



DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts (AMSPA)

Mission Statement:

Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts strives to inspire students to excel academically through productive, creative, and risk-taking learning environments which are safe, inclusive, and diverse. Therefore, students are successful through life with all the necessary skills to be open-minded, respectful, and influential individuals in society.

Kalaylah Chisolm

Dr. Armstrong

MLED 300

20 April 2020

I pledge on my honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this work, and I am unaware of any violation of the Student Conduct Code by others.

Demographics:

➤ **School Size:**

○ **330 Students**

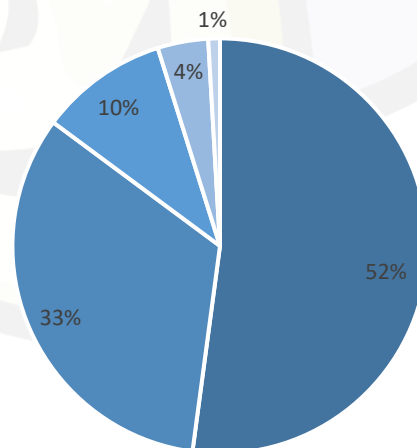
- 200 Female Students
- 130 Male Students

➤ **School Location (Type):** Suburban/Urban

➤ **Racial/Ethnic Groups:**

- White: Approx. 172 students
- Black/African American: Approx. 109 students
- Asian: Approx. 33 students
- Hispanics: Approx. 13 students
- Other: Approx. 3 students

AMSPA Student Demographics



■ White ■ Black/African American ■ Asian ■ Hispanics ■ Other

➤ **Free & Reduced Lunch:** 5% of the student population, approx. 17 students

➤ **English Language Learner (ELL) Students:**

- 3% of the student population, approx. 10 students

➤ **Exceptional Students:**

- Special Needs (Requires an IEP): 3% of the students, approx. 10 students
- Gifted & Talented: 60%, 198 students

Purpose/Philosophy:

Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts (AMSPA) was established to foster a learning environment that encouraged students to continue their creative journeys through the performing arts. Unfortunately, a lot of the performing arts are becoming dying forms of art with the rise of digital usage in our world. However, students and many community members are missing the influential aspects of live performances. AMSPA strives to continue to promote and spread awareness of the importance of arts education.

AMSPA is located in between a suburban and urban area due to the teaching philosophy of our founder. She believed that every student should have the opportunity to pursue their dreams no matter the size. Our founder was an African American student that usually felt disconnected and out of place in her art form. However, she stuck with the art due to the relationships she made, the confidence that she received, and the future she knew that she wanted to pave for students like her. Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts is a magnet school which Sara Davis Powell (2015), the author of *Introduction to Middle Level Education* states, with intriguing themes, specialization, and the draw of experienced teachers, and small class sizes, some magnet schools have successfully recruited students from suburban and rural areas due to its focus. The variety of students creates a healthy diversity among students (p.84). Powell's description of magnet schools

in urban settings solidifies our founder's reasons for establishing Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts.

AMSPA's mission statement is rooted in the belief that creativity is the key to a student's success and changing the world for the better. In relation to *This We Believe*, AMSPA's stems from the following principals: students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning, curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant, and lastly the school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all (Powell, 2015, p.11). We believe that through the appropriate advocacy, leadership, and support that our students will grow into well-rounded citizens in our community post-graduation of our neighboring high school, Avalon High School for the Performing Arts.

Grade Configuration:

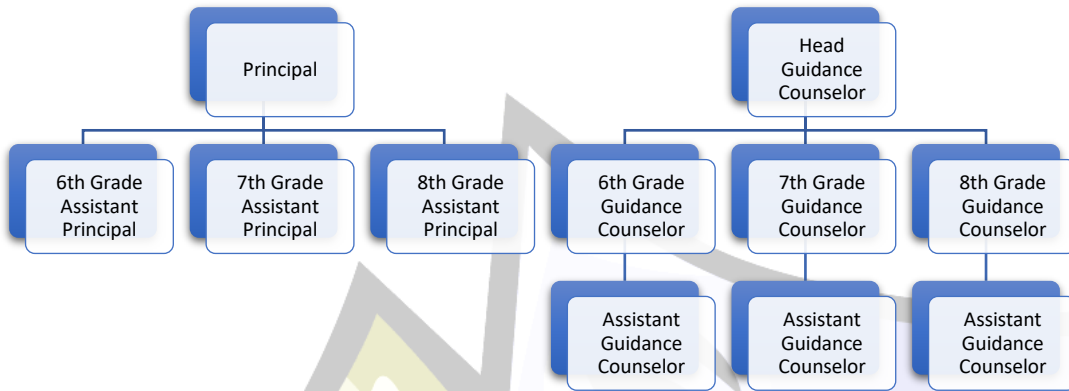
Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts is a magnet school which requires students to submit an application that includes general information about the student, their experience in the performing arts, and audition requirements or a presentation of their work throughout elementary school. Since the application process for AMSPA is slightly rigorous, there are only 110 new students that are accepted each school year. The levels represented at AMSPA are sixth through eighth grade. Each grade level consists of about 110 students due to maintaining small class sizes to ensure that teachers and students can focus on their continuation of their craft(s) at the middle school level.

Purpose/Philosophy:

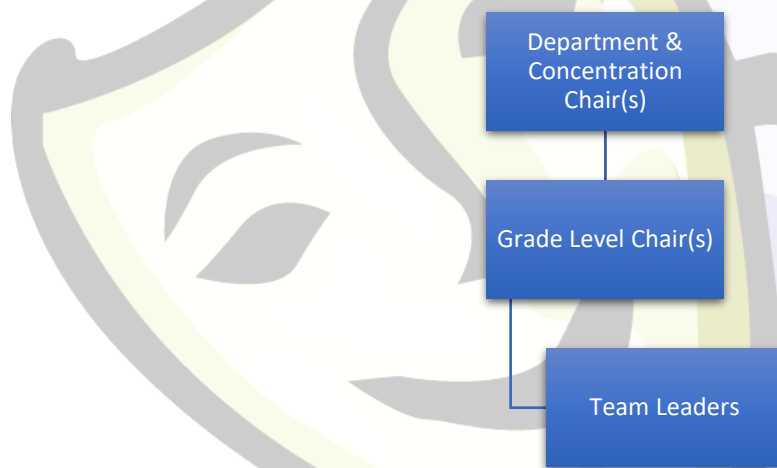
William Alexander, known for being the “father of middle level education”, believed that students in the middle of the K-12 school system should have their own status and structure. “The most prevalent grade configuration is 6-8...” (Powell, 2015, p.5). Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts supports the grade levels of sixth through eighth because it is the most prevalent but is also the most influential time in a student’s academic career. “The middle school years represent a unique and significant period of human development. Young adolescents are in a world of their own and yet are keenly aware of their surroundings.... By middle school, students have begun to develop diversified views of themselves (Powell, 2015, p.25). The performing arts is continuously being cut from budgets in schools across the country due to a lack of interest in the student population. Although, if students can be immersed into the arts earlier in their studies, it could mold them into being proficient artists in their craft, but also inspire students to continue to grow. Lastly, the audition process was implemented to make sure that we are being “student-oriented”, keeping our student to teacher ratio manageable, and giving a variety of students the ability to attend AMSPA that are passionate about pursuing their craft.

Leadership:

The administration team at Avalon Middle School for Performing Arts will consist of...



The teams are divided between each grade level. The leadership for the teams will consist of...



The department/concentration chair(s) and grade level chair(s) will meet with their respective assistant principal twice a month to communicate any changes that the principal may have made and discuss curriculum. The department & concentration chair(s) will meet with the grade level chair(s) weekly to discuss curriculum, to make sure that each grade level is on track with the standards, and teams are being consistent. The grade level chair(s) will then communication any

information to the team leaders during their bi-weekly meeting and through email weekly. The team leaders will then meet with their team during their planning period to communicate information that they have received from the grade level chair(s). During their weekly meetings, the team leader will do a check in with their team members to see how they are doing personally and in the classroom.

Purpose/Philosophy:

The administrative team consists of principals and guidance counselors because they are both essential to the wellbeing and development of the young adolescents. The principal is a “pivotal role in the success of teaming” (Powell, 2015, p.118) and guidance counselors are “specially trained to work with young adolescents have the potential to make significant differences in the life of a school” (Powell, 2015, p. 119). Each guidance counselor will be assigned to one or two teams in their grade level. Guidance counselors can then build closer relationships with the teachers on their teams and can get to know their students on a deeper level.

Team Configurations:

At Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts, the team configurations would consist of two five member teams. Each teacher will have the ability to teach their own subject however, the students get to choose the performing arts concentration they would like to participate in. The concentrations will include musical theatre, theatre, chorus, technical theatre, band/orchestra, and dance. In sixth grade, the team configuration will consist of two four member teams due to sixth grade students only taking core classes to begin getting acclimated to the middle school environment. Additionally, sixth grade students will have the opportunity to choose electives that

will assist them in deciding which concentration they would like to declare in their seventh-grade year and they are required to take AMSPA 101, which will allow the students to get to know more information about the school and the expectations. Sixth grade students will also have different opportunities throughout the school year, during their advisory period, to take master classes and observe some of the concentrations in the school. In the students' seventh grade year at AMSPA, the teams will consist of five teachers. On the team there will be four core teachers that teach Math, Science, English Language Arts (ELA), and Social Studies. The fifth teacher on the team would be the concentration teachers. The concentration teachers will only be required to meet with the team once a month to assist core teachers on ways that they can incorporate aspects of the performing arts into their classroom. By eighth grade, students will follow a similar schedule from the previous year. The core classes will be hybrid during the eighth-grade year because this will allow students more time to work on their craft rather than be in the classroom.

Teachers are assigned to their teams during our spring retreat. The retreat will either be hosted on campus or off campus depending on funding for that year. The retreat will consist of team building activities, ice breakers, and towards the end of the retreat the teachers will complete a questionnaire on the qualities that they would like in a team member. The questionnaire will also allow teachers to submit their top five choices for individuals they would like on their team. On the last day of the retreat, the teams will be revealed, and the teams will have the opportunity to create their team name. Students are then randomly assigned to teams due to keeping concentrations and academic levels diverse. Since more than half of the students at AMSPA are gifted and talented, there will be one gifted and talented certified teacher for each core subject in each grade level. Whichever team the certified teacher is placed on in the grade level, the gifted students for that grade level will have to travel outside of their team to go to that teacher's

classroom. However, if a student is gifted in all subjects, which is rare at AMSPA, then the student will travel to each separate classroom. The student's team will be assigned based on their schedule and the placement for their homeroom. In each team, they will create a team motto that they will follow. Throughout the year, there will be fundraising opportunities that the students will participate in with their teams and compete against others in their grade level.

Team members will meet during their planning period every Wednesday for at least 50 minutes. The planning period for teachers will be during the elective/concentration time for students. The team must meet with each concentration teacher once a month, they will meet for 50 minutes before school starts. During the planning period, the team leader will conduct a check in with the teachers to see how they are doing personally. This is important to do since most first year teachers leave the education field due to feeling that there is a lack of support during their time of transitioning into the classroom. The teams are also expected to do a classroom check in, discuss any student concerns they may have, discuss any flexible scheduling they may want to do for the week/month, and ways that they can make their lessons either interdisciplinary or integrated for the month.

Purpose/Philosophy:

The teaming at AMSPA is based on ideals of *Turning Points 2000* which calls for "heterogeneous ability grouping or students" (Powell, 2015, p.111). The small classroom setting allows for teachers to address specific needs of their students in their classrooms, but also allows for representation of many abilities to be shown in the classroom and in the school community. The grouping can eventually become homogenous due to students being able to choose similar interest and paths during their time at AMSPA. The teaming at AMSPA allows for students to still

become open-minded and diverse individuals because there is a mixture of heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping occurring through their middle school career.

A team structure allows students to have ownership and a family unit inside the school due to the amount of time that each team spends with each other. AMSPA has four to five person teams due to providing “more diversity of teacher materials, delivery, personalities, and teaching styles” (Armstrong, 2020, Slide 8). If a student is not able to understand content in one class, it is possible that another team teacher or concentration teacher could be able to help the student master the content. The teaming structure chosen also allows for teachers to be able to be more flexible in their scheduling. The flexible scheduling at AMSPA correlates with *This We Believe* and *Turning Points* because it “provides teachers with multiple opportunities to make sound decisions regarding curriculum and instruction for the young adolescents they reach” (Powell, 2015, p.129). The core and concentration teachers can rearrange their schedules however they feel fit because it will allow for teachers to have the freedom of choice in their classrooms.

Advisory Program:

Advisory is important to us at Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts because the arts community is small and knowing how to build relationships is an essential skill for inspiring artist. The advisory program at AMSPA will occur three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The advisory period would be like a homeroom where the students will receive important paperwork that may need to go home or any school wide announcements. The Monday and Wednesday advisory period will last for 15 minutes to allow students to prepare themselves for the day/week or get any information that may need to be sent home. However, homeroom will last approximately 30 minutes on Friday to give students additional time in their advisory period,

but also to complete requirements for the ABC's of Life Program. The students will be assigned to their homerooms by their concentration although, in sixth grade their homeroom class will be the same as their AMSPA 101 class. The sixth-grade students will be placed in a homeroom with a teacher that is on their team. Homeroom will also be a time for students to build relationships. Students will have the opportunity to share upcoming events in their concentration with their homeroom class, speak with members in our community about their concentration, and discuss any academia that may need to be addressed with their homeroom teacher.

Each week for advisory, the teachers will be following the ABC's of Life Program, which is essentially, taking common words and phrases that we deal with in our daily lives that our students can benefit from learning about. Each team will decide what letter of the alphabet they would like to do that week. For example, for the letter A, the teachers could plan on discussing acne and ways to manage it since students at the middle level are beginning to start puberty. The ABC's of Life Program was established by our founder to ensure that students are coming to school to learn about core content, but also to learn about life. Our founder believed that you should be both "book" and "street" smart. The training for the ABC's of Life Program would take place during the first week of school for teachers. They will receive PowerPoint ideas of words that they can do in their team, but a team can also choose a word that they would like to use as well. The team would have to get it approved by the principal first to be able to present their word in the classroom. The ABC's of Life Program PowerPoints would be updated each year so that new ideas can be shared, and students would not get bored of seeing the same content each year. Also, during training, teachers will be given check in ideas to do with their students and ways to interact with their students during the short advisory time.

Additionally, once a month each concentration will have a master class or workshop that will occur during the advisory period however, the advisory period will be extended to make sure the students are able to get a worthwhile experience from their homeroom and have enough time to learn from the expert in their master class or workshop.

Purpose/Philosophy:

Advisory is “a special time regularly set for small groups of students to meet with specific adults” (Powell, 2015, p. 122). Advisory at AMSPA is held three days a week because *This We Believe* states, “when advisors and advisees meet regularly, they help students internalize respect, compassion, and positive values, as well as collaborative skills” (National Middle School Association, 2010). The additional time on Friday’s will allow students to be able to conclude their school week with their advisory group and addressing any new information that may need to be sent home. Students also begin to get restless by the end of the school week and offering clubs/organizations on Fridays will give students a break from schoolwork to focus on different aspects of their development. Masterclasses and workshops being held during this advisory period will continue to demonstrate our usage of flexible scheduling. Also, it allows for students to end their school week on an inspiring note working with someone who is in the field of their concentration.

Advisory is also time for students to build relationships with their peers and their homeroom teacher. *Turning Points (1989)* suggests that middles schools provide opportunities for students to have a close relationship with adults within the school (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). As mentioned above, AMSPA believes that building relationships are key to

be a successful artist and we want our students to be able to know how to communicate with others who may be in the same age group as them or older.

Schedule:

Master Schedule		
6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Core 1 8:45 - 9:55am	Core 1 8:45 - 9:35am	Core 1 8:45 - 9:15am
Homeroom 8:45 - 9:00am	Homeroom 8:45 - 9:00am	Homeroom 8:45 - 9:00am
Core 2 10:00 - 11:10am	Core 2 10:35 - 11:25am	Core 2 9:20 - 9:50am
Core 3 11:15 - 12:25pm	Core 3 10:35-11:25am	Core 3 9:55 - 10:25am
Lunch 12:30p - 1:00pm	Lunch 11:30 - 12:00pm	Core 4 10:30 - 11:00am
Core 4 1:05 - 2:15pm	Core 4 12:05 - 12:55pm	Lunch 11:05 - 11:35am
AMSPA 101 2:20 - 2:50pm	Concentration 1 1:00 - 2:20pm	Concentration 1-2 (11:40 - 12:40pm Con. 1) (12:40 - 1:40pm Con. 2)
Elective 2:55 - 3:45pm	Concentration 2 2:25 - 3:45pm	Concentration 3-4 (1:45 - 2:45pm Con 3.) (2:45 - 3:45pm Con 4.)

Advisory Schedule (Fridays)
Core 1 8:45 - 9:55am
Core 2 10:00 - 11:10am
Core 3 11:15 - 12:25pm
Lunch 12:30 - 1:20pm
Core 4 1:25 - 2:35pm
Homeroom 2:40 - 3:10pm
Organization Meetings 3:15 - 3:45pm

*Home room is only held on Monday and Wednesday

**Planning periods are during concentration times. On Fridays, teachers have planning and lunch at the same time. Administration is required to be on lunch duty on Friday.

Purpose/Philosophy:

The flexible scheduling at AMSPA correlates with *This We Believe* and *Turning Points* because it “provides teachers with multiple opportunities to make sound decisions regarding curriculum and instruction for the young adolescents they reach” (Powell, 2015, p.129). The core and concentration teachers can rearrange their schedules however they feel fit. Since some of the core teacher’s class times are shortened due to homeroom on Monday and Wednesday, the flexible schedule allows for teachers to be able to get class time back if needed or rotate students with other members on their team. In eighth grade, the concentrations are in a flexible schedule as well because the musical theatre and theatre students can work closely together to rehearse during their class time, master classes pertaining to their concentration could be held during this time, or the musical theatre teacher and theatre teacher could be coteaching a lesson together. Any concentration teacher can coteach during the allotted time because it will allow AMSPA students to be well rounded students in the arts.

As stated in previous sections, sixth grade students have more time in their core classes to become acclimated to middle school and to also provide more core content before moving on in their middle school career. Sixth graders also take AMSPA 101 to learn about Avalon Middle School, opportunities, and the expectations throughout their time attending AMSPA. Each grade level begins to decrease their class time to allow students to begin working in their concentration

and transition into completing their coursework at a hybrid status. By a student's eight grade year, they are aware of the expectations, are ready to continue to focus on their concentration, and can successfully complete their coursework primarily online.

A teacher's typical day at AMSPA is having classes back to back until their students go to their concentration classes. However, sixth grade teachers do not get a break until the very end of the day since they must teach an additional course. During the student's lunch period, the teachers are on lunch duty. We appreciate our teachers and are thankful that we have a strong and fully staffed administration team that can allow our teachers to enjoy the extended lunch period on Fridays. The teachers are very appreciative of the quiet time they receive on Friday, but also glad to have any additional planning time they may need if they need to leave school early on any day throughout the week. The most challenging task of being a teacher at AMSPA is the flexible scheduling. The flexible scheduling is great for the focus of the school, but it can be hard to plan lessons for the students. The teachers have found ways to adjust to the flexible schedule by planning lessons ahead, setting expectations for their students to come into class prepared, and coordinating with their core teachers on rotating students or planning a lesson together to add more time to another content and being integrative.

AMSPA also believes in the *This We Believe* principal "Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them" (National Middle School Association, 2010). During our spring retreat, teachers can share what they found challenging or successful in our flexible schedule. We then work together to revise our schedule enough to not confuse students too drastically, but to revise the schedule when it comes to flexible scheduling. Also, teachers are exposed to more ways to plan flexible lessons and helping their students adjust to the flexible layout.

Alternative Programs:

Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts provides a multitude of alternative programs. The programs included are below. Students are highly encouraged to begin any club/organization that they feel will be beneficial to our school community.

Before School Activities

JumpStart

This is a program that allows students to dance, walk, or play a selected game in the gym once they arrive to school in the morning before classes begin.

SafeCircle

This is a group that meets once a week in the library to allow students to have a quiet place to be in the morning, time to talk to a guidance counselor about any problems that they may have in a private group setting, and also receive ways to keep organized throughout the school year.

During School Activities

Most clubs/organizations will occur during the school day on Fridays after homeroom. Some organization may not meet depending on any events that may be occurring during their meeting time in the school day. The organizations include...

- Student Council
- Glee Club
- International Thespian Society
- Junior National Honor Society
- Coloring Club
- Art Club
- Various Ensemble Clubs
- Various Dance Style Clubs
- Book Club
- Math Club
- Broadcasting Club
- Journalism Club
- Intramurals

After School Activities

Clubs are offered during the school day on Fridays however, clubs are allowed to extend their club meeting after the final bell has rang if students are able to stay behind. Most of the time after school activities will include rehearsal for productions, concerts, or recitals. Since we do partner with a lot of the theatre companies in the area, some will host after school programs that we highly recommend our students to participate in if they are not in the rehearsal process for a production at AMSPA.

Purpose/Philosophy:

Clubs and organizations are useful in improving a student's academic performance and their ability to develop their character. Most of the clubs and organizations at AMSPA allows students to have leadership opportunities and create clubs of their own. As stated in an article by Heather Wolpert – Gawron titled “Why Choice Matters to Student Learning”, “student choice allows ownership in learning, allows students to display their learning, and enforces true differentiation” (Wolpert-Gawron, 2018). Since we are a performing arts school, most of the work is performed in the classroom, but also outside of the classroom. The offering of after school programs and the high expectations of our establishment encourages students to perform well in their classes, learn the importance of reputation in the field of study, and developing their character.

Related Arts:

Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts has a focus on the performing arts so, related arts are already immersed into the curriculum. However, to make sure students are meeting physical health requirements, we have incorporated that music concentrations must participate in marching band with the adjacent high school, musical theatre concentrations must have students practice dance styles twice a week, theatre and chorus concentrations must do movement work twice a week, and technical theatre concentrations must spend fifteen minutes outside the classroom to run or play a game. Also, once a week during advisory, in relation to the ABC's of Life Program, students are given mini lessons on mental health, physical health, eating healthy,

and any personal hygiene. Students are required to participate in the concentration physical requirement that for their specific concentration.

Purpose/Philosophy:

The purpose of a related arts school is to focus on art forms that are dying out in our society and students are losing interest in the art. If more students are given the opportunity to pursue and navigate in the world of the performing arts, there is a chance that more students will stick with their art form. Powell (2015) states that “physical development influences every other type of development middle level student experience – emotional, social, intellectual, and character” (p. 26). Even though we are focused on the arts we also believe that are students should understand their body to ensure that they are keeping themselves healthy mentally and physically. A lot of the concentrations at AMSPA require a student to be present with their body to be able to use it as an instrument/tool to contribute to their learning. We want our students to be aware of injuries and other parts of their development so, we require concentration instructors to discuss any possible injuries that can occur at the beginning of each semester.

Curriculum Initiative:

AMSPA will have several curriculum/school initiatives due to the focus of the school. Since the eighth-grade students will work on a hybrid schedule to be able to work on their craft instead of being in a core classroom most of the day. The flexibility of hybrid classrooms will grant students with the opportunity to be in their core classroom less and be able to complete most assignments at home instead of in the classroom. The eighth grade students will also have 1:1 access to tablets to be able to complete online work in and outside of the classroom. Since

technology is continuing to grow in our society, giving the students the ability to be in hybrid classrooms as early as middle school will prepare them for options in college, but also continuing to grow with technology and the aspects its changing in our lives. The tablets will also be useful for any filming projects that students may need to construct throughout the school year. The other grade levels will have access to filming material as well through the media center in the school. Lastly, incorporating after school activities such as productions through the theatre program, a GLEE club for the musical theatre concentrations, various ensembles for the band/orchestra concentrations, and various dance groups for the dance concentrations. The students will be able to work on their productions or projects during the concentration class time if allotted, but most of the work will be done outside of the classroom. Students are required to take part in at least one production in the school year. Each production that a student is involved in they are required to submit a one to two page reflection to their concentration teacher on what they learned from the production, how they improved in their craft, and any additional requirements that may vary dependent on the concentration.

As stated above, each core content is are required to complete a lesson once a month that is interdisciplinary or integrative. There must also be an assessment that is included in the lesson that could be interactive journals, presentations, interactive projects, etc. The projects will then be displayed in the hallways of each team to be shared with other members of our school community and outside members of our community.

Additionally, since we have a small population of ELL students, we do have an ESOL instructor at AMSPA. Our ESOL instructor is more of a resource for our ELL students since most students are fluent in English, but we want to still make sure our ELL students are aware of their resource. Also, it is important to have our ESOL instructor at AMSPA for any parents that may

not be fluent in English to be able to help with any translations that they may need throughout the year. We also do not want any prospective students to feel excluded or discouraged to apply for AMSPA because of a lack of resources.

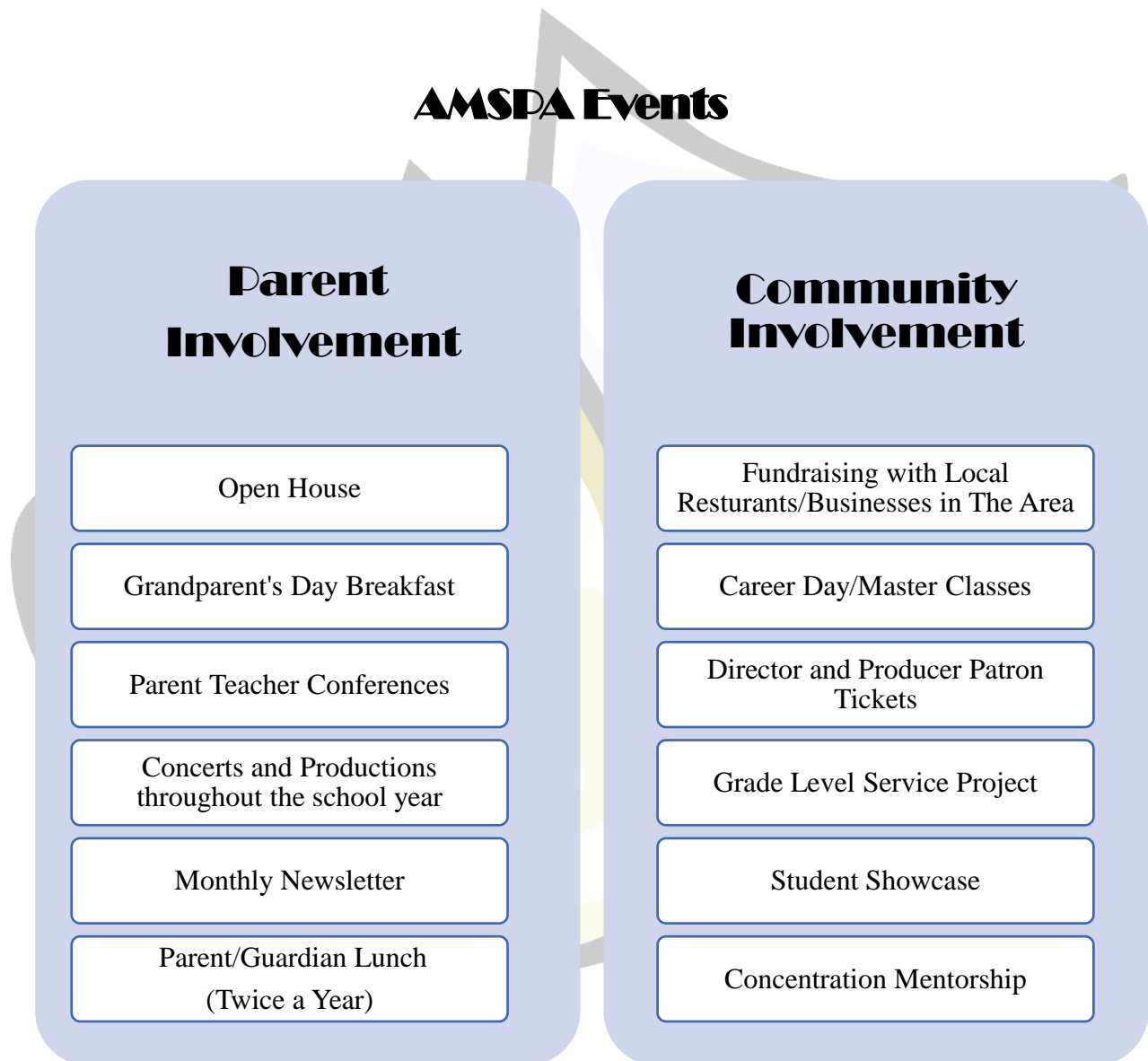
Eighth grade students are required to complete a review before they attend their Stepping Up Ceremony at the end of the school year. The review will consist of the student making a visual presentation of the work that they have completed while at AMSPA and depending on their concentration complete a performance piece or share a model that they created for a production. The students will be reviewed by their concentration and team teachers. The students will be assessed on their involvement throughout their middle school experience, how they have developed since the started at AMSPA, and if they should be considered for Avalon High School for the Performing Arts. All students are well prepared for the review because it is a topic that they are presented with in AMSPA 101. Students are also discussing their portfolios throughout year during their advisory periods.

Purpose/Philosophy:

AMSPA believes that the arts are a very important part of our society. The curriculum and schedule allows for students to work on their concentrations, but also contribute to their core classes. The flexible schedule also gives students the experience of how classes could be held in a college setting. We strive for our curriculum to be “challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant” (Powell, 2015, p.11). We require our teachers to plan at least one integrative lesson each month to correlate with their integrative assessment. We also have our teachers using “multiple learning and teaching approaches” (Powell, 2015, p.11). Our flexible scheduling and 1:1 learning encourages teachers to use multiple teaching approaches to be able to reach their students. Also,

the students at AMSPA are attending the school due to its focus. The students are interested in their concentrations so anyway that their teacher can relate to their concentration the students will be appreciative of their core class teachers.

Parent/Community Relationships:



Parent involvement begins as early as the first week of school with Open House. At Open House, parents can meet the students' teachers, speak to administration, and becoming familiar

with the expectations at AMSPA. Additionally, each semester there are parent teacher conferences that parents are asked to join the teachers on the students' team and discuss their growth throughout the semester. Parents are always recommended and appreciated when they contact their student's teacher about any concerns that may occur before the conference period. The parents are also introduced to our Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA at AMSPA are named the Thespis Stars Booster Program. The Thespis Stars help to support our teachers by providing them with monthly appreciation events. They help the students by providing fundraising opportunities throughout the year to help fund many of the masterclasses and workshops that the students can participate in. The program also coordinates at the end of a semester a celebration for the students. Every year each grade level is awarded with a dance and an award ceremony. After the award ceremony, the students are given a field day. Lastly, the Thespis Stars Booster Program supports parents by hosting a parent and student luncheon twice a year and a Grandparents' Day breakfast. Parents are also highly encouraged to come to all performances that their students are participating in. Each month there is a newsletter that is sent out to each parent to help them know upcoming events, ways to get involved for the month, and more information that needs to be communicated.

AMSPA also receives constant support from community members. We are supported by various theatre companies in the area, local restaurants, and other businesses. Throughout the year, we partner with local restaurants to host a dinner and a show night. The package includes a local restaurant hosting our patrons to a three-course dinner for a discounted price and then the patrons will come and watch one of our productions or concerts. We also fundraise by selling vouchers for local restaurants. Our community is also involved with AMSPA by giving their time to teach a master class or visit our campus for a career day. They also contribute their time and resources to participate in our concentration mentorships. This allows students to have a mentor in their

concentration that will be a motivator for them, but also help them to see what it is like being in the field of their chosen concentration. The mentor will have a group of students in the same concentration. The number of students in each group are dependent on the number of mentors we are able to acquire.

Each grade level is responsible for completing a service program within their teams. The service program could include but is not limited to helping at a soup kitchen, singing at retirement homes, or donating perishable items to shelters and food pantries. The students also collaborate to create a Student Show case at the end of the school year to raise awareness for the arts. The proceeds are divided evenly to the school and a local theatre program or playhouse in the area.

Lastly, there is a partnership program called the Thespis Circle that allows businesses, families, locals and beyond to donate to Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts. In the Producer's Circle there are a few categories that you can choose from for the amount that you are willing to donate. The levels are House, Cast, Director, and Producer. Director and Producer patrons can receive 5 free tickets to any production or concert that they would like to see throughout the school year. They can use the tickets all at once or a couple at a time.

Purpose/Philosophy:

Avalon Middle School for the Performing Arts prides ourselves on the involvement of our parents and community members. As stated in *This We Believe*, schools that actively involve their families of students and include community and business partners creates a developmentally responsive environment for students (Powell, 2015, p. 11). Parents are vital to the self – esteem of their students and their participation and interest in their activities encourages students to continue working on their craft due to the support. Community members being involved shows that students

are cared and supported on an even higher level. Students are appreciative of members of their community showing them what they can do in their futures and to be proud of what they are creating now because it is only the start to their greatness.



References

- Armstrong, A. J. (2020). *Teaming* [Powerpoint Slides]. Retrieved from https://bb-winthrop.blackboard.com/webapps/blackboard/execute/displayLearningUnit?course_id=_48980_1&content_id=_1308150_1
- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1989). *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Author.
- National Middle School Association. (2010). *This we believe: Keys to educating young adolescents*. Westerville, OH.
- Powell, S. D. (2015). *Introduction to middle level education*. Boston: Pearson.
- Wolpert-Gawron, H. (2018, November 18). *Why Choice Matters to Student Learning*. Retrieved from KQED: <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/52424/why-choice-matters-to-student-learning>

