IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

August 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year! I hope that you are enjoying a fun and relaxing summer break, and I very much look forward to working with families in the Acton and Boxborough communities when the school year begins.

We here at the high school have been working hard this summer to prepare for the students’ return. As you know, we will have a day-long freshmen orientation event on Wednesday, September 3rd. This event will include an assembly, an abbreviated class schedule, counselor meetings, and time for students to gather together for activities at the end of the day. We are very excited that we are able to support our incoming students in this way.

This letter contains lots of practical information about the start of school. As we progress through the year, I will be in touch via e-mail when issues and topics come up that I feel are important to share with you. I do not send a regularly timed message, choosing instead to be in touch as topics arise. Please note, however, that the PTSO sends out a “Weekly Chatter” every Sunday morning, which contains up-to-date information about our calendar, events, and school policies. Please make sure to note your preferences concerning email communication on the School/PTSO Permission page on the PowerSchool Parent Portal (accessible via the ABRHS website).

Start of School
This year school begins for freshmen students with a whole day (7:23-2:18) on Wednesday, September 3rd. As this is the official opening day for the district, buses will run and lunch will be served. Students in grades 10-12 will report on Thursday, September 4th. We will begin the day on September 4th in Advisory (noted on student schedules), to which all students should report by 7:23.

Student Schedules
Student schedules will be available online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal on Thursday, August 7th at 12:00 noon. In order to access PowerSchool, you will use your personalized username and password. If you have not created one, log on to the PowerSchool parent portal and click on “create an account” before logging in. Detailed instructions are available under “Learn More.” You will need your student’s ID number and old powerschool password to create this new account. These were listed on the back of your student’s year end report card. If you need to retrieve this information, please contact JPotter@abschools.org.

Once you are logged into PowerSchool you will need to complete your child’s online emergency information card and the School/PTSO permission page before accessing your student’s schedule.
While we have put much work and thought into student schedules and are confident that they will be well received by students and families, we know from experience that some of you will have concerns. Because we have limited staff available in the summer, please use the following procedures if you have questions or concerns.

Should a student find an error in their schedule or have a simple request to add or drop a non-leveled elective they may go to the AB website under “Latest News” and click on the link for “Schedule Change Request Form.” Students should follow the instructions on this form and submit their request to the Counseling Center.

At this time, we will no longer accept requests for level changes to a higher-level course. If there are extenuating circumstances, students should contact the department leader. Such requests will not be otherwise entertained.

**Change in Course Titles**

Please note the high school has changed the title of all Standard Preparatory courses (SP) to College Preparatory 1 (CP1). This change was based on consensus that College Preparatory 1 better reflects the rigor and objective of these courses. Weighted grade point averages based on course designation have not been altered.

**Lockers**

Most schedules contain information regarding lockers. Please do not be concerned if a student’s schedule is lacking this information. If that is the case, we will provide that information to the student on the first day of school. Attention seniors: If you will not be using an academic locker during the 2014-2015 school year, please contact Mrs. Haras pharas@abschools.org over the summer or at the beginning of the school year.

**Bus Schedules**

will be posted on our website in late August.

**Fall Sports and Activities**

Most fall sports practices will begin on August 21st, football begins on August 18th. Please check our website: [http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/](http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/) for the starting time for each sport. Students trying out for a team must have proof (green form) of a current physical examination on file with the nurses before tryouts. The athletic fee is $205 per sport per season with a $820 family cap. Waivers are available for cases of financial hardship.

**Band Camp** begins August 18th (Monday - Thursday, 9am - 9pm; Friday, August 22nd, 9am - 3pm).

**Chorus Camp** will be Thursday, August 28th (9am - 2pm)

**Student IDs/School Pictures**

Student pictures will be taken on **Thursday, September 11th and Friday, September 12th**. Every student will be provided with an ID card. In addition, families may choose to purchase packages of these photographs. **Parents will receive information in the mail from the photography company regarding picture ordering procedures.** If you have any questions, the phone number for Prestige Portraits for Lifetouch Studios is (800) 426-9533.

**Senior Portraits**

To have a senior picture included in the yearbook, each student must have his/her senior portrait taken by Lifetouch Studio. Lifetouch will be on campus August 11th and August 14th and again on October 7th - October 10th. Families with questions about portrait appointments should wait to receive the postcard from Lifetouch which will include the contact information – or contact the Yearbook Advisor, Diane Cileno – dcileno@abschools.org.

**Senior Privileges**

Seniors who have not yet applied for privileges may pick up application forms beginning the week of August 19th. Forms will be available at the Main Office and Administration Offices. Please follow the instructions on the privilege request form.
Parking
Parking on campus will be available for seniors only, at a cost of $200 for the year. Those seniors wishing to purchase a parking sticker may report to Room 102 North (Campus Support Room) on August 26 through August 29th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Parking stickers may also be purchased after the school year begins during school hours. **Any incoming senior who owes a parking fine from junior year will not be issued a parking sticker until the fine is paid.**

During school hours parents and visitors are welcome to park in the designated visitor parking spaces at the high school. Please do not park in any numbered parking space as all of these spaces have been assigned to faculty and staff. The high school campus has specific drop off and pick up areas for parents, students and busses and the direction of traffic flow changes in the morning and the afternoon. We ask that all visitors please follow the direction of the high school campus support staff. The campus support staff are available to answer your questions and direct you through our campus.

Absences
Parents are to notify the Main Office of all student absences. Please call (978-264-3323) on the day of the absence. If parent notification is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. An unexcused absence will be defined as a truancy. Details pertaining to consequences for student truancy will be discussed with students in advisory on the first day of school. As was the case last year, parents can review their child’s daily attendance records on the PowerSchool Parent Portal. In order to receive access, you will be required to update your child’s emergency contact information and the PTSO permissions first. In accordance with the school policy, each student is granted an opportunity to earn full credit for any course as long as his/her total absences (excused and unexcused) do not exceed 20 days per full year course, 10 days per semester course, or 5 days per semester course meeting on alternate days.

Dismissals
If a student needs to be released early, he/she must bring a note signed by a parent or legal guardian to the Main Office prior to third period on the day of the dismissal. **In the event of an emergency**, parents may call the Main Office to have their child dismissed on that day. Students returning to school must check in at the Main Office when they arrive. Students leaving campus without following the proper dismissal procedures will be considered truant from any class missed. Notes excusing truancies due to the student’s failure to follow the dismissal policy will not be accepted. Upperclassmen with privileges are expected to follow the same dismissal procedures whenever they are going to miss class.

I know this letter contains a lot of information. We do not expect you to remember everything! Please note that all of the information contained here is available on our school website: [http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/](http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/). Links are also provided to both the PTSO and the Counseling Department websites. We encourage you to check all of those sites regularly for information about school happenings, upcoming events, school policies, etc.

Again, I hope that you are enjoying your summer. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Campbell, Ed.D.

Principal