



Issue 3
March 2023

13914 Mailer Blvd
Orlando, FL 32828
Phone: 407-207-7839

Administration

Karen Furno, *Principal*

Assistant Principals

Angie Algarin

Michelle Anderson

Administrative Deans

Leann King

German Santos

Facebook Information

www.facebook.com/avalonmiddleschool/

Website Information

avalonms.ocps.net/home

Avalon Middle School

Home of the Huskies!

Principal's Message

Dear Avalon Family:

This year has been a good one for Avalon, filled with so many wonderful accomplishments from both students and staff. Our students have been recognized for outstanding achievement in academics, athletics and citizenship. We are very proud of our Huskies.

Can you believe that we are getting ready to begin the 4th quarter? While students have already started looking toward summer, it is important for them to remain focused so that they finish the year well. In addition to final quarter classwork, our students will have end of the year state assessments in math and reading as well as the 8th grade Statewide Science Assessment and 7th grade Civics in addition to district assessments in all other courses. We are confident that 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 the 8th grade Gradventure trip and celebration, a school dance, 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 been very helpful through their sponsorship of all student activities and staff appreciation. We would not be able to offer these activities without the support of our PTSO. 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.

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.

Thank you for all of your support this year. I look forward to your continued involvement in your child's education.

Sincerely,
Karen Furno



Husky Herald

Media Center

This quarter we had an author visit with James Ponti. Over 100 students attended and enjoyed asking questions regarding his writing process and character development. We are also in the process of vetting and ordering 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, book mark design contest, and the daily guess the guest reader activity. We also rewarded our students who made their AR goals during the 2nd nine weeks. In addition, we have added new Makerspace items including robots, architecture kits and a weaving loom. We look forward to seeing you 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 April. After a tough battle questions quiz, we finally selected our competition team. Congrats to Noah Clark, Elaina Keefe, Inika Mohan, Evan Pientka, and Abigail Regenstein for making the team and to Joshua Regenstein 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 fed the homeless at Straight Street, made Valentine's Day cards for teachers and staff, and did a Valentine's Day Book Drive for the Winnie Palmer Children and Families Hospital NICU. We were able to donate over 180 board books and over 150 crocheted baby hat and blankets to the NICU families and babies. We are also cosponsoring the Spring Fling Dance in March. 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 2023-24 school year. If you have any questions, please contact Shana Wax at shana.wax@ocps.net.

WDOG News/Yearbook

The WDOG News crew has been hard at work. Their 2nd nine weeks' end of the quarter project was to design an app and develop a commercial to advertise it. The students were very creative! Their 3rd nine weeks' project is to develop their own news channel, slogan, and production. Our special segment teams have been working hard on highlighting important events such as Black History Month, President's Day, and Women's History Month. Our yearbook editors have been very busy finishing the final touches on the yearbook pages. They added their personal flair and originality to every page they created. We can't wait for you to see the final product.

Yearbooks

Yearbook sales are coming to a close! Currently the cost is \$37 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!



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

3. All students who have earned a 3.5 (no rounding) or higher cumulative GPA for the school year.
4. Quarter 4 is not used in the *current year* as the ceremony is BEFORE final grades are in.
5. 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.
6. 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).
7. 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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Calendar

March 2	MPA workshop AMS Cafeteria 5-7:30 pm
March 6	MPA trip to Evans High School
March 10	End of 3rd Marking period/Hurricane Make up day/ Field day
March 13-17	Spring Break
March 20	Begin 4th Marking period- PTSO/SAC meeting 5-7 pm Media Center
March 22	Long Wednesday/Track meet vs Discovery and Corner Lake-Away
March 28	Report cards go home
March 29	Track meet vs. Legacy and Timber Springs-Home
March 31	School dance 6-8 pm Cafeteria
April 3	Latinos in Action trip-UCF 8:30am -3:30 pm
April 4	Performing Arts field trip Fun Spot
April 5	Track meet vs. Union Park-Home-No Early release Wednesday
April 8	Spring Musical Saturday rehearsal 9 am-2 pm
April 12	Track meet vs. Wedgfield Away 5 pm
April 17	PTSO/SAC meeting 5-7 pm -Media Center
April 18	7th/8th Grade field trip- Kennedy Space Center
April 10-19	Spring Musical rehearsals AMS Cafeteria
April 20	Spring Musical performance 6:30pm-8:30 pm AMS Cafeteria
April 21	Spring Musical performance 6:30pm-8:30 pm AMS Cafeteria
April 27	Orchestra Spring Concert 6:00pm-8:00 pm AMS Cafeteria/Progress reports go home
May 2	Band Spring Concert 6:00pm-8:00 pm Gymnasium
May 3	Chorus Spring Concert Dress rehearsal 3-4:30 pm Cafeteria-No early release Wednesday
May 9	NJHS Induction Ceremony 6-8 pm Cafeteria
May 10	No early release Wednesday/Chorus Spring Concert 6:30pm-8:30 pm at TCHS
May 11	FFA Banquet 6-7:30 pm Cafeteria
May 12	Gradventure 8th grade trip 3 pm
May 16	Athletic Banquet 6-8 pm Cafeteria
May 17	Evening of Excellence - Timber Creek High School
May 26	Last Day of School

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TESTING CALENDAR

April 3	BEST Writing Field Test
May 2	FAST PM for Reading
May 4	FAST PM for Math
May 5	BEST Algebra 1/Geometry
May 8	Civics EOC Exam 7th grade/Statewide Science Assessment 8th Grade



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4 Curriculum

Language Arts

Sixth grade ELA is finishing up argumentation, which is a tricky set of skills! Students will practice tracing and evaluating arguments based on claims, evidence and credibility of sources, as well as sound reasoning. We're even introducing rhetorical appeals and devices to help them identify where arguments are faulty or weak—a skill that used to be reserved for high school, but is applicable for everyday life. Students will also plan and write an argumentative essay after Spring Break.

Throughout the third quarter, 7th graders have been working hard on writing expository essays. Students have shown that they can effectively respond to a given prompt using the multiple sources provided. Since our benchmarks have changed this year, students have had to revise their learning in order to adapt to the new writing rubric. Additionally, students can analyze how authors use diction and syntax to establish and achieve their purpose as well as evaluate an argument's claims for sound reasoning and relevant evidence. They even debated select topics within class! You should continue to see your student reading for homework on a regular basis. We encourage you to read along with your child and discuss the book together.

Eighth grade ELA students will be participating in a mini unit with a focus on argumentation. They will learn about tracking the development of an argument and analyzing the type of reasoning being used. The unit will end with an argumentative essay where they write to argue a position. Then, students will be engaging in a Holocaust Unit, a Women's Suffrage Unit, and a novel study.

Math

Sixth 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 FAST test, that will take place at the beginning of May. So far, students have been completing weekly review assignments. These assignments will help students determine what specific material they need extra practice with before they take FAST. 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.

It is hard to believe we are three-quarters of the way through the year! In 7th Grade Regular Math, we are working on our Proportional Reasoning and Relationships units. Students recently learned how to find the unit rate and use proportions to solve conversions. We have now shifted our focus to finding the constant of proportionality using equations, graphs, and tables. Our final unit in this domain will focus on Percent Reasoning. The Proportional Reasoning and Relationships domain makes up 22-31% of the Grade 7 FAST Assessment which will take place in May.

In 7th Grade Accelerated Math, we are finishing up Linear Systems of Equations, and will begin Functions next. This unit will include Input and Output tables as well as Domain and Range. After this we will move to Geometry concepts. We are utilizing our Math Nation workbooks quite a bit in class, and the book is also available online from home. The online resource is a very good way to stay caught up even from home, and includes a TON of example videos. Have your student show you how to find it! (Launchpad, Math Nation, - change the book to 7th accelerated, find the unit and lesson). Soon we will begin to spiral review questions to be better prepared for our 8th grade FAST test in May. We will then continue working through 8th grade standards until the end of the school year so your student will be ready for high school Honors Algebra next year!

For quarter three, 8th grade geometry students have worked on trigonometry, quadrilateral, 3D objects, solids and circles. Students learn about proving relationships and theorems in quadrilaterals finding volume, surface areas and real-world applications on 3-D objects. We will close out quarter three working on arcs and angle relationships in circles solving for sectors, arc length, and intersecting angles and applications from them.

Algebra students worked on quadratic functions, absolute values functions, and exponential functions this quarter. We spent a lot of time working on key features on all the above functions specifically in identifying key features and methods of solving them. Writing equations from multiple representations, and most importantly apply them.



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Science

Sixth-grade science has been working hard this 3rd quarter. We just finished our unit on Cells working with microscopes, looking at real cells, using micro viewers and making Cell Cities. We are currently learning how to classify living things which has been a lot of fun and are about to start on Body Systems where the students will learn the structure and function of each body system. The students will also participate in several dissections throughout the quarter. Our 6th graders are a lovely group of students that have been working very hard this year.

In the 3rd quarter, seventh-grade Honors students continued their study of Earth science. We focused on how Earth's surface changes by studying weathering and erosion, and talking about how these processes affect Florida's coastlines and our tourism industry. We dove into Plate Tectonics to 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!

At the end of 3rd quarter, students transitioned from Earth science to astronomy and are beginning their studies of space, with our first focus being the origin of the universe and the vastness of space. In addition to studying the evidence supporting the Big Bang Theory, we study the enormous distances in space, and discuss the ability of humans to travel these vast distances. It is amazing to consider our place in the universe: of a hundred billion galaxies, each with hundreds of billions of stars, to a single planet orbiting a single star. And of course, we can't get through this topic without a few questions about black holes.

Upcoming in the 4th quarter, students will continue their study of astronomy by focusing on objects in our solar system and how they move. They will learn how our solar system formed, and how this process leads to the differences between the characteristics of these objects. In our study of planetary formation, we will be using a giant moon map as part of a collaboration between OCPS, UCF and the Aldrin Family Foundation. We will look at the "life and death" of stars and how their properties change throughout this evolution. Our study of stars includes learning about our sun and how its benefits life on Earth and the potential dangers it poses to Earth.

In the 3rd quarter, seventh-grade Comprehensive 2 science students changed their focus from Earth science to Life Science. We studied how traits, such as hairline and detached earlobes are passed on from parents to children in their genes. Students practiced using Punnett Squares to determine the probability of a trait being passed to the offspring based on the genes of the two parents. We used pedigrees to track how genetic disorders can be passed down through generations of a family.

At the end of 3rd quarter, we introduced our study of relationships among species in an ecosystem, such as predation, competition, mutualism, commensalism and parasitism. Consider asking your child what type of relationship is present between honeyguide birds and badgers. Honey guide birds, who alert and direct badgers to bee hives. The badgers then expose the hives and feed on the honey first. Next the honey guide birds eat. Both species benefit.

As we move into the 4th quarter, we will finish learning about ecological relationships, and then continue our study of life science with Evidence of Evolution and adaptations of organisms that allow them to better survive in their environments. We will study how blubber, duck feathers and elephant ears all contribute to their level of fitness, or ability to survive certain conditions. Let's finish the year strong!

As the 3rd nine weeks comes to a close, 8th grade classes are wrapping up our unit on Sun-Earth-Moon. The students have been exploring how the gravitational pull and alignment of the Sun, Earth, & Moon affect everything from our seasons, moon phases, eclipses, and tides. The 4th nine weeks brings about our unit on Matter. We will be looking at the parts of an atom, the periodic table, and chemical and physical changes. This tends to be the student's favorite unit!

Eighth- grade Honors students finished their motion, forces, Conservation of Momentum, and Gravitational forces. They started Work and Power. They will soon start Waves and Theory of Electromagnetism. There were a lot of lessons at middle school level given to bridge the gap in their learning and prepare them for the SSA. There will be two units left (Electricity and Thermodynamics) before they dive into chemistry- their favorite part!

Students also are working on SSA Review Projects. We have developed mini units for each of the disciplines for the students in regular, advanced, and honors classes to complete at home to help them refresh their memory of the last two years of science! Students also practice in class in different sets of packets that address the 4 strands that are tested in the SSA. In addition, there are about 30 hands-on stations designed to review the test material. These review opportunities will continue through April.

ExploraVision projects were due January 31st and projects were submitted. Results will come in March/April.

The 4th nine weeks also brings about the testing season. All 8th grade students will participate in the State Science Assessment. Students are also required to take a Common Final Exam during the month of May that will count as 20% of their final grade for the course. Please encourage your students to take the exams seriously. Their outcome on these exams can be used to help place them in a science course in 9th grade.

PTLW

In 6th-grade 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.

Seventh grade PLTW Design and Modeling students are learning the design process of engineers and technologists. They first designed a prototype of an ankle orthosis for kids with cerebral palsy. 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 downloaded apps to have some fun competitions with Sphero Sparks+ robots. The students have also built various gear systems, constructed windmill, 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 engineer 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 STEAM Night, battle bots, cross country racing, and the impossible obstacle course. This has been an awesome year with a great group of builders and coders!

continues next column



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6 Curriculum

Fitness

In Fitness class, we just completed our Track Unit. We wanted our students to try different events to see if they would be interested in trying out for track. The students did amazing.

Agriculture

Agriculture students are continuing to learn many exciting things. 6th graders are diving into the tools used in agriculture, and are learning more about the plants and animals that support our society. They are also doing an investigation into plant growth, by growing and measuring the growth of several different plants from seeds. 7th and 8th grade students are learning animal specific terminology, breed identification, and animal anatomy! In addition, 7th and 8th grade students are expanding the garden by the car line, growing beets, radishes, spinach, herbs, tomatoes, peppers, squash, pumpkins and corn!

FFA recently competed in the Federation Floriculture test, and our team won! They will also be participating in the State preliminary test, and hopefully qualifying to compete at the state level...wish them luck! FFA is also gearing up for the Central Florida Fair Youth Livestock Show, where students will exhibit their chickens, ducks, cavies, and sheep. This experience enables students to practice skills learned in and out of the classroom, and helps to showcase our program to the greater central Florida community.



Social Studies

This quarter, 6th graders are focused on Ancient India and Ancient China. Our India unit taught us about monsoons and the difficult terrain that made much of India uninhabitable. From deserts to mountains and plateaus, we focused on the Indus and Ganges River Valley civilizations. We learned the differences between Hinduism and Buddhism and how these belief systems helped to shape the government and society. The Caste System was a major focus of study, as it is tied so closely to social structure, religion, and government.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated right as we begin our study of Ancient China. This is always a fun topic to learn about! Students enjoyed making paper lanterns that decorated our hallway and classrooms. We just finished a DBQ (document-based question) on the Great Wall and if the benefits outweighed the costs. Students used their writing skills to pick a side and defend their choice with evidence and elaboration. Our simulation on the Silk Road trading "highway" is always engaging! Students earned goods to trade along the way and learned about some of the positive and negative consequences merchants faced during their travels.

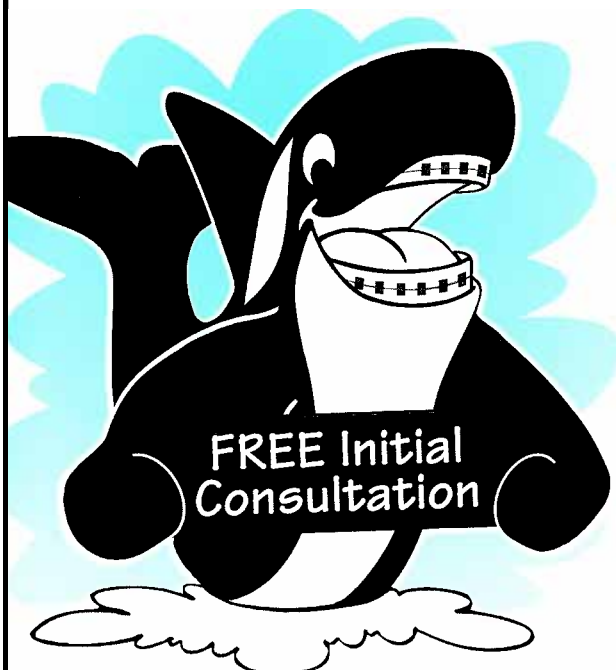
We are also celebrating Black History Month by writing our version of the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech and researching influential historical figures.

At the start of the third quarter, 7th grade civics classes learned more about the structure, function, and processes of the three branches of the U.S. government, along with the U.S. court system at both the federal and state level. After that, they started a unit on federalism to learn about the different obligations and services of our three different levels of government: federal, state, and local. Students completed a scavenger hunt around the school to learn about the specific laws that impact their daily life. We then started our unit on the U.S. Constitution, focusing on their individual 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. Landmark Supreme Court cases that have impacted our society. During the fourth quarter, students will be finishing up two units of new content: Forms and Systems of Government and Global Policy. Students will learn about the different types of government around the world and how the United States has participated in foreign policy throughout history. Following that, students will begin a three-week review for the state required Civics End of Course Exam (EOC) scheduled for Monday, May 8th. The EOC will count for 30% of their final civics grade. Civics teachers will be sharing additional resources to help students' study as we get closer to the EOC. After the test, students will have about two 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. The civics teachers are excited to end the year strong and have truly enjoyed having your children in our classes!

During the third quarter, US History 8th grade students focused on westward expansion, traced the sectional differences between Northern and Southern states and examined religious, educational and cultural reform movements. Our students also expanded their knowledge of the American presidents and states through their projects 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.

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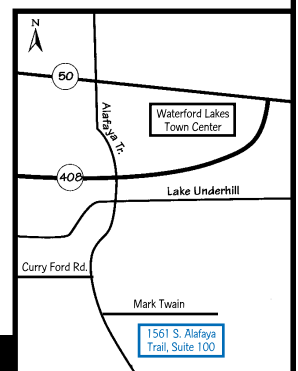
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Chorus

Our Chorus students have been keeping busy these 9 weeks, with Avalon Singers and OneVoice preparing for our annual Music Performance Assessment and The Pack and Voices Rising preparing for their Music Performance Workshop.

In February, our students in The Pack had their annual Valentine's Doo-Wop performance where they went to Encore at Avalon Park Assisted Living and sang doo-wop songs for and with the residents. After that performance, they traveled to the Addition Financial Arena at UCF and sang the National Anthem for the UCF Women's Basketball game. They were awesome!

In March, many of our Chorus students will be performing in the OCPS All-County Chorus. Congratulations to Katelyn Flynn, Kaylee Joyal, Oliver Laguerre, Alexander Nealssohn, Nolan Nguyen, Lillian Ponder, Lilly Palmby, Aiden Perez, and Christos Philindas! We're so proud to have you representing Avalon Middle School!

Many of our Chorus and Musical Theatre students are in rehearsals for our upcoming school musical, "Matilda, Jr."! We'd love to see YOU in the audience on April 20th and 21st at 6:30pm in the Avalon MS Cafetorium! Ticket purchase information will be advertised at school as we get closer to the performance.

On May 10th, please join our Chorus students for their final concert of the year at 6:30pm at the Timber Creek High School Performing Arts Center! The concert will feature lots of Disney hits, and suggested admission will be an item donation for S.A.L.T., an organization that serves the shelter-insecure population of downtown Orlando. An item list will be distributed to our Chorus students. We hope to see you there!

Orchestra

This month, all orchestra classes have been working hard and learning new skills every day. The Beginning Orchestra has been steadily learning new songs like Lightly Row and Happy Birthday. With each familiar piece comes more abilities and comfort on their instruments. The Intermezzo Orchestra has been progressing well with each new piece given to them. Their ecstatic personalities keep the energy up in all of their music.

The Sinfonia Orchestra will be taking a trip to Lake Buena Vista High School to participate in the Music Performance Assessment. Each one of the students has been preparing for their performance at MPA and are ready to make it one of the best displays of their music playing abilities this year.

Band

The AMS Band students have been working so hard and making some awesome music! We had 8 students participate in the OCPS All-County Band and the Jazz Band earned a Superior at their district assessment performance. Our Solo & Ensemble was extremely successful and our Wind Ensemble will be performing soon at their district assessment...which will be amazing as well! Symphonic Band, Beginning Band, and Percussion Ensemble are also working on some school-based performance opportunities and they are doing some great things too. All of our Band students have been truly wonderful and it is definitely showing!

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ART

2D Studio 1 (6th Grade)

Sixth graders got to learn about Color Theory this quarter. They learned how primary colors can make secondary colors, and how primary colors and secondary colors make tertiary colors. The students created unique color wheels based on their choice of subject. After the color wheel project, they revisited how a monochromatic color scheme works by using acrylic paints and created gemstone paintings just in time for Valentine's Day.



2D Studio 2 (7th Grade)

Seventh graders learned about Color Theory as well and created unique color wheels based on their choice of subject. After the color wheel project, students got to learn about the style of "Pop Art" and the artist Andy Warhol. They created a large still life of their favorite snack or candy using acrylic paint, making sure they had a good understanding how complimentary color schemes work well together to enhance their work.

3D Studio 1 (8th Grade)

Eighth graders really have enjoyed this marking period and learning how the medium Papier Mache works to create art. Students first made Papier Mache Donuts based on learning about the style of art called "Pop Art." After the donut project, students have recently learned about how different countries of origin used masks to communicate with ancestors, to help with food supplies, and are used for specific festivities. Students learned about Italian Venetian Volto Masks which is a citizen's mask and was a festive project just in time for Mardi Gras.



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