



Issue 2
March 2024

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Website Information

avalonms.ocps.net/home

Avalon Middle School

Home of the Huskies!

Principal's Message

Dear Husky Families:

As we reach the final stretch of the academic year, it's a joy to reflect on the incredible achievements of our students and staff this year at Avalon Middle School. From academic excellence to active participation in extracurriculars, our school community has shown dedication and talent in various endeavors. The tireless efforts of our teachers and staff in creating a nurturing learning environment have undoubtedly contributed to our success.

Although the school year is coming to a close, there's much to look forward to. Our students will continue to grow academically and personally, exploring new opportunities and showcasing their talents in upcoming events and projects. Let's all come together as the Husky family to support each other and contribute to the positive and inclusive atmosphere that defines our school community.

Thank you for your continued commitment to excellence. I'm confident there are even more accomplishments and moments of pride for Avalon Middle School on the horizon. Together, let's make this a memorable and successful end to the school year.

Warm regards,

Jennifer Williams
Principal

*Administrative Team:
(left to right) Angie
Algarin (Assistant
Principal), Jennifer
Williams (Principal),
and Michelle Anderson
(Assistant Principal)*



Husky Herald





Yearbook

The Yearbook team has done a great job capturing school memories including Fun Friday, the AMS basketball and track season, Literacy Week, and the spring musical rehearsals. We can't wait for you to see the final product. Yearbooks are on sale for \$42! The last day to purchase yearbooks will be April 26th.

Media Center

We received our new books and will continue to order books to be added to our collection. We also rewarded our students who made Accelerated Reading goals during the second nine weeks.

Art

2D Studio 1 (6th Grade):

6th graders had fun the third marking period experimenting with paint. They learned about Color Theory and created Monochromatic Landscapes. Students will transition into learning about Perspective towards the end of the third nine weeks and leading into the fourth quarter. The rest of the fourth marking period students will learn about tessellations and different art careers.

2D Studio 2 (7th Grade):

7th graders had fun also exploring the medium paint this past marking period. They also learned about Color Theory and the genre Pop Art. Students learned about different Pop Artists such as Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, etc. Students created their favorite candy in a Pop Art style. As we head into the final marking period students will create a form of scratch art that represents their pet or their favorite animal that gives the illusion of texture. Also during the fourth marking period students will create a parody of starry night and understand how specific colors can set moods within art.

3D Studio 1 (8th Grade):

8th graders have had fun working on creating three-dimensional snacks sculptures. They are currently working with the medium clay and are creating pinch pot animals and tic-tac-toe boards. As we head into the fourth nine weeks students will create masks based on certain cultures around the world, learn about assemblage art, and different art careers within the three-dimensional fields.

EOC Reminder:

Art students have an EOC at the end of the year. There will be a study guide in their Canvas course as we get closer to testing.

Honor Roll/Evening of Excellence

As we begin the second semester, please keep in mind the criteria for the AMS Honor Roll and Evening of Excellence.

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 a 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:
 1. **A** for the FINAL GRADE in EACH 6th and 7th-grade class (since we often get only final grades for students 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**.
 2. **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 taken into account for EOE purposes.
- Classes taken at any high school will NOT be taken into account 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 – the student is ineligible since we cannot verify GPA for Q1.

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NJHS

NJHS has been busy! We have completed many service projects including a holiday gift drive, working the concession stand at athletic events, a virtual food drive, writing cards and letters of appreciation to different members of our community, and we will be hosting and serving dinner at a shelter downtown. These activities and experiences have demonstrated the benefits of service in our community! We look forward to welcoming new 7th grade members in May!



Stem Club

In the STEM Club, students did community service working STEAM Night. They worked with visiting UCF SAE engineering students to learn gear ratios and build electric model cars. They were given hydrogen fuel cell model cars to build and learn about this transportation technology. They are continuing builds of Vex IQ robots with their creativity in competitions like castle challenge, racing, and the impossible obstacle course. This has been a wonderful year with a talented group of STEM students!

IED

IED students continue to move through their engineering course. They finished modeling skills and geometry of design in Fusion 360. We will be finishing with user certifications.

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4 Curriculum

Science

6th Grade: Life Science & Comprehensive Science I

Our sixth graders have completed a wide variety of science units this year. Depending on the course, units on scientific method, measurement, safety, geology, meteorology, genetics, weathering, climate, classification, and energy have built a strong foundation for the final nine weeks of science. We have just completed a long unit on cell theory, cellular structure and function, and cellular processes. That introduces the body systems that will continue throughout the year until summer. We will start with the levels of organization, and then the first body system: skeletal. After that, we will continue with the muscular, nervous, digestive, circulatory, respiratory, excretory, endocrine, integumentary, immune and reproductive systems. Laboratory exercises will continue throughout the year with microviewers, microscopes, and dissections of invertebrate and vertebrate species. Our students have looked forward to this section of the year with excitement and fear. It is not as bad as they may have thought and after doing two or three dissections, they will be quite good, as they improve their knowledge base and skills. This will prepare our students for the end of year exams and for the next progression in science next year. We are confident that our students will not only master the content, but gain varied and fun experiences that will benefit them for the rest of their academic careers.

7th Grade: Honors Earth/Space Science

In the 3rd quarter, 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. 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 seafloor spreading is causing the Atlantic Ocean to become 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 it benefits life on Earth and the potential dangers it poses to Earth.

Comprehensive 2 Science

In the 3rd quarter, 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 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!

8th Grade

As the 3rd nine weeks come to close, regular and advanced 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!

Honors students finished their motion, forces, Conservation of Momentum, and Gravitational forces. They started the Energy Unit and 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 (State Science Assessment). 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 State Assessment material. These review opportunities will continue through April.

ExploraVision projects were due January 31st and projects were submitted. Results will come on April 1st.

The 4th nine weeks also brings about the testing season. All 8th grade students will participate in the State Science Assessment. No CFE for the Regular and Advanced classes. However, Honors will take the CFE as well. This exam is 20% of their final grade. Please encourage your students to take the exam seriously. Their outcome on these exams can be used to help place them in a science course in 9th grade.



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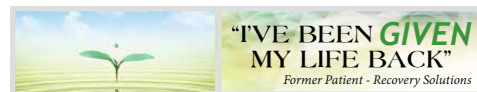
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Curriculum

5

Testing Calendar

Statewide Assessments

Florida Assessment of Student Thinking		
PM3	Subject	Grades
April 2	B.E.S.T. Writing	6-8
May 1	English Language Arts	6-8
May 2	Mathematics	6-8
May 3 - May 23	Make-Ups	6-8
End of Course (EOC)		
May 2	B.E.S.T. Algebra 1 EOC	Student Enrolled in Algebra
May 2	B.E.S.T. Geometry EOC	Students Enrolled in Geometry
May 7	NGSS Civics EOC	7
May 3 - May 23	Make-Ups	
Statewide Science Assessment		
May 6	Statewide Science Assessment	8
ACCESS for ELLs		
Jan. 22 - March 14	ACCESS for ELLs Speaking	ESOL Students 6-8

Districtwide Assessments

Common Final Exams		
May 13 - May 23	Common Final Exams	6-8
Jul. 15 - Jul 25	Common Final Exam Make-Ups	6-8

Battle of the Books

The Battle of the Books is a reading competition where teams compete by answering questions about a selected list of books. We have the six students who will be participating in the district battle competition in April.

WDOG News

In the 3rd quarter, our amazing WDOG News crew continued producing the school morning announcements. Each student has had the chance to work in the studio as an anchor, script writer, teleprompter, production assistant, editor and director. In addition to their recurring special segments "Meme Monday", "Tell a Joke Tuesday" and "Funny Friday", they have also produced Bike Safety PSAs, 2023 Recap videos, and informational segments about holidays. Their 3rd quarter team project was to create a movie trailer and they did not disappoint.



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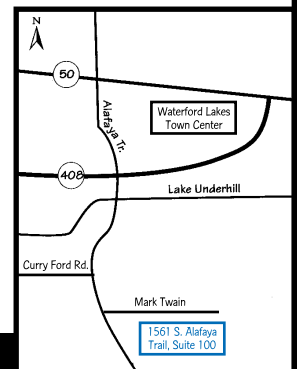
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6 Curriculum

Sports

Basketball

Our Boys and Lady Huskies had an Amazing regular season. Boys ended their regular season 4-2 and our Ladies ended undefeated 6-0 winning cluster championship. At the time this newsletter goes to print, both of our teams have moved on to playoffs.

Track

Track tryouts will be held on February 26th - 29th. All students trying out are checking in the Gym on Feb. 26th. Track tryouts event schedule below:

- Mon. 2/26 - 100M & Mile
- Tues. 2/27 - 200M & 800M
- Wed. 2/28 - 400M, Long Jump, Shot Put
- Thur. 2/29 - Call Backs & Make-Ups

The three track meets will be held on March 13th (at Corner Lake MS), March 27th (at Legacy MS), and April 3rd (at Odyssey MS). Come out to watch our future track stars!

Sports Physicals

All physicals are submitted online. Every student that would like to try out for a sport, must have a physical on file. Go to <https://avalonms.ocps.net/athletics/physicals>, and you will find a step by step on how to create a parent account and how to add your athlete.

Math

6th Grade Math

6th grade math students at AMS are currently finishing units on ratios, proportional relationships, geometry, and statistics and will soon begin to prepare for the Math FAST test, which 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.

7th Grade Math

7th grade math students are recently completed learning about proportional relationships in relation to tables, graphs, equations, and real-world scenarios. We have now moved into the Geometry domain in which students will learn about finding the area of polygons and circles then we will shift our focus to finding the surface area and volume of cylinders. Throughout the semester, we will be spiraling previous standards to help prepare for the Math FAST test in early May. Students may continue to utilize Math Nation and IXL for additional practice at home.

7th Accelerated Math

7th grade students are working on 8th grade standards and topics just finished up solving two variable linear relationships, a topic that includes using the y-intercept and slope to graph a line. We will be testing this week on systems of equations, where we graph two lines and see how they intersect. The next topics will be expressions involving exponents, after which we will cover functions, angle relationships, and probability. We will continue to both learn new content as well as review to be prepared for the 8th grade FAST test, the beginning of May. Students should continue to work on their mission pathway in Khan Academy on the 8th grade course as well as 'preparing for Algebra'. We will also continue to utilize Delta Math and Math Nation for practice.

8th Grade Math

8th grade math students at AMS are currently finishing up the unit on systems of equations. In the third nine-weeks we anticipate finishing up Functions, Scatter Plots, Algebraic expressions, and angle relationships to prepare for the FAST Math test that is scheduled for the first week of May. 8th grade Pre-Algebra serves as a crucial stepping-stone to students' mathematical journey. This class consists of foundational concepts that students must master to ensure readiness for more advanced algebraic topics in high school such as Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and beyond. In order to ensure academic success, we encourage students to continue to practice their skills in class and at home. For consistent practice is a key to mastering mathematical concepts.

Algebra

Last quarter, students explore quadratic functions. Unit 8 begins with graphs of quadratics and determining and interpreting key features of quadratics from their graph. With the understanding that quadratic functions have a vertex, students rewrite quadratic expressions in vertex form by completing the square. Student learning is supported with models. Unit 8 concludes with solving quadratics by graphing, utilizing both key features and completing the square to graph using vertex form. Unit 9 begins with using the graph and key features to write a quadratic function. Students continue to use various forms of a quadratic throughout the unit. Unit 9 ends with several lessons on solving quadratics using a variety of techniques. Throughout Units 8 and 9 students experience a variety of real-world applications of quadratics. Third quarter starts us at Unit 10 which relates understanding of the key features of quadratic functions to key features of absolute value functions, and they write and solve absolute value equations. Students connect the solutions of an absolute value equation to the graph while also relating each piece of an absolute value function to a linear equation. This connection supports a student's understanding of why, when solving an absolute value equation algebraically, it is set up as two separate equations. Unit 11 begins by exploring exponential functions using multiple representations to understand exponential growth and exponential decay. Students then discover the key features of exponential functions by utilizing multiple representations. The unit ends with students applying their knowledge to write the equation of an exponential relationship.

Geometry

After students wrapped up Unit 9 with solving problems involving area and density. Spiraling back to area prepares students for relating the area of cross-sections to volume and finding lateral and surface area of three-dimensional figures and understanding of volume begins with relating volume to stacks of cross-sections and understanding Cavalieri's principle. They begin to explore how rotating a two-dimensional figure results in a three-dimensional figure. Volume formulas are utilized to find the volume of three-dimensional figures and apply area formulas to determine the lateral and surface area of three-dimensional figures. Quarter 3 starts to involve relationships in circles. Rather than placing all of the relationships in one unit, the content was separated into a unit that focuses on relationships that involve arcs and a unit that focuses on lengths of segments. Unit 11 builds on Unit 10 and leads into Unit 12 by exploring figures inscribed in a circle as well as circumscribed circles. The intentional spiraling of the content is meant to help students understand the relationships between arcs and inscribed figures (Unit 10 to Unit 11) and introduce segments such as tangent lines (Unit 11 to Unit 12). Other relationships and theorems related to triangles are explored in Unit 11.



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Language Arts

6th grade

Students wrapped up argumentation and will be practicing writing skills to prepare for the FAST Writing test in April. Students are continuing to read independently in class and at home, work on meeting their AR goals and review skills for the FAST Reading test in May.

7th grade

Throughout the third quarter, 7th graders have been engaged in all elements of the writing process including writing and revising an entire expository essay. Additionally, students can compare two or more central ideas and their development throughout a text; explain how text sections and features convey a purpose in a text; as well as track an author's argument by analyzing the different types of reasoning used and their effectiveness. In our final quarter we will be working on skills to prepare for our FAST tests in April and May.

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.

8th grade

Students just finished an informational unit about colonizing space that ended with a debate. They will soon be moving into an argumentative writing unit in preparation for the FAST Writing test. Students should continue to read 50 pages of a choice book for homework, and work toward completing their AR goal.



PIT CREW

PIT crew continues to be a successful elective class at AMS, with ESE teacher, Mr. Macri leading the students. Twenty-five 8th graders selected PIT crew as their elective class one period daily, in order to help others. This is the essence of service over self. We have seen great success with this program this year. The PIT Crew kids are an extra set of hands and help in academic classes for struggling students. They read items aloud, redirect, encourage, mentor and offer accommodations and support. All students have gained new relationships and increased confidence.



PLTW

In PLTW 6th grade Medical Detectives 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 and tested a prototype of a balloon propulsion car. Then they learned technical sketching with dimensions and are going to dive into computer 3D design with TinkerCAD 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 windmills, and completed the survival challenge. We will be moving into coding robots with ROBOTC and designing an automated factory assembly line.



Social Studies

6th Grade

Students have been busy learning about world religions and philosophies, as well as, the civilizations of Ancient India and Ancient China. Our Quarter 3 projects were fantastic and really showcased the students' knowledge and understanding of Ancient China! As we head into the fourth quarter, we begin to learn about Ancient Greece and Rome. We will make connections between the ancient world and modern times, focusing on our similarities in government and the concepts we still practice today. We will conclude the year with a quick study of Mesoamerica before we prepare for our final exam.

8th Grade

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 of US History will focus on westward expansion, trace the sectional differences between Northern and Southern states and finally examine religious, educational and cultural reform movements. Our students will expand 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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8

Robotics Team

The AMS Robotics Team, the Cyber Paws team won awards in both of the regional Vex IQ they competed in. They were awarded the Create Award in their first ever competition. At the second competition, they were awarded the Design Award by the judges which qualified them for the north and central Florida State Vex IQ Championship Competition. The team is excited to compete against 70 other robot teams in Florida.



Band

Congratulations to our Husky Band students for their recent accomplishments! AMS had 7 Band students accepted into the OCPS All-County Honor Band. They recently participated in rehearsals and a performance with over 100 other OCPS middle school band students under the direction of a guest conductor and they represented our school and our Band Program amazingly!! Then on Thursday, February 15, our Husky Jazz Band performed at the District Music Performance Assessment and they earned a Superior rating! These students have put in so much time, work, and energy and it has definitely shown! CONGRATULATIONS!!!! Then on Friday, February 16, we had 25 Husky Band students participating in Solo & Ensemble and they did an amazing job representing our school and Band Program earning great ratings and scores! Next, Wind Ensemble will be getting ready for their District Music Performance Assessment, Beginning Band and Symphonic Band will be preparing to make some performance videos, and Percussion Ensemble will be performing at Timber Creek HS. Keep up the great work Husky Band, you all are so wonderful!!

Chorus

On March 12, our 8th grade Advanced Chorus (Avalon Singers) will be participating in our district's annual Music Performance Assessment. We will be performing two pieces for a panel of adjudicators and a live clinician, followed by a sight reading assessment. We are so proud of these talented singers! In April, our production of Into the Woods Jr. (which includes many Chorus AND Musical Theatre students!) will take place on April 18th and 19th. On May 8th, please join our Chorus students for their final concert of the year at 6:30pm at the Timber Creek High School Performing Arts Center! We hope you will join us for these wonderful performances!

Agriculture/FFA

Agriculture students are learning more about plants and animals this quarter. In 8th grade, students learned to analyze soil chemistry for crop production or pasture use, and are now beginning to learn the different breeds of livestock. 7th graders have been learning all about animal agriculture, including external anatomy, and the different animal digestive systems. In 6th grade, students are learning about the different plants and animals commonly used in agriculture and what each is used for.

Our FFA chapter has been working hard to get ready for the Central Florida Fair youth livestock show, as well as preparing to compete at the state finals in 4 different career development events! Students recently celebrated National FFA week with spirit days at school also!

