

FROM THE PTSO CHAIR: CHRIS RENZI

PTSO Enhances Communication between School and Families

The PTSO would like to welcome you and your family back to school for 2008! We are excited to share this year's first newsletter with you as everyone prepares to welcome our students to R.J. Grey Junior High and AB Regional High School.

The primary goal of the AB Regional PTSO is to help facilitate communication between school, home, the school committee, and our community. Changes have been made in the past to accommodate the busy lives of our families. We are always open to new ideas and welcome your thoughts on how to improve communication between our parents and the schools. We hope that you will find an opportunity to get involved and we wish everyone 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 ABRPTSO website. We continue to mail approximately 1,800 newsletters each month to families. Increased postal costs and a dwindling pool of adult volunteers who are willing to fold and label newsletters each month forced us to consider other ways to stay in touch. This first newsletter of the year 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, smaller quarterly publications which will feature articles on a specific topic, as well as a detachable calendar for the next two months will be available. We will produce this smaller publication four times a year (November,

January, March and May). Please remember to sign up to have your newsletter delivered electronically and help us cut down on "our" costs for printing and mailing.

In addition to these above mentioned publications, we will also e-mail to all those signed up through <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> an electronic "update" on high

school and junior high news and events using our Constant Contact e-mail list. If you have not signed up already to receive these e-mails, keeping us all in "constant contact," please visit our website (<http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu>) and update your contact information.

CHAIRS CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

You'll really Want to Read this...

PTSO Membership Dues

No fundraising! The PTSO relies on a modest contribution of \$30 per family to support our communication costs and to provide small grants to both R.J. Grey Junior High and ABRHS. Please consider donating online if it's easier for you at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and click on "Pay Membership Dues Electronically."

PTSO E-mail List – STAY CONNECTED

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 HS and JH electronic "updates" as well as occasional PTSO reminders, clarifications, information regarding parenting programs and last minute requests for volunteer assistance. This is a great way to stay connected and informed and there is no cost. You can change or delete your own e-mail address at any time.

Do you Need to UPDATE your Profile?

If you have a child new to the JH or HS, please go to the link above and click on "Update Profile." From there, check the appropriate graduating class box.

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 quarter, OR simply read it from our website.** (All families on the e-mail list will be sent the quarterly link, as well as regular monthly updates from the High School and Junior High.) 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 click on "submit."

PTSO Forums

The PTSO will once again offer mid-day forums where families may have a chance to learn about what's going on in the schools and ask 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 hope to offer three forums in October, January, and March. The first forum will take place on Tuesday, October 14 at 12 p.m. in Acton Memorial Library. Remember to sign up for Constant Contact updates so we can bring you the latest update to the exact date. High School Principal Alixe Callen and Junior High School Principal Craig Hardimon will attend, and it will be a great opportunity to hear about news from each of our schools. The topics for the forums scheduled for January and March will be provided in November's publication.

Also we are pleased to announce that our new high school principal, Dr. Alixe Callen is offering several opportunities for parents and guardians to meet with her informally. These events are offered at different times of day during the week of September 15, and details are contained in the article about the high school on page 5 of this newsletter.

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 donations are \$30 per family) to support our communication costs and to provide small grants for each school for activities that are prioritized by their respective principals. 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. Once again, this year we are also offering an option for families to pay their dues online through MKTix, a parent-owned business in our community. Please consider donating online, if it's easier at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and click on "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.

Chris Renzi, Co-Chair, ChrisRenzi@comcast.net, 978.266.1296

PTSO Charter

The Regional Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) provides

- Communication among parents, faculty, students, administrators, school committee, and community members, and
- A framework for promoting excellence at R.J Grey Junior High School and Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.

The Regional PTSO includes representatives from the R.J Grey Junior High School and the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. Board members from both schools sponsor bi-monthly meetings featuring a speaker from the school system, updates from both principals, and general discussion. We advertise these open meetings in the newsletters and via email. Board members are elected for one year terms in May. If you are interested in getting involved with the PTSO Board, please contact Chris Renzi at ChrisRenzi@comcast.net, or 978-266-1296.

PTSO Board 2008-2009

Chair		Chris Renzi
Secretary		Karyn Finamore
Treasurer		Dawn Gomez
Directories	ABRHS	Patti Babcock
	RJG	Pam Rogers
Gardening		Subha Thiagarajan
Newcomer Welcome	ABRHS	Jan Immerman
	RJG	Kimberly Powers
Newsletter/Communications		Mary Ann Ashton
		David Gerratt
Volunteer Coordinator	ABRHS	Bonnie Maserang
	RJG	Elaina Kourepenos
Interschool Council	ABRHS	Ellie Halsey
	ABRHS	Debbie Clough
	RJG	Amy Hedison
	RJG	Christine Phillips
Membership	ABRHS	Alice Tam
	RJG	Cathy Griffen
Project Graduation		Shailla Golikeri
Nominating	OPEN	
Publicity	OPEN	

High School Student Phone Directories

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

August 2008

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 5th, 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.

Student's Name (Print) _____ Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

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

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Alixé Callen

Welcome to the 2008–2009 School Year!

I am delighted to be on board as the new principal of Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. As I have said previously, I feel like I hit the jackpot!

One of my goals for the year is to spend time getting to know the community. To that end, we have been working with the PTSO to put together some “Meet the Principal” coffees for the beginning of the school year. The dates for these gatherings are:

- Monday, September 15th
7:00–8:00 pm (HS Library)
- Wednesday, September 17th
3:00–4:00 pm (HS Library)
- Thursday, September 18th 9:00–
10:00 am (Acton Memorial Library)

In addition, we will offer an information evening for parents of freshmen and new students. That event will be held on **Thursday, September 11th** from 7:00–8:00 pm in the High School Auditorium.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at these events.

Best wishes for a great school year,
Alixé Callen

A-B Web Site

The A-B web site (ab.mec.edu/abrhs) is the primary source of information about the school. We are constantly adding information to the web site 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).

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

ABRHS First Day Schedule

On the first day of school, Wednesday, September 3, 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. Congratulations to new members Nancy Belanger, Janet Chinitz and Jan Couch, and many thanks to all who participated in the recent election for new members. Many thanks to all who participated in the recent election for new members. The first meeting of the School Council will be Monday, September 15 at 6 p.m. in the High School Library.

Safety Committee

Over the years the High School Safety Committee 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 e-mail 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.

Senior Portraits

The following dates remain for senior portraits: October 14 - 18 and November 20 and 21. 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.

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 27, 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 16th and 17th, 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.

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 4. Designs must be submitted by September 19.

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 at the close of school, so there will

be no parent pick up in the front circle 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.

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 are expected to bring with them at that time a note from a parent/guardian explaining their reason for being tardy. 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 a particular

class without a pass three times in a term, there will be three points deducted from his/her term average for that class.

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 and will be defined as a truancy. Any student found to be truant from a class will have three points deducted from their term average for that class. In the event that a student is able to provide acceptable documentation excusing the absence, the student may have record corrected by following the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. Parents/guardians are encouraged to review their child's attendance record regularly using the Parent Portal to PowerSchool. Instructions for accessing PowerSchool were included with the Principal's letter sent out with student schedules.

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.

The 2007-2008 ABSAF Board of Directors

Officers: Scott Apgar, President; Nick Finamore, Vice President; Peter Fairbrother and Laurie Maylander, Treasurers; Sasha DeMello, Secretary

Board Members: Nancy Belanger, Cathy Berard, Jim Crumlish, Michael Deleo, Mary Duggan, Jon Goddard, Judy Gray, Cindy He, Kathy Horan, Ling Huang, Qi Li, Jill Liu, Joanne Marcotte, Cy Marrion, Susan Muller, Maura Murphy, Mary Beth O'Brien, Damara Press, Janet Renaccio, Chris Renzi, Shirley Stewart, Aurelie Teebagy, Cindy Zhou

Student Members: Ryan Apgar, Nolan Condron, Kelly Donovan, Nick Finamore, Xenia Jarotschuk, Jenn Kappel, Kate Laurion, Elizabeth Muller, Leo Mullin, Danny Sherman

Ex-Officio: Marie Altieri, Alixe Callen, Steve Desy, Craig Hardimon, Mark Hickey

Website

For high school families, the Student Handbook as well as information about calendar, class times, and more all can be found on the webpage with "General" information about ABRHS: <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/about/info.shtml>. Check back often for up-to-date information.

Activities Fair

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School has many opportunities for students to get involved in extra-curricular activities. Information about these many opportunities will be available to students during the "Activities Fair" in September, or on the ABRHS website: <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/activities/index.shtml>.

ABRHS Volunteer Opportunities for Parents/Guardians 2008-2009

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 indicate which activity 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, September 25th 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 5th. Remember, your underclass son or daughter will be a senior before you know it! *

*Requires CORI check

ABRHS Volunteer Opportunities for Parents/Guardians 2008–2009

- ❑ **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.

PC Season Flying High with “Peter Pan”

AB Proscenium Circus is ready for another exciting season of six plays and musicals, opening with the classic play, “Peter Pan.” Mark your calendars and plan to see all of these shows!

- ***Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up***, directed by Linda Potter, is the familiar story of an adventurous boy who lives on the fantasy island of Neverland with the Lost Boys and Tinkerbell, and is pursued by Captain Hook and his pirates. This adaptation of the play by J. M. Barrie includes all of the beloved characters—and flying, of course! (Oct. 24–Nov. 1)
- ***Cabaret*** — Set in 1929-30 Berlin on the eve of the Nazis' rise to power, this Tony Award-winning musical uses the songs of the cabaret to mirror the effect of the political forces on the lives of the German people. Directed by Linda Potter, musical direction by Jeanie Furlan, choreography by Christine Campbell. Music and lyrics by Kander & Ebb. (Jan. 30–Feb. 7)
- **The Big Eleven**, a comedy written and directed by A-B student Stephen LaConte, chronicles the chaotic lives of juniors as they learn to survive at a high school where competition reigns and Ivy League schools are the dream. (Feb. 26) This production will also be entered in the Mass. Drama Festival competition in March.

- **Mostly Mozart: An Evening of Light Opera**, directed by Jen Moss and Jeanie Furlan, features A-B's finest singers in light-hearted scenes from famous operas. Guest artist John Salvi will perform selections from his repertoire and a duet with a student. (April 4)
- **The Class Play Competition** is an annual PC event where each class presents a 30-minute play that is completely directed and produced by students and the judges declare the winners at the end of the evening. (May 16)
- **You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown**, a musical directed by Beth Abrams, brings the beloved Peanuts gang to the stage – Lucy, Linus, Sally, Schroeder, Charlie Brown and Snoopy! (June 12 & 13)

How to buy tickets

Buy a Season Ticket to see all six shows and support the award-winning A-B student theater! Season Tickets are \$45 for Adults and \$35 for students and seniors. They are available beginning September 1st at MKTix.com (via credit card) or through A-B Friends of Drama (via cash or check). Individual tickets for all shows are available at MKTix.com beginning September 1st and will be sold at school and community locations TBA one month before each show opens. For an order form or more information, visit ABDrama.org or contact Linda Potter, PC Advisor, at (978) 264-4700 x 3584.

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 2008–09 school year. The summer is rapidly coming to an end and I am thrilled and excited to have students in our 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 daily announcements and other timely school information, please go to our website (<http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>), 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 use e-mail but wish to receive this newsletter, just send a note to my office either with your child or to the address above. Copies of *Grey Matters* can also be found on our website.

We also provide other opportunities for communication. A monthly RJG newsletter, *Shades of Gray*, includes articles from various teams and teachers, as well as a calendar of events to keep families informed.

Team Assignments

As you can imagine, scheduling a school with almost 1,000 youngsters is a complex process of checks and balances and a significant portion of the summer is spent building these teams in order to balance them by:

- sending school
- gender
- race
- world language requests
- special education and ELL services

Given all of these variables, it is virtually impossible to build the schedule around individual team requests. Accordingly, we cannot promise to meet the numerous parent and guardian placement requests which we receive. With that said, 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.

On Friday, August 29th, 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 letter and its envelope, which was mailed to students in early August. **Please be sure not to throw this letter away!** We will also post the team assignments, as well as updated team configurations and staffing on our website: <http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>.

Attendance Procedure

If your child will be absent from or late to school, please call the absence line at (978)264-4700 ext. 3333 **before** 7:30 am 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–7:45 am. and 1:45PM–2:30 pm. 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.

The First Day of School

For seventh graders, the first day of school is Wednesday, September 3rd. Students should report to the following areas by 7:30 am where they will meet with

their team teachers and other members of their team:

7 Blue	Front Gym
7 Gold	Café
7 Green	Library
7 Orange	Band Room
7 Red	Back Gym

After a series of team building activities, students will be divided into their homerooms and will proceed with the school day. Students may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch at our outdoor cookout, where I will be cooking burgers, hotdogs,

and vegetarian options. After lunch we will hold an assembly where I will meet with the students to talk about our expectations along with our Assistant Principals, Ms. Warren and Mr. Shen.

All eighth grade students *new to the Acton-Boxborough District* are invited to participate in an orientation program on **Wednesday, September 3rd** 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 4th. Eighth graders should report

to the auditorium by 7:30 am on Thursday morning, September 1st for a short program before proceeding to their homeroom.

I hope to meet many of you at our Back-To-School Night on Thursday, September 25th at 7 pm 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 and I look forward to seeing everyone soon. This is going to be a fantastic year!

ABSASF Kicks Off 2008-2009 Fundraising Drive

The ABSAF (Acton-Boxborough Student Activities Fund) has kicked off its 2008-2009 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 over 1,300 Acton and Boxborough residents provided \$125,000 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 transporta-

tion 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 2008-2009 school year (a value of \$130). 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.

For RJ Grey Families

The Student Handbook as well as information about student activities, bus routes, lunch menus and more all can be found on the webpage with "Student" information about RJ Grey: <http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>.

Daily Announcements as well as archives of Principal's weekly messages and more all can be found on the webpage with "Communication" information about RJ Grey: <http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html>.

Check back often for up-to-date information.

Sports Updates

For students and families looking for up-to-date information about all of our fall sports teams at RJ Grey and ABRHS, check the "Athletics" page of the website, where you can access game times, directions, and more through the High School Sports Network: <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/athletics/index.shtml>.

School Committee News

FROM THE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Jonathan Chinitz, Chair

Welcome to all of our families in the regional schools! In each of the PTSO newsletters published this year, we'll plan to add an article about the issues that we're working on with the Regional School Committee. We welcome your presence at our monthly meetings (see the schedule on our website: <http://www.ab.mec.edu/about/schoolcommittee.shtml>), or you are welcome to contact us through e-mail or individually. We've included information here about how to contact us.

As part of our planning for the coming year, we held a workshop in July to talk about the budget process and our goals and assignments for our committee members. We will continue to work closely with the Acton Leadership Group (ALG) and the Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) to be sure that we are developing budgets that meet the needs of our students and fit into the bigger budget plans in each of our towns. We are also committed to continuing an early budget development process to facilitate the work of the Finance Committees in both towns. In Acton, a petition from citizens has required a Special Town Meeting scheduled for early October, which will ask Town Meeting members to approve the use of reserve funds to reduce the tax burden on taxpayers. At the state level, the declining economy and a ballot question that could eliminate the state income tax both could affect the revenues available to cities and towns. The Regional School Committee members will closely monitor the effects of the Special Town Meeting decision and state-level developments on next year's budget, and encourage your participation in these important decisions as well.

The School Committee plans to complete its work on the impact of 990 hours compliance at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and its report on the Special Education Financial issues. Additionally, School Committee members are organizing a committee to investigate compensation and benefits for administrators.

As a whole committee, we will be developing a five-year plan for vision, budget, employee contracts, and class size.

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 4th at R.J. Grey Junior High School library. The agen-

das and information that we review for our meetings are published on our website (<http://www.ab.mec.edu/about/schoolcommittee.shtml>), and meetings are televised on local cable television. We look forward to your feedback.

All School Committee Members can be contacted at abrsc@acton-ma.gov

Acton School Committee Members:

Jonathan Chinitz	jchinitz@gmail.com
Michael Coppolino	copp@verizon.net
Heather Harer	hharer@verizon.net
Xuan Kong	xuankongsc@gmail.com
Sharon Smith McManus	ssm112001@aol.com
John Petersen	john.s.petersen@verizon.net

Boxborough School Committee Members:

Brigid Bieber	tbbieber@comcast.net
Maria Neyland	jmneyland@verizon.net
Bruce Sabot	bruce_sabot@comcast.net

Thank you!

The AB Regional PTSO is very grateful to all the parents/guardians in our community who help with our mission to enhance communication between the regional schools and our families. As we start off a new school year, it's a good time to say a particular "thanks" to two parents in our community who share their professional expertise with us many times throughout the year:

David Gerratt, founder of DG Communications/NonProfitDesign, publishes our newsletter five times per year. His business specializes in print and web design for nonprofits, specializing in "promoting the good work of others by making them look good." His flair for design was a great gift to the PTSO in helping us re-design the look of our publications several times during the last two years. If you are interested in learning more about David's business, see his website at www.dgcommunications.com.

Our e-mail messages that we send out to families at RJ Grey and ABRHS come courtesy of Constant Contact, which specializes in providing e-mail marketing services to small businesses and associations around the globe. Our account was donated by Eric Groves who lives in Acton and runs sales at the company. He donated the account under the company's Cares4Kids program (www.cares4kids.com) which enables employees and customers to donate Constant Contact to nonprofit organizations that help children. If you are interested in learning more about Constant Contact, visit www.constantcontact.com.

2008-2009 PTSO CALENDAR

Thurs, Sept 11, 7-8 pm

Meeting for parents/guardians of
9th graders with Dr. Alixe Callen,
ABRHS Auditorium

Thurs, Sept 25, 7 pm

RJ Grey Back to School Night

Tues, Oct 14, 12 pm

PTSO Forum, Meet the Principals,
Acton Memorial Library

Thurs, Oct 23, 6:50 pm

ABRHS Back to School Night

Meet the Principals of our Regional Schools

The principals of our regional schools are eager to meet with parents/guardians to answer your questions and hear your concerns.



**Alixe Callen,
ABRHS**

In her first months as the principal of ABRHS, Alixe is offering several opportunities for parents and guardians to meet her.

- **Thursday, September 11**
For parents/guardians of Freshmen, ABRHS Auditorium 7-8 pm
- **Monday, September 15**
For all ABRHS parents/guardians, ABRHS Library, 7-8 pm
- **Wednesday, September 17**
For all ABRHS parents/guardians, ABRHS Library, 3-4 pm
- **Thursday, September 18**
For all ABRHS parents/guardians, Acton Memorial Library, 9-10 am



**Craig Hardimon,
RJ Grey**

Mr. Hardimon offers regular "drop-in times" for parents/guardians each month. For the first months of school, you are wel-

come to visit with Craig at the following times:

- **Tuesday, September 9**
Principal's Drop-in Hour, 6-7 pm, RJG Principal's office
- **Tuesday, October 14**
Principal's Drop-in Hours, 6-7 pm, RJG Principal's office

SEPTEMBER 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="checkbox"/> High School Schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School Schedule	1 Labor Day	2 Teachers' meetings	3 School opens 7:23 Homeroom extended	4 Photo Day	5 Photo Day	6
			School opens 7:30 a.m. – Gr 7 Orientation – New students for Grade 8 – 12:30 p.m.	School opens – Gr 8		
7	8	9 School Pictures Principal's Drop in Hour, 6–7p.m. School Council, 7–8:30	10 Gr 9 Election Workshop	11 Parents/Guardians Mtg with Dr. Alixe Callen – Freshmen and New Students, 7–8 p.m. ABRHS Auditorium	12	13 ACTs
14	15 Gr 9 – Nomination and Papers and Speeches due School Council 6 p.m. ABRHS Library Meet with Dr. Callen 7–8 p.m. ABRHS Library	16 Activities Fair – lunch periods	17 Activities Fair – lunch periods Senior Class Meeting Meet with Dr. Callen 3–4 p.m. ABRHS Library Student Council Rep/Alt Elections	18 Meet with Dr. Callen 9–10 a.m. Acton Memorial Library Gr 9 Elections, Period 1 Counseling/Freshmen Groups	19 Counseling/Freshmen Groups Deadline for Directory cover design	20
21	22	23 Counseling/Senior Groups	24 Counseling/Senior Groups	25 Early dismissal, 10:50 a.m. Back to School Night, 7 p.m.	26	27
28	29	30 Rosh Hashanah – No School				

OCTOBER 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <input type="checkbox"/> High School Schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School Schedule			1 Deadline for military recruiting notification	2 "The Invisible Children" in-school Senior Class assembly	3 Interim Reports due	4 SATs
				Student Council, 12:22	8th Grade Dance, 6:30–8:30 p.m.	
5	6	7	8	9 Yom Kippur – No School	10 Make-up Photo Day VOICE Day Senior Class Dance	11
12	13 Columbus Day – No School	14 PTSO Forum, 12 p.m., Acton Memorial Library Senior Portraits Musical Workshops	15 Senior Portraits Fall College Night 7 p.m.	16 Senior Portraits Counseling – Senior Drop In	17	18
		Mid-Term Reports Mailed Principal's Drop in Hour, 6–7:00 p.m. School Council, 7–8:30 p.m.				
19	20 School Council, 6:00 pm	21 Career Breakfast 7:23 a.m.	22	23 Back to School Night, 6:50 p.m.	24 Peter Pan, 7:30 p.m.	25 ACTs Peter Pan, 7:30 p.m.
			8th Grade Minutemen Field Trip, 8–12:00		7th Grade Social, 2:30–4:30 p.m.	
26 Peter Pan, 3:00 p.m.	27 Musical Workshops	28	29 "Check it Out" Program Gym and Auditorium Nurses/Seniors	30	31	
					Halloween dress-Up Day	