

# Weekly Highlight

Athol-Royalston Regional School District

## Spotlight

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District would like to thank the Royalston Academy for their generous donation of \$15,000.00 for the construction of the new school playground at the Royalston Community School. The Royalston Academy was established as a non-profit agency by Katherine Seymour Bullock Cole to enhance educational and cultural experiences for the children and adults of Royalston.

## Happy Holidays

Can you believe the holiday season is upon us and vacation is just around the corner? I know I can't! I still have gifts to buy and wrap and cookies to bake.

I hope as each of you celebrate the holidays you will know how much you are appreciated. This year we have asked a lot of you and I know change is hard. I hope, however, you can see what I see; a committed group of teachers and staff who have great hope for the future of Athol and Royalston. Please enjoy your time off.



## District Administrators Host ELL Families for Dinner

Last Friday night district administrators and ELL families came together to talk about ELL experiences in the district. Principals, Assistant Principals, and Directors interviewed families, had dinner, played games and learned about the families everyday lives. The event was a great success. Students shared their experiences at the Athol-Royalston schools through a video they put together. The next family dinner will be held at the high school where district administrators will honor all the Adams scholarship winners. Directly after dinner the students will receive certificates from the school committee.

## Superintendents Schedule

12/18/2017

- Chart Meeting ACES
- Kindergarten Concert Aces
- Sped monthly meeting

12/19/2017

- DILT Meeting skills Meeting
- FinCom Meeting

12/20/2017

- Sub-committee Meetings
- Principals Meeting
- Holiday Party Admin
- School Committee Meeting

12/21/2017

- MacDonald's grand opening
- Patch Meeting
- Directors Meetings
- ACES Review Team

12/22/2017

- Half Day

## Picture of The Week

Assistant Principal of Athol High School, Dave King, wearing his best holiday apron with a smile as he serves ELL families. He has the spirit!



## Did you know?

**True collaboration happens** when schools reach a stage where there is no competition, no distrust, and no disharmony. Teacher teams fully understand that their mission is to increase student learning. They are willing to bring any and all issues related to improved instruction to a team meeting or to a table discussion with no hesitation or reservation. As Rick Du Four describes it, the adults move from “collaboration lite” to honest, purposeful professional interactions.

## College and Career Pathways

The district has begun working diligently setting up a college and career pathways committee to explore what is currently offered for programming and to set a plan for what programs will be offered in the future. The committee includes, teachers, community members, and administrators. The committee will begin its work by interviewing students, staff and the community on what they see as important programming to include at the high school level. They will also start looking at the ways in which the school can retool the schedule to accommodate for the new 21<sup>st</sup> century model of education at the high school level. This model will include more internships, more college offerings and more opportunities for students to explore what they love for extensive periods of time while in school. Athol-Royalston Regional School District is on the cutting edge of this work and I am sure will become a model for other schools to follow. I want to thank all the individuals who have and will be taking part in shaping this programming. It is truly exciting and worthwhile work!



## Bringing About A Positive School Culture!



Most recently I have been reading articles about what brings about a positive school culture as research tells us that without a positive school culture student success will remain low. Below are some suggested ways to improve school culture. **Which of these does your school currently employ?**

### 1. Engaging Academic Learning;

- Lessons that are hands-on, child-centered, and actively encourage students to feel excited about going to school
- Schools that are child-centered often display lots of exceptional student work, inside and outside the classroom. A nurturing classroom will be one that showcases children's interests and honors their differences.
- Students will receive more support in an environment that uses differentiated learning than in one that standardizes lessons for all students.

### 2. Social-Emotional Learning and Inclusivity

- Students often feel more comfortable in a classroom that actively focuses on the importance of cultivating social and emotional skills and is inclusive of everyone, regardless of learning differences.
- Students pay attention to the level and tone of voice the teacher uses when talking to students. Are conversations polite and respectful?

### 3. Positive Discipline

- A positive school culture is how children are disciplined. Are missteps seen as opportunities to learn? How are healthy behaviors supported, and how are detrimental behaviors discouraged?

### 4. Teacher Turnover

- Seeing how teachers react to the school's internal system is a great indicator of what kind of environment is encouraged. Do not consider it a coincidence if you find out that a great many teachers are jumping ship. They may be leaving for many reasons, including being overworked or not having effective communication.

### 5. True Collaboration

When schools reach a stage of true collaboration in all arenas of the school, there is no competition, no distrust, and no disharmony. Teacher teams fully understand that their mission is to increase student learning. They are willing to bring any and all issues related to improved instruction to a team meeting or to a table discussion with no hesitation or reservation. As Rick Du Four describes it, the adults move from "collaboration lite" to honest, purposeful professional interactions.

## School Highlights

### AHS

Congratulations to Athol High School Senior Kris Selanis who was recently selected as a Masslive Super 7 Pre-Season Boy's Indoor Track Athlete!

AHS wrestlers that placed in the Red Raider Invitational Wrestling Tournament held at Athol High School. Joey Gray (160lb 3rd Place), Chris Waslaske (182lb Champion), Ryan White (138lb Champion), Caleb Cox (126lb 2nd Place)

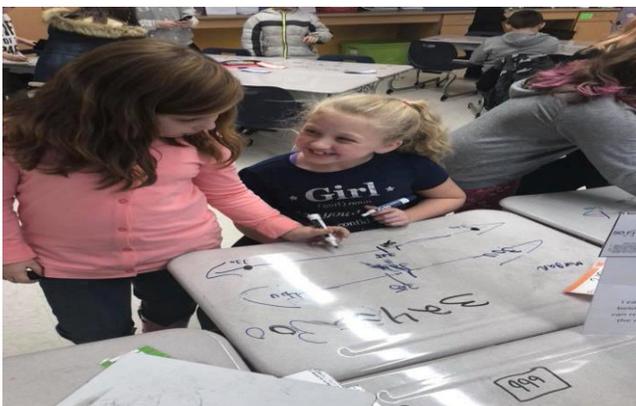


### RCS

Royalston Community School students are well on their way. During the district walkthrough evidence was found to support the schools efforts in ensuring students are learning. 83% of classes had rigorous activities for the students to take part in that were aligned to the state standards. Classes were designed with rigorous activities for students!

### ARMS

ARMS is currently reviewing the possibility of adding additional math instruction to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students over the February vacation to help the students to get ready for MCAS. The hope is the program will be free and transportation will be provided. Keep your eyes out for more information on this potential program.



### ACES

Tuesday the AIR team, contracted by the state, observed 18 classrooms. One of the observers focused on grade K-2 and the other observer focused on grade 2-4. The review should be available one week from today. The AIR team role is to help evaluate level 3 and 4 schools in the state and give them feedback on their progress. AIR will be doing similar visits at the middle school.