



Cobra Monthly



February 2018

Principal's Message

Dear AMS Families,

In light of the recent school shooting in Florida, I know that school safety is in the forefront of everyone's minds. It certainly weighs heavily on us working at schools charged with the safety of all of our students. Along with the vast majority of schools in the US, at AMS we do regular lockdown drills as part of our monthly emergency drills. We know that drills train us to do something so that in an emergency, it is second nature and increases the likelihood of a school of 900 being able to react in a coordinated and calm way.

There are different schools of thought about the best way to respond to an active shooter on campus, one that involves running or fighting back and another that involves hiding. Albany Unified currently uses the hiding method. In our district, everyone goes into the nearest classroom- shades are drawn, doors are locked and students are out of view and quiet. When the drill is over, administrators come around and knock four times and then unlock the door and call into the room that the lockdown drill is over.

Our district has had Keenan & Associates auditing our drills this year to give us feedback on what we can improve upon. They have been out to observe our drills. We will be interested in receiving the feedback of the auditing team to see if they recommend either a different approach as a district or just ways to tweak our current approach as a school. We have also reached out to the Albany Police Department to partner with us to practice

our drills and get feedback. In light of what is happening in our country, after receiving the feedback from the auditing team, we plan to increase staff training to help everyone feel prepared. We will run a simulation on our staff development day when we will have more time to work with staff on responding to different scenarios.

Know that school safety is on the forefront of our minds too. We will keep you apprised of any changes of approach related to school lockdowns.

Best,

Deborah Brill, Principal

Club Corner: Comic Book & Photography

The Comic Book Club is run by Ms. Perez for 7th and 8th grade students. Meeting every Thursday at lunch in the library, students develop and share a love for graphic novels. In this club they read comics, discuss the merits of graphic story-telling, make comic books, and even host guest speakers!

The Photography Club is led by Ms. Velasquez, and they meet every Thursday at lunch in room 214. All grades are welcome and the club's main activity is to take photos of everyday life at AMS. When they aren't snapping pics of school life, students take pictures of monthly themes. These pictures are used in a slide show and members give constructive criticism about each photo.



AMS Spotlight: P.E. Department

The Physical Education staff at AMS is committed to teaching the skills and values that allow students to develop and appreciate a physically fit, healthy lifestyle that will endure for a lifetime. The P.E. classes focus on being a safe and supportive environment where students can challenge themselves physically. The main goal of the P.E. department is to instill a love for lifelong fitness by focusing on each individual student's effort and personal improvement.

Typical Day In PE

Change into their PE uniform
Dynamic and static warmups
Strengthening exercises
Daily run
Unit activity or weekly long run
Change back into school clothes

The P.E. department exposes students to a variety of sports and activities such as: soccer, dance, track & field, etc. Students typically spend two weeks per unit, working on fundamental skills and improving individual abilities. The P.E. team also hosts monthly challenges - such as upper body strength and cardio challenges - as well as school-wide fitness activities. In the 6th grade, students participate in the Cycles Of Change program learning bike riding skills and safety. The P.E. department has also hosted E.R.I.C. (Early Recognition Is Critical) clinics, which are ultimate frisbee clinics that teach body-awareness and early cancer screening. A yearly favorite is the Turkey Trot, which is held the week of Thanksgiving. In addition, the P.E. department has a reward system to motivate students in improve their cardiovascular endurance. Students who achieve certain mile times will earn wristbands in 6th and 7th grade, and t-shirts in the 8th grade. Students may also earn wristbands for personal improvement in their mile time.

-The AMS P.E. Team

Restorative Practices @ AMS

At AMS, the staff use a variety of restorative practices to help students understand perspectives and address any harm caused. Some of these practices are natural approaches that have been in use for years and others are a direct result of adapting restorative justice. These approaches and practices include:

Restorative questions - Students complete reflection forms when they have caused harm to help process what happened and what needs to happen to make things right. Staff also use these questions when talking to students about conflict or harm.

Conflict resolution - A meeting between 2-3 individuals that is mediated by an administrator, counselor or teacher using restorative questions and "I messages." Resolutions will only be conducted when all parties agree.

Restorative action - An action that someone takes to help make things right after causing harm.

Restorative circle - A practice in which those impacted by an action come together using a formal circle process to address the harm done and explore ways to move forward. Circles are also used to build community and create culture in classrooms.

Restorative conference - A practice in which those impacted by an action come together in a conference setting to address the harm done and explore ways to move forward. This typically happens between a student and a staff and is facilitated by another staff member.

-David Hauptert,
Vice Principal

