

# AAST NEWSLETTER

AAST.HORRYCOUNTYSCHOOLS.NET

## AAST Open House



a stem school ~ realize the possibilities

January 19 - January 23, 2026



It was great meeting all the potential Future Koi at Thursday night's Open House! Thank you to all who attended and to all of our teachers and student ambassadors who made the night a success!



**Applications are now OPEN! You may apply on the Horry County Schools or AAST website. Application deadline is February 19, 2026.**

### Upcoming Events



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

**AAST OPEN HOUSE**  
FEBRUARY 12, 6-7PM

**ACT TEST**  
FEBRUARY 24

**SENIOR TRIP**  
FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 1

**HCS BATTLE OF THE BOOKS COMPETITION**  
MARCH 5

**HOSA STATE CONFERENCE**  
MARCH 11-MARCH 13

**Open House**  
**February 12,**  
**6pm to 7pm!**

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.

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### Guest Speaker: Sean Cygan, SCAD

Sean Cygan, Assistant Director of Admissions at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), visited our Advanced Art and Digital Arts & Design with Animation classes as a guest speaker. He shared an overview of SCAD's academic programs, campus experience, and creative career pathways, helping students better understand opportunities in art, design, and animation. The presentation gave students a valuable look at what studying at a leading art and design university can offer as they consider their future goals.



### New @ the AAST Library: Culpability by Bruce Holsinger

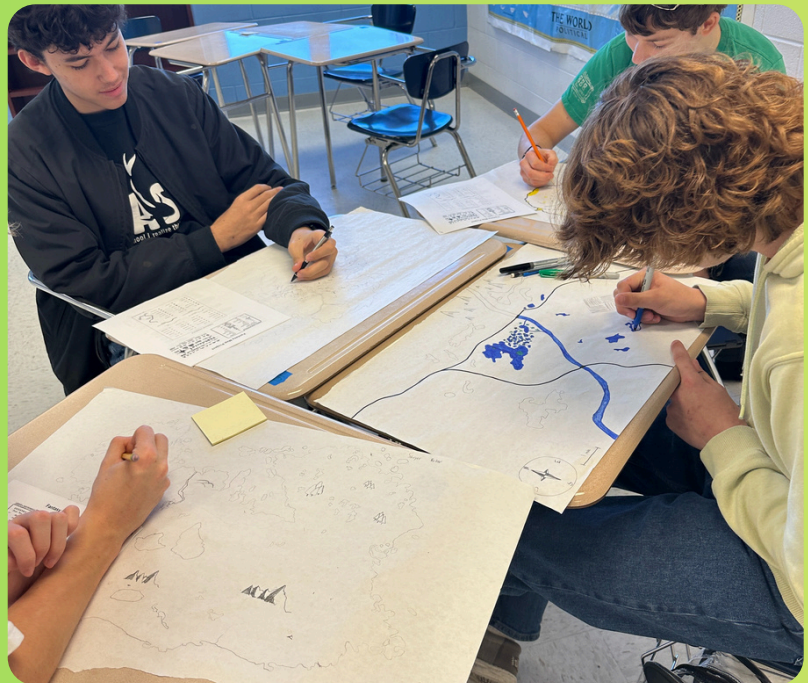
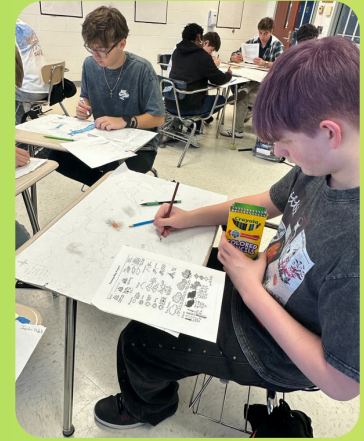
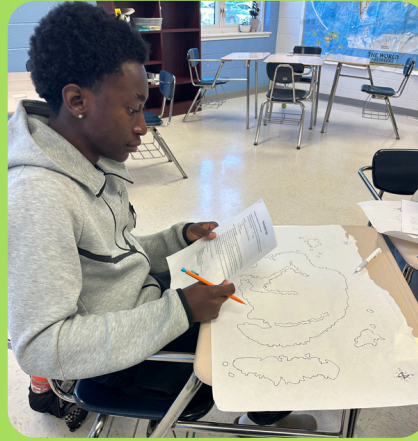
When the Cassidy-Shaws' autonomous minivan collides with another car, seventeen-year-old Charlie is behind the wheel, with his family absorbed in their own worlds—and each hiding a secret that ties them to the crash. During a weeklong retreat on the Chesapeake Bay, the family grapples with the moral and ethical consequences of the accident as a police investigation threatens Charlie's future. As suspicions grow and a tech mogul with ties to Charlie's mother enters the picture, the novel becomes a gripping family drama and a thought-provoking exploration of responsibility and ethics in the age of AI.

## Fantasy Map Making in GIS

Students in our GIS class began the semester with a creative project called Fantasy Map Making, a hands on way to learn the basics of cartography and geospatial thinking. Using uncooked rice to outline the shape of a continent or island chain, students traced their coastlines, added landforms and settlements, and built a complete map from scratch.

This activity also introduced students to GIS, which stands for Geographic Information Systems. GIS is the technology used by governments, scientists, engineers, and businesses to analyze places, solve problems, and make data driven decisions. GIS combines geography with data science so that professionals can map and interpret patterns in the real world such as traffic flow, flood risk, wildlife movement, public health trends, and city growth. Visualizing data and seeing what others can't.

Students learned the three core GIS feature types, which are points, lines, and polygons. These are the building blocks of spatial data. Fantasy Map Making lets students be creative while also seeing how real GIS organizes information and turns it into insight. It is a simple and engaging way to start the deeper geospatial work they will do this year.



## AAST Multicultural Planning Committee at the MLK Day Parade

AAST's Multicultural Planning Committee proudly participated in the Myrtle Beach Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade, honoring Dr. King's legacy of service, equality, and community. Representing our school with pride, students and staff joined the celebration alongside local organizations, reflecting AAST's commitment to civic engagement and community involvement.



## Guest Speaker: Cobi Christiansen, CCU Data Operations Specialist

Cobi Christiansen spoke with Aerospace Engineering seniors about his work with Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) and his role as a Data Operations Specialist at Coastal Carolina University. He shared insights into real-world applications of ROV technology and discussed career pathways in the field.

Christiansen also reviewed student design projects and provided valuable feedback to help refine their ideas and engineering approaches.



## Computer Science Student on National Research Team at CCU

Benjamin Wynn earned a spot on the LANL-CCU (Los Alamos National Laboratory) research team; the focus of their work is solving specific national security problems via high-performance computing

This group includes both current and former undergraduate and graduate students from CCU and other affiliated universities, CCU faculty and staff, and several scientists at LANL.

The team is led by Dr. William Jones of CCU. He is a close colleague of our AAST Computer Science program.



### Benjamin Wynn

ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENT

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NA

### Biography

**Benjamin Wynn** is currently attending the Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology as a computer science major, a specialized career-focused program that allows students to pursue advanced technical studies alongside their traditional high school curriculum. Through this academy model, students gain hands-on experience, industry exposure, and practical skills prior to graduation. He has previously interned at McLeod Health as an IT support technician, where he assisted with system support, troubleshooting, and end-user technical needs in a professional healthcare environment.

#### Education

- High School Diploma, Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology, May 2026 (expected)
- B.S. Computer Science, Coastal Carolina University, 2030 (expected)