

THE PATH

A PUBLICATION BY AIKEN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STAR POWER!

Stars of Public Education Winners Announced



For the full list of winners, including our first-ever Assistant Principal of the Year Award, please see page 5.

Aiken County Public Schools' annual Stars of Public Education winner announcements, typically held in the spring, were delayed this year due to Covid-19 restrictions until October.

Winners, including Teacher of the Year **Misty McConnell**, were taken by complete surprise as Aiken County Superintendent King Laurence and District staff members celebrated the District-level Stars of Public Education winners at their schools with a presentation of a trophy, balloons, a cash prize, and other gifts to announce they had been selected as 2020-21 Stars.

"It's always exciting when we have the opportunity to recognize our teachers, administrators, and staff for the excellent jobs they do every day," said Superintendent Laurence. "Even when we cannot celebrate these recognitions in the way we normally would, being able to invite the families of our honorees to share in this moment is special."

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BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY

Students began the 2020-21 school year on August 31, two weeks later than the planned start of the school year, with the choice of a hybrid model of learning both at school and at home, or a full-time virtual model called AIKEN INNOVATE.

A Back-to-School Task Force, led by Executive Director of Middle Schools Dr. Phyllis Gamble, comprised of 39 people from varied roles in the District's schools from teachers, counselors, and principals, to Departmental leaders and staff in Technology, Nursing, Transportation, Communications, Operations and Maintenance, Attendance, School Food Service, Special Programs, ESOL, Career & Technology Education, Extra-Curricular Activities, and Purchasing met numerous times over the summer to plan out the school year and make recommendations to the School Board on how to proceed with safely educating students.

Approximately 6,300 students, a third of our student population, chose AIKEN INNOVATE, while the rest of our 16,158 students were divided into two cohorts, and returned to school two days a week for in-person instruction and learned remote the other three days with the intent of moving



to traditional instruction as soon as it was safe to do so. Face-to-face students at the Elementary level moved to four day a week instruction on October 12 with Middle and High School students

following October 26, and then moved to five-day instruction the first week in November. Due to a rise in the amount of students and staff affected by Covid-19, the School Board voted to have face-to-face students return to the hybrid model of instruction on November 30, following our Thanksgiving break.

The Back-to-School Advisory Committee, led by Bert Postell, Executive Director of High Schools, is comprised of local physicians, nurses, educators, parents, and District staff, and was created to monitor Covid-19 data and make recommendations to the Superintendent regarding student instructional models.

WELCOME

TO OUR NEW DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Mike Rosier

DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNICATIONS



Mike Rosier was named Director of Communications in September after serving as the District's Communications Coordinator for four years. He recently earned a master's degree in Intelligence and Security Studies from Augusta University, and also holds a bachelor's degree in History with a minor in International Relations from USC-Aiken. He is a graduate of Silver Bluff High School in the Class of 1993.

Prior to joining the District in 2016, he had an extensive career as a journalist at several newspapers throughout South Carolina and Georgia, including *The Aiken Standard* and *The Augusta Chronicle*. He currently serves as the United Way of Aiken County Coordinator for ACPSP, the United Way of Aiken County Education Division Chairman, and Chairman of the local Education Matters non-profit.

"I'm excited to lead the Communications Team. It's an honor and privilege to continue serving families and my colleagues in this new role," Rosier said. "I love this community and I'm dedicated to providing accurate and timely communication to parents and employees."

Shadie Hall

DIRECTOR OF
HEAD START &
EARLY HEAD START



Shadie Hall was selected as the Director of Head Start and Early Head Start in August. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from the College of Charleston and has more than 25 years of administrative and management experience in the private sector, government, and in the fields of human services and education.

Prior to joining the District, she served as a Head Start Director and as a Federal Monitoring Reviewer Consultant with the Administration of Children & Families-Office of Head Start. She also served as the lead consultant for MS Hall & Associates, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in professional development training and technical assistance in the areas of Head Start/Early Head Start, Early Care & Education, Family Law, Board Development, Youth Development, Strategic Planning, and Grant Writing.

"I am so excited to be a part of this new venture for Aiken County Public School District and I am looking forward to the journey," stated Hall. "I know that Head Start prepares children and families for not only school success, but success in life. My parents raised me to believe that a person's current situation or zip code does not define who they are or who they are destined to become."

Ms. Hall is a product of the Head Start program herself, and feels that she has come full circle.

LaToya Wiley

DIRECTOR OF
SPECIAL PROGRAMS



LaToya Wiley was named Director of Special Programs in September after serving as the department's interim director during the 2019-20 school year. She's a graduate of Midland Valley High School, who went on to obtain an undergraduate degree in History from USC-Aiken, a master's degree in public administration from Troy University in Alabama, and a second master's degree in special education from Augusta University.

She began her career with the District in 2009 as a special education teacher. In 2015 she was named the District's first Human Resources Recruitment Coordinator. Wiley has also worked as a services coordinator with the Aiken County Board of Disabilities, taught Special Education and First Grade in Richmond County, served as an Adjunct Professor at USC-Aiken, and served as the Coordinator of Compliance for the Special Programs Department with Aiken County Public Schools.

As Director, Wiley is responsible for ensuring students with disabilities throughout the district are provided with appropriate educational services and supports. Through collaborating with district and community stakeholders, she directs the development, implementation, and evaluation of all programs related to the legal provision of special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act and accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

NEWS



Board Welcomes Dr. Patricia Hanks

Dr. Patricia Hanks was sworn in as the newest Aiken County Board of Education member during the November 17, 2020 regularly scheduled Board meeting, representing District 4 (Attendance Area 2 in North Augusta).

Dr. Hanks, a retired optometrist and U.S. Navy veteran, has called North Augusta home for the last 25 years. She and her husband have three children that attended Aiken County Public Schools, and is excited to be serving the students and families of Aiken County.

"I am thankful and humbled by the confidence and trust shown by the voters who supported me," Hanks said. "On their behalf, I will work hard to ensure the best interest of our children, teachers and Aiken County as a whole, are always a top priority. My sleeves are rolled up and I am more than ready to do the job!"



Board Member Dwight Smith Named Citizen of the Year

Congratulations to Aiken County Board of Education Interim Chairman **Dwight Smith** who was named the Midland Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in November! Mr. Smith spent 38 years serving the students of Aiken County in various roles, including teacher, head coach, athletic director, school bus driver, alternative school instructor, assistant principal, principal, and as a Board of Education member from 2010 – 2014, and again from 2019 to current, serving residents of District 6 (Attendance Area 3).

"I'm flattered and humbled," Smith said. "I have worked to get people nominated for this award, and I know to be placed in the path of that of those who came before me is a tremendous honor."



Live Streaming Begins for Board Meetings

As a way to be more transparent to the community and allow greater access to accurate information to stakeholders in real time, the Board Communications Committee decided to start live streaming all regularly scheduled Board of Education Meetings held at the District Office in July.

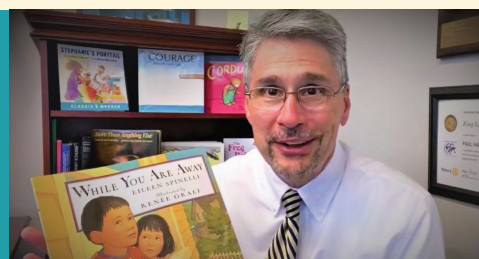
With important topics related to remote learning during the pandemic being discussed, and a limited number of seats available in the Board Room, making meetings available on the District's website and YouTube channel has allowed thousands of people to be in the know as the meeting is happening. To date, the District has nearly 73,000 views of Board Meetings! The Board Communications Committee is currently in the process of upgrading video equipment for enhanced capabilities and quality during live streamed Board meetings.



During the November 17, 2020 Aiken County Board of Education oath-taking ceremony, from left, are Aiken County Board of Education Members **Cameron Nuesse** (District 9/Attendance Area 1), **Sandra Shealey** (District 1/Attendance Area 4), and **Dr. John Bradley** (District 8/Attendance Area 1).



Superintendent Story Time



Superintendent King Laurence shares his love of reading every Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. on the District's Facebook page when he chooses a new book to read to students and their families. "Superintendents Story Time" started in the 2019-20 school year after students began learning remotely as a way to connect with Aiken County children during a time when in-person readings were not possible. Week after week the number of viewers increased as people watched on social media to see him reading aloud. His most recent series of videos has garnered nearly 8,000 views!

"Some of the most special times we can have are reading to others and having others read to us," Superintendent Laurence commented. "As a parent, a teacher, and as a principal, I have enjoyed reading books to children and adults and sharing the messages of those books. Story Time allows me to read to a new audience and again share the stories that I have loved all my life."

EMPLOYEE NEWS

Former North Augusta Middle School Teacher Sandy Zeller Named Franchise Teacher of Year by VirtualSC

Aiken County Public Schools is pleased to announce former North Augusta Middle School teacher **Sandy Zeller** as the VirtualSC Franchise Teacher of the Year.

For the last three years, the VirtualSC program has selected a Franchise Teacher of Year. The VirtualSC Franchise Teacher of the Year is a franchise teacher who has demonstrated excellence in online teaching. This is someone who has shown a passion for education and for virtual education, as demonstrated through his or her work with students.

"There are a lot of advantages to virtual learning and one of the things I love is that everyone is on a level playing field when they come in and there are no preconceived notions about who the students are so you treat everyone exactly the same," stated Zeller, who currently serves as a Media Specialist at Aiken High School.



Leavelle McCampbell Middle School Principal Dr. Tiffany Hall Named ASCD Emerging Leader

In September when the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, or ASCD, released the names of its newest cohort of national "Emerging Leaders" in education, Leavelle McCampbell Principal **Dr. Tiffany Hall** was honored and excited to find herself listed as one of the 21 elite educators.

"I love to be engaged and I love learning so this is a fantastic opportunity for me to continue to learn and grow as a leader and an education professional," stated Dr. Hall. "Through this program you have the opportunity to collaborate with talented educators from across the country and it's really exciting."

All emerging leaders are enrolled in the ASCD program for two years and are invited to participate in multiple opportunities, including attending the invitation-only Leader to Leader convening, writing for ASCD publications, and hosting the ASCD podcast.

For information on ASCD's Emerging Leaders program, visit www.ascd.org/emergingleaders.



Golden Apple Winners



Four Aiken County Public School educators were selected as 2020 recipients of the prestigious Golden Apple Award presented by WJBF News Channel 6, Augusta Flooring, Great Deals on Furniture, and Kroger! The award recognizes teaching excellence, and honors educators for going above and beyond to educate and motivate students.

Congratulations to teachers Natalie Walden of Aiken Elementary School, Susan McNeill of Belvedere Elementary School, Trina Terlizzi of Kennedy Middle School, and to Silver Bluff High School Lead Counselor, Elesha Ellison, who was named the first-ever counselor recipient of the Golden Apple Award! The educators were surprised in November when WJBF Anchor Brad Means and a camera crew stopped at each school to present them with gifts and awards while interviewing each educator.

USC Math Masters Educators Published in Education Journal



Congratulations to USC Math Masters Educators Tiffany Coleman, April Ray, and Andrea Rexroad for being published in the September 2020 edition of *The MathMate*, the official journal of the South Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics!

Coleman, a teacher at Jefferson Elementary School, submitted an article titled, "Field Notes: Creating an Interactive Mathematics Lab for Elementary Students" that details her experience and analysis on implementing an interactive mathematics lab classroom in an elementary school and the potential impact that such a classroom might have on students' mathematical understanding.

Ray, of Oakwood-Windsor Elementary School, details how teachers can create a classroom environment that helps students overcome math anxiety and build their confidence to help them excel in mathematics in the article titled, "Unlocking the Magic of Math".

Rexroad, who works at the District Office, provided an overview in her article "The Path from Elementary Patterns to High School Algebra and Some Tools for the Journey," that explains how Math standards connect across the grade levels, the Mathematical Process Standards to help dig deeper with questioning, and some steps and ideas to help meet teachers where they are and give them some extra tools.



Natalie Walden



Susan McNeill



Trina Terlizzi



Elesha Ellison



Tiffany Coleman



April Ray



Andrea Rexroad



2020-21 STARS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to the 2020-21 Stars of Public Education winners!

We appreciate the hard work and dedication of these five extraordinary people who give so much of themselves daily to ensure schools run smoothly and that students are safe. Aiken County Public Schools is proud of our Premier Performers!



1

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Misty McConnell

REDCLIFFE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
THIRD GRADE TEACHER

"I love Aiken County and I'm just so excited to have this opportunity. There are challenges every year, and especially now with everything going on with the pandemic, but you meet all the children and every year is a great experience. Being that constant for my students every day and understanding they need me just as much as I need them really gets me excited."

2

FIRST YEAR TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Carina McGee

AIKEN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER

"The students, by far, are the most important thing about teaching. I like to say that I teach humans first and English second, and as much as it's a fun statement, it really is true; my students are the reason I went into this profession in the first place, and they're the reason I keep pushing through the stress and enjoy going to work each day."

3

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Lindsey Hager

NORTH AUGUSTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

"I just have so much appreciation in my heart right now for our faculty and staff because even though I have an award, this is really an award for our entire school. I couldn't do my job without them. We all work together, we communicate well, and we are a family. When one of us wins, we all win. When one of us loses, we all lose."

4

PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Dr. Jason Holt

AIKEN HIGH SCHOOL

"To be considered for something like this from among our Aiken County principals is something that is very special to me. I am beyond humbled and really at a loss for words. To be considered in this capacity as a Principal of the Year from among the folks I work with and collaborate with every day just means the world to me."

5

GEM (GIVING EVEN MORE)

Nicci Cabaniss

MOSSY CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOOKKEEPER

"I love my job and enjoy helping others in many areas of our school. I like being able to help committees to give my input and plan things for our students and families to showcase Mossy Creek Elementary. I honestly did not realize these things are 'going above and beyond' - it's just my nature. My most favorite part of the day is being a welcoming smile to our students in the morning as they arrive on campus. Seeing all the smiles makes my heart happy!"

STUDENT NEWS



Levi, now 4,
currently attends
J.D. Lever
Elementary
School in the
4K program.

Baby's First Teacher Program Turns Four as Former Newborns Enter 4K Classrooms

Nicole Coker says much of the August day on which her son Levi Coker was born, a little over four years ago at Aiken Regional Medical Centers, remains a blur. One of the things she does remember is that she and her son were visited by representatives of Aiken County Public Schools who gave them a bag filled with a number of items including a small toy and a new book.

"It was a crazy day," Coker said. "I remember that little book and I know we still have it."

The individuals who had visited the Coker family were retired Aiken County educators and volunteers with the school district's new Baby's First Teacher Early Learning Initiative. The initiative was designed both to welcome new families to Aiken County Public Schools and impart upon new mothers their importance as their baby's first teacher.

The Early Learning Bag also contains information on the importance of reading to newborns and small children ahead of school, as well as resources for families to utilize in educating their children at home. These resources also help families to better understand and look for milestone moments in the growth of their babies.

The initiative represents a partnership between Aiken County Public Schools, Aiken Regional Medical Centers, Aiken County First Steps, The Aiken County Education Association (Retired), Public Education Partners, and the Cheer for Children Reading Library.

"It's something that's really nice for new mothers and their children," Coker added.

The Baby's First Teacher Early Learning Initiative has delivered over 3,500 Early Learning Bags to new mothers in Aiken County since 2016.



Midland Valley High School Student earns National 180 Award

Midland Valley High School Freshman Cody Shearer was one of only nine students nation-wide to be recognized by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as a recipient of the 14th Annual 180 Educator and Student Awards for Read 180! The award celebrates students who have overcome considerable challenges to succeed in school and the educators devoted to guiding students to success.

For the last six years Cody has been working on his literary skills in Read 180, which uses a blend of teacher-led instruction and adaptive technology to personalize instruction and accelerate growth, helping students overcome obstacles to become proficient readers. It was his determination and perseverance that led his teacher, Karen Fiery, to nominate him for the award. Knowing Cody's literary struggles in the first few years coupled with his personal struggles, Fiery said she was impressed with his desire to improve and encouraged by his growth in his confidence.

"Cody approached every day in Read 180 this year with enthusiasm. He was willing to put in the hard work and do what was necessary to increase his reading ability and stamina, and his gains were evidence of that," Fiery said. "His grit and determination are what it takes to truly improve and succeed, and his story is one that other Read 180 students should look to for motivation."

In addition to the national recognition, Cody received a Grand Prize of a \$500 Amazon Gift Card, and Midland Valley High School received a classroom library to inspire lifelong readers. Congratulations, Cody!



Lia's Little Library

Little Free Libraries have been popping up everywhere for the last 10 years, but Aiken County Public Schools' students are being touched by a very special library designed and built by North Augusta High School Junior Lia Murphy and her grandfather, as part of a five-year literacy service project that Lia initiated.

In August, Lia was crowned Teen Miss North Augusta and has made "Lia's Little Library" her platform. Lia stocks the Library, located at Summerfield Park in North Augusta, each week with gently used books she has collected from family, friends, and community members.

Lia, the daughter of Jennifer Murphy, a Hammond Hill Elementary Teacher, and John Murphy, North Augusta High School Principal, is also on a mission to get books into the hands of all 4-K students in the District to help instill the love of reading in each child.

"With both of my parents being educators, I know the importance of early literacy. I know that many children don't have books of their very own, and I wanted to put books in the hands of as many students as possible," Lia said. "It has been exciting to grow my literacy project each year, and to add Lia's Little Library to it. It makes my heart happy to know that I am bringing joy to others. I hope that they will love books as much as I do and will develop a life-long love of reading!"

To date, Lia has given more than 1,000 new books to not only 4-K students in Aiken County, but also 4-K students in Edgefield County and McCormick County as well! Thank you for sharing your love of literacy, Lia!



AIKEN WORKS
ENHANCING EDUCATION

Aiken Works co-hosts Morning Coffee Chat: Youth Apprenticeship 101

Aiken Works partnered with Apprenticeship Carolina to host its first-ever virtual workshop for students to celebrate National Apprenticeship Month in November. Students were able to join a Zoom meeting to learn about registered apprenticeship opportunities and resources available through Apprenticeship Carolina and Aiken Technical College. Youth apprenticeship opportunities offer high school juniors and seniors a chance to gain work experience, explore new career pathways, and learn about options other than postsecondary schooling. Aiken Works Lead Larry Millstead hopes to continue hosting Morning Coffee Chats. Local businesses interested in offering apprenticeships may contact him at LMillstead@acpsd.net for more information.

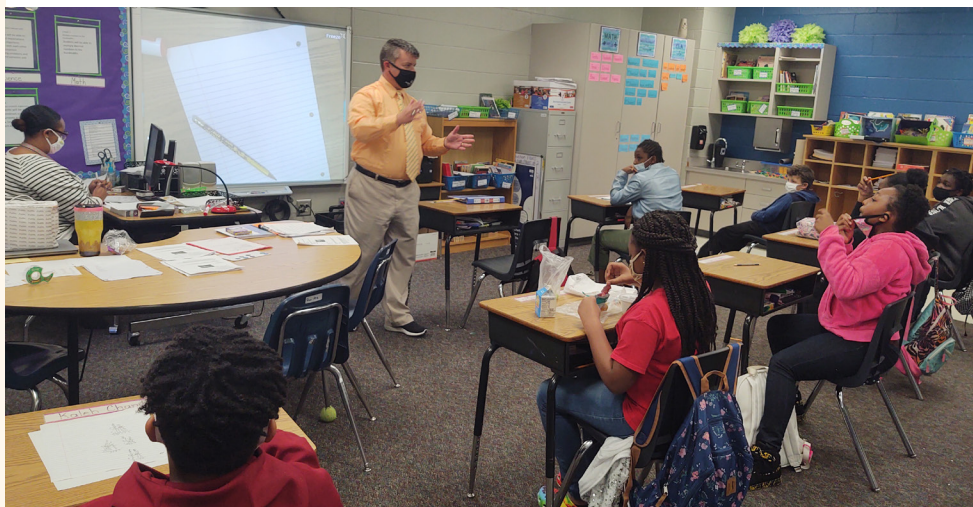
Aiken Works Hosts Career Awareness Workshops for Elementary Students

Fifth grade students at North Aiken Elementary School were among the first group in that grade level to participate in Career Awareness Workshops led by Larry Millstead, Aiken Works Lead, and Sondra Thomas, Military Community Liaison. Together they focused on life skills, social skills and how both relate to future career opportunities. Aiken Works, a Community Workforce Collaborative that has typically catered to high school students looking for internship and apprenticeship opportunities, has expanded its reach to middle and elementary school students in the last year.

Looking to increase Aiken Works programs at the elementary level, Millstead and Thomas created the nine-week workshop program, which allows them to travel to different fifth-grade classrooms weekly to discuss the importance of life skills such as following rules, clear communication, the value of teamwork and the importance of setting goals. They bring career awareness to the classroom, helping to prepare students for the transition to middle school.

"It has been a pleasure to work with fifth-grade students," commented Millstead. "They have been so engaged, asking great questions. It's inspiring to see students at this age imagining future career possibilities and working on those soft skills that are needed in the work force."

The program has been implemented at Cyril B. Busbee, Clearwater, Greendale, Jefferson, North Aiken, Oakwood-Windsor, and Ridge Spring-Monetta elementary schools, and will expand to other elementary schools in the District in the future.



ATHLETIC NEWS



North Augusta High School Football Claims Region 5-AAAA Title

Congratulations to North Augusta High School on capturing the District's lone region championship this season behind an unbeaten 4-0 to claim Region 5-AAAA in head coach Jim Bob Bryant's first season. (Photo by Artie Walker Jr./ Special thanks to The Aiken Standard).



South Aiken High School Varsity Girls' Soccer Coach Earns Coach of Significance Award

South Aiken High School Varsity Girls' Soccer Coach Dave Mihoulides was recognized by the United Soccer Coaches as a 2020 High School Coach of Significance Award winner! The award recognizes one member in each state that coaches for character and uses the soccer field to teach life lessons at the high school level.

Coach Mihoulides has been teaching in Aiken County for 26 years and coaching soccer at South Aiken High School for 15 years at both the JV and Varsity levels. Congratulations on earning this prestigious award, Coach Mihoulides!

High School Football Returns to Aiken County Public Schools

Facing the very real possibility of the 2020 high school football season being cancelled, many coaches and student-athletes prepared for the season during specially designed team workouts with excitement, but cautious anticipation. Fortunately, the season did begin, and our teams were able to take the field of competition despite a number of games needing to be cancelled in the interests of health and safety following positive cases and subsequent student quarantines. Congratulations to all players and coaches for persevering and playing through tremendous adversity this season!



North Augusta Lady Jackets Capture Region 5-AAAA Golf Championship

Congratulations to the North Augusta High School Lady Jackets Golf Team on capturing the Region 5-AAAA Golf Tournament with a team score of 411 and advancing to the Lower State tournament this season. Lady Jacket members of the All-Region Team include Bella Waters, Cassady Fortson, and Liv Johnson. North Augusta High School Girls' Golf Coach Leslie Johnson was also named as Region Coach of the Year. Great job Lady Jackets!

District Schools Claim Region Championships in Volleyball, Cross-Country

The Aiken High School Lady Hornets Volleyball Team has consistently been one of the top teams in the area and the state, and the 2020 season was no different. The Lady Hornets, led by head coach Jeremy Rinder, won the Region 5-AAAA title and advanced to the Lower State Championship in finishing with a 24-4 overall record. The Lady Hornets were not the only Aiken County team that claimed region titles during the fall sports season. The North Augusta High School Yellow Jackets won the Region 5-AAAA title in football, and the Lady Bulldogs of Silver Bluff High School captured the Region 5-AA title, while the Wagener-Salley High School Lady War Eagles took home the Region 3-A title for the fourth consecutive year. Other region championships were won by the Aiken High School Boy's Cross-Country Team led by Region 5-AAAA Coach of the Year Roger Carpenter, and All-Region selections Jason Embrose, Peter Caldwell, and Anthony Defillips, and the South Aiken High School Girls' Cross-Country Team that won the Region 5-AAAA crown. Aiken High's Victoria Colon-LaBorde was the individual Region 5-AAAA girls' champion, and qualified for the state meet alongside South Aiken's Lexi Taylor. Finally, the South Aiken High School's captured the boys' and girls' Region 5-AAAA swimming championships. Congratulations to these teams, players, and coaches! (Photo by Kyle Dawson/The Aiken Standard).

A special thank you to The Aiken Standard Sports Department for allowing us to use photos from various sports events for the Athletics page!



◀ **Aiken High School Golf Standout Kaylee McElwain, South Aiken High School Standout Lindsey Greene Reach Class AAAA State Golf Tournament; Green Named All-State**

Congratulations to Aiken High school's Kaylee McElwain and South Aiken High School's Lindsey Greene on advancing to compete in the Class AAAA State Golf Championships! Additionally, Lindsey was the Region 5-AAAA medalist and was named as an All-State golfer after finishing seventh overall in the state tournament.

South Aiken High School Swimmer Kaitlyn Golyski Wins Individual State Titles

Congratulations to Kaitlyn Golyski of South Aiken High School on bringing home two individuals state title medals from the state swimming finals in the 200-yard Freestyle and the 100-yard Freestyle. Great job Kaitlyn!



◀ **Wagener-Salley Standout Gracie Starnes Named Region 3-A Player of the Year**

Congratulations to Wagener-Salley High School Volleyball standout Gracie Starnes upon earning All-Region accolades and being named as the Region 3-A Player of the Year. Gracie was also recognized as an All-State player for the Lady War Eagles. Congratulations Gracie!



District Launches Online Ticket Sales for Athletics

Admission to sporting events went digital for the first time in September, thanks to a partnership with GoFan, to offer spectators contactless ticket sales.

"The health and safety of our students, staff members, and patrons during athletic events is always our top priority and our new contactless ticketing service through GoFan will help ensure a terrific experience without the risk associated with a cash transaction," said Dr. Corey Murphy, Chief Officer of Operations and Student Services.

Fans can now order sports tickets online, and easily access and share tickets through email or text, limiting person-to-person contact and the need for a physical exchange of cash. GoFan ticket sales also account for limited seating in all venues to ensure social distancing guidelines can be followed.

SIGNINGS

Four Thoroughbreds Sign With College Programs

Congratulations to South Aiken's Peyton Boozer (USC Aiken baseball), Hallie Miller (Columbia International softball), Hailey Roth (Wofford soccer) and Hannah Gunsallus (Lees-McRae swimming) for recently signing collegiate scholarship offers. Way to go Thoroughbreds!

Midland Valley Softball Standout Signs with Converse College

Congratulations to Midland Valley High School softball standout Maggie Griffis on signing a collegiate scholarship offer recently with Converse College.

Aiken High School Boys' Basketball Star RJ Felton Signs with East Carolina; Baseball Standout Reagan Fairchild Signs with Charleston Southern

Congratulations to Aiken High School's RJ Felton, the Region 5-AAAA Boys' Basketball Player of the Year, and Reagan Fairchild on recently signing collegiate scholarship offers with the East Carolina University Pirates and Charleston Southern University Buccaneers, respectively!



IN MEMORY

Aiken County Public Schools has been deeply saddened by the losses of **Edward McKenzie, Jr.**, a fifth-grade student at North Aiken Elementary School, former South Aiken High School student **Morgan Douthitt**, and Coach **Dana Chipley**, a teacher at Langley-Bath-Clearwater Middle School and Softball Coach at Midland Valley High School, who all passed away unexpectedly this year.



Edward McKenzie, Jr.

The North Aiken Elementary School staff held a tree dedication ceremony in honor of Edward McKenzie, Jr. The Aiken Council of Neighborhoods and Crosland Park Neighborhood Association assisted his family in planting a Rising Sun Redbud tree at the school in Edward's memory, marked by a plaque to remind the community of the bright spirit he was.

Edward's sister who is also a North Aiken Elementary School student was given a watering can so she can care for the tree, and feel connected to her brother.



Morgan Douthitt

Friends of Morgan Douthitt created a memorial for her, including a sign, illuminated with a single strand of white lights, that contained messages of love in Morgan's memory, alongside a large white cross with "Long Live Morgan" written on it.

Morgan attended South Aiken High School during her Freshman, Sophomore and Junior years, and was known for her beautiful smile.



Dana Chipley

Affectionately known as "Coach Chip" in the Midland Valley Community, Mrs. Chipley was a beloved teacher and coach who constantly gave to her students and student athletes to ensure the next generation was well equipped.

Her commitment to the community went far beyond the classroom as she was an amazing educator, an excellent coach, and an even better person. To celebrate her life, the Midland Valley High School Lady Mustangs Softball team, along with students, teachers and community members hosted a balloon release on the softball field, releasing hundreds of orange and blue balloons in remembrance of Coach Chip.

★ NOVEMBER: THE MONTH OF THE ★ MILITARY FAMILY

Aiken County Public Schools is proud to celebrate the Month of the Military Family each November. Due to Covid-19 we were unable to host traditional Veterans Day programs in our schools. In an effort to honor our Veterans and teach our students about the importance of the day, we created the 2020 ACPSD "Purple Star" Virtual Veterans Day Program which was shown to students in individual classrooms, and posted to our YouTube channel for AIKEN INNOVATE students to access as well.

The program contained a special message from Dr. Corey Murphy, Chief Officer of Operations & Student Services, and a 20-year veteran who currently serves in the Army Reserve.

"The video presentation and the hard work that the JROTC Cadets have done celebrates those men and woman who have served and are still here to receive your thanks," Dr. Murphy said. "Currently, we have 1.3 million service members on active duty, and an estimated 20.3 million veterans who have completed their service. These people provide us with the great freedoms that we enjoy as American, which is why Veterans Day observances like this one are truly important and greatly needed."

Thank you to Aiken High School NJROTC, Midland Valley High School NJROTC, North Augusta High School NJROTC, Silver Bluff High School NJROTC, South Aiken High School NJROTC, and Wagener-Salley High School JROTC student Cadets for participating to help make this year's Virtual Veterans Day Program a success!



We appreciate the dedication and sacrifice of our Military families, and want to thank our ACPSD Veterans for their service to both our Country and our Schools, including:

U.S. Army

Kevin Bellinger • Meg Borgemann • Delores Brown • Richard Brown • Bernard Burgess • Allen Burnham (Army National Guard) • Sandra Cash • George Curtis • Bobby Dorland • Carlton Edward Doss • Lalisa Folk (Army National Guard) • CSM (RET) Michael Fowler • Kenneth Freeman • Dr. Phyllis Gamble • Heather Gonyea- Evans • Richard Hall • Davis Harris • James Hooper • James Ingram • Mia Jackson • Gloria James • Dr. Edward Johnson • Bobby Jean Jones • COL (RET) Maxie L. Joye • James Kelly • Dr. Edwin Laughner • Joseph Lawson • Joshua Peter Letko • Jerry Lindner (Army Reserve) • Kenneth Lott (Army National Guard) • Kevin Madison (Army National Guard) • Bridget Mcilwain (Army National Guard) • Gloria Mendoza • Larry Millstead (S.C. Army National Guard) • Marla J. Mura • Dr. Corey Murphy (S.C. Army National Guard & Army Reserve) • Jamie Negron-Cruz • Joey Nunley • Shaquana O'Neal (Army Reserve) • Briante Perkins • Bert Postell • Hope Robinson • Roseliz Santiago-Libran • Earnest Saylor • Dennis Simpkins • Jessie Smith Dudley • Aaron Stewart • Africa Thomas • Katherine Thompson (Army National Guard) • Harold Vaughn • Quentin Wright

U.S. Navy

Richard Barnes • Robert Bartley • Ken Beck • Gene Bush • Wanda Bush • Witney Chipman • Erika Carlton • Tyrone Deloach • Brian Goldschmidt • Michelle Holtsizer • James Howard • Timothy Marinelli • James Moore, Christine Myers • Joseph Palladini • Pedra Rodriguez • Lee Self • Lynniece Smith-Francis • George Weber • Gary Wheeler • Michael Wohlwend

U.S. Marine Corps.

Frank Carson • Claude Davis • Matt Franklin • Harry Johnson • Rasheem Neloms • Rebecca Rivera • Stephen Thompson

U.S. Air Force

Dave Cavazos • Cody Clark • Denise Ann Hutcheson • Dr. Corey Murphy (SC Air National Guard) • Aneshia Peterson • Mark Rich • Geoclyn R. Williams (Georgia Air National Guard)

Names and branches were provided by ACPSD employees. We apologize if any Veterans were inadvertently left off the list. If you are a Veteran but your name does not appear, please email your name and branch to Sondra Thomas at SThomas@acpsd.net to update our records.

AIKEN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1000 Brookhaven Drive

Aiken, South Carolina 29803



Premier Learning Spaces Coming Soon to Aiken County Public Schools

Thanks to outstanding community support with a Penny Sales Tax in 2014 and Bond Referendum in 2018, construction of Premier Learning Spaces is well underway! Trusting your tax dollars to Aiken County Public Schools has allowed for tremendous improvements at school campuses throughout the District, including **1** Belvedere Elementary School, **2** Millbrook Elementary School, **3** Ridge Spring-Monetta Elementary School, **4** Midland Valley High School, and **5** North Augusta High School. Thank you for your continued support!

