

# AAST NEWSLETTER

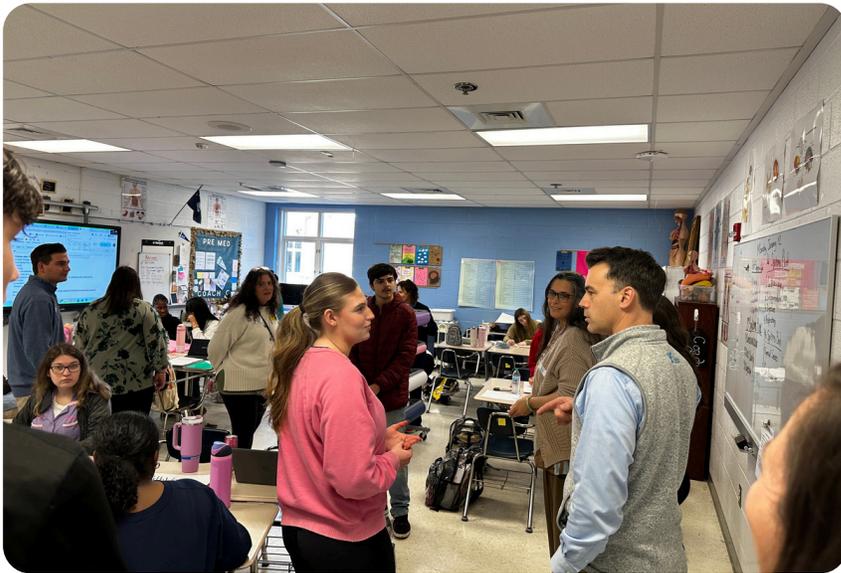
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## Leadership Grand Strand



a stem school ~ realize the possibilities

January 5 - January 9, 2026



AAST welcomed this year's participants in the Leadership Grand Strand program sponsored by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. This program is designed to develop a corps of informed, committed, and qualified individuals capable of providing dynamic leadership for the Grand Strand area. Visitors heard from student representatives of each major during a panel discussion and then toured the school. AAST majors are always eager to partner with local businesses in preparing students for both college and careers.

### Upcoming Events



US HISTORY EOC  
JANUARY 13

BIOLOGY EOC  
JANUARY 14

2.5 HOUR EARLY  
DISMISSAL  
JANUARY 16

AAST OPEN HOUSE  
JANUARY 22, 6-7PM

SENIOR TRIP PARENT  
MEETING  
JANUARY 28, 5:30-6:30

AAST OPEN HOUSE  
FEBRUARY 12, 6-7PM

Open House  
January 22,  
6pm to 7pm!

## Support Staff Person of the Year: Ms. Kim Perry, Library Media Aide



Congratulation, Ms. Kim Perry, Support Staff Person of the Year! Kim's bright personality, deep love of reading, and unwavering generosity makes our media center a vibrant hub for literacy, connection, and belonging. Her imaginative book displays are irresistible invitations for students to explore new stories, and the space itself reflects what she brings to school every day: joy, care, and intention.

Ms. Perry's background in special education gives her an exceptional ability to recognize and respond to the needs of every student who walks through the door. She consistently goes above and beyond to ensure each student feels seen, encouraged, and capable. Whether she's helping a student find the perfect book, offering a quiet space and a kind word, or stepping in with wherever support is needed to cover a class or a duty. She does it all with genuine warmth and joy, often without even being asked. Ms. Perry is an indispensable part of the AAST community and a shining example of compassion, creativity, and service.



## Guest Speaker: Mr. Connor Angus, Filmmaker

Ms. Etherson's Digital Arts & Design students got an inside look at what it really takes to work in the film industry with a visit from Mr. Connor Angus!

Connor—an LA-based filmmaker, Horry County Schools alum, and former student of Ms. Etherson—is currently back home in Myrtle Beach working on a documentary, and he took time to share his journey with our class.

Students learned the behind-the-scenes realities of the movie industry: career paths, set roles, creative problem-solving, and what it takes to break in and stay in.

Best part? Several of our students will have the opportunity to work with Mr. Angus in the future—a huge step toward real-world experience and professional connections. We're grateful for the inspiration and industry insight he brought to our classroom!

## AAST Junior Student of the Month: Jeriah Long



Jeriah has been a steady and dependable presence in Government and Economics all semester, and his consistency truly stands out. When he is absent, he takes initiative by reaching out independently and completing make-up work promptly. In class, Jeriah asks thoughtful questions, stays engaged, and works hard to connect government and economic concepts to the real world. Just as importantly, his politeness, good nature, and sense of humor make him a positive influence on our classroom community. Jeriah is an all-around great human, and our class is better because he is part of it.

## AAST Senior Student of the Month: Laylah Johnson

Laylah is an outstanding student and a strong representative of AAST and the Pre-Med and Entertainment Technology programs. She consistently demonstrates dedication and leadership, serving on the School Improvement Council and as a student ambassador for the Entertainment Technology major. Laylah plays an important role in recruitment efforts, speaks to visiting groups, and approaches every responsibility with a positive, respectful attitude. Her strong work ethic and commitment to AAST make her an excellent choice for Senior Student of the Month.



### Solar Panel Project

Students in Ms. Johnson's Clean Energy classes are building solar panels by soldering solar cells in a series arrangement to maximize voltage. They cut plexiglass using Dremel tools and assembled their panels with silicone. After construction, students tested their panels to measure maximum voltage and investigated how changes in elevation and azimuth angles affect solar output.





## New @ the AAST Library

Hawkins, Indiana, is in recovery. It's been two months since Vecna's earthquake tore through the town, and its residents are still reeling from the devastation. Nancy Wheeler has spent every waking minute on the hunt for Vecna, but he's continued to elude her. How can she head to Emerson for college in the fall if Hawkins is still under the influence of the Upside Down?

When fellow classmate Joey Taft starts acting shifty at graduation, Nancy is convinced Vecna's found his newest victim. Joined by fellow amateur sleuth Robin Buckley, Nancy doesn't waste any time questioning Joey. What the girls discover leads them down the path of a bigger story than The Hawkins Post could ever have assigned Nancy. Why are people around town suddenly getting sick? Why is there a strange man tailing Nancy as she investigates? And, most important, does this even have anything to do with the Upside Down?

## Stage Combat Workshop Brings Real-World Theatre Training to Students



Our theatre students recently participated in an engaging stage combat workshop focused on quarterstaff technique, emphasizing safety, precision, and storytelling. Led by guest artist Thom Penn, Professor of Theatre at Coastal Carolina University, the workshop introduced students to the fundamentals of stage combat and how it differs from real combat. Professor Penn also spoke with students about college and career pathways in theatre. The experience offered valuable insight into college-level training while reinforcing skills such as focus, collaboration, and professionalism.

# Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

Friday, January 9th, was Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. AAST would like to publicly thank the people who help keep our school safe and welcoming every single day - SRO Chris Dukes, and our SSOs, Joe Sack and Hendrix Johnson.

They protect our campus and create a positive and safe environment for learning. They build relationships with students, welcome our visitors, and help in any way we ask. Their presence matters, and we are grateful for the professionalism and care they bring to our campus.



## Helicopter Landing at Conway Medical Center



Future healthcare heroes in the making! AAST students were welcomed to Conway Medical Center today. These bright minds explored various career paths in healthcare and got an exclusive up-close look at the Novant Health helicopter. It's inspiring to see the next generation so engaged and curious about serving our community through medicine. Who knows—we might be looking at our future doctors, nurses, and first responders!

As we prepare for our upcoming AAST Open Houses, we invite students and families to explore our major brochures online. Each brochure provides detailed information about the curriculum, opportunities, and career pathways for every program at AAST.

You can find all of the brochures conveniently [here](#) to help plan your visit and learn more about what each major has to offer.

