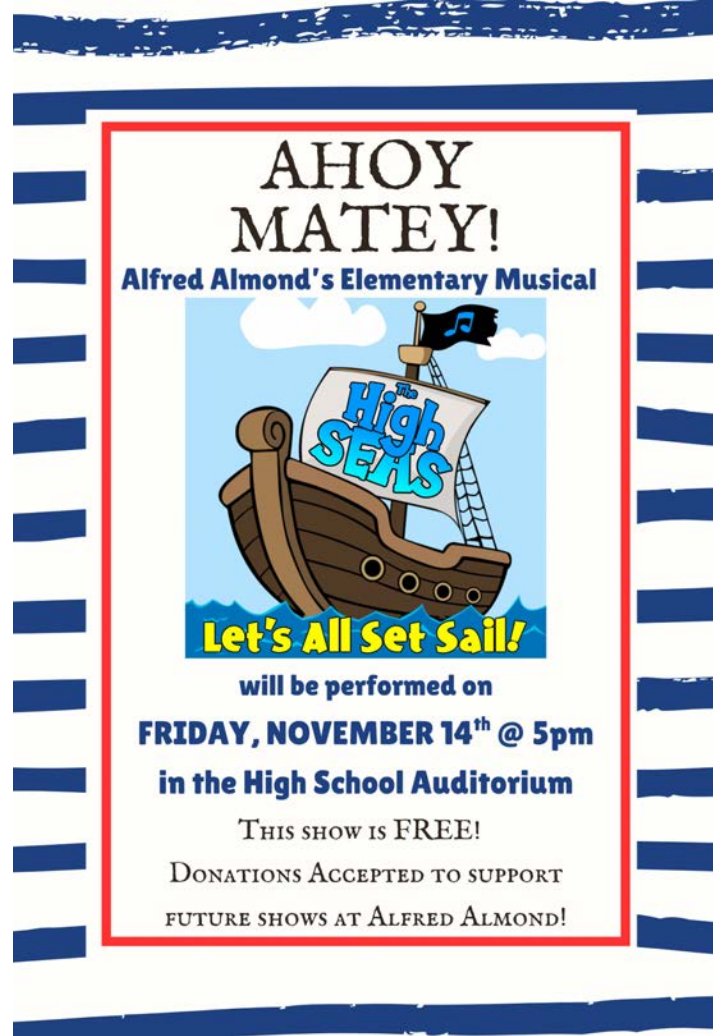
Stay involved with your student's learning and activities at school. From anywhere.












**AHOY MATEY!**

**Alfred Almond's Elementary Musical**



**Let's All Set Sail!**

will be performed on

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm**

**in the High School Auditorium**

THIS SHOW IS FREE!

DONATIONS ACCEPTED TO SUPPORT FUTURE SHOWS AT ALFRED ALMOND!