



Mears Middle School

# Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

Friday, January 7, 2022

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## *Mears Students are Back in Action*



This week, Mears Middle School enjoyed the return of students and staff following the two week winter break. Students returned for the second semester and enjoyed reconnecting with friends, classmates, and their teachers and staff. Pictured here are students in Ms. Sison's Drama class, who are playing a fun get-to-know-you game on their first day back.

**Go Panthers!**

# Lunchtime Walking: A Health Choice



More students than ever before this school year are walking the track at lunch. This activity seems to have become more popular as the new no-phone rule has gone into effect. At Mears, we are pleased to see students taking advantage of the opportunity to connect with their classmates while getting some exercise at the same time.

# Free Time Play at Lunch

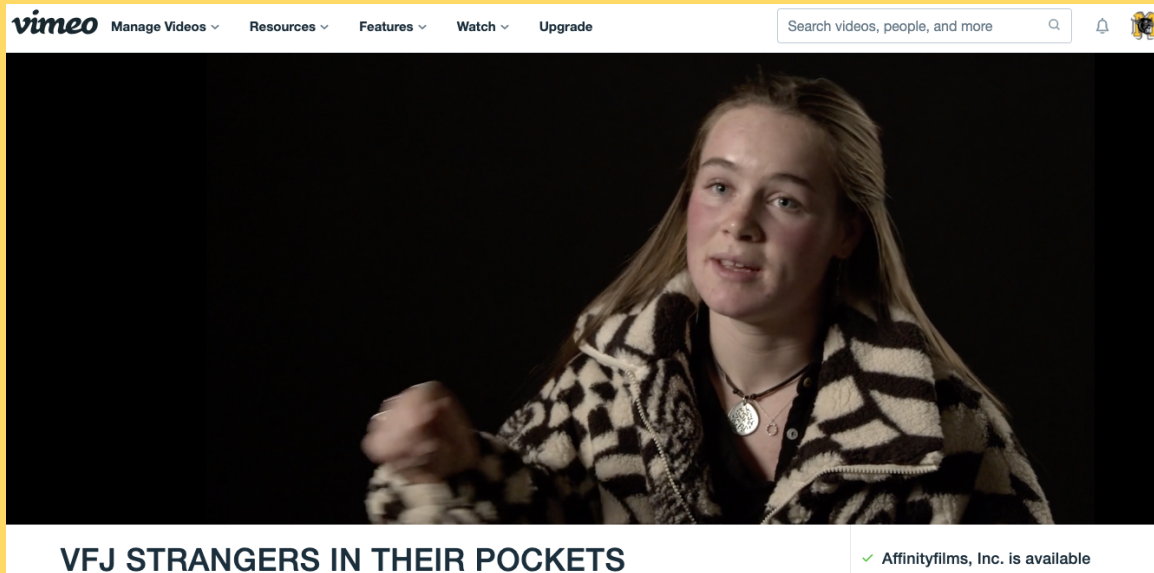


Many students at Mears enjoy playing basketball and volleyball during their lunch break. These activities are another fun and healthy option for students to socialize and play.

# Stay Informed/Get Involved

Wednesday, Jan. 12 – Mears Leadership Team Meeting, 3:00-4:00pm, Library

## Strong Start to Mears New Electronic Device Policy



### [Cell Phones & Social Media Video](#)

Mears Families,

We've been incredibly proud of your students for adhering to the new Mears electronic-device policy. In general, students have shown tremendous discipline, keeping phones and other electronic devices stored during the school day. We're also seeing a great deal of socializing that at times wasn't occurring when screens were an option.

Relevantly, ASD has asked that we share the video above, which emphasizes the importance of monitoring students' social-media behavior.

At any rate, thanks for your support and enjoy the start of the new year.

Sincerely,  
Mike Scott,  
Mears AP

# Mears Electronic-Device Policy Reminder



Mears Families,

We're truly proud of how well students are doing with the new electronic-device policy

If the policy is violated, devices will be picked up by family at the front window. We recognize this is an imposition for families, so please speak to your students about not using phones during the day.

Please call or email if you have any questions.  
Sincerely,

Mears Administration

## Bag and Backpack-Free Hallways

Students are doing a great job adhering to the policy.

We've made this decision for three reasons:

1. Safety: We recognize that a school without bags and backpacks in the hallways is inherently safer because items are visible to staff at all times.
2. Clarity: Despite our best efforts to define appropriately-sized bags and backpacks this quarter, students continue to have a hard time distinguishing; by eliminating backpacks we're able to ensure a crystal-clear message and prevent behavioral infractions related to bag/backpack use.
3. Opportunity: Now students have the opportunity to fully employ their lockers, making backpack use unnecessary.

In short, we're convinced that keeping our hallways bag and backpack free starting January 3rd will result in many benefits for our students.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me.

Regards,

Mike Scott

Mears AP

[scott\\_michael@asdk12.org](mailto:scott_michael@asdk12.org)



# Mears Activities Update

Cross Country Skiing and Boys Basketball start right after the break, so if you're interested, please submit your paperwork in advance.

**Families must fill out the following forms for students to participate in sports:**

- Middle School Participation Form
  - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xnIL0dz4uKW6YsMk\\_MrWGZd4mjAkPMj5/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xnIL0dz4uKW6YsMk_MrWGZd4mjAkPMj5/view)
- COVID-19 Supplemental Waiver of Liability
  - <https://www.asdk12.org/cms/lib/AK02207157/Centricity/Domain/4260/COVID-19%20Waiver.pdf>
- COVID-19 Return To Play
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vsUwRmFJTh5s4ecdD0wJ2PW8ywX2-J5U/view>
- Health Examination Form
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11I5oSifxCsx-F-MNlknP6hBp0FPtELfeI/view>

Added to these forms, if a student has tested positive for COVID-19 in the three months prior to the activity, families should fill out the **COVID-19 Return-To-Sports** form.

Forms can be scanned and emailed to our AAFP: [spartz-hays\\_robin@asdk12.org](mailto:spartz-hays_robin@asdk12.org) or dropped off at the school by your student near the main office between periods 1 and 2: designated basket supervised by Ms. Spartz-Hays.

Visit Mears website for all activities updates and information:  
<https://www.asdk12.org/domain/4260>

## Upcoming Activity Events



### **Cross Country Skiing**

This exciting event begins on January 6th. Submit your paperwork soon!

### **Boys Basketball**

This popular sport starts on January 10th. Submit your paperwork soon!

# Panthers Write!

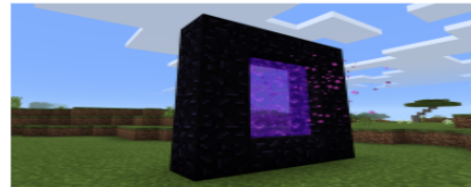
## January Writing Contest

## Exploring Portals

C. S. Lewis used a wardrobe, J. M. Barrie used the second star to the right, and Lewis Carroll used a rabbit hole—each a gateway to another world. This month, pick an object that is important to you and transform it into a portal to an alternate world. Write a story about someone discovering the portal and adjusting to life where everything is foreign. Take into consideration where this secret passage is located and what it feels like to pass through it.

The deadline is Friday, January 28th. Stories can be no more than 1,000 words. Please submit stories to the Panther Participation course inside Canvas..

## Exploring Portals

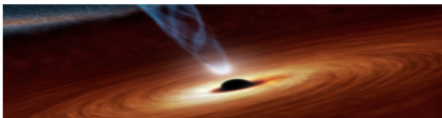


Consider the following questions as you plan your story:

- What world will the main character travel to?
- Who will be in your story?
- How will they be transported?
- What awaits them in this new place?
- Do they return, and if so, how?



**[Click here to begin your story.](#)** (Have your Googledrive open.)





## Submission Guidelines:

Go to Panther Participation.  
Click on January Writing Contest.  
Click "Start Assignment" at the top.  
Select "Google" tab. (Must have your ASD Googledrive open.)  
Find and select your story.  
Click submit.

**[Click here to submit in Panther Participation.](#)**

Deadline is Friday, January 28th.

## **December, 2021**

### **Writing Contest Winners**

Thank you to the Mears writing community for submitting so many excellent flash fiction stories. It was a difficult decision, but after reading the many entries multiple times, the judges selected this month's winners.

In first place, for her story, "The Mullet is Back," is Caitlyn Crombie.  
The runner-up, for "Help, my Cell Phone is in Jail," is Shanna Coonrad.

Read December's winning submissions here:

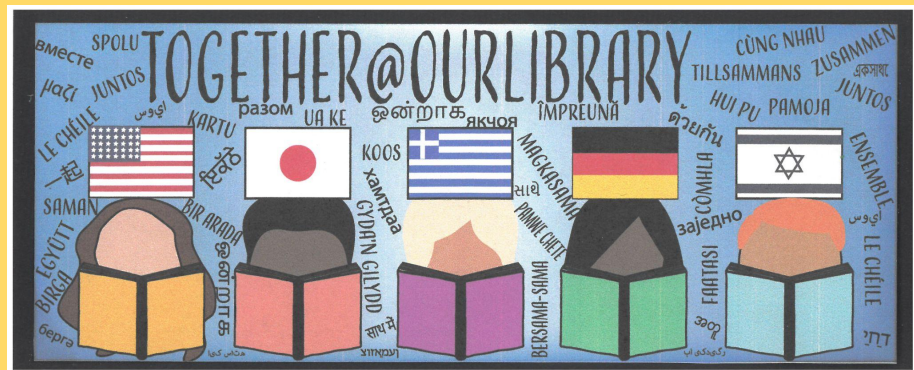
**[Mears Writing Contest Winners, Dec. 2021](#)**



# Library at Mears

## Bookmark Contest Winners

Please congratulate **Trinity Morel** (left, vertical) and **Addyson Solberg** (right, horizontal), the winners of the Mears Middle School bookmark contest. Their bookmarks will represent Mears in the district competition.



## Winter Read



A new selection of winter-themed books are on display outside the library.



# Mears Health Update

## Mears Welcomes Nurse Richards



The Mears community welcomes Ms. Karin Richards, our new school nurse. A graduate from UAA, Ms. Richards has worked in Texas as a neonatal intensive care nurse for the last ten years. She was born in Fairbanks, AK and grew up in North Pole. She recently moved back to Alaska with her husband and two dogs because they missed it so much.

Ms. Richards is excited to begin to her work as a middle school nurse and looks forward to getting to know Mears students and to support their health and wellbeing.

## Important Covid Health Reminders:

### Updated Resources for Families

- [COVID 19 Updates Home Screening Guidelines](#) (All languages may not be updated, but communications is working on this)
- [Return-to-School/Work Policy](#)

Other Important Links:

[Anchorage Covid Vaccination Info](#)

[ASD Covid Information Link](#)

## Mears Counseling Corner

Make sure your student has joined the counseling canvas page. Updates from the counseling office will be made throughout the year on Canvas. If students have not done so already, please have them click the invite link below.

Invite link: [Mears Counseling Canvas Page](#)

Caitlin Burr, 7th Grade  
[burr\\_caitlin@asdk12.org](mailto:burr_caitlin@asdk12.org)  
907-742-6424

Crysta Svendsen, 8th Grade  
[svendsen\\_crysta@asdk12.org](mailto:svendsen_crysta@asdk12.org)  
907-742-6428



### **PTSA Meeting Schedule**

Parents, family members, and students are all welcome and encouraged to participate in PTSA meetings. Be sure to mark your calendars and come join us to learn all the ways that PTSA supports the Mears school community.

## **Upcoming PTSA General Meeting -- Jan. 18, 2022 5:30pm**

Meeting Dates for Spring Semester: Feb. 22, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 3, 2022

### [Mears PTSA Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 958 2804 2654

Passcode: 124813

All meetings for the first semester will be held via zoom.

### **PTSA Volunteer Needs**

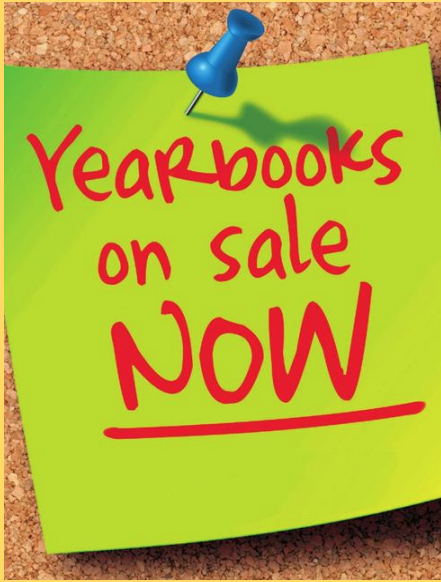
We are actively recruiting for Volunteers and for Open Board Seats and hope that you will join us! We specifically need volunteers for the following:

- Open Vice President Position
- Open Board Secretary Position
- School Store & Merchandise/ Morning and Lunchtime Shifts Now Available
- Merchandise Inventory
- Social Media Coordinator
- Yearbook Sales Promotion & Distribution

Are you interested in supporting Mears PTSA as a volunteer? If you'd like to learn more, please fill out this brief survey:

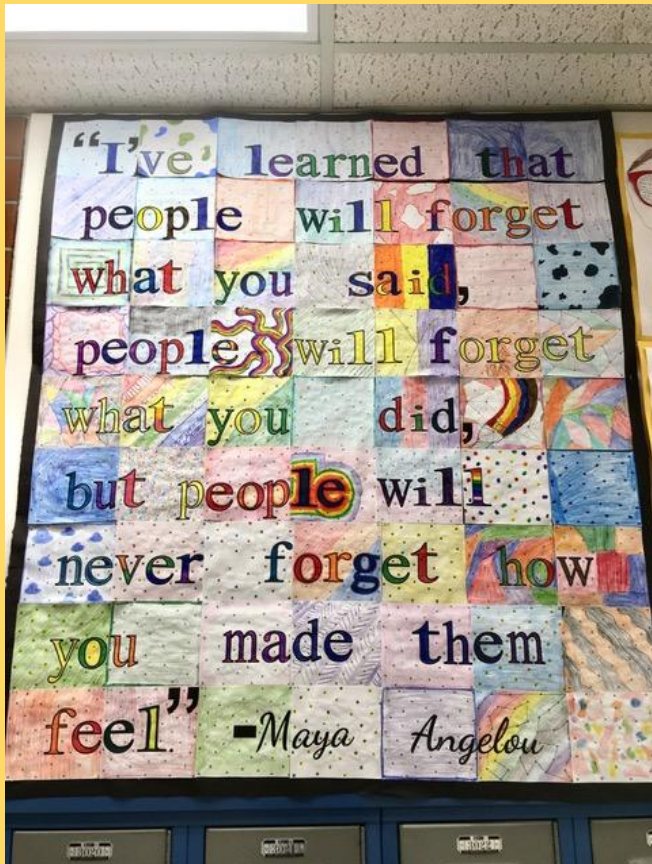
### [Mears PTSA Volunteer Interest Form, 2021-22](#)

# Mears 2021-22 Yearbook Sales Have Begun



2021 – 2022 Yearbooks are on sale now! Purchase your yearbook at [www.ybpay.com](http://www.ybpay.com) use Yearbook ID: 13921122 Mears PTSA

## Inspiration



Thank you to Mr. Williams and his students for always providing the Mears community with inspiring words and images that make us think, wonder, and aspire to be our best.





## **We are on Dena'ina Homeland**

Mears Middle School acknowledges that we operate and gather on the traditional land of the Dena'ina Peoples and honor, with gratitude, the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

## **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](#)