



Mears Middle School

Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

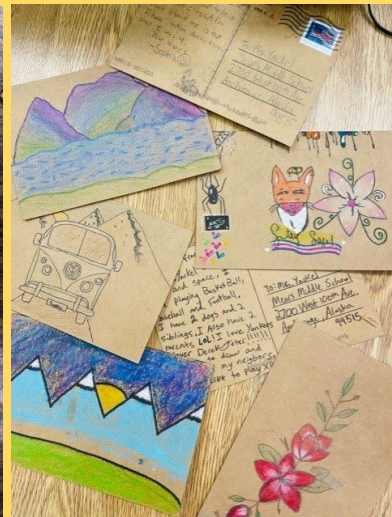
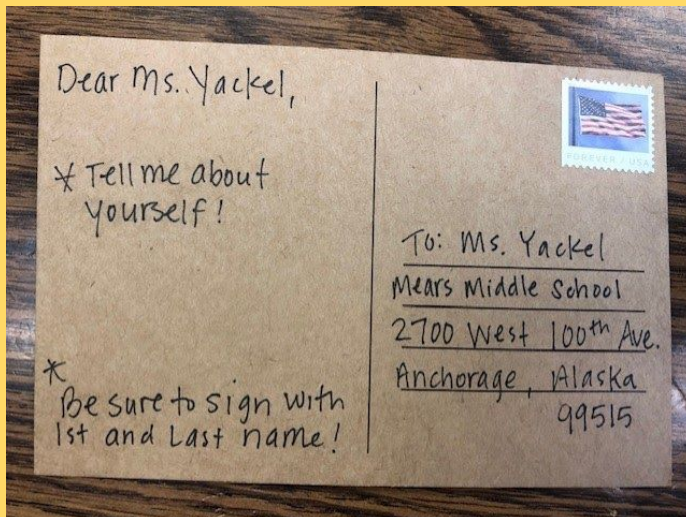
Friday, January 15, 2021

Mears Yearbook Cover Art Winner



A big congratulations goes out to Oriah Jensen, Mears 8th grader, whose artistic talents have been recognized by the yearbook staff. Oriah's creative cover for the 2021 yearbook captures Mears' upbeat school spirit, while also reminding readers of the unique and truly historic school year it has been. On behalf of the entire school community, thank you, Oriah, for sharing your talent with our school community. Go Panthers! --Eric

“Post-Card-It-Up” USPS Mail-in Art Project



In Ms. Kat Yackel's art classes, students were given a project which required them to use the US Post Office to mail in their assignment. Ms. Yackel had this to say about this innovative project:

“In each student's art supply kit, I have included a blank postcard, with postage. Their assignment is to design the post card, tell me about themselves, and mail it to me at Mears. It's been really fun to receive these, get to know my students, and have new art in the art room. (Sidenote: I also realized that in this day and age of communicating mostly by email, texting, etc., many students did not know how to address a post card. I'm glad that I was able to teach them!). --Ms. Yackel

Meet Your Quarter 3 Teachers and Teams



Mears Parents and Families,

As a result of the restrictions of distance learning, parents and families do not have the same opportunities to get to know your student's teachers as you would during a traditional school year. So, in an effort to make sure you get to know your teachers, Mears teachers and Collaborative Teams have created introduction videos.

Be sure to take a few moments to watch the new [Mears Teacher and Team Videos](#).



BLACKSTONE TEAM

The videos will give you the opportunity to get to know your student's 3rd quarter teachers, along with the learning objectives and goals of the classes they teach. Mears 7th and 8th grade Collaborative Teams have also produced introduction videos, so you can get to know the teacher teams that support your students.

Stay Informed and Get Involved

Teachers and Staff

Monday/Jan. 18 --

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday



[9 Ways to Honor MLK's Legacy, NY Times](#)

Tuesday/Jan. 19 --

Small In-school, In-person Program begins
Planning and CT before and after school

Wednesday/Jan. 20 --

Staff Meeting, 9:00-10:00am
Canvas Open Hours Support Session, 10:00-11:00am
CT Leaders, 10:30am-12:00pm
Departments, 12:45-1:45pm
Leadership Team, 2:00-3:00pm

Thursday/Jan. 21 --

Planning and CT before and after school

Friday/Jan. 22 --

Planning and CT before and after school

ASD Return to School Update

ASD Back-in-School

Key Points

- ▶ The plan prioritizes elementary school students returning first because of their challenges with online remote instruction.
- ▶ The plan addresses equity concerns by identifying students who may need extra support in middle school and high school.
- ▶ The plan allows the District and community to build confidence in the mitigation protocols and provides time to make adjustments while phasing students back into schools.
- ▶ Prioritizing in-person school for small groups of students who need additional support will reduce some of the need for summer school and keep more students on track for graduation.
- ▶ ASD Virtual will remain an option for all grade levels.
- ▶ The District will continue making announcements around the 1st and 15th of each month.

Mears Families,

Beginning next week, middle and high schools throughout ASD will be reopening their doors to small groups of students for in-person support and instruction. While the majority of students in the district are generally showing success while learning online, the students selected for the small in-school programs have demonstrated a need for additional support.

At Mears, we are excited to welcome back a cohort of about 35 students, who were invited to attend based on meeting certain criteria. Due to ongoing safety mitigation efforts and the need to continue to staff Mears' robust online educational program, staffing for the in-school program is limited. Therefore, Mears in-school program will remain small and focused on those students who have already been selected.

ASD Back-in-School



Elementary Students

January 19, 2021

- Pre-K-2, K-6 self-contained special needs programs, and the Whaley School will begin in-person school for 5.5 hours each day.
- Grades 3-6 will continue with current online and Zoom classes; however, the District's goal is to bring them back as soon as possible after Pre-K-2.
- The District will monitor COVID-19 transmission, mitigation strategies, and staffing levels to determine when grades 3-6 can safely return.
- ASD will notify families in advance of the return date for grades 3-6 so they can plan accordingly.
- Select elementary schools with unique programs may bring additional grades of students back along with Pre-K-2.

Middle and High School Students

January 19, 2021

- Selected students who need extra support will begin in-person, small-group classes for 5.5 hours each day.
- All other students will continue with online and Zoom classes through the third quarter.
- Parents and students will be notified before the holiday break with details about their individual class schedules.

March 15, 2021

- At the beginning of the fourth quarter, middle and high school students will return to in-person school.
- Beginning at the fourth quarter allows schools to effectively build schedules to coincide with criteria for earning credit toward graduation.

The small in-school program at Mears will support students, while at the same time allow school personnel the opportunity to fine tune safety protocols and build community confidence as we prepare for a broader reopening of school at the beginning of 4th quarter on March 15.

Here is a link to the [ASD School Safety Plans](#), where you will find all the details for Mears' Covid safety protocols.

As always, I will continue to provide our school community with updates in this newsletter, which is published every Friday.

In the meantime, thank you all for your ongoing support for all of our students and for Mears' incredible teachers and staff. Go Panthers! --Eric

Panthers are Writers

January Writing Contest

FLASH FICTION or The Super Short Story



- Tell a story in 200 words or less.
- **Categories:**
 - > “No, not my cell phone.”
 - > “Tik Tok gone viral.”
 - > “COVID--blocked and unfriended.”
- Deadline: Friday, January 29th.

For all contest details go to:

<https://sites.google.com/asdk12.net/mears-creative-writing-contest/home>



Mears Middle School

[District Home](#) [COVID Incident Report](#) [Our Schools](#) [Employee Options](#) [Log In](#) [Search](#)

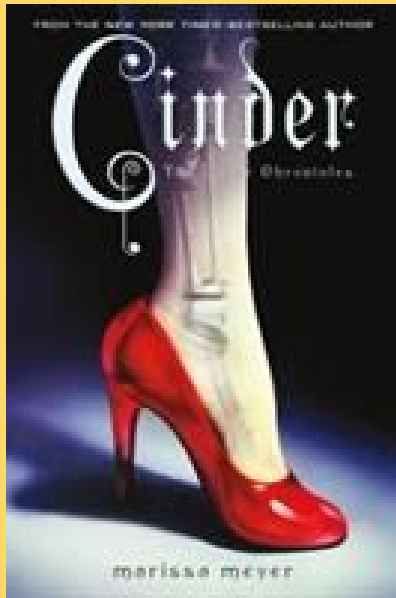
[WELCOME](#) [FAMILIES](#) [STUDENTS](#) [STAFF](#) [ACADEMICS](#) [SPORTS & ACTIVITIES](#) [PTSA](#) [I WANT TO...](#)

CREATIVE WRITING... STORYTELLING CONTEST
DECEMBER

CONGRATULATIONS!
1st Place: Ella Wheelles 2nd Place: Winry Olivieri

Panthers are Readers

Mears Reads Book Club



EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

February's book club meeting will be on Tuesday, February 16th, at 2:15PM. We will be discussing *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer.

Each month, there are artful activities, dazzling discussions, dynamic debates and venerable voting!

If you would like to join us on Feb. 16th contact Mrs. Fleming at 742-6432, fleming_heather@asdk12.org, or through a student's Inbox in Canvas, to ask for the Zoom link.

Mears Counseling Corner

If you need any assistance in preparing for the 3rd quarter, please let our counselors know by filling out a HELP Ticket:

<https://www.asdk12.org/domain/4978>

Welcome to Mears Counseling!

Counselors: Caitlin Burr, Brent Haugen, & Crysta Svendsen



Mears Counseling is a place where students can contact their counselor, find resources, and have a safe place to connect.

Your Counselors

Brent Haugen,
907-742-6428

Caitlin Burr,
907-742-6424

Crysta Svendsen,
907-742-6426

Does Your Family Need Some Extra Support?

CARES Act Voucher (Gift Card) Program Application

Introduction

The Voucher Program is made possible through CARES Act funding from the Municipality of Anchorage. This program will provide vouchers to individuals and/or families living within the municipality to help them with certain daily expenses such as groceries, diapers, medication, gasoline, etc. The vouchers will be made up of non-transferable gift cards from local participating stores that can be redeemed for those daily expenses. You will receive one voucher per address with the exception of those living in a residential program that requires sharing a physical address. Households including minor children are eligible for an increased benefit.

[CARES ACT Voucher Application](#)

Recently Updated: ASD's Health and Safety Covid Matrix

ASD's planning and decision-making process for determining the District's risk level for conducting school takes multiple community factors into consideration. The District conducts this process in close conversation with the Municipality of Anchorage and the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

In recent months, organizations such as the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the World Health Organization have expanded their guidance and resources regarding safely providing public education. This new information includes a range of metrics and other criteria that allows districts, in close coordination with state and local health officials, to revise and adapt school opening guidelines based on the unique context of their community.

Here is a link: [ASD's Covid Matrix](#)



Congratulations to Mears' New President Curt Ehrhart and Sheila Hill as our new Treasurer.

Mears PTSA still has open leadership positions, including Vice President and Secretary. Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering to support this great organization and our wonderful school community.

Thank you for the continued support of the Mears PTSA. Our school store sells PE approved clothing, beanies, baseball caps, hoodies, and more is online www.MearsPTSA.com.

Join Mears PTSA Membership and become part of an organization that is the leading Child advocacy group in the Nation. You not only become a member of Mears, but Alaska PTA and National PTA membership benefits include Office Depot/Office Max, Hertz, and more. Learn more at www.MearsPTSA.com



Ways you can help us raise funds doing your day to day shopping and holiday shopping.

Fred Meyer Community Rewards



YOU CAN HELP Mears Middle School PTSA **EARN DONATIONS**

JUST BY SHOPPING WITH YOUR FRED MEYER REWARDS CARD!

Fred Meyer donates over \$2 million per year to non-profits in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, based on where their customers tell them to give. Here's how the program works:

- Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Mears Middle School PTSA at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for us by our name or by our non-profit number FT042.
- Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping Mears Middle School PTSA earn a donation!
- You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today.
- If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk of any Fred Meyer store.
- For more information, please visit www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards.

Addressing Current Events in the Classroom

Mears Families, Teachers, and Staff,

I am writing to you all to acknowledge the significance of current events, specifically last week's tragic and violent assault on our nation's Capitol during the meeting of the US Congress.

No doubt, each of us has been impacted by this tragic event and its aftermath in a variety of ways. While our perspectives and interpretations of the event may in some cases differ, we are all united in our obligation to educate and support our students during this confusing and volatile time.

We are also bound by our commitment to foster a healthy and cohesive school community that supports a wonderfully diverse group of students and their families. To this end, it is important to acknowledge

the institutions and values we all hold dear and, as public educators, are committed to supporting: The US Constitution and the democratic process, The Rule of Law, The Bill of Rights and the guarantee of equality, the intrinsic value of people from diverse backgrounds in our own community and across the nation, and a strong, unequivocal opposition to violence.



As parents and educators during these trying times, we are all grappling with questions about how best to respond to the moment in our homes and classrooms. Like each of us, our students are being impacted by current events and they deserve understanding and guidance, as well as the time and space necessary for reflection and respectful dialogue.

The following are a collection of resources that you are invited to reference as you consider how best to address current events in the days and weeks to come. Each includes an array of resources designed to promote understanding of events (past and present), media literacy, personal reflection, and healthy and respectful discourse.

Of course, each of you--parents, family members, teachers and staff-- in your own way, will determine the best and most appropriate approach to take with your students. Above all else, I know that every one of us will offer our students a welcome and supportive space to continue to learn and grow. --Eric

<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-to-teach-the-u-s-capitol-attack-dozens-of-resources-to-get-you-started/2021/01>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/educator-resources/current-events/responding-insurrection-us-capitol>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/learning/teaching-resources-to-help-students-make-sense-of-the-rampage-at-the-capitol.html>

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](#)