



Mears Middle School

Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

Friday, March 27, 2020

YouTube Link: [Mears Principal Address, Friday, March 27, 2020](#)

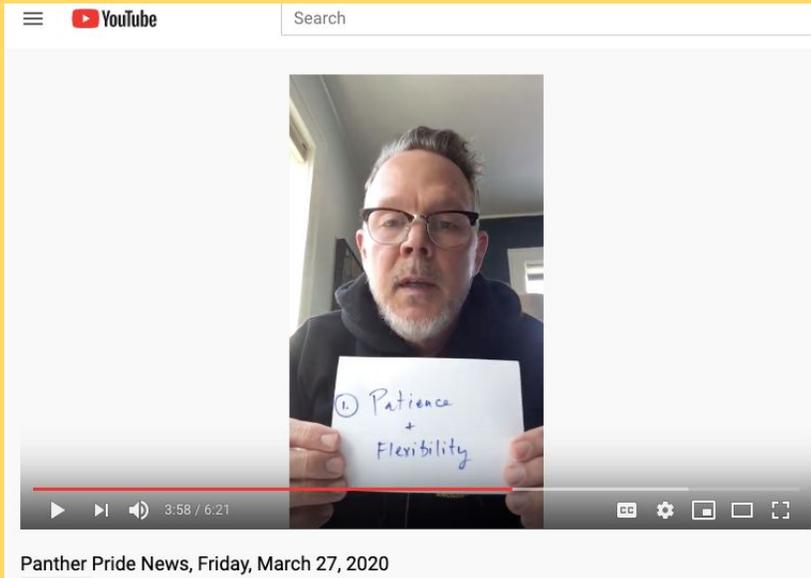
Online Launch Begins, March 31



Mears Teachers and Staff meet by Zoom on Funny Hat Friday, March 27, 2020.

Mears Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you and all of our students doing well. As we head toward the end of our second week of school closure, there are a number of important announcements to make, which are included in this newsletter. Most notably, the teachers and staff at Mears are pleased to announce that we are preparing to launch the first stage of online learning next week on Tuesday, March 31st. We are very excited to re-engage with our students!



The transition to online learning is truly monumental and is being made possible due to the dedication and hard work of teachers and staff throughout the Anchorage School District. It is no small feat to prepare thousands of staff and 50,000 students for an online learning experience. And, yet, we are scheduled to begin the rollout in just a few days.

This historic shift will move teachers and students from the centuries-old model of teaching

and learning face-to-face to one that works remotely. Given the nature of the change, it is important that we remind one another of a few crucial points: 1) to be patient with ourselves and each other as we learn a new way of teaching and learning, 2) that we commit to doing our very best each day, and 3) to always try to be grateful for the good things we have in our lives.

I, for one, am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to work on behalf of the students, families, teachers, and staff who make up this wonderful school community.
--Eric

Important Updates:

Online Learning Launch:

The transition to online learning in ASD will occur in stages, with different subjects being phased in and introduced over the coming weeks:

Tuesday, March 31 -- English Language Arts and Mathematics

Monday, April 6 -- Science and Social Studies

Monday, April 13 -- Electives

Teachers will keep a daily Office Hours schedule when students can check in with their teachers for feedback and support. The Office Hour Schedule will be published soon. Stay tuned for updates.

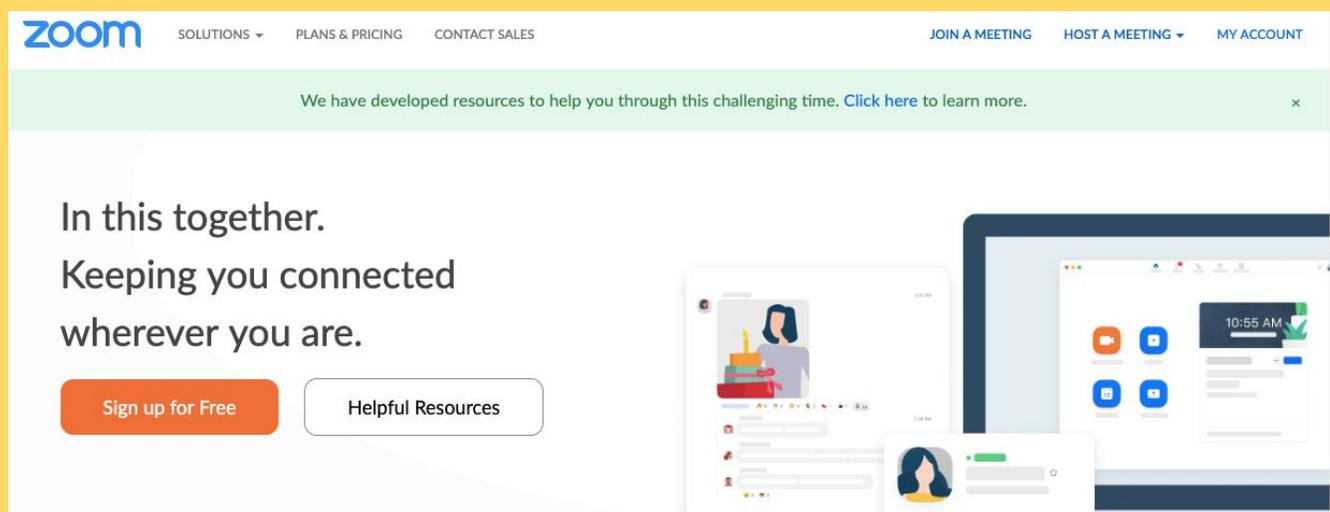
All teachers will be facilitating learning using the Canvas Learning Management System, which has been used successfully by teachers in ASD's iSchool over the last decade.

Curriculum is being organized by ASD teacher-led teams and is designed to ensure equity and accessibility. Providing access to all students is a high priority in the district and at Mears. For this reason, curriculum modules in the various subject areas will be uniform and all teachers will deliver content using the Canvas platform. We want to be sure that all of our students have the same opportunity to access content, as well as receive helpful support and guidance from teachers and staff.

In the next few days, more information will be provided by ASD and Mears about the specifics of online learning. Support will be provided to ensure that our students are able to connect with their teachers, log into their classes, and access the new online curriculum.

Communicating with Zoom:

Teachers and staff will be utilizing Zoom for video conferencing with students during Office Hours. Zoom will also be used to communicate with parents and families during this period of school closure. It is highly recommended that families download Zoom onto your devices to help facilitate communication.



Visit: <https://zoom.us/>

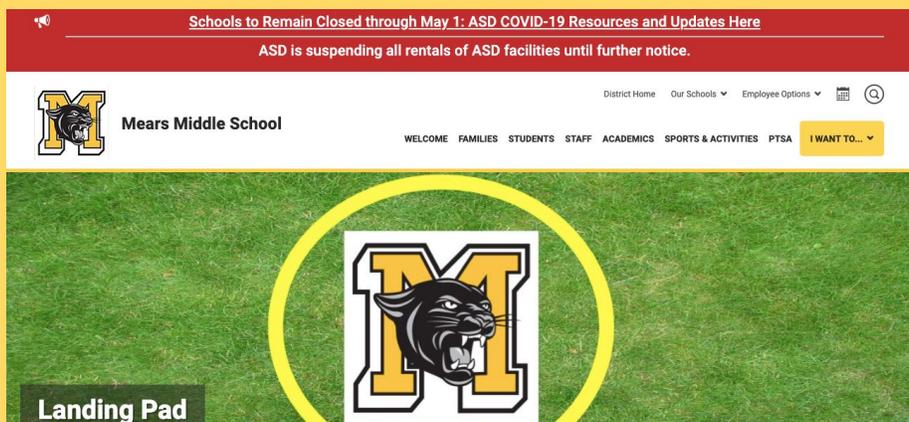
Technology Distribution:

ASD is working to ensure that students and families have the technology they need to access online curriculum. For the families who need it, the district aims to provide one Chromebook computer per family. The district may also assist with internet connectivity.

Mears website now includes information on all local Anchorage-based special offers for families looking for internet service. Please visit: [Internet Special Offers for Anchorage Students and Families](#)

Understandably, ASD will distribute Chromebook computers and modem hotspots to students in high school first, as they are working on completing credits toward graduation. Distribution to high schools is tentatively scheduled to begin on Monday, March 30. Technology for students in middle school will follow. More information about technology support for families will be sent out as soon as it is available.

Mears Website Updates:



[Mears Middle School Website](#)

Mears website now includes a landing pad for educational enrichment activities. We have also added a resource page for special internet service offers in Anchorage. [Internet Special Offers for Anchorage Students and Families](#), in addition to a menu of expanded counseling services (see below).

Mears Counseling Services:

In response to the increased need for counseling support during this challenging time, Mears has launched a landing page of counseling resources and services for our students and families. Please visit [Mears Counseling Services](#) to connect with Mears counselors for any support your student or family may need. We are here to help.

District Health Services

For students requiring nursing support, please coordinate with ASD Health Services at 907-742-4136 or email healthcareservices@asdk12.org. The District wants to provide any support possible to students who may be high risk according to CDC guidelines.

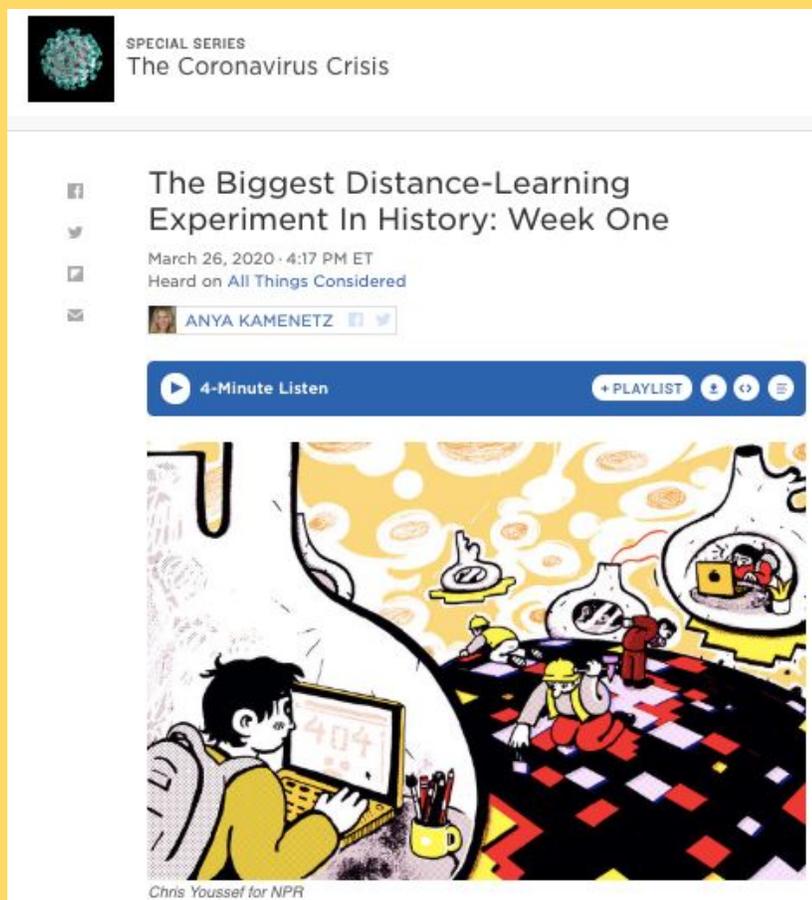
Student Nutrition

ASD Student Nutrition will continue food distribution of pre-packaged breakfast and lunch meals for any child 18 or younger at established food service sites. Mobile food service routes will remain scheduled to accommodate students and families unable to access the school distribution sites. Information on feeding sites and mobile bus route meal drop off can be accessed at this link: <https://www.asdk12.org/Page/15121>.

Educational Resources

The Family Resources link (<https://www.asdk12.org/Page/15108>) on the ASD COVID-19 website includes important information for families during the period of school closures.

⇐ Backman Recommends ⇒



The image is a screenshot of an NPR News article. At the top left, there is a circular logo with a virus-like pattern and the text "SPECIAL SERIES The Coronavirus Crisis". The main title of the article is "The Biggest Distance-Learning Experiment In History: Week One". Below the title, it says "March 26, 2020 · 4:17 PM ET" and "Heard on All Things Considered". The author's name, "ANYA KAMENETZ", is listed with social media icons. A blue bar below the author's name contains a play button icon, the text "4-Minute Listen", and a "+PLAYLIST" button. The main image is a cartoon illustration by Chris Youssef for NPR. It depicts a young boy with a backpack sitting at a desk with a laptop. The laptop screen shows a "404" error. In the background, there are several large, stylized virus particles. One of these virus particles is shown with a person inside it, looking at a laptop, symbolizing the concept of distance learning during a pandemic.

Listen to this 4-minute radio broadcast from NPR News:

[The Biggest Distance Learning Experiment in History](#)

Excerpt: “Thrown into the breach, public schools are setting out on an unprecedented experiment: With little training and even fewer resources, in a matter of days they're shifting from a system of education that for centuries has focused on face to face interaction, to one that works entirely at a distance.”



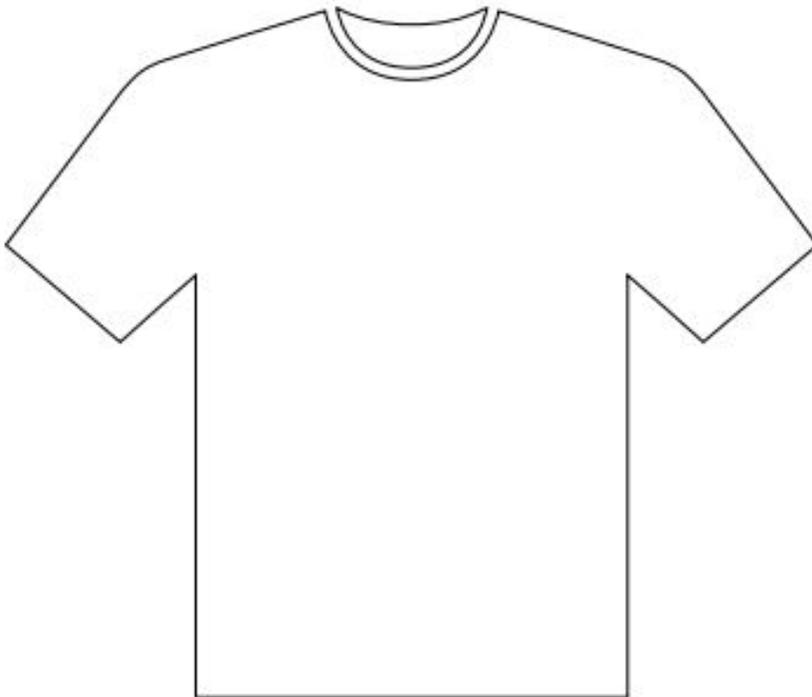
Mears Middle School Anchorage, AK

PTSA

ART CONTEST

In an effort to promote fun activities at home during this challenging time, Alaska PTA is having a weekly Art Contest. Next week they are having a virtual spirit week. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/akpta49/> to see more info.

8TH GRADE T-SHIRT CONTEST



Name: _____

Team: _____

RETURN BY MARCH 31, 2020

Email: mearms.ptsa@gmail.com or mail to PO Box 92948 Anchorage, AK 99509

Requirements:

Shirt will be white or gray

Print Color Green (Freshman color for Dimond)

Design suggestions: Graduation Year 2024.
Don't include Mears, Dimond, Freshman.

Image only on Front or back of shirt.

WINNING DESIGN WILL BE ANNOUNCED

APRIL 10.

Memory Books online ordering www.ybpay.com \$35

Order today. Don't delay and be the parent that your student didn't get a memory book. NEW this year - you can personalize the memory book with your student's name. Its an additional \$5. Order online and receive a free wall calendar or easel from Shutterfly.

Personalization deadline is April 6. Pre Orders without personalization are due May 15th. We will only have 400 books for sale. This includes the presales. Currently, we have sold 170 books.

FOR SALE

MEMORY BOOK
\$35
IMAGE ABOVE SHOWS PERSONALIZED COVER.

This has turned into a year we will never forget. Now is the Time to order this years memory book. We will have very limited amounts available when they come in. Be sure to PRE-ORDER TODAY!!

GO TO
WWW.YBPAY.LIFETOUGH.COM
SCHOOL CODE: 13921120

Make checks payable to Mears PTSA or pay with a credit card online www.ybpay.com



Mears Middle School Mission

Through teamwork and cooperation, all students become partners in their own educational progress, fostering self-respect, responsibility and integrity.

[Mears Middle School Website](#)