

the MAROON monthly



AUBURN ENLARGED CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOLUME 30, ISSUE 5

Auburn esports athlete has 'smashing' success at states

For Auburn High School senior Evan Payne, the recent Empire State Scholastic Esports Federation Fall championships at Syracuse University were an opportunity not only to display his skills as an esports athlete but also how far the Maroons program has come since its formation a few years ago.

Payne accomplished that feat by finishing second in the state for Super Smash Brothers Solos, a video game in which players "control a character and use attacks to weaken their opponents and knock them out of an arena."



Payne was thrilled with his accomplishment.

"I think it gives our school a good reputation," he said, "which helps school spirit because others would know the (esports team's) accomplishments. That makes me happy because I like to make a positive impact wherever I can. Getting second in the state makes me proud of how far I've come."

Auburn esports coach Brian Bealer said Payne's second-place finish was the result of his dedication and skill.

"Evan has been a part of the esports program at Auburn High School since we started it four years ago," Bealer said. "He has consistently been one of the best players and has worked very hard to compete at such a high level."

Bealer said Payne finished in the top four in the Eastern Region last year. In the first year that Auburn is a part of a NYS-specific league (Empire State Scholastic Esports Federation), Payne finished second in the regular season.

Taking second place at the ESSEF Fall championships was special because it was held at the SU esports arena and was the first time he was able to compete against athletes and coaches from other schools around the state. The atmosphere made it more challenging for Payne.

"I think my performance at SU was great," Payne said. "It was my first time in my entire esports journey that I played at such a competitive setting, which made me really nervous, especially when I made it to finals where I had to play in front of a crowd while being broadcast. I think this impacted my performance a little, but most of it was me not playing very well. I was very surprised I made it past the semifinals, considering the skill of my opponent."

Payne said being a part of the Auburn Mario Kart Team that lost in the second round of the playoffs helped him when he reached the Super Smash Brothers Solo championship.

"I think I've progressed as an esports athlete in terms of not only skill, but also teamwork and composure," Payne said. "Our Mario Kart team did not make it to Syracuse, but it being a team sport allowed me to get better at working with others."

Bealer spoke very positively about Payne, not just as an esports athlete but also as a student.

"Evan has been a very hard-working student since I first met him as a freshman," Bealer said. "He takes some of the most challenging classes at AHS (including college-level classes). He tries his best and is always looking to improve not only academically, but also for the esports games that he participates in."

Payne said his esports experience helps him as a student at Auburn High School and will mean more when he attends the Rochester Institute of Technology next fall.

"In Smash Brothers, I have learned to stay calm whenever I'm winning or losing, so I can either close out the game or make a comeback," he said. "I hope I can further such skills when I hopefully participate in esports at RIT while pursuing a degree in biomedical engineering."

COFFEE HOUSE AHS MODERN BAND

January 23rd

5-7 PM

Free Admission

LIVE ACOUSTIC MUSIC
POETRY READINGS!

COFFEE • HOT COCOA
(WITH EXTRA TOPPINGS!)
BAKE SALE ITEMS

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT AUBURN MUSIC BOOSTERS

Families of 3rd Grade Students (and older) are invited to attend:

AUBURN'S INSTRUMENT PETTING ZOO

Interested in playing an instrument, but not sure which one is the right fit?

Do you have questions about Auburn's Music Program?

When and where do you get an instrument?

All of these questions and more can be answered at the Instrument Petting Zoo! Please join Auburn's music department for a fun and informational evening about the joys of learning how to play an instrument. Even if there is a student/sibling in the program already, come try out the different instruments we have to offer.

Instruments available to try include:



Flute

Trombone

Cello

Bass

And MORE!

Date: Wednesday,
January 28th
Time: 6:00-7:30 PM
Where: Auburn High
School
250 Lake Avenue
Prizes will be provided by the
Auburn High School
Tri-M Music Honor Society





Boy's Modified White Basketball Team went 11-0 on the year!

Team members: De'Andre Agee, Kyrie Amoako, Landon Blanchfield, Evan Bulla, Keller Collins, Sam Cosentino, TJ Dale, Joey Gagliano, Seth Portipilo, Zyon Tillman, Joey Villano, Charlie Zambito and Coach Zambito.



Attendance Incentive Program

We are encouraging students to show commitment and responsibility by coming to school every day! At the end of each month, the grade level class with the best overall attendance will earn a special reward. The winning class will get to choose a game to play in the gym with Ms. Solomon. This incentive promotes school pride, perseverance, and the importance of being present and ready to learn every day!

Every month we are going to see what grade level class has the best attendance. Winners pick a game to play in PE class Grades K-6. What class in your grade has the best attendance this month?

CHALLENGE OUTLINE

1. Each grade level is in the challenge
2. students will do a class vote for the game
3. Grade level class that wins, picks the game.
4. Games will be played at the end of each month
5. Ms. Solomon will go over more info with students during class.

Kaela and Kara Sova accepted into the NYSSMA All-State Festival!



The Auburn High School Orchestra is proud to recognize a remarkable achievement by two of its own: **Kaela Sova**, senior violist, and **Kara Sova**, junior violinist. Both have been accepted into the **New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Music Festival from December 4th-7th**, held at the Rochester Convention Center.

The **NYSSMA All-State Festival** is one of the greatest honors a high school musician in New York can receive. Each year, thousands of students who sing and play all types of instruments across the state audition, but only the top performers are selected to participate in this elite ensemble.

Prior to last year, it had been ten years since anyone from Auburn High School had gone to Area All-State. This being the second year in a row for Auburn High School to send anyone—let alone two people—to Area All-State is a great achievement that is sure to inspire other students in the high school Orchestra.

Kaela would like to acknowledge **Roberta Zalkind**, her viola teacher who has also helped her immensely in her acceptance into All State. Kara would like to recognize **Janet Milnes** at the Eastman Community Music School (ECMS).

Their Journey to All State

To qualify students first attend the **NYSSMA Solo Festival** and perform at Level 6, the most advanced category. Their performance includes memorized scales, a solo piece, and sight reading—where the students must play a completely unfamiliar piece with no prior practice in front of a judge.

Both Kaela and Kara not only rose to the challenge but achieved perfect scores of 100, earning consideration for All-State.

Kaela and Kara have represented our orchestra and our school at the All-State Festival, joining the most elite student musicians from across New York to rehearse and perform under the most prestigious conductors. We invite the school community to join us in congratulating Kaela and Kara on this well-deserved recognition. Their hard work, talent, and passion for music are an inspiration to us all!

by Orchestra Club Vice President Madeline Lovell and Orchestra Club Secretary Nathaniel Swab

Sixth grade students at Herman Avenue

examined the innovations of ancient Egypt's Old Kingdom (Age of the Pyramids). They became experts on why and how pyramids were built. Their learning was extended by having each student construct their own unique pyramid. Students were excited to share and display their pyramids and knowledge by educating visitors from other grade levels.



The sixth grade team is very pleased with their accomplishments and hardworking efforts. Students enjoyed this fun, educational learning experience, and we commend their dedication to their education!



Sixth graders at Genesee are being pampered this week after winning a special Spa Day for having the best attendance in the entire school! Their commitment to showing up ready to learn each day paid off in a big way, as students enjoyed a relaxing celebration filled with fun, self-care, and time to unwind with classmates. We are so proud of their dedication and can't wait to see them continue to lead the way in attendance!

*Elizabeth Duffy-Cuddy
Genesee Elementary School*



January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																												
	 January Artwork Olivia Nemo, Owasco Gr. 6	December 2025 <table border="1" data-bbox="535 255 698 418"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> February 2026 <table border="1" data-bbox="714 255 878 418"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 NO SCHOOL New Year's Holiday	2 NO SCHOOL Holiday Recess	3 Wolf Moon
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4	School Resumes Sports Tryouts: Modified Boys & Girls Swim Modified Girls Basketball Modified Boys Wrestling District Parent Council Mtg. 6:30 PM @ Tubman	5	6	7	8	9 Zone 4 JH Area All State																																																																												
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World Religion Day		Board of Education Mtg. AHS Library @ 7:00 PM																																																																																
18	 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday NO SCHOOL	19	20	21 8th Grade Parent Night AHS @ 6:30 PM	22 Regents Exams	23 Modern Band Concert 5:00-7:00 PM @ AHS End of First Semester AHS End Marking Period 3 K-8 Marking Period 2 Ends Regents Exams																																																																												
25 	26 Marking Period 3 Begins AJHS & Elementary Marking Period 4 Begins AHS	27	28 Musical Instrument Petting Zoo for 3rd Grade Families & older 6:00pm - 7:30pm @ Auburn High School	29	30 12:00 PM Early Release Elementary Half Day AHS Report Cards AJHS Report Cards	31 Zone 4 JH Area All State Zone 3 SH Area All State at Ithaca College																																																																												



Casey Park
welcomed a special
Kindness Helper
 throughout the month
 of December. Each
 day, the Kindness
 Helper shared simple
 challenges
 encouraging
 students to spread a
 little extra kindness.
 Every morning,
 students eagerly
 searched the school
 to see where the
 Kindness Helper had
 appeared.



Yoga Class at Genesee

6th grade students at Genesee recently participated in a mini yoga class to build mindfulness and healthy coping skills. During the session, they practiced simple breathing strategies, gentle stretches, and grounding exercises they can use anytime they feel overwhelmed—whether it's during a busy school day or stressful moments around the holidays. The goal was to help students learn how to calm their minds, listen to their bodies, and create their own “pause button” when big feelings arise. We're so proud of the way they embraced these tools and are excited to see them use these strategies in and out of the classroom.



First Aid Classes at Auburn Junior High

Students enrolled in Health 8 classes were exposed to First Aid Training before Thanksgiving break. By incorporating first aid training into the school curriculum, students should now have the confidence and skills to respond to emergencies swiftly and effectively. Learning first aid can empower students to act in a crisis, whether it's helping a friend or family member with a cut, choking, or responding to a serious accident or medical emergency. Epi-pen training, learning what FAST (FACE-ARMS-SPEECH-TIME) for stroke recognition and how and where to find an AED were also discussed. Thank you to Mrs. Teachout for lending her time and knowledge to us.



diversity, equity & inclusion

- Students across the district spent the month exploring and celebrating Holidays Around the World, learning about the diverse traditions that make our community unique.
- Our Book Buddies program celebrated the season with a special gift exchange. Every volunteer presented their student with a brand-new book to enjoy over the break, followed by a festive treat of cookies generously donated by the XL Cookie Company.
- The Student United Way successfully wrapped up its Holiday Toy Drive. Their efforts provided a significant boost to the Community Action Program, helping bring holiday cheer to local families.
- Our My Brother's Keeper Fellows and mentors have been busy this month, engaging in impactful mentoring sessions and deepening their leadership skills through Mastermind book studies.
- Students across the district spent the month exploring and celebrating Holidays Around the World, learning about the diverse traditions that make our community unique.
- The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force met on December 1st. We began aligning our DEI Strategic Plan with the NYS Portrait of a Graduate, ensuring that equity and inclusion are woven into every step of our students' journey toward success.

*Karen DiVietro
Executive Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction*



Pictured is Emily Cadwallader, Seward PTA President, and Brianne Neabel, Seward Librarian. Through Scholastic Dollars generated from the Seward Book fair, Seward was able to purchase this plethora of books with a variety of titles and reading levels. For birthdays, the students get to choose a good fit book for themselves!



Thank You for helping us support our Teachers & Students!

This year's stats so far:

\$19K
given out
for fall
grants

\$19.2K
raised of our
\$40K annual
appeal
goal

(only \$20.8K left
to go to reach
our annual goal!)

\$64K
raised towards
the AHS Lighting
Project -
\$71K to go!

(Accepting
Richard
Knaul
matching
donations
till Feb 1st)

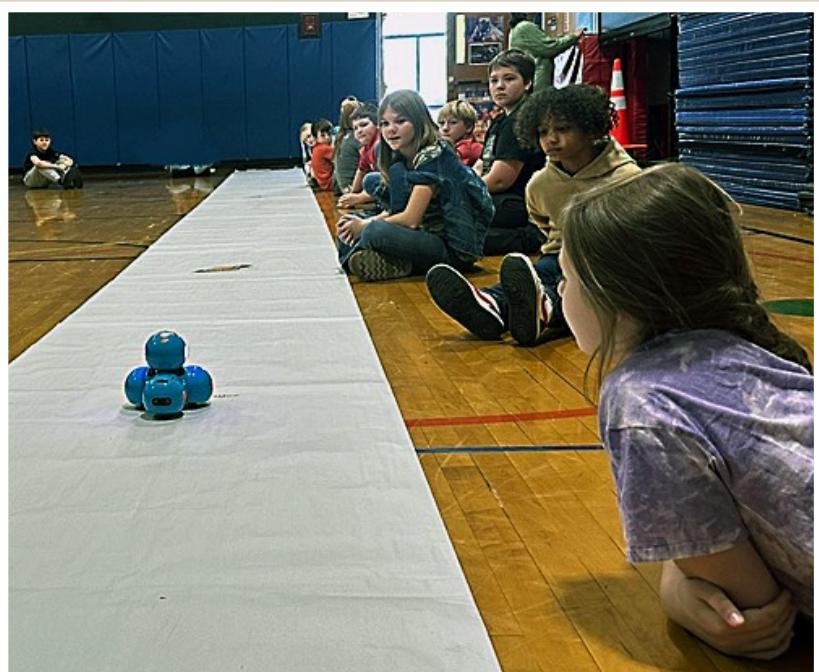
**Have a
Fun-Filled
Holiday**



Studying the Solar System



Fifth graders in Mrs. Duffy's and Miss Iversen's class had a blast diving into the solar system! Each group was given a planet to research, learning all about what makes it unique and how far it is from the Sun. With the help of their school librarian, Mrs. Calarco, they took things a step further by coding a robot to travel a scaled version of their planet's distance, like a mini space mission! To top it all off, they recorded a video explaining what they learned and showing off their robot's journey. It was a fun mix of science, coding, and creativity!



Anne Marie Duffy, Nicole Iversen, Victoria Calarco
Genesee Elementary School

Beginning Monday, February 2, 2026

Open Enrollment for Auburn Enlarged City School District's 2026-2027 Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program

The Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program is an integral component of our district and includes a UPK program for our 4-year-old learners and a 3PK program for 3-year-olds. Together, these programs offer comprehensive educational services to Auburn School District residents who will be 3 or 4 years of age on or before December 1, 2026, and are available at no cost for eligible children.



Site	Program	Full/Half Day	Contact
Cayuga Community College-81 Wall Street	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-294-8603
Cayuga Onondaga BOCES-1879 W. Genesee St. Rd.	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-255-0075
Cayuga Seneca Community Action Agency-89 York St. and sites at several AECSD schools	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-252-0038
Early Childhood Center-1110 Corporate Dr.	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-255-0233
E. John Gavras Center-182 North St.	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-255-2746
Montessori School of the Finger Lakes-6734 Pine Ridge Rd.	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-252-2225
YMCA- 27 William St.	3PK and UPK	Full-day	315-253-5304

A list of our Universal Pre-Kindergarten program locations (sites) below contains information regarding which sites offer 3PK and/or UPK full-day programs. Parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to visit any of these participating sites before completing your child's registration. Kindly contact the site to arrange a visit. **Spaces are limited.**

Parents/guardians can register their child online and upload the supporting documentation on/after February 2nd.

The 3PK and UPK 2026-2027 online student registration will be open beginning February 2, 2026. Please register your student using the online enrollment form located at the link on the Auburn Enlarged City School District website, www.aecsd.eduation, under Student Registration.

Parents/guardians who prefer to submit their student's registration in person may pick up a 2026-2027 registration packet at any of the UPK sites listed above and also at any Auburn Elementary School or our Administrative Offices. **Registration packets will be available for pick up the week of January 26th.**

Completed applications should be submitted to your child's current Pre-Kindergarten site or to the Harriet Tubman Administrative Offices at 78 Thornton Ave.





Give your child a Head Start

Early Learning



Prepare children for school and lifelong learning in an inclusive environment

Health & Nutrition



Meals, health screening and resources for the whole family

Family Well-Being



Resources and activities to strengthen your family's success

Early Head Start, Head Start, 3PK & UPK serving pregnant women and children ages 0-5 throughout Cayuga County.

Enroll today, 315-252-0038 or caphelps.org



Scan to complete an online application



Seymour Library

Seymour Library | 176-178 Genesee Street | Auburn, NY | 315.252.2571

Visit www.seymourlibrary.org for updates on programming & events.

Saturday Storytime

Saturday, January 10 at 10 am

Families will engage in stories, songs, and movement together during this fun and interactive storytime at Seymour Library! Designed for ages 2 to 5, but all ages are welcome. No registration required for this free program.

Saturday STEAM: Snowman Science

Saturday, January 10 at 1 pm

Explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and/or Math at this monthly program. This month, we will listen to a *Snowman* book followed by a fun activity where you can create your own *playdough snowman* and make a *snowfall in a jar*. Designed for ages 6-12, but all ages are welcome.

LEGO Club: The Biggest, Best Snowman

Monday, January 12 at 5 pm

Explore your creativity with stories and LEGO challenges during the library's LEGO Club! Accept our *The Biggest, Best Snowman Challenge*. Listen to the story, then design and build the tallest (LEGO) snowman ever! Designed for ages 6 and up, but all ages are welcome.

Tales with Trevor

Wednesday, January 14 at 4 pm

Join us at this doggy storytime with a special guest, Trevor the library dog! Trevor is a patient and friendly dog who loves to be pet and enjoys a good story. Bring a favorite book from home or borrow a library book and practice reading aloud to Trevor.

Family Movie Night: Bad Guys 2

Friday, January 16 at 6 pm

Throw on the cozy, comfy clothes, gather the family and join us for a special after-hours movie screening of *Bad Guys 2*! Snacks will be provided, but feel free to bring your own.

Upcoming Closed Dates:

Monday, January 19: Closed for MLK Jr Day.

Pokémon Club

Wednesday, January 21 from 4 pm to 6 pm (drop in)

Each month we will complete different Pokémon activities. Designed for ages 7 and up, but all ages are welcome!

TEEN PROGRAMMING

Get creative using a variety of materials and techniques during this DIY program designed for teens (age 12+).

Altoid Wallets

Friday, January 9 at 4:30 pm

Upcycle an Altoid Tin into a wallet- perfect to hold your chapstick, trinkets, or treasures!

Collage Bookmarks

Friday, January 23 at 4:30 pm

Explore the art of layering materials and create a unique bookmark using scrapbook paper, old magazines, stickers, and more!

No registration is required for any of these programs!

Make 2026 the year your family falls in love with the library! Join us for storytimes, STEAM activities, book clubs, and more. Start the year off right and visit us today!



Hands-on learning and discovery!

Join us for STEAM programming and activities at Seymour Library!



Talk to your teen about **VAPING**

Click below to read the
**US Surgeon General's
Tip Sheet for Parents:**

https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipSheet_508.pdf



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
Office on Smoking
and Health

Follow us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/AuburnECSD>
<https://www.facebook.com/AuburnJrHS>
<https://www.facebook.com/caseyparkelementary>
<https://www.facebook.com/geneseeschool>
<https://www.facebook.com/OwascoElementary>
<https://www.facebook.com/HermanAveElementary>
<https://www.facebook.com/WilliamHSewardElementary>



GO MAROONS!

All events and activities
are subject to change.
Please check the website
for the latest updates:
www.aecsd.education



Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

Students who are applying to colleges, please be aware that procedures for the confidentiality of student records within the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) have recently changed. FERPA permits school officials to disclose all education records, including disciplinary records, to another institution at which the student seeks or intends to enroll. This now also applies to post-secondary institutions (colleges), upon request.

NEW YORK STATE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

You can go online to find out if any sexual offenders live near you. The New York State Sex Offender Registry is available at www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/nsor/index.htm whereby you can search for Level 2 and Level 3 sex offenders.

If I'm not here,
I can't learn.



Keep Your Child on Track With Schoolwork

Supporting Children's Learning: Children who are struggling with schoolwork can become frustrated and look for ways to avoid going to school and participating in school. Our goal is to provide them with the support they need so they feel good about learning and good about themselves. Parents and teachers need to work together to help children succeed in school and feel connected. Find out more at:

www.everystudentpresent.org/parents

Check out #EveryStudentPresentAECSD on social media.

Reading with Mrs. Batis

In December, second graders at Casey Park were treated to a holiday themed tree decorating activity. They finished off their activity with a fun holiday story read to us by our principal, Mrs. Batis!

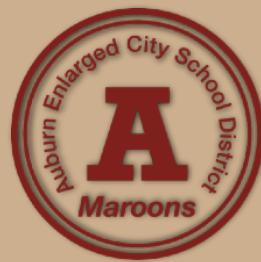
Erin Gutelius



Stories, Soccer and Success!

Mrs. Gutelius and Mrs. Chiaramonte's 2nd Grade Class had Varsity and JV soccer players **Liam Brent** and **Kater Albino** visit our classroom. They read the students holiday stories, talked about how they had to work hard in school and on their teams. They discussed balancing school and soccer and how both require hard work and dedication. Through the enriching conversation with the high school students, the younger students were able to learn how hard work can lead to real success in the classroom and on the field. It was a wonderful example of students giving **100%**.

Erin Gutelius



JANUARY 2026 DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Official Publication of the
**AUBURN ENLARGED CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
www.aecsd.education

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Misty L. Slavic, Ed.D.

SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK

Michelle Major

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Deborah J. Leone

To report Child Abuse call the Statewide Toll Free Telephone Number:
1-800-342-3720 or visit: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>
The New York State Office of Children and Family Services