

# PTSO News

September 2005  
Volume 19  
Number 1



Newsletter of the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools Parent-Teacher-Student Organization

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RPTSO Web Site: <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu/>

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## FROM THE CHAIRS:

**Beth Petr – ABRHS Co-Chair**

**Jan Couch – RJGJH Co-Chair**

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Welcome back from the Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)! We are excited to share this year's first newsletter with you as everyone prepares to welcome about 1000 students to our Junior High and 1825 to our High School.

Although mothers, fathers, and guardians are not as closely involved in older children's school experiences, your help and attention is still essential! Please take a few minutes to look over this wealth of information. You might find something interesting on one of the volunteer forms, or on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu/> You might be content just to glance at this newsletter every month. That's great. The goal of the PTSO is to help facilitate communication between home, school, the school committee, and our community. It is often said that NOW is the time to pay closest attention to your children, as they are becoming more independent and moving into and through their teens. Hopefully, and with your support, the PTSO can help.

Two of the changes you will see this year are to our email messages and newsletter. As more of us become "tech savvy," the PTSO recognizes the cost savings of doing business electronically. In the next few months, we expect to offer families a choice of receiving a paper newsletter, OR an email message linking them to the latest newsletter posted on our website. The printing and mailing cost savings would be money that we can instead give to our schools. Of course, some families would still prefer a paper copy be mailed to them, and that is fine. See the next newsletter for details!

Thank you for sending in your annual PTSO dues of \$25 per family using the enclosed form. Dues are the PTSO's main source of funding and primarily cover the monthly production and mailing of this newsletter, several scholarships, and some funding given to our two principals for needs they feel are top priority at R.J. Grey and ABRHS.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who responded to our dues reminder letter sent out last spring. This was for last year's dues (2004-2005) and resulted in \$10,000 in additional dues income. \$6,700 of these funds was given to HS Principal Steve Donovan and \$3,300 was given to JH Principal Craig

Hardimon. As stated in the letter, "We understand that in these economic times, there are valid reasons why dues may go unpaid, and of course, that is fine. If this is the case, please don't feel the need to respond." There are many of us with mountains of paper on the kitchen counter, who appreciate the reminder mid-year, especially with all the stuff that comes in at the start of the school year.

Mark your calendar for our first PTSO Forum on Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at noon in the Acton Memorial Library. High School Principal Steve Donovan and Junior High Principal Craig Hardimon will be our presenters. They will be followed by a few words from several of the community groups that support our regional schools, including the PTSO, the Regional School Committee, ABSAF (Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund), and CAFY (Community Alliance for Youth). Meetings are written up in the next newsletter, so folks who cannot attend can stay informed.

Finally, thank you to the parents who have volunteered to be on the PTSO Board this year. All parents and guardians are welcome to attend our next PTSO Board meeting on November 2 at 7:30 p.m. As always, feel free to contact any of us with questions or comments.

We hope you have a great school year!

[BPetr@verizon.net](mailto:BPetr@verizon.net) or 978-263-7208  
[JCCouch@comcast.net](mailto:JCCouch@comcast.net) or 978-263-2118

## **PTSO Informational Email List for Families**

The PTSO email list has a new look this year! We have switched to Constant Contact ([www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)), a service currently being used by several of our Acton elementary schools. THANK YOU to Acton parent Eric Groves for making this possible, and for answering a million

questions over the past year or so.

If you did not receive a welcome email message from us yet, or you never signed up for the PTSO emails and would like to, please go to our website and click on the PTSO EMAILS link. <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> You will be asked for your child's Class (Year of High School graduation).

Constant Contact will allow you to change or delete your own email address at any time. It will also allow us to send messages to a particular Class, as well as only send one message if you have children in more than one Class.

These messages will be occasional reminders, clarifications, and last minute requests for assistance from the PTSO. They are not official "school" notices and will not contain essential information required for all families. You do not HAVE to be on this list, but it is a simple way to keep in touch with school happenings, and ask questions. There is no cost.

### **Thank You Volunteers!**

The Volunteer Coordinators would like to thank all the people who have generously volunteered their time this past year to help at the Junior and Senior High Schools. Parental involvement is one of the factors that distinguishes our schools and enables our students to continue the tradition of excellence that we have known in Acton-Boxborough. Your help really does make a difference for our students!

There are many different types of volunteer opportunities available at both the Junior High School and the Senior High School. Time commitments vary greatly among the different jobs, so we hope you will find something that might fit into your schedule.

Please note that there are separate volunteer forms for the Junior High and Senior High. Included in this newsletter is the High School form. The Jr High form will be mailed to you separately. Please take a moment to look them over for an area that might interest you. Please contact either of us if you have any questions or would like more information about a particular position before signing up. We would be glad to help you find the right place to help!

- Susan Moncrieff, ABRHS (978-635-8099)
- Debbie Clough, RJGJHS (978-266-0153)

### **ABSAF Kicks Off 2005-2006 Fundraising Drive**

On August 31<sup>st</sup> ABSAF (Acton-Boxborough Student Activities Fund) will kick off its 2005–2006 fundraising campaign. The mail appeal is addressed to all residents of Acton and Boxborough and seeks to raise funds to support extracurricular programs at the regional schools. Members of the ABSAF board believe that extracurricular activities help to develop well-rounded children with healthy self-esteem. The range of activities at our junior high and high school is

impressive as is the fact that over 85% of our students participate in these activities. Whether students are interested in music, sports, academic teams, theater, speech and debate, or community service, there are many wonderful programs that provide constructive and creative outlets for them.

Supporting a broad range of extracurricular activities is a challenge for us all, particularly when school finances are under pressure forcing some communities to completely eliminate extracurricular programs. Although taxes, gate receipts, and activity fees help to fund these programs, revenue from these sources is not enough to cover the total cost. ABSAF was founded in 1981 to help bridge the gap. Since that time, the organization has been making a significant difference in the number and quality of extracurricular activities at the Acton-Boxborough regional schools.

This past year contributions from nearly 1,300 Acton and Boxborough residents provided \$102,750 to support a broad range of extracurricular activities. Some examples of how ABSAF funds have been used in recent years include: donations to Proscenium Circus (the high school theatre group), purchase of band uniforms and instruments, new stage curtains and sound system for the junior high, supplies and equipment for all athletic teams, study guides and league dues for academic teams, athletic uniforms, and transportation to events for all the groups mentioned above.

Donations in any amount are appreciated, and for a donation of \$150 or more, you and your immediate family will receive an ABSAF pass admitting you to most home extracurricular events sponsored by the regional schools as well as two tickets to the school plays/musicals at the junior high and the high school for the 2005-2006 school year. ABSAF passes are now on sale at football and soccer games at Leary Field or by mail at P.O. Box 662, Acton, Massachusetts 01720. In addition to supporting extracurricular activities, the pass is a bargain for many families. If you have questions about ABSAF, please contact Jack Boyles at 978-405-2528 or [absafinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:absafinfo@yahoo.com). Please help to keep the extracurricular activities at the regional schools strong and vibrant. Thank you.

### **The 2005-2006 ABSAF Board of Directors**

**Board Members:** Scott Apgar, Sue Blaney, Jack Boyles, Sasha DeMello, Lisa DiBartolomeo, Mary Duggan, Terri Emerson, Jon Goddard, Judy Gray, Maureen Hart, Phil Landry, Mickey Lieto, Andrea Magner, Lynn Martin, Cy Marrison, Sharon McManus, Maura Murphy, Damara Press, Mac Reid, Rebecca Scheier, Gayle Shenson, Mary Ellen Wilson

**Student Members:** Carley Cesare, Eric DiPaolo, Ankit Gupta, Eric LaForest, Meg Lieto, Katie McManus, Pat Morris, Patrick Sloan.

**Administration and Ex Officio:** Steve Desy, Steve Donovan, George Frost, Craig Hardimon, Mark Hickey



**CHANGES AND/OR DELETIONS**  
**High School Student Phone Directories**  
*(Junior High Directory Forms will be mailed separately)*

August 2005

Dear ABRHS Parents/Guardians:

The telephone directory for ABRHS students will be produced again this year by the PTSO in conjunction with the high school. These handy references will be available for purchase by students and parents as soon as they are completed.

The PTSO is sensitive to concerns about privacy and the release of personal information. Please use this form if you, as parent/guardian, **DO NOT** want any or all of the below information published in the phone directory or if you wish that your child's own telephone number be used rather than the home phone.

Please note that your child will also have the opportunity to change or delete any of the information but that your wishes as parent/guardian will have priority regarding what is published in the directory.

Return this form to the **PTSO HS Student Directory, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720-0912** by **Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>**.

You do **not** need to fill out this form if you do not wish to make any changes.

Thank you,

Judy Peters  
ABRHS Student Directory

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Please only fill out the section that pertains to the **changes and/or deletions** you wish to make regarding your child's information in the High School Student Phone Directory:

\_\_\_ Please remove all information about my child from the directory.

Please remove my child's:

\_\_\_ Address and Telephone number

\_\_\_ Address only

\_\_\_ Telephone number only

\_\_\_ My child has a different phone number, please use this number \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach a second sheet for additional children if necessary.)

**Only return if changes are requested.**

# ABRHS NEWS

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## FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**Steve Donovan**

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Welcome, students and parents, to the kick-off of the 2005–2006 school year. We anticipate a good year working together.

In addition to the freshmen who have moved up from the junior high, we are welcoming a number of students whose families have moved into the school district as well as students from nearby communities who are here through the School Choice program. We hope everyone will join us in helping our new students feel at home at Acton-Boxborough.

We also welcome our new assistant principal, JoAnn Campbell, who comes to A-B after working as a teacher and administrator at Newton North High School.

We have an exciting new group of faculty members this year. New teachers and counselors include:  
English: Dana Graham, Karen Nazor, Quixada Moore-Vissing and Zia Parakh  
World Language: Sinikka Gary, Jim Marcotte, Matt Wirzburger, Florence Gilfix and Andrea O'Brien  
Science: Annette Leger and Jim McCaughey  
Mathematics: Janet Maxwell  
Special Education: Carol Moser-Wight  
Counseling: Wioletta Pawlowski and Jodi Chu

### **ABRHS First Day Schedule**

On the first day of school, Wednesday, August 31, ABRHS students should report to their homerooms by 7:23 a.m. Homeroom assignments can be found on the schedules that were mailed to students and will also be posted at school entrances. The schedule for the first day will be modified to allow for distribution of student information, class assemblies and all eight periods of classes, so it is important that students attend homeroom to know the schedule for the day.

### **ABRHS School Council**

The ABRHS School Council meets monthly on Monday evening to help set and review school goals for the year. The three parent representatives who were elected to School Council in the spring are Mary Ann Ashton, Nancy Coppolino and Gina Nguyen.

### **Back-to-School Night**

Our Back-to-School Night for parents will be held this year on Wednesday, October 19. Please plan to join us to meet your student's teachers and learn about the expectations of the courses he or she is taking.

### **A-B Web Site**

We are constantly adding information to the school web site ([ab.mec.edu/abrhs](http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs)) to make timely information readily available to parents. Parents and students should check this site regularly for daily announcements and other school information. Comments about the content of the web site or suggestions about additional information that would be useful

can be directed to Susan Sousa ([ssousa@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:ssousa@mail.ab.mec.edu)).

### **High School Extracurricular Activities**

Clubs and other extracurricular activities can contribute to a student's education and enrich his or her life. ABRHS has a wide variety of activities in which students can participate. At the Freshman and New Student Orientation on August 25, students receive a list of extracurricular activities so that they can begin thinking about how to become involved. Returning students can pick up a copy of this list in the Counseling Center.

During lunch on September 14th and 15th, there will be an Activities Fair at which students can pick up additional information about the clubs and organizations at A-B and can talk to club members about their organizations. Information about volunteer opportunities will also be available. Students should listen to the morning announcements for information about the first meeting of organizations that interest them.

Parents who would like more information about extracurricular activities at the high school can contact Kay Steeves at 978-264-4700, ext. 3444 or at [ksteeves@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:ksteeves@mail.ab.mec.edu).

### **Safety Committee**

The High School Safety Committee developed procedures for a lockdown at the high school during the 2000–2001 school year. These are practiced each year. This year, the annual drill will be held early in October.

### **MCAS Retests**

The MCAS retests are scheduled for the week of November 14. Any junior or senior who still needs to take these tests should contact their counselor and make sure that they are on the list.

### **Recruiting Information for the Armed Forces and Post Secondary Educational Institutions**

Federal law requires schools to provide information on students to military recruiters and representatives of post secondary educational institutions. Upon request from recruiters or school representatives, ABRHS will provide the name, address and telephone listing for all high school students. If an eligible student and/or parent does not want this information released, they must notify me in writing. Notification may be made by mail (Stephen Donovan, ABRHS, 96 Hayward Road, Acton, MA 01720) or by email ([sdonovan@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:sdonovan@mail.ab.mec.edu)). Parents who have already made this request for their student do not have to repeat the process each school year; the original request will be honored until the student graduates.

– Steve Donovan

## **Parking and Dropping Off at ABRHS**

Parents who drop off and pick up their high school students need to follow the directions of the campus monitors both before and after school.

There are two drop off/pick up areas:

– In the BACK CIRCLE of the high school, by the auditorium entrance where the picnic tables are located off of Hayward Road.

– In the front of the school please come down Charter Road and take a left into the drop off area by the WEST WING ENTRANCE.

**Please note this change from last year:** School buses will be using the front circle, and there will be no parent drop off or pick up in the front circle this school year.

Please do not drive into the parking lots to drop off your child.

Please slow down when you are driving through our campus.

Please do not park, even temporarily, in a numbered parking space as they are assigned to faculty and staff who are arriving for work.

Thanks to all of you who have been so cooperative as the configuration and traffic flow at the high school has been undergoing change.

– Lani DeRome  
Principal's Assistant

## **ABRHS Attendance and Tardiness Policies**

### **Tardy Policy**

School starts at 7:23 a.m. If a student comes to school later than that, he/she must sign in at the Main Office. Students arriving late to school in excess of three days will be required to meet with their assistant principal before gaining admittance into class. Students chronically late to school will be assigned detention. If a student is late to class during the day, the classroom teacher may require the student to attend after school detention and /or reduce the student's class participation grade for that day.

### **Absences**

Parents are to notify the Main Office of all student absences. Please call (978-264-4700, ext. 3500) on the day of the absence. If a parent call is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. An unexcused absence will be defined as a truancy and the student will be required to serve an after school detention for each truancy recorded. In the event that a student later provides acceptable documentation excusing the absence, it should be delivered to his/her assistant principal for individual consideration.

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.

## **High School Dates of Interest**

### **August**

31 School opens

### **September**

1 & 2 Student photos

14 & 15 Activities Fair (during lunches)

24 "Juice" Concert sponsored by AB radio station

WHAB 89.1 FM

28 Early Decision and College Application Workshop

28 Grade 9 Elections

30 Interim reports for Term 1 issued

### **October**

4 No school – Rosh Hashanah

8 SAT I & II

10 No school – Columbus Day

13 No school – Yom Kippur

15 PSAT/NMSQT

19 Back-to-School Night 7:00 P.M.

21 Hypnotist sponsored by Student Council 7:00 P.M.

25 Career Breakfast (set of career speakers) –  
First period

27 – 29 Fall Play

## **Acton Boxborough Alumni Association**

The AB Alumni Association (ABAA) is calling all AB alumni to register with them. In June, ABBA sent a mailing to confirm the location of 13,000+ alumni. To encourage quick responses, an invitation to enter a Bose stereo raffle was part of the mailing. Replies from Oregon to Florida continue to arrive in the ABAA mailbox. In the meantime, the database is being built so that updated alumni information will remain easily retrievable. Feel free to check out our web site at <http://www.abalumni.org/> Alumni can register with ABAA by replying to the mailing, registering online, or simply by calling the ABAA phone line listed below. Stay tuned to find out who wins the Bose stereo in late September!

Suzanne Brozek and Carol Jette  
ABRPTSO Alumni Liaisons  
978-264-4700 Ext. 4200

## ABRHS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS 2005-2006

**Volunteers are needed in many different capacities this year to help with activities organized both by the High School and by the PTSO. Please check activities with which you would like to help, and mail your completed form to: A-B Regional PTSO, H. S. Volunteer Coordinator, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720-0912.**

**Thank you in advance for your help!**

Your name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (day): \_\_\_\_\_  
(evening): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your child's/children's name(s) and grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Days and times you are available to help: \_\_\_\_\_

**If both parents/guardians are completing this form, please write the name of the volunteer in the margin next to the activity.**

### On-going activities (help on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis)

- Office support:** Help in one of the school's offices. No experience is necessary. Training is provided.\*
- Computer lab assistance:** Provide assistance in the labs at the High School by supervising students. Training is provided.\*
- PTSO Newsletter:** The PTSO Newsletter is a monthly Junior/Senior High School publication, which requires many hands to help fold and label for an hour or two, on the last Thursday of each month, in the High School. No previous experience is required. Coordinator: Elaine Shirron

### Activities at the High School that occur on an irregular or infrequent basis

- Career speakers:** Speak to groups of interested students about your career, including the education and training required and job prospects for the future. Presentations may be given in a classroom or the Counseling Center. Please indicate your career. \_\_\_\_\_
- Host a job shadowing student:** Provide valuable insight into your chosen field of work by spending the day at work with a junior or senior student who has an interest in pursuing a career in your occupation. May also involve setting up or arranging an internship at your place of work, if this might be mutually beneficial.\* Please indicate your occupation. \_\_\_\_\_
- Provide support to community service projects:** May involve providing ideas, contacting agency or program managers, picking up supplies, transporting students, assisting students with organizing projects, compiling student interest directories, updating student volunteer opportunity files, sending out memos, and helping with community service projects.\*

- ❑ **Translate school information:** Translate school information from a student’s native language into English or communicate via sign language with hearing impaired students. Some work may be done at home. Please indicate the language(s) with which you are familiar. \_\_\_\_\_
- ❑ **Help to proctor exams:** Supervise groups of students taking standardized exams. A commitment of 2 hours 1 to 2 times a year.\*

**PTSO activities that occur on an irregular or infrequent basis**

- ❑ **Hospitality/Teacher Appreciation Committee:** Provide refreshments and/or assist with various events (e.g., coffees), including the annual “thank you” breakfast for the teachers/staff on June 8. A coordinator is needed, primarily to make phone calls from list provided. Involvement is much more sporadic than at the elementary level. Please indicate if you are willing to coordinate.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ❑ **Project Graduation Committee:** Help chaperone, decorate, or organize this popular all-night extravaganza held at the High School for graduating seniors, which relies heavily on parental support (not parents of seniors). This year’s date is Friday, June 2. Remember, your underclass son or daughter will be a senior before you know it!\*
- ❑ **ABRHS Alumni Association:** Currently the PTSO is looking for assistance with the following: administrative assistance, on-going or for specific short-term tasks, and webmaster for alumni website. Please specify interest \_\_\_\_\_. Co-Chairs: Carol Jette and Suzanne Brozek
- ❑ **Gardening Committee:** Meet as needed several times a year to beautify the grounds of the school. Committee members needed for occasional workdays, and possibly to plan activities with the students. Green thumbs are not required.  
Co-Chairs: Damara Press and Subha Thiagarajan
- ❑ **New Family Support:** Help families new to the school system or community feel “connected.” Be available to answer questions by phone or in person. May help with a get-together for new families. Chair: Sue Hart
- ❑ **Help Make Telephone Calls for PTSO or other school-related needs:** As many hands make light work, parents/guardians are being sought to help make phone calls to contact volunteers to help out with various school-related issues and events. Calls may be made from school or home. A great job for those who need flexibility in scheduling!
- ❑ **One-Time Miscellaneous Projects:** Help with clerical projects or social events that may come up throughout the year. If you can’t decide where to help out, this may be the category for you!

***E-mail will also be used to alert parents/guardians to other volunteer opportunities during the year. To join the PTSO email list, click the button on our website at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu>***

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. The time you spend volunteering is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Susan Moncrieff at 978-635-8099.

\*Requires CORI check.

***Please note that most activities will require a completed CORI form (forms completed last year for the High School are still valid). Forms may be obtained from the High School office.***

# RJGJHS NEWS

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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

**Craig Hardimon**

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I'd like to welcome new and returning families to R.J. Grey Junior High for the 2005-06 school year. The summer is rapidly coming to an end and I am thrilled and excited to have students in our building soon.

### Communication

To maintain clear lines of communication this year, I will continue to utilize my principal's e-mail list. If you wish to receive my weekly newsletter, *Grey Matters*, the daily announcements, and other timely school information and news via this method, please send me a quick note at:

[chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu). Be sure to put "principal's e-mail list" in the subject line and tell me your name and your child's name and grade. If you do not have e-mail but wish to receive this newsletter, just send a note to my office either with your child or at the address above. Copies of *Grey Matters* can also be found on our website. If you are currently receiving our emails but wish to be removed from our list, please send an email to "listserv@listserv.ab.mec.edu" with the following text in the body of the message:

**unsubscribe JHS-PARENT-LIST**

There are also other opportunities for communication. We have a monthly RJG newsletter called the *Shades of Gray*, which includes articles from various teams and teachers, as well as a calendar of events to keep families informed. As principal, I participate in the monthly PTSO forums to talk about what is going on in our school and to answer questions from parents. Additionally, each month I have a "Drop-in Hour" for parents who might want to stop by the office and ask questions about the school or share their thoughts. I have had a number of great conversations with parents and I look forward to continuing the dialog. The "Drop-in" hours will be from 6 – 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month (with the exception of January 10<sup>th</sup>, which will be from 5 – 6 p.m.).

We also want to hear from you. In our summer mailing, you will find a copy of Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's Parent Communication Map. This document will provide you with a list of who would be the most appropriate contact person depending on your question or concern.

Historically we have found that the best person to talk to regarding any academic concerns is the specific classroom teacher. While teachers are not routinely at their computers, they can be reached through email or voicemail. The format for our email is first initial, last name, followed by our server address ([mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:mail.ab.mec.edu)). For example, my address is [chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu). Teachers can also be reached through voicemail by calling our main number 978-264-4700 and asking for the teacher's voice mail.

### Team Assignments

As was done last year, students will have the opportunity to learn what team they are on *before the first day of school*. On

Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 4:00 p.m., we will post the team assignments on the front door of RJG. To ensure confidentiality, students will be identified by their ID number. This ID number can be found on the envelope in which my summer welcome letter was mailed. We will also post the team assignments on our website:  
<http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>.

A significant portion of the summer was spent building these teams in order to balance them by: sending school, gender, world language requests, teacher recommendations, and parent requests. I am confident that the teams have been built in a manner that will ensure that every student will have the opportunity to maintain old friendships and develop new ones throughout the school year in an academically challenging environment.

### Attendance Procedure

If your child will be absent from or late to school, please call the absence line at (978) 264-4700 ex: 3333 **before** 7:30 a.m. and state your child's:

1. name
2. team
3. and, briefly, the reason for the absence or tardy arrival.

If you need to call during school hours (7:30-3:30), please call extension 3304 to leave a message with a member of our office staff.

Students who are marked absent in homeroom but for whom we did not receive a call will be marked as "unexcused." An unexcused absence will generate a call home. Please assist us in this process and remember to call the school if your child will be absent.

### The First Day of School

For seventh graders, the first day of school is Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. Students should report to the following areas by 7:30 a.m. where they will meet with their team teachers and other members of their team:

7 Gold	- Cafe
7 Green	- Library
7 Orange	- Front Gym
7 Red	- Back Gym

All eighth grade students *new to the Acton-Boxborough District* are invited to participate in an orientation program on Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> beginning at 12:30 p.m. and ending at 2:06 p.m., so that students may ride home on their regular bus.

The first day of school for all other grade eight students is Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. Eighth graders should report to the auditorium by 7:30 a.m. on Thursday morning, September 1<sup>st</sup> for a short program before proceeding to their homerooms.

I hope to meet many of you at our Back-To-School Night on Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> for parents/guardians of both seventh and eighth grade students. You will receive more information about this event in a few weeks.

Enjoy the last weeks of summer. The building seems empty without the hustle and bustle of students. I can't wait for school to finally begin and to hear the sounds of students in the building again. This is going to be a fantastic year!

– Craig Hardimon

### **R.J. Grey School Council Elections**

Two parents or guardians of 7<sup>th</sup> graders are needed for participation on the RJGJHS School Council. The council consists of elected parents/guardians, teachers, community members, and student representative led by the school principal. Meetings are held monthly throughout the school year to discuss relevant concerns and issues, as well as to develop a school improvement plan.

Interested candidates should submit a short paragraph about themselves by noon on **Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>** for the ballot. Voting will be done at Back-to-School Night on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>. Write-ups should be sent to PTISO Co-Chair Jan Couch at [jccouch@comcast.net](mailto:jccouch@comcast.net) or Principal Craig Hardimon at [chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu). Paper copies may be mailed to RPTSO, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720, but please confirm with a phone call to Jan 978- 263-2118.

### **Newcomers Reception**

R.J. Grey students and their parents/guardians who are new to the towns of Acton/Boxborough, or who did not attend the local schools, and who missed the orientations held last spring, are invited to attend a reception on Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> from 7:00–8:15 p.m. in the R.J. Grey Library.

This will be the perfect opportunity to meet other new students and parents. There will also be some recently new families, and some not-so-new families who can answer any questions you may have about transitioning in to R.J. Grey or anything else you may want to know. The reception will be casual so feel free to stop in for as long (or as short) as you like. If you are unable to join us, feel free to contact Newcomer Welcoming Committee Chair Bonnie Maserang at 978-264-1886. Welcome to Acton/Boxborough – we look forward to seeing you on the 30<sup>th</sup>!

### **Changes to RJGJHS Student Directory**

The R.J. Grey student directory has always been a great resource for students. This year, in addition to the students' names, addresses and telephone numbers, we will be including parents' names and teams. You will be receiving a form to fill out and send back to provide us with parent names. You may also use the form to opt out of the directory, if you wish.

The PTISO hopes these changes will improve the directory and make them more useful to parents as well. If you have any questions or comments please contact Patti Babcock, 978-264-3274, [ppbabcock@comcast.net](mailto:ppbabcock@comcast.net).

### **Box Tops for Education at R.J. Grey!!**

As many of you know, this has been a very successful activity at the elementary schools, and with great participation and enthusiasm RJG can also benefit. Beginning in late August, a container will be located in the main lobby for the collection of Box Tops. The student council and administration will determine the distribution of the proceeds.

On the first Wednesday of each month, a few parents have volunteered to cut and count the Box Tops. If you have any questions or would like to help with this free fundraiser, please contact Marisa Westlin 978-263-9831 or Kim Kembel 978-263-6988 . More updates to follow. Start saving those Box Tops now, thanks!

### **Junior High School Dates of Interest**

August 31	First Day: Grade 7 Students (7:30) New Grade 8 Students (12:30)
September 1	All students report
September 5	No School – Labor Day
September 8	School Pictures
September 21	Student Council Representative/ Alternate Elections
September 23	Grade 8 Dance, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
September 29	Grade 7 and 8 Back-to-School Night, 7:00 p.m.
October 4	No School – Rosh Hashanah
October 5	Student Council Meeting, 12:22 p.m.
October 10	No School – Columbus Day
October 11	School Council Meeting, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
October 12	Midterm Reports Mailed
October 13	No School – Yom Kippur
October 20	Make-up Picture Day
October 26	Grade 8 Minuteman Trip
October 28	Grade 7 Social, 2:30–4:30 p.m.
October 31	Halloween Dress-Up Day

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEWS

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## FROM THE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**Mike Coppolino, Chair**

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Welcome back! We hope that everyone had a nice summer, and that you're ready to get back in the groove of the school year. For planning purposes, you should know that according to our teacher's contract, next year we will start school AFTER Labor Day, on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Two exciting community driven projects have been coming to fruition thanks to the hard work and generous contributions of two volunteer organizations. The first is the installation of field turf on Leary Field, which is almost complete thanks to the Friends of Leary Field ([www.learyfield.org](http://www.learyfield.org)). This group of volunteers has been working for almost two years and has made the largest single donation (over \$280,000) to the Regional School District. These funds, combined with the support of the Community Preservation Funds and School Building Project Funds have allowed us to upgrade Leary Field and increase its use for many school and community groups. Special thanks to Friends of Leary Field executive committee members Bill Mullin, Matt Lundberg, Dave Wilson, Rich Delaney, and Sue Reuther along with the many volunteers and contributors that have made this project a reality. Please join us at our first home football game on September 16<sup>th</sup> against Chelmsford to see the field in use.

A second equally exciting project is moving forward thanks to another privately funded organization – Danny's Place Youth Services ([www.dannys-place.org/](http://www.dannys-place.org/)). In June, the School Committee authorized the leasing of space in Merriam Hall at the Administration Building to be used as a Youth Center. The center is envisioned as a safe place where students in grades 6

through 12 can spend time after school and attend entertainment and special events. DPYS will also provide grant-based support to other groups already serving the community's youth. Applications for the first round of grants will be accepted until Oct. 14. The steering committee is in the process of hiring a youth services director who will run the center. Special thanks to Jeff and Cindy McCarthy and all of their volunteers who have worked for two years to achieve their vision as a tribute to their son Danny who died in a car accident in 2003. Both of these projects are shining examples of the dedication of community members to the youth of Acton and Boxborough.

The School Committee would like to thank the citizens of both towns for their support of last spring's operating overrides. As a result, our schools are able to continue with mostly the same staffing that we had last year. We realize that this is a sacrifice on the part of all taxpayers to preserve our schools. We would also like to welcome approximately 50 choice students from neighboring towns who will be attending ABRHS this year. The School Committee voted to re-enact the choice program, which has been reestablished to allow us to hire a few teachers at the high school to try to maintain class sizes, which are at an all time high. We will not be asking for an override this year, and we will keep everyone informed about budget issues throughout the year. Please consider attending or tuning in to any of our upcoming Regional School Committee Meetings

– Marie Altieri Chair, Acton Public School Committee  
– Mike Coppolino, Chair, AB Regional School Comm

## UPCOMING REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS & AGENDA ITEMS

- September 1<sup>st</sup>** School Opening, staffing, budgets  
**October 6<sup>th</sup>** Principal Steve Donovan's annual report about ABRHS  
including Class Size, Staffing, and School Choice  
**October 27<sup>th</sup>** Principal Craig Hardiman's annual report about RJGJHS

All meetings begin at 7:30pm and are held in the R.J. Grey JHS Library.

**All School Committee Members can be contacted at [AB\\_School\\_Committee@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:AB_School_Committee@mail.ab.mec.edu)**

**Acton School Committee Members:**

Mike Coppolino	<a href="mailto:copp@verizon.net">copp@verizon.net</a>
Marie Altieri	<a href="mailto:altierim@verizon.net">altierim@verizon.net</a>
Jo-Ann Berry	<a href="mailto:joannberry@verizon.net">joannberry@verizon.net</a>
Terry Lindgren	<a href="mailto:terry.lindgren@comcast.net">terry.lindgren@comcast.net</a>
Sharon Smith McManus	<a href="mailto:ssmcmamus@rcn.net">ssmcmamus@rcn.net</a>
John Ryder	<a href="mailto:johnry92261@verizon.net">johnry92261@verizon.net</a>

**Boxborough School Committee Members:**

Liz Markiewicz	<a href="mailto:ainslie78@comcast.net">ainslie78@comcast.net</a>
Becky Neville	<a href="mailto:neville317@juno.com">neville317@juno.com</a>
Bruce Sabot	<a href="mailto:bruce_sabot@comcast.net">bruce_sabot@comcast.net</a>

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**PTSO News**  
**Acton-Boxborough Regional High School**  
**Acton, MA 01720**

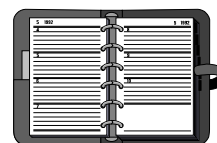
Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>  
PTSO Forum

**With Principals**  
**Steve Donovan**  
**Craig Hardimon**

12 Noon  
Acton Memorial Library

## **2005-2006 PTSO CALENDAR**

- Thu Aug 25 – 10:30 Freshmen & New Student Orientation/Pizza Lunch
- Mon Aug 29 - 7:30pm HS New Family Welcome (Commons B)
- Tue Aug 30 - 7:00 pm JH New Family Welcome (RJGJr High Library)
- Tue Sept 13 – Noon PTSO Forum – Acton Memorial Library
- Thu Sept 29 - 7:00 pm JH Back to School Night (parents & guardians)
- Tue Oct 18 - Noon PTSO Forum
- Wed Oct 19 - 7:00 pm HS Back to School Night
- Wed Nov 2 - 7:00 pm PTSO Board Meeting
- Tue Nov 8 - Noon PTSO Forum
- Tue Jan 10 - Noon PTSO Forum
- Wed Feb 8 - 7:00 pm PTSO Board Meeting
- Tue Feb 14 - Noon PTSO Forum
- Tue Mar 14 - Noon PTSO Forum
- Mon Apr 10 - 7:00 pm PTSO Board Meeting
- Tue Apr 11 - Noon PTSO Forum
- Mon May 8 - 7:00 pm PTSO Business Meeting & College Search Presentation



Submission DEADLINE for the October 1<sup>st</sup> Newsletter is September 16. Please contact Jan or Beth.