

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
36 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720**

Together we promote respect for self, others, and learning.

**Alix Callen, Ed.D.
PRINCIPAL**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

August 2009

Dear Parents and Students,

I hope that you all are enjoying a restful, relaxing summer.

We here at the high school have been working hard to prepare for the start of school. We have reviewed carefully the results of our annual senior survey and are making changes that will help students to feel more supported and excited about the year. Returning students will be glad to know that the mid-term schedule has been revised to address concerns related to student stress. In addition, the faculty stress committee has significantly amended the test postponement policy to make it more ‘user-friendly.’

The most exciting work that we have been doing this summer surrounds our efforts to embrace our new mission statement. As we communicated at the end of last year, the Faculty, School Council, Student Council and School Committee have all voted to adopt a new mission statement for the school: *Together we promote respect for self, others, and learning*. As we move forward, this mission statement will guide our decision-making, our actions, and our expectations for our students. While I have been unbelievably impressed by the degree of respect the school community affords to each of its members, I do think there is additional work we can do in this regard. I look forward to continued conversation across the school community on this important topic.

Start of School

This year school begins for students on Tuesday, September 1. School hours are 7:23 a.m. to 2:18 p.m. On the first day of school, please report promptly to your homeroom (indicated on the enclosed schedule) by 7:23.

Student Schedules

Enclosed in this mailing, you will find your schedule for the coming year. Those students whose schedules are not enclosed owe parking fines, which may be paid in the Administration Office.

Most schedules contain information regarding lockers. Please do not be concerned if your schedule is lacking this information. If that is the case, we will provide that information to you on the first day of school. **Attention Seniors: If you will not be using an academic locker during the 09-10 school year, please see Mrs. Haras in room 117N or Mrs. DeRome in the Administration Office over the summer or at the beginning of the school year.**

Requests for schedule changes in period or teacher assignments must be brought before the school’s Appeals Board. (The Appeals Board is not for level changes. Please see level changes below). The Board consists of the Department Leaders and an Assistant Principal and will meet on Monday, August 24th only. **Any student wanting to appear before the Appeals Board should call the Counseling Department (264-4700, ext. 3430) between August 10th and August 21st to make an appointment for August 24th.** Those students who have serious concerns and cannot make the Appeals Day should either mail a letter outlining their concerns to the school or deliver it to the Counseling Center. The letter should be addressed to the Appeals Board c/o Mr. Larry Dorey. **We ask that appeals requests not be sent by email.**

While every effort has been made to accommodate student course requests, in some instances requests could not be filled due to scheduling conflicts. Students who find that they are missing a course they requested may contact the Counseling Department to inquire what their options may be.

As you are reviewing your schedule, please note the following:

- All students must be scheduled for a lunch period – lunch is served periods 4, 5, 6, and 7.
- **Level changes to a higher level course than a student was recommended for will not be entertained.**

All students will receive an updated schedule in homeroom on the first day of school.

Emergency Contact Information via PowerSchool

Please take the time to go on line to complete or edit your student's emergency contact information. This log-in information was listed at the bottom of the letter that went out with the year end report cards. Once you have submitted the emergency form, you may continue to use PowerSchool to track your child's attendance and stored historical grades throughout the school year. If you have any questions, please contact Jeanne Potter at 978-264-4700 at extension 3404 or by email jpotter@mail.ab.mec.edu.

Orientation Activities

We provide an orientation program for all students new to the community as well as rising 9th grade students. As we communicated to rising 9th grade students at the end of the past school year, this year's new student orientation will be held on Wednesday, August 26. We hope your child will be able to attend this introduction to the high school. The orientation for all freshmen will begin at 10:30 on August 26th. Students should report to the main lobby of the school around 10:00 a.m. for information on the location of group orientation sessions. The orientation includes a free pizza lunch which will be served at 11:30 and is provided by the parent organization (PTSO). The orientation for students new to the community grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 10:15 a.m. and will take place in the Counseling Center. Freshmen new to the school system are also invited to stay for the general freshman orientation that will begin at 10:30. Students attending orientation will be able to use their schedules to find their classrooms, explore other areas of the school and practice opening their lockers. Students should plan to leave the building by 12:00 p.m.

Bus Schedules

Bus schedules will be on our website in August and will also be published in *The Beacon* in late August.

Fall Sports and Activities

Most fall sports practices will begin on August 27th, football begins on August 24th. Please check our website: <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/> for the starting time for each sport. Students trying out for a team must have proof of a current physical examination on file with the nurses before tryouts. The athletic fee is \$190 per sport per season with a \$760 family cap. Waivers are available for cases of financial hardship.

Band camp begins August 17th (Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.; Friday, August 21st 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.). Chorus camp will be held on Tuesday, August 25th, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m..

Student IDs/School Pictures

Student pictures will be taken on **Wednesday, September 2nd and Thursday, September 3rd**. 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 10-14 and October 5-8. Families with questions about portrait appointments should wait to receive the postcard from Lifetouch which will include the contact information.

Senior Privileges

Seniors who have not yet applied for privileges may pick up application forms beginning the week of August 24th. Forms will be available at the Main Office and Administration Offices. Completed forms should be returned to the Principal's Assistant, Lani DeRome in the Administration Office for further processing.

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 before school starts should report to room 201N West lot entrance. The schedule is as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Monday – 8/24 | 7:00 – 11:00 |
| Tuesday – 8/25 | 12:00 – 4:00 |
| Wednesday – 8/26 | 7:00 – 11:00 |
| Thursday – 8/27 | 12:00 – 4:00 |

Parking stickers can also be purchased during school hours after school starts. Any incoming senior that 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 monitors.** The campus monitors 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 homeroom on the first day of school. As was the case last year, parents can review their child's daily attendance records on PowerSchool. In order to receive access, you will be required to update and submit emergency contact information on PowerSchool.

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 truanancies 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.

Parents: If you have an emergency during the school day and need to contact your son or daughter, please call 978-264-4700 ext. 3430 or leave the message in person at the school store (located right next to the Main Office). Messages will be delivered to students in classrooms by our A-B Express student delivery service during selected periods during the day.

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/>. 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 on September 1st.

Sincerely,

