

Alston Middle School Summary Report

April 2012

A Year of Success

As we reflect on the 2011-2012 school year and the numerous accomplishments of our students and staff, we must first say thank you to everyone who contributed to our many successes. We are so proud of our students, staff, parents, business partners, and community members who have supported our efforts this year. Our combined efforts have earned us many awards and recognitions and have enabled our students to grow through a quality education.

I can say without any reservation that it has been a great honor to work with all of the stakeholders at Alston Middle School. Over this past year, I have learned that Alston Middle School truly is a special school where the academics, arts, and athletics come together to promote student growth and create a wonderful learning environment. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this school.

We hope this publication highlights many of our accomplishments, programs, special challenges, and goals. As we look to close out this year and begin anew, we are confident that all stakeholders will come together to meet the challenges with success. Together, we can continue to uphold Alston Middle School's reputation as a premier school for academics, the arts, and athletics.



With Tiger Pride,

Thad Schmenk, principal

Alston Belief Statement:

We believe that:

Education is our top priority

A safe environment is essential to the learning process

Individuality is to be respected

Active participation and communication between school, parents and the community is essential

Cultural diversity enhances understanding and enriches life

Success comes from setting high expectations in a positive environment

Exceptional students require special resources and support

ALSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Thad Schmenk, Principal

Natasha Prosser, Assistant Principal

Bob King, Assistant Principal

500 Bryan Street

Summerville, SC 29483

843.873.3890 (main office)

843.821.3978 (fax)

School website:

<http://dorchester.ams.schoolfusion.us>

Alston School Improvement Council:

Thad Schmenk, Principal; Natasha Prosser, Assistant Principal; Lisa Hamilton (Chairman); Gina Hardy, AMS faculty; Wramie Spafford, AMS faculty; Jim Brantley, Community Advisor

Roaring to Success: A Year in Review

- Alston's faculty has been working hard to improve student performance by focusing our staff development on Differentiated Instruction. To see more on how we are doing, please visit <http://ed.sc.gov/>
- We continue to incorporate technology into our classrooms by using Smart Board, United Streaming, Gizmos, and mobile computer labs. This year we added Wi-Fi to several areas in the building and upgraded several existing labs.
- Alston continues to place students in a three-year art core. Students can choose from band, guitar, creative writing, dance, orchestra, piano, theatre arts, visual arts, and vocal music.
- We have made it a goal to increase the number of students earning high school credits in order to assist the high schools in increasing their graduation rates.
- A healthy lifestyle and eating program (CHEFS) was implemented this school year via the Greater Summerville/ Dorchester County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Class of 2011. As a result, Alston implemented new, healthy cafeteria menus and created a sustainable garden and outdoor lab.
- Weekly math trainings for math teachers continue to increase math achievement.
- A continued implementation of the Professional Learning Communities is assisting our teachers as we transition to a new set of state standards in mathematics and English language instruction.
- Our Positive Behavior, Interventions, and Supports program continues to lower the number of student referrals and days of suspension by offering awards and incentives for academic achievements, by acknowledging good deeds and good behavior via our Tiger Pride Cards, and by hosting sporting events, school dances, and the Tiger Pride store.
- The Tiger Touch mentoring program assists students in making positive decisions.
- The Media Center continues to promote reading and research via special programs and other incentives such as our monthly reading events and our Annual Read-In.
- The Trident United Way and Dorchester County Community in Schools continue to provide grant monies for a special after-school tutorial. As a result of this program, Tiger Time students have seen a significant growth in MAP scores.
- Alston offers students an opportunity to develop hobbies and athletic abilities through a large variety of clubs and sports. This year, our induction teachers sponsored a very successful Powder-Puff football game which also raised over 400 canned goods for our local non-profit organizations.
- Alston also increased the number of students who participated and placed in our district's and state's PTSA reflection contests. This year, we had six student recognized by the state and two state first place winners!

**ALSTON MISSION
STATEMENT:
ALSTON MIDDLE
SCHOOL AIMS TO
PROVIDE ALL
STUDENTS WITH
THE SKILLS AND
OPPORTUNITIES TO
BECOME
PRODUCTIVE
STUDENTS**



Alston Middle School pledges to increase the opportunities for students to explore careers. To increase parent, community, and business involvement. To make improvements to the facilities and grounds. To increase test scores and student achievement. And to improve our PBIS character improvement initiative.

ALSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Professional Interview Day ~ College Visits ~ Students completed career inventories ~ 8th grade Career Research Project ~ Maintain parent involvement through PTA programs and school activities ~ Annual Veteran's Day Ceremony honoring family members who are active duty and those who served ~ Phone calls home to parents ~ Parent Portal, Phone Master, and school website ~ Meet the Principal events in July ~ Clemson vs. Carolina Food Drive ~ Weekly PBIS team meetings ~ New wall murals painted in hallways ~ Quarterly Benchmark testing in Math, Science, ELA and Social Studies ~ PASS strategies ~ "Teaming" concept with common teacher planning times ~ Read 180, Compass, AR, Tiger Time, Literacy Model ~ Continued 8th grade advanced math and English courses ~ All students set goals for PASS and school performance ~ First In Math Evening Program for the Students and Parents ~ Parent Awareness Night Seminar ~ ESL Parent Support for Parent Portal ~ UMOJA Community Night-featured in the Summerville Journal Scene ~ Guest Chef From Trident Technical College Culinary School provided a cooking workshop for the AMS faculty ~ Master Chef learning series ~ AMS Student "Read-In" events ~ Journey to the Middle program for rising 5th grade students ~ AMS Student Clubs established



(left to right: Ms. Heyres and AMS guitar students, Ms. Linton with her students, Mr. Schmenk and students working in the AMS garden)

Congratulations to Megan Linton ~ Teacher of the Year
AJ Glover ~ Rookie Teacher of the Year
Peter Collins ~ Rookie Honor Teacher of the Year
Carrie Fogle ~ Classified Employee of the Year
LaDonna Davis ~ Guidance Counselor of the Year

- Katelyn Bobbitt and Caroline Brown attended the *SC Young Writers Conference*.
- Kayla Williams (2nd place for her poem, "Which One") and Caleb Christmas (3rd place for his poem, "Army") placed in the Trident Region Poetry section of the *National Career Development Association's 2012 Poetry and Poster Contest*.
- Nicole Mullen won 1st place in the Trident Region section of the *Silver Crescent Foundation's "Discovering Manufacturing" Design Challenge*. Her essay also received an Honorable Mention from state judges.
- Boy Scouts and Summerville High JROTC participated in a cleanup day at Alston Middle School. Several scouts and ROTC members are current and past Alston students.
- Strings students played several public concerts throughout the year: Atlanta Bread Company, Perfectly Franks, Flowertown Festival, and several AMS school functions
- AMS piano students Sean Lam, Keasler Rothemich, Holly Blackmon, Emily Bruce, Megan Wiggins, Valerie Frank, Avery Holmes, Donovan Lam, Stephen Peek, and Jordan Ball were selected for the SC MEA Piano Solo and Ensemble.
- Sean Lam played for the South Carolina Music Educator Conference Piano Division Honor's Recital, and he has already been selected to play at the February 2013 Music Educators Conference. Sean will be participating this summer in the Charleston Southern University Piano Summer Camp series.
- Mailee Hall, Sean Lam, Shalick Smith, Anna Weaver, Roma Patel, and Jennifer Crowe auditioned for the *This School's Got Talent*.
- Valerie Frank auditioned for 2012 Piccolo Spoleto Rising Stars.
- AMS dance students participated in "*Day of Dance*" at Columbia College in Columbia, SC and were invited back for next year's program.
- PTA 2011 State Reflections Contest Winners for Alston: *Dance*: Averi Ulanoff (1st place); *Visual Arts*: Liliana Hernandez (1st place); *Music*: Sarah Jankowski (3rd place); Brandon Perdue (Honorable Mention); *Literature*: Wade Hamilton (Honorable Mention); *Film*: Brandon Perdue (Honorable Mention)
- 2010-2011 Junior Scholars: Tristan Cromer, James Crow, Jason Culbreth, Sean Lam, Emma Leftwich, Cassidy Legates, Michaela Lewis, Harnish Makkar, Brianna Manns, Jackson Seith, Noah Sigalas, Ariel Smith, Maxx Snell, Maya Stezler, Carly Strickland, and Zachary Troyan
- Duke Tip Scholars: Colby Timmons and Eleanor Tischler
- Hoops for Hearts raised over \$1,500 dollars.
- The AMS Girls' Robotics Team won 1st place for robot design at the 2012 Robotics Competition at ROMS.
- AMS PMD classes organized a mock election and facilitated a school wide vote for a PMD President.
- Alston PTSA provided teachers with 12 mini grants totaling \$2,000 for improvements in the school and 100 % of the AMS Faculty and Staff purchased a PTSA membership for the 2011-2012 school year.
- The AMS theater students performed this year's student musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*.
- AMS was awarded a Keep Dorchester County Beautiful mini grant for School Gardens.
- AMS QUEST team won 2nd place in math-level 1 (6th grade) and 2nd place in social studies-level 1 (6th grade) and 2nd place in the Overall Level 1.
- A Creative Writing Contest sponsored by Summerville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.: 1st Place: Wade Hamilton, "Driftwood"; 2nd Place: Kiara Dingle, "I'm Not Alone"; 3rd Place: Nicole Crum, "A Loner"
- Band teacher Debbie Jordan has been Nationally Board Certified.
- Theater teacher Adam Weiner received an *Arts in Education* grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission
- Social Studies teacher Pren Woods has been selected one of ten teachers nationwide to the *Teachers Educating Across Cultures in Harmony (TEACH)* program summer session in the Kingdom of Bahrain and State of Qatar. Mr. Woods was also one of twenty-five teachers nationwide as a recipient of the *National Endowment for the Humanities in South Africa for History and Culture*. Both of these programs will take place this summer (2012)
- AMS Wrestling placed second this season, and two athletes were awarded state medals.
- AMS Girl's Softball team played an undefeated season.
- AMS Concert Choir Received an Excellent Rating at SCMEA Choral Festival in Columbia (April 2012).
- 11 AMS Piano Core students received the following ratings at the SCMEA Piano Solo and Ensemble Auditions (April 2012): 2 Superior, 7 Excellent, and 2 Good.