

August 4, 2021

Back To School

Hello everyone. It is a good time to be a Blue Bomber! We have taken a number of positive steps over the last few months to improve things from a cosmetic perspective at the Palmerton Area Senior High School. The window replacement project should be completed on schedule. Now, we are looking forward to getting things back on the right track after the many months of dealing with COVID.

While the cosmetic changes were certainly needed, there are many more important things that must get done. COVID definitely took us back a few steps. Now we have to focus on resetting things and getting Blue Bomber pride back in gear. Our students are already practicing for various sports. (We fully expect to see a large number of spectators cheering for our athletes.) Also, our drama productions and musical productions are back.

The virus altered the overall climate of our building. This in turn impacted the teaching and learning process. We are now focused on fully returning that Blue Bomber pride. I am asking everyone to challenge themselves to make this year our best year ever.

Communication with parents is an essential aspect of a successful education process. The first formal opportunity for you to get involved in things is our Back To School Night on September 8. Please mark that date on your calendar as we are looking forward to seeing you there. Our freshman and new student orientation is set for August 11.

Arrival at School

Our first day of school is Monday, August 30. 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 10th, 11th, or 12th grade, your child's schedule is enclosed. The 9th grade students will meet in the auditorium on that first day after they enter the building at 7:20 AM.

(Also note that we will officially welcome our 9th graders, new students, and any sophomore students who were virtual last year on August 11 with our orientation program.)

On August 30, 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. When our doors open at 7:20 AM, students may enter the building. When the warning bell rings at 7:27 AM, the students in Grade 9 should go to the auditorium. Students in grades 10, 11, and 12 should report to their first block class. Block 1 classes start at 7:30 AM.

Schedule Changes

You will have the opportunity to get a jump start on schedule changes. Please take note of the following dates / times: August 11 (2:00 PM - 4:00 PM), August 16 (2:00 PM - 5:00 PM), and August 17 (10:00 AM – 2:00 PM). Any other time, you will need to make an appointment with your guidance counselor. Please do not rely on e-mail for schedule changes. If none of the listed dates / times work for you, please schedule an appointment with your guidance counselor.

Once school starts, schedule changes can be made by appointment only from August 30 through September 2. (Students in grades 10 and 11 should meet with Ms. Vicki McHugh. Students in grades 9 and 12 should meet with Mrs. Maggie Schaffer.) After September 2, no additional changes will be permitted. 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.

Paperwork

On the first day of school, a great deal of paperwork will be sent home with your child. 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 really need to know how to contact you. **If your phone 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.

Student Handbook

There have been a number of changes to the Student Handbook. Please review that book with your children. The changes are identified with a graphic image.

Dismissal

The regular dismissal schedule will be in place on the first day. The first day of school is a full day of school. There is no school for students on September 3 or September 6 in recognition of the Labor Day holiday.

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. **Drop offs and pick up are not permitted on the Junior High School side.**

Parking

Students may purchase parking permits in the main office from August 30 to September 10. Students must have a current driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.

Parking regulations will be strictly enforced after September 10. Your parking permit must be clearly displayed at all times. (If you switch vehicles one day, please swap the permit as well.) Please review the Student Handbook for changes to our parking process. All student vehicles should be facing one particular way - facing towards the building. We are hoping this will help with safety when exiting at the end of the day. The only parking spots where this alignment will not be enforced is the very last row of parking spots closest to the stadium.

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 a car has stopped before crossing the road. Drivers can also get distracted so please pay close attention. Do not just assume that people will stop. Please take good care of yourself. That is a priority because unfortunately, the world will not always do it for you. **Also note that masks must be worn on school busses.**

Breakfast and Lunch

Breakfast and lunch will be provided 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 carry over 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.

All breakfast and lunch meals are free for this school year. Additional lunches and snacks can be purchased.

Nurse's Office

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires that all 12th grade 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 have been 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 on our website. We also shared this news with an automated Connect Ed telephone message. If your child has not received the meningitis vaccine yet, they are not permitted to start school. This is a commonwealth / state requirement. In order to get an exemption to this requirement for religious, philosophical, or medical reasons, please see our website under Health Services - Latest News.

Welcome New Staff Members

We welcome new staff members to the Blue Bomber family: Mr. Joseph Trimmel - Special Education, Ms. Malia Mueller - Music / Concert Band and Marching Band, Mrs. Katherine Baumgardt - English, and Mr. Brandyn Miller - Technology. (Mr. Miller is transferring from the elementary school level.) We are confident that our new staff members will prove to be valuable assets to our already excellent staff.

We also welcome Mr. David Sodl as our secondary level assistant principal. His office will be at the high school and he will assist with the junior high on an as needed basis. Mr. Sodl is joining us from the Pleasant Valley School District where he served as an assistant principal.

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 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: Dr. Jodi Frankelli - Superintendent