

# The Division Digest

A Newsletter From the Office of the Superintendent

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## Superintendent's Message

Dear ACPS Community,

Nearing the end of the first nine weeks, it is a good time to reflect on the start of our 23-24 school year. As I talk to students, staff, and parents, it appears the year has gotten off to a smooth start. We are happy to welcome new students and staff to the ACPS community. We have several new initiatives we are working on this year including a new literacy program at our primary and elementary levels, several new Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at the high school level, and adding much needed assistance for our students to smoothly transition from school to work or post-secondary education.

The Division Digest is a forum for our schools to showcase all of the meaningful opportunities our students are offered and for our division departments to provide important information to our employees. As you read this, join me in celebrating the impressive accomplishments of our students and staff acclaimed in this newsletter.

You are each an important contributor to the school division's accomplishments. I thank you for everything you do on behalf of our students, our schools, and our community.

Go Raiders!

*Annette A. Bennett*

## Upcoming Dates

**October 6** - First Quarter Ends

**October 9** - Columbus Day - No School

**October 10** - Teacher Work Day

**October 11** - Second Quarter Begins

**October 12** - Interim SB Meeting

**October 26** - Regular SB Meeting

**November 10** - Veterans Day - No School

**November 22- 24** - Thanksgiving Holiday

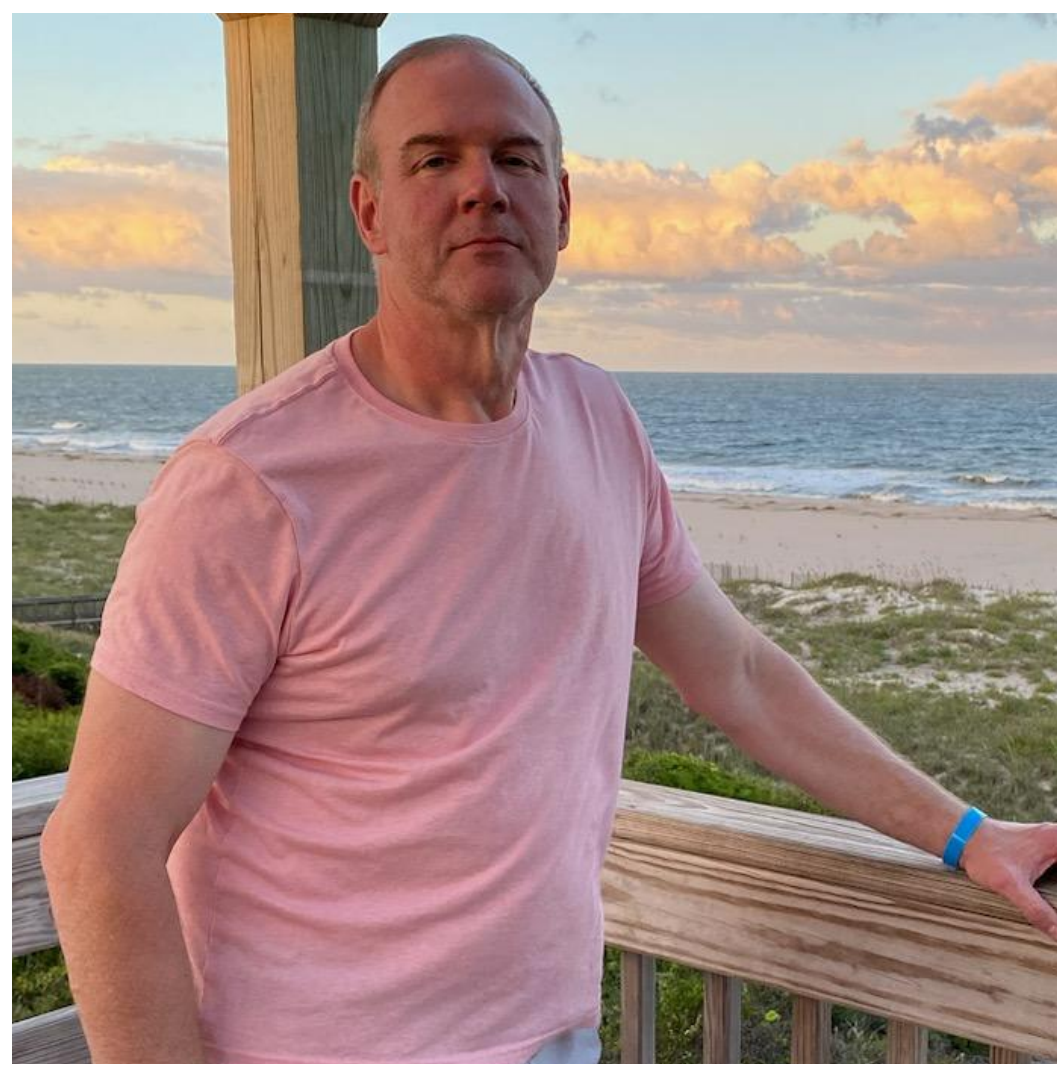


# Student Services News

## Mrs. Mary Sherry, Director of Student Services

This school year has brought some changes to the Special Education staff. You may have noticed some new faces at school or you may have seen familiar faces in new places.

The APS special education family welcomes new special education teacher, Douglas Suplita.



Mr. Douglas Suplita APS SpEd Teacher

APS also welcomes new special education instructional assistant, Larcelia Pinn.

The AES special education family welcomes Makayla Hostetter as she moved to their campus from APS this year and new special education teachers, Faye Rater and Patricia Thorpe along with new Instructional Assistant, Ms. Cheryl Miller.

AMS is thrilled to welcome Brandy Shrewsberry and Jacqueline Pinn as they join AMS as eighth-grade special education teachers this year.



Ms. Jacqueline Pinn AMS SpEd Teacher



Ms. Brandy Shrewsberry AMS SpEd Teacher

We are also very excited to welcome Dr. Marin Swienton, the new Occupational therapist and Ms. Emily Bromer, the new Speech and Language Pathologist for ACPS.



Ms. Emily Bromer ACPS Speech Language Pathologist

Please join me in welcoming these folks to their new schools!



The next Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is scheduled for Wednesday, October 24th from 6:00-7:00 pm at the School Board Office. The Special Education Advisory Committee meets four times per year and is made up of parents, community members, and staff who are interested in improving educational services for special education students in our division. Topics such as transition needs, Special Education services and supports, staffing needs, support groups, and mentoring opportunities have been included as part of previous agendas. Committee meeting are open to the public and any interested parties are invited to attend.



## HR News

**Dr. Jason Tibbs, Director of Finance and Human Resources**

### Welcome New ACPS Staff

ACPS welcomed 32 new instructional staff members included in a total of 78 new hires across the division for the 2023-2024 year. If you have come on board since late July, we welcome all of you and hope your first nine-weeks has gone well.



2023-2024 New Staff Members

### Open Positions Update



While the start of the 2023-2024 proved to be very smooth, ACPS is currently seeking applicants for crucial positions throughout the division. You are our best advocate for recruiting new staff. ACPS is currently looking for bus drivers and a few other positions. Please check the Human Resources page from time to time for open positions. If you hear of someone interested in Appomattox County Public Schools, please refer them to the Employment page on the division website or contact Human Resources at 434-352-8251.

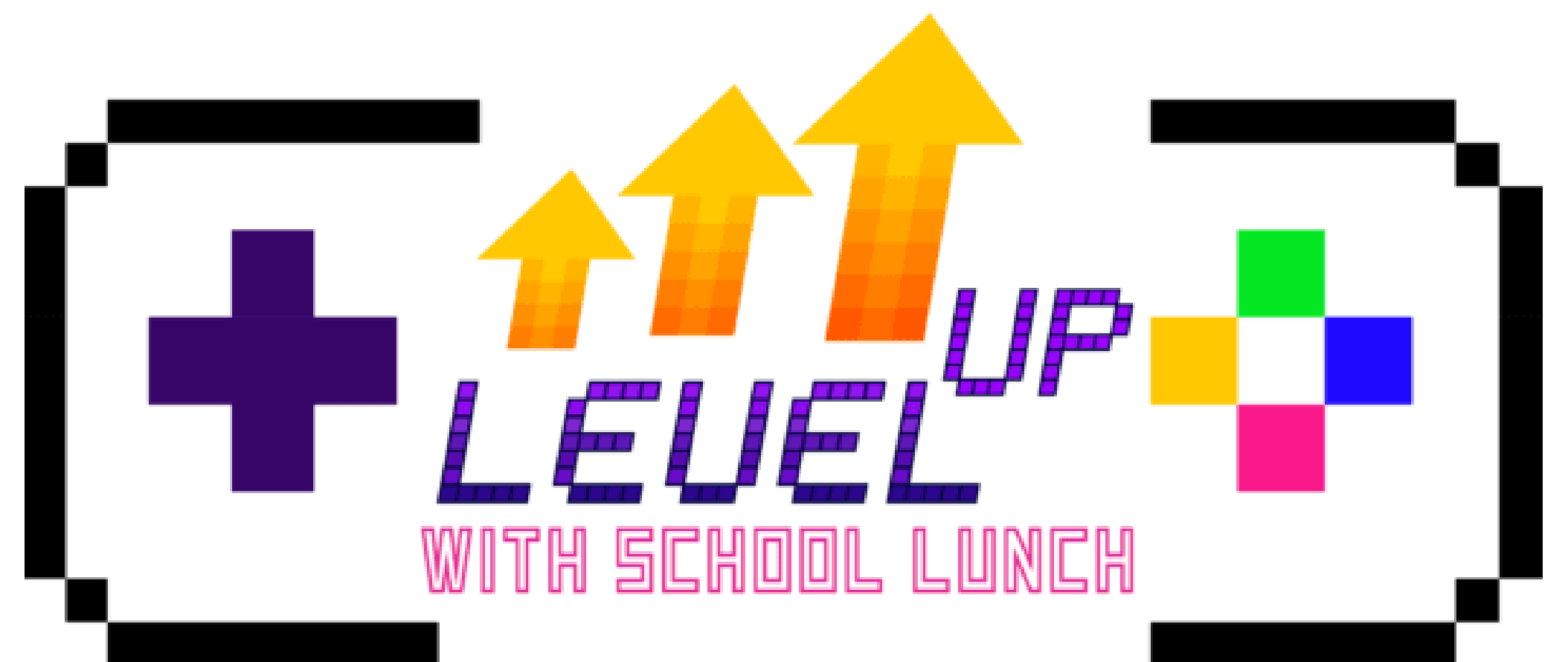
### Increasing Efficiency

The Human Resources Department would like to say a huge “Thank You” to everyone’s patience as we continue to work on increasing efficiency regarding services provided to the staff. Over the past year, we have implemented a number of technology enhancements including all applications for job positions online, TalentEd Records for Contracts, Intent to Return forms and New Hire Onboarding, Employee Navigator with Innovative Insurance Group for open enrollment, SmartFind Express and lastly Evaluations+ through Vector Solutions.

## Cafeteria Corner

**Mrs. Penny Garrett, SFS Specialist and Cafe Manager**

### Mark Your Calendars for National School Lunch Week!



The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) serves nearly 30 million children every school day. President John F. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week (NSLW) in 1962 to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child’s life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom.

**#NSLW23 will be celebrated October 9-13, 2023.**

Students will be encouraged to show their enthusiasm from October 9th-13th with special menus, cafeteria events, and more.



Learning is tough work—and kids need fuel if they’re going to learn! That’s why a healthy midday meal is crucial to the growing children who go to school.

If you have any questions or concerns with the food service department, please contact Mrs. Penny Garrett at [pregarrett@acpsweb.com](mailto:pregarrett@acpsweb.com) and she will be happy to help.

### Reminder

ACPS accepts online payments for student meal costs. MySchoolBucks.com allows parents to view their child's cafeteria balance, monitor their purchases and add money to their student's cafeteria account. Visit MySchoolBucks.com for more information.



# Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE

**Dr. Cheryl Servis, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE**

It is our goal to build a mentoring program within our schools to help our new folks feel welcomed, supported, and successful. Mrs. Karen Cyrus is serving as the New Teacher Mentoring/Family Engagement for 2023-2024.

Each new teacher to our division has been partnered with a school-based mentor teacher, and each school has one teacher who is serving as a Lead Mentor in order to help streamline effective communication of needs, concerns, highlights, and celebrations. Monthly meetings for new teachers to target timely topics of interest are underway.



Family Engagement has multiple goals, and a priority is targeting school attendance across the division. We know that sometimes school attendance and a family's connection to a school are impacted by the needs that are happening in the home. So, supporting families so they can, in turn, support their students' academic success is critical.

Both New Teacher Mentoring and Family Engagement roles are organic in nature--they will grow and develop as the needs arise and develop. While the roles may appear different, in some ways they naturally connect, as our new teachers are very aware they have needs in their classroom, but may not know the community well enough to know how to connect their students to those avenues of support. It is the desire that both our new teachers and our families feel there are arms reaching out to them from our schools who care.

## *Youth Registered Apprenticeship*

Appomattox County High School has been busy exploring different ways to offer work based learning and career exploration opportunities for youth interested in putting their learned skills to use on a job site. Appomattox County High School has partnered with the VA Department of Labor to offer students youth registered apprenticeships. An apprenticeship "combines on-the-job training, provided by the employer that hires the apprentice, with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of national skills standards," according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprentices are paid from the beginning of the apprenticeship while working to earn nationally recognized credentials in their respective fields when the apprenticeship is completed.



*L to R: Mr. Garrett, Terrence Bush, BJ Carter, Angela Carter, Sherie Fulcher, Dr. Bennett*

ACHS Senior Terrence Bush selected to enroll with an apprenticeship program with Appomattox Auto works in the field of auto tech. He will attend school and complete his course work in the automotive technician program at Appomattox County High School with Mr. Jonathan Garrett. Then Terrence will attend work hours with Appomattox Auto Works to apply his classroom knowledge on the jobsite.

Appomattox County High School looks forward to offering more opportunities like youth registered apprenticeships to better prepare students to transition into post graduate life and community partnerships play a major role in that. If you are interested in learning more about how your business or program can support opportunities like this, please contact Megan Graves at [mggraves@acpsweb.com](mailto:mggraves@acpsweb.com).



# APS News

Mrs. Allison Maxwell, Principal

## SEL Lessons



The guidance counselors at APS have had so much fun getting into classrooms and continuing with our Social Emotional Learning lessons this year! September's theme focused on "Cooperation" and taught kids how to work together and help each other. Other topics discussed included being respectful and kind. In October, the SEL lessons focused on "Respect". Students were taught that they can be respectful by showing they care for others through how they treat those around them. Every lesson always includes book suggestions that help teach and support the lessons being taught each month.

## PTO Stadium Blanket Fundraiser



Our APS PTO is still selling the amazing Raider Stadium Blankets! Have you gotten yours yet? They are soft and cozy and perfect for these cool fall nights! There are two designs to choose from and blankets are \$35 each.

Contact our PTO at [appomattoxprimaryPTO@gmail.com](mailto:appomattoxprimaryPTO@gmail.com)

## Kindergarten Field Trip

Our Kindergarten students recently took their first field trip to Layman's Family Farm and had a blast!! They filled their day with fun fall activities and brought home their very own pumpkin.



## Homecoming Spirit Week

Our littlest Raiders celebrated Homecoming Week in style!! We had themed dress up days each day of the week, including pajama day, athletic day, USA day, favorite color and Raider day (our favorite!!). Kids loved dressing up and participating in fun activities throughout the week.



It's been a great start to the year at APS and we look forward to making this the best year yet for Every Raider, Every Day!



# AES News

Dr. Jason Bowyer, Principal

## Open House

AES hosted Open House events for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students and families to allow our students to showcase how their year has started and to allow teacher the opportunity to meet and answer questions with parents. AES partnered with SNAP-Ed through the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office to provide a free Farmers Market to all families who attended. Families were able to leave AES with as much free produce as they could carry!



Farmer's Market at AES

## Core Values

AES kicked off the year with a focus on core values. For the month of September, the focus has been on Cooperation and Teamwork. Throughout the month, students have heard stories of teamwork and cooperation on our morning announcements, ranging from historical perspectives and current events to scientific breakthroughs and featuring individuals such as Lionel Messi, Michael Jordan, Henry Ford, Helen Keller, and Harry Truman. As we apply the concept of "Every Raider. Every Day." we ask our students to think about how they can be team players and contribute to the success of every Raider at AES.



## One Word Challenge



One-Word Challenge

Mrs. Elliott and Ms. Olsen had their classes complete the one-word challenge. Each student picked one motivating word they would focus on throughout the school year to motivate them to greatness! Students kicked off the school year by applying

their words for motivation to a team-building activity where they were tasked with the challenge of "Saving Fred."

## 2023 SOUPer Bowl

AES students loved participating in the SOUPer Bowl hosted by the ACHS FFA. Students enjoyed the friendly competition between classrooms to see who could bring in the most canned food items, but more importantly, they loved the feeling of supporting our community by donating to local food pantries. In all, AES collected over 932 nonperishable food items. Thank you, ACHS FFA, for inviting us to participate!

The beginning...



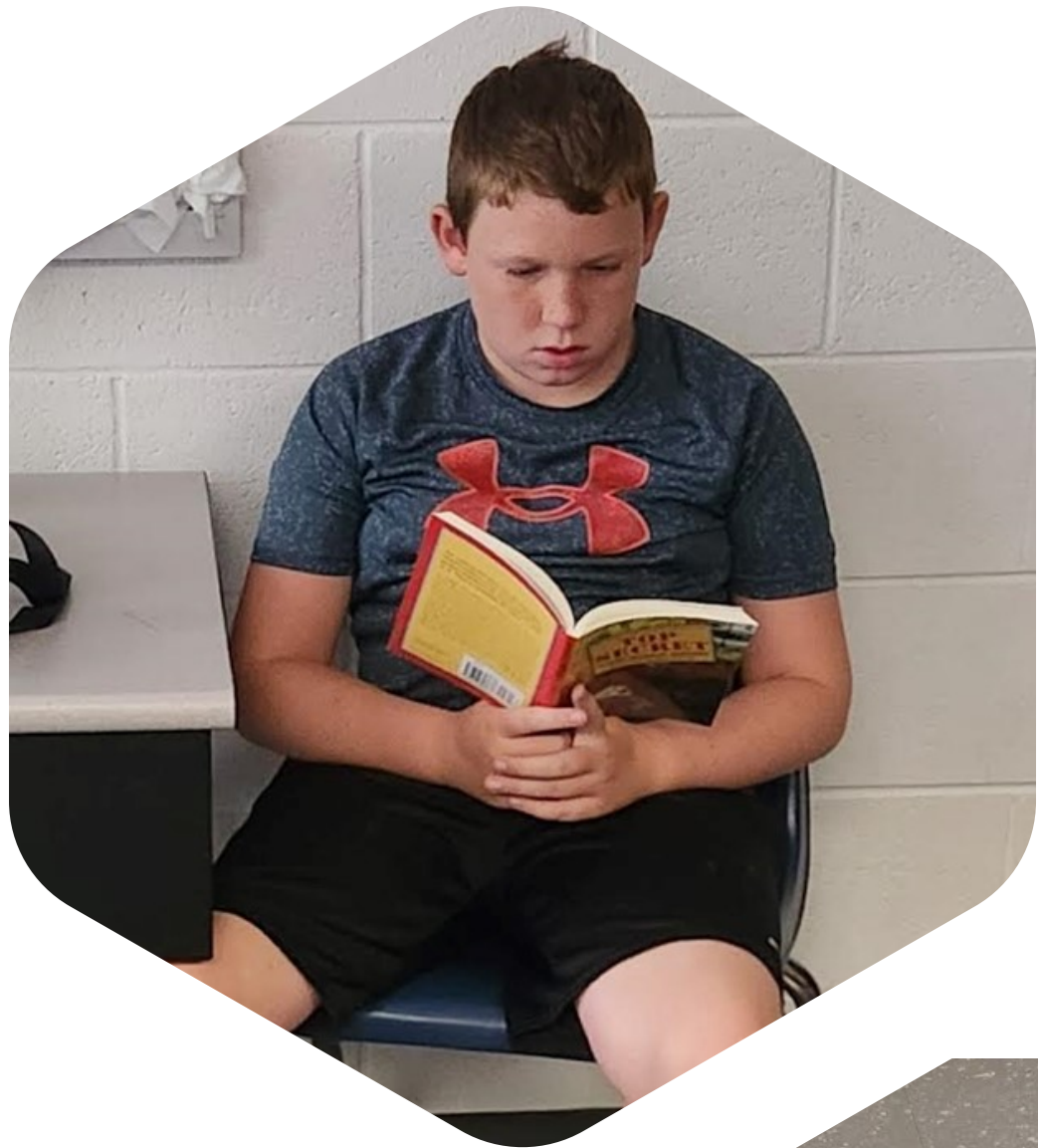
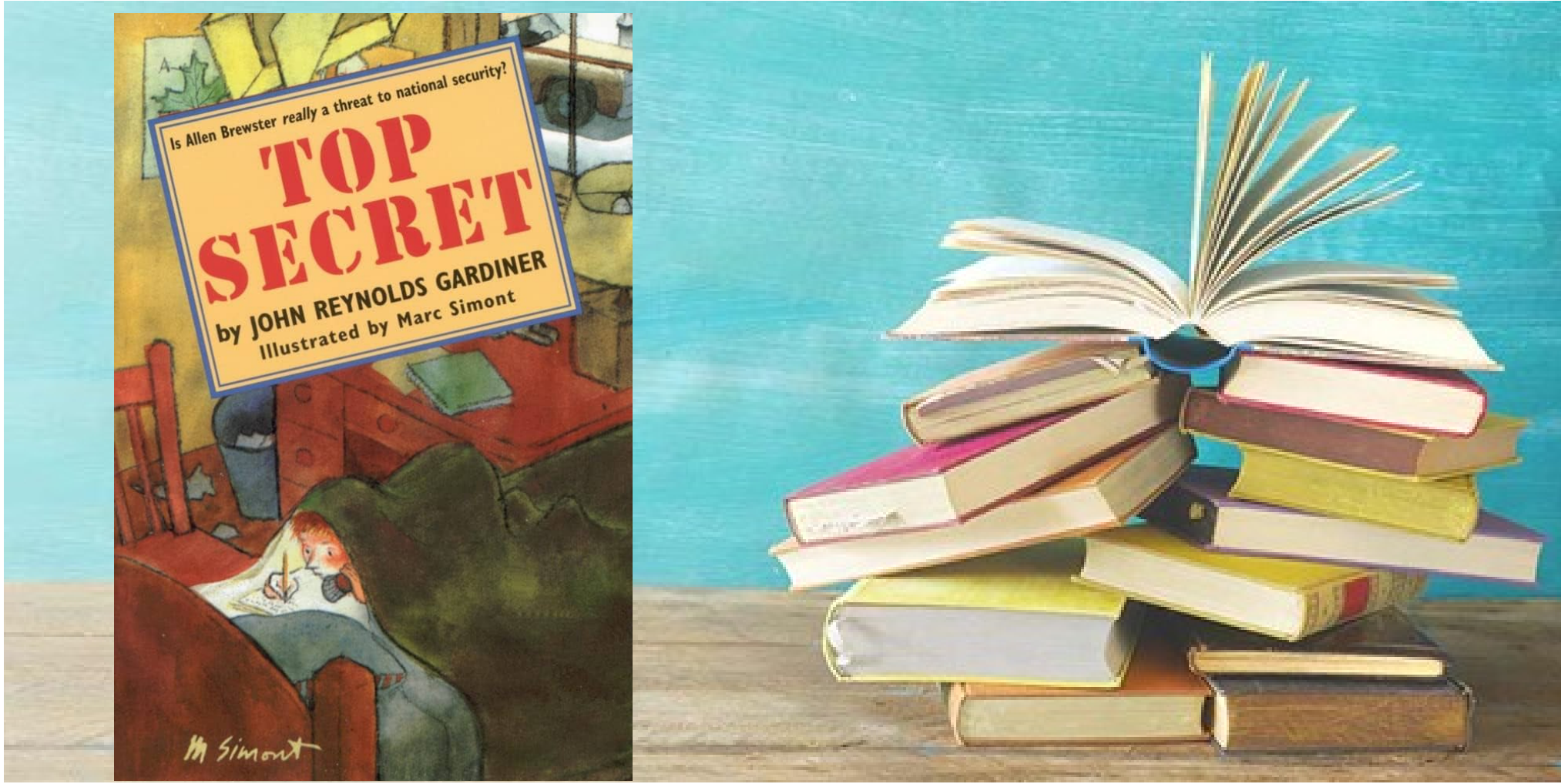
The ending!





## Picking Up a Good Book!

Students have always loved attending Mrs. Jones's class, but for this year, it's to enjoy a good book! Mrs. Jones encourages her students to pick up and read any chance they have, and her students have decided to take her up on the offer with one of their many class novels, "Top Secret!"



Reading "Top Secret" in Mrs. Jones's class

## Patrick Henry's Red Hill



Red Hill in Brookneal, VA

Extending our learning outside of the classroom is a highlight of any school year. Fourth-grade students had that opportunity in September with a visit to Patrick Henry's Red Hill. Students were able to learn more about Patrick Henry, the Revolution, and Colonial times in America.



AES Students at Patrick Henry's Red Hill



# AMS News

Mr. William Pettus, Principal

## The Sunshine Guild

The Sunshine Guild ventured around AMS bringing joy and sunshine to all employees at the school. It was a surprise that truly was a surprise. Everyone works so hard to make good humans (no easy task as you all know) at AMS and they deserve a pick me up anytime they can get one. Thank you Ms. Ulmer, Mrs. Hanes and Ms. Walker (who gave up their planning) and the rest of the guild. Here's to more HAPPY strolls in the halls of Appomattox Middle School.



Ms. Walker, Mrs. Hanes, and Ms. Ulmer

## Figurative Language Restaurants

Ms. Walker's Raider Reach class is currently working on Figurative Language restaurants. During this time each group will be coming up with menu items and descriptions. Students must describe each item using figurative language. Each group will create a restaurant name, letter to the town on the opening of their new place, menu, hiring poster (using figurative language), and a grand opening poster.



Planning menus and descriptions for their restaurants

## AMS Faculty/Staff Cookout

In this age where life's a gamble, and the stakes are certainly high,  
on a recent day, AMS decided to meet, beneath the sunny sky.

They gathered 'round a big old grill, with laughter in the air,  
Their hearts were light, their spirits bright, their minds and feelings fair.

As the day drew on, with the fire burning bright,  
There was mirth and merriment, and plenty of delight.

They shared tales of student victories and the losses we'd endured,  
But through it all, they knew their path, and of that, they were all sure.

For in this school game we play, where success will ebb and flow,  
They knew that with friends by their side, they could always lead the growth.  
They toasted to the moments, both up and down they'd known,  
And vowed to keep on rolling, on this journey that is our own.

Like Kenny Rogers said, "You've got to know when to hold 'em,"  
But in this school year anew, we knew we'd never fold 'em.

With every passing day, we are reminded of this treasure,  
It's our love and laughter shared, and moments we will remember forever.

- MR. BRENDAN CONROY, Assistant Principal

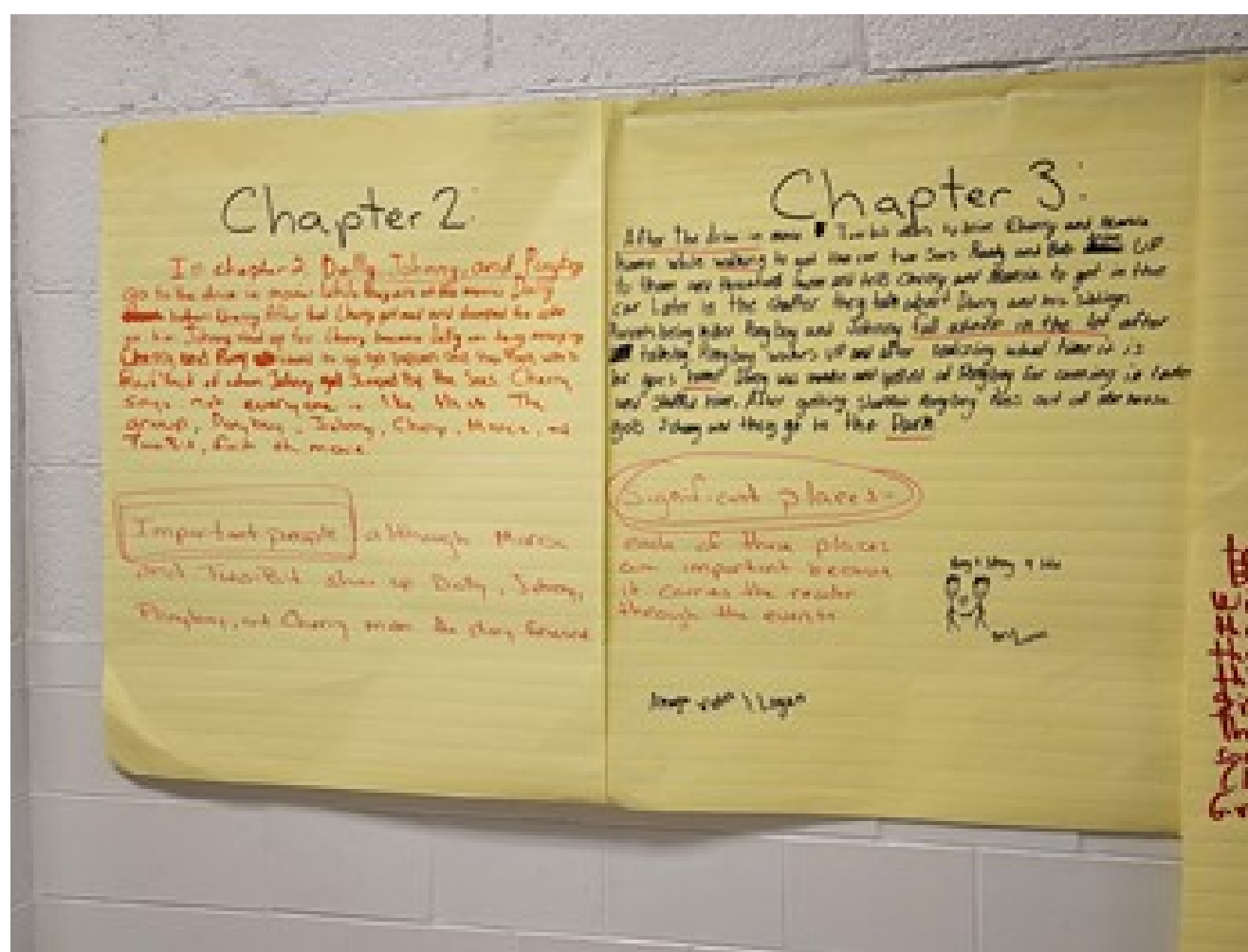


AMS Cookout

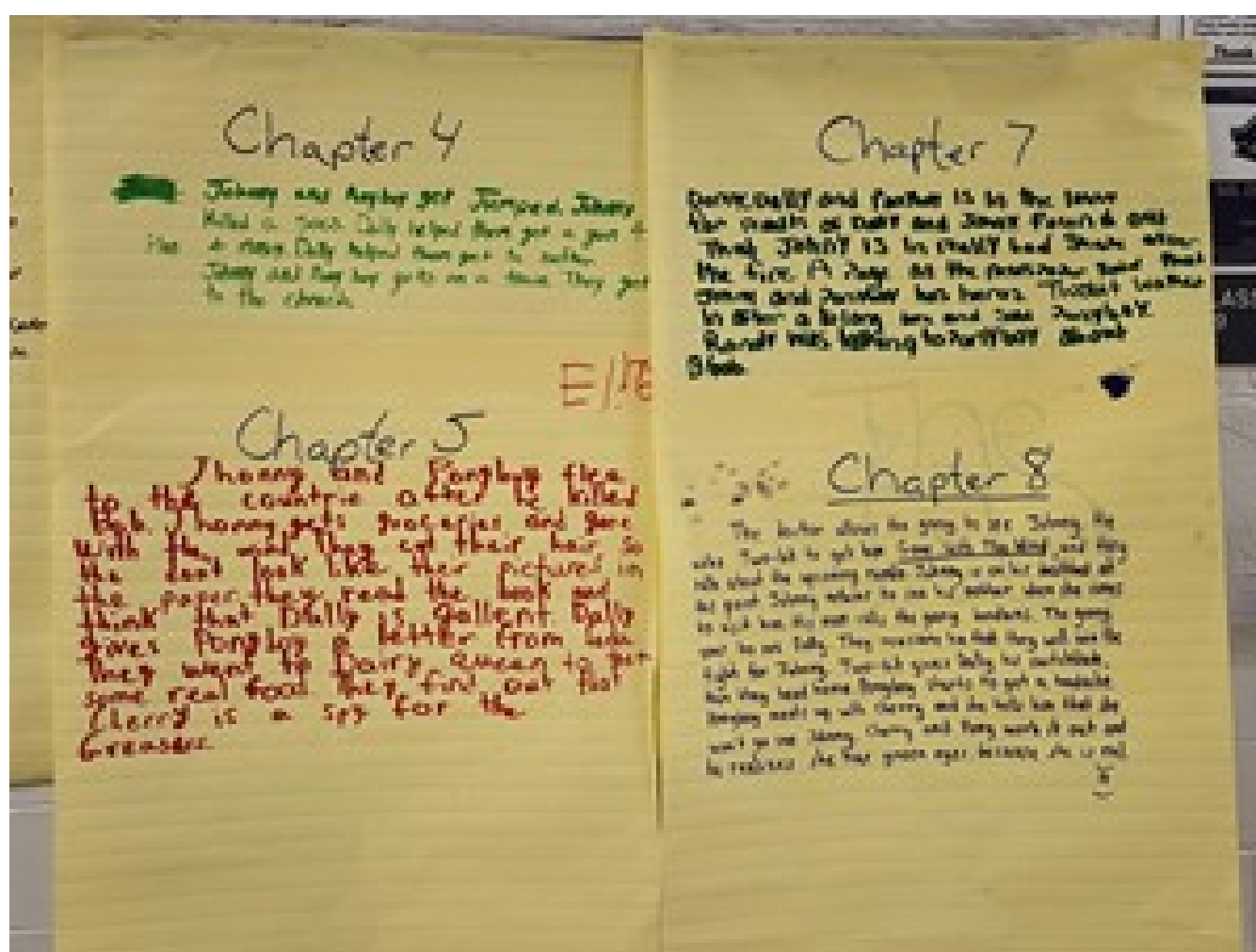


## The Outsiders

Studies have shown how reading lends itself to each area within education and is one of the best ways to help support student growth, so AMS 8th grade English classes have been reading *The Outsiders* and are competing in a read-off to see which class will have the highest amount of books read by the end of each quarter. Looking ahead to the second quarter, classes will continue building literature skills using short stories and novellas. For example, in the month of October, they will be reading “Scary Stories” like “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Feather Pillow,” “The Landlady,” “The Black Cat,” and “The Monkey’s Paw.”



Our English teachers are all excited by the student effort they have seen so far.



## Watersheds and Grudge Ball

Mrs. Tucker’s 8th grade science classes have been learning about watersheds and recently played a fun review game called Grudge Ball.



Students' illustrations of watersheds



Grudge Ball game

## Invasion Sports Unit

Recently in PE at AMS, we completed our Invasion Sports unit. Students got to choose between flag football, lacrosse, and hockey. We were able to practice skills with multiple mini games before moving on to full gameplay over the last three days of the unit. Everyone had a blast practicing their skills in these different sports! In addition to the invasion sports, students performed fitness activities such as circuit training, fitness bingo, and stretching routines



Pictured below is a lead-up game that we played during flag football that involved throwing to a target. It integrated cardiovascular training as well as passing a football to a target.



Invasion Sports in P.E.



Lead-up game



# ACHS News

Mr. Luke Cunningham, Principal

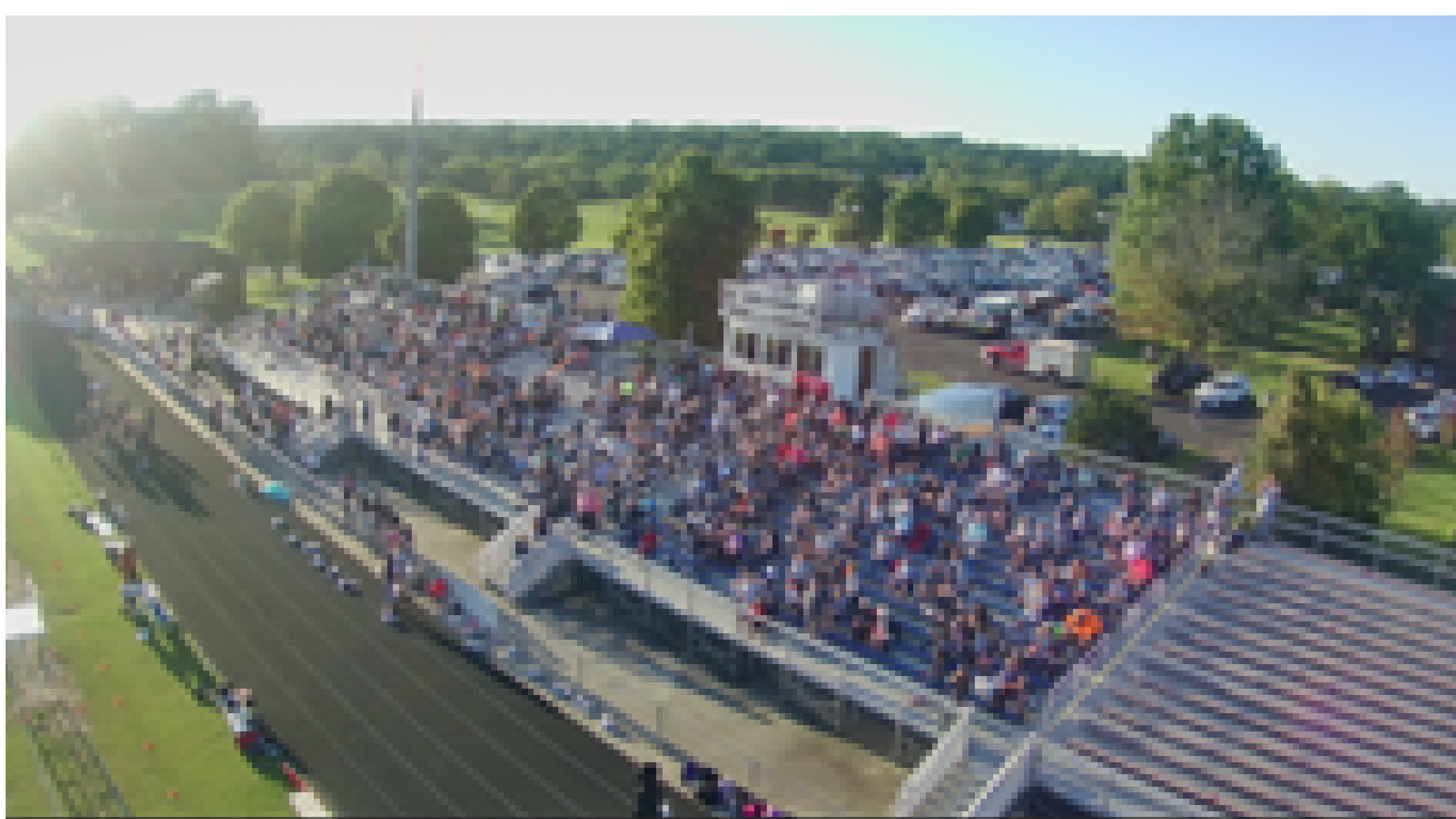
It has been a great start to the 2023-2024 school year! Our ACHS students have come into this year with great enthusiasm and expectations for an exciting year. Students and staff have embraced the theme of "Every Raider, Every Day" as a commitment to valuing and taking advantage of each day of the school year to grow and improve as a community. I look forward to seeing all of the great things this year has in store for our school.

## Drones Program

Appomattox County High School has started to expand its CTE offerings and that includes the introduction of our unmanned aircraft course. Students within this course have the opportunity to learn about the science behind flight and put what they have learned into practice by learning to operate drones. The course includes a variety of drones with various types of capabilities for varying levels of skilled pilots.



Drones class instruction



Drone photo from our game against Rustburg



## Work-Based Learning Internships

We have begun to introduce work-based learning opportunities for some of our CTE students. Our very first intern student was Terrence Bush through our auto technology program. Terrence has accepted and begun an internship right here in Appomattox at AutoWorks. He has the opportunity to take all that he has learned within Mr. Garrett's auto program and apply to a potential career.



ACHS Senior Terrence Bush

## Club Day

ACHS was excited to host its first club day of the year in August. During this day students and staff have a set apart time for students to participate in a club of their choosing. Our staff has expanded our club list to 25 different clubs for our students to choose from. The goal is to help students connect with peers and staff members with common interests and continue to build up our sense of community on campus.



Club Day



# Athletics News

Mr. Tim Peterson, Athletic Director

## Titan Trophy Ceremony

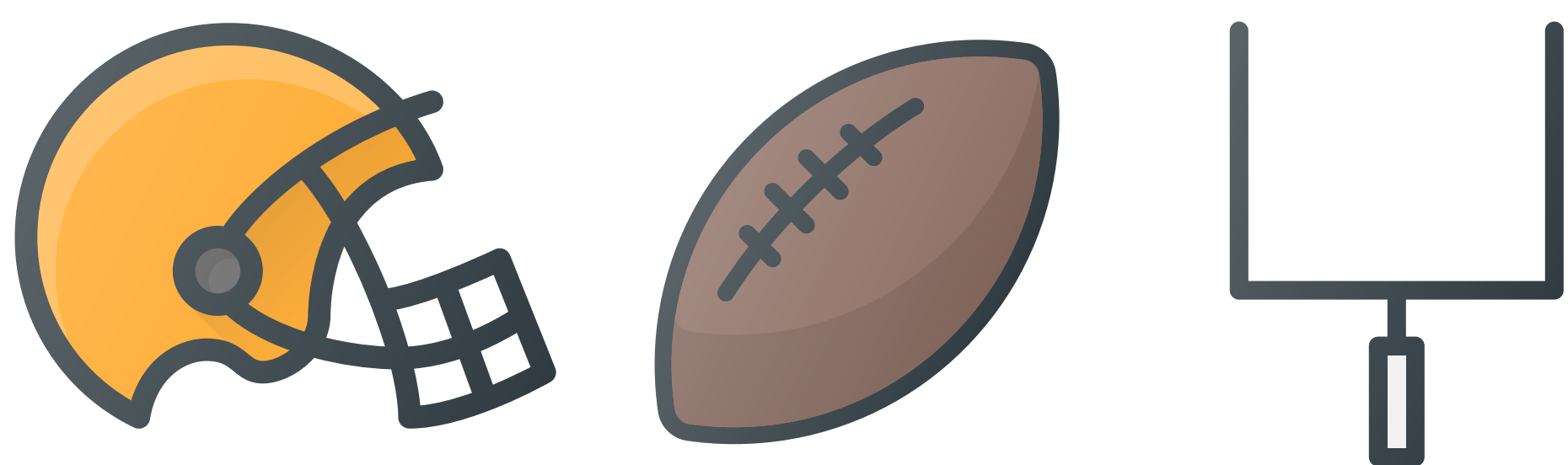


Gray Peterson was the winner of the Titan Trophy and the Bill Dudley Leadership Award.

Kevin Fitch won the Titan Atlas Highest Index for weightlifting.

Tre'Suan Kelso was the runner-up for the Hellfire Titan for linebackers.

For linemen and linebackers, the Dirty Dozen Award winners from the Appomattox Raiders were Daniel Bradley, Tre Kelso, PJ Reel, and TyShaun Napier.



## Fall Sports –Remaining– Schedule

### Varsity Football

10/6	Nelson	Away	7:00
10/13	Chatham	Home	7:00
10/20	William Campbell	Away	7:00
10/27	BYE	--	--
11/3	Dan River	Home	7:00



### JV Football

10/5	Nelson	Home	6:00
10/12	Chatham	Away	6:00
10/19	William Campbell	Home	6:00
10/26	BYE	--	--
11/2	Dan River	Away	6:00

### Cross Country

10/4	Nelson County	Away	5:00
10/11	Altavista	Away	5:00
10/14	Milestat Invitational	Away	8:00
10/27	Galileo	Away	5:00
11/3	Nelson (Dist. Champ.)	Away	5:00



### Volleyball

10/3	Dan River	Home	5:30/7
10/5	Gretna	Home	5:30/7
10/10	Altavista	Away	5:30/7
10/12	Nelson	Home	5:30/7
10/17	Chatham	Away	5:30/7
10/19	William Campbell	Home	5:30/7
10/24	Jefferson Forest	Home	5:30/7
10/26	Dan River	Away	5:30/7