



A.N. McCallum High School

Principal Update

Welcome Back to Mac!

Greetings Mac families! I am thrilled to start another exciting year at A.N. McCallum High School. This is a special year for us because we opened our doors for the first time 70 years ago.

The start of the school year always comes with big feelings for both our students and staff. Our goal is to help students know they are loved and supported while empowering our staff to meet their students' varying needs in a healthy learning environment where everyone can excel. If you are new to the Mac family, welcome! You are starting an adventure with an amazing community. Please know we are here to help.

We are Partners in your Child's Education

It seems like only yesterday that I dropped my youngest child off at kindergarten- this year she is a senior and I am already feeling the pangs of her being so close to graduation. All parents understand this feeling. Parents who are *also* educators have insight that other parents may not. Please know that Mac educators love our students! Teachers and our support staff come to school every day to serve kids. My hope for this year is that we can work together with the knowledge that your child is loved both at home and at school.

Tuesday, August 20

[2024-25 Bell Schedule](#)



How we Communicate

We want to keep you informed. There are many ways we communicate with families and students:

- **MacJournalism** - Our journalism program keeps us all informed through their MacJ posts on Instagram (@macjournalism). They rarely miss an event or an important

announcement. Note: if you don't have an Instagram account, the MacJournalism posts are worth getting an account and just following their posts.

- **Blend Announcements** - Depending on the nature of the announcement, students and parents will receive Blend Announcements.
- **Morning Announcements** - Our Mac Student Council does morning announcements, as well as a moment of silence and pledges, at the beginning of 2nd and 6th periods.
- **MacKnightly eNewsletter** - Our wonderful Mac PTSA sends out a weekly newsletter called the MacKnightly Newsletter with important announcements. To sign up to receive this, please sign up at the bottom of this webpage: <https://mccallumpts.org/>.
- **Principal Update** - I send a Principal Update (like this one) once a month. It serves to connect and highlight important information.
- **Emails and Texts through School Messenger** - School Messenger is the system used by AISD to send group emails and text messages. Occasionally, parents have accidentally opted out of receiving these by indicating they would like their email made private. To check your settings, go to your Portal, click on the tile "Frontline SIS Self-Serve", click on the tab "Edit Contact Info", and scroll down to check that you have indicated "No" to making your email private (unless, of course, you'd like to opt out of emails)
 - We will be switching to a new platform known as Thrill Share. This new platform should be more user friendly than the old school messenger system.

What to do if (when) my student has a concern in the classroom?

We are in the business of people. We can expect that there will be differences of opinion, misunderstandings, confusion in communication, etc. What do you do when something happens? Please follow these steps when addressing a concern or misunderstanding.

- **STEP 1:** As often as possible, we want our students to practice advocating for themselves. The first step in addressing a concern is to encourage your student to speak with their teacher. Most problems can be resolved at this level and it is great practice for students to become advocates in their own lives.
- **STEP 2:** If you and your student feel there is still an issue, please email your teacher directly. You can find their contact information in the [AISD Directory](#) or by emailing through the Parent Portal Frontline Self-Service.
- **STEP 3:** The best next step is for the student or their parent to reach out to their support team of AP and/or counselor to help resolve the problem
- **STEP 4:** If you feel like your concern has not been addressed then please contact Mr. Baxa the school principal.

Your Mac Support Teams

It's important you know your student's support team - their Assistant Principal and Counselor. We have a few changes to our team this year.

	Assistant Principal	Counselor
All Students in Fine Arts Academy	Sam Parrott parrott.samuel@austinisd.org	Shelley Goldstein shelley.goldstein@austinisd.org

Last Names A - GO (not in FAA)	Gabriel Adame gabriel.adame@austinisd.org	Loren Croom (A-E) loren.croom@austinisd.org
Last Names GP - PA (not in FAA)	Larry Featherstone larry.featherstone@austinisd.org	Nicollette Muller (F-LH) nicollette.muller@austinisd.org
		Cristela Garcia (LI-RN) cristela.garcia@austinisd.org
Last Names PE - Z (not in FAA)	Teri Kirby teri.kirby-eliason@austinisd.org	Marc Garcia (RO-Z) marc.garcia@austinisd.org

- 504 Coordinator - **Josh Amy** - joshua.amy@austinisd.org
- College and Career Counselor - **Camille Nix** - camille.nix@austinisd.org
- Principal's Admin Assistant - **Bonnie Baker** - bonnie.baker@austinisd.org
- Guidance Secretary - **Arianna Barron** - arianna.barron@austinisd.org

From the College & Career Center

Fall Austin Community College Dual Credit Update

Deadline to register for ACC courses was August 4th - this was a hard deadline for our school! After the 4th, if you have not fully registered for an ACC course, you will be dropped and placed in AP, OnRamps, or regular courses based upon your course history. Any student who indicated interest in a fall ACC course has received correspondence via email on how to fully register.

Senior Information

Class of 2024, are you ready? It is going to be a FUN year!

Ms. Nix will be running college prep sessions throughout the fall semester. Please reach out to Ms. Nix at camille.nix@austinisd.org if you have any questions.

Here is a checklist of tasks to accomplish prior to graduation:

- ☐ *Apply to four year or two year school, enlist in the military, or apply to the workforce*
- ☐ *Take and pass the Texas State Initiative exam (many of you are exempt - stay tuned for more info!)*
- ☐ *Complete the FAFSA or the opt-out form.*

School Supplies

Students should come to school with a refillable water bottle, writing utensil, paper, fully charged Chromebook, and a backpack in which to put it all. If your student is new and doesn't yet have an AISD issued Chromebook, please be on the lookout for an email with information

on getting one. Teachers will communicate specific needs for their classes to their students during that first week of school.

Upcoming Events – Mark your Calendar

- **Make-Up Freshmen Orientation** - If your incoming 9th grader was not able to attend the Orientation Session on 8/3, please consider having them attend the make-up session on Thursday, August 10th from 2 pm - 3 pm in room 140.
- **Back to School Knight** - Mark your calendars for our Back to School Knight on the evening of **Monday, August 26th**. This is a great opportunity to meet your child's teacher and to find out more about what they will learn this year.
- **High School 101 for Freshmen Parents & College 101 for Senior Parents**- These sessions will be led by our counseling team to help incoming parents learn the ins and outs of high school and senior parents navigate next steps. *Date/Time TBD*

Period Products at Mac



I have wonderful news! Austin ISD will now be providing free period products in all girls and gender neutral bathrooms. This is a great thing for all our students who experience periods at school. You can read more about this in KUT article [“Getting your Period at School is the Worst. Austin ISD is Trying to Make it Better.”](#)

We have already received the supplies and will ensure they are in bathrooms on the first day of school. What's worse than having your period at school? Having your period on the FIRST day of school :)

Drop Off & Pick Up at Mac

Sunshine Drive is used by AISD buses to drop off and pick up students who ride the bus. Because of this, Sunshine Drive from Houston to Stark is off limits to private transportation pick up in the afternoon. Our recommendation is that you communicate with your student a rendezvous location along Houston St. or Grover Ave. We don't recommend that students cross the street to get to their pick up vehicle. The traffic seems to be worse the first couple weeks of school. Let's be patient and treat each other with civility as we get our students home safely.



Parking - This Year will be an Adventure!

The good news is that construction of our new dance studio is almost complete. This means parking at McCallum will be a challenge again this year. The lot directly north of the MAC Theatre (the biggest slashed circle on map above) will be blocked and we will not have those parking spaces. The large lot right along Koenig is available *after* the band finishes practicing in the morning at 8:30ish. Students would need to move their cars right at the end of school so the band can practice. I highly recommend carpooling when possible. **Parking is very limited.**

My child has a doctor's appointment. *How do I pick them up early from McCallum?*

Parking is limited and our school is very spread out. We want to make the process of picking up your child early as simple as possible. Here is the easiest way to pick your child up early for an appointment:

1. Send a note the day before the anticipated absence with your student. We can only accept notes from the parent/guardian listed in our system. The note should include:
 - a. Reason for leaving
 - b. Time leaving
 - c. Student ID#
 - d. Parent/guardian phone number
 - e. Parent/guardian signature
2. Your student should take the note to the office before school (or at their earliest convenience).
3. Your student must check out via Raptor in the main office.
4. After checking out your student may be picked up by the flagpoles.

5. If the student will return to school the same day, they will need to check back in via Raptor in the main office.
6. Excuse notes may be turned in online using the following link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1sQz6F-n_j9CsSyBkdk_472AmPDTCm_fJrMX3J6gXil/
7. For more information on our attendance policies please visit our attendance page at
<https://mccallum.austinschools.org/departments/attendance>

Taco Shack Bowl



Mark your calendars for the 21st Annual Taco Shack Bowl between McCallum and Anderson on **Thursday, August 25**. The day starts with a very early morning Spirit Bowl at the two respective Taco Shacks near each school. The evening ends with the high energy football game at House Park. Go Knights!

Legislative Update – HB 114

Teen vaping has become a major public health concern in recent years. The use of electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, has skyrocketed among teenagers, with many experts attributing this trend to the marketing efforts of ecigarette companies. While e-cigarettes were initially marketed as a safer alternative to traditional cigarettes, research has shown that they can be just as harmful, particularly for young people.

HB 114 has been enacted to respond to the increasing concerns around e-cigarettes, vaping, marijuana and THC-related products among youth. The bill mandates that any student found in possession of, under the influence of, selling, gifting or delivering these substances within a 300-foot radius of any school premises, will be immediately removed and placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).

Please talk to your students about this change in state law and how it could affect their school life.

Recognize Excellent Customer Service

Do you know a McCallum HS staff member who went the extra mile? Submit them for a RAVE (Recognizing All Valuable Employees). We can't wait to hear about some of our employee's awesome deeds.

<https://www.austinisd.org/hr/customer-service/rave>



Update on Schedules

We are still working on finalizing our student schedules for this year. Students will be able to view their classes by Sunday, August 13th. Students will access their schedules through the portal.

Thanks for taking the time to read the Principal Update. We are looking forward to another wonderful school year at McCallum.



Go Knights!
Thank you,

Andy Baxa
Proud Principal
McCallum High School