

Head of School Update Holidays 2009



Happy New Year! I hope this mailing finds you and your families well and safely enjoying all the warmth and blessings that this special time of year brings. As 2009 moves into the history books, the holiday season affords our community an ideal opportunity to look back and reflect upon all our triumphs and accomplishments throughout this past year. With the first semester done and less than one hundred days left in the

“As 2009 moves into the history books, the holiday season affords our community an ideal opportunity to look back and reflect upon all our triumphs and accomplishments this past year.”

2009-10 school year, it’s amazing to think how far Animas High School has come.

One year ago, I was living on an air mattress in an apartment. We had no building, only 12 students enrolled, and a highly charged political climate that sometimes made me wonder what I had signed up for. Fast forward to January 2010,



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where we have a completed building with newly sealed floors, 75 amazing students, a full faculty, and an incredibly supportive and involved community—the changes we have seen have been immense, and I am looking forward to 2010 and the continued growth it will undoubtedly bring.

Despite the initial upheaval, there have been a few constants throughout this year—one of the primary threads is the quality of young adults we have the privilege to work with at AHS. I remember being in awe of the intelligence, creativity and motivation I was witnessing in our community’s young adults, as I began working with them over the summer. It felt like we could do anything with the students we had involved with AHS. That feeling has proved to be correct this year, as our students have tackled with gusto an incredible number of new and challenging tasks.

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Upcoming Happenings and Events

Holiday Break continues through January 3, 2010.
Classes resume at 8:15 AM Monday morning, January 4, 2010.

Semester One Reports Cards will be Mailed Home on Tuesday, January 5th, 2010. Please call the school's Main Office at 970-AHS-AHS4 with any questions or concerns related to your student's report card. As always, your student's advisor should be your primary point of contact concerning academics and our faculty are always available via email.

NWEA-MAP Testing Students will participate in a second round of testing the week of January 25th. The resultant data will help AHS gauge growth throughout the 2009/10 school year and provide instructors, students and their families a warm-up for March's CSAP testing.

Upcoming PAC Meetings at AHS will be held:

Thursday, January 7, 2010 @ 7 PM
Monday, February 4, 2010 @ 12 Noon

Animas High School Board of Directors Meetings at AHS will be held:

Tuesday, January 5, 2010 @ 8:15 AM
Tuesday, January 12, 2010 @ 12:15 PM
Tuesday, January 19, 2010 @ 8:15 AM
Tuesday, January 26, 2010 @ 12:15 PM

2010-2011 AHS Enrollment Opens on January 14th. Animas High School will begin accepting enrollment forms for the incoming 9th grade class of 2010. Enrollment lottery will be held March 1, 2010 if needed. AHS is also accepting a limited amount of students into next year's 10th grade class of 2011. Please log on to www.animashighschool.com for more ENROLLMENT DETAILS.



(continued from pg. 1)

They literally put the school together from the ground up, pulled off a hugely successful Exhibition (and handled some odd questions from community members with aplomb!), tackled difficult and complex projects, advocated for changes they wanted to see, and above all, remained unfailingly positive, excited, and engaged. We are all incredibly proud of these growing adults, and can't wait to see how they continue to change and grow over the next 4 years. They are going to be an amazing Senior Class!

Another constant has been the support from the community that has truly made this school possible. From the very beginning of this journey parents have opened their homes to massive groups of teenagers, businesses have welcomed us and supported our fundraising efforts, and parents have constantly supported our mission, goals, and most importantly, our students. From the early presentations at the Rec Center to our Exhibition with 300 attendees, the community of Durango has helped us to grow into the successful school that we are. A school does not exist in isolation, but it is rare to have a school that is so entwined with the community in so many ways. Without this support, we would not be here.

Summing up this journey in a few paragraphs can never do justice to our complete narrative. The people, the progress, the set-backs, the adaptations...all of these emotions and experiences made 2009 one of the greatest years in the history of education here in Southwestern Colorado. However, it is possible to encapsulate the main themes continually encountered throughout this project: First, a community and region that recognizes the need for choice in education and the need for a 21st century approach to high school. Second, individuals and families who are so giving of themselves, their time and their resources. Finally, a collection of young adults who have impressed and impacted us so profoundly. Our students continue to surpass our expectations, and their quest for academic, emotional, and social growth continues to motivate and inspire our staff.

Together we have accomplished amazing things in 2009 and there's no reason why 2010 will not prove even better. Thank you all for everything you've done for Animas High School this year. Your support and encouragement has fueled us through all the challenges and adversity one encounters with any start-up. 2009 has been an incredible year for AHS and we look forward to the journey with all of you in the new year. Wishing you all a healthy and happy New Year!




2010-2011 Enrollment Kick-Off Event!

**SPECIAL
MOVIE
PRESENTATION**

Don't Miss the Durango Premiere of Robert Compton's New Documentary,

2 Million Minutes
A 21st Century Solution


 For 25 years, report after report has shown that American students are falling further and further behind the rest of the world intellectually. As the American public school system fails to adapt to this century, schools in China and India produce four times the number of high school graduates as the U.S. and educate these students to a much higher level.

Having revealed this frightening decline in his first documentary *Two Million Minutes*, executive producer Robert A. Compton next searched the world for the best high schools in the hopes of discovering a solution to America's education crisis. Then, in one of the poorest areas of America, Compton discovered a school that teaches ordinary U.S. children at an extraordinarily high academic level. This school demonstrates that American students are capable of competing academically with the best in the world given the right curriculum, the right teachers, the right inspiration, and expectation for success.

Despite the decline of public education, the decades ahead can be ones of prosperity and economic growth for the United States, provided the American people have the will and the leadership to embrace The 21st Century Solution. www.2millionminutes.com

Thurs. January 14, 6:00 PM
at Animas High School
3206 North Main Street, Durango

This FREE event is proudly sponsored by Animas High School, Southwestern Colorado's Newest Public Charter School of Choice. Doors open at 6 PM and the event is open to all! For more information regarding this special premiere, please log on to our website at www.animashighschool.com or call (970) AHS-AHS4



Project Profiles

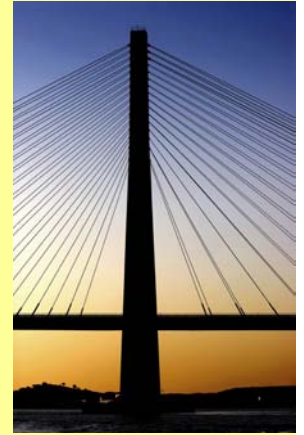
Here's a look at just some of the projects that students may encounter in Semester Two:

Mathematics Teams A & B Josh Dalley, Colleen Dunning, Cathy Cullicott ***Building Bridges***

In this project, students will work in small groups on a scaled down bridge construction project. Once complete, there will be a lab to see which bridge is the safest, strongest and most effectively constructed..

Essential Learning Targets include:

- Students use proportions to create a scale of their bridge in blue-print form
- Students use proportions to compare their model bridge to a life-size bridge (or design the bridge based on a real-life bridge in Durango.)
- Students adhere to a budget and create a bridge that follows a “life-size construction budget” and/or a budget for their model.
- Students employ a variety of math concepts related to geometry, matrices (financial planning) polynomials (Linear, Quadratic and Cubic), trigonometry, forces, and stress to design and construct a stable, professional quality model of a realistic bridge.
- Students think critically and creatively to design a bridge that is functional, unique and beautiful.



Community Connections include:

- Students can research and study different types of bridges on line and in Durango
- Inviting an Engineer to talk with the students about bridge design, and also invite him back for the exhibition “weight test”.

Challenge Extensions include:

- Considering friction coefficient and creating a surface for your bridge that is suitable for driving. You may want to consider a particular driving condition; can you create a driving surface that increases friction in icy/wet conditions?
- Assigning each group a different scenario; i.e. building a bridge in Washington State that crosses a river, build a bridge in Phoenix AZ that crosses railroad tracks, build a bridge in Yosemite National Park that provides an underpass for wildlife, build a suspension bridge that crosses a river and enters a big city...This would allow for each group to consider different variables and obstacles and goals for their bridge and make each bridge unique.

Physics Team A Colleen Dunning ***The Science of Rock***

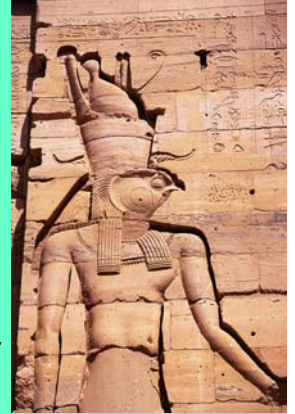


Throughout next semester, we will work through three mini projects that will culminate into one large exhibition project. We will examine the Physics of light, sound, electricity, and electromagnetism by assembling our very own music concert. Students will perform a Physics Dissection in which they take apart an electronic device such as a speaker, take notes on their findings and fully restore the device to working order when complete. Students will explore the science of light, via stage lights, lasers and filters, which will be used to accent our concerts. Finally, the students will build a musical instrument of their choosing. Instruments could include an electric guitar, drum set, wind instrument, rudimentary piano, maybe even a hurdy gurdy!

Digital Arts Teams A & B Roxanne McKnight **Art History with a Digital Interpretation**

Students will study Visual Art and Communication techniques encountered in ancient cultures including: Native American Pottery, pictographs and petroglyphs, Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Greek Stonework and Rock Carvings and Ancient Roman Papyrus Printing. From cave paintings to reproductions of ancient text, students will gain a historical perspective on visual art and communication by producing artistic reproductions of their own.

Students will then capture and import their artwork into Adobe Flash and Illustrator programs. Students will use software applications to animate, model and replicate their reproductions into digital files designed for web applications and their own DPs.



Humanities Teams A & B Lori Fisher, John Fisher **Model United Nations**

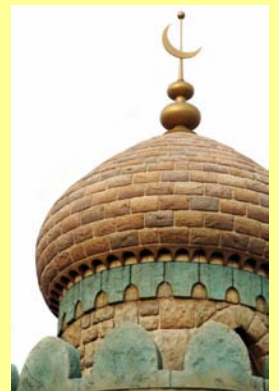


In this project students will take on the task of representing a nation at a conference of the United Nations. Before the conference, they will learn the history and mission of the United Nations, the role it plays in the realm of international policy, and some of the controversies surrounding the UN. In preparation for the conference, students will research their nation and the issues being debated at the conference, and will learn to run and participate in meetings using parliamentary procedure. Finally, students will write formal position papers and resolutions on various topics, engage in spirited debate, and ultimately engage in the high art of international diplomacy.

1. What role does the United Nations play in the world?
2. How can we solve seemingly intractable international problems?
3. Is the United Nations an effective organization? Why/why not?

Clash of Civilizations: Islam and the West

In this project, students will explore the vast history of interaction and conflict between Islam and the West. We will be looking at the history of interactions between these two civilizations, and studying what they have taken from one another over the course of history. Students will be conducting research in Durango to examine public perceptions and knowledge of Islam. Based on their findings, students will be focusing their research on one issue they would like to educate the public about. Issues could include: the role of women, particular conflicts (Israel/Palestine, Iranian Revolution, the War in Afghanistan etc.), terrorism in the 21st century, etc. Students will write formal research papers, then present them at Exhibition with a visual image that represents their thesis and draws in the audience.



1. In what ways have Islam and the West shaped each other culturally, politically, economically and intellectually?
2. Is there a "Clash of Civilizations" between Islam and the West?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the various forms of Islam?
4. What are public perceptions in Durango of Islam?

Spanish Teams A & B John Sheedy *Pen Pals & Conversation Partners*

Spanish classes will be writing letters to a new group of students who live in Tijuana, Mexico. The students in Tijuana go to a school with internet access so we will be exchanging frequent letters with them via email. Our Spanish classes continue exchanging letters with students in Nicaragua. AHS students received their first letters from their pen pals at Christmas and our students generously gathered gifts that we mailed with letters to Nicaragua for the holidays. Classes continue practicing language and letter-writing skills in Spanish and we are sending the letters via snail mail since the Nicaraguan students don't have the internet. Challenge extensions include the sharing of poems, taking pictures and composing narratives in Spanish about what it's like to be a 9th grader in the US.

Exchanges will take place between AHS students and native Spanish speakers at least once a week as part of a collaborative program with The Adult Education Center. Conversation partners are security screened by the Adult Ed Center before coming to AHS and will participate in "intercambios" or language exchanges with our students. Each week, conversation partner teams are given a topic by the instructor to discuss both in English and Spanish. AHS students will debrief the exchanges following their experiences.

Cooking in Spanish

Students will learn new vocabulary and Spanish terms associated with cooking so that they can make some delicious creations. Students will practice working with Spanish recipes, writing and translating instructions on cooking their dishes. Students will also create their own menus in Spanish and work together to prepare their dishes for their peers. Teachers have generously offered to judge the results as we assess this project not only in the classroom but at the dinner table!



Focus on Immigration

Students will view the movie "El Inmigrante" and participate in a curriculum that accompanies the film. Students will engage in role plays exploring immigration. We'll watch and discuss examples of Immigration Theater, such as "Teatro del Campasino" and invite a professional member of our community in to do some theater activities with us. **Independently**, each student is also required to interview an immigrant living in Southwestern Colorado and present that experience to their class.

Physics Team B Cathy Cullicott *The Science of Rockets, Waves and Weaponry*



What do music, earthquakes, light, heat, sound, and heating food in the microwave all have in common? How do Newton's Laws apply to rocketry? What cool tricks can we do because of Bernoulli? Did Archimedes really run naked through the streets yelling Eureka? What do teeter-totters and bicycles have in common? These are just some of the questions guiding our physics explorations in semester two.

This spring, we're going to do the wave, dissect a rock and roll show, launch mini-rockets, sink some ships, experiment with air pressure and design our own mini weapons of classroom destruction. Bring an open mind, plan on working hard and get ready to tap into your inner scientist. Be sure to wear your safety goggles and look out for the flying marshmallows!

Second semester SIGs and X-Blocks

THE STUDENTS HAVE SPOKEN AND THE RESULTS ARE IN! REMEMBER A SIG STANDS FOR (STUDENT INTEREST GROUP) AND INCLUDE SOME OF AHS'S MOST POPULAR ELECTIVE OFFERINGS. THE FOLLOWING SIGS ARE BEING OFFERED SEMESTER 2:

Speech and Debate (John Fisher)

Like to argue and play with ideas - this is the sig for you. In this sig we will be debating a variety of controversial issues. Some possible topics include: The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, torturing of prisoners in the war on terror; water rights in Durango; whether and what the government should be able to tax; whether we should lower the voting age. Of course, you as a group will eventually decide which issues you want to debate.

Whose Line Is It, Anyway? (Colleen Dunning and Lori Fisher)

Participate in Improv activities. Learn skills that will help you present for an audience, think on your feet, and make others laugh. Improv allows for a safe environment where you can express yourself, gain self-confidence and have a great time! Making a fool of yourself is strongly encouraged.

Documentary Filmmaking (John Sheedy)

In this class we will explore how to use filmmaking to document social causes, the environment, and sports. Students will be introduced to basic camera techniques and editing on Final Cut Pro. They will also learn how to outline a documentary and how to capture action sports. Students are expected to all actively participate, ultimately creating a 5-10 minute video to share with the school.

Science of the Shred (Michael Ackerman)

We will be using algebra, physics, measurement, estimation and carefully collected data to explore the equations, applications and theories that power our sport. We will be responsible for the construction of Chapman Hill's terrain park and mogul lanes and will be using this experience to facilitate our scholastic endeavors. We will complete ongoing observations and refine mid semester projects related to our academic pursuits at Chapman. Later in the spring, we'll use the study of snow science as the foundation for our lessons as well as giving students a safe and thorough introduction to Colorado's magical snowpack in winter. This SIG is open to all students and **WE WILL NOT BE SKIING/ SNOWBOARDING** during this SIG- We will be in the building Monday afternoons and on the hill on Thursdays. Durango Freestyle and Big Mountain Ski Team athletes are encouraged to participate as well as non-skiing/riding AHS students. Follow all the action online at www.scienceoftheshred.blogspot.com

Achievement Skills—by invitation only! (Jeff DiGiacomo)

Everyone benefits from skills for achievement and success. If you need to learn or relearn study skills – organizational skills, assignment tracking skills, writing skills; and you need time – time to ask questions, time to complete work, time to learn techniques to help you succeed this class may be for you. If you feel you have need for this class and you have not received an invitation, please see Jeff.

Economics and Investments (Cara Tankersley)

Want to learn how to get rich? This SIG will focus on all aspects of investing in the market and how the US and global economy influence the market. Topics covered will be stocks, bonds, mutual funds, the business cycle, and fraud, as well as the basics like checking accounts and credit cards. Students will participate in a stock market simulation game where they are given the chance to hand pick individual stocks and create a portfolio that they will track throughout the course. The course will be supplemented with guest speakers who are in the investment world for a real life perspective on investing.





With the help of Fort Lewis College Environmental Center, students from the Sustainable Living SIG at Animas High School organized a river clean up. Students, teachers, friends and family met at Animas High School at noon on Saturday and began a riverside clean-up beginning at 32nd and working south. After two hours of litter clean-up, it was estimated that the crew picked up seventy-five pounds of trash! Among the items picked up was a shopping cart. It was also estimated that 90% of the trash picked up was related to alcohol. Through organizing and executing an event such as this, the students realize that they have the power to make a difference within their community.

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REMEMBER , X-BLOCKS ARE ANIMAS HIGH SCHOOL'S FITNESS BASED ELECTIVES. THE FOLLOWING X-BLOCKS ARE BEING OFFERED SEMESTER 2:

(sub)Urban Hiking (John Fisher)

Rain or shine, snow or hail, we will be out walking! We'll explore multiple routes from AHS. Expect to get your heart rate UP—we will be taking heart rates before and after each walk. No ambling, loitering, or shambling allowed. Bring warm winter clothes, because we will be walking regardless of weather.

SCUBA Diving: Open Water Certification (Lori Fisher)

Want to swim with sharks, breath underwater, and find Nemo? Here's your chance! We are partnering with Splash Down to offer the PADI Open Water Diver Course. During this course, students will be learning everything they need to be a safe and competent diver, including dive physiology, physics, safety procedures, equipment, and planning. Students who have completed this course will be eligible for a diving trip to Belize that is being planned for Project Week next year (March 2011). **ADDITIONAL COSTS APPLY.** See Lori for details.

Flag Football, Soccer, and Ultimate Frisbee (Jake Lauer)

Do you love you sports? Do you enjoy a little friendly competition? Wanna have some fun running around like crazy in the snow, rain and sleet? Then this is the X-Block for you. But be ready: we will be outside everyday regardless of the weather. So make sure you bring warm clothes and your sense of adventure. And don't worry if you have never played any of these sports. We will learn all of the rules, skills and techniques you need to have fun and become a superstar.

If You Can Walk You Can Dance... (Colleen Dunning)

Even if you think you can't dance, you can have a great time and get some exercise while we all learn some sweet dance moves. We will bring in members of the community to teach a variety of dance, perhaps some salsa, hip-hop, ballroom, swing... Get down with your bad se(lf and earn some fitness credit.

Aikido: A Japanese Martial Art (Cathy Cullicott)

Come learn how self-defense is about much more than just fending off an attacker, and let Cathy teach you how to throw her, and your classmates, across the room! No prior experience is necessary, and Fall semester students are welcome (and encouraged!) to sign up again.



NOW ENROLLING for the CLASS of 2014!

Animas High School, Southwestern Colorado's Newest Charter School of Choice is excited to announce the opening of enrollment for the incoming class of 2014. Animas High School values:

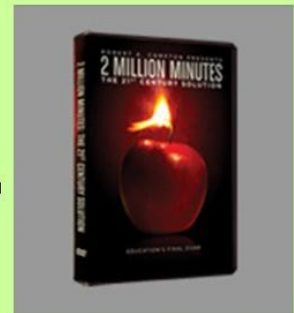
- Rigorous academics, where all students are challenged
- A culture of excellence, where students exceed high standards
- Strong faculty-student relationships, where students are well known
 - Engaging learning

8th Grade Students and Families, Don't Miss These Upcoming Enrollment Events:

2 Million Minutes- Durango Premier!

Enrollment Kick-Off Event 1/14/2010 6:00PM at AHS Campus

Join AHS for a free showing of Robert Compton's compelling new documentary 2 Million Minutes- The 21st Century Solution. Animas High School is excited to bring this provocative documentary to Durango which explores education reform in the 21st Century. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to see the movie that's sparking dialogue across the United States. Learn more about the film at www.2mminutes.com or by visiting www.animashighschool.com



Class of 2014 Student Tours and Shadow Experiences

Students interesting in enrolling at AHS have the opportunity to tour Animas High and/or shadow a current AHS 9th grader. Reservations for shadows and tours must be set up ahead of time and space is extremely limited. Call AHS-AHS4 today to save your space for one of the following dates:

AHS Shadow Experiences- 1/22, 1/29, 2/12 and 2/19

(students arrive at 8AM and are teamed up with an AHS Student Ambassador. Students shadow until 12:30PM)

CLASS of 2014 AHS Tours- 1/22, 1/29, 2/12 and 2/19

(students arrive at Noon and are finished at 1:00 PM- AHS Student Ambassadors conduct tours and answer questions)

2010 AHS Info Nights-1/20, 1/26, 2/8 and 2/18

Join AHS Head of School Michael Ackerman for an informational slide show and Q & A session about Animas High School. AHS faculty and student ambassadors will also be on hand to talk about the AHS experience, our academic programs and our school's unique culture of excellence. No sign-up necessary! All Info nights will be held at Animas High School, 3206 North Main Street Durango and are held from 6:00 to 7:30 PM.



Interest in AHS's incoming class of 2014 is extremely high and SPACE IS LIMITED!

To enroll, please visit www.animashighschool.com or call (970-AHS-AHS4) for more info