



AHS Parent Newsletter: Friday, Feb. 9

Principal's Message

Winter sports are wrapping up this week and playoffs start next week for the teams that make it to NCS. On Monday, our women's soccer team had their senior night. Last night, I attended our women's basketball senior night where the Hornets defeated Castro Valley. Tonight, Mr. Lee will be attending the men's basketball senior night and I will be off to Estuary Field for the men's soccer senior night. Spring sports started their tryouts and practices this past Monday. The teams are soon to be set and their seasons will be in full swing in a few weeks. All spring athletes' parents should attend the Spring Sports meeting on Monday, February 12, at 6:30 pm in Kofman Auditorium.

AHS Art and Culture

And now, a bit of AHS Art and Culture. CTE Multimedia Teacher Andrea Szeto shared a slideshow of surreal compositions her students created using Adobe design tools. Be sure to check out the extremely interesting images that her students produced! [Get SURReal! - AHS Multimedia Art](#)

Assembly

Every year, students choose a topic of importance to them and create a student assembly addressing that topic. In years past, they have presented on Human Trafficking, Black Lives Matter, Gender and Consent to name just a few. Today, they presented an assembly on Mental Health. The assembly had testimonials submitted by students anonymously to be read by members of the assembly committee, a panel made up of mental health professionals from the School Based Health Center, and videos from the Kevin Love Mental Health Foundation. Here is a link to the video for you to watch; [mental health assembly video](#). You may wish to check in with your child about the assembly and any feelings they may be experiencing around their own mental health. As always, we offered an opt out room for students who did not wish to attend the assembly or who wanted to leave during the assembly.

Extra-Curricular Events – Attendance

I don't do a lot of social media for my own mental health, but from time to time, items are shared with me that I feel I might want to comment on for the purpose of clarification. The first item is the attendance and behavior expectations for extra curricular events such as proms, picnics, and other activities. These events are privileges, not rights. Your child's education is their right. Extracurricular activities are reserved for those students who meet the expectations. For our part, we sponsor the events and communicate out to students and families the expectations for students to attend these events. We follow the Department of Education's lead when we determine our benchmarks for attendance. In terms of behavior, students earning a suspension lose an activity. This is stated in the student handbook and was presented to students at the beginning of the year

assemblies followed up with parent square reminders. It's attendance that is most contested by students and parents. The state determines a student to be chronically absent once their attendance falls below 90%. The state does not differentiate excused and unexcused absences, but rather anything below 90%.

AHS has followed this lead with a bit of alteration that favors the student who has less than ideal attendance. We have determined the benchmark as the number of times missing a period by counting back the total number of school days (not block periods) from an event to a start date, either the first day of the school year or the first day of the second semester, whichever favors the student. For this year's prom, it is 6 or more period absences for the semester to any period in a student's schedule or 16 or more period absences since the first day of school. We do not factor in days missed due to COVID nor multiple consecutive days in the hospital or consecutive days out with a doctor's note. Notes that say that a student may need to miss a day here and there for whatever reason are not factored in and we assume that the student needs to consider this when they opt to miss school for other possible reasons that will count as part of the 6 or more days. These benchmarks are easily met by the vast majority of students and others will be permitted using the previous sentence's criteria in considering exceptions. Where there is an issue between the school and some, is for students who have excessive absences, both excused and unexcused.

In addition to absences, please remember that students exceeding 10 tardies total across their schedule since January 8, will also be ineligible for extra-curricular activities. I've heard many an argument/rationale regarding the reason for a tardy, but with a cushion of 10, I sit comfortably with this expectation. Also, students are assigned detentions to be served in the cafeteria, where they can eat or do work, during lunch. We do not interfere with their afterschool activities. Students with unserved detentions, also find themselves ineligible. Those are presently posted by student Id. number for students to review should they need to make-up any unserved detentions so that they may, hopefully, still participate in the privilege of an extra-curricular activities.

Grading Changes

Also online, there has been discussions about a change in the grading that is coming to AUSD. Some people have simplified this discussion to imply that students are earning credit or points when they do not submit any work. The intent of the grading change is to create 5 equal bands of grades. The present system has 4 equal bands of grades with A - D each getting 10 points or 10% of the total, then there is one grade, F, that gets valued at 50 points or 50% of the total. The new system attempts to change this valuation for the F grade making it equal to the other 4 grades. Our AERIES system, however, is not designed for a 5 equal grade band system so a board policy was enacted to create equal bands. The only way to create 5 equal bands is to make 50 the bottom of the bottom band and so a point of 50 - 59 would still equals an F. Such a system exists for the College Board in the grading of AP exams of 1-5, and AUSD is just trying to create a similar system for grades. I assume that once we upgrade our computer records system in the future, there will hopefully be a way to implement a grading system with equal grading bands.

One comment online said that this just came to the knowledge of teachers. I want to let you know that AHS teachers were visited by district office personnel last spring to let us know that the board

would be considering this new policy this school year. We also dedicated a half day to the discussion and explanation of the proposed change at our professional development day back in August. In addition, I let our department heads know that the AUSD school board approved the new policy in the past few months. That said, a comment claiming that this was new information to the AUSD community does not stand with the evidence presented.

Reminder – President’s Week

A reminder that next week is a short week of only 4 days before the President’s week off. There is no school next Friday, February 16.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may email me at rithurnburn@alamedaunifed.org or you can call the school at (510) 337 – 7022 and I will try to address them.

Robert Ithurnburn
Hornet Pride!



Weekly Bulletin

Saturday, February 10

- 8:00am Wrestling: Women All Level WACC Championship Castro Valley HS
8:00am Wrestling: Men's All Level WACC Championship Castro Valley HS

Monday, February 12

Periods 0,MM,1-6

- 8:30-9:12am Meaningful Monday Seminar 6th Period classrooms
6:30pm Spring Family Sports Meeting Kofman Auditorium

Tuesday, February 13

Periods 0,1,2,5,SMART,6

Wednesday, February 14 ❤️

Periods 0,1,3,4,6

- 5:30pm School Site Council Online – teams link

Thursday, February 15

Periods 0,2,3,4,SMART,5

Friday, February 16 – No school

Presidents' Week Break – No Classes: February 16 – February 23

Meaningful Monday, February 12
(start with 6th Period Classes)