



August 10, 2015

Dear Osprey Parents, Students and Supporters,

Welcome to the 2015-16 school year! We hope you are enjoying the final stretch of your summer vacation and we look forward to welcoming you back to campus in just a couple of weeks. Animas High School continues to thrive as we enter our seventh year of providing rigorous project-based learning to prepare our students for college and post-secondary success. We recognize that your choice to be part of our school community plays a critical role in our success and we appreciate that you have chosen to be an Osprey. The year ahead will provide opportunities for every student to be challenged and supported, and we are excited to work with each one of you in your individual journey through high school.

With Sean Woytek as our new Head of School, we enter the new school year with a reinvigorated commitment to academic and cultural excellence. We hope you will join us for our **Head of School Reception on Thursday, August 13th from 5:30 to 7:30pm** at the **Powerhouse Science Center**. Sean will share his State of the School address, as well as his vision for the school year ahead and the event will provide a chance for all of us to welcome him aboard.

We're hoping that this letter will contain answers to logistical questions you may have as the start of school draws near. That said, we encourage you to reach out if you need more information about anything at any time.

Student Orientation

All students will participate in orientation activities before academic classes begin on Thursday, August 27th. Our **Student Orientation** program is designed to help students prepare for the academic year ahead, set goals, have fun and strengthen relationships with peers and teachers.

9th Grade Orientation is three days long--Monday, August 24th through Wednesday the 26th. Students should plan to be at AHS by 8:25 each day; release will be at 3:15 on Monday and Tuesday and 2:00 on Wednesday, from the AHS campus. Monday, the 9th grade will travel by bus to Bayfield where they will participate in a series of team-building activities led by AHS Founder Phil Bryson, whose organization, On the Edge, has been facilitating leadership programs for over 20 years (<http://www.ontheedge.com>). Activities will include low and high ropes course elements, following the principle of challenge by choice. Wednesday afternoon,

9th grade students will participate in a revived AHS tradition--the Animas Regatta--where they will test out boats their advisory groups will build, crossing the Animas River at 32nd street. *We plan to revive the Animas Regatta as long as the Animas River is proclaimed to be safe to enter by August 26th. We are working on an alternate plan, in case the river is still unusable on August 26th and will keep you informed as plans evolve. **Please read look for a permission slip that will be sent to you separately within the next week; when you receive it, complete it and bring it to the first day of Orientation.***

10th Grade Orientation is two days long--Tuesday, August 25th through Wednesday the 26th. Students should plan to be at AHS by 8:25 each day; release will be at 3:15 on Tuesday and 2:00 on Wednesday, from the AHS campus. Sophomores will travel to Bayfield on Tuesday to work with AHS Founder Phil Bryson of On the Edge. As with the 9th grade, the team-building activities will include low and high ropes course elements and will follow the principle of challenge by choice. ***Please read look for a permission slip that will be sent to you separately within the next week; when you receive it, complete it and bring it to the first day of Orientation.***

11th Grade Orientation is on **Wednesday the 26th** from 8:25 to 2:00 and will include a variety of activities including cheering on the 9th graders for the Animas Regatta with the whole school.

12th Grade Orientation is also on **Wednesday the 26th**, and will begin with a new tradition borrowed from High Tech High: Senior Sunrise! The details are a surprise but ***we'll need ALL seniors to meet at 6:30am at the base of the ABC trail on the corner of E. 10th street and E. 6th Avenue.*** It's early, we know, but we promise this will be a fun and special morning for our Class of 2016. We will provide coffee and juice but please bring your own reusable mug. The seniors will come back to campus for the day and will also help cheer on the 9th graders at the Animas Regatta. Their day ends at 2:00pm as well.

What to Wear and Bring for Student Orientation

All students should wear comfortable, school-appropriate clothes (no short shorts), layers for variable weather and sturdy, closed-toed walking shoes for each day of Student Orientation; please bring a backpack, sack lunch, sun protection, a rain jacket, water bottle, small notebook and pen.

Students will receive their class schedules during Orientation--9th graders on Tuesday the 25th, and all others on Wednesday the 26th. Additionally, 9th graders and new 10th or 11th grade students will learn which teacher will serve as their advisor on the first day of Student Orientation. Questions about class schedules can be directed to our Registrar Maureen Truax at registrar@animashighschool.com. Our **Bell Schedule** is attached here; there is just one minor change from last year's schedule, as we have moved PEAK Meetings, our all community meetings, to every other week right before lunch.

All students will be asked to sign the **2015-16 Student Contract** during the first week of school. We use the Student Contract as a way to communicate about community expectations that support our Culture of Excellence. A copy of the Student Contract is attached here as well for your reference.

Parent/Guardian Orientation

We recognize that it's important for our Osprey families to have the information and inspiration they need at the start of the year as well, and so we will host a Parent Orientation at school on **Thursday, August 27th from 5:30 to 7:30pm** where families will have the opportunity to meet teachers, learn about their student's classes and gather answers to questions they may have about our programs. ***All new and returning families are strongly encouraged to attend.***

The **Annual All School Picnic**, an informal gathering and potluck supper for Animas families, will be on **Friday, September 18th from 5:00 to 7:00pm at Buckley Park**. Please plan to join us for this celebration of the start of the year!

School Supplies

We do not distribute a uniform school supply list for families at the start of the year. When classes begin on Thursday, August 27th, teachers will communicate with students about what they'd like them to have for their particular classes. Please consider doing your school supply shopping at the Durango Office Depot; when you mention at the register that you'd like a percentage of your purchase to go to Animas High School, they will make a donation to our school.

Transportation

We are pleased to be continuing our partnership with Durango 9R School District to provide transportation for AHS families. Students may board their neighborhood 9R bus in the morning and transfer at Durango High School to the **AHS Hub Bus**, which leaves DHS at 8:05 to take them to AHS in time for our 8:25 start. The AHS Hub Bus also provides transportation to DHS at the end of our school day at 3:15, so our students can participate in DHS after-school activities or hop on 9R busses to return them home. We are not able to offer the AHS Hub Bus on Monday afternoons, as 9R schools have early release. Please plan for alternate transportation on those afternoons.

AHS Hub Bus service will begin on Tuesday, August 25th, and any student who plans to ride on the bus must complete the Bus Rider Rules form from 9R (attached) to Laurel Rodd in the AHS Main Office before he or she will be allowed to use this service.

Students are welcome to drive to school and are encouraged to carpool. All student parking will be in the lower lot this year, as we need to reserve all upper lot parking spaces for our staff, volunteers and visitors. We will distribute parking permits in the first week of school after students sign their parking contracts.

Lunch Program and Economic Data Survey

Once again, we are glad to partner with locally-owned restaurants to offer catered lunch for \$6 daily. This year's caterers include Serious Texas Bar-B-Q (Monday), Cuckoo's Chicken House (Tuesday), Grassburger (Wednesday), East by Southwest (Thursday) and Zia Taqueria (Friday). Lunches must be ordered and prepaid online by 9:30am of that day; more details on how this works can be found here: <http://animashighschool.com/lunch-orders/>

Catered lunch will begin on Monday, August 31st, so students should plan to bring a sack lunch for the first week of school. Seniors may leave campus for lunch; we have a closed campus policy for all other students.

Our catered lunch program relies upon parent volunteer support. ***If you are available to help serve lunch one day a week for the fall semester, we would love your help!*** Generally, the commitment requires being available to come into school from about 11:00 to 12:30. This is a great way to support our school community and get to know our students. If you are able to volunteer in this role, please contact Laurel Rodd at mainoffice@animashighschool.com or 247-2474 x2306.

Last year, a student-led initiative called Feeding Our Ospreys Daily (FOOD) helped us to initiate some free and reduced lunch options for students who qualified. The student body committed money they raised through the annual Desert Sun Coffee Fundraiser to subsidize the cost of lunch for those who need it. These efforts will continue this year, and we are working to grow the funds available to provide students with free or reduced lunches through fundraising.

In light of that effort, and to support a healthy operating budget for our school, ***we are asking every Osprey family to complete the Economic Data Survey (attached) so we can ascertain the percentage of our student population that qualifies for free or reduced lunch.*** Our school is state funded per pupil and we qualify for more state dollars for each free and reduced lunch student, allowing us to offer more resources including the lunch program to those in need. The information obtained from the survey will also offer demographic information on our student body and allow us to apply for grants, increasing our operating dollars. We will have an ice cream social on September 18th if we receive surveys back from the majority of our students.

Participating in Durango High School Athletics and Activities

Thanks to our partnership with Durango High School, many of our students play on DHS athletic teams and participate in other DHS after-school activities and we have deep admiration for our Osprey-Demon student-athletes and thespians.

Durango High School Boys Golf begins on August 10th and all other fall sports begin August 17th. Students must bring a completed Physical/Conduct Form, Medical Consent Form and participation fee (\$112 for AHS students) to the DHS Activities Office (*not to AHS*) in order to receive a red card, which makes them eligible for tryouts. The DHS Activities Office will be open

from 3:00 to 6:00pm August 10th through 12th for fall sports and the deadline for receiving fall sports red cards is August 12th. The DHS School Based Health Center is offering sports physicals for \$25. They are open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00 to 4:00 and you can reach them at (970) 375-3832.

For contact information for DHS coaches, links to forms and more please visit <http://dhs.durangoschools.org/fall-sports>; you will also find information about DHS fall, winter and spring sports here.

Finally, we have attached the **2015-16 School Calendar** here for you. It can also be found on the AHS website (animashighschool.com), along with lots of other helpful resources for your family. Also attached is our **Student and Family Handbook** which outlines our policies, procedures and expectations in more detail.

Thank you for your attention to all of these details! If you have any questions about anything covered here or other beginning-of-the-school-year matters, please don't hesitate to contact Assistant Head of School Libby Cowles, who writes our weekly newsletter, News from the Nest; she will point you in the right direction. Please also let Libby know if you haven't been receiving the newsletter; you can reach her at libby.cowles@animashighschool.com.

Here's to a great year ahead, Ospreys!