

DEAR TROJANS FAMILIES - A message for you and your students as they begin the new school year.

Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year!

I could not be more excited to start a new school year as I am this year. We ended last year on such a high note celebrating our AHS Class of 2023 with what should be our highest four-year graduation percentage since the state has been keeping track. We will receive our official percentage later this month, but all indicators are we should have our best percentage ever. On-Time graduation isn't our only highlight from 2023, so let's keep our momentum going.

At AHS we had the most students taking and testing in advanced placement courses last May in a long time. For the 2023-24 school year, we have the most AHS students signed up for AP courses than we've ever had before. Many of them will be first time AP students and we are super excited and take this as a strong indicator that we are bouncing back from the effects of the pandemic, and our students are willing to try courses with a little more challenge and rigor.

Our AP teachers are poised and ready to support their students to rise to this challenge and I'm certain our students will respond. We also have students taking college in the high school courses where they earn dual credit from colleges like Central Washington University, and Eastern Washington University. Academically, things are happening at AHS.

Our increases have much to do with our AVID academic program, our Capturing Kids Hearts social emotional program, and our work with equity through AVID, CKH, and Culturally Responsive Practices. These, along with excellent instruction, have been our campus-wide practices for 4 to 6 years. We have the right staff and we have the right "stuff" at AHS. Our programs are chosen because they help ALL students; from those who are focused and driven, to those who are still developing their purpose. So, what can students do to take advantage of these opportunities?

SHOW UP!

*Two very simple words. Words that can serve, and continue to serve. At the end of the day, **Auburn High School is about YOU, our students.** This year students at Auburn High School will hear and see these two words time and time again. When our students **SHOW UP**, they do amazing things. When our students **SHOW UP**, they gain opportunities to work towards their dreams. When our students **SHOW UP**, they move their lives forward, and as young adults it is important to **SHOW UP** even when it can be difficult to do so.*

We know that sometimes students are sick and that excused absences are a reality and something we can work together to overcome. However, chronic absenteeism has no easy cures or easy solution and creates challenges and barriers for our students. Plan to start strong so that you can end strong.

***SHOWING UP plays a big part in student successes.** How big? We know that when AHS students **SHOW UP** to school 95% of the days (19 out of every 20 days), they pass their courses at a 98% rate. When AHS students **SHOW UP** to school 90% of the days (18 out of every 20 days), they pass their courses at a 95% rate. I feel this is important to share because it is as close to a "magic" formula as we will find in education. **SHOW UP, ENGAGE, and SHOW OUT.** Find your purpose for attending and then live up to that. Finding your purpose might take some exploration. So, explore.*

***Sometimes trying something new** can be exciting. You should ask yourself often, "**Am I on MY path?**" or "**Am I just being a follower?**" **Be honest with yourself.** High school can be overwhelming and finding your purpose is something that can help provide you with a plan that works for you, and sometimes that takes courage.*

***Conquer your fears**, everything in high school ends up being temporary so taking a brave step and trying something new may benefit you. You might learn something new that interests you, or you may learn that a new experience isn't for you at this time and place. **Explore, explore, explore** and then ask yourself those important questions that **only you** can answer truthfully. Another plus is you'll meet more people and possibly make more friends, too.*

Always remember this, YOU belong here, and so does everyone else, WE are here for YOU, and this high school journey is about YOU. **Investing in yourself** is one of the most important decisions you can ever make. I have been working in high schools for quite a long time and I have yet to meet a former student who shared that they wish they would have tried less things while in high school, or shown up less. Usually, they share that they wish they would have tried more things, and had better attendance. So, take their collective wisdom & use it to your best advantage. Also, be sure to let me know how our school is living up to what you need to move your life forward.

Knowledge is power, so I hope you will use all of the resources we have available, as often as needed. There is a lot happening at a comprehensive high school such as ours, so take advantage of this and go make it happen. This IS all about you, so **SHOW UP**.

Let's have a great year, Trojans!



Mr. Jeff Gardner
AHS Principal