



AT A GLANCE

25-26 School Year

**November/
December**

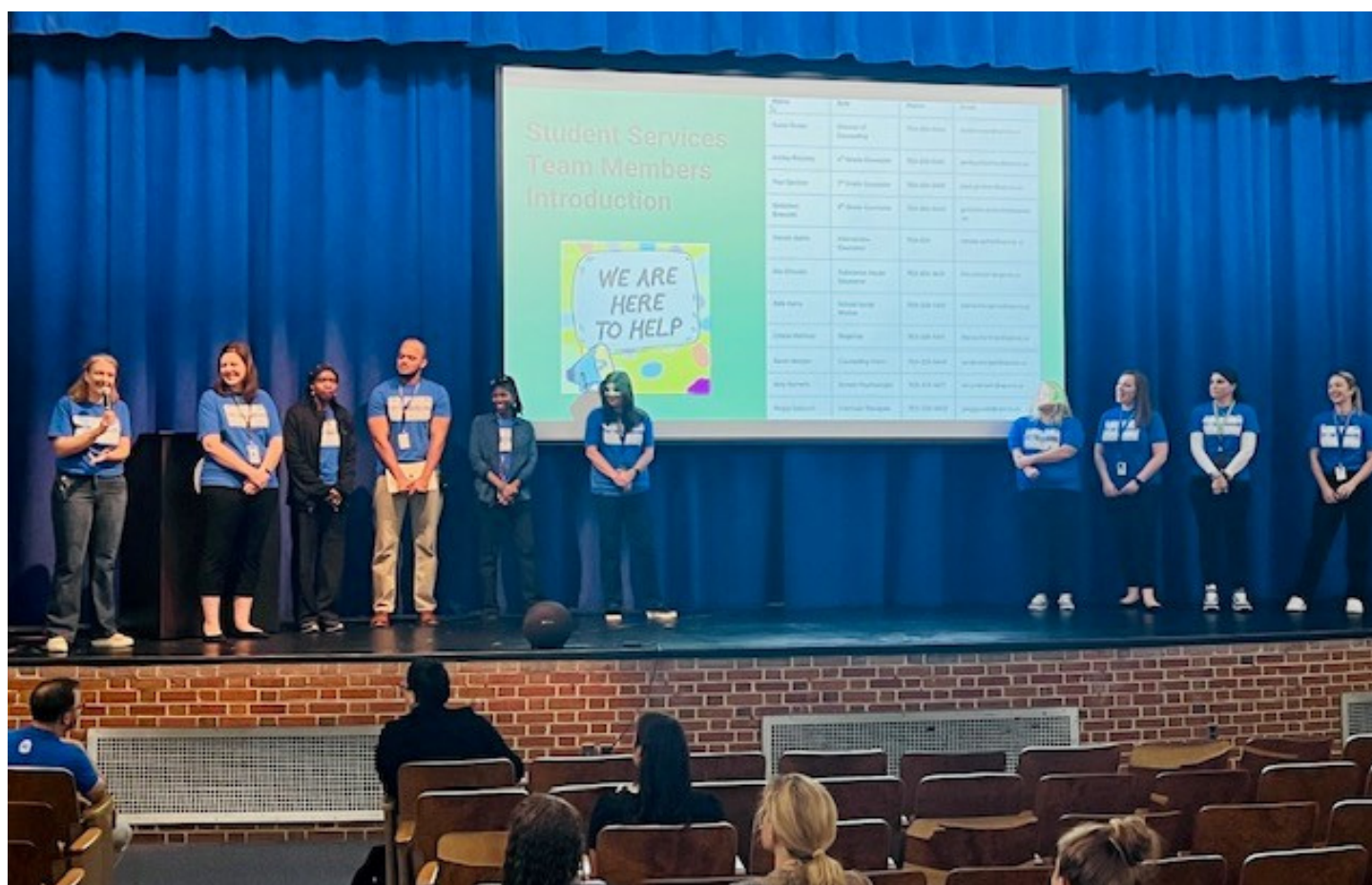
- Quick Reference Guide
- What's Happening in November/December
- Student Services Highlights from 1st Quarter
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Updates
- Academic and Career Counseling Highlights
- Other Resources

Quick Reference Guide

Student Services Team

The Student Services Team is here to support the whole child - socially, emotionally, and academically. We provide individual counseling, small group counseling, academic advising, career exploration and classroom lessons. Additionally, we consult and collaborate with parents/guardians, other staff, and community providers. For more information about supports and resources at WMS, visit our [Counseling.page!](#)

Name	Role	Phone (703-228-xxxx)	Email
Susan Russo	Director of Counseling	5466	Susan.russo@apsva.us
Ashley Bleakley	6 th Grade Counselor	5481	Ashley.bleakley@apsva.us
Paul Gardner	7 th Grade Counselor	5457	Paul.gardner@apsva.us
Gretchen Brenckle	8 th Grade Counselor	5469	Gretchen.brenckle@apsva.us
Natalie Battle	Intervention Counselor	5447	Natalie.battle@apsva.us
Kim Chisolm	Substance Abuse Counselor	2631	Kim.chisolm@apsva.us
Kate Karns	School Social Worker	5467	Katherine.karns@apsva.us
Liliana Martinez	Registrar	5441	Liliana.martinez@apsva.us
Sarah Morgan	Counseling Intern	5469	Sarah.morgan@apsva.us
Amy Nemeth	School Psychologist	5471	Amy.nemeth@apsva.us
Peggy Sabouni	Interlude Therapist	5453	Peggy.cole@apsva.us



The WMS Student Services Team presenting at the 1st Quarter Parent Chat: Supporting Student Success!

**What's Happening in
Nov/Dec?**

- [School Psychologist Week](#): November 3-7, 2025 highlights the vital role of school psychologists in supporting students and communities with the theme: “Finding Your Path.” Learn more about what our amazing School Psychologist, Ms. Amy Nemeth, does [here](#).



- [Arlington Tech Field Trips](#): November 4-6; Students are able to see up close some of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities available to all high school students in APS at the [Arlington Career Center](#) as well as learn more specifically about the Arlington Tech Program and how to apply.
- [Signs of Suicide Program for 8th Grade](#): November 17-21; help students know what to do if they are concerned about themselves or others experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harm behaviors. Parents received [this letter](#) through ParentSquare. Please be sure to reach out if you would like your child to opt-out of this lesson.
- [Small Group Supports](#): As counselors wrap-up new student groups, they will continue with groups around Executive Functioning and will be launching groups for students with feelings of anxiety. Parents will receive a group counseling form if their child has been recommended to attend. Please feel free to reach out to the Student Services team with any questions or concerns.

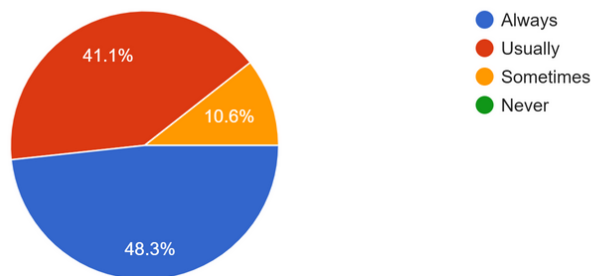
Highlights from 1st Quarter

- [Supporting Student Success Parent Chat](#) - Click on the link to access the presentation! (see picture above! 😊) *The date for our next Parent Chat about coping with stress and anxiety will be announced soon!*
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#) (October) - including classroom lessons led by school counselors



Responses from the end of the lesson exit ticket for 6th grade indicate that students can “speak up for myself or others in times of need.” (See graph below.) We will continue to reinforce strategies to help students self-advocate and advocate for others here at Williamsburg.

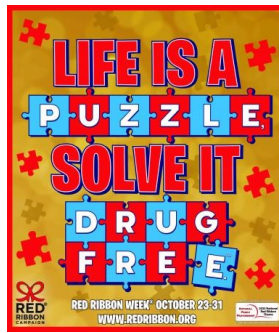
I can speak up for myself or others in times of need.
265 responses



- Unity Day - Oct 22 - Staff and students wore orange to unite against bullying.



- Red Ribbon Week - Oct 23-31: Substance Abuse Counselor, Kim Chisolm, provided resources and activities to engage with students on making healthy choices.



Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Williamsburg uses the [Responsive Classroom](#) structure to align lessons with [VDOE SEL Standards](#) and meet emerging needs of students during **Teacher Advisory (TA) lessons on Tuesdays and Thursdays**. See TA SEL topics and standards for November below! (Click to enlarge.)

November		
T	W	Th
NO SCHOOL	5 B	6 A TA SEL Lessons Topics: "Stand Out for Your Pack", "Protecting Our Pack — Citizenship & Integrity, Feeling Confident in Your Decisions, "Growth Mindset in the Moment" - SEL_Lessons_6th Day 9. - SEL_Lessons_7th Day 9. - SEL_Lessons_8th Day 9 SEL Competencies: SoA1: 5-6a, I can empathize with others' thoughts, perspectives, and emotions. SoA1: 5-6a, I can empathize with others' thoughts, perspectives, and emotions. SoA1: 7-8b, I can develop an understanding and appreciation of different abilities, backgrounds, cultures and social groups. DeM1: 7-8c, I can compare and contrast possible outcomes of my decisions. Decision Making and Social Awareness
NO SCHOOL	12 B	13 A TA SEL Lessons Topics: "Stretch, Don't Stress!", "Clear Binder, Clear Mind!", "Growing Through Stress", "Growth Mindset in the Moment" - SEL_Lessons_6th Day 10. - SEL_Lessons_7th Day 10 - SEL_Lessons_8th Day 10 SEL Competencies: SeM1: 5-6b, I can proactively plan and apply a coping skill for handling a stressful situation that typically causes me to experience uncomfortable emotions. SeM1: 5-6c, I can identify and utilize strategies for persevering through challenges and setbacks. SeM1: 7-8b, I can apply coping skills to process thoughts, express my emotions and manage stressful situations. SeM1: 7-8c, I can reframe a challenging situation into a positive or learning opportunity for growth. Self-Management

18 B TA SEL Lessons Topic: SEL Review - SEL_Lessons_6th Day 11. - SEL_Lessons_7th Day 11. - SEL_Lessons_8th Day 11 SEL Competencies: SeM1: 5-6c, I can identify and utilize strategies for persevering through challenges and setbacks. SeM1: 7-8b, I can apply coping skills to process thoughts, express my emotions and manage stressful situations. Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making	19 C	20 A TA SEL Lessons Topic: Mindset Reset (calming strategies) - SEL_Lessons_6th Day 12 - SEL_Lessons_7th Day 12 - SEL_Lessons_8th Day 12 SEL Competencies: SeM1: 5-6b, I can proactively plan and apply a coping skill for handling a stressful situation that typically causes me to experience uncomfortable emotions. SeM1: 7-8b, I can apply coping skills to process thoughts, express my emotions and manage stressful situations. Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making
25 B TA SEL Lessons Topic: Making Real-Life Connections - SEL_Lessons_6th Day 13 - SEL_Lessons_7th Day 13. - SEL_Lessons_8th Day 13 SEL Competencies: SoA1: 5-6b, I can gain a broader understanding by asking questions and listening to those with different perspectives, backgrounds, and cultures. DeM1: 5-6b, I can show curiosity about a social problem by asking questions and gathering evidence to identify potential solutions. DeM1: 7-8a, I can reflect on lessons learned from actual experiences to inform future practices. Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Skills, and Decision Making	26 THANKSGIVING BREAK ---->	27

We're also excited to announce the launch of the **WMS C.A.R.E. Council**—our new student leadership group for **7th and 8th graders** promoting Compassion, Awareness, Responsibility, and Empathy. These student leaders will help guide SEL lessons, foster empathy and responsibility, and model what it means to lead with care in our school.



Murals from a fall SEL activity are now gracing the Williamsburg hallways!

Academic and Career
Planning

As you have probably seen, [SchoolLinks](#) is the new college and career planning tool APS has adopted this year. Students should have completed their onboarding “Would You Rather” activity that helps them identify potential future careers they might love. Ask your child to show you their results! If they haven’t completed yet, they simply go to MyAccess and click on “SchoolLinks” - the activity will pop right up!

Counselors are being trained on the full capabilities of the SchoolLinks platform in early November and will be ready to help students use this tool to select their classes for next year and develop their 6-year plan, as required by the Virginia Department of Education. Workshops and information for parents will be coming soon as well!

Other Resources

Hazel Telehealth is a free service to all APS students in grades 6 through 12. Learn more here: [Virtual Therapy with Hazel Health - Arlington Public Schools](#)

Find more resources here: [Mental Health Resources - Arlington Public Schools](#)

Featured article from Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE): [Middle School Career Exploration is Vital to Future Success - AMLE](#)