

FROM THE CHAIRS

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

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. Please take a few minutes to look over this wealth of information, which will offer you a variety of ways to be involved and stay in touch with your children and their schools. You might find something interesting on one of the volunteer forms or on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu>. It's volunteers who make many of the events possible, and volunteering is a great opportunity for you to meet the parents/guardians of your children's classmates. The monthly newsletter will also offer you an inside glimpse of the schools, updates from various departments and upcoming events.

We'll always welcome your thoughts on how to improve communication between our parents and the schools, and hope that you'll find an opportunity to get involved. Have a great school year.

Mary Ann Ashton, ABRHS Co-Chair
MABAshton@aol.com
978.263.4399

Jan Couch, RJGJHS Co-Chair
JCCouch@comcast.net
978.263.2118

ABSASF Kicks Off 2006–2007 Fundraising Drive

On August 26th ABSAF (Acton-Boxborough Student Activities Fund) will kick off its 2006–2007 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

ABSASF CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

You'll really Want to Read this...

PTSO E-Mail List

If you have not signed up for the Regional PTSO emails yet, please go to our website <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and click on the PTSO EMAILS link. These messages sent by the PTSO include occasional reminders, clarifications, information regarding parenting programs and last minute requests for assistance from the PTSO. These 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, and you can also change or delete your own email address at any time.

PTSO Newsletter Available On Line

The PTSO recognizes the cost savings of doing business electronically. **Families may choose to be mailed a paper newsletter every month, OR simply read it from our website.** (All families on the email list will be sent the monthly link.) To be removed from the paper copy mailing list, go to the bottom of any PTSO email and click on "Update Profile". From there, check the box that says "e-newsletter only", then submit.

ABSAF's Fund Drive

2006-2007 ABSAF Board of Directors

Board

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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 \$108,000 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 2006-2007 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, MA 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. Please help to keep the extracurricular activities at the regional schools strong and vibrant.

Thank you.

Note: ABSAF, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, is a separate organization from the PTSO.

Meeting for Families New to ABRHS

Thursday, August 31, 7:30 p.m.
Student Center South, High School

Welcome to all of our new families! We look forward to meeting you and answering any questions you may have. Please note that this is not meant for families of Freshmen, unless you have joined the High School over the summer and missed the Orientation meeting last Spring. For more info, contact Sue Hart at 978-263-6808.

Student Directory Cover Design Contest

In conjunction with the PTSO A-B student phone directory, high school students are invited to submit a design for the directory's cover. Guidelines for the contest will be available from any art teacher or from Mrs. Bowes in the Counseling Center beginning on September 11. Designs must be submitted by September 25.

Proscenium Circus Plans Exciting Season of Student Theater Productions

Mark your calendars so that you won't miss any of the exciting productions that Proscenium Circus, the high school drama club, will present this year including "Holes" on November 3-5, 9-10, the musical "Once Upon A Mattress" on February 2-4, 9-10, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on April 27-29, and the student-directed Class Plays on May 16. General ticket information will be available in late September.

Proscenium Circus Advisor Linda Potter invites any high school student who is interested in doing theater, on stage or backstage, to come to the first PC meeting on September 14, 2:30-5:00 in the auditorium. No previous experience is necessary to join, just a willingness to learn. A new Improv Troupe will meet on Thursdays starting September 21. It is supported in part by A-B Friends of Drama and a grant from Danny's Place Youth Services, a privately-funded, non-profit local group that benefits area youth. Interested students should contact Jeanie Furlan (jfurlan@mail.ab.mec.edu) and attend this meeting.

Adults are invited to the first A-B Friends of Drama meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 7:00 pm in the cafeteria. To learn more about PC, contact Linda Potter at 978-264-4700 x3425. To learn more about Friends of Drama, contact Jane Rodophele at 978-266-1677. Information for both groups is posted at www.ABDrama.org.

— Susan Williams

ABRPTSO Annual Membership 2006-2007

Funds raised through Membership Dues provide for grants to the Junior High and High School, graduation scholarships, programs such as Project Wellness, Freshman Orientation and Project Graduation, the monthly PTSO newsletter, and student directories. In the past, PTSO funds have provided guest speakers in the classrooms, subsidized field trip costs, printed school newspapers and magazines, purchased supplies for special class projects, and supported students' community service activities.

Only one contribution per family is requested per school year, regardless of the number of students in grades 7-12. **Donations are tax deductible.** The PTSO is a 501(c)3.

Parent/Guardian name(s): _____

Address: _____

Student(s) name(s): _____

Student grade(s):	RJGJHS:	_____ 7th grade	ABRHS:	_____ 9th grade
		_____ 8th grade		_____ 10th grade
				_____ 11th grade
				_____ 12th grade

Basic 2006-2007 Dues: **\$25.00**

Optional Contributions: (any amount is appreciated)

RJGJHS student publication copying/The Blueprint* \$ _____

ABRHS student publication copying/The Spectrum* \$ _____

Project Graduation Event for Seniors (anyone may contribute) \$ _____

Additional general contribution \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: **ABRPTSO** and mail them to: **ABRPTSO Membership, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720**

THANK YOU!

Membership Chair: Holly Ben-Joseph 978-266-1436

To join the PTSO Email list, click the button on our website at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu>

** created by students and distributed for free to all students and staff throughout the year*

High School Student Phone Directories

CHANGES AND/OR DELETIONS (Junior High Directory Forms will be mailed separately)

August 2006

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 by Friday, September 8th, to:
PTSO HS Student Directory, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720-0912**

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*

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 from the directory.

My child has a different phone number.

Please use this number in the directory: _____

Student's Name (Print) _____ Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

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

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Steve Donovan

Welcome to the 2006-2007 School Year!

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 a few 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 have an exciting new group of faculty members this year. New teachers and counselors include:

English: Beth Baker, Dan Goldner, Laura Hirshfield, Kate Magner and Emily Mullin (Dorothy Johnson will return from retirement to teach two classes)

Social Studies: Kristen Ervick and Eric Menninger

World Language: Adriana D'Eramo (Italian and Spanish), Meredith Hultgren (Latin), Patricia Braunegg (French), and Lauren Wander (Spanish)

Science: Eleni Kakaliou and David Palmer (transferring from R.J. Grey Junior High)

Mathematics: Ray Kalagher and Patricia Walker (formerly served as long term substitute)

Counseling: I'Esha Brown

Linda Potter, in addition to her work with Proscenium Circus, the drama group, will teach two classes.

Brendan Hearn has been hired with responsibility for audiovisual and technical theater.

There are a few other positions which are in the process of being filled.

ABRHS First Day Schedule

On the first day of school, Wednesday, September 6, 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 and to serve as a sounding board for the principal. The three parent representatives who were elected to School Council in the spring are David Chamberlain, Janet Geller-McGrath and Tina Grosowsky.

Back to School Night

Our Back to School Night for parents will be held this year on Thursday, October 12. 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) 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).

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 30, 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 19th and 20th, 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.

Safety Committee

The High School Safety Committee developed procedures for a lockdown at the during the 2000-2001 school year. These are practiced each year. This year, drills will be held in the fall and spring.

MCAS Retests

The MCAS retests are scheduled for the week of November 13. 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 Info. 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 by October 1. Notification may be made by mail (Stephen Donovan, ABRHS, 96

Hayward Road, Acton, MA 01720) or by email to Judi Bowes in the Counseling Center (jbowes@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.

New this Fall: Naviance Family Connection for Juniors & Seniors

The Counseling Department is using the Naviance Family Connection program to help students make better decisions about course selection, college and career opportunities. Some of the features include: tracking student interests, tracking goals and achievements, scheduling visits by college representatives, a college search program, transcript requests, recording college choices and admissions decisions, storing scholarship information and communicating with students and parents via e-mail.

The Classes of 2007 and 2008 have been introduced to the program and have set up personal accounts with user email logins and passwords. At this time we would like to invite parents of juniors and seniors to set up parent accounts with Naviance. If you would like to have parent access to the Naviance program please e-mail Andrew Palmer at apalmer@mail.ab.mec.edu. Please identify the name of your child in the request. A registration code will be e-mailed to you.

Parking and Dropping Off

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.

- School buses will be using the front circle, and there will be no parent drop off or pick up in the front circle before and immediately after school.
- 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 in helping with the traffic flow at the high school.

Lani DeRome
Principal's Assistant

Senior Portraits

The following dates remain for senior portraits: October 16th–20th and November 15th - 17th. The photography will take place in Conference Room 115N at the high school

Students should receive an official appointment card with the date and time of their appointment from Prestige Portraits for Lifetouch. For questions about appointments, call 1-800-426-9433.

Attendance & 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.

It's a Date / ABRHS

SEPTEMBER

- 6** School opens
- 7/8** Student photos
- 19/20** Activities Fair (during lunches)
- 27** Early Decision and College Application Workshop
- 28** Grade 9 Elections
- 29** Dance sponsored by Junior Class

OCTOBER

- 2** No school—Yom Kippur
- 6** Interim reports for Term 1 issued
- 9** No school—Columbus Day
- 12** Back-to-School Night 7:00pm
- 13** Early dismissal for students—Professional development for staff
- 13** Hypnotist sponsored by Student Council 7:00pm
- 14** SAT & Subject Tests
- 17** Career Breakfast (set of career speakers) First period
- 21** PSAT/NMSQT

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.

ABRHS Volunteer Opportunities for Parents/Guardians 2006-2007

Volunteers are needed for activities and events organized by the High School and the PTSO. Please check those with which you would like to help, and mail your form to: **A-B Regional PTSO, H.S. Volunteer Coordinator, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720-0912.** Thanks 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.*
- Library/computer assistance:** Provide assistance in the library at the High School. Training is provided.*
- PTSO Newsletter:** The PTSO Newsletter is a monthly Junior/Senior High School publication, which requires many hands to fold and stick labels for an hour or two, on the last Thursday morning of each month, at school.

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.*

*Requires CORI check.

ABRHS Volunteer Opportunities for Parents/Guardians 2006-2007

PTSO Activities That Occur On An Irregular Or Infrequent Basis

- New Family Support:** Help families new to the High School or community feel “connected.” Be available to answer questions by phone or in person.
- Back to School Night at the Jr High:** Thursday, September 28th 6:30 – 9:00 PM, several volunteers (who don’t have children at RJGJHS) needed to stand at PTSO table and help with refreshments for the Junior High families.
- 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 in early June.
- 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 8th. Remember, your underclass son or daughter will be a senior before you know it!*
- ABRHS Alumni Association:** Assistance needed with the following: administrative assistance, on-going or for specific short-term tasks, and webmaster for alumni website.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 is also used to alert parents/guardians to 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. If you have any questions, or need more information, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Celeste Margolius at 978-263-6560 or CelesteMargolius@comcast.net.

Please note that most activities require a completed CORI form. For more information about this form, contact Deb Trentschi in the High School Office at 978-264-4700 ext 3403 or DTrentsch@mail.ab.mec.edu

*Requires CORI check.

Don't Miss Our Sept. PTSO Forum

Join us for our first PTSO Forum on Tuesday, September 12th at noon in the Acton Memorial Library. High School Principal Steve Donovan and Junior High Principal Craig Hardimon will be our presenters, 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.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Craig Hardimon

Looking Forward to the New Year!

The summer is rapidly coming to an end and I am looking forward to welcoming both new and returning families to RJ Grey Junior High School for the 2006-07 school year. The administrative team —Larry Fliegelman, Megan Hatt and I—are excited to have students in the building soon.

Communication

As those of you who were members of the RJG community last year will remember, one of my long standing priorities as principal has been to ensure that effective communication happens between home and school. In this regard, I will continue to offer monthly “drop in” hours, and will also continue to utilize my principal’s e-mail list. If you wish to receive my weekly newsletter, *Grey Matters*, as well as receive the daily announcements and other timely school information and news via this method, please send me a quick note at: mcharter@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 <http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>. 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.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, hearing from all of you and hearing from your young adults will be my top priority as we work together to ensure that the junior high is providing the most supportive educational atmosphere possible.

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*). For example, my address is 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.

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** 7:30AM 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 (7:30AM–3:30PM), 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.

Team Assignments

On Friday, September 1st, at approximately 4PM, 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 which 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.

The First Day of School

For seventh graders, the first day of school is Wednesday, September 6th. Students should report to the following areas by 7:30AM 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 6th beginning at 12:30 PM and ending at 2:06 PM, so that students may ride home on their regular bus.

The first day of school for all other grade eight students is Thursday, September 7th. Eighth graders should report to the auditorium by 7:30 AM on Thursday morning, September 7th 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 28th 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

Volunteer Positions Available

Project Wellness Steering Committee; RJG—2 Year Commitment Fundraising Coordinator(s)

This position involves attending regularly scheduled steering committee meetings (every 2–4 weeks for 1 hour) beginning in the fall of each school year and continuing through to the actual event in early March. Most of the systems and procedures are in place with all current steering committee members willing to train any future members. The majority of the work can be done at home with a computer and phone. If you, or you and a friend, would be willing to take on this very important activity, or need more information please contact Jan Couch at: jccouch@comcast.net

School Council; RJG— 2 Year Commitment

Two parents or guardians of 7th 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 15th** for the ballot. Voting will be done at Back-to-School Night. Write-ups should be sent to PTSO Co-Chair Jan Couch at jccouch@comcast.net or Principal Craig Hardimon at 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 Couch at 978-263-2118.

Newcomers Reception

R.J. Grey students and their parents who are new to Acton/Boxborough are invited to attend a reception on Tuesday, September 5th 7:00-8:30 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 BSMDesign@Comcast.net. Welcome to Acton/Boxborough—we look forward to seeing you on the 5th!

Regional PTSO Board Positions for Junior High Parents/ Guardians

Membership(RJG)

A job that can be done at home and at times convenient for you. A computer and basic understanding of MS Excel is needed. Position involves recording contributions and donations during the school year. Spreadsheet formats are set up. The PTSO Board meets only 4 evenings during the school year to update and discuss current and future PTSO activities. This is a great way to meet other parents, and get involved in our regional school district. Please contact Jan Couch at jccouch@comcast.net if you are interested. Ideally this is a two year commitment.

Inter-School Council Rep

Inter-School Council is a group of representatives from each of the Acton public schools and AB Regional schools. Representatives meet with Bill Ryan, Superintendent, 2–4 times per year in the evening. Mr. Ryan will bring the group up-to-date on various issues of the school system and is interested in both your feedback and information about what is going on in each of the schools. Please contact Jan Couch at jccouch@comcast.net for more information or if interested.

It's a Date / RJGJHS

SEPTEMBER

- 6 1st day for 7th graders
- 6 New 8th grade students only, 12:30pm
- 7 All students report to JH
- 14 School Pictures
- 20 Student Council Rep/Alt Elections
- 28 Back to School Night, 7th & 8th grades, 7pm
- 29 8th Grade Dance, 6:30pm–8:30pm

OCTOBER

- 2 Yom Kippur, No School
- 9 Columbus Day, No School
- 19 Make-up Picture day
- 25 8th Grade Minuteman Tech Trip
- 26 7th Grade Social: 2:30pm–4:30pm
- 31 Halloween Dress-Up Day

School Committee News

FROM THE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Michael Coppolino, Chair

Welcome Back! We hope that you all had a wonderful summer and are ready to delve into another school year. For those of you who are new to the Regional Schools, welcome! You will find that your kid's years at R.J. Grey and ABRHS will go by very quickly, but we hope that you will find them exciting and rewarding. We will be providing an update of School Committee activities in each of the monthly Regional PTSO newsletters. Meanwhile, we encourage you to feel free to contact any of us if you have any questions or concerns. We have actually been quite busy over the summer...

Additional State Aid Becomes a Reality

The biggest news was the finalization of the state budget, and how much it will impact Acton-Boxborough. Our Regional school system will be receiving the biggest percentage increase in state aid of any school district in the state—approximately 50% in one year. State aid (Chapter 70) to Acton-Boxborough will grow from \$3.1 million to \$4.7 million this year, and is projected to reach \$6.5 million when the new funding formula is fully implemented over the next four years. Acton Public School's state aid is growing from \$2.7 million to \$3.2 million (an 18% increase) this year, and should reach \$5.5 million when the formula is fully implemented. Also, the state is phasing in a 17.5% minimum over the next four years, which is similar to the "\$2,000 minimum" funding plan that Acton officials, led by Marie Altieri and Superintendent Bill Ryan, brought forward last year. We are very grateful to Representatives Jamie Eldridge and Cory Atkins, and Senator Pam Resor, for their commitments to education and restoring local aid. Along with their colleagues, they put many other priorities aside to make true education reform a reality.

What does this additional aid mean? Most of this year's increase will be saved for future budgets. Prior to this year's substantial increase in state funding, it was likely that we would have needed to ask one or both towns for an operating override in the spring of 2007, but with the additional monies from the state, we should be able to avoid such a request. With a portion of these funds, we were able to add three teachers (one each in English, Science, and World Language) and one counselor at ABRHS for this fall. The remaining regional school aid will flow to the Excess and Deficiency account (E&D at the region, which is similar to free cash on the town side), while the Acton Public School's extra aid will flow to Acton's free cash.

Policy Review Completed

Also this summer, the school committees finalized their policy manual, which will be posted on the school's website. This is

the culmination of two years worth of work, led by Marie Altieri and Becky Neville, which brings all of our policies up to date and will make them readily accessible. We also had a planning workshop in July, where we set goals and priorities for the next year. Following are some key topics, listed in no particular order: a) looking closely at appropriate class sizes, staffing and resource levels for both the junior and senior high schools, b) exploring demographic and cultural shifts within our schools, c) improving electronic access to information, and d) continuing to pursue state aid, in terms of setting an appropriate foundation budget.

Our next Regional School Committee meeting will be September 7th in the RJ Grey Library at 7:30pm. At our October 5th meeting, we will hear ABRHS Principal Steve Donovan's annual education report, and in November, R.J. Grey Principal, Craig Hardimon, presents his report.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

All School Committee Members can be contacted at AB_School_Committee@mail.ab.mec.edu

Acton School Committee Members:

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Boxborough School Committee Members:

Brigid Bieber	tbbieber@comcast.net
Becky Neville	neville317@juno.com
Bruce Sabot	bruce_sabot@comcast.net

Submission DEADLINE for the October 1 Newsletter is September 18.
Please contact Beth at BPetr@verizon.net or 978-263-7208.

PTSO News

<http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu>

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

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School
Acton, MA 01720

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2006–2007 PTSO CALENDAR

Wed, Aug 30, 10:30am

Freshmen & New Student Orientation/Pizza Lunch

Thu, Aug 31, 7:30pm

HS New Family Welcome (Commons B)

Tue, Sept 5, 7:00pm

JH New Family Welcome (RJGJr High Library)

Tue, Sept 12, noon

PTSO Forum, Acton Memorial Library

Thu, Sept 28, 7:00pm

JH Back to School Night (parents & guardians)

Thu, Oct 12, 7:00pm

HS Back to School Night

Tue, Oct 17, noon

PTSO Forum

Tue, Nov 14, 7:00pm

PTSO Board Meeting

New CORI Procedures for Volunteers

From Superintendent Bill Ryan

Under the original CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) statute, the school system is required to renew CORI checks on all volunteers every three years. In addition, there have been recent amendments which mandate us to gather more information and to confirm identification with a picture I.D. Because of these changes, we have determined that the most effective process will be to do a new CORI certification for all volunteers beginning January 1, 2006.

Please keep in mind:

- We will request new CORI forms be completed now for the period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009.
- We will only request one form be completed for all schools in Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools.
- A separate form must be submitted by each individual who wishes to volunteer.
- CORI forms must be submitted for new families even if they completed CORI checks in their previous schools district.

For more information:

- Go to the Department of Education website to view the legal advisory which has been shared with us <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/CORI.html>. (We will post a link to this site from our website.)
- Call Deputy Superintendent of Schools, George Frost at 978-264-4700 x3209 (gfrost@mail.ab.mec.edu)
Deb Trentsch at the High School at 978-264-4700 x 3403 (DTrentsch@mail.ab.mec.edu), or Marcia Charter at the Jr High at 978-264-4700 x 3304 (MCharter@mail.ab.mec.edu)