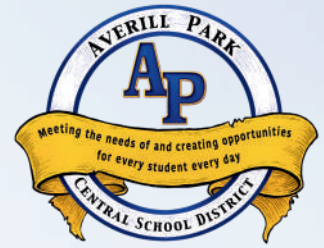


Averill Park

FALL/WINTER 2023



Creating a Pipeline: Recent Grads Hired in Transportation

Every high school senior must answer one big question during their final year while attending the Averill Park Central School District. What's next?

For some, it's college. Others join the military or take a gap year. And others want to join the workforce immediately.

Two recent graduates of Averill Park High School found their next venture right across Gettle Road, at the bus garage.

Anthony Spath ('22) and Chuck Emery ('23) were hired by the Transportation Department as Mechanic Assistants right out of high school. Both former students were part of the Automotive Program at APHS, which is one of the few high schools around to offer an in-house program while others use services from Questar III BOCES.

"Both of those guys are working out really well. They get hands-on learning right out of school from one of the best auto technicians around," Transportation Director Mark Premo said, referring to Head Mechanic Brett Lesson.

Both Premo and Lesson are also Averill Park CSD graduates, as are many of those working in the Transportation Department. Lesson attended the Questar III BOCES automotive program in high school and went to Ohio Technical College. He spent 10 years working at a Chevy dealership before coming back to Averill Park CSD, where he has worked for the past 12 years. He also serves on the Questar III BOCES Automotive Advisory Board.

Emery is in his first year working for the Transportation Department and is tasked with cleaning up the shop, performing DOT bus washes, as well as doing lighter washes. He'll spend time shadowing Lesson this year before advancing to other areas.

"I'm enjoying it so far," Emery said. "It's a good resume builder and it's been fun learning." Spath is in his second year and is doing light mechanic work, including oil changes and brake work.

"I like the hands-on learning," Spath said. "I've been learning a lot here. It's been pretty cool." Both Spath and Emery stated that their time working in the automotive program in high school prepared them well for joining the workforce after graduating.



Pictured from left is Head Mechanic Brett Lesson and Mechanic Assistants Anthony Spath and Chuck Emery.



Students created leaf rubbings at Miller Hill-Sand Lake Elementary School during the fall.

MTSS Efforts Support Elementary Students

In order to continue to meet the needs of its younger students, the Averill Park Central School District is participating in a state-wide grant to support MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) efforts across all three elementary schools.

This work is part of an MTSS-I grant the district received in January 2022. APCSD was one of 29 school districts selected and administrators began implementing the program over the summer.

The focus of the grant is to support the district and its three elementary schools in building a consistent MTSS support structure, which focuses on the academic and behavioral needs of all elementary level students.

This year, the program will focus on behavioral supports and each elementary school has created a Building Implementation Team, which is charged with creating a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system. Next year, the focus will shift to academic support structures.

Additionally, the grant provides the district with a MTSS coach from SUNY Albany who provides professional development for the district and building teams.

The purpose of the work with the grant is to develop an integrated support system that focuses on the “whole child” which encompasses both the academic and social and emotional needs of each student.

Behind the Re-Naming of the District Mascot

In 2022, the New York State Board of Regents approved rules prohibiting the use of indigenous names, mascots, and logos by school districts. This included the name “Warriors” which is used by the Averill Park Central School District, due to the fact that at one point the name was associated with Native American imagery.

School districts must comply with the directive or face having state education funding withheld.

At the beginning of the school year, Averill Park CSD created a student-led panel which has met to discuss possible names. The panel has also discussed the importance of having a school mascot related to the nickname, whether certain names can create more student engagement, and many other topics.

The panel is planning to visit each school building to present to both staff and students, and will deliver a presentation at the District’s next Community Engagement Night on Dec. 13, 2023.

Additionally, be on the lookout for a survey which will be used to obtain community feedback regarding potential names.



A panel of high school students discusses the mascot name change.

New Grants Aimed at Improving School Climate

After being shut down due to budget cuts, Algonquin Middle School brought back its popular CARES program recently using federal funds with the goal of deepening the connection between students and their school, while improving student academic performance.

Students work with teachers in small groups to work on their study skills and upcoming tests and quizzes. In total, 48 students are able to participate in this free program and it has been popular among students, and successful for their academic growth.

Additionally, AMS was awarded a \$50,000 grant for Dynamic Mindfulness. The grant provides training that will ultimately result in students seeing decreased stress with an increase in focus, self-control, and empathy.



Capital Project Update

In October 2021, the Averill Park CSD community approved a \$28.5 million Capital Project that focused on infrastructure, safety and security.

Over the summer, large pieces of the project were completed, including roofing replacements, along with security upgrades at Algonquin Middle School and Averill Park High School.

The project is currently in the design phase for the next part of the project, which will focus on work at all three elementary schools.

Much of the Capital Project is dedicated to items that are not typically seen by the general public, but are essential to keeping doors open for students to learn each day.



A big part of Phase 1 of the Capital Project included replacing roofs. The roof at the High School had extensive work done over the summer.

Work Completed Through Summer

APHS

- Roof Restoration
- Main Entry Vestibule
- Bus Atrium - HVAC
- Main Office - HVAC
- District Office - HVAC
- Restrooms - Ventilation
- Water Treatment System
- Cafeteria Kitchen
- Gym Bleachers
- Security Hardware

AMS

- Roof Restoration
 - Fire Alarm Upgrades
 - Chimney Reconstruction
 - Main Entry Vestibule
 - Main Office Reconfigure
 - Security Hardware
 - Boiler / Hot Water Tank
 - Select Door Replacement
- ### Bus Garage
- Complete Roof Restoration

Work Planned for 2023-24

APHS

- Athletic Press Box
- Cafeteria Serving Line
- Water Filtration System
- Emergency Generator
- Courtyard Drainage

All Buildings

- Safety and Security Upgrades

Mechanics

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“Chuck is doing a great job and Anthony is very mechanically inclined,” Premo said. “They want to learn, which is all we can ask for.”

Premo and Lesson are happy to have good help in the department and look forward to seeing the younger employees grow.

“They’re both young, and being a bus mechanic is unique. It’s a specialized area,” Lesson added. “By getting these guys in when they’re young, we’re able to make sure that they don’t form the bad habits of taking shortcuts. The Department of Transportation comes in to inspect buses every six months and they look the bus over inside and out. Everything has to be perfect, so we can’t overlook anything. These guys will form good habits by working hard and being detail oriented.”

Premo hopes that he can create a pipeline of workers over time, coming from the automotive department at the high school to the district’s Transportation Department. Starting out as Mechanic Assistants allows recent graduates to learn, earn a paycheck, enroll in a state pension plan, and possibly work their way up to full-time mechanics when a position opens up.

Premo, himself, started as a mechanic before rising through the ranks to become the Transportation Supervisor.

“It’s a good profession and these young guys can do whatever they want in the future,” Lesson said. “We’re giving them a chance to learn and grow.”

What they do from there is up to them.

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Leveling Up in CTE

Construction Class Gets New Equipment Through Partnership With APEF

Students in the Construction class at Averill Park High School have a new piece of equipment in the shop that can create a wide range of products.

The District partnered with the Averill Park Education Foundation to bring the new Laguna CNC Router to APHS. The machine can create pieces from wood, plastics, composites, and non-ferrous metals. It can create anything from signs to furniture pieces or musical instruments, and even baseball bats with its attachable lathe. The possibilities are endless.

Not only can the machine create interesting class projects, it will also expand students' knowledge on precision machining which is invaluable if any of them decide to enter the manufacturing workforce after high school.

Food Banks In Need

All five school buildings in the Averill Park Central School District have food bank programs used to assist students and families in need.

At the elementary level there is a Backpack Program, where students are sent home on Friday afternoons with food for the weekend. At the middle school and high school levels, students are able to pick out the food they'd like to take with them.

Over the years, the programs have continued to run with the help of community donations, staff contributions deducted from their paycheck, and more.

In order to make the program work, the District relies heavily on Mrs. Ferlito's class of students who are learning early employment skills. The students travel by school bus to the Regional Food Bank on Wednesdays to pick up food, sort it into backpacks, and deliver it to the elementary school buildings on Fridays.

While the Regional Food Bank has a wide variety of supplies for school districts to distribute, it does not carry fresh fruit in the winter time. It also doesn't have gluten free options that some students may need. There is always a need for donations and anyone who would like to donate to the program can visit www.regionalfoodbank.net. Community members could also donate directly to the school district. If you would like to donate, gift cards are welcome for any grocery store so those who run the program can purchase specific items that are needed at a given time. If you would like to donate a gift card, please bring it to the main office of any school building and write "food bank" on it.

Assistance is needed to sustain this very important program moving forward and any donations community members can provide would be greatly appreciated.

