

OUR SCHOOLS IN ACTION

Back to School Issue 2024

Welcome Back

The first day of school for all Amherst Central School District students will be Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2024. This will be a full day of instruction. Breakfast and lunches will be served.

Before & After School Care

Amherst CSD partners with Just For Kids for before school care at Windermere Boulevard Elementary School and after school care at Windermere Boulevard and Smallwood Drive Elementary Schools. All program information, registration and payment is done through the Just for Kids website at www.justforkidsonline.org/amherst-csd. Pricing is calculated when you register your child as it is based on what you enroll for, how many children are enrolled, and potential other discounts.

Bus & Classroom Placements

Parents will be able to access elementary classroom placement information, as well as transportation information, through the Aspen Parent Portal under the Classroom Placement/Transportation tab. When the information is released on the portal, parents will receive an email. Parents who do not have an Aspen account or have forgotten your login ID and/or password, contact your child's school. Current users can access the portal through the ACSD website. If you have any questions regarding bus drop off, pickup time or locations, please call transportation at 716-362-3045.

A New Website Look

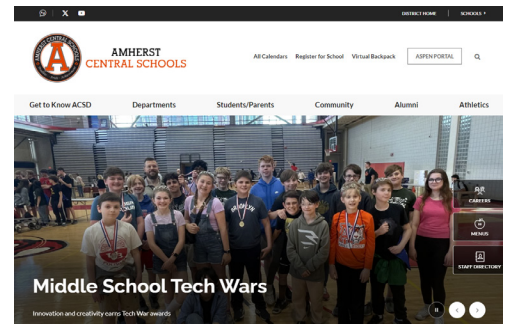
The Amherst Central School District website is one of the primary communication tools we use to showcase good news, events and information about the district, our schools and the athletics department.

We are happy to share that we have launched a new website design with features that make navigating the site easy and intuitive. The district homepage is still found at amherstschoools.org and by using the Schools dropdown from the header area you can navigate to the homepages for Athletics, Amherst Central High School, Amherst Middle School, Windermere Boulevard Elementary and Smallwood Drive Elementary.

Some of our most popular pages, such as menus, staff directory, careers, transportation and central registration, are linked right on the homepages. We have maintained a similar heading and page organization from our last web template, so you should be able to find information quickly. To assist in navigating the site, the Search bar can be accessed from any interior page.

We know that the calendar feature is important for our families. By using the All Calendars link at the top of each page, you can filter events from the district, buildings, Board of Education, Family Support Center and music department into one calendar. If you only want a building calendar, that's all you select. Athletic events are found on the athletic site. There is a search feature available for the calendars.

We are pleased with the new features of the site and anticipate you will be also.



Welcoming A New Principal

Marcie Pascual was named principal at Windermere Boulevard Elementary School, effective July 15, 2024. Her appointment was approved by the Board of Education June 4, 2024. An educator since 2002, she has broad experience developing, collaborating and facilitating on educational topics ranging from strategic planning, curriculum development, special education, and data driven strategies to improve learning outcomes.

Her administrative experience with the Cleveland Hill UFSD began in 2016 as the elementary assistant principal, a role she held for three years. In 2019 she was named Cleveland Hill Elementary School principal. Prior to Cleveland Hill, she was a special education teacher at Windermere Boulevard Elementary School for 12 years.



AMHERST CENTRAL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER



Where mental health matters and strong families succeed

Family Support Center Events

Throughout the school year, the Amherst CSD Family Support Center sponsors workshops and events for families. They are advertised in the FSC newsletter that is emailed to all families and posted on the FSC web page.

The center's goal is to foster family communication and well-being, healthy youth development and success in school. If students are struggling with issues such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem/self-image, substance use, family conflicts, peer relationships or serious school academic or behavior concerns, the Family Support Center can help. Our program can assist parents with getting their children and family the most appropriate, affordable support in a timely manner.

In order to accomplish this, there is a spectrum of services available, including:

- Individual and family counseling
- Support groups
- Parenting groups
- Referrals and information to outside community resources
- Wellness activities

FSC Art Contest

Each year the Family Support Center hosts an art contest open to all Amherst District students. This year's art contest theme is "Nature: How It Impacts our Physical & Mental Health". Students are asked to submit artwork to their art teacher by Monday, Nov. 4, 2024. They can use any art materials and the artwork size should be 8.5 x 11. All submitted artwork will be displayed at a Gallery Night on Nov. 19, where the winners will be selected. The winning artwork will be framed and displayed at the center.



Best Music Community

The Amherst Central School District has been named a 2024 NAMM Best Communities in Music Education. This marks the 8th consecutive year that our district-wide music department has received this award. The Best Communities in Music Education award acknowledges districts across the United States for their commitment and support of music education, and their efforts to ensure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education. The schools and communities recognized by this award demonstrate a commitment to ensuring music learning opportunities are available for every student and provide an example for other communities to follow.

Community Education Camps & Survey

Currently the Amherst Central School District's Community Education program offers sports camps for students in grades 1 - 12. We would like to gauge interest from the community regarding future programming for adults. We have developed a survey to gather feedback. It can be found online at amherstschoools.org on the Community Education webpage.

We are offering a youth lacrosse camp in September. We also offer fall and winter youth programs in basketball and wrestling. All registration is done online.



Virtual Backpack

Our district uses a virtual backpack to make flyers from non-profit groups, community groups and intergovernmental agencies available to our families. We post the flyers on the Virtual Backpack webpage, rather than send those paper flyers home to families. It's a cost savings for our district, as well as it allows families access to the flyers 24/7. The flyers are arranged by month and accessible throughout the school year. We do not post fundraising information from outside agencies.

Staff Service Awards

Amherst Central School District honored its 45-, 35-, 30- and 25-year employees who have made significant contributions to the district through longevity of service.

Judith Gersic from Windermere Boulevard School was honored for 45 years of service. Celebrating 35 years of service are Mark Doran from District Office and Paul Spielberger from Amherst Central High School.

Recognized for 30 years of service are Gary Kratz from Smallwood Drive School; Heather Rogers from Windermere Boulevard School; Regina DiMaria and Beth Taylor from Amherst Middle School; Mark Rapp from Amherst Central High School.

Celebrating 25 years of service are Michael Belle-Isle from District Office; Kevin Fildes and Jeffrey Palmer from Amherst Middle School; Mary Ellen Goergen, Mitchell Maxick, Daniela Wolfe, Tammy Wrzosek-Kline from Amherst Central High School, Jennifer Diodate and Patricia Tripi from Smallwood Drive Elementary and Susan Neira from Windermere Boulevard Elementary.

Capital Project Update: Summer 2024 Work

The district's capital improvement project kicked off this summer with Phase 1 work at Smallwood Drive Elementary School and Windermere Boulevard Elementary School. Project updates are posted on the Capital Project webpage at amherstschools.org.

At Smallwood Drive, work started in May to relocate and redesign the tennis courts into a multi-purpose play area, remove an existing basketball court and construct a new bus loop exiting off North Burbank Drive. These projects are expected to be complete by the start of school. Inside Smallwood, a number of upgrades and improvements were made to interior door locksets, exterior security cameras, exterior building lights, drinking fountains and a hot water tank replacement.

Interior work at Windermere Boulevard included intrusion locksets on interior doors, stairwell door and hardware improvements, additional exterior security cameras, upgrade to exterior building lighting, drinking fountain replacements, classroom and bathroom HVAC renovations, classroom sink/cabinetry and bathroom renovations and boiler roof deck replacement.

At both elementary schools, the auditorium stage rigging, HVAC, LED stage lighting and stage sound system improvements will be completed by October. The pool filtration system at Windermere will be replaced with an October finish date.



Smallwood Drive Bus Loop



Smallwood Drive Auditorium



Smallwood Drive Multi-Purpose Play Area



Windermere Boulevard Bathroom



Windermere Boulevard Auditorium



Windermere Boulevard Classroom HVAC

Attendance Matters

Attending school every day helps students learn and stay on track. Students need to attend school to achieve in school. When students miss school, they miss out on academics, clubs and so much more. Families can monitor and support their children in many ways to help improve attendance.



- Help your child get into the habit of going to school and learn the value of regular routines.
- Teach your child that attending school is non-negotiable unless they are truly sick.
- Build relationships with other families and friends to discuss how you can help each other (e.g. drop off or pick up children, baby sit, etc.).
- Encourage your child to participate in before or after-school activities. Students who are involved at school usually enjoy school more and are more likely to want to attend every day.
- If possible, schedule doctor and dentist appointments for before or after school.
- Call your school or visit the online Parent Portal to check your child's attendance and see how many days they have missed – if they miss more than nine days in a year, they are at greater risk for failure.
- Schedule vacations for days your children don't have school.

New Principal

(continued from page 1)

During that time, she took on the additional roles of summer scholars program director, mentor teacher, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools trainer and ELA elementary curriculum teacher leader. She began her career as a special education teacher at the Stanley G. Falk school from 2002-2005.

Ms. Pascual fills the position left vacant by the retirement of Windermere Boulevard Principal Julie Flanagan.

"We are very excited to welcome Ms. Pascual back to our Amherst CSD family. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position and a passion for impacting continuous growth and improvement for all students," said Anthony Panella, Superintendent, Amherst Central School District.

Welcome New Teachers!

Our new teachers attended a four-day New Teacher Orientation in late August.



CEP: Free Breakfast, Free Lunch for All Students

As of Nov. 1, 2023, all students enrolled in Amherst Central School District are able to receive one breakfast and one lunch each day for no charge. This is a result of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) expanding access to the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP allows eligible schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to offer school meals at no charge to all students.

All students at Amherst Central High School, Amherst Middle School, Windermere Boulevard Elementary and Smallwood Drive Elementary are eligible to receive one school breakfast and one school lunch at no cost to your household. In the cafeteria, students will continue to go through the line and provide their student ID number at checkout, just like they do now. This provision only pertains to full breakfast and lunch meals.

A la carte items, such as snacks, ice cream, and additional food and beverage items must still be purchased. If you have been notified by the district that you have an outstanding balance on your child's lunch account, you are still responsible for the payment of that balance. We will continue to send letters home with balances due and instructions for payment arrangements.

Reduced Fees on SAT, ACT, PSAT and AP Exams



Families that qualify for reduced rates or waivers on SAT, ACT, PSAT and AP exams will be required to complete the CEP Household Income Eligibility Form. This form is used to determine eligibility for additional state and federal program benefits that your child(ren) may qualify for. The form can be found on the District website under the Departments tab, Nutrition Services, Household Income Eligibility Form.pdf. Any questions should be directed to School Lunch Manager, Tracey Horn, at 716-362-3025.

Registering for School

Families new to the District should register their child/children as soon as possible to ease transition and allow adequate time for educational services to be arranged (schedule, classroom placement and transportation) before school begins Sept. 3, 2024.

The Central Registrar will process registration documents for new and re-entry students, Universal Pre-K and Kindergarten students, as well as for private, parochial and charter school students. Students who reside in the Amherst Central School District, but are enrolled in private, parochial, or charter schools need to register with ACSD annually.

The process of registering a child for Amherst Central School District is done online at www.amherstschoools.org. The District uses Aspen, our student information system, to maintain student and family records. We also use Family Connection, an online platform, to register new students and collect the information we will need about your child.

The Central Registration office is located at the District Office, 55 Kings Highway. Meetings with the Central Registrar are by appointment only; please call for an appointment or with questions, 716- 362-3030.

Private, Parochial, Charter Students April 1 Deadline for Registering; Bus Requests

Students residing within ACSD limits, who attend private, parochial or charter schools are now required to register with the district annually prior to April 1, or within 30 days of moving into the district, in order to receive transportation, school-based services and update student information on file.

Residents of Amherst Central School District who require transportation to a private, parochial or charter school within 15 miles of 55 Kings Highway Amherst, NY 14226 can (re)register through the Family Connection Portal.

Once (re)registered successfully, you are able to indicate your need for transportation and you will receive an email from Central Registration confirming that your account is active and your documents are being (re)verified by Central Registration. Annually, you must register and verify documents before transportation requests can be completed.

Amherst Central School District Careers Join the "A" Team

Amherst Central School District is a major employer in our community and we routinely have openings for a variety of positions at all of our schools. All of our openings can be found on our employment webpage at amherstschoools.org. All applications are submitted through the online employment portal. Help guides for creating an account and how to apply are posted on the employment webpage. Employee benefits include a health benefits package, employee assistance program, retirement benefits, life insurance, paid time off and wellness programs.

Our employment categories are:

Substitutes - We offer competitive substitute rates and accept applications throughout the school year. We look for hard-working, innovative and enthusiastic individuals who can partner with our administrators, faculty and staff on a daily basis. We have opportunities at all grade levels and in every building. We need subs for teachers, teacher assistants, teacher aides, food service, laborers and school nurses.

Certified - Postings for teachers, coaches, teaching assistants and administrators are found under the Certified category. Job postings for substitute teachers and teaching assistants are found here.

Classified - Postings for clerical, teacher aides, food service, laborers and school nurses are found under the Classified category. Substitute postings for these positions are also found there.

For the 2024-25 school year, we are in need of the following substitutes:

Teaching (certified, non-certified)
Teaching Assistants
Teacher Aides
Food Service
Laborers
Nurses

We recruit year-round for these positions.

Are you looking for full-time or part-time work?

Are you hard-working and enthusiastic?

Amherst Schools might be the perfect fit for you!

We hire throughout the school year!

Now Recruiting 2024-25 Substitutes

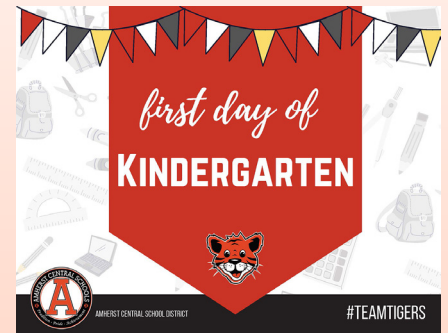
Apply at amherstschoools.org



Tradition, Pride, Achievement

First Day of School Signs

If you want to take to social media with some first day of school signs, we've got you covered. Check out the First Day signs that you can download from the website under the Students/Parents tab.



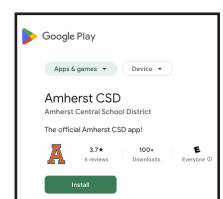
Online Events Calendar

The District posts all information, notices and calendar event dates on the district website at www.amherstschoools.org. If you do not have internet access and wish to pick up a printed copy of pertinent notices and a listing of calendar events, you may contact Debbie Custodi, District Clerk, at 362-3051.



Get Our App!

Amherst Central School District's mobile app is available free in the iTunes and Google Play stores; search Amherst CSD and look for the orange A logo.



DASA: Preventing and Addressing Bias-Based Harassment in Schools

The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) took effect July 1, 2012 and was amended to include cyberbullying effective July 1, 2013. Its purpose is to provide students with a school environment free of discrimination and harassment by peers and by school personnel. It applies to behaviors on school property, in school buildings, on a school bus, as well as at school-sponsored events or activities. Incidents of harassment and discrimination may include, but are not limited to, threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), and sex. The DASA Incident Reporting Form and more information can be found at www.amherstschools.org/DASA

DASA Coordinators for 2024-25

- Windermere Boulevard School
Melissa Stasio, school counselor
Nicole Holler, assistant principal
- Smallwood Drive School
Katie Marzocchi, assistant principal
Jennifer Noe, social worker
- Amherst Middle School
Derek Kise, assistant principal
Pamela Primerano, social worker
- Amherst Central High School
Patrick Kapperman, assistant principal
Daniela Wolfe, social worker

Code of Conduct, Attendance Policies

The annual notifications that school districts are required to make public to inform parents/guardians and students of their rights are posted on the district website. The District's Code of Conduct, along with School Attendance Policy, Parents Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security and Student Privacy Policy, can be found at www.amherstschools.org/notifications. If you do not have internet access and wish to pick up a printed copy, call Debbie Custodi, District Clerk, at 362-3051.

Special Education Services/ Child Find Notice

Each school district in New York State is required by law to establish a Committee on Special Education which is comprised of parents and professional school personnel. This committee reviews the needs of each child referred and determines if she/he is educationally disabled. Appropriate services or programs for identified children are then recommended by the Committee to the Board of Education. These programs take the form of part-time services, full-time special classes or home instruction. Special classes, resource rooms, integrated co-teachers and consultant teachers are available at all schools.

When the Committee on Special Education has determined that students with special education needs cannot be provided for in the District schools, appropriate out-of-district instructional programs are arranged at the District's expense.

The school district is also responsible for the placement of preschool children, ages 3 and 4, who have been identified by the Committee on Preschool Special Education as educationally disabled. This committee is made up of District personnel, a parent, a representative of Erie County, a representative of a preschool education agency and possibly regular and special education teachers.

Contact the Special Education Office at 362-3063 or your building principal if you feel your child may require special educational services. A NYS Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 5-21 is available upon request.

Rights of Parents and Students Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The FERPA regulations, including recent amendments, require a school district to include specific information in its annual notice. This information includes the rights of parents or eligible students: to inspect and review the student's education records; to seek amendment of the student's education records which they believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of their privacy rights; to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records (except to the extent that the law authorizes disclosure without consent) and to file complaints concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the FERPA requirements.

The District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Parents and students over the age of eighteen, have a right to refuse in writing the release of student directory information by November 15 of each school year. After November 15, the District may release such information to any outside group without individual consent. As required by Federal law, student directory information for eleventh and twelfth graders shall be made available upon request to persons or groups which make students aware of occupational and educational options. In addition, two federal laws require the District to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information-names, addresses and telephone listings-unless parents have advised the District that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

To exercise your right to have this information kept private, notify the school office in writing before November 15 that you do not wish this information to be released, either generally, to military recruiters or both. Please note that unless you use this "opt out procedure," the school district cannot refuse the military recruiters' requests and you and your student may be contacted by them at home.

Pesticide Application

Parents and staff can request notification of certain pesticide applications by the District. New York State Education Law Section 409-h, effective July 1, 2001, requires all public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools to provide this written notification to all parents, guardians, faculty and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year.

The Amherst Central School District has implemented an integrated pest management (IPM) program including good housekeeping and sanitation, repair, maintenance, weed control and monitoring. The District uses pesticides only as a last resort when other nontoxic methods of necessary pest control have proven unsuccessful. Even then, the District uses only the least toxic pesticide specific to the pest to be controlled.

The District is now required to maintain a list of parents, faculty and staff who wish to receive 48-hour prior written notification of certain pesticide applications. The following pesticide applications are not subject to prior notification requirements:

- A school remains unoccupied for a continuous 72 hours following an application.
- Antimicrobial products.
- Nonvolatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children.
- Nonvolatile insecticidal baits in tamper-resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children.
- Silica gels and other nonvolatile ready-to-use pastes, foams or gels in areas inaccessible to children.
- Boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate.
- The application of EPA-designated biopesticides.
- The application of EPA-designated exempt materials under 40CFR142.25.
- The use of aerosol products with a directed spray in containers of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from an imminent threat from stinging and biting insects including venomous spiders, bees, wasps and hornets.

In the event of an emergency application necessary to protect against an imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour notification list. If you would like to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur in your school, please complete the form below and return it to Mark Rampado, Director of Facilities, 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY 14226 or fax it to 836-2537.

Amherst Central Schools Request for Pesticide Notification Application

(Please print)

School Building: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Tradition, Pride, Achievement

School Property Rules

- The high school complex is open for light recreational activities such as walking and running on the track and use of the tennis courts. Be considerate of others.
- Bikes are not allowed on the track, turf, or in the high school complex.
- Students are not allowed to loiter or gather in the complex at any time, especially after the complex locks at dusk.
- Tennis courts are for tennis only.

Facility Use, Building Permits

Members of the school community who wish to use facilities or grounds (such as gymnasiums, classrooms, auditoriums, baseball diamonds or athletic fields) must apply for a permit.

In addition, all community organizations must submit a certificate of insurance naming the Amherst Central School District as an insured when requesting an application.

The building permit application is available at www.amherstschools.org and in each building. There may be fees depending upon facilities and personnel required.

Asbestos

Written notice will be posted in all school buildings as well as on the District website.

Fire Inspection

Fire inspections were conducted in all school buildings and there were no discrepancies.

Please feel free to contact Mark Rampado, Director of Facilities, at 362-8151, for further information on any of the above.



Amherst Central School District
55 Kings Highway
Amherst, NY 14226-4330

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Lorry Goldhawk
Maryjane Metzen
Dominic Vivolo

Anthony J. Panella, Superintendent

*****ECRWSEDDM***

District Resident

Equal Opportunity, Respect

The Amherst Central School District offers employment and educational opportunities, including vocational educational opportunities, without regard to race, color, age, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, military status, political affiliation, genetic predisposition, carrier status, or disability.

The District recognizes its responsibility to provide all District students and employees an environment that is free from sexual misconduct, harassment and intimidation.

Michael Belle-Isle, Assistant Superintendent for Student and Staff Services, and Laura Bosinski, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, serve the District as Compliance Officers for Allegations of Discrimination and/or Harassment (students and employees), Title VI, VII, IX, Section 504, American Disabilities Act, New York State Executive Law, Military Law and Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

All questions regarding these policies should be directed to Michael Belle-Isle or Laura Bosinski at 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY 14226.

News to Know

The Amherst Central School District incorporates the use of social media to share good news throughout the District.

Follow our accounts to learn about the great things happening daily in our schools.

Emergency School Closing

When inclement weather or any other emergency situation forces the closing of District schools, the information will be communicated by radio, television broadcast and our parent broadcast system. Please do not telephone the schools or the District Office.

The decision to close schools in weather-related situations will normally be made by 6:15 a.m. The safety of our students and staff is the basis for any decision, and the key factors that must be considered include road conditions and weather reports.

When the schools are closed due to weather conditions, all other activities including before and after school programming, sports practice, student activities and Community Education classes will be cancelled. If schools are closed for other reasons, activities and practices that are not affected by the specific emergency may be permitted with prior approval of the building administrator.

In-School Closing Procedures

(for when school is in progress)

If inclement weather should occur after students are already in school, students will not be dismissed during the height of any weather-related storm. In most cases dismissal would then take place at the regular dismissal time, weather permitting. However, on very rare occasions it may be necessary to close a school during the day due to loss of power, loss of water or other emergency situations. If this occurs, procedures are in place to transport the students to another building, if necessary. Students and staff would then remain at the alternate site until the regular dismissal time. A pre-established program of instruction would be implemented at the alternate site. Parents are reminded to provide the school office with up-to-date emergency telephone numbers.

Board Meetings

The Amherst Central School District Board of Education meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month unless otherwise noted on the website. Occasionally, the meeting dates are changed to accommodate school holidays. Please check the school website at www.amherstschoools.org. The meetings are held in the District Office Conference Room, 55 Kings Highway, at 7 p.m.

For more information, call the District Clerk, Debbie Custodi, at 362-3051.



Twitter

@AmherstCSD
@AmherstCHS

@AmherstMiddle
@SmallwoodDrive

@WindermereBlvd
@AmherstTigers1



Amherst Central High School
Amherst Middle School