

FROM THE CO-CHAIRS: MARY ANN ASHTON (HS), CHRIS RENZI (JH) & JAN COUCH (JH)

PTSO Makes Improvements for Busy Families

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. We've made some changes this year to accommodate the busy lives of our families. 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.

Newsletters

For the last two years, we have encouraged families to sign up to receive the PTSO Newsletter through e-mail and we have made the publication available on the AB PTSO website. This first newsletter is being mailed to all families so that EVERYONE has a chance to read about these changes and learn about ways to be involved with their students' schools. Starting in November, we are pleased to introduce a smaller quarterly publication which will feature articles on a specific topic as well as a detachable calendar for the next two months. We will mail this smaller publication four times a year (November, January, March and May) to those families who are not signed up to receive publications through e-mail, and the remaining families will receive the publication electronically. There is still some time to sign up to have your newsletter delivered electronically and cut down on "our" costs.

Between these publications, we will distribute an electronic "update" on high school and junior high news using our Constant

Contact e-mail list. If you have not signed up already to receive these publications electronically, please visit our website (abrptso.ab.mec.edu) and update your contact information.

PTSO Forums

The PTSO offers mid-day forums where we are able to offer families a chance to learn about what's going on in the schools and ask their questions directly to school administrators and staff who are available to talk about specific topics. While we understand that many of our family members work during the school day, we summarize these sessions

in our publications so that we're able to communicate this information to all of our families, whether you're able to attend or not.

This year we will be offering three forums in October, January, and March. The first forum will take place on Tuesday, October 17 at 12 p.m. in Acton Memorial Library featuring High School Principal Steve Donovan and Junior High School Principal Craig Hardimon. It will be a great opportunity to hear about news from each of our schools. The topics for the forums

CHAIRS 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 e-mails yet, please go to our website <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and click on the PTSO EMAILS link. You will receive the new HS and JH electronic "updates" as well as occasional PTSO reminders, clarifications, information regarding parenting programs and last minute requests for volunteer assistance. You do not have to be on this list, but it is a simple way to keep in touch with school happenings. There is no cost, and you can change or delete your own e-mail address at any time.

Do you Need to UPDATE your Profile?

If you are already receiving e-mails from the PTSO, you only need to update your profile IF you have a child new to the JH (such as an incoming 7th grader) or HS. Please go to the link above and click on "Update Profile". From there, check the appropriate graduating class box.

PTSO Newsletter and Updates Available On-Line

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

From the Chairs

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scheduled for January and March will be provided in upcoming notices.

Membership News

For those of you new to the regional schools, you will find that there are fewer requests for your volunteer time and for fundraising activities. Although there are other organizations which may require your fundraising skills and contributions (e.g., performance and sports booster groups, ABSAF, Project Graduation), the PTSO does not sponsor any fundraising activities. We rely on a modest contribution from each family (this year's dues are \$30 per family) to support our communication costs and to provide small grants to each school for activities that are prioritized within each school. In the past years, we have relied on people to send in the membership form from this newsletter with a check, have staffed a table at the Open Houses at each school, and have sent a reminder letter to those who have not sent dues in mid-February. Families can send their dues by mail using the enclosed form or now have the option to pay with a credit card using MKTix, a parent-owned business in our community. Please go to PTSO website <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and **click on the link to Pay Membership Dues Electronically.**

Get Involved

As students become more independent and move into and through their teen years, it is essential that parents keep up with the news that is affecting their students' lives. Please take a few minutes to look over the wealth of information included in this newsletter, and in our future communications, 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 is only the volunteers who make many of these events possible, and volunteering is a great opportunity for you to meet the parents/ guardians of your children's classmates.

Our quarterly newsletter and our e-mail updates will also offer you an inside glimpse of the schools, updates from various departments and upcoming events.

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ABSAF Kicks Off 2007–2008 Fundraising Drive

On August 15th ABSAF (Acton-Boxborough Student Activities Fund) will kick off its 2007–2008 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 percent 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 \$115,000 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 theater 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 2007–2008 school year. ABSAF passes are now on sale online at www.absaf.org as well as 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 Scott Apgar at 978-621-3307 or absafinfo@yahoo.com. Please help to keep the extracurricular activities at the regional schools strong and vibrant. Thank you.

The 2007–2008 ABSAF Board of Directors

Board Members

Larry Allard, Scott Apgar, Jack Boyles, Cathy Berard, Tom Cates, Jim Crumlish, Lisa DiBartolomeo, Sasha DeMello, Mary Duggan, Nick Finamore, Jon Goddard, Judy Gray, Kathy Horan, Mickey Lieto, Cy Marrion, Laurie Maylander, Susan Muller, Maura Murphy, Damara Press, Chris Renzi, Aurelie Teebagy

Student Members

Ryan Apgar, Kiki Boyles, Cary DeMello, Nick Finamore, Jenn Kappel, Ellie Licari, Leo Mullin, Liz Jenkins

Administration and Ex Officio

Steve Desy, Steve Donovan, Craig Hardimon, Mark Hickey

ABRPTSO Annual Membership 2007-2008

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.

If you prefer to pay electronically, please go to the PTSO website at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and click on the link to Pay Membership Dues Electronically.

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 2007-2008 Dues: \$30.00

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 and Alice Tam 978-274-2073
 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 2007

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 7th, 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,

Patti Babcock
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 2007–2008 School Year!

In addition to the approximately 500 freshmen who have moved up from the junior high, we are welcoming a number of students whose families have moved into the school district. 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 include:

English: Kathy Kennedy, Liz Morris, Sarah Scott and Carolyn Smiley

Social Studies: Courtney Carp and Peter Colby (formerly served as long term substitute)

World Language: Jonathan Arend (Latin), Carrie DeBlois (Spanish), Cathy Hammond (French)

Science: Leah Budiansky, Betsy Parker and Michael Romano

Mathematics: Susan Nugent and Lisa Cummings (formerly served as long term substitute)

Physical Education: Parindar Miller

Counseling and Psychological Services: Elizabeth Warren

Alternative Program: Janis Jordan

Child Development: Carole Reardon

ABRHS First Day Schedule

On the first day of school, Wednesday, September 5, 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. During the extended homeroom students will receive important information, verbally and in the form of handouts, so it is important that students attend homeroom to

get the information they need to start the year. The schedule for the day will be modified to accommodate the extended homeroom.

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 Nancy Coppolino, Terry Lindgren and Jim O'Neil.

Back to School Night

I hope that most of you will be able to join us for Back to School Night on Thursday, September 27. The welcoming session will take place in the auditorium at 6:40 p.m. We especially invite parents of freshmen and new students to this portion of the evening. Knowing this timing may be too early for many people, we will have my remarks available in writing and on the web site for those who are interested. Parents attending the welcoming session should arrive in the building between 6:15 and 6:25 to pick up their students' schedules and to be seated. Auditorium seating will be available on a first come, first served basis. Student Center East will accommodate some overflow from the auditorium. Parents not planning to attend the opening session should arrive in the building by about 6:45.

Parents will follow their child's schedule for a simulated school day beginning at 7:00. Handouts containing a school map and a timetable for the evening will be distributed along with student schedules in the Commons area (cafeteria) in the north wing.

Alternatively, parents can get a copy of their child's schedule from their son or daughter. We will be following Day D of the six-day cycle (days are designated A through F). If you bring your own schedule, be sure you have room numbers and an indication of which wing (north, south, east or west) each classroom is in.

Back to School Night is an opportunity for parents to meet the teachers and to hear about the expectations in your child's classes. During a student's lunch or other free period, parents are invited to visit the Coun-

seling Center, the library and other resource areas of the school. Information tables will be set up (PTSO, ABSAF, Project Graduation, League of Women Voters and other organizations) in the Commons area, and parents can enjoy some refreshments at the same time. Because of the popularity of this event and the size of our student body, parking close to the school is at a premium for Back to School Night. Parking is available at the Junior High and at the Parker Damon Building. Please allow time to walk from these locations to the high school building. Monitors and student volunteers will be on hand to assist you in finding your way around the building.

Any parents who need special accommodations at Back to School Night (elevator access, translation of information, etc.) should contact Deb Trentsch in the Main Office (extension 4303).

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 29, 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 18th and 19th, 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 oppor-

tunities 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 over the years has developed procedures for a lockdown at the high school, in addition to traditional fire/evacuation drills. These are practiced each year. This year, drills will be held in the fall and spring.

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 the school in writing by October 1. Notification may be made by email to Judi Bowes in the Counseling Center (jbowes@mail.ab.mec.edu) or by mail (Judi Bowes, ABRHS, 36 Charter, Acton, MA 01720). 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

Senior Portraits

The following dates remain for senior portraits: October 15–19 and November 14–16. 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.

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.

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, and 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, and thank you to all of you who have been so cooperative in helping with the traffic flow at the high school.

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.

It's a Date / ABRHS

SEPTEMBER

- 5** School opens
- 6/7** Student photos
- 13** No school
Rosh Hashanah
- 17** School Council meeting
6:00 p.m.
- 18/19** Activities Fair
(during lunches)
- 19** Senior Class meeting
- 20** Grade 9 Elections
- 27** Back-to-School Night
- 28** Early dismissal for students—Professional development for staff

OCTOBER

- 3** Early Decision and College Application Workshop
7:00 p.m.
- 5** Interim reports for Term 1 issued
- 6** SAT & Subject Tests
- 8** No school
Columbus Day
- 10** Academic Integrity Parent Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 16** Career Breakfast
(set of career speakers)
First period
- 20** PSAT/NMSQT
- 26** Dance sponsored by WHAB (student radio station)

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.

ABRHS Volunteer Opportunities for Parents/Guardians 2007-2008

Volunteers are needed for activities and events organized by the High School and the PTSO. Please circle those activities with which you would like to help and reply in one of the following manners: Return your form by dropping it off at the High School office or mail it to: **A-B Regional PTSO, H.S. Volunteer Coordinator, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720-0912** or e-mail Bonnie Maserang at **BSMDesign@Comcast.net**. Remember to include all personal information and the activity numbers of the activities you are interested in. 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.*

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 by spending the day at work with a junior or senior student who has an interest 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

- Back to School Night at the Jr. High:** Thursday, October 4th 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 6th. Remember, your underclass son or daughter will be a senior before you know it! *

*Requires CORI check.

ABRHS Volunteer Opportunities for Parents/Guardians 2006–2007

- 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.
- New Family Support:** Help families new to the High School or community feel “connected.” Be available to answer questions by phone or in person.
- PTSO Communications:** The new PTSO quarterly communication will be mailed to families four times a year. We are looking for several writers willing to interview designated staff members at the regional schools and write up a lead story for these quarterly publications. Interviewing and writing will need to take place in October, December, February, and April for publication the following months.
- 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 e-mail list, click the button on our website at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu>.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Volunteers will be contacted as needed throughout the year. If you have any questions, need more information, or are especially anxious to volunteer, please contact Bonnie Maserang at BSMDesign@Comcast.net.

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

*Requires CORI check.

Proscenium Circus

Five exciting student theatrical productions will be presented by Proscenium Circus this year. The season opens with “The Laramie Project” on November 2–10; the winter musical is “Brigadoon” on February 1–9; the two spring shows are “Frankenstein” on March 7 & 8 and “Murder at the Prom”, an interactive mystery dinner theater, on April 11 & 12; and the “Student Directed Class Plays” will be presented on May 19.

Please note the new ticket system: Tickets for ALL productions, as well as Season Tickets, may be purchased online beginning September 1 at www.MKTix.com. Tickets will also be sold at Roche Bros. starting one month before each show. Tickets will no longer be sold at West Acton Market or Tedeschi's. Avoid the rush and purchase your tickets early online!

First PC Meeting on September 10

Proscenium Circus advisor Linda Potter encourages all A-B students who are interested in doing theater, on stage or behind the scenes, to come to the first Proscenium Circus (PC) meeting on Monday, September 10, 2:30–4:30 pm in

the auditorium. No previous experience is required, just a willingness to learn. The meeting will also feature some fun new theater games with Mary Ann Brandt.

Friends of Drama Meets on September 18

Parents of students involved in PC are encouraged to attend the Friends of Drama meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 7:00–9:00 pm in the high school counseling center. Linda Potter will talk about all of the PC activities, explain how students can become involved, and highlight some volunteer opportunities for interested adults. Season tickets will be sold at the meeting.

Ad space reservations are now underway for the program booklet which is seen by over 7000 audience members throughout the year. Business owners are invited to contact Jane Rodophele for more information: jane.rodophele@verizon.net.

To learn more about PC, Friends of Drama, Season Tickets, or advertising in the program, please visit www.ABDrama.org.

— Susan Williams

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Craig Hardimon

Looking Forward to the New Year!

I'd like to welcome new and returning families to R.J. Grey Junior High for the 2007-08 school year. The summer is rapidly coming to an end and I am thrilled and excited to have students in our building soon.

Communication

You may be interested to hear that this summer we transitioned from an old fashioned "listserv" to a new electronic communication system, Constant Contact. 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 go to our website (<http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>) and click on the link "Sign up for RJ Grey emails", and complete the registration form. Please note that parents and guardians who already completed this new registration form in the spring or earlier this summer do not need to repeat this process.

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.

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 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 6-7PM on the second Tuesday of each month.

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*). 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 (7:30-3:30), 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.

To enhance student safety and building security, starting on August 31st, the doors to the front lobby doors will be the only public entrance to school during the school day (visitors are asked to check-in at the Main Office upon arrival). All other doors will be locked during the school day.

Along a similar topic, I want to remind everyone of our student drop-off/pick-up procedures:

1. The front entrance loop is for buses only between 7:00AM-7:45AM. and 1:45PM-2:30PM. Other vehicles are not to enter the loop during these times.

2. Student drop off and pick-up is allowed at the bottom of the steps in the lower parking lot only. *This lot is located east of the building, behind the tennis courts, just off Charter Road. Please pay particular attention for students entering and/or exiting cars when driving through this area.*
3. Parents are asked to enter and exit the parking lot via Charter Road, not Mass. Avenue (Route 111). *Driving through the campus during bus drop off and pick-up interferes with the buses and causes unnecessary traffic problems.*
4. Students are not to be dropped off in front of the Blanchard gym or in the parking lot on the west side of the building. *Again, doing so interferes with our school buses and causes unnecessary traffic problems.*
5. Parent parking is only allowed in the lower lot and in the visitor spaces off the front loop. *Please note that these visitor spaces are for short term parking only.*
6. Cars are not to be parked – momentarily or otherwise – in the front loop area except in a visitor's space.
7. Lastly, please remember not to pass the busses.

Team Assignments

On Monday, August 27th, 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>. These assignments should be considered final and cannot be changed.

For your convenience, team-specific supply lists will be made available on Monday on the front doors of the school, on our webpage, and at Staples, Quill & Press, and Kmart.

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 5th. 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 5th 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 6th. Eighth graders should report to the auditorium by 7:30 AM on Thursday morning, September 6th for a short program before proceeding to their home-rooms.

I hope to meet many of you at our Back-To-School Night on Thursday, October 4th 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 7th graders are needed for participation on the RJGJHS School Council. The council consists of elected parents/guardians, teachers, community members, and student representatives 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 14th** for the ballot. Voting will be done at Back-to-School Night on October 4th. Write-ups should be sent to PTSO Co-Chair Chris Renzi at chrisrenzi@comcast.net or Principal Craig Hardimon at chardimon@mail.ab.mec.edu. Paper copies may be mailed to PTSO, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720, but please confirm with a phone call to Jan 978-263-2118.

Newcomers Reception at RJG

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, September 4th from 7:00–8:30 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

It's a Date / RJGJHS

SEPTEMBER

- 5** First day for 7th grade only
- 5** New 8th grade students only, 12:30PM
- 6** All students report to JH
- 12** School Pictures
- 13** Rosh Hashanah, No School
- 19** Student council Rep/Alt Elections
- 28** 8th grade dance, 6:30–8:30PM

OCTOBER

- 4** Back to School Night, 7th & 8th grade, 7PM
- 8** Columbus Day, No School
- 18** Make-up Picture Day
- 24** 8th grade Minuteman Tech Trip
- 26** 7th grade social, 2:30PM–4:30PM
- 31** Halloween Dress-Up day

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 Jan Immerman at 978-266-1145. Welcome to Acton/Boxborough—we look forward to seeing you on the 4th!

School Committee News

FROM THE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Bruce Sabot, Chair

Welcome back everyone! We hope you had an enjoyable and restful summer. Whether you and your children are returning to the district for another year of school or if you are new to RJ Grey Junior High School or the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School we welcome you and look forward to another busy year of academics and other activities. Quarterly, the Regional PTSO Newsletter will provide updates on the activities of the AB Regional School Committee. We welcome your comments either by email to any of the committee members or by attending one of our monthly meetings. Your feedback is important to us so we will always welcome it.

As the days of summer move into autumn, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee has spent the summer planning for the 2007-2008 school year. The committee met in July for its annual workshop at the Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough. One of the main topics was how the school committee could improve the working relationship with the Acton Leadership Group (ALG) and the Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF). Improving the relationship with these groups will help improve the budgeting process for both towns.

In addition the committee set forward with its goals for this school year. They include: review the 990 education hours mandate at the high school, study salary compensation, analyze SPED financial impact, improve the budget process, understand the different ways that each gender learns, monitor the health care costs of our employees, and focus on Chapter 70 (state education) funding. In addition, the committee will work with the administration as it begins the search process for a new high school principal.

We also would like to welcome a new/old face to the district. Marie Altieri started July 1st in her new role as Director of Personnel and Administrative Services. We look forward to working with her this year and for many years ahead.

As stated before, this year looks like another very busy year at the district. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting, which will be on Thursday, September 6th at the RJ Grey Junior High School library. If you can not attend the meeting please watch it on local cable television. You can check out details about the School Committee including members,

upcoming meetings, meeting minutes, policies, and now meeting handouts at <http://www.ab.mec.edu/about/schoolcommittee.shtml>. If you have questions or comments the names and email addresses of the school committee members are listed below. We look forward to your feedback. Enjoy the rest of your summer. Thank you.

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

Acton School Committee Members:

Jonathan Chinitz	jchinitz@gmail.com
Michael Coppolino	copp@verizon.net
Heather Harer	hharer@verizon.net
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Sharon Smith McManus	ssm112001@aol.com
John Ryder	johnry92261@verizon.net

Boxborough School Committee Members:

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

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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2007-2008 PTSO CALENDAR

Wed, Aug 29, 10:30am

Freshmen and New Student
Orientation/Pizza Lunch

Thur, Aug, 30, 7:00pm

HS New Family Welcome (Commons C)

Tue, Sept. 4, 7:00pm

JH New Family Welcome (RJG JH Library)

Thur, Sept 27, 6:50pm

HS Back to School Night

Thur, Oct 4, 7pm

JH Back to School Night

Tue, October 16, noon

PTSO Forum, Acton Memorial Library

Don't Miss Our Sept. PTSO Forum

Join us for our first PTSO on Tuesday, October 16th 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, Regional School Committee, ABSAF (Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund), and CAFY (Community Alliance for Youth).

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 6. Designs, which can be created by hand or with a computer, must be submitted by September 12.