

AMHERST - PELHAM *Regional* SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

Amherst Regional High School  
21 Mattoon Street, Amherst, MA 01002  
Phone: (413) 362-1701 Fax: (413) 549-9704  
<http://www.arps.org/hs>

Mark Jackson, Principal  
Diane Chamberlain, Assistant Principal  
Miki Lee Gromacki, Assistant Principal  
Karen Keough-Huff, Athletic Director

August 2011

Dear ARHS Parents & Guardians,

On behalf of the faculty and staff of ARHS, I would like to welcome all of our students and families to SY 2011-12.

Over the next two weeks, all ARHS families will receive two mailings. The second mailing, which will be sent on **Wednesday, August 31**, will include student schedules and Emergency and Health Information forms. The purpose of the mailing you are reading now is to provide ARHS families with information basic to the upcoming school year. As a **cost saving measure**, regardless of how many children are currently enrolled in the high school, families will receive only **one** copy of this mailing. Below is a list of enclosures.

1. Special first day of school schedule;
2. School and district calendars;
3. Bell and Late Arrival Day schedules;
4. Homeroom assignments;
5. Information regarding double mailings;
6. Ordering information for *The Graphic* and the yearbook;
7. Information from the ARHS Parent Guardian Organization

\* \* \* \*

**An important reminder for all new students and 9<sup>th</sup> graders:** On Monday, August 29 from 8:30 – 1:00, ARHS will hold a one-day Open House for **all new students and 9<sup>th</sup> graders**. The day is organized on a drop-in basis – whenever they arrive, students should plan on staying for approximately an hour. Parents and guardians are welcome to attend. The goal of the day is for students to receive their schedules, become familiar with the layout of the building and meet some people who will play a role in their lives over the next four years.

\* \* \* \*

The **first day of school** for all students is **Tuesday, September 6**. The day's schedule is below:

1. **9<sup>th</sup> graders** will report directly to their **homerooms** at 7:45.
2. **New students**(grades 10 – 12) will report to the **library** at 7:45.
3. 10 – 12<sup>th</sup> graders will report to school at 10:00[Buses will make a 2nd morning run.]
4. Upon their arrival:
  - 10<sup>th</sup> graders will meet with their counselors. Locations will be provided on the first day.
  - 11<sup>th</sup> graders will report directly to their homerooms.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> graders will report to the auditorium.
5. Dismissal is at the regular time, 2:20 pm.

Lastly, here are two other important dates:

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- Monday, September 19: **9<sup>th</sup> Grade/New Student Family Night @ 7 pm**: This is a one hour meeting designed to provide parents and guardians of all students new to the high school with an overview of ARHS's policies and procedures.
- Thursday, October 6: **Open House @ 7 pm**: Parents and guardians will follow their child/children's schedule and have an opportunity to meet the teachers.

For the remainder of August, the main office is open from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. I encourage you to call if you have questions. I look forward to seeing everyone shortly.

Sincerely,

Mark Jackson  
Principal

**'What's New and Worth Reviewing'**

1. Last year, via *PowerSchool*, the district's student information data base, we provided parents/guardians and students real time access to students' grades; the prior year we had done the same for students' attendance records. In June, when we reviewed the level of use of these two functions, we found it to be exceedingly high: upwards of 90% of student records had been accessed at some time throughout the school year.

As a result, for this school year, we are going to rely on the access families have to PowerSchool, and not **send hard copies of progress reports home.**

However, for families that do not have Internet access, we will continue to send hard copies home. Hard copies of report cards will also continue to be sent home. I will have more to say about the details of this at Open House.

2. Starting last spring, the district's Informational Systems office began a major **technology upgrade** of both the high school and middle school. In the high school, this involved three forms of technology: document cameras, which are 21<sup>st</sup> overhead projectors that project any document placed on them; LCD projectors that are linked to classroom computers; and MIMEOs, the latest generation of interactive white boards, which allow teachers, among other things, to navigate to other links by simply tapping the white board.
3. Regarding safety and security, for the upcoming year, **the front doors of all schools**, except during arrival and dismissal, will be **locked** during the school day. This is a practice that was piloted last spring at the Middle School and Fort River. The front doors have been equipped with voice/video capability and buzzers. All visitors will need to identify themselves before being 'buzzed' in by the school's office personnel. The district believes, and I am in full support, that this is an important next step in ensuring the safety of students and staff throughout the school day

I also assume that, since the community is accustomed to easy access to the schools, this will take some getting used to. School offices are typically busy places. If there is some delay in responding to your initial 'buzz', I'd ask for your patience and understanding.


  
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4. Cafeteria: **Breakfast** is available to all students every morning. The cost of breakfast is \$1.00 full price and \$0.30 reduced price. Students need to finish with breakfast before 7:40 in order to be on time for first period. The **cost of lunch** is \$2.50 with no further increases planned at this time. The cost of a reduced lunch will remain at \$0.40. Keeping the lunch lines moving maximizes the time students have to actually eat. To help in this effort, the Food Service Department maintains ‘**cafeteria accounts**’ for students. Last November, we instituted an on-line payment system for the convenience of parents and students. Please go to **MyNutriKids.com** to set up an account. Students may also deposit with the cafeteria cashiers an amount of money by either cash or check that is automatically debited when they swipe their ID cards. Please make checks payable to: **Amherst School Food Service Department**.
  
5. Late Buses: Late buses will run according to the schedule below. Students should be ready to board the late buses by no later than 3:45.

M	T	W	Th	F
Amherst	Amherst	No late buses	Amherst	No late buses
Hill Towns	Hill Towns		Hill Towns	

August

- 23: Football tryouts begin at 9:00 a.m.
- 26: All other sports practices/tryouts begin at 3:15
- **Important:** In order to try out or practice, students must be registered and cleared for participation. Contact the Athletic Office @ 362-1746 if you have questions or concerns.

September

- 5: Labor Day, All schools closed.
- 15: Late Arrival Day: All Students Report at 10 am
- 10: ACT administration; register online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) ; deadline with late fee is Aug. 26
- 20: School Picture Day (October 25th is re-take day).
- County-wide College Fair hosted by Williston-Northampton. Details available from the guidance office.

October

- 1: SAT administration; register at collegeboard.com; deadline with no late fee September 9 (Sept 21 with fee waiver or late fee)
- 5: College Recruiting Night 7:00 High School Library. Session is for student athletes (and parents) who are interested in participating in College Athletics.
- 6: Open House
- 15: PSAT administration; register in guidance office beginning Sept 19; strongly recommended for juniors; sophomores invited to take it; fee waivers available to juniors only.
- 22: ACT administration; register at actstudent.org; deadline Sept 16 with no late fee or fee waiver, Sept. 30 with late fee).