

FALL
2025

Aurora City School District YOUR SCHOOLS

Aurora Learners - Future Ready



From the Superintendent

By DR. PAUL MILCETICH
Superintendent of Schools

The start of the school year and the fall season always bring so much excitement to our



school and community as we have the fall athletics teams and the marching band in full swing, along with other activities that accompany school being back in session! There are always certain highlights each year which we enjoy

celebrating, such as our highly successful Girls Cross Country, Boys Soccer and Girls Volleyball teams this season. Additionally, the Thunder Over Aurora Marching Band Spectacular on Saturday, September 13th was a huge hit and the largest band show we have hosted to date! Our students and staff enjoyed Spirit/Homecoming Week starting on September 21st and culminated with the dance that Saturday evening with the Aurora Alumni Association inducting four new members that same day. We have other activities, concerts, and the annual Fall Play *Almost, Maine* to which we look forward to on November 15th and 16th. Additionally, it is the time of year when we are able to celebrate some of the overall academic accomplishments of our students and the district as a whole.

On that note, there are many outside affirmations of our amazing learning culture, which we need to share with our community at large. The Aurora City School District was recently informed by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) that the district received the highest rating of five stars on the district's report card from the state, one of only 47 of 608 districts able to reach this level of "Significantly exceeding state standards." The Aurora City School District is in good company and one of a select group of districts able to hit this mark four years running. So...a congratulations is in order to the PreK-12 students and staff for this recognition, as well as appreciation to our community for their support!

Superintendent continued on p. 7

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT BEST HIGH SCHOOLS 2025

AHS #2 IN AKRON METRO; #4 IN NORTHEAST OHIO; #15 IN STATE OF OHIO; TOP 2% OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE STATE

This year, *U.S. News & World Report* magazine analyzed data on more than 24,000 public high schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. From there, nearly 18,000 schools were ranked as the highest-scoring public high schools in the nation.

Aurora High School (AHS) was ranked by the publication at #2 in the Akron Metro Area, #4 in Northeast Ohio and #15 in the State of Ohio in their Best High Schools 2025 article. This puts AHS in the top 2% of high schools, out of 715 ranked high schools, in the State. AHS is ranked at #502 in the country.

The methodology used by U.S. News & World Report for this article focuses on six factors which include, College Readiness (30%), State Assessment Proficiency (20%), State Assessment Performance (20%), Underserved Student Performance (10%), College Curriculum Breadth (10%) and Graduation Rate (10%).

Aurora City School District Assistant Superintendent, Mike Hayes, said of the rankings, "Based on the *US News & World Report's* 2025 metrics examining

approximately 18,000 Public High Schools across the United States including over 700 in Ohio, Aurora High School ranked in the 97th-98th Percentile



across both the state and nation! These rankings are wonderful for our community to see and certainly reaffirm all the great work going on daily within The Greenhouse! However, like any quantitative metric, there is a qualitative story behind it that seldom gets told. In this case, that story exists in the deep and meaningful relationships nurtured with students, valuing the process of learning, practicing and developing empathy while becoming more resilient through collaborative efforts and true critical thought within classrooms, extracurriculars and the community! Thank you to all the Aurora students, staff and community members who work so hard to nurture future-ready learner-roots allowing amazing human beings and outcomes to blossom!"

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & WORKFORCE STATE REPORT CARD RANKS ACSD 5 STARS

The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (ODEW) released the 2025 State of Ohio Report Cards. The Aurora City Schools earned a perfect 5-Star rating from ODEW. This is the 4th consecutive year the ACSD has achieved this honor. Aurora City School District Assistant Superintendent, Mike Hayes, stated to the Aurora Board of Education that, "the Aurora City School District is happy to be one of only forty-seven districts out of over 600 in the state to earn the best possible, 5-star rating from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce." Hayes said, "I'm grateful for all our students, staff and families deeply valuing education and thanks to all of Greenmen Nation for living, leading, and learning with Heart!"

Aurora City School District Superintendent, Dr. Paul Milcetch, stated of the award, "The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce recently



released the annual state report cards, and I am proud to share that the Aurora City School District once again received the highest possible rating of five stars, meaning the ACSD "Significantly Exceeds State Standards." Out of 608 districts across Ohio, only 47 earned this distinction, and Aurora is one of the very few to do so four years in a row.

State Report Card continued on p. 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Superintendent.....	1
U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools	1
ODEW State Report Card	1
Warders New Leighton Elementary Principal	2
New AHS Principal Pacholewski	2
Rothstein New Harmon Asst Principal.....	3

ACSD Staff Excellence Award Winners	3
Roberto Presented With Proclamation	3
ACSD Quality Profile	3
Sport Report	4
Stop The Hate Scholarships	4
AHS National Merit Scholarship Honors	4
Thunder Over Aurora	4

Who's Who & What's New.....	5
Class Acts	6
Cybersecurity Class Partners with KSU	6
Trunk or Treat.....	6
Kick Off To Kindergarten.....	7
ACSD Hiring Bus Drivers.....	8
Your Schools, Your News	8

Meet New Leighton Elementary School Principal Spencer Warders

The Aurora City School District's (ACSD) Board of Education (BOE) voted to hire Spencer Warders as the new Leighton Elementary School principal. Warders was unanimously approved by the BOE for employment on July 7, 2025 to replace former Leighton School Principal, Michelle Nizen.



Warders comes to the ACSD from his previous position as an administrator at Brecksville-Broadview Heights Middle School where he held the position since 2017. Prior to Warders' assistant principal position at Brecksville-Broadview Heights, he was the assistant principal at Copley-Fairlawn Middle School from 2015-17. Before becoming the assistant principal in both districts, Warders began his career as a Language Arts Teacher at Arbor Hills Junior High School for three years and then became a Social Studies Teacher at Nardonia Middle School from 2012-15. He was also a football and wrestling coach from 2009-15.

Warders' educational background includes a B.S. in Education from Bowling Green State University and Master of Arts Degree in School Leadership from Concordia University Chicago.

Warders stated, "I am prepared to contribute my leadership, dedication and collaborative spirit to ensure that Leighton Elementary continues to thrive as a cornerstone of the Aurora City School District."

ACSD Superintendent, Dr. Paul Milcetic, said, "Spencer is an experienced, skilled, relationship-oriented, student-centered leader with the proven ability to connect with people and build culture while serving as a strong instructional leader. He also happens to be an Aurora parent and community member with two children in our district."

AHS WELCOMED NEW PRINCIPAL DR. ASHLEY PACHOLEWSKI



Aurora High School welcomed new Principal, Dr. Ashley Pacholewski, who was unanimously approved for employment by the Aurora Board of Education on April 28, 2025.

Her 3-year contract began on August 1, 2025.

Pacholewski, who graduated from Bowling Green State University, Ohio, with a Bachelor of Science in Education, went on to earn a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Cleveland State University. She earned her principal's license from Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, OH in 2020 and recently earned a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Superintendent's Licensure from Ashland University. Her educational objective is, "To facilitate and empower growth of a school organization through strength-based approach that celebrate positive outcomes."

Her career began at Brunswick High School where she was an instructional coach and English teacher until 2021. From 2021-July 31, 2025, Pacholewski was an assistant principal in the Ashland City School District. She also holds memberships in various professional organizations.

ACSD Superintendent, Dr. Paul Milcetic, said, "Upon the opening of the Aurora High School Principal position, we knew we needed to design an intensive, exhaustive, and inclusive interview process to find the best person to continue to lead the success of AHS...someone who would dedicate themselves to collaborating with staff and stakeholders to sustain and enhance the learning environment for our students in line with our approach of nurturing the roots of the competencies and ensuring they leave our district future ready. We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Ashley Pacholewski

as our next AHS Principal and know she is the leader most suited for this crucial role and will surely make a difference in our district and the learning community!"

Mike Hayes, ACSD assistant superintendent, explained, "Throughout the extensive and multifaceted interview process, Ashley 'Pach' continually showcased a deep and sincere alignment to the roots of The Aurora City School District's Strategic Vision. Her ability to connect with students was outstanding, her references were exceptional, and her passion shined through as an innovative instructional leader poised to lead Greenmen Nation for years to come!"

AHS Principal, Dr. Ashley Pacholewski, provided a statement saying, "Hello Aurora Community, I want to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Milcetic, Mr. Hayes, our administrative team, dedicated staff, incredible students, the Aurora community, and our Board of Education for the honor of serving as the next principal of Aurora High School. The Greenhouse is truly the stuff of dreams—a vibrant space where exceptional educators cultivate growth, bright students thrive, and a compassionate community comes together in pursuit of a shared vision: educating whole people.

I will be bringing a fierce love for education and am excited to live this vision, to embody the values of Greenmen Nation, and to let my love for our community shine through meaningful collaboration and strong partnerships that center upon student success.

Thank you sincerely for this privilege as I am looking forward to connecting with everyone, getting to know you all and growing roots of collaboration to bloom future-ready learners.

I am excited for what we will dream and accomplish in 2025-2026! It is an honor to love, nurture, protect, and serve the Aurora City School District."



YOUR SCHOOLS

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Editor: Stacey DeAnna

Your Schools is a publication of the Aurora City School District. Its purpose is to keep residents of Aurora informed of current events and progress in the Aurora City Schools and to foster pride and a continuous communication link between the schools and the community.

Your Schools has been awarded the "Mark of Excellence" and "Best of the Best" Awards by the Ohio Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for service as a school district newsletter. *Your Schools* is a quarterly publication, mailed to all residents of Aurora. For information, comments, or story ideas, e-mail Editor Stacey DeAnna at: yourschools@aurora-schools.org.

Dr. Jeremy Rothstein, New Assistant Principal at Harmon Middle School

The Aurora Board of Education (BOE) approved the hiring of new Harmon Middle School Assistant Principal, Dr. Jeremy Rothstein at the May 2025 BOE meeting. Rothstein took over the position at the beginning of this school year and replaced previous Harmon Middle School Assistant Principal, Ryan Beaumont.



Harmon Middle School Principal, Mark Abramovich, said when introducing Rothstein that, "Jeremy comes to us with 11 years of experience as an assistant principal, most recently at Hudson Middle School. Jeremy has also served as a middle school science teacher at Chagrin Falls Middle School, along with being a middle school assistant principal in Mentor, Ravenna and Chardon, but as a resident of Aurora with his own kids, Luca, 8 and Nico, 6, in the Aurora City School District, Jeremy feels he is now home!"

Abramovich added, "While he was in college, I hired Jeremy about 17 years ago as the 7th grade baseball coach. Then in his later years of college, he did his student teaching in 2010 here at Harmon Middle School with teachers, Angi Frankmann-science and Peggy Katsilometes-math. Jeremy has continued to be a lifelong learner as he has gone all the way to earning his doctorate. He has a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and his Doctorate is in Education from the University of Findlay. We have an assistant principal who is passionate about middle school students, relishes working with middle school educators, has outstanding energy and one who can assist in keeping Harmon Middle School at an elite level."

ACSD Superintendent, Dr. Paul Milcetic, stated, "We are thrilled to have Jeremy come home to Greenmen Nation and know he will be an amazing asset to our students, staff, and district as a whole for years to come!"

ACSD QUALITY PROFILE 2024-25 AVAILABLE ONLINE THIS FALL

The Aurora City School District's annual Quality Profile (QP) 2024-25 will be available on the district website this fall. The QP helps to characterize the overall educational value of the Aurora City Schools in areas that matter most to our community that are not included on the yearly State of Ohio Report Card. The annual profile can be found on the district website Homepage under District and title Quality Profile. Please take a look soon at how much we have to be proud of as a District.



ACSD STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARD 2025 WINNERS



The 2024-25 Aurora Schools' Staff Excellence Award winners were announced last spring. Congratulations go to Excellence in Certified staff award winner Kim Armbrecht and Excellence in Classified Service staff award winner Harry Holt. These staff members were nominated by their peers and are very well deserving of the honor. Each of these award recipients were recognized and congratulated by the Aurora Board of Education at the May 2025 BOE meeting.

KIM ARMBRECHT - Excellence in Teaching Award Winner

A nomination for the award was given for Craddock School First Grade Teacher, Kim Armbrecht, which stated that, "For many years, Kim has embodied the very essence of an outstanding educator; and her impact on our first-grade students and our entire team is immeasurable. Kim's dedication to teaching is truly inspiring. Her classroom is a vibrant and engaging space where young learners flourish under her guidance. She fosters a genuine love for learning in her students. Her passion for teaching shines though in every lesson, every interaction, and every extra effort she makes to ensure each child reaches their full potential." The nomination added that even though she was approaching retirement her drive and commitment didn't waver in the slightest." She continued, "to



bring the same energy and passion to her classroom demonstrating an unwavering dedication to her students in her final year."

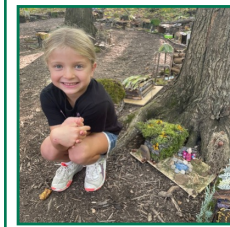
HARRY HOLT - Excellence in Classified Service Award Winner

Harry Holt, Head Custodian/Maintenance employee at Aurora High School, has been called "an unsung hero of the district." He was described as going, "above and beyond in everything he does while being thoughtful and attentive to those he serves. He genuinely cares about other people and is always willing to take an innovative approach to solve a problem while also keeping a calm and cool demeanor." Holt was also described as "making lives easier and better by embodying excellence, not only in execution, but in kindness and demeanor."



Enchanted Fairy Forest

Miller School Kindergartner students created a special **Enchanted Fairy Forest**



and they made wooden fairies that were placed in a natural fairy house crafted by Leighton School **5th graders**. Kindergartners and preschool classes had a wonderful time walking the fairy nature path.

MIKE ROBERTO PRESENTED WITH CITY OF AURORA PROCLAMATION

Congratulations to Aurora City Schools' retired Superintendent, Mike Roberto, who received recognition from the City of Aurora for, "his exceptional service to the Aurora City Schools for 25 years." City of Aurora Mayor, Ann Womer Benjamin, presented the proclamation to Roberto on Wednesday, June 11, 2025.

The proclamation stated that Roberto has, "dedicated 34 years to the education field," with 25 years at the Aurora City Schools while, "demonstrating unwavering commitment to students, educators, and the broader community." It went on to declare that, "Under Superintendent Roberto's leadership, Aurora City Schools has achieved notable academic success, expanded student programs, improved facilities, and fostered a culture of inclusion, innovation, and excellence, helping to make our community of the most desirable places to live in northeast Ohio." The plaque continued by noting, "Superintendent Roberto



has served as a mentor and role model to countless educators and administrators, always leading with integrity, compassion, and a student-first mindset," along with declaring, "The legacy of Superintendent Roberto will live on through the many lives touched by his dedication to public education, the strong partnerships built between the schools and the community, and the high standards set for future generations."

SPORT REPORT

Thank you to AHS Alumni **AJ Barner**, NFL Tight End on the **Seattle Seahawks**, who donated game jerseys to the AHS weight room and the coaches office. One of the jersey's was personalized to AHS Football Coach, Bob Mihalik, reading, "To Coach Mihalik, you have built a legacy at Aurora. Thank you for being there for every step along my journey." The jersey now hanging in the AHS weight room is signed, "Any dream can be accomplished in Aurora, OH."



AURORA SOCCER

The **Aurora Boys Soccer Team** has raised \$5,000 for cancer research so far this season. Way to go!



Congratulations to **Bill Keckan** for his 20 years of service on the **Aurora Varsity Football Team Chain Gang**. Keckan was presented with a plaque on the field on September 26, 2025 by Aurora Board of Education president, Pam Mehallis. Aurora BOE members, administrators, and family members also joined Keckan on the field for the tribute.

SPORTS IN FULL SWING!



AHS STUDENTS WIN SCHOLARSHIPS IN STOP THE HATE CONTEST



This year, 4,419 students at more than 160 Northeast Ohio schools participated in the *Stop the Hate* contest and workshops, writing individual essays, poems, or group songs for a chance to win academic scholarships, educational grants, and prizes for themselves and their schools. Thank you to the AHS English Department and AHS Instructors, Melissa Lindley and Conni Hilston, for their encouragement in getting students involved in the *Stop the Hate* initiative and acting as liaisons that foster empathy within Aurora City School District students.

Congratulations to the Aurora High School (AHS) Maltz Museum, *Stop the Hate*, Youth Speak Out 2025 winners who were announced



at the beginning of April. AHS senior **Rania Rafiq** (pictured) was named the *Stop the Hate* Essay Contest First Runner Up. Rafiq was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship for her First Runner Up title. Each of the two Runner-Up winner's schools also received a \$2,000 Anti-Bias Education Grant.

Three AHS students were also named as Honorable Mentions in the 11th and 12th Grade *Stop the Hate* Essay category. Seniors **Mackenzie Lane Frost** and **Manisha Girn**, along with 11th grader, **Amelia Kilway**, were all given \$1,000 scholarships and AHS was given a \$500 Anti-Bias Education Grant for each student.



AHS NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP CLASS OF 2026 HONORS

The Aurora City School District is proud to announce the Aurora High School (AHS) Class of **2026 National Merit Scholarship Program** (NMSP) Semifinalists and Commended students. Out of 50,000 entrants, this Semifinalist honor is only given to the top 16,000 students nationally with the highest scores on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). Congratulations go to the AHS NMSP Semifinalist students, **Alexander Jin** and **Andrew Mueller**.



National Merit Scholarship Commended students reflect a performance in the top 50,000 of students taking the PSAT across the nation with congratulations extended to the three AHS commended students, **Preston Duncan**, **Benjamin Hercik** and **Benjamin Kang**.

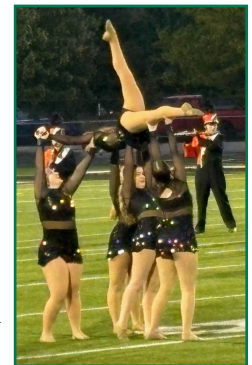
THUNDER OVER AURORA 2025

The annual AHS Marching Band program's Thunder Over Aurora took place on Saturday, September 13, 2025.



- Bedford High School Bearcats Marching Band
- Eastlake North Marching Band
- James A Garfield Marching Band
- Newton Falls Tigers Marching Band
- NDCL High School Band of the Fighting Irish
- Ravenna Ravens Marching Band
- Rocky River Pirates Marching Band
- Streetsboro Rockets Marching Band
- Wickliffe Blue Devils Marching Band

Hosted By: The Aurora Greenmen Marching Band
Directed By: Eddie Nabring and Mason Smith



WHO'S WHO & WHAT'S NEW

Thanks to the efforts of **Tom Marshall**, Commander of American Legion Post 803 of Aurora, who worked with the American Legion District 14 to verify there were no **Americanism & Government Test winners** from Aurora last spring, it was determined that District 14 was in error and there were in fact three Aurora student winners. A belated congratulations goes to District winners: **Benjamin Atkins, Aiden Kondik** and **Gracyn Vidovic**. They were each awarded a certificate for their accomplishment.

Ryan Cooper was the winner of the **AHS Drug Free Club \$5,000 scholarship**. The check was presented at this year's summer AHS Band Camp. Way to go!



(Left to Right) Mike Hayes, Ryan Cooper and Ashley Pacholewski

Students at AHS wanted to continue the tradition of a **speech and debate program** that was started by former ACSD Superintendent, Mike Roberto, at Harmon Middle School. AHS is now continuing that tradition.



Check out the **Community Focus "Spotlight on Aurora Schools"** television show found on **Spectrum Channel 1021**. This is a great way to see more in-depth stories from all of the numerous happenings in Greenmen Nation. Previous shows this year have introduced viewers to the many new 2025-26 administrators including, Ashley Pacholewski (AHS), Jeremy Rothstein (Harmon), Bryan Schiraldi (Treasurer), and Spencer Warders (Leighton). Current shows, along with previous shows, can be also be seen on the **MyCommunityFocus App** on-line.

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Community Focus October 2025 Show (left to right) Dr. Paul Milcetch, Ashley Pacholewski, Spencer Warders

Aurora City School District students recently volunteered at **Santa's Hideaway Hollow**, Santa's "Summer Home," located in Middlefield, Ohio. The hollow is described as, "A Magical Place Tucked in Your Heart

Where the Spirit of Christmas Lasts Forever," and is a non-profit organization dedicated to working with seriously and terminally ill children and their families to provide comfort and support throughout the final stages of a child's illness. The hollow is 100% volunteer driven. The district is very proud of these caring students who helped bring smiles to families who visited the 93 magical acres in Christmas in July and got to meet Santa and the elves and enjoyed wonderful food and activities.



Munch the Fox

Molly the Cow

Munch the Fox, the Ohio Department of Education's mascot, celebrated **Wellness Wednesday** at Leighton School on September 24, 2025. Munch handed out samples to any students that wanted to try the sweet pea and rice. **Molly the Cow** was also on hand at Craddock School on September 18th for the berry smoothie tastings.

AURORA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 2025 INDUCTEES

Congratulations to the Aurora High School Alumni Association's 2025 Hall of Fame Inductees. Dr. Paul Milcetch honored the inductees at the **Aurora Alumni Association's** luncheon on September 27, 2025. This year's recipients included:

Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame **Jeremy Shorr** (Class of 1998)

Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame **Ty Mitch** (Class of 2008)

Athletic Hall of Fame **John Kudley** (Coach)

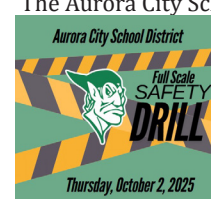
Honored Educator and Staff **Alicia Jimenez**

AHS HOMECOMING 2025 KING & QUEEN
The **AHS Class of 2026 Homecoming King & Queen** were crowned during the AHS homecoming festivities during the varsity football team's homecoming game versus Copley on September 26, 2025. Congratulations to King **Nathan Grummitt** and Queen **Ellie Phillips**.



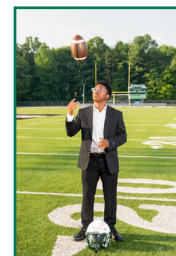
Homecoming 2025 King Nathan Grummitt & Queen Ellie Phillips

The Aurora City School District conducted a **required full-scale evacuation drill** at all of the school district buildings on October 2, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. This planned exercise was a part of the district's ongoing commitment to the safety and security of all staff and students by being prepared. This drill is required to be conducted every three years and is held in conjunction with the **Aurora Fire Department, Aurora Police Department** and the **City of Aurora**. Thank you to all who made this evacuation seamless.



Leighton Elementary School AE-PTO Bubble Run Fundraiser

The **Aurora Schools Foundation (ASF)** has added AHS senior **Xavier Board** as their **first-ever student representative** on the **ASF Board**. He is also captain of the AHS varsity football team a student teacher at Harmon School and an AHS ambassador. The ASF stated, "Xavier brings energy, insight, and a deep commitment to his school-community, and ASF is proud to welcome this exceptional young leader to the team. His voice will help shape the Foundation's future and keep us connected to what matters most, our students."



CLASS ACTS

The **AHS ACADEMIC AWARDS CEREMONY** was held on September 18, 2025 with 197 AHS students being celebrated with a letter, a pin, and AP Scholar awards. Congratulations to all on all of your hard work.



Goodyear STEM Day 2025

Congratulations to the 20 staff members who retired from the ACSD during the 2024-225 school year. They took with them a total of 567 years of experience with them! The district thanks them for all of their hard work and dedication while wishing them no nothing but the best in their next chapter. Congratulations to long-time personnel retirees:

- Donna Janoso – Music Teacher - 50 Years
- Sue Milnar – 37 years
- Cathy Funnell – Harmon Cafeteria Manager – 31 Years
- Sandra Petti – District Nurse - 30 Years
- Mary Lombardo – 27 years
- Lynne Lewis – 25 years
- Paul Frankmann – Social Studies/French Teacher - 27 years
- Angela Frankmann – Science Teacher - 23 years

CYBERSECURITY CLASS PARTNERS WITH KENT STATE UNIVERSITY



The AHS Cybersecurity Class has partnered with Kent State University (KSU) thanks to the efforts of AHS teacher Nick Kukarola and Superintendent Dr. Paul Milcetic. AHS has an articulation agreement in place with KSU to offer AHS cybersecurity students college credit.

Now, through the KSU College of Aeronautics and Engineering, AHS cybersecurity classes have been deemed CCP courses. The credits students earn at AHS will now transfer to the BS in Cybersecurity Engineering, BS in Computer Engineering Technology and university-wide application toward KSU's additional science option requirements.



PAUL BERENDT (student far right), and his team of **MINH LE, MAX MOYER** and **BRODY PETERS** were honored at the June 2025 **AURORA BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING** for earning the honor of being named one of **50 STATE FINALISTS** in the national **SAMSUNG "SOLVE FOR TOMORROW" COMPETITION**. Their project involved creating an alternative battery that uses manganese instead of lithium which ultimately produces a less harmful byproduct that reduces CO2 in the atmosphere. The contest's aim was to raise awareness of crucial community issues and cultivate social responsibility in future leaders.

Excel TECC National Honor Society Awards



Congratulations are in order for **NATALIE ARTERS, COLBY BLASER, XAVIER BOARD, DORIAN GOODEN, AMELIA GOODMAN, RACHEL MARZULLO, and HANNAH MILLER** on their spring **2025 NATIONAL TECHNICAL HONOR SOCIETY** inductions.

A big congratulations goes out to **AHS EXCEL**



TECC and MEDIA ARTS INSTRUCTOR, PATRICK FENNER, (PICTURED) who earned an **EMMY AWARD** this past summer at the **56th GREAT LAKES AWARD CEREMONY**. Fenner earned the Emmy

Award for a moving documentary titled, **SHELTERING HOPE**, which shares stories of formerly unhoused individuals in Cleveland, Ohio who find new homes through the City of Cleveland's, **"A HOME FOR EVERY NEIGHBOR"** program. The documentary can be viewed on **YOUTUBE**.



MARY BECKSTROM, HARMON MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA, was nominated by the Harmon/High PTO in honor of **TEACHER APPRECIATION MONTH** to have her photo placed on a **WHEATIES CEREAL**

BOX. Among the many things Beckstrom does, she also created a "Booktalks" series, holds media center contests, operates a Maker Space for students, and is an advisor for the student bike club. The Wheaties box, encased in plexiglass is empty and now sits on Beckstrom's media center desk.

The **AMERICAN LEGION** sponsors the **AMERICANISM AND GOVERNMENT TESTING** which is a civics-based program for sophomore through senior students that promotes understanding of the U.S. Government and American Flag. Grade winners advance to potentially national levels for prizes. The Legion's **AMERICAN FLAG PROGRAM** tests fourth graders on their knowledge of American Flag etiquette, providing them with a guide for study and administering the test. The boy and girl with the highest score receives a prize and moves on to District competition.



Congratulations to AHS Cybersecurity Instructor **NICK KUKAROLA** who was nominated for the **YOUTH INITIATIVE AWARD** at the 11th annual **CELEBRATE PORTAGE** event.

Rotary Club of Aurora Chosen Rotary Club students are honored each month at the Aurora Board of Education Meeting as Rotary Students of the Month
September 2025 – AHS **Andrew Mueller** and **Kamryn Taylor**
October 2025 - Harmon **Sage Braydich** and **Henry Trook**



KICK OFF TO KINDERGARTEN 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR



The Aurora City Schools' Kindergarten Registration for the 2026-2027 school year will begin in February. Please

help spread the word to your neighbors and friends. We will be holding our Kickoff to Kindergarten parent-only meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 6:30 PM at the Aurora High School Auditorium located at 109 W. Pioneer Trail.

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, students must be 5 years old on or before August 1 to be eligible for regular entrance into kindergarten in the Aurora City Schools. This change was adopted in July of 2025 and was based on several years of historical data and analysis of kindergarten readiness. If your child is not age 5 on or before August 1st, the Early Entrance Assessment Process will be explained at the Kick-Off to Kindergarten parent meeting.

Residents of the Aurora City School District who have a child turning 5 on or before August 1st, 2026, are invited to attend the Kickoff to Kindergarten meeting to pick up registration materials and learn all about kindergarten. We will be holding the registration days on March 4th and 5th. You will select a registration timeslot using the links shared at the parent meeting. All presentations and registration information will be shared on our district website after February 18th if you cannot attend this parent meeting. Contact Miller School with specific questions at 330-562-6199.

State Report Card - *Continued from p.1*

This achievement is truly a community celebration. It reflects the dedication of our PreK-12 students, the tireless efforts of our staff as well as the steadfast support of families and our entire community who continue to invest in the promise of public education in Aurora. Our ongoing efforts to create and sustain excellence and opportunity for our learners is truly special.

The state report card measures six components: Achievement, Progress, Gap Closing, Graduation Rates, Early Literacy, and College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness. Aurora "Exceeds" or "Significantly Exceeds" expectations in all of the components affirming both strong outcomes on state assessments and steady growth for students of all backgrounds and abilities.

As proud as we are of this recognition, the true confirmation of excellence is found in the everyday learning process, the spark of curiosity in classroom discussion, the

Superintendent - *Continued from p.1*

You can find Aurora's report card on ODEW's website and will see that the first of the six components measured in the report card is Achievement. This rating is based on the Performance Index which is a function of the state test results in a district. Where Achievement illustrates how well the district scored on the tests, the second component on the report card which is labeled Progress demonstrates how much growth young people experienced over the school year. The third component, Gap Closing, drills down to the district details to determine if some of our most vulnerable learners are having their needs met by the district. Graduation Rates make up the fourth component and the Early Literacy component of the report card, which addresses whether our youngest learners are improving and becoming proficient in their reading in grades K-3, is the fifth category. The new and final category of College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness (CCWMR) was added this year and is aimed at measuring how prepared our students are for their future opportunities. The Aurora City School District "Significantly exceeds state standards" in the first four areas and "Exceeds state standards" in the last two.

Aurora High School has also received high accolades on a number of fronts. AHS was again recognized by the U.S. News & World Report as one of the best high schools in Ohio and the United States, affirming our status as one of the elite public educational institutions and an exceptional asset to our community! The US News & World Report evaluated over 700 public high schools in Ohio and over 18,000 across the United States. AHS ranked one of only four Northeast Ohio high schools in the top 15 and within the top 1.66% (15th) of schools in Ohio as well as within the top 2.78% (502nd) of all high schools across the country. Additionally, we had historic levels of achievement in the world of Advanced

resilience developed through teamwork, the creativity expressed in the arts and the leadership shown in athletics and extracurriculars. These moments are what define the "Green Standard" and prepare our students to be future-ready in every sense of the phrase.

We celebrate this honor with gratitude and humility, recognizing that there is always room to grow. Together as students, staff, families, and community, we will continue nurturing the roots of learning so that every Aurora learner can thrive now and in the future."

Congratulations to the entire Aurora City School District including students, staff and families, along with our community, for this honor.

Placements as 998 tests were taken with an 88.26% passage rate, which were all the highest levels in school history! In turn, 208 of our AHS Greenmen were officially recognized by the College Board as AP Scholars!

The State Report Card as well as recognition from the US News & World Report and College Board are positive affirmations but not necessarily confirmation that Aurora City Schools are excellent. The confirmation comes from the joy of the learning process, support from the families and our community, the qualitative stories of growth in the schools every day, and the testaments of success from our Greenmen graduates when they leave us and move forward with life. Of course, we also understand there is always room for growth as a district. Our goal as educators is to strive for The Green Standard and help grow our learners in a holistic manner, so they are well rounded students, athletes, leaders, musicians, artists, innovators, teammates and overall human beings. This message is the one we'd like you to carry moving forward...a narrative of Aurora Learners who are Future Ready.

Finally, many may recall that the ACSD put a bond issue on the ballot in the fall of 2024 that did not pass. Since that time, we have collected survey feedback from community members, explored alternatives, and are now beginning the process of creating "The Essential Plan," which is a facility plan to address the aging buildings (particularly a portion of Craddock that is over 110 years old), infrastructure, and overcapacity at our PK-5 buildings. This new plan is a significantly less expensive option than the previous "Master Plan," which was created as a generational solution to overhaul all of our district school buildings. More information will be forthcoming, as we dig into the design phase of this option, but the basic aspects of this plan include building a new Grade 1-3 Elementary School and bus garage on the existing Craddock property (replacing the current Craddock School and bus garage), while also doing an addition at Miller and adding a Board Office behind the Kohanski Conference Center. The Essential Plan would allow PK and K to remain at Miller, replace our oldest and most decrepit structures, address our parking lots, Greenmen Way, and HVAC issues across the district, allow for growth at Leighton as a Grade 4 and 5 building, and permit us to remove the trailer learning spaces at Miller and Leighton, which are now necessary due to overcrowding. We are early in the process and plan to provide more information and opportunities for community engagement in the design as we move through the remainder of the school year.

As always, we appreciate your support of our schools... and Go Greenmen!

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