The Student Experience *at Aberdeen Public Schools*







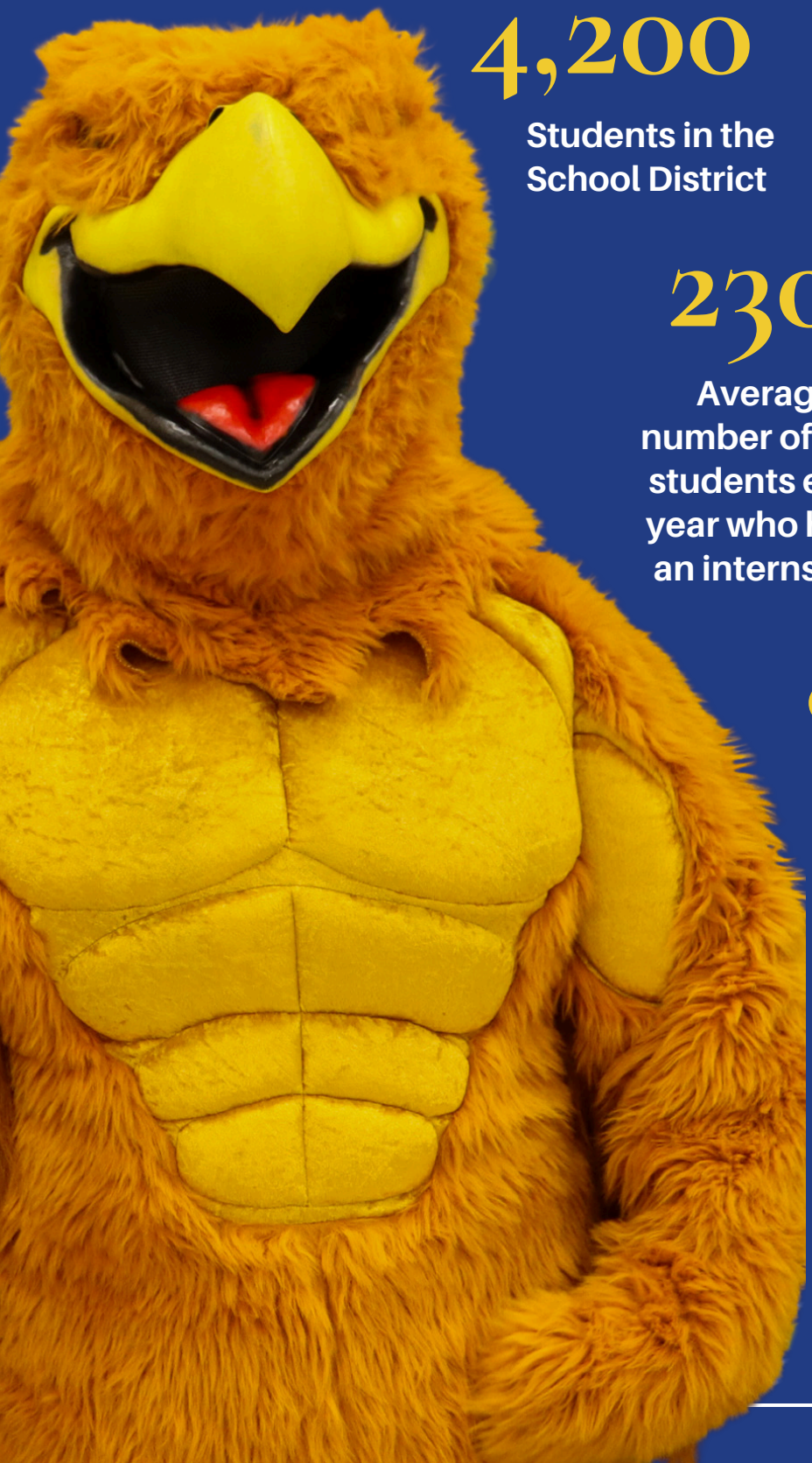


ABERDEEN
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Empowering all students to succeed in a changing world.

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By the Numbers



4,200

Students in the School District

230

Average number of CHS students each year who have an internship



95% Central High School graduation rate

16

CTE career clusters at ATEC



9 Schools in the district: six elementary, two middle, one high school

There's No Place Like Home

Central Show Choir performance features Aberdeen's Storybook Land





Photos by CHS Show Choir Parents

For Central High School's Show Choir, there's no place like home—this year's Eagle Express show features a magical trip through Aberdeen's Storybook Land and the Land of Oz.

CHS Show Choir Director Susan Appl said they initially planned a different show, but then fellow Show Choir Director Jenna Hansen mentioned it's the 125th anniversary of "The Wonderful World of Oz." Choreographer Kevin Chase kept coming back to the idea, and they decided on a Storybook Land theme that incorporated the Land of Oz.

(continued next page)

Show Choir continued

"It's coincidental that it's also the 50th anniversary of Storybook Land this year," Appl said. "The stars all aligned."

For Eagle Express students, it provides a more personal experience for their performance this year.

"It's very personal because growing up in Aberdeen, Storybook Land is this very magical place," said CHS junior Cadynce German.

German encouraged people of all ages to come out and see Central's show.

"It's kind of a moment for us to show off our talent and how hard we've worked since September," she said.



Eagle Express will perform at the CHS Theatre the following dates:
·Valentine's Bistro: Feb. 16 and 17 at 7 p.m. both nights.
·March 14: Center Stage at 10 a.m.
·March 16: Final Bow (parents only)

German is in her sixth year as part of show choir—three years in middle school and three years at Central—and she said she likes the opportunities to get to know everyone involved.



"In show choir, a lot of people are involved to make it happen, so you get to know a lot of different people," she said.

She would encourage anyone considering show choir to go for it.

"I would say just do it because there is not another opportunity like this outside of high school," German said. "... We're always welcoming of new people, and you're going to get to know people in all grades."

Reading to Lead

Literacy committee aims to build confident readers

A team of Aberdeen Public School District educators has been working hard behind the scenes to improve outcomes in reading and writing among students.

The Aberdeen Public Schools Literacy Committee is made up of a small group of elementary teachers and administrators, all working toward the goals of the district's elementary literacy plan.

"The main goal is building confident readers—increasing the student's ability to read fluently, to comprehend written text," said Bailey Mohr, Elementary Instructional Coach/Coordinator for Aberdeen Public Schools.

Specifically, the goals of the plan are:

- Increase student ability to read fluently and to comprehend written text and spoken language.
- Build confident readers.
- Increase assessment proficiency on standardized assessments.
- Provide a consistent tiered system of reading support across the district.
- Expand reading strategies for all K-5 students.
- Reduce Tier 3 referrals.
- Provide early reading interventions within the least restrictive environment.



Communication between teachers and families is a big part of the plan, Mohr said.

The district's literacy plan aligns with a statewide literacy initiative, as well as a nationwide focus on the science of reading.

"Literacy is unbelievably important, and it all starts in elementary school," Mohr said. "Students learn foundational reading skills starting in kindergarten and then continue to build on those skills throughout school with the goal of becoming confident readers who comprehend what they read. The foundational reading skills include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension."

When it comes to literacy, parents play an important role.

"Reading with your child is very important but also paying attention to where your child is at in their reading journey," Mohr said.

They can also reach out to teachers. "Our teachers are eager to work with parents on how to improve students' reading skills," she said.

Making Math Fun

Number Ninjas expands to all Aberdeen Public elementary schools



This fall, the Number Ninjas program expanded to all six elementary schools in the Aberdeen Public School District.

The school district even held its first-ever elementary Number Ninjas competition--with135 students in grades 3-5 attending!

The event was held at O.M. Tiffany Elementary.

Number Ninjas is an after-school program for elementary schools, where students can earn ninja belts as they master their math skills.

The Number Ninjas program even expanded to elementary schools outside of the school district, including Aberdeen Christian, Roncalli and Warner.

The Number Ninjas program is similar to MathCounts at the middle school level.

Also this falll, students from Holgate Middle School and Simmons Middle School competed in various MathCounts events.

Both programs are a way to make math fun for our students!



Every Student Belongs

Simmons Middle School offers Inclusive PE Class

A new physical education class at Simmons Middle School is fostering student friendships and creating a culture of inclusivity at the school.

Inclusive Physical Education at Simmons includes general education eighth graders and special education students in sixth through eighth grades.

The class is a collaboration between Physical Education and Health Teacher Cassidy Neer and Special Education Achieve Teacher Chelsea Ashmore, who got the idea after seeing several instances of their students showing empathy for their classmates.

"We saw a lot of examples of kids having that natural skillset to include," Neer said.

This fall was the first semester Simmons offered the Inclusive PE class. Students alternate between working together in the health classroom and in the gym, with activities centered around friendship, kindness and wellness.

"I look forward to this time of my day," Neer said. "It challenges us to adjust and adapt and make it engaging for all the students. I've had a lot of fun with it and I'm so honored that we even get the chance to do something like this."

Neer said they do activities that everyone can participate in. It's important to give special education



students an opportunity to not only be in the class, but to be a big part of the class.

"I think that gives them an identity and it gives them a place of belonging," she said, "because they deserve to have that feeling."

The general education eighth-grade students who are in the Inclusive PE class chose to be part of the class rather than a traditional PE option.

"The kids are here because they want to be," Neer said. "They chose to be in here. When they show up every day smiling, it could light up any room. But it's so cool to see their leadership. That is truly intrinsic."

Ashmore said they have seen students who haven't shown leadership in other areas who now step up to be a leader in Inclusive PE.

They also see students spreading that empathy and inclusivity into their other classes as well.

Inclusion is something Neer and Ashmore would like to make the standard at Simmons.

"We don't want to do it from time to time, we want to do it every single day," Neer said. "... Just normalizing inclusion. That's our biggest thing."

Career and Technical Education

ATEC Academy students qualify for SkillsUSA Nationals



When Aberdeen Central seniors Porter Kolb and Conner Miller decided to enter the SkillsUSA competition for the first time, they had no idea it would take them all the way to the national stage.

"It was just the state competition," explained Kolb, adding that it was only a three-hour drive away.

But then Kolb won first place in Auto Service Technology, and Miller won first place in Auto Maintenance and Light Repair. Suddenly, they were heading to nationals.

Last summer, Kolb and Miller traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to participate in the Nationals SkillsUSA competition, held June 23-27.

The national competition was a much more massive event, held at the Atlanta Falcons stadium and the 2 million-square-foot Olympic Center.

"It was pretty crazy," Kolb said. "I think they said 18,000 people were there—the biggest turnout they had yet."

The competition included a large vendor fair, as well as companies recruiting for different jobs. This was the students' first time in Atlanta, and they also got to visit sites near the competition location, including the World of Coca-Cola Museum.

Both students enjoyed the overall experience, but they won't be competing again this school year because they planned to graduate early.

After high school, Kolb plans to go into agricultural diesel. Miller plans to get a job in town, potentially at Lust Auto Body, where he interned.

The students said taking classes at Central's ATEC Academy has helped lead to their success.

Miller said it gave them the opportunity to gain a lot of experience working in the auto shop.

"ATEC gives you the ability to try out a lot of different fields for a semester, see what you like, and see what you can learn from it," Kolb said.

To other students considering entering the SkillsUSA competition, they offered advice.

"Just try your hardest and don't let other people get to you," Miller said.

"Just do it," Kolb said. "You're probably not going to regret it. Even if you don't love it, you're not going to regret it."

ATEC Academy, located at Aberdeen Central High School, offers advanced technical and specialized courses that prepare students for college and/or careers.

TLC Program helps SPED students transition into adulthood

When Malachi Bratton was a sophomore at Aberdeen Central, his parents suggested he could take a gap year after high school before starting college.

"I found out I could do TLC," Bratton said, "and decided that would be a good thing."

Now 18, Bratton started in the Aberdeen Public School District's TLC Program last fall, and he's really enjoying it.

"It's helping me learn stuff I need to know for when I'm on my own," he said.



That's one of the main goals of the district's TLC Program, which stands for Transition Learning Community. The program is open to any special education student up to age 21 who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and has met all the requirements of high school, said Aberdeen Public Schools SPED TLC Teacher Hannah Davis.

The TLC program focuses on employment skills, vocational skills, independent living, and recreation and leisure. It also focuses on understanding the community and the resources and services available to students as they transition into adulthood.

Currently, about 20 students are enrolled in the TLC Program, which is located in the District Service Center.

Davis said the program is flexible and can be tailored to the needs of each student, whether they plan to head to college or the workforce, or if they need a lot more support.

"The school district can be that team member and connect and guide families, depending on the goal," Davis said. "It's a very wide range of abilities and students."

In the classroom, students work on independent living skills, recreation and leisure, and community exploration. For the employment side of the program, TLC partners with S.D. Vocational Rehabilitation's Project Skills, a paid work experience program for students with disabilities.

Another component of the program is the TLC Golden Talon Coffee Shop. Throughout the school year, TLC students offer a pop-up coffee shop in the Simmons Middle School lobby.

"Our coffeeshop is huge because that encompasses so much learning," Davis said.

The coffee shop also does delivery style coffee along with the pop-up style.

"It's really fun," she said. "I love it."

Student internships in the classroom and community





For an hour every morning last spring, Aberdeen Central junior Emma Joachim stepped out of her role as a high school student and into her role as a middle school classroom intern.

Joachim interned for Mrs. Carolyn Geyer, seventh-grade language arts teacher at Holgate Middle School. The internship experience helped Joachim on her journey toward narrowing down her future career path.

Approximately 50-60 CHS students participate in the Aberdeen Public School District Internship Program each term, totaling about 230 internships per school year.

Students like Joachim who are considering education can intern in an Aberdeen Public Schools classroom. Others can get hands-on experience at a variety of local businesses. Bailey Hovel was one of those students who interned out in the community last spring as a senior. Hovel had an internship at the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce, and she said it was an invaluable experience.

"Just seeing how much that they interact with the community has been so eye-opening," Hovel said.

She said it's very useful to have an internship as a high school student. Working with the Aberdeen Chamber made her more civic-minded.

Geyer said the internship program benefits students because it provides exposure to a career area that interests them.

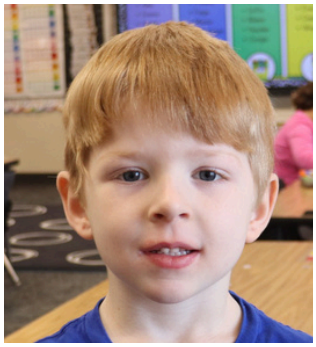
"I think that is so beneficial for the kids—whether it's in here with education or out in the community doing something else—when they can actually experience it," she said.

> I think that is so beneficial for the kids—whether it's in here with education or out in the community doing something else—when they can actually experience it.
>
> ***Mrs. Carolyn Geyer***

Golden Eagle Kindergarten Quotes

Aberdeen Public Schools offers a supportive, nurturing kindergarten environment. But don't take our word for it—check out what our students had to say!

Watch the video!



WESTON

"You're going to love kindergarten.



EMMA

"It's going to be okay. Kindergarten is nice."



HAYDEN

"The best part of kindergarten is about learning and sharing."



PAIGE

"Kindergarten is fun."

Golden Eagle Student Success Quotes



AMNA GEORGE

STATE DEBATE CHAMPION

"Being a Golden Eagle has helped me so much. I've been involved in so much in school, but that's also because of the people. ... I like being involved in our school because people are so nice."



ESTEN FOSS

MILITARY ACADEMY PRINCIPAL NOMINEE

"I am extremely honored to represent my school, state, and country at the U.S. Military Academy, and I look forward to upholding their motto of Duty, Honor, and Country for the next four years and beyond."



AGLAIA RAMEY

FULL SCHOLARSHIP TO NOTRE DAME

"Try to challenge yourself. ... You might as well do as well as you can. I think everybody should do as well as they can in what they do because that just makes the most opportunities open."

Join Us



Golden Eagle Pride

Our school spirit runs deep. Students, staff and community unite with enthusiasm, tradition and a shared commitment to excellence. Once a Golden Eagle, always a Golden Eagle!

Learn With Us.

Since 1887, families have trusted us as the top choice for empowering every student to succeed. We're excited to have you join the Aberdeen Public Schools family!



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