



Amherst Middle School

24 August 2021

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe summer is drawing to a close and the new school year is just around the corner. We hope that this summer offered your family the chance to connect, relax, and make memories. AMS has had a busy summer preparing the building, our classrooms, and our curriculum for the return of your students. While we know that this year still has challenges, it also has so many opportunities for our community to come together and support one another. Our focus this year is on reuniting our community of learners and recommitting to the core beliefs and practices that actively contribute to a positive learning environment. AMS is a truly special place for students to learn and grow. Strong partnerships between family and school are the only way we can accomplish this! We look forward to opportunities for collaboration and together build an amazing year for each of your students!

Please take some time to review all of the information included in this letter. We've tried to address many questions that are on parents' minds from the implementation of the SAU39 Reopening Plan to school lunches, lockers, athletics, and the first day of school schedule. More information will be coming in the days leading up to school and please reach out if you have questions. Thank you for entrusting your students into our care this year. We are honored to help them navigate this next step in their journey!

Sincerely,

AMS Leadership Team

Bethany Bernasconi, Principal

John Schuttinger, Assistant Principal for Operations

Carol Scianti, Assistant Principal for Student Services

2021-2022 SAU39 Reopening Plan

Status Level System: We will continue with our use of a five-color status system for schools in SAU 39.

Amherst Middle School will open in yellow status.

Yellow – Required Safety Protocols

- Masks will be required for students and staff at AMS when indoors
- Lunch will be outdoors as long as weather permits. When lunch must occur indoors, grade levels will be split through the cafe and classrooms for lunch.
- Designated volunteers will be allowed to access the building; and,
- Parent meetings can be done remotely or in-person with masks.

AMS is fortunate to have an incredible natural campus that lends itself to learning outdoors. Teachers are encouraged to make use of our campus and all have classroom radios which are carried with them for ease of communication with the front office. We will also continue the practice of outdoor lunches this year as long as the weather cooperates.

Remote Learning

The Amherst School District's reopening plan includes a remote learning option that is offered in partnership with VLACS. For more information on the SAU #39 remote learning options for the 2021-2022 school year, please click [here](#). If you would like to enroll your child in the remote learning option, please complete the Remote Modality Selection form available in PowerSchool. You should still complete the annual registration forms in PowerSchool as well.

School Start/End Times

The school day begins promptly at 8:30am at which time all students should be in their Launchpad(6-8) or Morning Meeting (5) classrooms. Students not taking the bus may be dropped off at AMS beginning at 8:00am and will leave morning recess to report to class no later than 8:25am. The YMCA will be offering a Before the Bell program each day from 7:00-8:00am and families wishing to participate must register with the YMCA. Directions can be found on the AMS homepage and are linked [here](#).

Daily dismissal is at 3:24pm for all students. There will be a single pickup line at AMS and we ask your patience and help to ensure a safe and timely pickup for all students.

First Week of School

The first day of school will be an early release at AMS. Students still arrive at school as described above. All 5th grade students should report to the cafe when they arrive. 6-8th grade students will be able to gather in the outdoor recess area (basketball/gaga blacktop area) where they will be dismissed from at

8:23am to report to their Launchpad classrooms. Students will be dismissed for the day at 12:50pm for the buses and parent pick-up.

The focus of this day will truly be on community building and welcoming all of our students back to AMS together. Students only need to bring their lunch (if they are not having a school lunch), a snack, a water bottle, and their excitement to start school. All school supplies should remain home until the second day of school when your child will start a full day and all classes in a regular schedule.

Wednesday (9/1) and Thursday (9/2) will follow the Monday Bell schedule, and teachers will help guide students through their day. Students will receive a copy of their schedule in Launchpad/Morning Meeting and you do not need to print anything at home. The normal weekly bell schedule is found [here](#) and on our website if you would like to preview with your child.

Athletics

We are excited to start our year off with a full roster for all Fall Sports. Tryouts for each sport begin on August 30. Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Cross Country, Field Hockey, and Volleyball are the offerings for the beginning of the school year and we look forward to seeing our athletes join us. It is imperative that families download and print the [ATHLETIC HANDBOOK](#) that can be found [here](#) on the AMS website. Please read through the contract with your athlete and complete the health forms to be handed to the Coach at tryouts.

AMS Office hours

Our school office is ready to assist you in any way possible to make the transition to a new year at AMS. If the matter is not a pressing need you can always contact us via email at AMS@SAU39.ORG. We review these emails each day and will respond within 24 hours.

Our hours of operation will be 8 AM to 4 PM each day.

Please call (603) 673-8944 to reach someone in the office. We are happy to answer your questions or navigate you to the correct next step.

Buses

As part of the Reopening Plan and in accordance with Federal Requirements, masks will be required on all buses.

For the present time, students are only permitted to ride on their assigned buses. We will begin bus passes later in September. We are working with Butler Bus Company to accommodate this tradition of students being able to submit a note in the morning to take a different bus home for one day.

Laptops & Cases

All students will be issued a school laptop and charger on September 1st. These are the students' responsibility to bring to school each day, fully charged. Please help remind your student to charge their device overnight and bring it to school with them each day. Students may bring their power cords and charging stations will be available during lunch periods. Helping them to set up positive technology routines and expectations at home, will help them gain greater responsibility with experience.

A small case/neoprene sleeve will be provided to your student for their school assigned laptop. Please encourage your student to use this sleeve consistently to cover and protect the device.

Backpacks & Lockers

We will assign lockers this year to every student allowing them an opportunity to store their belongings each day. We will also allow students the choice to carry their backpacks throughout the day to minimize their need to access a locker and help with organization. However, we encourage students to use their lockers for materials they do not need to bring home or for a specific class.

Launchpad & Morning Meeting

Each morning your child will attend Morning Meeting in grade 5 or Launchpad in grades 6, 7 & 8. The mission of this time is to connect students and adults in a meaningful manner allowing all Eagles a greater ability to access their potential. This time offers a check-in and relationship building with an anchoring adult and peers each day. Launchpads are a mixed age group of 6,7,8th graders who will stay with the same anchoring adult throughout their time at AMS.

Free School Lunch & Breakfast

The Federal Government is now affording breakfast and lunch for all students. **If you qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch we ask that you still complete the appropriate paperwork so that we can access federal funds for other school services based on that data. This information affects our funding for federal grants, including our Title 1 summer programs and Special Education.**

We ask that you still speak with your child about A La Carte items which are **still a cost to you and not covered under the federal funds**. These items are offered at every lunch and are the 'fun' foods such as

ice cream, soft pretzels, chips, etc. Please talk to your child about the cost and how you would like them to access or not access these items which will affect your finances.

SAU #39 School District's Food Service Department offers a convenient, easy and secure online prepayment service to deposit money into your child's school meal account at any time. We are asking all parents whose students will be purchasing A La Cart items at school to open an online MySchoolBucks account. This secure online prepayment service allows parents to deposit money into their child's school meal account at any time. You can set up an account on your computer or phone [here](https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/getmain?requestAction=home) (<https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/getmain?requestAction=home>).

With this account:

- You can pay via debit, credit or echeck.
- Your student will be able to make a purchase immediately after funds are added.
- You can receive low balance emails.
- You will have the ability to print a copy of your child's eating history report.
- Balances from last year are carried over from school to school.

For questions, email remotesupport@sau39.org.

Wellness Policy

[School Board policy JLCF](#) states that all food served and provided for at school must follow the USDA guidelines. This includes foods served as part of a learning experience, celebration or other party event. If you have any questions about the policy or whether a snack can be sent in for students to share please reach out to the office.