

Volume 11, Issue 1

October, 2021

## A Word from the Principal



Dear Students,

**Welcome back!!!** It has been such an amazing start to the school year. The AOS staff have been so thankful to have you back on campus....in person! I know it has been a bit of an adjustment getting back into a routine, but I am confident you can do it. I have a number of items to update you on including a thank you, along with an important reminder.

**New Staff:** I want to acknowledge our new staff members and let you know what a great addition they have been to the AOS family. Please read more about them on page 4 of the newsletter.

**Jesse Aitken:** Options Academy Math and Science teacher  
**Reymundo "Benny" Benavidez:** Special Education teacher  
**Gabe Diaz:** Career and Technical Education teacher  
**Laura Hekman:** Options Academy English Language Arts teacher  
**Dari Lawrie:** Social Studies/ English Language Arts teacher  
**Blake Looney:** Science teacher  
**Candace Caswell:** Special Education Assistant  
**Lori Halloran:** Special Education Assistant  
**Anna Winn:** Food Service and Special Education Assistant

**Thank You:** A huge shout out to the Welcome Center, Fact, and our District Nursing staff for allowing us to expand into their space, which in turn allowed us to expand our program for students. We couldn't have done it without their cooperation!

**New Programs:** We have expanded our program to offer 9th and 10th grade students the opportunity to recover credit at an accelerated rate and then return to their resident high school through our Options Academy program. We are excited to welcome South and West 10th grade students this Fall. Additionally, we are now offering a CTE program focused on the Construction Trades, in which students will have the opportunity to become certified in a number of different skill sets.

**Attendance:** I'd like to take this opportunity to remind every student the importance of attending school every day along with showing up to class on time. The AOS staff have made it their mission to serve you and there is no way we can help you reach your goal of graduating or earning a GED if you are not here. We will continue to prioritize the importance of your attendance moving forward...but we need your commitment!

Sincerely,  
 Mr. Hannan



**Albany Options School**  
 Greater Albany Public  
 School District

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## ROCKS

Respect  
 Ownership  
 Courage  
 Knowledge  
 Safety

## October 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <b>FAFSA &amp; Oregon Promise Open!</b>	2
3	4	5	6 Early Release	7	8 <b>NO SCHOOL:</b> Staff Development	9
10	11 Columbus Day/ Indigenous Peoples' Day (School in session)	12	13 Early Release	14 <b>FINALS:</b> End of six-weeks	15 <b>NO SCHOOL:</b> Grading Day	16 <b>National Boss' Day</b>
17	18 First day of Trimester 1, Grading Period 2	19	20 Early Release	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 Early Release	28	29	30

## November 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Oct. 31  <b>Halloween</b>	1 <b>Día de los Muertos</b> 	2	3 Early Release	4	5	6
7 Daylight Saving Time Ends 	8	9	10 Early Release <b>Conferences 3:30-8:30</b>	11 <b>NO SCHOOL:</b> Veteran's Day	12 <b>Conferences 7:30-4:00</b>	13
14	15	16	17 Early Release	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	25 <b>NO SCHOOL:</b> <i>Thanksgiving</i> 	26 <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	27
28	29	30 	Dec. 1	2 <b>FINALS:</b> End of Trimester 1	3 <b>NO SCHOOL:</b> Grading Day	4

## Important Information

### HEALTH SERVICES AT AOS

AOS has partnered with North Albany Wellness Center to provide on-site mental health and therapy services to AOS students, which will include individual counseling sessions and group therapy.

**The district nurse is also in the building every Wednesday!**

If you are interested in receiving medical or mental health services, please contact Mrs. Harryman at:

[Anna.harryman@albany.k12.or.us](mailto:Anna.harryman@albany.k12.or.us)

### SOCIAL MEDIA:



"Like" us on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/albanyoptions](https://www.facebook.com/albanyoptions)

"Follow" us on Instagram at:

@AlbanyOptionsSchool

#AlbanyOptionsSchool

### GRADES

Parents and Guardians,

You are able to check your student's grades on Pinnacle!

You can access the Gradebook at:

<https://aos.albany.k12.or.us/students-parents/pinnacle/>

and use your assigned **DBN number** to log in.

Need your number? Just call the school at (541) 967-4563.

### HAVE A JOB?

Students can earn Work Experience elective credits for having a job. **See Mrs. Harryman if you have questions.** You could earn as much as 2.0 credits for work you're doing!

## Seniors GED: FAFSA and Financial Aid

Seniors and GED students, it is time to begin working on your plans for after you complete your education.

If you plan on attending any kind of post-high school education, please complete the FAFSA.

**FAFSA** stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and is the form you complete in order to apply for financial aid for college and career school. You can access it at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov).

A letter has been sent home to all of

our families of seniors and GED students with detailed information about funding for college. If you did not receive a copy, please let Mrs. Harryman know right away.

**ORSAA** is an alternative to the FAFSA for undocumented students in Oregon, including students with DACA status. The ORSAA gives students access to state grants and scholarships and can be completed at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://OregonStudentAid.gov).

**The Oregon Promise** is another funding opportunity for students planning on attending community college and can

be completed online at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://OregonStudentAid.gov).

**GED students:** deadlines vary depending on when you receive your GED, so check it out right away.

**FAFSA and all financial aid applications are open starting October 1st, so do not wait to complete them!**

If you need assistance completing the financial aid applications, please contact Mrs. Harryman at:

[anna.harryman@albany.k12.or.us](mailto:anna.harryman@albany.k12.or.us)

## GED Completers

*Congratulations to the following students who earned their GED in September:*

Jalyn Simmons  
Sebastian Kaiser  
Aliyah Denly  
Makenzie Veith  
Jadyn Clemmens  
Julian Pena  
Kiley Hunt  
David Santana

## Graduates

*Congratulations to the following student who completed their high school diploma in September:*

Ian Dobson



## Pic of the Month



Students in Ms. Lawrie's Painting class started the year out painting sunflowers from our school garden. Several students in that class planted those same sunflowers last Spring in Horticulture class!



## Welcome New Staff—Teacher Introductions

AOS welcomed several new teachers to our staff this year. Below are staff welcomes, some of which were written by students in Ms. Bellando's Journalism English class.



**Jesse Aitken** joins AOS as the Math and Science teacher for Options Academy. A graduate of Western Oregon University with a Bachelors in math and a Masters in teaching, Mr. Ait-

ken also teaches the photography elective. He fell in love with Alt Ed while student teaching at College Hill High School in Corvallis. In his free time he enjoys sports, photography, reading and gaming. When asked to share a piece of advice he lives by, he responded, "You never know what is going on in someone else's life, so if they have a reaction to something that does not seem to make sense, understand that their anger [or] frustration may be directed elsewhere." Students are sure to find patience and understanding in any class with Mr. Aitken.

- by Karyssa Negrete



**Dari Lawrie** is a new English and Social Studies teacher. Ms. Lawrie chose to teach at AOS because she loves her subjects and people. She believes in the alternative school model because she

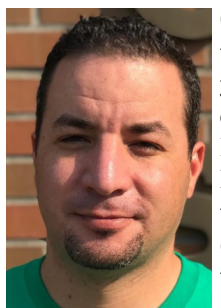
believes that everyone deserves a chance. In her free time Ms. Lawrie writes plays, short stories and poetry, and she also runs a chainsaw in the woods sometimes for various causes. For her, "the most important human quality is curiosity." Students in her class learn to ask questions and participate in project-based learning.



**Laura Hekman** is Options Academy's new Language Arts teacher. "I always knew I wanted to be a teacher," Mrs. Hekman states. As a child she would spend all day after

school pretending to be a teacher, using her piano as her desk and assigning worksheets to her grandfather. In her free time, Mrs. Hekman enjoys physical activity such as yoga, gardening and rock climbing. She also enjoys creative hobbies like cooking with the food she grows in her garden. She even enjoys playing casual games like Stardew Valley and Battle Block Theater with her husband. "When a lot of things are going on in life... I find it comforting to know that I just need to take one day at a time."

- by Avery Reynolds



**Gabe Diaz** joins the teaching staff this year from his previous position here as Bilingual Liaison. Now he is the CTE teacher, offering two different construction classes. Before getting into educa-

tion, Mr. Diaz had never worked with students before, but he saw it as an opportunity to grow professionally and took it. He works at AOS specifically now because he was the type of kid in high school who would have benefited from a school like AOS, which did not exist when he was growing up in Puerto Rico. Mr. Diaz relates to the students here. "AOS lets you be you," he said. "Trust yourself. You are more than what you think." In his classes, Mr. Diaz gently pushes his students to be their best. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family, playing music and building things.



**Reymundo "Benny" Benavidez** is the new Special Education teacher. He got into education because he had a hard time in school and wanted to make life better for the stu-

dents he serves. He started his career with youth outreach, crisis, and secure facilities, but he always wanted to be a teacher. Mr. Benny enjoys watching movies with family, BBQ, Dallas Cowboys, Ford and the holidays. His message to students is "be proud of who you are, what you've been through and where you came from... Diversity is beautiful and part of what makes our home at AOS such a beautiful place."



**Blake Looney** is the new Science teacher in the high school program. As someone who struggled in high school, he didn't always know he wanted to be a teacher, but Mr. Looney has the gift of encouragement; he sees

himself as a person to spur others on to meet their full potential. He chose to work at AOS because he believes in the alternative school format and wanted to be somewhere that he could get to know students on a genuine level. A person of various interests, Mr. Looney enjoys growing carnivorous plants, being a part of his gym community, and watching good movies and TV. His advice for students even comes from the popular cartoon Adventure Time: "Dude, suckin' at something is the first step to being sorta good at something." Mr. Looney passes this advice on to students as a reminder that it takes time and a lot of failure to become truly great at something, so it's always worth that first step.

## Welcome New Staff—Support Staff Introductions

*AOS welcomes three new support staff members to the team. Below are staff welcomes, some of which were written by students in Ms. Bellando's Journalism English class.*



**Lori Halloran** is a new special education assistant and SPED secretary. Before working at AOS, Mrs. Halloran volunteered at her children's schools and enjoyed helping students. She chose to work at

AOS because there are fewer students, meaning she could provide more individualized support for them. In her free time, Mrs. Halloran spends time with her two dogs and two cats, her husband and her two children going to their sports, choir, and band events. When asked for a piece of advice to relay to students, Mrs. Halloran responded emphatically: "Take notes! The amount of information we

get in a typical day is a lot to retain... I still make notes and lists to remind me of what needs to be done in my day."

- by Kaitlyn Hayner



**Candace Caswell** "Mrs. C" joins the AOS staff as a Special Education Assistant and Food Services Assistant. She was guided into the field of education by Eunice Shriver in the early 1970s.

Mrs. C lives on a ranch and loves to care for it. Students at AOS already love Mrs. C's energy, excitement, and helpfulness as she floats around their classes to help them with school work or bring them breakfast. Some of them even refer to her as the AOS grandmother. "Accept no 'should' or 'ought' but your own," Mrs. C said when asked about advice to live by, adding, "therefore, I judge no one."

-by Kevin Bumgardner & Tori Teem



**Anna Winn** joins the AOS staff as a Special Education Assistant and the Food Services Assistant. She is excited to work at AOS because it is important to her to be in a position where she can

help and make an impact on others, as well as still have time to be a parent. In her free time, Ms. Winn is an all-around creative person. A few of her hobbies include sewing, knitting and crocheting, along with active hobbies like biking and hiking. "I try to leave everything I touch better than I found it," she said when asked for advice to live by. "As humans we are responsible to be better and make all things better. It is possible, trying is key! You would be amazed at the difference you can make one day at a time."

- by Cailan Hale

## Photography with Mr. Aitken

Mr. Aitken has been teaching the Photography class this term, which has been focused on getting familiar with the cameras and being accustomed to photography outdoors.

Each student has captured some great shots of our garden, including honeybee activity with sunflowers.

The students have also begun to hone their editing skills on Adobe Lightroom, allowing them to fine-tune the details they would like to showcase within their photos. The editing skills

will continue to grow while the students become adept at handling their camera and making their images come to life through advanced settings.

In the next several weeks, the class will collaborate with the Journalism class to provide images that can be used for articles.

The second half of the trimester will be devoted to exploring different styles of photography until each student has a sandbox of skills and tools to play with. There will be continued development of editing skills including

advanced work with Adobe Lightroom and an introduction to Adobe Photoshop.

The class will culminate in a personal project that they will devote the final week of the class to creating their masterpiece.



**Greater Albany Public  
School District**

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[www.aos.albany.k12.or.us](http://www.aos.albany.k12.or.us)

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**RESOURCES:**

**MRS. HARRYMAN EMAIL:** (schedule to talk)  
[anna.harryman@albany.k12.or.us](mailto:anna.harryman@albany.k12.or.us)

**NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE:**  
1-800-273-8255

**NACIONAL DE PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO:**  
1-888-628-9454

**LINN COUNTY CRISIS SERVICES:**  
1-800-304-7468

**OREGONYOUTHLINE.ORG**  
1-877-968-8491  
Text "TEEN2TEEN" to 839863

**JACKSON STREET YOUTH SERVICES**  
Mental Health and Outreach  
541-220-2955

**CALL: 211 - INFORMATION HELPLINE**  
Connect to health and human services

**EMERGENCY - 911**

Albany Options School Newsletter: October 2021  
Respect Ownership Courage Knowledge Safety

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