



ALLIANCE CITY SCHOOLS

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Get to Know ACS Superintendent, Rob Gress!



Superintendent Rob Gress answered 10 questions to help the community and Aviator families get to know him a little bit more. Take a look at what he had to say!

Q: What has been the most challenging part of this year so far?

A: COVID-19! Ensuring all students and staff are safe and that we have the physical and human resources we need has certainly been challenging. But we know that it's been equally challenging for students and families. We are learning and growing each day, however, and will adjust and adapt in order to continue making positive differences in the lives of our students.

Q: What has been the most exciting part of becoming a superintendent?

A: The opportunity to work with ACS staff and others in the community to make the City of Alliance a great place to live, work, and go to school.

Q: What made you choose to pursue a career in education?

A: I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. To help students prepare themselves for a positive future.

Q: What are some of your favorite hobbies?

A:

- Riding my bike
- Traveling - especially to the beaches and national parks
- Reading crime and mystery novels
- Listening to music

Q: What's your favorite thing about the Alliance community?

A: The people here are always willing to do whatever needs to be done to make the community a better place. If there is ever anything we need, there are always people to go to for assistance. Alliance is a uniquely supportive and caring community.

Q: What are some of your goals for the district?

A: Some of my goals include:

- For our community to be proud of our schools, our staff, and our students.
- For our students to like learning here and attending school every day. And for staff to truly enjoy working here.
- It's also always my goal that each student graduate from ACS prepared for life, college or their future career.
- Lastly, I want to encourage all students to follow the aviator profile and be contributing and caring citizens who carry the values we have as Aviators with them wherever they may go in life.

Q: What are you most proud of about the district?

A: I am proud of how much the staff truly cares for each and every student. They go above and beyond each and every day!

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: My family consists of my wife Anne, who is a great physical therapist, and our two sons- Tommy, a 2020 ACS grad and freshman at Duke, and Sammy, a freshman at AHS. They are all tremendously proud that I am the superintendent here in the community we live, and I am proud to say they love and care about Alliance just as much as I do.

Q: How have your previous positions prepared you?

A: My previous 15 years as an administrator at Alliance City Schools has helped me to learn what our district needs to do in order to help the students and our community. My time as a teacher has helped me better relate to what our staff goes through every day and working in three other school districts has exposed me to different experiences and ways of doing things that I am able to draw on to help in my role as superintendent.

Q: How would you describe your leadership style?

A:

- I truly believe you win with people -- having a caring and dedicated staff will have more of an impact than any curriculum or process that may be in place. We are in the people business and it's those people that will help to drive us forward and be successful.
- I believe you need to love and respect people, but you also need to push them to reach their full potential.
- Having a culture free of blaming, complaining and defending is very important. We all need to own our work and strive to be better each day.

ESports Team Advanced to State Finals

The Alliance High School Esports team has had a successful season. The team has only been around for two years and already the students on the Fortnite team have gone to the state finals to compete for the championship. They finished second in the state.

The team is composed of Captain Maddix Bryant, Matthew Scott, Ian Scott, Cassidy Mauck, Chandler Klutz and Kiara Bryant and coached by David Hammers.

“Unfortunately, Alliance lost in the semifinals to Barberton, which was the only team that managed to beat us in the regular season,” Coach Hammers stated. “They did fantastic, and I can’t wait to see what they do in the spring.”

Only being in their second year as a team, they have done phenomenally and shown that they are in it to win.

The Esports team was created during the 2019-20 school year. It offered students who may not have been interested in athletics and other organizations the chance to take part in a team activity. The Esports team is part of a state-wide league. They take part in competitions for Fortnite, Rocket League, Super Smash Brothers and League of Legends.

The team takes part in a fall and a spring season with different competitions taking place each season. The students have the ability to play on varsity and JV teams for each game that is played.

Similar to athletic programs, the students practice after school as a team in order to strategize and prepare for their competitions. This program has become very popular and offers students interested in video games a chance to take part in a rapidly growing extracurricular activity.

The spring season will start soon, and ACS wishes all students on the Esports team the best of luck!



ACS Updates Communication Efforts

This year has relied heavily on consistent and constant communication with Aviator families. One of the ways ACS has been handling this is by using a new app called ParentSquare. This app allows ACS to communicate efficiently on an easy-to-use platform tailored to each family.

Parents and guardians have the ability to see posts as soon as the teacher, principal or district sends them and get instant notifications through email, text message and push notifications through the app. Parents, teachers and principals have the ability to stay in constant contact with one another by way of direct messages using the ParentSquare app.

“As part of the Alliance City Schools four-year strategic plan, we had a goal to improve communication between the district and our families,” said Chad Morris, technology supervisor. “We had different staff using different forms of communication which became difficult for families to manage. ParentSquare

has become the hub for all communication. ParentSquare has allowed us to make communication simple and easy for both families and staff through an app that can be downloaded on iOS and Android devices. It allows users to pick their communication type of either email, text, or push notification. This allows the end user to choose how they receive the information from their child’s schools.”

All parents are encouraged to download the ParentSquare app for all ACS communications. If you have trouble downloading the app, contact your child’s home building for more information.

Another way the district has strengthened its efforts in communications is by launching an updated website. The updates make it easier for parents and students to find the information they are looking for. Check out the website updates at www.alliancecityschools.org.

ACS Implements R Factor/R Culture for 2021

Alliance City Schools will be implementing the R Factor/R Culture initiative to kick off the start of the 2021 year.

The R Factor is the key to producing outcomes based on the responses to different events or circumstances. The equation for success using the R Factor is $E+R=O$, or an event, plus a response, equals the outcome. This equation is crucial in making sure that the district leads 2021 with an R Culture, a culture that follows the suit of this concept.

Decisions made about how to respond to an event or circumstance have a direct correlation on the outcome. Responses to different events are not always

easy ones to control, as many events prompt a default-driven response, which is built on impulsive, resistant and on-autopilot reactions. However, there is also the option of a discipline-driven response, which is built on intentional and skillful reactions.

The daily application of R Factor response techniques will determine the quality of outcomes that we see in the district moving forward into the new year. There will be more information regarding R Factor and R Culture in the coming weeks as we begin to prepare for the next steps in district success.

GET ADDED TO THE ALLIANCE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT MAILING LIST!

We will be changing our delivery method for the Alliance City School District newsletter beginning with the next issue. If you would like to receive a printed copy of the newsletter mailed directly to your front door, please fill out the form below with your information and drop it off at the Glamorgan Castle (200 Glamorgan St., Alliance, OH).

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



If you would like to be added to our email list to have the newsletter sent to your inbox, please fill out the form: <https://forms.gle/UNrQYjZmsy7B5wQ29>

AELS Welcomed First Grade Students

This year was a bit of a change for first graders at Alliance City Schools. Instead of moving to a different building, all first graders remained at Alliance Early Learning School this year. The district restructured the buildings to allow AELS to house preschool through first grade students.

“One of the great benefits of having our first-grade students here at AELS, is that we potentially get to have our students here for four years, just like the high school,” said Principal Cory Muller. “If they start with us and have two years of preschool and then move on to kindergarten and first grade, we have the opportunity to drive their early success with all of the foundational skills that they build here. The foundational years are some of the most important, as we establish a love for learning, teach our young children how to read, and start to help students build number sense for their mathematical futures. There is also a better connection between kindergarten and first grade teaching staff, being we are all housed in the same building.”

The addition of the first graders at AELS posed a unique challenge with having three separate buildings come together as one. First grade staff from the former Rockhill Elementary, now Alliance Elementary School, and the former Parkway Elementary, now the Parkway Learning and Development Center, joined together with the preschool and kindergarten staff already at

AELS. All staff members worked hand-in-hand to make this transition happen as smoothly as possible for the students and their families.

AELS is home to experienced teachers who are extremely effective, caring and highly trained and educated in early childhood education. The students’ formative years will be guided and shaped by the dedicated staff at AELS.

“As a parent myself, I find it beneficial to have our students stay here for first grade as well, being that children’s relationships with their peers that start in pre-k can continue into kindergarten and first grade,” Muller said. “Whereas, in the past, some of these students who were close friends with one another might have had to attend a different school, based upon where they lived. It’s a great feeling to

know that the friendships our students build continue into first grade and beyond, as all second-grade students are in the same building at AES. Housing all students in a grade level in one building is what is best for kids.”

The first graders are doing great at AELS and will be off to AES at the end of this year ready for all that second grade has to offer them.

ACS Takes Part in NNPS Grant

Alliance City Schools is proud to announce that it recently received a grant to take part in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). NNPS is an organization created to foster the involvement of the community and parents in all aspects of a student’s educational journey.

This year, the Alliance Intermediate School and the Alliance Middle School are taking part in this grant. Both schools have already created their action teams that will be leading the charge for parent and community involvement in their buildings. The teams consist of parents, teachers and principals who are working closely together to create events and activities that encourage family engagement.

“Both AIS and AMS are doing a very good job fostering their programs of family and community engagement,” said Michelle Balderson, a district lead for the grant. “These partnerships help to foster and support student learning and development both academically and behaviorally.”

The action teams took part in a day-long training where they learned about the history, ideals and practices of the NNPS grant. During this training, the teams created a one-year plan for their respective buildings.

A common theme both schools will be emphasizing is the R-Factor, a dominant part of Alliance City School’s culture. It is important for all parents to be engaged and to fully understand the culture their children are being taught while in schools. The R-Factor encourages students to take responsibility for their own actions and to contribute to the district’s positive culture of no blaming, no complaining and no defending.

In order to assist with educating families about the R-Factor, AIS and AMS will be adding a resource wall with material relating to the R-Factor for parents to take and learn from.

The district hopes to continue the work at the other schools in the district in the future.



ACS Now Offers Online Registration for New Students

For the first time, Alliance City Schools will be offering online registration for all new students, including preschool and kindergarten students.

The online registration along with additional information related to registering a child in the district is now available at www.alliancecityschools.org/page/register-your-child. For assistance with registering a child or if you have any questions, please contact Ronda Pittman, the district registrar, at 330-821-2106.

Preschool and kindergarten registration will begin Monday, Feb. 22 with parents being able to register their children online for Alliance Early Learning School.

AELS offers two years of preschool at an affordable price for any Alliance family looking to get a head-start on their child’s education.

“Some families may not know that our preschool program is paid on a sliding scale based on income, so it may be more affordable than some believe,” said Cory Muller, the AELS principal. “Students identified as having a disability attend AELS at no cost to the family and we provide so many wonderful services for all of our preschool students. We are a five-star preschool center, and we would love to educate all of our little aviators in this district.”

The staff at AELS is top notch. All preschool and kindergarten teachers are highly qualified and prepared to provide the district’s youngest Aviators with the desire to learn and grow throughout school.

COVID-19 REMINDER:

As we begin to wrap up 2020 and step into the new year, we would like to remind everyone to please continue following the COVID-19 guidelines:

By following these guidelines, it will help keep students, staff and community members safe, as well as keep students in our school buildings for in-person learning.

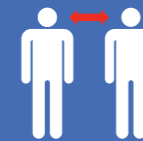
Thank you for doing your part!



Wash your hands



Wear your mask



Practice 6 ft. social distancing



Stay home as much as possible

ACS has Taken COVID-19 in Stride

There is no denying this past year has been a difficult one. However, in true Aviator fashion, ACS students, staff and families have worked together to make this year a great one.

The dedication of each individual has been astounding. Students and staff are abiding by all recommended guidelines, including masks and social distancing. They have been creative and flexi-

ble with their approach to education and learning. Teachers have improved their skills with instructing remotely and are often finding themselves working with in-person, remote and fully digital students simultaneously. Platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom have become an integral part of the education system at ACS during this time.

Even with some students

taking part in remote or digital learning, ACS staff members, such as counselors, mental health professionals and occupational therapists have continued to provide support when needed. The Aviator team is full of caring and compassionate individuals who want to see all students succeed, even through a global pandemic.

In order to allow ACS students and staff to remain in

school, we are emphasizing the need for all Aviators to practice social distancing, to stay at home whenever possible and to continue to wear masks. By doing this, you can help ensure that all students continue to learn in a safe school environment.

This year has been anything but normal, but it is certainly a year to remember for all the successes and triumphs ACS has seen.

Reconnecting with Retirees: Frank Mancini

Superintendent Rob Gress has started a new series called Reconnecting with Retirees. The series, which will be posted to the Alliance City School's facebook page and twitter account, is a way for Aviator alumni and community members to learn about what some of their favorite former Aviators have been up to since they were last in the buildings.

First up, Superintendent Gress interviewed Frank Mancini, a former history teacher and wrestling coach at Alliance High School. Since retiring, Mancini has continued to coach wrestling at Boardman, pick up an interest in landscaping and work out whenever he can.

"My goal is to outwork the young kids," Mancini said.

There are many classes he taught that he remembers fondly, but the one that sticks with him the most are the Western Civilization courses that he taught. He was able to help build and design those classes as dual credit, allowing a number of students to receive college credit from the University of



Mount Union before they had even graduated high school.

The one thing Mancini misses the most about teaching at AHS are the relationships he had with the students, teachers and other staff members in the building. He encourages all staff currently at ACS to take part in everything going on at the schools.

"Be present in the moment, make the most of every day," he said.

Check out the ACS social media accounts or the ACS website, <https://www.alliancecityschools.org/page/reconnecting-with-retirees>, for the full interviews as they are released.

Alliance Career Center Enrolling now for Fall 2021!

Cosmetology

Welding

Practical Nursing

Medical Insurance Specialist/Medical Biller

Medical Assisting

(pending program approval)

Enrolling Now Medical Insurance Specialist/ Medical Biller!

Class to start in March 2021.



Enrolling Now STNA!

Class to start in January 2021 with additional classes throughout the year.



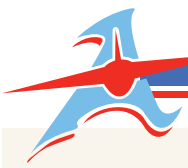
Questions?

For questions, call 330-829-2267 or email accrtw@alliancecityschools.org.

Apply on our website: www.accrtw.org

Alliance Career Center (ACC) is an equal education and employment institution. ACC admits students of any race, color, national

or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, and disability to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at ACC. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, disability or any other characteristic provided by state or federal law in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school administrative programs.



Staff Spotlight

Ms. Curfman

Ms. Curfman has worked for Alliance City Schools since 2006 in a variety of different roles. Most recently, she is the administrative assistant/student records representative for the Alliance Career Center.

Beth Starrett, director of career tech programs at ACS, had this to say about Ms. Curfman:

“She is the friendly voice on the phone and face at the door who greets everyone who enters the Alliance Career Center. Rechelle deserves the spotlight because she goes above and beyond to make our career center function. She helps inform potential students of classes and how to register, she coordinates WorkKeys testing, and helps our instructors in any way she can. She is a total team player who always acts with the best interest of the students and the career center in mind. We love having Rechelle as an integral part of our team!”

ACC is lucky to have a team member like Ms. Curfman!



**Rechelle
Curfman**

Team Spotlight

Elementary Digital Teachers

The Elementary Digital Teachers have gone above and beyond during this time. With a number of students taking part in digital learning at the elementary level, this team of teachers has had to learn how to guide their students through the Acellus curriculum and offer help without being able to interact face-to-face each day.

Michelle Balderson, Director of Elementary Education, had this to say about the team of teachers:

“Our online teachers understand that effective communication and support are key components of online learner success. They make themselves accessible in a variety of ways including e-mail, video conferencing or online chats, phone calls, and even home visits—to make sure students are receiving the full learning experience. They provide timely feedback regarding academic work and engage with students individually and as a group. The teachers encourage student success by offering verbal accolades during their Zoom meetings as well as mailings with surprises in acknowledgement of their progress! These teachers recognize the need for not only academic support but also emotional support during these ‘abnormal’ times.”

The Elementary Digital Teachers:

AELS - Becky Clark, Crystal Gibbons and Gretchen Cox

AES - Diana Fails, Stephanie Smith and Emily Allmon

AIS - Daria D’Eramo, Jennifer Clunk, Max Middleton, Geoff Jurica, Latoya Gispert and Diane Witham

Teacher Spotlight

Chris Yoder and Emily Davis

Chris Yoder has worked as an intervention specialist in the district for five years. She is a dedicated and caring teacher at AMS who moves her students with their families to be their best selves. She is dedicated to her students’ growth to becoming independent individuals in their chosen careers and future endeavors and sets high but manageable expectations for her students. Her goal is for all her students to reach for the stars.

ACS is happy to have Mrs. Yoder as such a valued member of the Aviator team!

Emily Davis is in her 19th year as a teacher at ACS. Each and every day, she works hard to create engaging and differentiated lessons for all of her students. A large part of what she does in the classroom is focusing on building strong and lasting relationships with each of her students, and in response to this, students have selected her as their honored educator several times over the years.

Each year, Mrs. Davis takes the time to write every graduating senior a personal letter wishing them well with their future endeavors. ACS is honored to have Mrs. Davis as a part of the AMS team!



**Chris
Yoder**



**Emily
Davis**