

# Andover Middle School

January 12

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

MR. BRETT WHITE



Inside this issue

Mr. Jones	2	<p>Before I talk this month about a few of the questions on our climate survey results, I wanted to thank all of you for the opportunity to work with your kids for the past 11 years. I can honestly say that AMS has the greatest kids anywhere. I have also truly enjoyed working with the AMS parents during my time as Principal here. Your support of AMS and your students is outstanding. Beginning in August, I will be in a new position in the Andover district. I will be moving to our District Office as the Assistant Superintendent in charge of human relations, replacing Mr. Tom Ostrander, who will be retiring this summer. Although next year I will miss seeing the kids, our parents, and the tremendous staff at AMS on a daily basis, I look forward to this opportunity and new challenge.</p>
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		<p>Thanks to all of you who took time to participate in our parent climate survey. Those results, along with our student climate survey data, can be accessed from the AMS website by clicking on the climate survey link. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders take the student survey each year, so the data is based on 7<sup>th</sup> grade responses.</p>

I want to highlight some positives as well as some area where we need to continue to strive to improve. With respect to the data, the experts say that when 20% of the respondents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, that is cause for concern. When at least 80% are satisfied or very satisfied, that is cause for celebration.

One of the positives from the student survey was the level of safety that students feel at AMS. 91.7% of our students are satisfied or very satisfied that they feel safe and secure at school. Only 6.2% of students responded that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this area. 2.1 % had no opinion. Although we would like the 6% to be 0%, overall, this is good news that our students feel safe coming to school.

Likewise, a high percentage of our students feel a sense of belonging to AMS. 89% are satisfied or very satisfied with the connectedness that they have with our school. 8.3% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 2.6% do not have an opinion on that question. One of the most powerful ways to connect with a school is to become involved in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities at AMS, or to plug in to a club or a group that meets to build those friendships and bonds.

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## Words from Mr. Jones, Athletic Director

### AMS Sports

Remember, students cannot participate in any athletic sport without a current physical on file with the athletic department. Please turn all physical forms in to Mr. Jones in the office. Those students (Wrestling, Boys Tennis and Boys/Girls Track) that have not had their Pay to Participate fee paid needs to do so by the first competition date. Most student/athletes have had their Pay to Participate paid already. Thanks for taking care of this.

#### Note to Parents:

Eligibility for the third nine weeks has already been determined. Remember that we establish our athITHANKSTHANKSetic/activity eligibility by the nine weeks. We feel that this method allows our kids to get back to activities quicker than doing it by semester. This helps some and hurts others, but not being eligible is something that kids and parents should be conscious of if they are properly monitoring their progress each week. Students must pass five subjects of unit weight during the previous nine weeks to be considered eligible. We have eight blocks, however, language arts is a two hour block and is worth one credit. So, our students have the possibility of earning seven credits. When two classes, like physical education and health, share the same hour on alternating days they are averaged together for one credit. Ineligibility is seldom a surprise to those involved. If you have any questions concerning physicals or eligibility please e-mail or call me at the school.

#### Important Dates Coming Up:

- ◆ Saturday, Jan 14<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade "B" Basketball Tournament starting at 9:00 AM. (Boys will play at Andover Middle School and the girls will play at Andover High School.)
- ◆ Saturday Jan 21<sup>st</sup>- Wrestling Blue/White Scrimmage @ 9:00am, Parent Meeting @ 11:00am
- ◆ Tuesday, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> – First Wrestling Match @ Derby Red Middle School Double Dual @ 4:00pm (Derby Red, El Dorado, Valley Center)
- ◆ Thursday, Jan. 26<sup>st</sup>- Winter Pep Assembly starting at 2:05 in the Andover Middle School

# Go Trojans!





*Part 2 of Mr. White's article*

Mr. Jones, Mrs. Ingram, and I spend many hours working through bullying issues with students. Likewise, our teachers are the first line of defense when problems arise. We try to educate kids in countless ways about bullying and the importance of treating one another with respect. In past years, we have brought the Rachel's Challenge program in to our school, and we have an active Chain Links club that is the result of that program, where kids exhibit kindness and compassion for one another. We have the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) program where 8<sup>th</sup> graders mentor 6<sup>th</sup> graders. This year we took a morning in September and had bullying assemblies for the kids, where they saw an anti-bullying video, heard about the effects that bullying can have by listening to talented storyteller Amy Beabout, and heard through songs and testimony about bullying from Cameron Ernst, a singer/songwriter from Dallas, Texas. The climate survey question about the school's efforts to address bullying reflects those efforts, but we still have work to do in this area. 84.9% of our kids were satisfied or very satisfied with our efforts to address bullying. 13% of students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 2.1% did not have an opinion. As with every middle school across the country, the issue of bullying is one that we must continue to focus on.

Each year one of our lowest questions on the survey is that students at this school treat one another with respect and tolerance, regardless of race, religion, gender, or family income level. On this year's survey, 66.5% (about two-thirds) were satisfied or very satisfied with the way kids treat one another. 29.9% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 3.7% offered no opinion. Maybe it should not be a surprise, when we look at society as a whole. My personal observation is that too often watching the way people interact and treat one another on reality shows, at sporting events, in the halls of Congress, or even just out at the local supermarket or in neighborhoods can be scary. As a society, we sometimes lack civility or even basic respect for our fellow human beings. Having said that, this is an area where we want to make improvements. It is my hope that as our kids learn through the curriculum about individuals and groups throughout history who have been discriminated against, tortured, and even killed because of who they were, an empathy develops that kids can learn to embrace differences and treat everyone with kindness and respect. Here are some things you can do at home to reinforce this to your kids:





*Conclusion of Mr. White's article*

Volunteer at a place that serves those who are less fortunate – Spending some time serving a meal to a homeless person, or helping out a person in need can raise levels of understanding and empathy for one another.

Talk to your kids about celebrating diversity and differences – The differences that we have make us a great country, community, and school. Instead of using

those differences, regardless of whether they are race, religion, gender, income level, or any other differences, to drive wedges between groups, we need to appreciate and value the diversity among us.

Don't tolerate put-downs – Kids will rise or fall to our level of expectations here. If they know that put-downs or insults are not allowed, they will respond accordingly.

Don't allow your kids to use generalizations or make offensive references to groups of people – Sometimes kids may repeat what they have heard or been exposed to through the media, etc. We need to educate them and stop them from making generalizations about entire groups of people and teach them to look at each person as an individual.

Stress the positives about others – Self-esteems and self-images are fragile in the middle school years, and can be devastated by cruel words and actions. Kids need to realize the pain their words can have, and to focus on building up instead of tearing down.

Let an adult know – The disrespect and intolerance that kids can show to one another is so often hidden from adults. Kids know when and where to attack, often in places that are difficult to supervise, whether on school grounds, in neighborhoods, or in front of a computer screen. Parents, trusted adults, teachers, and administrators need to know when this behavior is going on so it can be addressed and remedied.

Working together, we can make a difference in the way that our kids treat one another, and the respect and tolerance they show to their peers. Enjoy reading the climate results on the AMS website.



## OFFICE NEWS

*Inservice/No School*

*January 16th*

*Career Fair for 8th grade in a.m.*

*January 26th*

### *Yearbook Deadline*

the last day to purchase a yearbook is Jan. 13th. After that date, students can be put on a list to purchase a book in may. First come, first served.

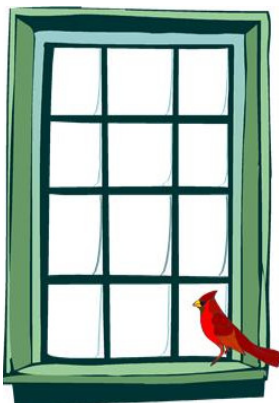
### *Arriving Late to School*

When students arrive late to school, they are to check in at the office to receive their tardy pass for their first hour class. The student handbook, which is included in the agenda book, clarifies what is classified as excused tardies and excused absences.

### *Cell Phone Reminder*

Cell phones are not acceptable in the school setting and should not be used in the building. There is a phone available for students' use in the office. Please take note of AMS policy regarding non-compliance and the consequences that will be given:

- 1st offense - 1 conduct point taken, phone returned to the student at the end of day
- 2nd offense - 2nd point taken, parent to pick up phone
- 3rd offense - Student will serve a 30 minute detention and parent to pick up phone
- Each time after that - Student will serve an *additional* 30 minute detention and parent to pick up phone.



*Winter*



### *Nurse's News Items:*

We again want to thank all of the wonderful AMS families, and AMSPO that have sent supplies to the health office this year. We appreciate your kindness and generosity.

I have sent **2<sup>nd</sup> notice** letters to the parents of all students that need immunizations. Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at this time need a Tdap (tetanus) and 2 Varicella (chicken pox). If we have a confirmed case of a disease for which your student is not adequately immunized against, he or she will be excluded from school for the incubation and contagious period, which could be up to 30 days. If your student received immunizations, please provide **written documentation from the doctor with these dates**. If your student has had the chicken pox disease, I need written documentation from your doctor of this. This is a new regulation from the health department.

**We would like to have all students compliant by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, so please take care of this during break.**

We have finished hearing and vision screenings. All 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders had their vision checked, and all 7<sup>th</sup> graders had their hearing checked. If you did not receive written notice of a problem, your student passed.

Remember, no medications may be given without a signed medication sheet from the parent and doctor. Please do not send medication to school with your student to take without this document. If you think your student will need over-the-counter medication this year, please have them stop in the nurse's office to pick up a form. You may have the doctor's office fax it back to us with a signature to 733-4165.

Please remember to keep your student home until 24 hours after starting an antibiotic for an infection. They also must stay home until they are fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea-free for 24 hours without medication.

The best defense against getting sick is frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds. It is important to do all we can to stay healthy. This includes eating a proper diet with plenty of water and getting enough sleep, both of which are a challenge for middle-school students.

Please have your student eat breakfast every day to help avoid mid-morning headaches and stomachaches. Also, please do not send energy drinks to school with your student. We have started allowing healthy snacks during class this year, which I think will help.

I do not give excuses for sports practices or PE. If your student has an issue (and doesn't have a fever or vomiting etc.), I will have them call you and you can decide if your child should go to practice or not. It is then the student's responsibility to contact the coach. You may write a PE excuse for 1 day. If your student needs to miss more than 1 PE class, a doctor's note is required.

Your child will need to make up the missed class before or after school.

Call the office if you have any contact information changes. Also, please check to make sure we have current emergency notification information in case we are unable to reach parents.

Have a safe and healthy New Year, and please call the health office if you have any questions or concerns.

Your AMS health office staff, Tami Cairns RN, Barb Trekell RN



## Counselor's Corner

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Fair

A variety of speakers will be coming to AMS on Jan. 26 to share their careers with the 8th grade students. The 8th Grade Career Fair will host a number of fields including environmental and software engineering, social work and play therapy, architecture, cosmetology, fashion design, and accounting and finance, to name a few. Students will be signing up for their sessions the week prior to the fair.

### 9th Grade Pre-enrollment

Pre-enrollment information for 9<sup>th</sup> grade will be presented to all 8<sup>th</sup> graders the morning of Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>. Robin Anderson, Andover High School Counselor, will be here to talk with the students about high school courses and the enrollment process. Students will be given enrollment guides and transcripts at that time. Parents are invited to the AHS Enrollment Fair that evening from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at AHS. A special meeting for the incoming freshmen will take place at 6 p.m. in the AHS auditorium.

### State Assessment Testing

State assessment testing begins in February and runs through April. Reading and math will be tested at all grade levels. Science will be tested at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level and social studies at the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Testing schedules will be posted later this month.

### Kansas Communities That Care Survey

Parents of all 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders should be receiving a letter announcing the Kansas Communities That Care survey which will be given on-line this month during regular social studies classes. The survey helps the state determine areas of need to combat drug and alcohol use as well as bullying and violence. The survey is confidential (no names are entered) and is completely voluntary. Opt-out forms are on the letter that parents will receive with the grade card mailing.

