

July 31, 2026

Back to School: Important Information & 2026-2027 School Year Guide

(Please save this communication for future reference, as it contains important information, dates, procedures, and expectations that you may need throughout the school year.)

Hello everyone,

It is always a great time to be a Blue Bomber! As usual, this summer has been a busy one. And now, it looks like everything we needed to accomplish has been completed.

We also have some new people joining our team. Allow me to introduce them to you.

- Mrs. Heydt will be an Instructional Aide at the high school this year.
- Mrs. Jessica Pastor is our new Guidance Counselor Secretary. She started with us in June and we are happy to have her as part of our team.
- Mrs. Amanda Lentz will be serving as our Attendance Secretary in the Main Office. She started in January and has now settled into her role at the high school.
- Pending School Board approval at the August 18 meeting, Caitlin Goldberg will serve as our Music Teacher, Marching Band Director, and Concert Band Director.

We also have a few additional positions that we are currently working to fill in the Special Education and Spanish departments.

We also have several building improvement projects at the high school on the horizon. The construction work began as soon as the school year ended and is now in full swing. I have been sending regular updates about the work through the SMORE newsletters released during the summer. This major project includes new classrooms as well as relocating the central administration offices. The project is expected to be completed between August and October 2027.

As you can imagine, the construction work will certainly impact student parking. We have developed a plan to ensure that parking opportunities are assigned fairly. Initially, parking will be based on grade level eligibility and a lottery system. Staff members will receive first priority. Senior students who did not have discipline or attendance issues during the previous school year will receive a parking spot on the west side. (The first two rows are completely off limits.) If additional spaces remain available, eligible juniors will participate in a lottery system. This information was shared in the SMORE newsletters throughout the summer and is also included in the Student Handbook on pages 28 and 29. (The Handbook is available on the High School website under Forms and Documents. The students will also receive a copy on the first day of school - August 24.

While it is always exciting to have new facilities and improvements, we fully recognize that there is no true substitute for good teaching, strong curriculum, flexibility, and positive communication.

Communication with parents and guardians is an essential part of a successful educational process. One of the first opportunities for families to become involved is our Back-to-School Night on August 27 at 7:00 PM. We will begin the evening in the school auditorium.

We also have Meet the Bombers Night scheduled for Fall athletes on August 26 at 7:00 PM at the stadium.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. We look forward to seeing you there. (Both of these announcements have been posted on the school website since mid-June. Please check the website for additional information.) We would love to see you there.

Arrival at School

Our first day of school is Monday, August 24. It is hard to believe that this date is right around the corner. Please take note of the following scheduling information for the first day of school. If you have a child in grades 10, 11, or 12, your child's schedule should be enclosed. The only reason your child's schedule would not be enclosed is if they do not have the required vaccine or a waiver form on file. The families involved have received School Messenger messages about this from me since early July.

Our Freshman and New Student Orientation is scheduled for August 4. Freshmen will receive their schedules at that time.

If your child did not keep their Chromebook over the summer and they are in grades 10, 11, or 12, they may pick up their Chromebook on the first day of school or on August 5 or August 11 in the Junior High School Cafeteria. Any ninth grade or new student may pick up their Chromebook on August 4 between 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM. If your child did not turn in their Chromebook at the end of eighth grade, you should still have the device and should bring it to school on the first day. If August 4 does not work for you, you may also come on August 5 or August 11.

On the first day of school, all high school students will report at the regular time for a full day of school. If students arrive prior to 7:20 AM, they should wait outside as our doors will open at 7:20 AM.

When the warning bell rings at 7:26 AM, Grade 9 students should report directly to the auditorium. Students in all other grades should report to their first block class. The Block 1 classes begin at 7:30 AM.

It is imperative that students in grades 10-12 bring their schedules to school on the first day or be prepared to access them through PowerSchool. If a freshman or new student does not attend our Orientation program, they will receive their schedule in the auditorium on the first day of school.

Due to the construction project at the high school, there are new pick-up and drop-off procedures. This information was communicated through the SMORE newsletters and was also included in the letter and map mailed home on July 29, 2026.

While the new drop-off and pick-up procedures are not ideal, the west side (stadium side) is unavailable to us. (Please note that these procedures were reviewed with the construction project manager and engineer before being released.)

At this time, this is the best plan we have available. We will closely monitor the process once school begins. If changes are needed, we will certainly make adjustments. The safety of our students and staff is, and will continue to be, our top priority.

If you have not reviewed a copy of the plan carefully, please do so now. If you need another copy of the letter or map, it is available on the school website.

Schedule Changes

You will have the opportunity to get a jump start on any needed schedule changes. Please take note of the following dates and times when the guidance counselors will be available:

August 6

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

August 10

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Freshmen and new students will have an opportunity to request schedule changes on August 4 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM following the Orientation program.

For additional dates and times, appointments should be made with the appropriate guidance counselor. Please do not rely solely on e-mail requests for schedule changes. If the dates and times listed above do not work for you, please schedule an appointment with your guidance counselor before the start of the school year.

Once the school year begins, schedule changes may be made only by appointment from August 24 through Monday, August 31. Students in grades 9 and 10 should meet with Mr. Kevin Wertz. Students in grades 11 and 12 should meet with Ms. Vicki McHugh.

After August 31, no additional schedule changes will be permitted. Please note that all schedule changes made after the start of the school year must have the approval of the guidance counselor as well as both the sending and receiving teachers.

LCCC Dual Enrollment

Any student who requested and received an LCCC class for Semester 1 must complete all of the registration steps prior to the first day of school.

Please note that requesting an LCCC course does not guarantee placement in the course. Students must meet all eligibility requirements, including attendance expectations. Since these

are college-level courses, students are expected to attend regularly and be responsible for meeting all course requirements. Students who are unable to meet the attendance expectations may not be eligible to participate in the LCCC program.

Online LCCC classes begin on August 25. Classes held at the high school also begin on August 25. However, registration for these classes must be completed prior to the start of the school year.

Please make sure that you are checking Schoology carefully, as all information and required links will be posted there. If there is an LCCC class listed on your schedule and you do not intend to take the course, please contact Ms. McHugh to make a schedule change.

Registration for Spring semester classes will take place during the Fall. If you have a class listed on your schedule for Semester 2, no action is needed at this time.

Paperwork

On the first day of school, a great deal of paperwork will be sent home with students. We would greatly appreciate it if you would promptly review and sign the appropriate documents. As you complete the paperwork, please make sure that you provide all current telephone numbers where you can be reached. In the event of an emergency, we need to know how to contact you. Accurate contact information is extremely important.

If any of your telephone numbers or contact information changes during the school year, please notify the school as soon as possible.

Student Lockers

The majority of students will have their locker assignments listed at the top of their schedule. Other students will receive their locker information on the first day of school. Under no circumstances should students share lockers with another student. Each student is responsible for their own belongings. If you need a lock, we have plenty available in the Main Office.

We will work with freshmen during Freshman Orientation to assist them with their locker assignments and procedures.

Student Handbook

There have been a number of changes made to the Student Handbook this year. Please review the Handbook with your child. To help identify updates and changes, a “NEW” clipart image has been included throughout the handbook.

Cell Phones

I realize that we live in a very technology-oriented society. I also understand that, as parents, we feel better when we are able to communicate with our children at a moment's notice. That being said, cell phones can also be a major disruption to the educational process.

It is our expectation that while students are in the classroom, their cell phones will be turned off and will be out of sight. The only exception is when there is a specific educational purpose approved by the teacher. Classroom use of cell phones must be authorized by the teacher.

Each teacher will have their own cell phone and electronic device expectations that they will share with students and parents/guardians. Teachers are permitted to prohibit cell phones and electronic devices in their classrooms if that approach best supports learning. Many teachers implemented this practice last year, and it worked very well.

If you have any questions, please refer to School Board Policy #237.

Nurse's Office

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires that all Grade 12 students have a second dose of the MCV (meningococcal) vaccine or proof of a religious, philosophical, or medical exemption prior to the first day of school.

This meningitis vaccine must be administered on or after the student's 16th birthday. Medical records may be emailed or faxed to the school nurse.

Email: lthomas@palmerton.org

Fax: 610-826-4929

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this requirement.

If your child needs this meningitis vaccine, the related information is posted on our website. We have also shared information about this requirement with the school community through several automated telephone messages.

Students will not be permitted to begin school unless they have received the vaccine or have an approved exemption or scheduled appointment to receive the vaccine. If this applies to your child, they will not receive their school schedule until the requirement has been addressed. This is a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulation / requirement.

To request a religious, philosophical, or medical exemption, please visit our website under the Health Services Department or contact our school nurse, Mrs. Laura Thomas. Mrs. Thomas will return to school on August 18. Before that date, you may contact me by phone or e-mail at phusar@palmerton.org. This requirement applies to both Blue Bomber Academy students and Palmerton Area Senior High School students.

Bell Schedule

As communicated in the SMORE newsletters, we will be implementing a new bell schedule at the start of the school year. The biggest change is that Enrichment will now be a stand-alone period and will no longer wrap around other classes. The Enrichment period has been reduced from 60 minutes to 40 minutes, while class blocks have increased from 76 minutes to 80 minutes.

Because each class period is longer, students will miss a significant amount of instructional time when they are absent. Attendance will be even more important this school year. If your child does need to miss school, please make sure they provide a note so that the absence can be marked as excused.

Final Note

I encourage you to take advantage of the fact that the start of a new school year is a great time to establish new family routines. Even though the excitement and changes that come with a new school year can make life somewhat hectic during the first few weeks, this is a wonderful opportunity to begin new and positive steps.

I also encourage you to support your child in getting involved in school activities. We offer a variety of clubs, activities, and athletic opportunities for our students. The best way to make high school a successful experience is to get involved and stay involved.

If you have any questions or concerns now or throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available and happy to help in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

Paula A. Husar
Principal

cc: Mr. Ryan Kish - Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Dan Heaney - Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Kelly Beblavy - Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Justin Petersen - Assistant Principal and Athletic Coordinator