Doc M’s Musings

Late Winter Update

The last update right around the holidays focused on many celebrations and accomplishments of our students in multiple areas. Since then, much has happened, including the Winter Sport Season which concludes in February. This update will still include some academics (including an update on required state testing and graduation requirements) but will also take a holistic approach including news on athletics, service, and recognition of the many accomplishments of AHS students in many extra-curricular opportunities provided at Aurora High School. As you will read and hear repeatedly, we pride ourselves on “nurturing the roots” of our students, which means providing a well-rounded educational experience that prepares them for the rest of their lives!

Let’s begin with some academic news and updates. First of all, I am proud to share our achievement levels and honor roll data from the 2nd Marking Period and 1st Semester. The full honor roll list is located on my website, but a recap is definitely in order! One data point I consistently track is the success rate of our students in classes at the end of each quarter and semester. The lack of failing grades means we are working together as a school to make sure students are learning and earning credits towards graduation. After tallying 2nd quarter and semester failures…here’s the summary. We had a 99.3% Success Rate in Q2 (.7% F’s of total grades), and a 99.6% Success Rate in Sem 1 (.4% F’s of total grades). Again, these data show a strong commitment to students by our staff, along with an effective intervention system in place. That being said, we can always get better to reduce failure even further! Additionally, congratulations are in order to all of our Honor Roll students for the 2nd Quarter! We had 246 students on the Merit Roll (3.0-3.49), 245 on the Honor Roll (3.5-3.99), and 206 on the High Honor Roll (4.0 and up), which is a total of 697 students or almost 70% of our student body. That is incredible and a great reflection of our learning culture!

Speaking of our learning culture, I was incredibly impressed by the number of students who participated in the AMC Math Test on Feb. 2nd. See the pictures to witness what I saw! Thank you to Josh Rakow and all who assisted with the AMC Math Test proctoring (Mark Dingman, Kasie Burroughs, Tim Baczkowski, and our counselors- John Calcei, Chris Miley, and April Nenadal). We had strong student participation in this annual math
event...now we’ll wait to see how our students performed. I was shocked (in a
good way) to see almost 1/3 of our students taking on this growth opportunity
and stretching their brains with this challenge. Another confirming event in
this category was our NHS Induction Ceremony on Feb. 17th. By the way, I owe
a “thank you” to NHS Adviser Jen Simmerman and selected speaker Jenna
Schadle for their role in the NHS Induction, as well as recognition to
all of our 69 new inductees! As
mentioned that evening, this event is
a celebration but is really just a
beginning as the students must now
live up to the standards of the four
NHS pillars, while making their
mark at the AHS Greenhouse.

We also had students perform well in academically related tests. Congrats to Junior Ian Doemling for his achievement in the Americanism Test. To quote
the press release, “On 10 January 2016, the 14th
District of the American Legion, State of Ohio,
was proud to recognize and present certificates to
the six winners of the Americanism and
Government testing program for the 2015 - 2016
school year. 14th District Commander, Rich
Masterson presented the certificates to the
winners during the District Winter Conference
held at American Legion Post 281 in Cuyahoga
Falls, Ohio. Ranking in the top 1% of those
tested in Summit and Portage Counties, these
students exemplify what can be accomplished through study and hard work
within our local school systems.” Additionally, there is good news to share
about Rose Brown, Conni Hilston, and their team of students who won high
honors at the WordWright Challenge, a national competition for high school
students requiring analysis of prose and poetry. In December, our 12th grade
students placed 11th in the nation of 631 teams, while Natalie Briggs (11),
Samantha Marotta (11), and Nick Malinowski (12) achieved outstanding
individual results!

In the area of standardized testing, there are some important updates.
During the 2nd and 3rd weeks of April (11th-22nd), AHS will be running block
schedule days in order to give the required state graduation tests. AIR
(American Institutes for Research) is the vendor for these tests, and students
will take the assessments using chromebooks. This testing mostly impacts 9th
and 10th grade students who are required to earn 18 points out of a possible 35
points in order to graduate. Students in the graduating classes of 2018 and
2019 will take seven “End of Course” assessments over two years with the possibility of earning a 1-5 on each test in the following subjects: English 9, English 10, Integrated Math 1, Integrated Math 2, Biology, US History, and US Government. We will be giving these tests in homeroom or small group classroom settings, while the other students attend their classes. The rationale behind this schedule versus a delayed start is that we strive to minimize the amount of instructional time lost due to testing requirements. Please see the information and visuals below to assist with a basic understanding of the days, times, and schedule.

**AIR/Next Generation Assessments- Class of 2018/2019 – Freshmen and Sophomores (except Gov for Juniors/Seniors)**

Performance Based Assessments (PBA) & End of Year Assessments (EOY)

- Completed in Homerooms/Classrooms utilizing chromebooks

Testing Window: April 11th - April 28th

Make-ups – April 25th – 28th

**English/Language Arts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBA/EOY</th>
<th>Minutes (Estimated)</th>
<th>Two Days</th>
<th>Minutes (Estimated)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>210 minutes total</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>English 9 and 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>105</td>
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**Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PBA/EOY</th>
<th>Minutes (Estimated)</th>
<th>Two Days</th>
<th>Minutes (Estimated)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Math –</td>
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<td>Session 1</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int. Math 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In. Math 2</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science –</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies –</td>
<td>180 minutes total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>US History, Gov</td>
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</tbody>
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Social Studies

American Government (In Social Studies Class - Juniors & Seniors only)

*Completed two days during block schedules

*Students in APUSH and AP Gov exempt from AIR

Science

All Freshman in Biology/Honors Biology, only necessary Sophomores take AIR

*Students in AP Biology are required to take AIR

2016 AIR/Next Generation Testing Overview for Aurora High School

The following tests will be given to Freshmen and Sophomores during the scheduled dates during the first 90 minutes of each morning. Freshmen who are in Honors Integrated Math 3 or higher will not be required to take the state math assessments and should report to their regular math class during the math testing times. Juniors and Seniors will take the US Government test during the block schedule over two days. Many Sophomores will be exempt from the Biology End of Course exam based on their performance in the Physical Science End of Course exam given during their freshman year.

**Week 1 -Performance Based Assessments (PBA) & End of Year Assessments (EOY)**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Test Scheduled</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/11/16</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>ELA: Session 1</td>
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<td>4/12/16</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>ELA: Session 2</td>
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<td>4/13/16</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Math: Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/14/16</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Math: Session 2</td>
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**Week 2 -Performance Based Assessments (PBA) & End of Year Assessments (EOY)**

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<td>Monday</td>
<td>Biology: Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/19/16</td>
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<td>Biology: Session 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/20/16</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>US History: Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/21/16</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>US History: Session 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the realm of athletics, there are also some important highlights to share. First of all, kudos to our Winter Sport Student-Athletes! Our overall Winter Sport Student GPA was a 3.45 at semester (tied for highest on record) with 75% of the Student-Athletes earning over a 3.0 GPA and 41% earning over a 4.0! That is the definition of STUDENT-Athlete. With respect to athletic accomplishments, there are a few noteworthy updates. Congratulations are in order for our Hockey Team! The Greenmen Hockey team qualified for the Baron Cup Tournament for the first time in 7 years and also advanced to the second round of the state playoffs. During this run, Joe Caprett added to his goal total, finished with 69, and holds the school record for most goals in a season! Meanwhile, Tomi Pirinen shattered the season assist record with 54. Additionally, the AHS Wrestling Team has performed well! Our wrestlers recently earned a 2nd place finish in the Region and also won the Suburban League – American Division! Individual achievement and recognition is forthcoming. Meanwhile, we had 10 swimmers (combined girls and boys) who advanced to the North East District meet with special congratulations to Whitney Lieberth and Lauren Sapochetti for setting two new school records! Whitney set a new record in the 100 yard breaststroke, and Lauren set a new record in the 200 yard Individual Medley!

If you had not already heard, we congratulated AHS Student-Athletes A.J. Kimes (Baseball at University of Dayton), Josh Burger (Football at Wofford College), Vinny Verbiar (Football at Ohio Dominican), Jake Martell (Soccer at Malone University), and Nick Malinowski (Soccer at George Mason University) for signing their Athletic Letters of Intent Wednesday Feb. 3rd for athletic scholarships, which will certainly be a nice compliment to their academic pursuits in higher education next fall. We celebrated with a well-attended press conference in our Media Center. Students, families, staff members, board members, and administration came to cheer on our student-athletes, as they signed their official paperwork!
Not to be outdone, we had many activities/extra-curriculars that have fared well in competition. One group that did extremely well, as was the case last year, are our Robotics Teams. One of our teams, called “int elligence,” took first place at the Dayton First Tech Challenge Competition and is now invited to compete at the Ohio State Competition in February. Pictured from left to right are John Holt, James Kristell, Colin Heath and Alex Kohn. Also, AHS Robotics Team “TBD” (pictured right) competed in Newark, OH. They were a member of the Winning Alliance and also won the Inspire Award, the highest award given to the team that is a role model to the robotics program. The team advanced to the State Championship in February. AHS team members are Ian Doemling, Kameron Fry, and Tyler Thieding! Ian Doemling and Tyler Thieding of Team TBD then competed at the state level competition in Cincinnati. They were in the winning alliance which advances them to the Super Regionals in Iowa in March. They again won the top award, the Inspire Award. Judges commented that the team showed strength in every area including a finely constructed robot, impressive outreach and gracious professionalism. Tyler Thieding also advanced as a Dean’s List Finalist and will represent Ohio as one of 100 students nationally recognized at the World Championship.

One last highlight with respect to club accomplishments, Coach Annie Walker and our Academic Challenge Team (Colin Heath, James Kristell, and Sarah Zhang are pictured) competed in January. I had the opportunity to be in the audience that cold, January night at the Ch. 5 station as they recorded the competition. It will be televised April 9th, so I will not spoil the results, but our students acquitted themselves well and made AHS proud!
Our students have also been busy honing their craft in the arts. We had impressive participation in the Scholastic Art Show...congratulations to our students, Sean Berrodin, and Brian Caponi! AHS had 7 students earn Gold Key recognition, 11 students earn 19 Silver Key awards, and 17 students earn Honorable Mention certificates. Additionally, we have seen an explosion in the amount of student artwork adorning our halls now that this competition is behind us. What a great way to show off the talent and hard work of our students, while also adding some artistic flavor to the learning environment! You may have also seen Sarah Dixon and her AHS Choir on National TV singing the National Anthem prior to the Cavs game on January 25th ...made us all proud!

As is typical at AHS, the spirit of service is strong! Thank you to Jen Simmerman and NHS for the coin wars (and Vicki Wolf for counting it all) and the assembly involved with “Aurora for Others,” as well as ALL of the staff members who participated in the basketball game or who agreed to take a pie in the face! We were able to raise thousands of dollars right before Winter Break ($8029.24 to be exact) for multiple charities and really live the true spirit of the holiday season! Recently, there have been so many requests from clubs (NHS, Key, GSA, SADD) to do service projects/collections at the school (such as Book Drive, Jeans for Teens, Adopt a Janitor, Uplifting messages on each locker, etc.). Of course, I have approved them all, but I just thought I would share how impressed I am with the concept of service being engrained in what we do. It is an important “Root” building activity that cannot be emphasized enough, and these activities are specific examples of how it is a part of our collective culture at AHS!
Speaking of service, we have had four students recognized for their efforts in this area. Congratulations to our December Rotary Students of the Month, Caroline Lukehart and Sam Iammarino. Both students were recognized at the BOE Meeting Monday, Dec. 14th and then also at Rotary on Dec. 16th. Additionally, Kiran Singh and Cal DiJulius were honored as February Rotary Students of the month at the Rotary Breakfast on Feb. 17th and also the February BOE Meeting. They are all very deserving of recognition for their efforts as students and leaders AHS with tremendous focus on service about self!

Concluding this update is a note about other activities at AHS that contribute to our learning environment and culture. We had a whole school assembly for a speaker on January 13th. Of course, we had to split our student body into two groups to make this happen, so the Juniors/Seniors had one assembly, while the Freshman/Sophomores had another to hear Justin Bachman and his message of tolerance, the value of self-worth, “Living Loud.” Justin is now in college and is a graduate of Solon High School who has successfully managed Tourette Syndrome and other adversity, while becoming a well-known speaker on the local and national scene. The feedback was very positive, and I believe his message was received by students and staff! On another note, we have also welcomed ILEP Scholars in January to AHS. If you are in our building, please see the board created by Rose Brown across from guidance for their names, pictures, country of origin, and cooperating teachers. We appreciate Mrs. Brown taking the lead on this effort and all of our cooperating teachers for sharing the classroom and students with these scholars. In case you were interested, this experience is more observational in nature for our international scholars with objective being that they learn about schools in the United States and take this learning with them. Additionally, they are able to share
their experiences with our students and staff, providing us with a different perspective!

We will conclude with a few final notes. I have had questions about whether we are having a spring dance. The answer is affirmative, as we will be having a “Spring Fling” Dance for students, which will take place on Saturday March 12. This date was not included in the Band Calendar. Also, you should have been seeing scheduling and verification sheets from your sons/daughters and the school. Although it is only February, scheduling season is in full swing, meaning we have already dedicated countless hours to working with students to sign them up for their requested and approved courses for next year. We will be finalizing the course request tallies, closing courses, and working on sectioning, as well as the Master Schedule in March and April. I cannot emphasize how important it is for students and families to be comfortable with selections, as our entire process is predicated on student demand. For this reason, we do not allow course changes, unless a change meets one of the criteria (see Program of Studies and Student Handbook).

I hope this update finds AHS Families both enjoying the mild winter but also taking advantage of the snow when it has come (although I know the students never tire of complaining about lack of snow days!). We have the end of the quarter on March 11th, Report Cards posted on March 18th, and Spring Break coming on March 21st. As is always the case, the year is flying by at an unbelievable pace! Never hesitate to contact me or anyone at AHS if you have questions or need assistance.

Yours in Education,

“Doc M”

Dr. Paul Milcetich

Aurora High School Principal