

2020-21
AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION
(603) 673-8944 / fax (603) 673-6774
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. This year is an especially challenging one for switching schools. We hope this information sheet answers some of your questions about your new school, but what you will experience with us this fall is certainly not the way we typically operate, and some of the information presented here may change as the school year proceeds. 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 625 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. All students should be in their classrooms by 7:30.

From 7:30 to 8:00, 5th grade students will go to their classrooms for morning meeting while students in grades 6 through 8 attend their Launchpad groups. These are groups of approximately 15 students, who will meet each morning with a teacher to start the day. Launchpad includes announcements, check-ins, and community-building activities. This year, all grades will have a one hour period of EAGLE Block (extension, enrichment or intervention activities) after morning meeting or Launchpad.

In 5th and 6th grade, core academic classes take place in two blocks. One is a STEM block for Math and Science, and the other is a Humanities block for Reading/Language Arts and Social Studies. In 7th and 8th grade, there are four core academic classes (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies).

This year, all students will have one day a week of integrated arts or "specials" classes. Specials typically include Music, Art, Family and Consumer Sciences, Innovation and Design, Health, Physical Education, Computers, and World Language. Things may look a little different for specials this year but all students will have most of these classes at some point during the year.

The school day ends at 2:24 this year. During a typical year, 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. For the start of this year, there will be no after school activities or late bus.

Late Starts:

During a typical school year, 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. This year, we are not planning to have late starts, at least for the beginning of the year.

Lunch and Recess:

This year, all students will have lunch in their classrooms and a recess period sometime between 11:00 and 12:30. Lunch will be available for purchase.

Typically, there are at least two choices of hot lunch, cold lunch options, and individual items such as milk, yogurt, juice, salad and sandwiches available for purchase. This year the lunch options will be more limited but there will still be at least a couple choices for lunch. The cost for a standard lunch at AMS 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 School Activities:

Although after school activities will not be available when we begin school, there are many things to look forward to after school when we return to our normal routines. 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: Student Leadership and Service, Theater Club, Chess Club, Innovation and Design Club, Maker Club, Wizards and Warriors, Art Club, Zentangle, Yearbook, Young Chefs, Jazz Band, and intramural programs in flag football, basketball, floor hockey, volleyball, and gaga ball. 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 7th and 8th 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 6th, 7th and 8th graders, as well as two socials each year for 5th and 6th 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 5th and 8th 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 typically 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. This year, teaching teams will look a little different in order to allow for flexibility as our circumstances change.

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.

5th Humanities (Rooms 4, 5, 6)	Jennifer LaRoche (RLA/SS)	Molly Norton (RLA/SS)	Marilyn Menning (RLA/SS)	Colleen McCarthy (RLA/SS)
5th STEM (Rooms 1, 2, 3)	Erika Downing (Math/Science)	Amanda Rogers (Math/Science)	Barb Terhune (Math/Science)	Jess Oltman Math/Science)

Grade 6:

All 6th grade classrooms are housed in the newer wing. Humanities classes are on the lower level, and STEM classes are on the upper level.

6th Humanities (Rooms 102, 103, 104)	Susan Nedelman (RLA/SS)	Ben Rodon (RLA/SS)	Jayma Robinson (RLA/SS)	Tiffany Maher (RLA/SS)
6th STEM (Rooms 202, 203, 204)	Christine Estabrook (Math/Science)	Jill Camitta (Math/Science)	Grant Dustin (Math/Science)	Karen Hujsak Math/Science)

Grades 7 and 8:

Grade 7 science classrooms are located on the first floor of the newer wing. All other 7th grade classrooms are upstairs in the main part of the building. All grade 8 classes are on the upper floor.

<u>7/8 Language Art</u> (Rooms 31, 32, 33, 34, 35)	<u>7/8 Social Studies</u> (Rooms 23, 24, 25, 26)
Josh Cooley	Debbie Hinrichs
Cheryl Allison	Susan Sprinkle
Bryan Dine	Barb McCormick
Anne Rocchio-Dodge	Danielle Service
Tasha Tower	Steve Lebel

<u>7/8 Math</u> (Rooms 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30)	<u>7/8 Science</u> (Rooms 100, 101, 200, 201)
Corey Cranney	Kelly Blais
Michael Lautenschlager	Beth Penney
Heather Hector	Alida Brown
Vicky Leknes	Geoff Griffiths
Karen Urbanik	Corey White

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, behavior specialist, 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) 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. Our school district also uses Nixle to convey emergency and other information. Instructions on how to sign up for Nixle alerts are available on the SAU website: <https://www.sau39.org/domain/530>. All students receive an agenda book to record homework, assessments, and other activities. 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:

Grades 5 and 7: Dan Farina x 7130, dfarina@sprise.com

Grades 6 and 8: Maggie Kim x 7106, mkim@sprise.com