



Mears Middle School

Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

Friday, March 19, 2021

It's a New Day



On Monday and Tuesday, March 15-16, Mears Middle School proudly welcomed students back into the school building for the beginning of the 4th quarter. Pictured here is Ms. Kehle Middleton with her geometry students during their daily nutrition walking break. Students and staff alike are enjoying the opportunity to interact and learn together after an entire year of separation and remote, online learning. Indeed, it is a new day! --Eric

Covid Safe Classrooms



Pictured here are orchestra students in Mr. Matthew O'Conner's class, Ms. Mia Sison's English Language Arts, and Ms. McLaughlin's Design and Modeling class. The photos capture classroom environments at Mears during our first week back to school, and illustrate Mear's commitment to social distancing, mandatory mask-wearing, and the use of protective shields located in certain classrooms. Mears teachers, staff, and students have done a tremendous job following the Mears 10-Point Safety Plan and other Covid mitigation measures.

Mears 10-Point Safety Plan



10-Point Panther Path of Safety

- 1 When on the Mears campus, keep your mask on at all times.
- 2 Maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and your fellow students.
- 3 Please always walk the one direction indicated by the hallway arrows.
- 4 Do not gather or socialize in the hallways: go directly to your class each period.
- 5 Do not touch your face.
- 6 Frequently wash your hands and use hand sanitizer.
- 7 Request to use the restroom and place your restroom marker outside.
- 8 Lockers will not be used.
- 9 No guests in the building: students and staff only.
- 10 Be safe for yourself and others.

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.

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

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

Important Reminders For the Return to School

1. 7th and 8th graders signed up for Mears in-person will attend school on M, T, Th, F.
 - Arrival time -- 8:30am
 - 1st period -- 8:45am - 10:15am
 - 2nd period -- 10:25am - 12:20pm (includes nutrition break)
 - 3rd period -- 12:30pm - 2:00pm
 - Bus pick up -- 2:00pm - 2:15pm
2. All Mears Online students will meet with their teachers on Wednesdays during **required** class periods:
 - 1st Block -- 10:15 - 11:15am
 - 2nd Block -- 11:25am - 12:25pm
 - 3rd Block -- 12:55 - 1:55pm
3. All Mears students can access meeting links and other important information about their classes on their teacher's Canvas pages.

Activities at Mears Middle School

During the 4th quarter, Mears will have two activities sessions: Session 1, 3/29-4/23; Session 2, 4/26-5/20. Session 1 will consist of Cross-Country Running and Soccer. Session 2 will tentatively include Track and Field, Tennis, and Outdoor Basketball. All of the activities will occur from 2:15-3:45, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

IMPORTANT NOTE: In-Person, Mears Online, and Mears students attending ASD Virtual or ASD home schools are welcome to participate in activities!

As always, the activities depend on student interest, so please sign up soon and secure your spot. Finally, all activities are intramural this quarter, meaning we will not compete with other schools, and we will not have spectators: All activities will occur on site. Additionally, there are no fees for intramural sports.

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

- Middle School Participation Form
- COVID-19 Supplemental Waiver of Liability
- Health Examination Form

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 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.

Please see the forms [attached to this email](#) or contact Mears Middle School if you have questions.

Mears Staff Meeting Schedule: For the week of March 22-26

Note: Department and Collaborative Team meetings will resume the week of March 29 - April 2.

Tuesday, March 23 -- Pick your Electives for next year Day!!
Dimond High zoom visits during 8th grade Math/Science classes
Future Fresham Fair, Class of 2025, 5:30 PM
PTSA Meeting, 6:00pm

Wednesday, March 24 -- Staff Meeting, 8:00-9:00am

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.

Here is a link: [ASD's Covid Matrix](#)
[New CDC Guidance for Schools](#)

Backman Recommends



This NY Times article showcases the incredible artwork that teenagers from around the nation have created during the pandemic. It's a wonderful reminder of how impressive and important the perspectives of young people are and is a celebration of artistic expression and student voice.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/08/learning/teens-pandemic-art.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

Mears Counseling Corner

It's Quarter 4!!! As this wild school year comes to a close, we will be looking forward to next school year and things each student needs to be aware of.

First - **Elective course requests** for all middle and high school students are happening via Q student connection. Each grade level has been given a different requesting window during which they can edit their requests an unlimited number of times until the windows close.

Next Year 7th grade students have until this Friday, March 19 to finalize their requests.

Next Year 8th grade course request window: March 22 - April 16

Next Year 9th grade course request window: March 22 - April 9

*Mears counselors will be showing 7th graders this process on 3/23 via zoom during class.

Second - **Dimond High Visits** - counselors will be zooming into the second half of all 8th grade Math/Science classes on Tuesday, 3/23 to talk "**High School**" and **course requests**.

Third - **Dimond High School Future Freshman Night - Tuesday, March 23, 2021 5:30pm - 7:00pm** <https://asdk12.zoom.us/j/94025226355?pwd=cDZ0N2lYdkdmSGFibUgyZm80Z28vQT09> Passcode: 549689

8th graders: Dimond has created an open Google Drive with all the important materials for incoming DHS Freshmen. Included are the **9th grade Honors application (due April 2)**, DHS Credit Checklist, Written directions for Online Course Selection, A "how to" video for course selection, DHS Freshman Course List, and the **Freshmen Fair Flyer**. Here is that magical link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1X1iHeHIN12AtcRF5IsSmyDTxaV27pRkg?usp=sharing>

*If your 8th grade student is not planning on attending Dimond High next year, please contact the school you are planning on attending for Future Freshmen information/dates.

If you need any assistance in preparing for the 4th quarter, please fill out a HELP Ticket: <https://www.asdk12.org/domain/4978>



Brent Haugen,
907-742-6428

Caitlin Burr,
907-742-6424

Crysta Svendsen,
907-742-6426

Visit this link to meet Mears Counselors:

<https://sites.google.com/asdk12.net/mearsteachervideointros/home>

Panthers are Writers

March Writing Contest



The Return: Write a story that includes a transition from online to in-person learning. (See next slides for details.)

Deadline for entries: Wednesday, March 31st.

Online-to-In-person Story



Write a story in which the main character moves back into the classroom after learning online for the previous year. Capture the first day back at school--feelings, thoughts, expectations, observations, the building, teachers and classmates. Your story can be fiction or nonfiction, or a blend of the two.

Returning to school...

- Stories can be written in conventional paragraph format, or can use alternate formats. Consider using blog posts, IM, or text messages to tell your story. Or a combination of several forms...!
- Stories should be no more than 1,000 words.
- Submit stories by following the directions inside the Panther Pride Canvas on or before Wednesday, March 31st.
- Link to Panther Pictures submission page:
<https://asdk12.instructure.com/courses/167345/assignments/3736105>



Mears March Creative Writing Contest

Results for the February "Write It Like Amanda" Mears Creative Writing Contest:

First place went to Kadee Farmer for her poem, "Bruised but Whole."

Runner-up was Ella Wheelles for her poem, "Weathered and Witnessed."

Congratulations to our winners, and thank you to all who submitted poems. All winning entries can be viewed online on Mears website.

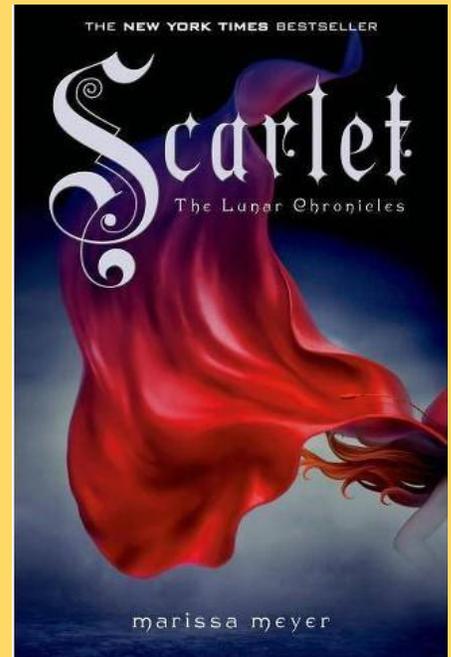
Panthers are Readers

Mears Reads Book Club

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

The next book club meeting will be on March 23rd, through Zoom. Yep, we will still use Zoom to meet. We are still determining what the meeting time will be. Students who are in school will have to get home before we start and we aren't sure how long it will take the busses to drop off students.

If you would like to join us contact Mrs. Fleming at 742-6432, fleming_heather@asdk12.org, or through a student's Inbox in Canvas to get the Zoom information.



PTSA Meetings

We have monthly meetings usually on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and you are welcome to attend. Here are our upcoming PTSA meeting held @ 6:00 pm via zoom

- March 23rd (after spring break)
- April 20th (Nominations for board positions accepted)
- May 11th (Vote in 2021/2022 board week prior to school ending)

PTA Fundraising Opportunity

2020 was a rough year for all businesses; the Black Cat Cafe is no exception. The lack of income means we need to get creative with our fundraising. Let me introduce my nominee: "Ducks 4 Bucks"!



Event Description:

We are selling Ducks for \$4 on our school store at the following link:

<https://mearsptsa.memberhub.store/store/items/671092>

We will securely attach your order number(s) to our yellow rubber duckies. These ducks will be fired from a *student* built [trebuchet](#) at a target 200 meters away. If the duck can successfully hit the target, you will be awarded a hoodie from our school store!

We currently sold more ducks than anticipated and we **need** PTSA assistance for this event.

I'm currently in **need** of

- social media type person
- graphics person
- writer
- few camera operators that are not afraid of flying ducks

More information at the **next** PTSA meeting. *By the way, did you pay this year's dues?*



<https://twitter.com/MearsPtsa>



Team Clothes Order Forms

- [Taku](#)
- [Echo](#)
- [Surprise](#)
- [Raven](#)
- [Muir](#)
- [Eklutna](#)
- [Blackstone](#)

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.

Amazon Smile smile.amazon.com/ch/92-0138999

Shutterfly <http://mearsptsa.shutterflystorefront.com>

Mears Artists Honor Health Care Workers



Students in Ms. Kat Yackel's art classes have created portraits to honor frontline healthcare workers. Above are colored pencil portraits by Katie MacDonald and her sister Kinsey MacDonald. On the left is a pencil illustration by Ms. Yackel.

On behalf of all of us at Mears, we deeply appreciate the service and sacrifices made by healthcare workers everywhere. --Eric

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](#)