



Mears Middle School

Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

Friday, April 17, 2020

Making the Best of Being at Home



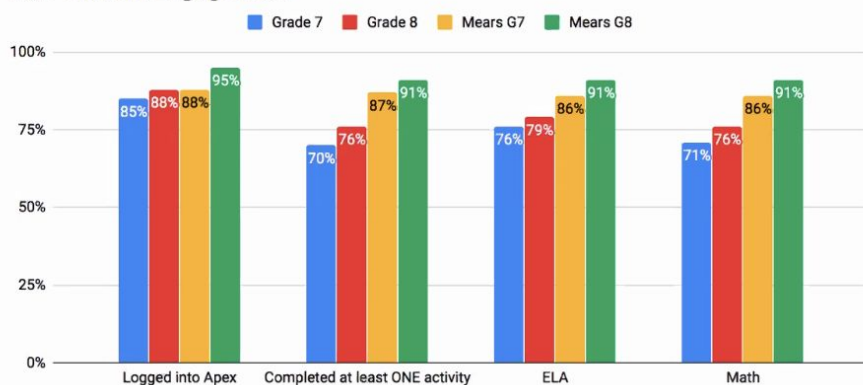
Check out the latest creation by Maddie Hechart, 8th grade. Her hand painted Converse are a stylish tribute to the popular podcast and novel Welcome to Night Vale. Maddie's initiative and creativity offer a terrific example of a Mears student who is using home social distancing time to discover and explore new things. In addition to completing their school work online and visiting with teachers during Office Hours, our students are encouraged to take full advantage of this unique time to be creative and engage in fun, new activities. Check out the podcast at: <http://www.welcometonightvale.com/>

Dear Mears Families,

I am pleased to report that as of Monday, April 13, the gradual three-week launch of core and elective classes is now complete. Mears' entire online learning program is now available to all students and our teachers and staff are thrilled to get back to the business of teaching and learning.

Student Engagement Report

ASD Student Engagement



With just six weeks of the school year remaining, it is vitally important that every student is connected and engaged with the online learning program. Due to school closures and the

challenges we face because of the Coronavirus, we have all lost valuable time this school year for learning and growth. This chart shows that Mears' current level of engagement in the online program is relatively strong, with nearly 90% of our students participating in distance learning. Of course, our goal is to have every student actively engaged and making the most of the time we have remaining this school year.

At this point, if your student has yet to connect with their teachers online during Office Hours for any reason at all, please be sure to reach out to Mears Counseling Office or Administration for assistance. Contact Ms. Beth Vongemmingen, Head Counselor, at 907-742-6424 or call Mears Main Office and leave a message for Mr. Eric Backman, Principal, or Mr. Mike Scott, Assistant Principal, at 907-742-6400.

At Mears, we are more committed than ever to preparing our students for success at the next level. It is, therefore, essential that all of us--to the extent that we are able--make sure to support and encourage all of our students to give their very best effort every day.

A very special thanks to all Mears families for your continued support, flexibility, and encouragement. We are all in this together! --Eric

Important Updates:

Finish Strong!

Education is vitally important to every one of our students. Academic engagement at school or at home strengthens us as individuals and as a community. School enriches our lives and makes us more thoughtful, creative, and empowered.

With just six weeks of the school year remaining, we need to do everything we can to promote Mears online learning program. Here are a few helpful talking points to use to promote effort and engagement at home.

- **Get Connected, Stay Connected.** Mears' goal is to have 100% of our students connected to their teachers and school through online learning.
- **For the next six weeks, we are all working to prepare students for the next grade level, which will be more challenging than the last.**
- **It is critical that we take full advantage of the limited time we have left this school year.**
- **Teachers will continue to offer encouragement and valuable feedback to support critical learning and growth.**
- **Be patient. Be kind. Do your best every day!**

Spring Office Hour Schedule: Strongly Encouraged, But Not Required

Mears' goal is to have EVERY STUDENT connected to their teacher and school through online learning. Be sure your student has the Mears Office Hour Schedule.

Mears Office Hours Schedule : Mears Office Hours					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-9 AM	Tutor Sessions for Sped, ELL, Tier II, and Tier III				
9-10 AM	Japanese/Spanish	P.E.	Japanese/Spanish	P.E.	Japanese/Spanish
10-11 AM	Math	Counselors	Math	Counselors	Math
11-12 PM	Language Arts	Band/Choir/Orchestra/Art	Language Arts	Band/Choir/Orchestra/Art	Language Arts
12-1 PM	Science	PLTW/Computer Tech./Video Production/SBP/FCS/	Science	PLTW/Computer Tech./Video Production/SBP/FCS	Science
1-2 PM	Social Studies	Service Learning/Study Skills/Health/Unlisted Electives	Social Studies	Service Learning/Study Skills/Health/Unlisted Electives	Social Studies
2-3 PM	Tutor Sessions for Sped, ELL, Tier II, and Tier III				
Office Hour Time Guide - Student Canvas courses will have the zoom office hour links and any updated office hour ti					

The online version of this schedule is available on Mears website under the "Welcome" sign. <https://www.asdk12.org/mears>

Students and their families are reminded that Office Hours are a designated time for students to get assistance in completing their online assignments. While Office Hours are not required, all students are encouraged to attend as often as possible. Daily routines and schedules can help improve productivity and will serve to keep students connected and engaged.

Every Office Hour session will be hosted by a teacher(s) on Zoom. Students have access to all Zoom meeting invitations, passwords, and ID#s in their Canvas accounts.

Device Distribution

Mears has now successfully distributed approximately 150 computer devices to our families. Should you need a computer to connect to the online program, please let a Mears staff member know. We will be sure to communicate your need to ASD's tech support team, so they can deliver a computer to your family. Please visit [Internet Special Offers for Anchorage Students and Families](#) if you are looking to improve connectivity at home.

Additionally, if you need technological assistance, or support of any kind, please call the ASD's help line: 907-742-HELP

Access to Student Personal Items:

As I am sure you are all aware, due to the potential threat of the Covid-19 virus, all school buildings in the district will remain closed for the remainder of the school year. Understandably, a number of families have begun to ask about retrieving their student's personal items from school. We are currently working with district leadership to devise a plan for pick up of essential items, while ensuring the health and safety of all community members. In the meantime, please know that all items at school are safe and secure.

We will communicate with our families about this matter as soon as we are able.

Last Chance: Climate and Connectedness Family Survey

Mears' Climate and Connectedness Family Survey is open for just one more day. The survey window closes today, Friday, April 17. Your input is extremely valuable to us, especially considering the role that school is now playing in each of our lives during the coronavirus pandemic. Help us become the very best school possible by taking a few moments to share your feedback with us.

School Name: Mears Middle School

Family Survey Link: [Mears Family Connectedness Survey](#)

Mears Counseling Services



**Mears Community
Outreach - Counseling
Department**

Please visit [Mears Counseling Services](#) to connect with Mears counselors for any support your student or family may need. We are here to help.

Mears counselors host Office Hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00-11:00am.

Student Activities -- 10:00-10:30am
Next Week's Theme is "Share Something Special." Students are invited to send in photos or short videos that showcase the special things in their lives.

Tech Support -- 10:30-11:00am

Parent Tech Tip

Here is a link to a YouTube video (approx. 5 minutes long) on how to download, setup, and use Zoom.

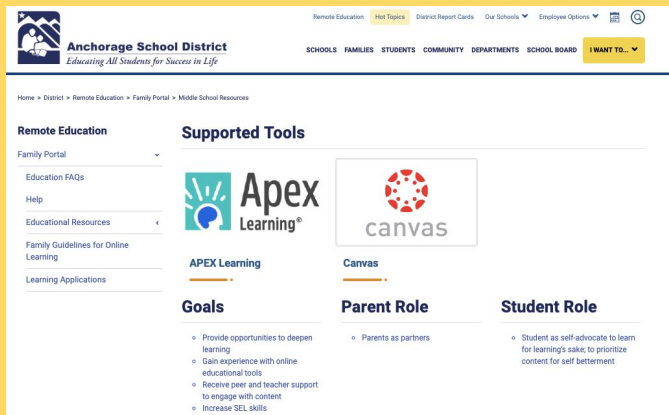


<https://youtu.be/d7xXZxRDFUU>

ASD Family 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>.

ASD Educational Resources and Support



ASD Middle School Online Learning Resource Page:

<https://www.asdk12.org/Page/15214>

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.

For support of any kind, please call 907-742-HELP

⇐ *Backman Recommends* ⇒

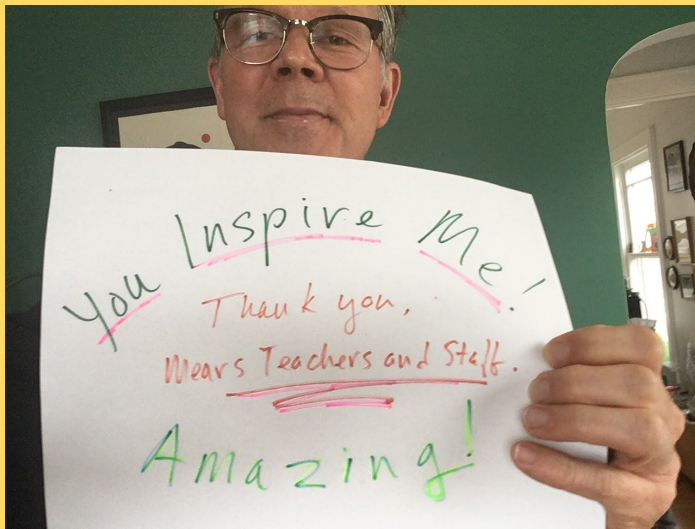


Here is a link to the recent Atlantic Selects Video, "Alone Together," which offers an upbeat and hopeful view of social distancing from a global perspective. This is recommended viewing for the entire family.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/610036/social-distance-world/>



Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week, May 4-8



Mears Students and Families,
To honor the incredible teachers and staff at Mears during the upcoming Teacher Appreciation Week, be sure to send in your messages of thanks and gratitude. Fun selfies, short videos, and email messages are all encouraged. You can email them directly to Eric Backman at backman_eric@asdk12.org or to Ms. April Eide at mearsms.ptsa@gmail.com.

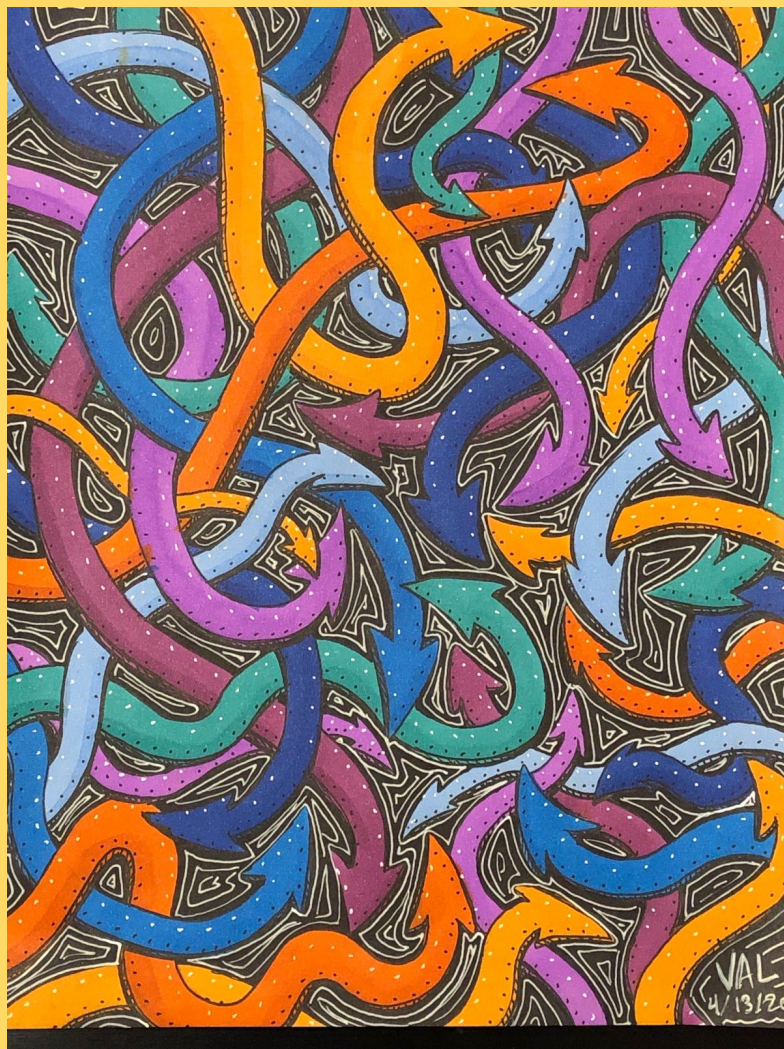
Mears PTSA Hosts Zoom Meeting with the Principal,
Thursday, April 23, 3:00pm. An email message will follow next week with the zoom link to join the meeting.

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.

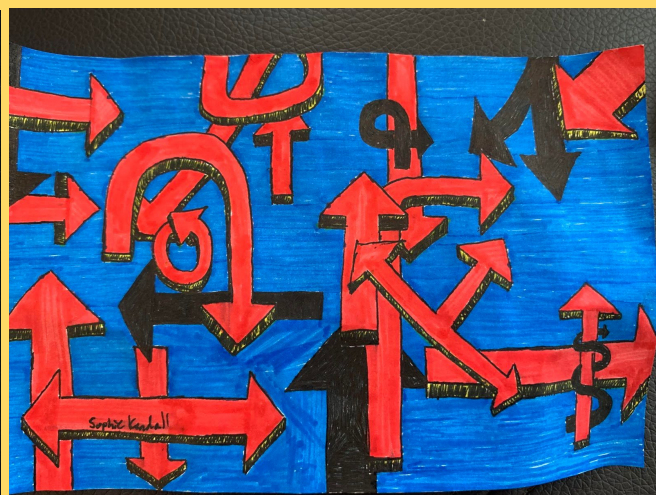
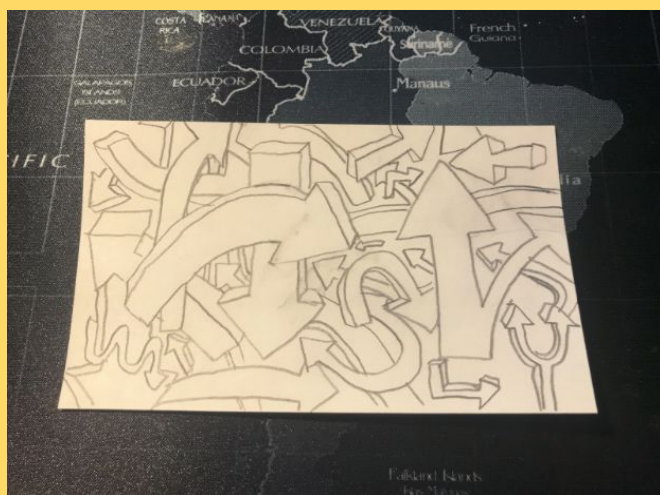
Personalization deadline is April 6. Pre Orders without personalization are due May 15th. We will only have 400 books for sale. This includes the presales. Currently, we have sold 170 books. Make checks payable to Mears PTSA or pay with a credit card online www.ybpay.com

The Chaos of Quarantine



Ms. Yackel recently gave an assignment that challenged students to create a full composition, using arrows, that conveys the feeling of chaos. She states, "We've been discussing (in office hours) our feelings about quarantine, the uncertainty that lies ahead, and how we can use art to express these feelings."

Here are the incredible works of Valerie Yocom, Sophie Kendall, and Oliver Gray.



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](#)