

August 7, 2024

Back To School

Hello everyone. It is always a great time to be a Blue Bomber! As usual, this summer was a busy one. It looks like we got everything done that we needed to do, so we think we are ready to go. We did not have a lot of employee slots to fill this year. However, we did hire a new psychologist. Towamensing Elementary and the High School would like to welcome our new psychologist, Ms. Brynn Rosell.

We are also in the middle of a search for a new superintendent. Mr. Ryan Kish is currently serving as the interim superintendent. He is doing a terrific job so there is no real hurry. The most important thing is to get the right person for the job.

We also have some building improvement items at the high school. The major renovation item is the Weight Room (Field House) which will benefit the students by giving them a place to work out and focus on establishing healthy routines. The expected “substantial” completion date for this renovation is September 6. Thanks to the School Board for ensuring that this project gets completed.

While it is always nice to get new things, we fully realize that there is no true substitute for good teaching, curriculum, flexibility, and positive communication. Communication with parents is an essential aspect of a successful educational process. The first formal opportunity for parents and guardians to get involved is our Back-to-School Night on September 12 at 7:00 PM. We will start that evening in the auditorium. Please mark that date on your calendar as we are looking forward to seeing you there.

Arrival at School

Our first day of school is Tuesday, September 3. It is certainly a rare thing that we start after Labor Day. However, if you recall, the School Board revised the calendar to accommodate the renovation at Palmer Elementary School. It is really hard to believe that this date is right around the corner. Please make note of some scheduling items for the first day of school. If you have a child in grades 10, 11, or 12, your child’s schedule should be enclosed. Our Freshman and New Student Orientation is on August 19. This is when these students will receive their schedules.

On the first day of school, all high school students will report at the regular time for a full day of school. If students arrive prior to 7:10 AM, they should wait outside. Our doors will open at 7:20 AM. When the warning bell rings at 7:26 AM, the Grade 9 students should go directly to the auditorium. Students in the other grades should report to their first block class. Block 1 classes start at 7:30 AM. It is imperative that each student in grades 10-12 bring their schedules to school on that first day or be ready to access it on PowerSchool. If a freshman or new student does not attend our Orientation program, they will be given their schedule in the auditorium on the first day of school.

Please note that there will be no passes issued from the cafeteria for people eating breakfast. Students should plan accordingly. If a student is planning to eat breakfast at school, they should plan to arrive at 7:20 AM. This will give them time to eat and then make it to class on time.

Schedule Changes

You will have the opportunity to get a jump start on needed schedule changes. Please take note of the following dates / times when the guidance counselors will be available.

August 14	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
August 15	2:00 PM - 6:00 PM
August 19	11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (Freshman Only)
August 20	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

For other dates / times, appointments should be made with the appropriate guidance counselor. Please do not rely on e-mail requests for schedule changes. If the dates / times listed above do not work for you, please schedule an appointment with your guidance counselor before the start of the school year.

Once the school year starts, schedule changes can be made only with an appointment from September 3 through September 6. Students in grades 9 and 10 should meet with Ms. Vicki McHugh. Students in grades 11 and 12 should meet with Mr. Kevin Wertz.

After September 6, no additional schedule changes will be permitted. Please note that all schedule changes made after the start of school year must be made with the permission of the guidance counselor as well as the sending and receiving teachers.

LCCC Dual Enrollment

Any student who requested and received an LCCC class for Semester 1 must take care of all of the registration steps prior to the first day of school. Online LCCC classes begin on August 26. The classes held at the high school begin when our school year starts. However, registration for those classes must also take place prior to the beginning of the year. Please make sure you are checking Schoology carefully as all of the information and links will be posted. If there is an LCCC class on your schedule and you do not intend to take one, please contact Mr. Wertz to change your schedule.

Registration for the Spring semester classes will happen during the Fall. If you have a class listed on your schedule for Semester 2, you do not need to do anything at this time.


Paperwork

On the first day of school, a great deal of paperwork will be sent home with the students. It would be much appreciated if you promptly read and sign the appropriate documents. As you complete this paperwork, please make sure that you note all of the appropriate telephone numbers where you can be reached. In case of any emergency, we need to know how to contact you. Again, we really need accurate contact information. **If any of your telephone numbers should change during the school year, please let us know.**

Student Lockers

The majority of students will have their locker assignments noted on the top of their schedule. Others will receive that information on the first day of school. Students under no circumstances should share lockers with another student.

Student Handbook

There have been a number of changes to the Student Handbook. Please review that book with your children. To identify updates / changes, a “” clipart image has been included.

Cell Phones

I realize that we live in a very technological society. I also understand that as parents, we feel better when we are able to communicate with our children at a moments’ notice. That being said, cell phones are also a major disruption to the educational process. It is our expectation that while students are in the classroom, their cell phones will be turned off and will be out of sight. The only exception is if there is a specific educational purpose approved by the teacher. Classroom use must be authorized by the teacher. Each teacher will have their own cell phone / electronic device rules and regulations that they will share with the students as well as the parents / guardians. A teacher is definitely permitted to ban cell phones and electronic devices if that works for their classroom. During our teacher meetings at the end of the school year, the majority of the teachers indicated that they will be doing this. If you have any questions, please see School Board policy #237.

Dismissal

The regular dismissal schedule will be in place on the first day of school. The first day of school is a full day of school.

Pick Up and Drop Off

All students driving to school or being dropped off at school should enter the building on the west side driveway. This is the side closest to the stadium. When dropping off students, please loop around the lot and get in line. The actual drop-off point is along the curb closest to the building - five feet from the stop sign. As soon as the buses depart at 7:20 AM, you may also drop off on the bus lane in the front of the building.

Drop-offs and pick-ups are not permitted on the Junior High School side. Please be vigilant of our safety procedures.

Parking

Students may purchase parking permits in the main office from September 4 to September 20. Students must have a current driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.

Parking regulations will be strictly enforced after September 20. The parking permit must be clearly displayed at all times. (If you switch vehicles one day, please swap the permit as well.) You are not permitted to park in someone else's spot and your privilege to park can be revoked if you are excessively late to school. Please see the Student Handbook for more details.

Transportation

George's Busing provides our transportation. They have asked me to point out something important. Students must be alert at the bus stops. Phones, headphones, and earbuds can all serve as a distraction. Students should always be alert and watch traffic. Make sure all cars have stopped before starting to cross the road. Drivers can also get distracted, so please pay close attention. Students should not assume that car drivers will stop for them. It is also recommended that in the dark of winter, students wear one or more pieces of bright clothing to increase their visibility.

Riding the school bus is a privilege. It is also a privilege that can be revoked for misbehavior on the school bus.

Breakfast and Lunch

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to the students on the first day of school. Your child's passcode for the cafeteria is the same one that was used last year. (This also applies to the incoming ninth grade students.) Please note that your child's account balance ... positive or negative ... will also carryover from last year. New students will receive their passcode for the cafeteria on the first day of school. You can have your child bring in a check to apply to their account balance or use the on-line service to add funds to their account. If you want to get a jump on things, please do this now.

The cost for breakfast at the secondary level is \$1.40 and the secondary lunch is \$3.05. Milk is 55¢. Because it is a paid lunch, please remember to complete the free and reduced lunch form if appropriate. Please keep in mind that these forms do not carry over from year to year. You must reapply every year.

Nurse's Office

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires that all Grade 12 students have a second dose of the MCV (meningococcal) vaccine or proof of religious, philosophical, or medical exemption prior to the first day of school. This meningitis vaccine has to be given on or after the student's 16th birthday. You may e-mail or fax these medical records to the school nurse. (E-mail: lthomas@palmerton.org or Fax: 610 826-4929.) Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this requirement.

If you have a child that needs this meningitis vaccine, the related information is posted on our website. We also shared the information about this vaccine with several automated telephone messages. If your child has not received the meningitis vaccine yet, they are not permitted to start school. If this is the case, they will not receive their school schedule unless they have just received the vaccine or have an appointment to get the vaccine. This is a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulation / requirement. In order to get an exemption to this requirement for religious, philosophical, or medical reasons, please see our website under the Health Services Department or contact our school nurse, Mrs. Laura Thomas.

Final Note

I encourage you to take advantage of the fact that the start of a new school year is a great time to establish new family routines. Even though the excitement and change can make life somewhat hectic for the first few weeks, this is a great time to begin new and positive steps. I also ask that you encourage your child to get involved in school activities. We offer a number of clubs, activities, and sports for the students.

If you have any questions or concerns now or throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available and happy to help in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

Paula A. Husar
Principal

cc: Mr. Ryan Kish – Interim Superintendent