

**2019-20**  
**AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION**  
**(603) 673-8944 / fax (603) 673-6774**  
**[www.sau39.org/ams](http://www.sau39.org/ams)**

Welcome to the Amherst Middle School! Coming to a new school can be both exciting and a little scary. It's hard to leave behind friends and familiar places, and you (and your parents) probably have lots of questions. We hope this information sheet answers some of those questions about your new school. Please also read the Student Handbook on our school web site for additional important information.

**AMS contains grades 5 to 8.** There are currently approximately 630 students. As a new student, you may be interested in knowing that we typically have between 20-40 new students enroll each fall and additional new students who join us throughout the year.

**Typical School Day:**

Buses begin arriving after 7:00 and drop off students at the circle between the middle school and high school. Students may remain on the playground until it is time to enter the building, or they may choose to go inside to one of a variety of areas in the building. At 7:25, students go to their lockers to drop off backpacks and coats and to gather their materials. All students should be in their classrooms by 7:30.

In 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, core academic classes take place in two blocks lasting an hour and 30 minutes each. One is a STEM block for Math and Science, and the other is a Humanities block for Reading/Language Arts and Social Studies. Both grades begin the day with a 20 minute Morning Meeting time, and also have two iCAN (individualized Competency Achievements Needs) periods—one for STEM and one for Humanities, two periods of integrated arts or “specials,” a 20 minute recess, and a lunch.

In 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, there are four periods of core academic classes (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies), a period of EAGLE Block (extension, enrichment or intervention activities), two periods of specials, and a lunch. Core periods in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade last approximately an hour. Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade start the day with a 10 minute homeroom period, while 8<sup>th</sup> graders begin in specials classes.

Specials classes are 40 minutes long in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 45 minutes in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Specials are scheduled on a 6 day rotation. Each day we are in school is numbered 1 through 6, and most specials classes meet two or three days out of the six. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, some specials meet just one day out of six. Some specials are for part of the year, and others last all year.

The school day ends at 2:19. Students who are staying after school for extra help, to use the library, or for any school activity are eligible to ride one of the two late busses, but must get a pass from their teacher or other supervising staff member. The late buses leave at 4:00 from the front of the middle school and have central drop-off points in Amherst and Mont Vernon. Bus routes are available on our school web site.

**Late Starts:**

Once a month, usually on the second Tuesday of the month, we have a late start day. Students arrive to school two hours later than usual, and the staff uses that time for professional development activities. Please check the school calendar for specific dates.

**Lunch and Recess:**

Students in each grade eat together for a 25 minute lunch. Lunch for grade 5 is from 10:40 to 11:05, and grade 6 lunch is from 11:05 – 11:30. Grade 7 eats from 12:10 to 12:35. Grade 8 lunch is from 11:45 to 12:10. There are at least two choices of hot lunch, and individual items such as milk, yogurt, juice, salad and sandwiches are available for purchase. Approximate cost for lunch is \$3.00. Students may put money into their lunch accounts and withdraw money from those accounts or pay with cash. Of course, some students prefer to bring their own lunches. After cleaning up their places, students in grades 7 and 8 may go outside for the last 10 minutes of lunch. Fifth and 6<sup>th</sup> graders remain in the cafeteria for the entire lunch period but have a 20 minute recess either right after (5<sup>th</sup>) or before (6<sup>th</sup>) lunch.

**After School Activities:**

There are many things to do after school! Some students arrange with their teachers to stay for extra help or to make up work. Others go to the Library to study and do homework on their own. Some students can qualify to participate in the Homework Help Program. Other after school activities that have been offered in the past include: Art Club, Theater Club, Chess Club, Computer Club, STEAM, Word Games, Wizards and Warriors, Math Counts, Technology Club, Crafts, Knitting Club, Gardening Club, Newspaper, Student Leadership and Service, Yearbook, and intramural programs in floor hockey, field hockey, volleyball, ultimate Frisbee, whiffle ball, gaga ball, and basketball. These activities are open to everyone and provide new students with an excellent opportunity to meet other kids while having fun.

We also have interscholastic teams for Girls Field Hockey, Boys and Girls Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Boys and Girls Basketball, Cheerleading, Wrestling, Boys and Girls Lacrosse, Boys Baseball and Girls Softball. Some of these teams are open only to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, others to students in grades 6 through 8. These teams all require try-outs. There are an interscholastic Cross Country Team in the fall and a Track Team in the spring for grades 5 through 8. These teams are open to all who would like to participate. There are also dances throughout the year that are held in the school Cafeteria for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, as well as two socials each year for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

Students in grades 7 and 8 may also be eligible to become members of the Amherst Eagles Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. NJHS members are selected by a Faculty Council based on evidence of high academic achievement, leadership, service, character and citizenship.

**Grade level descriptions:**

Students grow and change a great deal between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and we do our best to address their developing physical, social, emotional, and academic needs at each grade level. Both grades 5 and 6 are composed of three teams consisting of two teachers. One teaches math and science (STEM), and the other teaches reading/language arts and social studies (Humanities). Grades 7 and 8 have two teams consisting of four teachers, with each teaching one of the core subjects. Each student is assigned to a homeroom on the team, but core classes may be with any students on the team.

In addition to having the team teachers for core academic subjects, students have additional teachers for specials. All students have classes in Art, Music (band, chorus or general music), Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS), Innovation and Design (I&D), Computers, Physical Education, and Health. Beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade students may also take French or Spanish. Fifth graders have three additional specials classes: Engineering Practices, Skills for Success, and Library Skills. Specials classes cross teams and may be with any student in the grade.

**Grade 5:**

The fifth grade classrooms are located on the lower level in the same “pod” in rooms 1-6. Grade 5 teachers focus on basic learning skills in order to develop good work habits as well as academic skills.

| <b>Team 5-1</b>                           | <b>Team 5-2</b>                        | <b>Team 5-3</b>                          |
|---|--|--|
| Jennifer LaRoche<br>(RLA/SS)<br>Room 2    | Colleen McCarthy<br>(RLA/SS)<br>Room 3 | Marilyn Menning<br>(RLA/SS)<br>Room 5    |
| Erika Downing<br>(Math/Science)<br>Room 1 | Darby Shaw<br>(Math/Science)<br>Room 4 | Barb Terhune<br>(Math/Science)<br>Room 6 |

**Grade 6:**

All grade 6 classrooms are housed in the newer wing. Five classrooms are on the lower level, and one is on the upper level but just a flight of stairs away from its partner classroom. Grade 6 students will attend Environmental School for one week in the spring.

| <b>Team 6-1</b>                               | <b>Team 6-2</b>                            | <b>Team 6-3</b>                            |
|---|--|--|
| Sue Nedelman<br>(RLA/SS)<br>Room 104          | Ben Rodon<br>(RLA/SS)<br>Room 103          | Jayma Robinson<br>(RLA/SS)<br>Room 102     |
| Chris Estabrook<br>(Math/Science)<br>Room 100 | Jill Camitta<br>(Math/Science)<br>Room 204 | Grant Dustin<br>(Math/Science)<br>Room 101 |

**Grade 7:**

Grade 7 classrooms are located on the upper floor. Seventh grade events include the Hunger Banquet, Project Safeguard (a health and wellness program for students and parents), and the Global Science Initiative (GSI).

| <b>Team 7-1</b>                             | <b>Team 7-2</b>                        |
|---|--|
| Josh Cooley (Lang. Arts)<br>Room 32         | Cheryl Allison (Lang. Arts)<br>Room 31 |
| Debbie Hinrichs (Social Studies)<br>Room 33 | Kara Abate (Social Studies)<br>Room 34 |
| Corey Cranney (Math)<br>Room 30             | Geoff Bly (Math)<br>Room 29            |
| Amanda Rogers (Science)<br>Room 203         | Tracey Gagne (Science)<br>Room 202     |

**Grade 8:**

Grade 8 classrooms are also on the upper floor. Eighth graders attend a week of Environmental School at Poland Springs, Maine. Team 8-1 will attend from September 30 – October 4, and team 8-2 will attend from Oct. 7-11. Forms and information about 8<sup>th</sup> grade environmental school are available on our website under the Academic Programs dropdown menu. Eighth graders also participate in a mock trial unit as part of their social studies curriculum.

| <b>Team 8-1</b>                               | <b>Team 8-2</b>                            |
|---|--|
| Bryan Dine (Lang. Arts)<br>Room 22            | Anne Rocchio-Dodge (Lang. Arts)<br>Room 25 |
| Barbara McCormick (Social Studies)<br>Room 23 | Teri Stack (Social Studies)<br>Room 24     |
| Heather Hector (Math)<br>Room 21              | Vicky Leknes (Math)<br>Room 26             |
| Kelly Kalenik (Science)<br>Room 200           | Geoff Griffiths (Science)<br>Room 201      |

**Placement Tests:**

Incoming students in grades 7 and 8 will take math assessments to assist in placement.

**Support Services:**

There is an extensive support system available at AMS. This comprises our principal, assistant principals, learning specialists, speech and occupational therapists, academic and behavioral intervention programs, school psychologists, school social worker, and school counselors. The school counselors are assigned to specific grade levels and follow the students as they progress through the middle school. They offer in-class guidance programs, counseling groups, and individual and crisis counseling. Please contact your counselor if you have any concerns. (See contact information below.)

**For Parents:**

AMS is committed to home-school communication. To that end, there are a number of ways for parents and students to stay connected to our school. Our school web site ([www.sau39.org/ams](http://www.sau39.org/ams)) contains a wealth of information, including the school calendar, which lists important dates and events, and the student handbook outlining rules and policies. Parents will receive regular communications from the school about what's happening in various grades and departments, as well as information about upcoming events and activities. All students receive an agenda book to record homework, assessments, and other activities. Open house in September (10<sup>th</sup> for grades 5 & 6, 11<sup>th</sup> for grades 7 & 8) focuses on curriculum. Monthly PTA meetings are typically followed by a presentation or discussion on a variety of topics. Our library also has an excellent parent resource center. If you need to get in touch with someone, all staff members have voice mail extensions and e-mail addresses, which are available on our website. Typically, it is easier to reach classroom teachers by e-mail than voicemail.

There is a lot to learn about a new school! If you have questions, please ask your teacher, counselor or fellow students. We are all here to help you have the best learning experience possible and a happy, successful year.

**School Counselors:**

|   |            |                            |
|---|------------|----------------------------|
| Grade 6 and Grade 5 Downing/LaRoche team:                       | Dan Farina | x 7130, dfarina@sprise.com |
| Grade 7 and Grade 5 McCarthy/Shaw<br>and Menning/Terhune teams: | Maggie Kim | x 7106, mkim@sprise.com    |
| Grade 8:  | Deb Dionne | x 7129, ddionne@sprise.com |