

APRIL 1, 2026

APPLETON WEST

# PARENT NEWSLETTER

From the Principal



If there is one thing I learned last year in my first year as Building Principal, it is that the last two months of the school year will fly by! In addition to our spring sports hitting the fields and fairways, we have major competitions and conferences for our students involved in Skills USA, HOSA, and DECA. The lights will come up on the stage for our spring musical, Bye-Bye Birdie starting the weekend of April 24th. For our older students, Prom is just around the corner as well on April 18th.

With all the excitement of spring, you can help your student tremendously by reminding them to keep focused on their studies. These next four weeks show how much our students are growing; pushing themselves in athletics, learning new skills on stage, taking on challenges in competitions, and working hard in their classes. Whether your student is playing a game, performing in the musical, trying something new, or studying for finals, this is the time to celebrate how far they've come. I encourage you to come watch them, cheer them on, and let them know you're proud of their effort and growth. Our students are doing amazing things, and having you there supporting them really matters!

## April Events:

**April 7** - Students Return from Break

**April 14** - Parent Committee Meeting @ 5:30PM/Early American Room

**April 18** - Senior Prom

**April 22** - Post-Grad Parent Committee Meeting @ 5:30/Early American Room

**April 23-26** - West Theatre Presents Bye Bye Birdie

MARCH 1, 2026

## Activities/Athletics



Please help us welcome Shaya Ottestad-Vallafskey as our new head varsity girls' volleyball coach. Coach O-V has been a teacher for the past 10 years at Appleton West while also being the assistant varsity girls' volleyball coach for the past two seasons, building positive relationships with our student-athletes and families. As a college athlete, Coach O-V was a part of several very successful programs including taking second in the Softball World Series and competing at state in high school for Volleyball and Basketball, while also being recognized as all-conference for several sports in high school. Coach O-V really enjoys supporting students and athletes to reach their full potential and gain confidence that can carry with them throughout their lives. Welcome Coach O-V!

At the time of this newsletter our winter athletic programs will have completed their regular seasons with their tournament seasons underway. Congratulations to our students and coaches for a fantastic winter season. Thank you seniors for your effort and commitment to our school and programs. We have over 100 students in grades 9-12 competing in our spring athletic programs. Our students and coaches are looking forward to proudly representing our school and community this upcoming season.

SENIOR spring athletes: Reminder that senior banner photos will be Friday April 10 during FLEX time in Emmanuel Gym. Please come dressed in your HOME game day uniform for this.

Please visit

<https://www.foxvalleyassociation.org/public/genie/240/school/3/> to stay up to date for upcoming Terror events.

MARCH 1, 2026

---

## Academic Information



March was a busy month with ACT, preACT, and Forward testing along with the end of third quarter. The quarter officially ended on March 26th marking the half way point of the semester. Third quarter progress reports will be available in Infinite Campus on April 10th. Please make sure to take a look at your student's grade report on this day and reach out to your student's teacher with any questions. Let's finish the school year strong!

AP testing is coming up in May and in order to run all of the tests we need volunteers. We are looking for volunteers to help monitor the room and pass out supplies. Our students test digitally on Chrome books, and the room is a quiet space for up to 4 hours of testing. There is no technology troubleshooting for volunteers; we have I.T. staff in the room and a designated proctor in charge of overseeing the testing environment. Parents are unable to assist with the exam their student is taking. They may help with any other room their student is not in. If you are able to volunteer for an exam we would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you for considering!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4EA8AD2AA2FDCE9-63045291-aasd>

MARCH 1, 2026

---

## Student Services



As we enter the fourth quarter of the school year, we want to emphasize the critical importance of consistent attendance for our seniors. Senior Slide is a very real challenge that can pose significant obstacles to meet graduation requirements. The final weeks of school are vital for academic success, graduation requirements, career and college preparation. Regular attendance ensures students don't fall behind in coursework, maintain their GPA, and stay on track to graduate on time.

We ask for your partnership in supporting your student's commitment to being present and engaged. If your student is facing attendance challenges, please contact our Student Services office or your student's school counselor right away—we're here to help remove barriers and ensure they finish strong. Let's make this final quarter count! Please support your Senior to attend all scheduled class periods, every day.

**MARCH 1, 2026**

---

## **Counseling Office**

### **Sources of Strength "night at the ballpark" We belong in the AASD Campaign:**

The Appleton Area School District and the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers are teaming up to spread messages of hope, help, and strength in supporting the AASD Sources of Strength programs! Each student who participates in their school's Sources of Strength campaign in the month of April will receive a free ticket for the April 30th night at the ballpark game! Specifically, the We Belong in the AASD campaign will be implemented starting April 6th, 2026 with the culmination happening at the Sources Night at the Ballpark on Thursday, April 30th, 2026.

### **April showers bring ....money?**

At least, we hope so! The counseling office has been hard at work connecting college-bound seniors with scholarship opportunities to provide possible financial relief in pursuing higher education. But, many of the scholarship application windows have CLOSED as of March 26. So, what can you do?

Step One: Make sure you've completed the FAFSA! The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is your first step in achieving financial support for college. You won't know if you qualify for grants or other free opportunities without applying, so make sure you complete this important step!

Step Two: Check with your institution's financial aid office. Many times the institution has their own scholarship opportunities available and they may have something to offer.

Step Three: Check with your parent's employer. Many local employers offer scholarships to the students of employees planning on attending post-secondary education options. It doesn't hurt to ask!

Step Four: Check the national databases. Websites such as "Fastweb" and "College Board's Big Future College Scholarship Search" are helpful in accessing opportunities at the national level. Beware—some sites out there suggest that paying money for scholarship services increases your chances at winning one—not true, according to our financial aid friends at FVTC! Never pay money to try to win free money! But websites like those we've mentioned are included in the reputable services available out there.

MARCH 1, 2026

---

## Counseling Office

### **Seniors: are you uncertain about your path after graduation?**

Please see your school counselor! One of our most important roles is to ensure you have a plan for life after graduation, and regardless of your interest, we can support you in making that plan. Believe it or not—all of the options are still open and available! Check in with us as soon as possible to make your future plans into a reality!

### **Identifying Your Personal Pathway—Sophomore Conferences**

Sophomore conferences have returned to Appleton West! These individual conferences allow our sophomore students to connect with their school counselor 1-1 to complete career inventories, discuss interests and options in future plans, and most importantly, design a path to achieve those goals. Counselors further advise students how current course offerings in the AASD, as well as other programs we offer, align with the student's intended goals. Each conference takes about 30 minutes, and counselors will be sharing a 2 page document with parents via email which will include notes from the meeting as well as a timeline for planning in their junior and senior years. These documents also offer QR codes with a great deal of resources and additional information to ensure our families have the information they need to make informed decisions about life after high school.

Have questions? Reach out to your student's counselor. We are happy to review the results of the conference with you as well as answer any questions you might have!

### **Important Dates Approaching:**

**April 13:** Required senior class meeting to receive information about all necessary information pertaining to senior class celebrations and events.

**May 1:** National College Decision Day—colleges expect seniors to “commit” to the college. Students should check their email accounts for information from the institution about how to commit.

**May 19:** Students only—Terrors on the Rise senior signing event and college/career fair

**May 20:** Awards Night (students receiving an award will receive an invitation with notification they are receiving an award)

**May 27:** GRADUATION

## From the Nurse's Office



### FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE: Screen Time and Your Child

"Screen Time" refers to activities that are done in front of a digital screen, such as watching television, playing a video game or using an iPad or smartphone. Most American children spend between 5-7 hours a day on screens, with 3 of those being watching television. **Experts recommend that screen time be limited to 1-2 hours per day.** We understand that playing outside in cold temperatures can be more work, but with the proper clothing/attire, student's health can be improved by playing outside in the winter months. The fresh air, full body movements, and sunshine help to boost immunity during cold/flu season.

Too much screen time has been linked to many negative health outcomes, including:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Poor attention span, anxiety and depression
- Behavioral problems and aggression
- Obesity and cardiovascular problems



The widespread prevalence of screens and our increasingly digital culture makes it difficult for parents to control the amount of screen time their children have. Here are a few tips for reducing screen time:

- **Limit your own screen time. Children learn by observation. Model this behavior yourself!**
- Prioritize homework, chores, (non-digital) socialization and free play.
- Set limited viewing times and remove devices and TV's from bedrooms.
- Turn off screens during dinner, bedtime and homework.
- Don't leave the TV on in the background.
- Give consequences for violating rules.



**Teaching Appropriate Behavior and Online Literacy:** Eliminating all digital media may not be possible, but you can talk with your child about appropriate online behavior. Explain what's allowed and what's not, such as cyberbullying, sending/receiving inappropriate photos and sharing personal information online. Teach your child not to send or share anything online that he or she would not want everyone to see. Be sure that you are monitoring everything your child is doing online. Teach your child that not everything they see on the internet is accurate. Show them how to tell which websites are credible and while are not.

Managing screen time will be a constant challenge, but setting limits while children are young can help them learn a healthy balance as they grow.

**MARCH 1, 2026**

---

## **From Our District Office**

### **Family Engagement Survey:**

On April 6th at 4:00 pm, you will receive a message via Infinite Campus inviting you to complete a Family Engagement Survey. Each year, the Appleton Area School District gathers feedback from students, parents, and staff to better understand how we are doing.

While we rely on quantitative data such as attendance, grades, and state assessments, your input provides valuable qualitative insight into the experiences of our community. As educators, we are committed to continuous improvement, and your feedback helps us identify priorities and guide our next steps.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to support our ongoing efforts to improve.

MARCH 1, 2026

---

## From Our District Office

### Reality Check:

The Appleton Area School District and Community First Credit Union are once again partnering to bring Reality Check to Appleton schools. Reality Check is a financial education simulation that provides high school students with hands-on life experience in budgeting while giving them a fun and safe environment to learn how financial choices and career selections can impact their future.

After completing Reality Check, students consistently respond that their attitude about money has changed. They report leaving with a more realistic understanding of the cost of living and an improved sense of being financially prepared for the future.

The reason this works so well for students is they learn first-hand from the experience of community business representatives like yourself. Reality Check volunteers play an important part in the simulation, explaining options to students, helping them make selections and taking “payments” where necessary.

This eye-opening experience for young people isn't possible without the generous assistance of community members like you. Can we count on you to help our area students?

Dates, times and locations are as follows:

- Appleton North - Tuesday, April 14 from 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- Appleton West- Thursday, April 16 from 7:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
- Appleton East - Tuesday, April 21 from 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Please consider joining us as a table host volunteer to assist students for one or more of the dates.

[Click here](#) to register as a volunteer by April 2.

MARCH 1, 2026

---

## Referendum Information

Did you know? The AASD Board of Education has approved placing an operational referendum on the April 7, 2026 ballot. The referendum question will ask voters to approve \$15 million per year for four years to support:

- maintain existing programs and services and address the district's ongoing budget deficit
- a school counselor in every neighborhood school, every day, and a 50% increase in access to social workers, allowing students to receive help faster when facing mental health, family, or social challenges that are barriers to learning

The estimated tax rate impact for the four-year Operational Referendum is about \$15 per year on a \$100,000 home, or \$45 per year on the average Appleton area home (\$300,000).

In this video, Superintendent Hartjes provides an in-depth explanation of how the district's financial crisis unfolded and outlines factors that led to growing deficits.

We also highlight the district's careful financial management over the past decade, including building reserves and paying down debt early, and explain why a community referendum is now necessary to ensure the district can continue providing essential services and support for students.

Ways to Learn About the April 7 Operational Referendum

- Visit the Referendum Webpage: Access videos, FAQs, and submit your questions

MARCH 1, 2026



Join us for a community awareness event to **hear the heartfelt story of John DeMay**, a Michigan father who lost his 17-year-old son, Jordan, to online sextortion. John is sharing his experience to help others understand this crime, spark meaningful conversation, and protect families from similar harm.

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND:**

This presentation is blunt and powerful, recommended for ages 13+, and especially impactful when parents and children attend together.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 21**

**OSHKOSH CAMPUS**

5:30pm Doors Open  
6:00pm Program Begins  
7:45pm Law Enforcement Q&A

 **Fox Valley Technical College**  
Riverside Room  
150 N Campbell Road  
Oshkosh, WI 54902

Admission is **free**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22**

**APPLETON CAMPUS**

5:30pm Doors Open  
6:00pm Program Begins  
7:45pm Law Enforcement Q&A

 **Fox Valley Technical College**  
Entrance 16 – **A170 ABC**  
(Parking Lot North)  
1825 N Bluemound Drive  
Appleton, WI 54914

Admission is **free**

Partnering with schools throughout the Fox Valley & Oshkosh area.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER & RESERVE YOUR SPOT

 Email: [info@5-stones.org](mailto:info@5-stones.org)

Presented By:



MARCH 1, 2026

---

## From the Business Office



**Senior Caps and Gowns:** The deadline for caps and gowns has been extended! If your Senior student has not ordered their cap and gown yet, please order by using this [link](#)!

**Senior Scholarships:** There are many opportunities for college scholarships available to our students. Please follow this [LINK](#) to access the full list that has been shared with students.

### **Summer School Information and Registration:**

Summer school registration officially begins on April 20th. If you have any questions, please reach out to your counselor.

[AASD Summer School Information](#)

[AASD Summer School - Spanish Form](#)

[AASD Summer School - Hmong Form](#)

## UPCOMING SENIOR EVENTS

### ALL SENIOR MEETING

In April there will be an all senior meeting - you will receive an email with more information regarding this so keep an eye out!

### PROM

**Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> is Prom!**  
**Watch for info**  
**about ticket sales!**

### TERRORS ON THE RISE

**Tuesday May 19<sup>th</sup> - This is a required event for all seniors. More information will be coming soon!**

### AWARDS NIGHT

Wednesday May 20<sup>th</sup> will be Awards Night in the Auditorium at 6:30 pm. This event is invite only so you only need to attend if you receive an invite.

### POOL PARTY

Wednesday May 20<sup>th</sup>  
After Awards Night there will be a Pool Party at the Appleton West Pool for anyone in the graduating class. This will run 9:00-11:00 pm.

### WALK THRU ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

**You are welcome to visit the elementary school that you attended on May 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm.**

### GRADUATION

**Wednesday May 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**Arrive in Emanuel Gym at 5:15 pm. The ceremony starts at 6:00 pm.**

### POST GRAD PARTY

All graduates are invited to the Post Grad Party being held at Urban Air in Appleton from 9:00 pm to 12:00 am. This event is free for Appleton West graduates.

**MARCH 1, 2026**

---

## **Senior Prom Information**

**Seniors and One Guest Are Invited**

**Saturday, April 18, 2026**

**7:00 PM – Midnight**

**Hilton Appleton Paper Valley**

The AASD Parent Prom Committee is excited to host a memorable and safe evening for our seniors. We are committed to providing a fun, well-supervised celebration they will always remember.

### **Ticket Information**

Tickets are \$40 per person

### **Purchase Options**

In-Person Sales (During Lunch Hours 11:19 AM – 1:48 PM):

March 18, 19, 24, 25, 26 and April 9

Available at Appleton North, East, and West High Schools

Online Sales:

Beginning March 1 through Infinite Campus (credit/debit only)

### **Important Ticket Details**

- Only eligible AASD seniors may purchase tickets.
- (Students graduating early should contact their school counselor.)
- Each senior may purchase:
  - One ticket for themselves
  - One ticket for one guest
- Seniors and guests must check in together.
- In-person purchases require a completed paper form (please print clearly).
- Seniors must provide a valid email address they check regularly.
- Payment is due at the time of purchase:
  - Cash (exact amount preferred)
  - Check
  - Credit/Debit (online only)
- Guests must be at least a freshman in high school and no older than 20 years of age — NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Guest passes are not required.
- Final ticket sales end April 10th — NO EXCEPTIONS.

MARCH 1, 2026

---

## Senior Prom Information

### Prom Night Guidelines

- All students and guests must present a driver's license or student ID at check-in to receive a wristband.
- Wristbands must be worn at all times during the event.
- Guests must check in with the senior who purchased the ticket.
- All students and guests must arrive by 9:00 PM. Entry will not be permitted after 9:00 PM.
- Small purses are permitted; however, all items are subject to search.
- A coat check will be available.
- Formal attire is highly recommended. Costumes are not permitted.
- Snacks and water will be provided throughout the evening.
- Casino-style gaming and prizes provided by Best Bet Games.
- A photobooth will be available from Everlasting Memories.
- Students who leave the event at Hilton Appleton Paper Valley will surrender their wristband and will not be readmitted.

For the safety of all attendees, the Appleton Police Department will provide security throughout Prom. The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, illegal drugs, or weapons is strictly prohibited at the Hilton Appleton Paper Valley. Due to security and fire code regulations, only approved parent/guardian volunteers will be allowed inside the event.

### Volunteer & Donation Information

We are seeking volunteers for Prom night, along with donations of gift cards, desserts, and monetary contributions to help make this event both affordable and unforgettable for our seniors.

You may **sign up** for multiple volunteer slots. Please read the description of each shift carefully before signing up.

Monetary donations and gift cards may be coordinated through the Prom Committee. Please contact [aasdprom@gmail.com](mailto:aasdprom@gmail.com) for donation arrangements, drop-off information, or any questions regarding contributions. Items may also be dropped off at your high school office clearly labeled PROM 2026.

**MARCH 1, 2026**

---

## **Senior Prom Information**

### **Expectations**

- Prom is a substance-free event. Alcohol, drugs, and vaping devices are strictly prohibited.
- Students must arrive during the designated arrival window and may not re-enter once they leave.
- Students are expected to dress and dance in an appropriate and respectful manner.
- Students must follow all directions from chaperones, security, and venue staff.
- Any student violating expectations may be removed from the event without refund and may face school disciplinary action.

### **Bag Check & Security Notice**

For the safety of all attendees, the Appleton Police Department will be providing security at Prom.

All bags, purses, and coat pockets—including suit jackets and other formalwear—may be subject to inspection at check-in. Any prohibited items will be confiscated, and students found with such items may be removed from the event.

MARCH 1, 2026

## Important Links and Contacts

### USEFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION:

[Appleton West High School Website](#)

[Appleton West Bell Schedule](#)

[Appleton West Calendar](#)

[Athletic Forms](#)

[Athletic Calendar](#)

### Business Office Contact Information:

Amanda Nushart - Business Administrative Assistant  
(920-852-5410, Option 4)

Debby Andrews - Athletics Secretary  
(920-852-5410, Option 3)

### Student Services Contact Information:

Marie Deley, Julie Ossmann, Mindi Blake -  
Student Services Secretaries  
(920-852-5410, Option 4)

### Counseling Office Contact Information:

Cresta Buss - Registrar  
Morgan Still - Guidance Secretary  
(920-852-5410, Option 2)

**PLEASE TAKE OUR PARENT COMMUNICATION SURVEY!!:** Go to this [LINK](#) to take our anonymous survey. THANK YOU!