



AUGUSTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



606-756-2105



WWW.AUGUSTA.K12.KY.US/



AIS Podcast: Literally Speaking

By. Junior Jossten
Shaff



Tim Litteral Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Finance and Technology for the district, hosts our new district podcast. First debuted Oct. 3rd in an episode featuring Principal Kelsch. When asked why this podcast was started Mr. Litteral responded "We're always looking to enhance communication and a relationship with our stakeholders whether that's parents, families, or the community in general. We saw this as another way to provide more information to the community and get a little more in depth on certain topics opposed to only posting on social media or our website. What's discussed on the podcast will vary depending on what is happening within the district, this will also determine what guests we will have. For example our next guest will be Ms. Bishop our GearUp manager and Mr. Todd Kelsch will also be coming up to discuss our FRYSC program; they do a lot with family holiday assistance."

Move and Motivate With Mr. Chris

By. Junior Adalen Gilliam

October 27th youth Motivational Speaker Chris "Zondaflex" Tyler introduces his program "Move and Motivate with Mr. Chris" to AIS. Mr. Todd Kelsch says "The assembly is for middle and high school students and introduces a man named Chris Tyler, stage name is 'Mr. Chris'. His program consists of musically driven hip hop music.

The hip hop music serves as basically an energetic element in his assembly and his message is to get active and motivate yourself to do the right things at school, make good choices. It also gives you some expert advice on how to be a successful high school student."



Green Dot: Working to Prevent Interpersonal Violence

By. Junior Adalen Gilliam

Todd Kelsch, FRYSC & Community Education Director here at AIS speaks on Green Dot; a bystander intervention strategy that aims to prevent power-based personal violence, such as sexual assault and dating violence, by teaching individuals to make conscious choices that promote safety, Todd says "Their first meeting was held Oct. 20th. The first meet is always a focus group setting where the Green Dot facilitators will ask students for their input on things they like about the school and things that they may not like about it.

Those comments and suggestions are 100% confidential. The Green Dot facilitators use those answers and suggestions to produce content for the rest of the year. They are scheduled to come back in November for the freshman bystander training, this teaches freshman to identify and mitigate when they see things like bullying, sexual assault, dating violence. Then every month after all high school students will have a booster activity with Green Dot each month, which are simply reinforcements of their main idea and to help produce a safe culture."

Paige McCord new AIS PE Teacher

By. Sophomore J.J Russell



Introducing the new PE teacher here at AIS, Paige McCord. Paige is an AIS graduate from the class of 2015. She says "I went to Eastern Kentucky University and graduated in 2019 with a special elementary education degree. Then COVID hit, so I decided not to teach. That's why I waited forever. I would say coming back to AIS, it's definitely helpful to have some guidance here from people that I know and feel comfortable asking questions. From a learning standpoint I think that's a big pro, being able to come here and having the comfortability of having a family already when you step into your job. So far the year has been pretty good, a little over stimulating going from where I'm used to a classroom environment, with quiet, and you had some time to yourself to do anything you like, but it's been good. You know it gets better every day."

Fall Sports Roundup

By. Junior Adalen Gilliam



The fall sports season is kicking off here at AIS! Many eager coaches share their hopes for the season. High school boys basketball coach Jason Hinson states "We are fairly young and lost a bit of height and size last season. Being young and small will definitely be a challenge for us; one we haven't had within the past couple years. We play extremely hard on defense and I believe our lack of size we make up for in effort and toughness. I expect us to come out and perform at a high level. I believe our energy on the court will turn into a successful season." High school girls basketball coach Daina Bach says "I am very excited to be back on the sidelines coaching this team. We have a very talented group of ladies, and if they keep working as hard as they have for me in practice, I believe we could have a very successful season. It's been fun so far and I am glad to have the opportunity to give back to a program that has given so much to me." High school cheerleading coach Karla Hinson says "I'm excited for the upcoming cheer season. This year we have ten seniors and two freshmen, so next year is definitely a rebuilding. Hopefully by the time districts come around we are ready to compete and bring home a trophy." Pink Panthers girls' basketball coach and Assistant Principle Alison Bach states "Right now we have 15 girls that have been showing up for practices. Last year most of our team was 5th grade, we had one second grader and sixth grader. However this year we have enough to have a third, fourth, and sixth grade team. So it's definitely growing interest and we are very excited about that." Archery Coach Crystal Courts says "Entering the 3rd season, significant improvements in team and individual scoring are anticipated. With a substantial number of returning archers, expectations are elevated. This season, select archers will participate in 3D tournaments for the first time. Key objectives include qualifying for the NASP State Tournament and the All A State Tournament as a team. A successful season is anticipated. Go Panthers!

From the Desk of Superintendent McCane

By. Ms. Lisa McCane

As we move through this exciting time in our district, I wanted to take a moment to share a few important district updates. We truly have many irons in the fire and all focused on building a culture of continuous growth to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed. One of the most significant projects underway is the development of our new four-year Strategic Plan. Recently, we conducted the District Strategic Planning Faculty & Staff Survey and the Family & Parent Survey to gather your valuable input on what's working well, where we can improve, and which priorities should guide our work through the next four years. I want to sincerely thank everyone who took the time to complete these surveys. Your thoughtful feedback will directly shape the goals and strategies in the plan. Together, we will set clear, measurable goals that ensure our mission and daily practices remain aligned to serve students and families at the highest level. As we look to the future, our mission continues to align closely with Kentucky's statewide vision for education, "United We Learn." A key component of this vision is the Portrait of a Graduate, which reflects the essential skills and competencies all students need to thrive in life, career, and college after graduation. To support this work, the district is aligning our Essential Workplace Ethics Program to the vision of Portrait of a Graduate.

This is a community-driven effort designed to prepare students not just for academic success, but for success in every area of life. In our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and academic achievement, the district is also pursuing a state and a federal grant to strengthen reading and math support and to expand after-school programming for students. These opportunities will provide additional resources to help our students grow and reach their full potential. Finally, I'm pleased to share an update on the Multi-Purpose Educational Facility (Gymnasium) Project. The project is currently out to bid, with sealed bids scheduled to be opened on November 6 at 2:00 PM. In the meantime, we have been working closely with the City of Augusta to coordinate the relocation of underground utilities, secure necessary permits, and prepare for construction to begin by the new year. The project is expected to take two years to complete, with an anticipated opening in 2027, a fitting milestone as The Historic Augusta Gymnasium celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2026. I sincerely thank our parents, staff, and community members for their ongoing support and partnership. Your engagement makes all the difference in helping us move forward together. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. Together, we are shaping a strong and successful future for every student at Augusta Independent School!

Kentucky Transitions From ACT to SAT: What Students and Parents Need to Know

By. Principal Robin Kelsch

This year brings a major change for Kentucky high school students: the state has officially switched from using the ACT to the SAT as its required college admissions exam. Beginning this school year, all Kentucky juniors will take the SAT during the school day as part of the state’s accountability testing program.

For many years, the ACT was the familiar standard for Kentucky students, used to measure college readiness and serve as a key component in college admissions and scholarship opportunities. However, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) recently awarded the statewide contract for college admissions testing to the College Board, the organization that administers the SAT.

So What Does This Change Mean for Students and Families?

While both the SAT and ACT are designed to assess a student’s readiness for college, they differ slightly in structure and focus. The SAT emphasizes evidence-based reading, writing, and math, and recently transitioned to a fully digital format. The ACT includes similar content areas but has traditionally been paper-based and includes an optional writing section. The digital SAT is shorter—lasting about two hours and 14 minutes—and uses an adaptive format, meaning the difficulty of questions adjusts based on a student’s performance.

This modernized approach aims to make testing more efficient and personalized while maintaining rigor. So why the change anyway? The decision to switch to the SAT was made after KDE’s review of vendor proposals. Factors such as cost, accessibility, digital readiness, and alignment with state standards played a role in selecting the SAT. Many other states across the country have also transitioned to using the SAT as their statewide assessment in recent years. All Kentucky juniors will take the digital SAT at school during the spring semester—at no cost to students or families. Schools will provide the necessary technology and guidance to ensure students are comfortable with the testing format.

How to Prepare and What College Admissions See:

To help students prepare, the College Board offers free online practice through Khan Academy, which provides personalized study plans, full-length practice tests, and question-by-question feedback. Many schools will also integrate SAT preparation into their instructional plans throughout the year. The SAT is widely accepted by colleges and universities across the United States—just like the ACT. Students can still choose to take both exams if they wish, but the state-provided SAT will meet the requirement for college admissions testing. Most scholarships that previously accepted ACT scores will also accept SAT results.

ACT vs SAT	
<p>SCIENCE</p> <p>NO MATH FORMULAS</p> <p>215 QUESTIONS</p> <p>\$56.50</p> <p>OPTIONAL ESSAY</p>	<p>NO SCIENCE</p> <p>MATH FORMULAS</p> <p>154 QUESTIONS</p> <p>\$54.50</p> <p>OPTIONAL ESSAY</p>

Final Thoughts:

While change can be challenging, this transition offers new opportunities for Kentucky students. The digital SAT reflects the evolving landscape of education and technology, and it ensures that our students are assessed in ways that align with modern college and career expectations. As educators, we are committed to supporting students and parents throughout this transition. With preparation, practice, and a positive mindset, our students will continue to “RISE UP!”—no matter the test format.

Building Strong Foundations: Why Literacy and Math Fluency Matter by 3rd Grade

By: K-8 Principal Alison Bach

In Kentucky, we know that reading and math fluency are the cornerstones of lifelong learning. By the end of 3rd grade (around age 8), students make a big shift, they move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." That means reading isn't just about stories anymore, it's how students learn science, social studies, and even solve word problems in math. Similarly, math fluency, being able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide quickly and accurately, helps students tackle more complex concepts with confidence. Research shows: Students who are not proficient in reading and math by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to struggle academically later on. That's why Kentucky schools, and families, are working together to build strong skills early!

The Science of Reading: What It Means for Families

The Science of Reading tells us how the brain actually learns to read. It's not just memorizing words — it's learning the building blocks of language and sound.

Here's what great readers develop over time:

- **Phonemic Awareness:** Hearing and playing with sounds in words (like rhyming and clapping syllables).
- **Phonics:** Understanding how letters and sounds work together (like "ch" says /ch/).
- **Fluency:** Reading smoothly, with expression and understanding.
- **Vocabulary & Comprehension:** Knowing word meanings and being able to explain what's read.

When parents reinforce these skills at home, reading confidence soars!

At-Home Reading Tips for Families

1. Read Every Day — Even 10 Minutes Helps!

- Let your child choose books that interest them.
- Take turns reading pages aloud or echo read (you read a line, then they repeat).
- Ask questions: "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why do you think that character did that?"

2. Play "Sound Detective"

- Say a word ("cat") and have your child tell you the beginning, middle, and ending sounds. Try silly voices or set a timer for fun challenges!

3. Go on a "Word Hunt"

- Pick a sound pattern (like "th" or "ai") and see how many examples you can find in books, signs, or cereal boxes.

4. Build Reading Fluency

- Re-read favorite books or short passages. Time for one minute, then celebrate smoother reading or higher word count.

5. Make Spelling Fun!

- **Sky Writing:** Write words in the air while saying each letter sound.
- **Word Families:** Group similar words (cat, bat, hat).
- **Rainbow Writing:** Write each word in three colors.

Remember: Progress Starts Small

You don't need hours of study time — short, consistent practice matters most. Celebrate effort, not just correct answers! A simple, "I love how you kept trying!" builds motivation and confidence.

Working together — school and home — we can help every Kentucky child become a fluent reader and confident mathematician by 3rd grade and beyond!

Parent challenge of the Month

Try one of these each week:

- Read together 10 minutes a night.
- Play a math game at dinner.
- Ask your child to teach you one new word or math fact they learned at school.

School calendar**November 26–28: Thanksgiving Break****December 19: Last Day for Students****before Christmas Break****December 22 – January 02: Christmas Break****January 05: Classes Resume****January 19: MLK Day – No School****February 16: Presidents' Day – No School****March 20: PD Day – No School****March 30 – April 03: Spring Break****May 19: Primary Election – No School****May 22: Last Day of School and Graduation****November upcoming events****Nov. 10: Sources of Strength Peer Leader Training: 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.****Nov. 11: Veteran's Day program: 1 p.m.****Nov. 12: Faculty Meeting: 3:15 p.m.****Nov. 13: Board of Education meeting: 6 p.m.****Nov. 14: 4,5,6 Field trip to CMC****Nov. 15: MS Semi-Form Dance: 6:30 p.m.****Nov. 18: Green Dot refresher (9th grade): 8–2:30****Nov. 18: Parent-Teacher Conferences: 4–7 p.m.****Nov. 18: RTA Family Literacy Conferences****Nov. 19: FCA: 3 p.m.****Nov. 20: Breakfast Club: 9 a.m.****Nov. 20: Norma Gerrell Visit****Nov. 21: Norma Gerrell Visit****Nov. 24: PoG/Work Ethics Draft Meeting: 9 a.m.****Nov. 26, 27, & 28: No School-- Thanksgiving Break****Boys Varsity Schedule**

	Opponent	Location	Time
	Orange and Black	Home	6pm
11/15/25	Bracken Co Panorama	Away	TBA
11/20/25	Ripley at School	Away	Noon
12/2/25	Robertson Co	Home	6/7:30
12/5/25	Mason County	Away	6/7:30
12/6/25	St. Patrick	Home	Noon

Girls Varsity Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
11/15/25	West Union @Bracken	Away	10 am
11/25/25	Ripley Ohio BGDH	Away	Noon
12/1/25	Newport Central Cath	Away	6/7:30
12/3/25	Dayton	Home	6/7:30
12/5/25	Mason Co	Away	6/7:30
12/8/25	Robertson Co	Home	6/7:30

Newsletter Staff

Advisor: Christy Hoots

Editor: Adalen Gilliam

Reporters: Jossten Shaff, JJ Russell, Elizabeth Jackson

Photographers: Ashlyn Sargent, Kennede Tucker

AIS "HERO"



H: Averi Brewer:

Mr. Tanner Kelsch states "Averi is a hardworking student showing this with her consistent effort, engagement within the class, persistence leadership, and problem solving abilities."



E: Remington Harding:

Ms. Dean states "Remington is very enthusiastic with his friends and always greeting people with hugs in the halls. He's also enthusiastic for his learning, participating with our lessons, following along, and making sure that his teachers are seeing him doing a great job."

R: Dylan Hatcher:

Ms. Mckibben states "In College Algebra, Dylan stands out for his conscientious work, honesty, and one-of-a-kind personality that always keeps things interesting."



O: Robert Smith:

Ms. Habermehl states "He always notices anytime I'm wearing new clothes or have a different car. He's just very quick to see and ask about new things."





Nurse News

WINTER WELLNESS EDITION



NURSE'S CORNER

Cold weather and low humidity mean a rise in respiratory viruses like colds, the flu, and covid. These three viruses share many of the same symptoms making it difficult to know which one you have. Colds tend to have the most mild symptoms of the three and are not generally associated with serious complications. The symptoms of flu and covid range from mild to severe and can be associated with serious health complications. It is important to stay home if you are sick to prevent spreading the viruses to others.



DID YOU KNOW?

Cold germs can live on surfaces up to 24 hours and can live on your hands for up to one hour.

The influenza (flu) virus can live for 24 to 48 hours on hard surfaces.

The coronavirus can live from a few hours to a few days on hard surfaces.

TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY

- Get your flu and covid vaccines
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects

**THE #1 WAY TO STAY HEALTHY IS TO
WASH YOUR HANDS!**



Wash them often using soap and water. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails and scrub for at least 20 seconds.

KEY DIFFERENCES

Flu typically comes on suddenly with a high fever, severe body aches, and significant fatigue. Symptoms can last 1-2 weeks.

COVID-19 often involves more variability in symptoms, with loss of taste/smell and more severe respiratory issues. Symptoms can last 1-2 weeks but fatigue can linger for much longer.



Cold symptoms are generally milder with sneezing, a runny nose, and a sore throat, lasting 3-7 days. Colds are not usually associated with severe fatigue or a high fever.

AUGUSTA INDEPENDENT

After School Tutoring

Tuesdays & Thursdays
3-4 P.M.
Mrs. Hoots' room

WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- Math
- ELA
- Science
- Social Studies

Beginning Nov .4

AIS DRAMA PRESENTS:

JUNIE B. JONES

JINGLE BELLS
BATMAN SMELLS

STILL NEED CREW MEMBERS!

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

WHEN: MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, & FRIDAYS

WHERE: MRS. HOOTS ROOM

*** AUGUSTA ***
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

VETERANS DAY PROGRAM

**NOVEMBER 11, 2025
1:00 PM**

GUEST SPEAKER: US Marine Corps Veteran
& Third Grade Parent Justin Hurst

Special performances by AIS Marching
Band, AIS JROTC & AIS Elementary Students

AIS VETERANS DAY PROGRAM IS OPEN TO THE
PUBLIC AND OUR LOCAL HEROES ARE
ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND AND WILL BE HONORED

😊 **ATTENDANCE BOWL**

FALL REGION 9 ATTENDANCE COMPETITION

SCORING

EACH WEEK ALL OF THE DISTRICTS WILL BE COMPETING AGAINST EACH OTHER. THE REGION THAT HAS THE HIGHEST ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE WILL RECEIVE 10 POINTS, DOWN TO LAST PLACE WHICH WILL RECEIVE 0 POINTS. THIS WILL GIVE US A WEEKLY WINNER!

WEEK AFTER WEEK THESE POINTS BUILD. AFTER ALL FOUR WEEKS THE, DISTRICT WITH THE HIGHEST TOTAL POINTS WILL BE THE WINNER OF THE FALL REGION 9 ATTENDANCE COMPETITION!

WEEKLY THEME

- WEEK 1 - (OCT 27 - OCT 31) HALLOWEEN BOWL
- WEEK 2 - (NOV 3 - NOV 7) ELECTION BOWL
- WEEK 3 - (NOV 10 - NOV 14) VETERANS BOWL
- WEEK 4 - (NOV 17 - NOV 21) THANKSGIVING BOWL