



ALLIANCE CITY SCHOOLS

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In This Issue

- 02 | Q&A with Treasurer Kirk Heat
- 03 | The Defining Culture and Guiding Philosophy of Alliance City School
- 04 | Top Gun Returns
Join the Aviator Sports Boosters!
- 05 | 2023-24 ACS Preschool, Kindergarten Registration
- 06 | ACS Stays Ahead of the Curve with Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Training
Upcoming Events
- 07 | ACS Recognizes 2023 Pathfinder
- 08 | Staff Hobbies
- 09 | North Lincoln to be Demolished
- 10 | Staff SPOTLIGHTS
- 11 | Alliance City Schools Relocates Alternative Education, Preschool Programs
Royal Aviation Brings Record Number of Choirs

Superintendent's Message

At ACS we are steadfast in our vision of preparing kids for life, college, and careers. When our students graduate, they must be prepared to build a fulfilling life. If they choose to do that through college or a career, then they must be prepared for either path. In short, we have to deliver a strong academic program to our students. But we also know that we have to partner with parents to meet our students' social and emotional needs. Most kids spend more time at school than at home, so we work hard to demonstrate that we value, respect, and understand them.



In this newsletter, you'll see and read about students and staff who are demonstrating that through high performance, through leadership, and through being a caring citizen, we are indeed focused on this vision and we are indeed Aviator Strong!

Rob Gress,
Superintendent of Schools



Stark Help Central

A new resource was recently rolled out for all of Stark County. StarkHelpCentral.com is a one stop website for many resources including homeless services, food, car repairs, clothing, mental health, LGBTQ+, medical care and crisis numbers.

We encourage all families to take advantage of this resource as needed!





Q&A with Treasurer Kirk Heath

1. Can you provide an overview of the school's financial status?

Alliance City School's financial status remains heavily dependent upon state and federal funds. We are coming up on a new biennium budget in July of 2023, this biennium budget and our federal fund allocations will determine nearly 80% of our revenue. Support for public education needs to be a priority of our legislatures.

2. Can you discuss any steps the school is taking to be financially stable in the long term?

Alliance City Schools has worked to build a general fund balance that will allow the district to adjust expenditures through attrition, which is the most cost effective way to maintain a balanced budget. The District has prided itself in operating within the funds given from the State of Ohio, the Federal Government and local real estate taxes. We would like to thank our voters for the passing of our Permanent Improvement Levy to help maintain our buildings and facilities.

3. How does the school ensure responsible use of funds?

We ensure responsible use of funds by having strict processes that follow Board policy, Ohio Revised Code and Federal rules and regulations with checks and balances along the way. Annual audits are performed by the Ohio State Auditor's office as well as reviews by the Ohio Department of Education to ensure these processes are working correctly.

4. How does the school prioritize where the funds are being used?

Funds are prioritized through a budgeting process that ensures resources are allotted for the goals of our strategic plan. Our budget is determined by the State of Ohio, the Federal Government and local real estate taxes collected. We have numerous federal and state funds that do not allow us to prioritize the funds because they have specific requirements we must abide by. We also prioritize use of our funds by following replacement schedules for curriculum adoptions, technology, buses and so on to ensure our students are receiving a high quality education with modern technology in a safe manner.

5. Additional information the community and families should know?

Alliance City Schools has been recognized for the past seven times, including this year, with the Auditor of State Award, which is given to schools who receive a clean audit.



The District has prided itself in operating within the funds given from the State of Ohio, the Federal Government and local real estate taxes.



– Kirk Heath, Treasurer





The Defining Culture and Guiding Philosophy of Alliance City School

Over the last seven years, Alliance City Schools has worked to establish a defining culture and an overarching guiding philosophy for the district and its leadership.

We believe that Culture encompasses what we believe, how we behave and the experience our behavior creates for others. Our actions provide the standards for how we behave toward others. Culture not only shapes our behavior but has the potential to align everyone in the district around a common set of values and behaviors.

Our Values, Behaviors and Outcome (VBO) chart was created as the official blueprint for the culture of Alliance City Schools. It clarifies the specific behaviors ACS wants and the results we expect to get when these behaviors are present. The behaviors outlined in the VBO chart are essential to how we engage in the classroom and operate in our schools.

With our culture defined, the district worked to train staff in R Factor, which is a culture, behavior and decision-making framework.


The R Factor focuses on an equation - $E + R = O$ (Event + Response = Outcome). The idea is that by being prepared to respond to an event in a disciplined, intentional manner, we can produce desirable, positive outcomes.

Using the R Factor has strengthened district culture in many ways. Specifically it provides common steps to make sure our responses are "above the line", meaning they are intentional and skillful, and it encourages us to adopt a philosophy of "No BCDing," meaning no blaming, no complaining and no defending. The R Factor also promotes the idea that every person in the district has a specific "sphere of influence," a metaphorical "20 Square Feet" within which they have control. How

each of us reacts and behaves within our "20 Square Feet" affects the success of our school district as a whole.

"I have no doubt that the R Factor works," said Superintendent Rob Gress. "It helps develop in our students the soft skills that employers desperately need. As staff members, we are committed to modeling the behavioral skills we want students to have. We 'press pause' and 'get our mind right' before we respond to difficult events, for example. Likewise, we avoid blaming, complaining and defending ourselves about events that occur. As we adults do better and better with these things, we are showing our students how to 'step up' and 'make a difference' in our own lives and those of others. We'll continue to refine our R Factor practices into the future to ensure all of our students will graduate prepared for life, college and their future careers."

VBO Chart




Value

Behavior

Outcome

High Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teach and learn at high levels » Collaborate and communicate » Focus on continuous learning 	<p>All students will graduate prepared for life, college, and careers</p>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Engage in the learning process » Model the Aviator Profile and make a difference » Serve others with integrity and excellence 	
Caring Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Treat all people with dignity and respect » Value our differences » Press pause and seek first to understand 	





Top Gun Returns

Top Gun returned Jan. 13-14 after a two year hiatus. January 2020 was the last time the tournament was held with the 2021 and 2022 tournaments being canceled due to the pandemic.

The tournament has a long, rich history at Alliance High School. It began in 1987 as a small varsity tournament and quickly grew to include teams from Ohio and surrounding states. This year, 42 schools participated in the tournament.

Over the years, as the tournament grew, it became a true community event. Not only does Alliance City Schools benefit from the tournament, but so does the community as a whole. The number of athletes, coaches and family members that attend the tournament helps to boost the local economy. They eat at the local restaurants and stay in the hotels around Alliance. Top Gun has a tremendous impact on the community.

Alliance High School saw great success at Top Gun with junior Aidan Mozden earning the championship title and junior Jackson Eddy earning a 5th place finish in



their respective weight classes.

Each year during the tournament, community members are named to the Top Gun Hall of Fame. This year, four individuals were recognized with this honor. Bill and Millie Hurford, Virginia Mozden and Mike Keating were recognized for their

support of the tournament over the years.

The tournament would not have been possible this year without the help of Frank Mancini, Jeff Graffice, Sue Donohoe, Janene Pennington, Marcus Lambdin, Curt Hamilton, Doug Sikora, Doug Shields and all the volunteers.

Join the Aviator Sports Boosters!

The purpose of the Aviator Sports Boosters is to unite all supporters of Aviator athletics in order to work together to raise money and promote school spirit for all teams. Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 pm at Alliance High School in room 235. We encourage you to attend and become involved in volunteer opportunities and we welcome new ideas for fundraising and promoting school spirit!



Scan the QR code or visit
forms.gle/BjMcdULssxmNwoB86
to join!

Membership Levels

Flyer (Students only) - \$5

Crew - \$10-\$24

Pilot - \$25-\$99

Captain - \$100-\$499

Ace - \$500 and up





2023-24 ACS Preschool, Kindergarten Registration

Preschool and kindergarten registration for the 2023-2024 school year at Alliance City Schools began online on Monday, Feb. 27

In order to register your child the following information will be required:

For preschool, they will have to be 3 years-old by Aug. 1. The following is required for registration:

- *Birth Certificate from the Health Department*
- *Immunization Records*
- *Parent or Guardian Photo Identification*
- *Proof of Address*
- *Custody Documents if applicable*
- *Parent or Guardian Proof of Income*
- *Incoming preschoolers should be potty trained. If you have questions, please contact Alliance Early Learning School (AELS).*

For kindergarten, the child must be 5 years-old by Aug. 1. The following is required for registration:

- *Birth Certificate from the Health Department*
- *Immunization Records*
- *Parent or Guardian Photo Identification*
- *Proof of Address*
- *Custody Documents if applicable*

The staff at ACS are certified and highly-trained teachers, even the preschool teachers hold masters degrees. This is not a common occurrence in many preschools. The students begin at the age of three or four in a classroom setting and learn skills necessary to prepare them for kindergarten.

"This is one of our favorite times of the year. We get to meet and greet current and new preschoolers and kindergartners just beginning their educational journeys through Alliance City Schools," said Holly Power, principal at AELS.



Information about how to complete the online registration can be found on the Alliance City School website, www.alliancecityschools.org/page/acs-new-student-registration.

[FAQ](#)

If a parent is unable to register their child online, they should contact AELS at 330-829-2266.

Registration will continue through the summer months if necessary.



This is one of our favorite times of the year. We get to meet and greet both current and new preschoolers and kindergartners just beginning their educational journeys through Alliance City Schools.

– Holly Power, principal at AELS



It is important to note that the preschool program will transition to Parkway, 1490 Parkway Blvd., for the 2023-24 school year and beyond. Kindergarten and first grade programming will remain at AELS. For additional information, please view the [Alternative Education/Preschool Transition](#)

Spots are limited for preschool registration. Students previously registered in preschool at AELS do not have to be re-registered for the 2023-2024 academic year.



ACS Stays Ahead of the Curve with Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Training

Recently 13 of our district staff and administrators participated in training for Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) through the Stark County Educational Service Center.

House Bill #123 requires each school district in Ohio to have an appropriate number of personnel in each building trained on how to best assess possible threats to keep them from escalating.

The training covered many topics, including how to accurately assess a situation, what a threat assessment is and looks like, how to effectively use them in a school setting and why threat assessments are so important in helping to ensure the safety of students and staff.

"CSTAG, an evidence based program, is a practical and effective set of guidelines for schools to use in responding to threats of violence," said Shawn Jackson, Director of Secondary Education

and CSTAG participant. "It was developed to support school and district based teams to take a problem-solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and interventions with students who have threatened violence in some way."

The training defined threat assessment as "a problem solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and intervention with students who have threatened violence in some way."

A threat assessment procedure follows three steps: identification, evaluation and intervention. The goal of a threat assessment is not to discipline students, it is to intervene before the situation can escalate.

"This training allows our buildings to evaluate the seriousness of a threat and to respond to it appropriately in a consistent manner," Jackson said.

Upcoming Events

March 8

AES Family Game Night - 5 pm

March 9

AHS Senior Blood Drive

March 17

Early Dismissal
End of 3rd Quarter
AHS Project Prom - 12 pm

March 20

National Honor Society Induction - 7 pm

March 21

ACS Board of Education Meeting - 5 pm

March 23

AHS Cosmetology Hair-A-Thon - 12-6 pm

AHS Parent/Teacher Conferences - 3:30 pm

AELS Parent/Teacher Conferences - 3:45 pm

March 24

Report Cards Distributed

March 28

PLDC Parent/Teacher Conferences - 3:30 pm

March 30 - April 2

AHS Musical: Chicago

March 30

AES Parent/Teacher Conferences - 3:30 pm

April 6-11

Spring Break

April 18

ACS Board of Education Meeting - 5 pm

April 20

AHS Jazz Night

April 22

AHS Band Dinner Dance

April 29

Junior/Senior Prom

May 1

AHS Senior Scholarship & Career Commitment Night - 7 pm

May 2

No School

May 3

AHS Top 10% Banquet



ACS Recognizes 2023 Pathfinder

On Feb. 3, Tiana Jones, a 2010 graduate of Alliance High School, was named the 2023 Pathfinder recipient. Jones has made a name for herself in the professional golf world and shown herself to be a true inspiration for all ACS students.

While in high school, Jones competed on the boys golf team, since there was not a girls team at the time. She received many accolades, including being named most valuable player, first team all-district, first team all-county, first team all-state, medalist for sectionals, runner-up for districts and the 2009 Ohio high school state champion.

Jones continued her golfing and academic career at South Carolina State University on a full scholarship where she graduated top of her class and received many more accolades for golf, including capturing the PGA Minority Colleague Championship in 2012. Following her time at South Carolina State, she enrolled at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

She has served as the president of the Executive Women Golf Association and vice-president of the Club Managers Asso-

ciation of America student chapter. She has mentored her peers and volunteered at places like Holly Center for adults and children with special needs.

Currently, Jones is a professor and a division one head mens and womens golf coach at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

During the Pathfinder assembly, students from the 99th squadron lead the program. The 99th Squadron is a student success, character, leadership and life skills development program aimed at improving African-American students' academic and social achievement at Alliance High School. The program also places a particular focus on college and career readiness.

Members of the 99th Squadron conducted a question and answer panel with Jones, which featured questions about her experience as a student at AHS, growing up in Alliance and what it was like for her as a



minority in the golf community.

When asked what it was like to be a black female on a boys golf team, Jones said:

"It can be challenging. It can be hard because you're the only one that looks like you when you step on a golf course. You know, those challenges, I took on as a leader because if someone doesn't do it, who will? I've hopefully inspired a lot of minorities, especially African American girls, to pursue golf because of that. I was always taught you've got to be the change you want to see and if you're waiting on someone else to do it for you, they're not."

Jones is an inspiration and embodies what it means to be a Pathfinder and trailblazer for success. Alliance City Schools is proud to have her as an alumna of AHS.

Each year, Alliance City Schools hosts a series of Pathfinder Awards assemblies during Black History Month to recognize individuals who have been trailblazers for success. The recipients are recognized in five areas: arts and science, education, humanitarianism, citizenship/government and business. All individuals recognized as Pathfinders are either alumni who have been an inspiration to minorities in one of the above areas recognized either locally or out of the area or a non-ACS alumni who has been an inspiration to the local area.





Staff Hobbies



Chris Schillig: *Alliance Review* Columnist

Many know Chirs Schillig as an English teacher at AHS, but what some might not know is that he wrote a weekly column for the Alliance Review for more than 21 years.

His time with the Alliance Review began long before adulthood. As a kid he delivered the paper on his bicycle. His route took him from his childhood home on Easton Street to Beechwood Avenue, West State Street to Schubert Avenue then back to his house.

As an adult, he worked for the Review as full- and part- time staff from 1992 to 2016. He began writing his weekly column in 2001 and retired it in December of 2022. The column spanned a number of topics and often addressed issues that were timely and impactful. His inspiration often came from conversations, his current readings and happenings with his family and friends.

"I loved to write about humorous family situations and hum-drum, quotidian stuff, anything that might catch readers unaware and make them smile or think," Schillig said. "I was so fortunate to have the latitude to address anything I wanted: politics, education, the environment, movies and pop culture ... the list goes on and on."

Schillig estimates that he wrote 1,118 weekly columns over his 21.5 year career as a columnist.

Even though his time with the Review has come to a close, there was no way his writing career would come to an end.

"It's like breathing. Currently, I'm posting new stuff on my blog, cschillig.blogspot.com, and pondering other ways to keep my hand in," Schillig said. "I'm an English teacher, so it's practically a cliché to say I might have a novel in me somewhere, but it's still true."

Schillig is grateful for the time he spent with the Review, and encourages everyone to continue supporting local journalism wherever and however they can. Local journalism is fading fast in communities throughout the country.

"Nothing is waiting to replace it, and the local stories that make every community unique will go untold. That's a tragedy."



Diamonique Colbert: *Volunteering*

Diamonique Colbert embodies what it means to be a Caring Citizen. When she's not working at Alliance Intermediate School as a Climate Specialist or member of the Navigators staff,

she is often giving back to the community through a number of community service projects including volunteering through her church and hosting charitable drives.

In 2018, as a senior at Alliance High School, Colbert, along with some of her classmates, started a toy drive at her church. All the toys collected were donated to the Toys for Tots Foundation. After graduating, she teamed up with fellow Aviator alumni, Sarrick Sampson ('18) and Demitri Lott ('15) to host a holiday Christmas party where the "cover charge" was bringing a toy to be donated to the Salvation Army.

This past Christmas, Colbert changed the process a bit for the donations. She had families sign up to receive Christmas presents by using a form she posted to social media. After collecting the gifts at the Christmas party, she sorted them and members of the Alliance girls and boys basketball teams personally delivered the gifts to the families.

"I think it's important to give back to the community because I have been shown a lot of love by my city," Colbert said. "I feel like it's almost my responsibility to give back to a place that has given me so much."

In the near future, she hopes to start her own non-profit organization called the Colby Club to benefit and support Alliance children and families.

Colbert wants to encourage others to get involved because it's fulfilling and rewarding being able to make a positive impact on something or someone.

"I would like to thank and shout out Sarrick Sampson, Demitri Lott, Just Classy Events, my support system and my AIS family for always believing in me."



North Lincoln to be Demolished

Alliance City Schools and the City of Alliance prepare to tear down North Lincoln Elementary School.

and proud history of educating young Aviators and adults in Alliance. Built in 1914, the building housed students in Kindergarten through fifth grade until

people, it's sad to see historical buildings like this come to the end of their life span, so we are dedicated to keeping its legacy and memory alive. We are working with several partner groups to make sure we recognize and memorialize the contribution and history of the school."

“

We recognize that for many people, it's sad to see historical buildings like this come to the end of their life span, so we are dedicated to keeping its legacy and memory alive.

– Rob Gress, Superintendent

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The City of Alliance and Alliance City Schools collaborated to receive a grant that will assist with the cost of the demolition of North Lincoln, which has been used as storage for the district for nearly a decade.

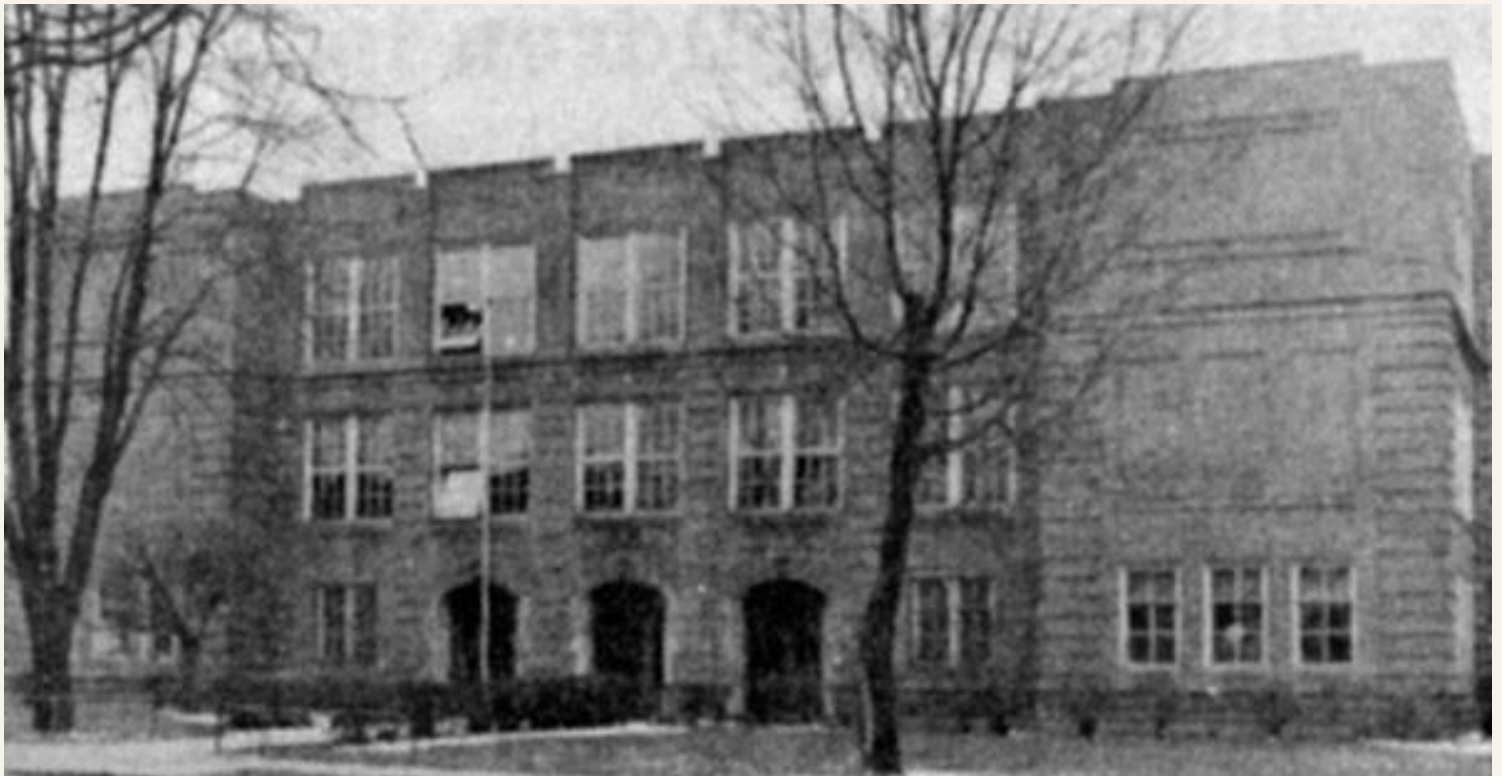
Located at 530 North Lincoln Avenue, the former elementary school has a long

2003. North Lincoln contained 16 classrooms in total. It later became the location of the Alliance Career Center and the Robert T. White School of Practical Nursing.

"Countless Aviators have positive memories that came from the North Lincoln school building," said Superintendent Rob Gress. "We recognize that for many

Unfortunately, with the deterioration of the building, the public will not be able to walk the building before the demolition takes place in a couple months. However, a small group of Kent State architecture students will be granted access to create detailed drawings of the building and record its history.

When the demolition takes place, the district plans to offer a limited number of bricks for community members to take as keepsakes. More information about this will be shared closer to the time of demolition. At this point, there is not a set date for when the building will be demolished.





Certified Staff SPOTLIGHT: Erica Jackson



Erica Jackson has worked for Alliance City Schools for nearly 20 years, the last six years has been spent as the Dean of Students at Alliance Intermediate School.

The best part of her job is being able to build relationships with students and their families. She loves seeing how much they grow socially, academically and behaviorally during their time at AIS and being able to celebrate those successes

with them.

"My students inspire me," she said. "I don't think they realize how much I learn from them each day. They make me want to grow as an educator."

Along with her responsibility as the Dean of Students, she also serves on the district PBIS team. PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. As part of the district team, she shares ideas for implementation of the process and meets with other staff throughout the district to help enhance their PBIS practices.

Some of the practices she has helped to implement at AIS are a bi-weekly "Tell Me Something Good" video where she interviews students about good aspects of their weeks, she plans monthly student incentives and sends supportive messages to parents regarding their students' PBIS progress. Those are just a few of the amazing things Mrs. Jackson does in her role.

Staff SPOTLIGHT: Teresa McMillen



Teresa McMillen has worked for Alliance City Schools since 2005! She is in her 4th year at Alliance High School where she works as the job coach for the Job Training Coordination (JTC) program.

As the job coach, she works with students to develop job skills and accompanies them on job sites where she guides them through the world of work. The students

in JTC get work experience throughout the Alliance community, including the University of Mount Union, Alliance YMCA, Alliance Park and Recreation Department among other locations.

"Mrs. McMillen is a ball of positive energy. She brings out the best in our students," said Shawn Jackson, director of secondary education.

Mrs. McMillen has been integral in helping the JTC program run the clothing closet, which allows students to have clothes and hygiene products when they need them.

"I feel so blessed to be able to fill students' needs throughout Alliance High School with things like the clothes closet, delivering Birdie Bags and Project Prom," Mrs. McMillen said. "I also enjoy preparing our JTC students for future employment and helping them learn skills that will stick with them for life. I love what I do!"

Team Spotlight: Maintenance Team and the Technology Team

It was hard to pick just one team for the team spotlight! Two were selected for their quick work and support of the district. The Maintenance team and the Technology team worked smoothly and efficiently to relocate the administrative offices after winter break when a valve broke at the Glamorgan Castle causing significant water damage.

Due to the efforts of the Tech and Maintenance teams, all administrative staff made a smooth transition to Alliance High School. The recent improvements the tech team made to district phones and devices allowed for an easy shift to the new location without disrupting the work being done by district staff.

The Maintenance team spent countless hours relocating the offices and setting up the temporary offices along with helping to clean out the Glamorgan Castle when the damage was discovered. Their hard work ensured the district could continue to function smoothly during the relocation.

"When we transitioned to the high school, it was imperative that our support of staff, students, and parents didn't miss a beat," said Superintendent Rob Gress. "Thanks to the planning and hard-work of the Maintenance and Tech teams, that's exactly what happened. We're proud of and thankful for their dedication to ACS."

The Tech team consists of Director of Technology Chad Morris along with Misty Sampson, John Marchick and Rich Fraser.

The Maintenance team consists of Director of Operations Nick Cowles along with Rick Leonard, Cliff Eberling, Wendy Saunders, Connie Stanley, Ryan Petti, Matt Blake, Kathy Bourne, Theresa Mabry, Sharon Sears, Joe Hughes, Angie Byelene, Kelly Hughes, Lori Shonk, Ian Carmen, Ashley Tanner and Tracy Tanner.



Alliance City Schools Relocates Alternative Education, Preschool Programs

The Alliance City Schools administration and Board of Education is excited to announce changes that will take place for the 2023-24 school year.

Starting next year, ACS will provide alternative education services at each grade-level building rather than at Parkway Learning & Development Center (PLDC). This will allow students to receive services with their grade-level peers in a classroom environment that is dedicated to meeting their individual needs. Additionally, these students will have more opportunities to take part in specials/electives, have the same extracurricular and co-curricular activities as their peers, opportunities to form relationships with more ACS staff members and have access to the multitude of school-specific resources.

With this transition, ACS does not anticipate a reduction in staff. The district will

continue to provide the same staffing support the students need and deserve.

"Much thought and discussion was put into this decision, and I have complete confidence that ACS is stronger when all our students have the resources and support they need to receive their education in their grade-level building, amongst their own friends and classmates," said Rob Gress, superintendent of Alliance City Schools. "The PLDC staff does amazing work with our students. Next year, and into the future, we will lean heavily on Portia Johnson, the current principal of PLDC, and the rest of the staff to continue and expand on that positive momentum. ACS will continue to emphasize trauma-informed care, mental health support and targeted professional development to ensure our students have positive and successful school experiences."

With this transition, the district will relocate its preschool program, currently housed at Alliance Early Learning School (AELS), to Parkway.

Over the past few years, enrollment at AELS, which houses all district preschool, kindergarten and first grade students, has continued to rise leaving little room in the building for activities and family-centered events. By relocating the preschool, it will allow for the program to grow to educate more students. In addition, the staff and students at AELS will have more room for activities and family engagement events.

For more information about the Alliance City School District, visit www.alliancecityschools.org.

Royal Aviation Brings Record Number of Choirs

The annual Royal Aviation Show Choir Competition took place at Alliance High School on Saturday, Feb. 25 with 13 show choirs from Ohio and West Virginia. This year marked the AHS Jetsetter's tenth year as a competition show choir.

While the Jetsetters have been around for many years, it wasn't until 2013, under the guidance of Director Carrie Chumat, that the group began performing. Over the past 10 years, they have attended 40 competitions and brought home 45 trophies.

"It's amazing to come full circle," said Chumat. "We are only competing now because ten years ago a competition in Twinsburg invited us to attend for the first time. The Alliance kids were amazed by what they saw, and decided to jump

in head first to the world of competitive show choir."

At this year's competition, dozens of individual awards were given out, but as a group, each choir competed for the chance to be named the Grand Champions.

Final Overall Awards for the 2023 Royal Aviation Show Choir Competition went to:

Grand Champion: Kaleidoscope from Musselman High School

First Runner Up: Kenton High School's Top Twenty

Second Runner Up: Varsity Chorale from Euclid High School

Third Runner Up: Royal Harmony from North Royalton High School

Fourth Runner Up: Music Company from River Valley High School

The Alliance Middle School Show Choir and the Jetsetters hosted an exhibition performance that included Melodica from Lakeside High School. Being the home school, the Alliance choirs were not able to compete. As the host schools, the exhibition performance allowed them to showcase their skills for all the other choirs in attendance.

