



Issue 3
March 2022

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Avalon Middle School

Home of the Huskies!

Principal's Message

Dear Avalon Family,

Although this year has proven to be a challenging one for Avalon, we have been able to achieve some outstanding accomplishments from both students and staff. Our students have been recognized for outstanding achievement in academics, athletics, music and citizenship. We are very proud of our Huskies! As we get ready to start our fourth quarter it is important for students to remain focused so that they finish the year well. In addition to final quarter coursework, our students will have FSA and EOC testing in math and reading as well as the 8th grade Statewide Science Assessment, the 7th grade Civics EOC and Common Final Exams in science, social studies and elective courses. We are confident our students will do well as long as they stay the course. Student grades along with their assessment scores are used to determine a student's placement in courses as well as participation in certain activities; therefore, please encourage your child to do their best so that they can take advantage of the wide range of electives and extracurricular activities available to them at AMS or in high school. In addition to exams and coursework, the final quarter has a lot of different activities for our students. These events include eighth grade Gradventure and celebration, track meets, music concerts, our spring drama production, and our annual Evening of Excellence. Please refer to our school's website calendar section or our weekly email news brief for additional information on all of these events and activities. We hope that you will join us in enjoying our students' talents and recognizing their hard work and achievement. I want to thank you and our AMS community for your support of our programs. As always, our AMS PTSO has sponsored our many activities as well as staff incentives. Whether planning

a student event or raising money to help a Husky in need, our PTSO works tirelessly to make Avalon the best it can be. We could not do it without them. Thank you to every PTSO member for being part of the team and working to help make this school year successful. As we approach the end of this year, we wish our 8th grade students well as they move on to high school. They have bright futures ahead of them, with the skills and habits that they need in order to be successful at the next level. If you do not currently subscribe to our weekly electronic news brief, then I encourage you to visit our website and sign up so that you are fully aware of everything that is happening at our school.

Sincerely,

Karen Furno



Husky Herald

Calendar

March 10 End of Third Marking Period
 March 11 Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
 March 14-18 . Spring Break
 March 21 Beginning of 4th Marking Period
 March 23 No early release Wednesday
 March 28 SAC/PTSO 5pm Cafeteria
 April 6 Track meet vs. Corner Lake Middle 5pm
 April 7 FSA Writing Test
 April 13 Track meet Away Wedgefield 5pm
 April 21- 22 . . Night of Broadway Spring Musical 6:30pm
 April 25 SAC/PTSO 5pm Cafeteria
 May 2 FSA Reading Session 1
 May 3 FSA Reading Session 2
 May 4 Spring Chorus/Musical Theatre Concert 6:30 pm Timber Creek HS
 May 5 FSA Math/Algebra/Geometry Session 1
 May 6 FSA Math/Algebra/Geometry Session 2
 May 11 Spring Band Concert 6pm Gymnasium
 May 12 8th Grade Science testing
 May 12 7th Grade Civics EOC
 May 16-25 . . . Common Final Exams 6th-8th grade
 May 25 Last day of School

Academic Recognition

AMS Honor Roll Criteria (Per Grading Period)

1. **Academic Excellence**- (4.0 GPA) Students who get straight A's on their Report Card (All high school honors classes in which a B/C was earned will receive grade higher (*weighted*) FOR THAT CLASS ONLY. Example – a B in Algebra I Honors is counted as an A but an A in Algebra I Honors WILL NOT override a B in 7th/8th grade advanced language arts class.) D/F's will not be counted as C/D's.
2. **Academic Achievement**- Students who score an overall GPA of 3.5-3.99 for the grading period.

Evening of Excellence – Eligibility

1. All students who have earned a 3.5 (no rounding) or higher **cumulative GPA for the school year**.
2. Quarter 4 is not used in the *current year* as the ceremony is BEFORE final grades are in.
3. All high school honors classes in which a B/C was earned will receive a grade higher (*weighted*) FOR THAT CLASS ONLY – (Example – B in Algebra I Honors is counted as an A but an A in Algebra I Honors WILL NOT override a B in 8th grade advanced language arts class). D/F's will not be counted as C/D's.
4. High school classes that are not honors level (i.e. Spanish) are not weighted (i.e. a B in Spanish is still only a B).
5. For 8th grade 4.0 GPA for 3 years, a student must earn:
 - a. **A for the FINAL GRADE in EACH 6th and 7th grade class** (since we often get only final grades for student who transfer in, we do not penalize students who have been at Avalon MS all 3 years for getting, for example, a B for Q3 in 6th grade math as long as the final grade in that class is an A). A B as a final grade in a high school honors class will be calculated as an A.

AND

- b. **A's for EVERY (counting weights for honors classes) quarter during their 8th grade year**

Notes:

- Any core/required academic class (including reading, if it was required) taken through any virtual school WILL be considered for EOE purposes.
- Classes taken at any high school will NOT be considered UNLESS it is a core academic class. (Example: Algebra II DOES count; Italian DOES NOT)
- Any additional elective classes (Example: student takes 7 classes at Avalon but chooses to take computers through FLVS) will NOT be counted.
- Student must be enrolled as a full-time student at AMS.
- Student MUST have grades for ALL quarters to be considered; i.e. student moves here in December but we never receive Q1 grades – student is ineligible since we cannot verify GPA for Q1.




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Media Center

The media center just ordered over 1300 new fiction and non-fiction books to add to our collection. We are excited to be able to update our collection to include current titles and student requests. We had a great time celebrating Literacy Week at the end of January. Celebrations included the annual door decorating contest, Caught you Reading Challenge, book scavenger hunt, and the daily Guess the Guest Reader activity. We also rewarded our students who made their AR goals during the 2nd nine weeks. We look forward to seeing your child in the media center!

Battle of the Books Club

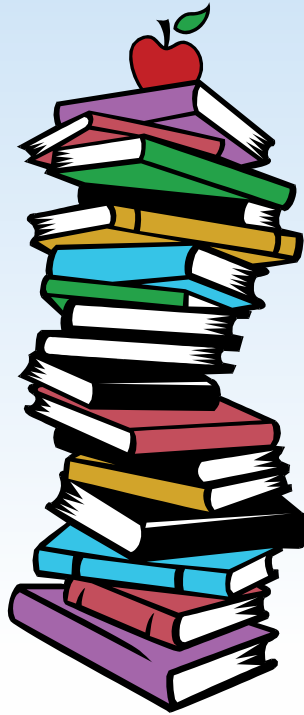
The Battle of the Books is an academic, student team competition that is based on the books from this year's Sunshine State Young Readers' Award list. We have been busy writing questions to help us prepare for our upcoming district battle in March of 2022. After a tough battle questions quiz, we finally selected our competition team. Congrats to Gabriel Castaneda, Emilio Gomez, Elaina Keefe, Abigail Regenstien, and Akari Roggio for making the team and to Inesh Mohan for scoring the alternate position. We know you will all represent AMS well!

National Junior Honor Society

Our NJHS members started the new year strong. We spruced up the school garden, made Valentine's Day cards for Encore residents and local firefighters, and delivered cookies and cards to all of the teachers and staff at AMS to show appreciation for all they do. At the end of the 3rd nine weeks, all eligible 7th grade students with a 3.5 GPA or above, will be invited to apply for membership for the 2022-23 school year. If you have any questions, please contact Shana Wax at shana.wax@ocps.net.

Yearbooks

Yearbook sales are coming to a close! Currently the cost is \$35 and will be available for purchase until April 29th. You can order your yearbook through Jostens at <https://www.jostens.com/apps/store/customer/1614352/Avalon-Middle-School/>. If you have any questions, please contact Shana Wax at shana.wax@ocps.net. Don't miss out on this year's memories!



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4 Curriculum

Social Studies

This last quarter the **sixth graders** are on exciting adventure! The students will explore the final three ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, and Meso-America. These civilizations provide students context for the basis of our political systems, many world languages, and the most widely practiced religion, Christianity. Some of the primary topics of focus are war, defense, mythology, art, and discrimination based on culture, religion, and socio-economic status in Greek and Roman societies. The hope is for students to not only master the learning standards, but also grow in awareness of multiple perspectives. Our hope is that the conversations around the dinner table, car rides, and walks turn into opportunities for you and your child grow together! Please check your child's Canvas and OneNote for work and announcements. These two mediums are the primary locations for work and feedback.

During the third quarter, **7th grade civics** classes learned about Federalism, the different obligations, services, and powers of our three different levels of government: Federal, State & Local. Students completed a scavenger hunt around the school to learn about the specific laws that impact their daily life as a student. We then started our unit on the U.S. Constitution focusing on their rights protected in the Bill of Rights. Students analyzed the first 10 amendments and specific scenarios related to right violations. We ended the quarter discussing the U.S. Court System and Landmark Supreme Court cases. During the fourth quarter, students will be finishing up two units of new content: Forms & Systems of Government and Global Policy. After this, students will begin reviewing for the End of Course Exam that they are scheduled to take on Wednesday, May 12th. After the test, students will have about three weeks where we will go deeper into some of the topics we have learned throughout the year and focus on some fun in-class projects. We are excited to end our year strong and have truly enjoyed having your children in our classes!

At the same time that the national spirit and pride were growing throughout the country, a strong sectional rivalry was also developing. Both North and South wanted to further their own economic and political interests. The third quarter will focus on westward expansion, trace the sectional differences between Northern and Southern states and finally examine religious, educational and cultural reform movements. Our 8th grade students will expand their knowledge of the American Presidents project this quarter. In our last quarter together, we will examine the cause, course, and consequence of the Civil War. Fourth quarter projects will focus on U.S. Geography and the year will culminate with our creating a "Study Guide" to prepare for the 'End of Course Exam' that will address the entirety of our curriculum.

Language Arts

6th grade language arts students are reviewing reading informational text and writing strategies to practice for FSA Writing. Students got more familiar with the FSA Writing Rubric and scored some sample essays before starting to write their own informational/explanatory essays. Also, the PBL language arts classes will be creating podcasts for our Puppy Camp students to help them prepare for middle school. We'll be starting that project after spring break.

Throughout the third quarter, **7th graders** have been working hard analyzing arguments. Not only have they identified valid and sound claims in multiple texts, they have also written essays arguing a strong position. For literary texts, students have analyzed how actual historical events can influence writers of fiction. Finally, they have compared sources across a variety of different media to compare how information can be presented differently by an author. Remember, each student has a quarterly AR goal based on his/her Lexile level. You should see your student reading for homework on a regular basis. We encourage you to read along with your child and discuss the book together.

8th graders are currently focusing on writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. After writing the argumentative essay, students will begin a literature unit. It will focus on comparing traditional texts to modern texts and identifying patterns and similarities.

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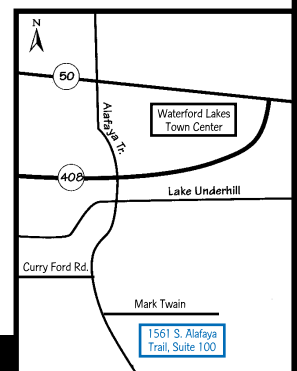
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Math

6th grade math students at AMS are currently finishing units on ratios and proportional relationships, geometry, and statistics and will soon begin to prepare for the Math FSA that will take place at the beginning of May. So far, students have been completing review assignments. These assignments will help students determine what specific material they need extra practice with before they take FSA. In order to master the 6th grade standards, students should consistently be reviewing at home by studying their notes to review content and utilizing the online Canvas Modules for extra skills practice. In addition, students can continue working on their lessons on iReady as further review of critical math topics.

It is hard to believe we are three-quarters of the way through the year! In **7th grade regular math**, we recently completed our Equations and Inequalities unit and have now shifted our focus into Geometry. The Geometry strand makes up 23% of the FSA questions assessed and will be a major focus as we lead into our final weeks prior to testing. Students have been doing a great job breaking down these problems using close reading strategies and annotating the text. Online and paper FSA practice tests can be found at <https://fsassessments.org/students-and-families/practice-tests/index.shtml>.

In **7th grade advanced math**, we are finishing up Data and Statistics and will be working on our Probability unit next. This unit will include Experimental and Theoretical Probability, in both simple and compound forms. Real Numbers, Exponents, and Scientific Notation follows Probability. We will also begin to spiral in FSA review questions to be ready for our FSA in May. We will continue working through 8th grade standards until the end of the school year so your child will be ready for Algebra next year!

Eighth grade math is busy wrapping up 3rd quarter content. In pre-algebra, we have been busy learning about the Pythagorean Theorem, transformations, and 2-variables. Next, we will be looking at angle relationships. We will take a look at the relationship of exterior and interior angles, and learn to solve for the missing angle. The Geometry strand represents 27% of the FSA questions on the 8th grade FSA. Students can access practice tests to begin preparing for the Math FSA at <https://fsassessments.org/students-and-families/practice-tests/index.shtml>. In Algebra, we just wrapped up rational exponents and radical expressions. We have begun our quadratics unit which students will learn how to solve and read key features from graphs. The quadratic unit represents a critical part of the Algebra and Modeling and Functions and Modeling strands on the EOC. In Geometry, we recently completed the right triangles unit and are currently working on Polygons and Quadrilaterals which is being covered for approximately 3 weeks before moving into Modeling with Geometry. We will finish up with our Circle unit prior to the EOC. Algebra and Geometry students should begin reviewing videos and practice problems at home to begin preparing for the EOC on May 5th and May 6th. Students were provided workbooks earlier in the year which align nicely with the online platform.

Science

Sixth graders are studying the introduction to cells with their complicated vocabulary of organelles, cell processes, classification, structure and function of the human body systems and homeostasis. Labs have been specifically added to enhance and support comprehension. Dissections will be starting soon for representative species. Then it is review time for our third and final PMA for the county. We can't believe we are in Q3. We have made it to the third nine weeks of this unusual school year. With all of the absent students, it was a challenge to keep everything in science on schedule. Hands on lab exercises and other in school activities have continued all year, despite many students being absent. Let's finish the year strong, study and good luck!

During the 2nd quarter, **7th grade students** were studying our very own Earth. Students learned how science changes with new evidence as we learned about evidence to support the Theory of Plate Tectonics. Students learned about volcanoes and earthquakes, where they are located and how they form. We talked about how Earth's surface is continually changing as the plates move, including discussion points such as why California experiences around 10,000 earthquakes a year and how a new Hawaiian Island may form in the future! We finished 2nd quarter learning about rocks and minerals, their characteristics and how they form. Students continued their study of Earth by focusing on how Earth's surface changes. We studied weathering and erosion, and talked about how these processes affect Florida's features.

In 3rd quarter, **Comprehensive** students change their focus to life science. Students will have the opportunity to study DNA and cell reproduction, genetics and ecological relationships. This leads into lots of interesting discussions about traits, including traits they share with relatives and how personal health can be influenced by their genetic code.

In **7th grade Honors Science** students began 2nd quarter by studying Earth as a system with a set of connected parts forming a complex whole. This is the foundation for understanding the impacts of each of these parts on the others, as well as the positive and negative impacts that humans have on our planet. We built on our understanding of Earth as a system by looking at how energy and matter can move between the various parts of Earth. For example, we take a close look at how heat energy is transferred both globally and locally by ocean currents and winds. Why do those winds change at the beach between day and night?

As 2nd quarter progressed, we changed our focus from the hydrosphere and atmosphere to the geosphere. Students studied how Earth's surface changes. We studied weathering and erosion and talk about how these processes affect Florida's coastlines and our tourism industry.

As 3rd quarter begins, we finish our study of geology with Plate Tectonics. We study the dynamic nature of science by looking at how evidence gathered in the 1960's led to the Theory of Plate Tectonics. Students learn about volcanoes and earthquakes, where they are located and how they form. We talked about how Earth's surface is continually changing as the plates move, including discussion points such as how and why the Atlantic Ocean is getting bigger each year!

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Classes

Agriculture

Our 6th and 7th grade agriculture students have spent the last month learning all about floral design. Most recently, they were able to construct jar gardens, mini bouquets, boutonnieres, and corsages with live plants and cut flowers! Our 8th grade students have been learning all about the poultry and livestock industries, including how these animals are part of our global food supply. They have also been learning the livestock-specific vocabulary. Who knew there were so many different names for animals?

FFA

FFA has been busy with Sub-district Leadership Events, Poultry Evaluation, and Floriculture. Our 7th Grade Floriculture Team placed First in our county-wide event! Several members from both teams will be moving on to the State Preliminary Test. Finally, our chapter joined the Orange County FFA Federation, as well as chapters all over the Country in celebrating National FFA week from February 22-25

Chorus

AMS Chorus had a fantastic 3rd 9 weeks preparing for their annual Music Performance Assessment (OneVoice and Avalon Singers) and Music Performance Workshop (The Pack and Voices Rising classes)! Many of our classes had a great time singing a familiar Encanto hit for our upcoming 6th graders. All classes are thrilled to start preparations for our upcoming Spring Pops concert on Wednesday, May 4th at 6:30pm at the Timber Creek High School Performing Arts Center. We hope to see you there!

Musical Theatre classes are hard at work preparing for this Spring's Night on Broadway! Together with our Spring Thespians, classes will be singing, acting and dancing musical theatre songs from various musicals. The songs are centered around the theme of "What Makes Us Different Makes Us Strong", and we are excited for you to hear and see their performance progress. We hope you'll join us on Thursday, April 21st and Friday, April 22nd at 6:30pm in the AMS Cafetorium!

Orchestra

The third nine weeks has been a whirlwind for the AMS Orchestra! We had three students participate in the All-State Honors Orchestra that took place in January for three days in Tampa! Congratulations go to: Harvey Chubb (8th Grade - Cello), Inesh Mohan (7th Grade - Violin), and Amani Taveras (8th Grade - Viola). So proud of you!

The Intermezzo and Sinfonia Orchestras combined to participate in District Concert Music Performance Assessment on March 1st. For those of you who are not aware, every spring secondary school music ensemble attend District Concert Music Performance Assessment or MPA. This is an adjudicated event that is under the umbrella of the Florida Department of Education and results are shared with every middle and high school principal in the state. For MPA we prepare 3 pieces in advance to be played on stage for 3 string professionals who critique and rate (Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor) our performance. From there we go backstage where we're given a piece to prepare without playing for 5 minutes and then perform it for the sight-reading judge. Finally, we play one more piece that will be conducted and prepared by one of the students. The orchestra voted for Jaecelyn Dampil to be their student conductor this year! Lots of hard work and dedication went to preparing for this performance. So proud of our AMS Orchestra students!



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Classes

Band

The band program has been actively performing the past few months! From our Winter Concert back in December featuring our entire band program, to honor band performances like All State in Tampa (Omar Khan, 7th grade percussion) and All County here in OCPS (Omar Khan, 7th grade percussion, Lena Boussi, 8th grade flute, Gabriel Castaneda, 8th grade trombone). Our Music Performance Assessment season is also in full swing with Jazz MPA in February where the Jazz Band earned an overall Superior Rating, and Solo & Ensemble in February, where we had over 50 entries perform earning all Superior and Excellent ratings! (including our Percussion Ensemble who earned a Superior rating!) We also have our Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band performing at Pre-MPA and MPA later in the spring. Our Beginning Band students have continued to work on Pass Offs and master the basics of their instrument. Please mark your calendars for our Spring Concert, which is in the AMS gym on Wednesday May 11th!

PE

In PE classes we are playing Capture the Football and showing the kids the value of teamwork. We have been switching up teams and so far, the favorite team match ups have been Stone Lakes versus Avalon Elementary. Coach Scales and Coach Bass have also finished with Running Club, so the students can focus on track tryouts beginning March 7th. Coach Bass still has a Workout Club afterschool every Monday and Friday, focusing on weight training.

Art

6th grade art students completed drawings of Martin Luther King in remembrance of MLK and as a reminder for why school was off for the holiday. Next, students did oil pastel techniques, learned about Pablo Picasso and then created their own portraits in the Cubist style that Picasso was so well known for. Students also learned how to "read" a painting and prepared to be able to participate in a 4-point critique. As we get closer to Spring Break, 6th graders will do soft pastel technique and will create Georgia O'Keeffe inspired monumental sized flowers.

7th grade art students reviewed the facial features prior to completing portraits of various African American's who have positively impacted society. Several students have their drawings on display in the lobby of the Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Building. Next, students studied a well-known artist and re-created the painting using acrylics. Finally, we will review what Copyright and plagiarism mean and will begin to learn about Banksy and will create our own Banksy inspired artworks using marker and pastels.

8th grade art students have been working with clay and have been hand-building. They first created pinch pot animals, vessels, stamps, and their name out of slab. We will use the stamps that they created to add decoration/motifs to future clay pieces.



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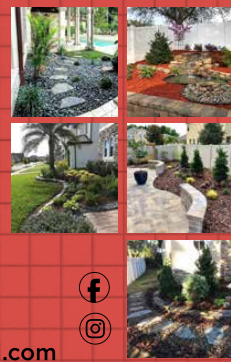
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8

Classes

STEM

In PLTW Medical Detective class, student doctors have finished diagnosing patients with food borne pathogens. They are doing labs involving their senses and human nervous system. The brain dissection is coming up fast. After the brain, we will begin working with DNA that the students will extract. Our great tech students will finish the year in Forensics and CSI by solving a murder mystery.

7th grade PLTW Design and Modeling students are learning the design process of engineers and technologists. They first designed a backpack prototype with multiple modifications aimed toward a target audience of their choice. Then they learned technical sketching with dimensions and are going to dive into computer 3D design with Google SketchUp and Inventor programs.

Our PLTW 8th graders are working on Exploring Robotics. They have investigated types, uses, and construction formats of multiple robots. The students will also build various gear systems, construct a windmill, and complete the survival challenge. We will be moving into coding robots with ROBOTC and designing an automated factory assembly line.

IED students continue to move through their engineering course. They finished modeling skills and geometry of design. We will be heading into advanced computer modeling and user certification.

Robot Club continues on building all kinds of robots with their creativity. We have been working with Vex IQ completing challenges like battle bots, cross country racing, and the impossible obstacle course. This has been an awesome year with a great group of builders and coders!



Spanish

In beginning Spanish, students are identifying and describing places in school. In Spanish 1, students continue focusing on grammar in the present tense and vocabulary for clothes and hobbies. In Spanish 2, our grammar focus is on past tense. Students are also learning about types of food from Latin countries. As a high school credit class, we integrate reading, listening, and speaking. Our final nine weeks will focus reinforcing skills learned throughout the year in preparation for the Common Final Exam (CFE).