



Michael Renkawitz, *Principal*
Dr. Diana DeVivo, *Assistant Principal*
David Kimball, *Assistant Principal*
Todd Dyer, *Director of School Counseling*
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August 24, 2021

Dear Avon High School Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2021-22 school year! I hope you and your family are well and safe.

In our letter to staff last week we shared that we are thankful for the coming school year. We compared it to the Thanksgiving holiday. Here is an excerpt from our staff letter that certainly applies to our students, as well.

*We're feeling thankful that everyone is "coming home" to AHS in a few days. With **no remote option**, we get to be under one roof once again! The "house" will be full and lively with everyone excited to see one another and get caught up, in person! Students are excited to "eat up" what you teach and digest their learning. Our favorite "family games" will be played, as after school activities resume in person, albeit with some limitations. The coming school year is a time for celebration. And we are ready to celebrate your return.*

An exciting part of our job is hiring new staff members. We are pleased to introduce new hires and reintroduce some veterans who are returning to AHS.

New Staff

- Jessica Bursztyn will serve in two roles for AHS and the district. Jessica will teach two classes of Mandarin Chinese and two sections of ELL at AHS, in addition to supporting the ELL program at other schools. Jessica recently earned her teaching certification through the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program. Jessica replaces Lauren Drazen who resigned to spend more time on her business interests.
- Juliann Iaiennaro joins us as a business teacher. AJ Schrag resigned in July to take a teaching position at the Academy of Information and Technology Education in Stamford. Juliann has worked in the Wallingford, Danbury, and Stratford Public schools as a teacher and administrator. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Naugatuck Valley Community College.

- Jessica Kolakoski replaces Beth Tormay in the office. Beth retired at the end of June. Jessica has extensive experience as an administrative assistant in the private sector.
- Dennis Landry is our new food services manager. Dennis is an experienced manager who replaces Norah Pompa who retired in June.
- Kim Schlosser, new to AHS, but not to APS, transferred from the central office to be the Athletics administrative assistant. Kim replaces Alison Locasio, who transferred to the business department at the central office.
- Brendan Smith will also teach in the Business Department. You may recall that Brendan was a paraeducator for two years here, earning his teaching certification through the ARC program and student teaching with us last spring.

Returning Staff

- Jill VanSlooten, visual arts teacher, rejoins us after a year of battling cancer and getting healthy. She wishes to extend a sincere thank you for all the cards, well wishes, gifts, and thoughtfulness many of you shared with her.
- Cara Boland returns to the AHS School Counseling Department. Cara had left the area and upon her return was assigned to AMS the past few years. The addition of a school counselor to the AHS staff reduces the caseloads for our counselors to be more in line with other Farmington Valley schools.
- Tim Feshler returns to AHS to support the Wellness Department. Beginning with the class of 2023, our juniors, the increased graduation requirements include 1.0 credits of Health and Safety. The class of 2023 begins the concept of a Wellness component each of the four years that students are in high school.
- Cari Genovese requested a return to AHS upon learning of Tim Curtis's retirement. Cari rejoins the social studies department to teach World History and Civics.

Again, I trust that you have seen our updated reopening plans and our quick reference mitigation strategies for the 2021-2022 school year that were shared out earlier. You can access the updates on the district website under the heading [2021-2022 Mitigation Strategies](#).

In addition to those strategies, we are once again offering families the option for excused late arrival and excused early dismissal for all students. This strategy allows us to reduce the number of students entering and exiting the school at one time. If there is a study hall or senior block in period 1 (A,C), 2 (B,C), 7 (A,C), and/or 8 (B,C), and you can provide your own transportation. Complete the [21-22 Semester 1 Excused late arrival/early dismissal application](#). The change will take effect when it appears in the student schedule.

The [arrival and dismissal \(parent drop off/pick up\) area and procedures](#) remain the same as last year. Please review the process if this applies to your situation.

We are also providing you with the [various period schedules](#) that may be used during the course of the year.

Again, welcome to the 2021-22 school year! Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

Dr. DeVivo

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Avon High School

Mr. Kimball

David Kimball
Assistant Principal
Avon High School

Mr. Renkawitz

Michael Renkawitz
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(AHS Gallery, from Jill Van Slooten)