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AVON GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**  
TO THE COMMUNITY

Changing Gears for Future Years



# A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Avon Grove Community,

At Avon Grove School District (AGSD), our aim is to cultivate a learning environment where students acquire the skills essential for leading successful and meaningful lives. The 2022-23 Annual Report showcases our dedicated efforts, highlighting remarkable achievements and initiatives implemented throughout the District last year. Beginning the school year with the opening of the brand-new Avon Grove High School (AGHS) in September 2022 marked a significant milestone that we are incredibly proud to have reached. Avon Grove students for years to come will benefit from the innovative and inspiring space, designed with *all* learners in mind. The year continued with success across disciplines as we made notable academic improvements driven by our Comprehensive Plan and the Profile of a Future Ready Avon Grove Graduate. We recognize that our success is not possible without the trust of our community, and I sincerely thank you for your continued support of AGSD.



Respectfully,

**Dr. M. Christopher Marchese**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

## MISSION

The purpose of Avon Grove School District is to foster a learning environment in which all students are exceptionally well prepared to succeed and lead full and meaningful lives.

## VISION

All Avon Grove students are well prepared to create their futures.





# Facilities Strategic Initiative

The Facilities Strategic Initiative made progress on several projects during the 2022-23 school year, including the completion of the Avon Grove High School construction and the start of the Avon Grove Middle School renovation.

Avon Grove High School welcomed staff and students to the new building on September 6, 2022. While the classroom portion of the building and cafeteria were fully operational, work continued throughout the fall to complete the auditorium, gymnasiums, fitness center and learning stairs. Once the remaining interior projects were completed, construction shifted to finish exterior work that included landscaping, signage and the completion of Waltman Way and the Jennersville Road intersection.

On April 13, 2023, the District held a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony featuring speeches from Superintendent Dr. Marchese, School Board President Bonnie Wolff, and High School Principal Dr. Christie Snead, with local and state government officials also in attendance. The District also hosted two open houses in April, where over 600 community members had the opportunity to tour the building and learn about how the spaces would be used.

Renovations in the new Avon Grove Middle School (former high school building) began in summer 2022 and continued through summer 2023.

## Middle School Renovations

- ▶ **A new roof for the entire building.**
- ▶ **A new heating, ventilation, air-conditioning (HVAC) system.**
- ▶ **Bathrooms throughout the building received new plumbing, fixtures, lighting and tile.**
- ▶ **The main entrance was moved to the main office space where it was reconfigured to feature a monitored, secure vestibule and provide support space for conference rooms, building administrators and staff.**
- ▶ **In the auditorium, the carpet, seats and lighting were updated and a sound booth was added.**
- ▶ **Lighting was also updated in the gymnasiums, classrooms, offices and hallways.**
- ▶ **Hallways, classrooms and student lockers were painted.**
- ▶ **A technology education classroom was renovated to provide two team rooms to be used by AGSD and visiting athletic teams during practices and competitions.**



# Facilities **Moving Forward**

In the spring of 2023, AGSD entered into a 20-year lease with the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) to operate programs from the Fred S. Engle (FSE) building as a new southern Chester County campus. The campus will be the home of several programs that serve both students in the District and outside of the District, including special education, Head Start and migrant education services. As part of this partnership, the facility is set to undergo a \$12,000,000 renovation. The CCIU is funding the renovation and AGSD families will benefit from access to high-quality services provided right on our campus. Additionally, the District office will be relocated to this site in the spring of 2025.

## Changing Gears for Future Years Comprehensive Plan

The 2022-23 school year marked the implementation of the new 2022-25 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a framework for planning, rooted in data and research, that aims to chart the most effective course for the District to support both students and staff.

In order to ensure that the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are met, the District established an Accelerating Growth Plan. The plan includes action teams that are tasked with evaluating the current systems and developing strategic improvement plans based on the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.



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### **HIGH-QUALITY ACADEMICS**

The focus on high-quality academics includes three strategies: create authentic outcomes and experiences for students that are aligned with the Profile of a Future Ready Avon Grove Graduate, provide equitable access to all learning and co-curricular experiences, and offer teachers a choice and voice in the professional learning process.

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### **SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

The effort to foster supportive learning environments includes three strategies: create safe and inclusive spaces for learning, increase the sense of belonging and relationship connections for students, and align systems related to student health and wellness with the most recent research.

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### **HEALTHY SYSTEMS CONDITIONS**

The third and final goal to establish healthy systems conditions includes two strategies: improve operational conditions to support student growth, and represent the diversity of the AGSD community within the AGSD workforce.

## Future Ready PA Index

### 2022-23 Act 13 Building Level Score

Avon Grove High School  
**84.6**

Fred S. Engle Middle School  
**76.5**

Avon Grove Intermediate  
School  
**85.2**

## High-Quality Academics

The Act 13 Building Level Score for evaluating educator effectiveness is comprised of student growth and assessment data, as well as attendance rate and graduation rate data, and is adjusted based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a school. All three AGSD schools received scores at least five points or higher above the Chester County average.

According to the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System for measuring student growth, AGSD students in grades 4-11 achieved “meets” or “exceeds” in 14 of the 17 areas tested. In addition, student scores were well above the state growth standards in 12 of the areas tested.

## Supportive Learning Environments



### Positive Behavior Intervention Support

Penn London Elementary School (PLES) and Avon Grove Intermediate School (AGIS) implemented schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) programs at the onset of the 2022-23 school year. The programs focused on expected behaviors in the cafeteria, at recess, in the hallways, on the bus, in the bathroom, at arrival and dismissal, and in the classroom. The expected behaviors include how to take care of yourself, others, and our school at PLES and how to be respectful, responsible and safe at AGIS. Acknowledgement systems using Bucket Bucks at PLES and tickets at AGIS were implemented to reward students for demonstrating expected behaviors. As goals were reached, incentives were provided.



### Language Immersion Program

At the start of the 2022-23 school year, AGSD implemented a dual language immersion program to aid students in the development of bilingualism and biliteracy. In each classroom, half of the students are native speakers of English and the other half are native speakers of Spanish. Similarly, half of the students' instructional day is conducted in English and half is conducted in Spanish. The inaugural year of the program enrolled a total of 44 kindergarten students and was considered a major success. The District measured parent satisfaction with the program and the results indicated that 100% of parents believe that it had a positive impact on their child's language development. Additionally, 97% said they would recommend the program.



### BELIEVE Program

The BELIEVE program launched in the 2022-23 school year to provide an apartment-simulated classroom in Avon Grove High School where students ages 18-21 can learn transition skills with the goal of independent living upon completion of the program. Eight students participated in the program, which includes Community Based Instruction (CBI) and work-based learning through the AGSD EMPOWER program. BELIEVE also generates revenue for the District, serving students out of the District for a fee.

# Healthy Systems Conditions

## Financial Performance

The AGSD General Fund budget supports the educational, administrative and facilities operations of the District. The 2022-23 budget was \$106,487,990, and included a real estate tax increase of 1.73%. This real estate tax increase supported the fourth year of debt service millage for the high school construction project (0.95%), continued support for the required PSERS contribution rate (0.48%), and a minimal increase for operational costs (0.30%).

Notably, the 2022-23 fiscal year tax increase included the final millage increase needed to support the high school construction and middle school renovation projects. At the start of the project planning process, a total of 2.86 mills was estimated to be required to fund the project, which was initially projected to be levied over a period of five years. Due to a combination of strategic planning, the successful approval and receipt of PlanCon funding, and favorable market rates, the District was able to fund the projects with a cumulative millage increase of only 2.06 mills over a four-year period, or 28% less than anticipated.

Throughout 2022-23, the District was fortunate to realize higher tax collections and other revenue sources than expected, which, when combined with careful spending practices, resulted in an increase in fund balance in the General Fund of approximately \$4.2 million and a total revenue of \$107,276,682. Approximately half of this surplus was generated from interest and dividends on the District's investments, which, due to the current interest rate environment, resulted in the highest

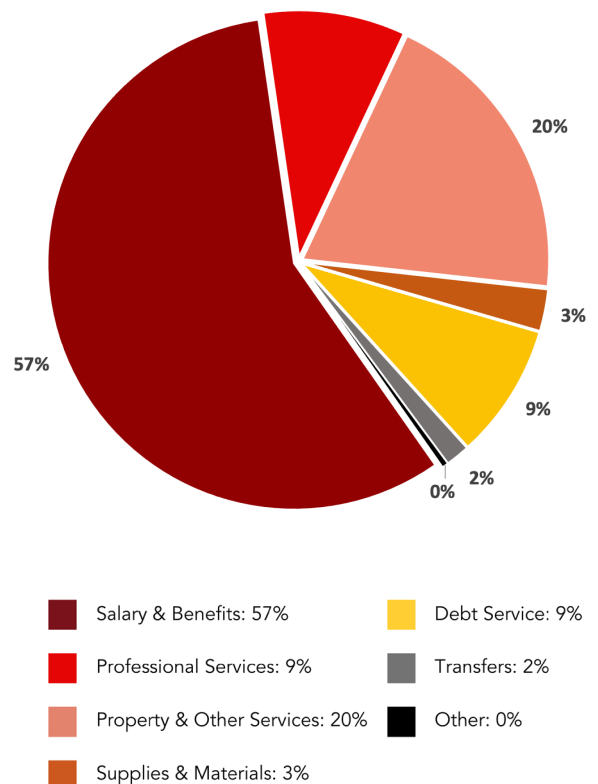
yield on its investments that the District has realized for several years. The District once again received an unmodified (clean) audit opinion from its independent auditor, and the auditor did not identify any findings or recommendations during the course of the engagement.

## Total Budget

# \$106,487,990

## Total Expenditures

# \$103,075,876





## Technology

AGSD's Technology Department provides leadership, innovation and support for the teaching and learning process. In 2022-23, the department focused its professional learning around Nearpod, an interactive student engagement platform. Avon Grove educators learned how to use Nearpod to differentiate, adapt and assess learning. The department continued to develop innovative practices for professional learning that provide educators with choice and voice in enhancing their craft.

AGSD's Technology Department provided information technology services crucial to opening the new Avon Grove High School and the renovated Avon Grove Middle School. In the middle school, the team installed a new computer network, refinished whiteboards and provided enhanced audio-visual technology in the common spaces of the school. The team also facilitated installations of a new intercom system and upgraded the security cameras.



# AGSD Pride

## Penn London Elementary School

- In collaboration with a grant from the PA State Farm Commission and the Avon Grove Education Foundation, PLES purchased three aeroponic garden towers. Students learned how to set up and maintain the towers, and food grown in the towers was then served in student lunches. As an added bonus, the Avon Grove High School art club partnered with PLES and painted a mural for the garden tower space.
- The Penn London PTA's Boosterthon fundraiser was a success, raising over \$60,000 to increase dramatic play opportunities for students. Playground C will soon feature a fire house, police station, police car, post office and mail truck.
- PLES successfully launched the Language Immersion Program, providing 44 kindergarteners with the opportunity to develop their reading, writing and speaking skills in both English and Spanish.



## Avon Grove Intermediate School

- Students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade represented Chester County at the Pennsylvania State STEM competition in Harrisburg.
- Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade had the opportunity to travel to Longwood Gardens and represent the District by making ornaments to display during their holiday celebration.
- AGIS students have their artwork displayed in an exhibit at the Avon Grove Public Library.



## Fred S. Engle Middle School

- FSEMS was awarded the PIAA 2022-2023 Sportsmanship Award for District One, as voted on by member schools. This award recognizes the exceptional character and sportsmanship displayed by our student-athletes.
- Over 200 students took the Keystone algebra exam in May, receiving a 99% pass rate.
- In the inaugural year of the middle school drone team, the club won two awards at a local drone competition: the Inspire Award and the Judges Award.

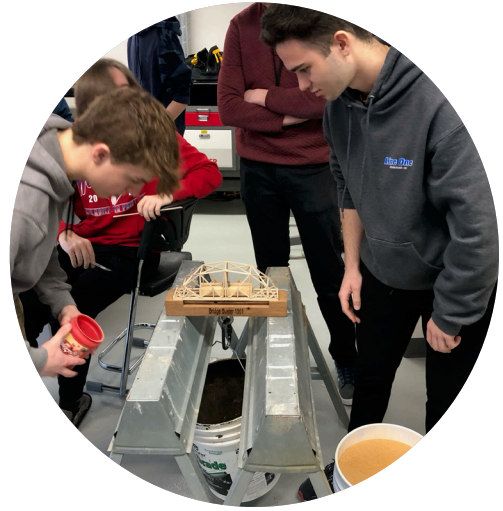




# AGSD Pride

## Avon Grove High School

- U.S. News and World Report ranked AGHS as #45 in the best Philadelphia, PA, Metro Area high schools.
- Nine AGHS students received the distinction of Commended Students in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program.
- All members of the class of 2023 graduated! The graduates went on to attend Automotive Training Center, Carnegie Mellon University, The Citadel, James Madison University, Millersville University, Seton Hall University, University of Delaware, University of Pittsburgh, University of South Carolina, West Chester University, West Virginia University, among other postsecondary institutions.



## Athletics & Activities

- FSEMS won the PIAA Sportsmanship Award for the Ches-Mont League.
- There were 1,304 rostered students across all AGHS activities.
- There were 1,037 rostered athletes across all AGHS athletics teams.
- Girls Soccer won the Ches-Mont National Championship.
- Girls Swimming and Diving won the Ches-Mont National Championship.
- Girls Track and Field won the Ches-Mont National Championship.
- Connor Britton placed 13<sup>th</sup> in the PIAA 3A state cross country meet.
- Baseball qualified for the PIAA 6A state tournament.
- Elias Chase placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the PIAA 3A state track and field meet in the Javelin event.



## Class of 2023



**429**  
Graduates

**83%** pursuing  
higher education

**17%** pursuing work or  
other opportunities

# Community Engagement

## EMPOWER Program

The EMPOWER program operated for its second year in 2022-23, serving 26 students. The program helps students transition to adult life by obtaining practical work experience at local businesses. The community partner list also continues to grow with 17 partners last year. EMPOWER celebrated the students' achievements and thanked their partners at an end-of-year appreciation breakfast.

## Senior Citizen Volunteer Tax Relief Program

AGSD's Senior Citizen Volunteer Tax Relief program provides residents, who are age 60 years or older and pay school taxes, an opportunity to earn a payment of up to \$650 to offset property taxes for volunteering in AGSD schools. Last spring, the District hosted an appreciation breakfast for participants in the program.



## Citadel Heart of Learning Award

AGHS mathematics teacher and cross country coach William Langhorne was selected as one of three grand prize winners for the 2023 Citadel Heart of Learning Award. Mr. Langhorne has been with the District for 15 years and is known for his kind and supportive nature. As a grand prize winner, he received \$10,000, half of which went to the high school and half of which went directly to Mr. Langhorne. Congratulations, Mr. Langhorne!





# AGSD Board of School Directors



Shown in photo on left (left to right): Bonnie Wolff (President) and Dorothy Linn, Ed.D. (Vice President). Shown in photo on right (left to right): Herman Engel, Richard Dumont, Ruchira Singh, Mike Woodin, William Wood, Jeffrey Billig, Tracy Lisi and Superintendent of Schools M. Christopher Marchese, Ed.D.

## Our Students

AGSD serves more than 5,000 students from: Franklin, London Britain, London Grove, New London and Penn Townships, and Avondale and West Grove Boroughs. We are proud of our diverse community of learners and aim for every student to feel connected, accepted and valued in AGSD.

School	Enrollment	Student Ethnicity	% of Students
PLES (K-2)	1,012	American Indian	1.0%
AGIS (3-6)	1,462	Asian	2.0%
FSEMS (7-8)	819	Black	1.6%
AGHS (9-12)	1,788	Hispanic	26.8%
		Multi-racial	1.9%
		Pacific Islander	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,081</b>	Caucasian	67.7%

Data as of October 1, 2022.

## Our Faculty

In 2022-23, AGSD employed 337 educators and 37 guidance counselors, school psychologists and nurses, totaling 374 faculty members.

**74%** MASTER'S DEGREES

**26%** BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Regarding level of education, 26% of faculty members have earned a bachelor's degree; 74% have earned a master's degree; and 2% have earned a doctoral degree. Regarding tenure, 83% of faculty members have three or more years as a contracted teacher.





**AVON GROVE SCHOOL District**

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