Michelle P. Feeney, Principal

5525 Shelbourne Road, Arbutus, MD 21227

August 8, 2016

Dear AMS Families,

We hope our AMS families have been enjoying a safe and fun summer break as we prepare to welcome our AMS families to the 2016-17 school year! The staff at Arbutus Middle has spent the last eight weeks enjoying summer as well. We have also been engaged in professional development activities, summer school, and curriculum writing in preparation for our upcoming school year.

Sixth grade students will participate in a half day orientation at AMS on Monday, August 22nd. They will return to a full schedule for opening day with the 7th and 8th grade on Wednesday, August 24th.

This year, AMS is proud to continue to offer Project Lead the Way, our engineering STEM-based program. We also welcome back our Student Ambassadors and look forward to another year of outstanding after-school clubs and programs. New to AMS this year is our 90 minute block schedule. Students will follow a four period day schedule on an A day/B day rotation. The BCPS schedule for A days and B days is enclosed in this summer mailing. Additionally, AMS will offer an information session on the new BCPS Grading Policy on Back-to School Night, Wednesday, September 7th at 6:30pm.

The administration is excited to welcome our new Assistant Principal, Perry Warren, and the following new staff members:

PE – Sean Northcraft
Art – Savannah Schmitt
Social Studies – Jared Melrath
FALS – Deborah Donovan
Special Education English Language Arts – Caroline Jones
Our students will be assigned to the following staff members for support this year:
Administrative Assistance
Assistant Principal April Jones - Grade 8 students, Grade 6 - A-K
Assistant Principal Perry Warren - Grade 7 students, Grade 6 - L-Z

Counseling Assistance

Kathy Gardner - Grade 8 students, Grade 6 - A-K Taylor Edwards - Grade 7 students, Grade 6 - L-Z

We welcome Rebecca Jankowski back as our **PTA President** this school year. We are looking forward to working with Becky and the other amazing members of our AMS PTA board. Please visit the AMS PTA website for details about membership, fundraisers, and upcoming events.

Home/School Communication: Please take time to read the enclosed AMS Family Handbook. This guide contains important information regarding the Arbutus Middle School procedures and policies. Additionally, AMS periodically sends Constant Contact phone calls to our families regarding matters of importance and general events. Families can also receive information about ongoing events at the AMS website and by following our school on Facebook and Twitter.

Starting/Ending Times: Again, opening day for all students is <u>Wednesday</u>, <u>August 24, 2016</u>, however 6th grade will participate in orientation on August 22nd for a half day. Our school day begins promptly at 8:00am. Due to supervision times, students are not to be dropped off before 7:50am and must be picked up by 3:00pm on regular school days and 4:00pm on activity days. Announcements will take place each day during homeroom. It is important that students arrive to school on time so they do not miss the 8:10am bell and announcements. All students will be dismissed at 2:45pm at the end of the school day.

Breakfast: Students will proceed directly to their homeroom class. AMS offers our students a "Grab and Go" Breakfast each morning. Students can go to the cafeteria upon entering the school and retrieve a prepackaged breakfast they may take to their homeroom. During the first week of school, students with scheduling questions will be assisted during homeroom time.

School Security and Safety: The safety of our students and staff is of utmost importance to us and for this reason we have set procedures for arrival and dismissal as well as for visitors. Our procedures for student drop off and pick-up are in place to ensure a safe area for buses to unload and load students. We ask that parents and guardians of car riders use the back parking lot on Sulphur Springs Rd. to drop off/pick up students. Car riders who must get dropped off in the front of the school should be dropped off in the designated spot in front of the gym entrance on Shelbourne Rd. Cars should not park in this area. Our goal is to keep vehicles from driving through the front bus loop during the arrival of our buses and to prevent an unsafe situation with a traffic back up on Shelbourne Road. Staff members will be on duty to guide students and visitors during arrival and dismissal times.

Families must make sure student emergency contact information is updated so that we have names of those who have consent to pick up your child. Also, every BCPS school utilizes the RAPTOR system for checking in all visitors. Please note that when visitors come to our school for the first time, they will be required to present a government-issued photo ID, or a driver's license to a staff member in the school office. The ID will be scanned and the following information will be collected: photo, name, and date of birth. This information will be utilized to check all visitors in, create an ID badge, and compare information against sexual offender databases throughout the country. If a visitor's name appears on any of the lists or a visitor refuses to allow the school to scan ID, he or she will not be allowed access to the school.

Student ID Cards: Baltimore County Public Schools uses a One-card identification system for all students and staff. All students must wear their cards in the school building on either a break away lanyard or clip. Returning students should use their One-cards from last school year. 6th grade students and new entrants will be issued cards during the first week of school. The One-card identification system is one more step in improving security for students and staff. The cost for replacing lost One-cards is \$5.

AMS Emergency Procedures: To provide for the safety, security and well-being of students, staff, parents and community members during emergency situations, we have established procedures and routines which we practice throughout the school year, including evacuations, as well as emergencies that may occur within the building (fire drills, lock-downs, severe weather drills, rally point drills). The school has also established an emergency team to inform parents and secure needed support in the event of an emergency. Should students be evacuated for an extended amount of time, we will convene at Arbutus United Methodist Church or Arbutus Elementary School, dependent on the length of the emergency. In any case, a call will be placed to families of students of where to pick-up students. Please be sure to have proper identification to pick-up students.

Other Important Information

This packet includes student schedules as well as essential information to help your child begin this school year. The enclosed forms should be completed and returned to school with your child for delivery to his or her homeroom teacher during the first week of school. Among these forms is the health consent form for our school nurse. Also included in this packet are the AMS Parent Handbook (please review with your child), the school supply list, bus list, and the 2016 PTA membership envelope. PTA membership is only \$8 this school year, so please help our PTA sponsor our after school buses and agendas by joining. An extra \$2 will go to support our after school buses. Our AMS Back-to-School Night will be held on Wednesday, September 7th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Please join us on that evening to meet your child's teachers and the rest of the AMS staff and to hear about the amazing things happening at AMS. We look forward to teaching our Eagles to soar to new heights! Go Eagle P.R.I.D.E.! *Please contact us if you have any questions at (410) 887-1402, and follow us on Twitter for the latest AMS news: Arbutus MS@ ArbutusMS, or join us on Facebook.* **Have a fun and relaxing remainder of the summer!**

Warmest regards,

Michelle P. Feeney Principal