

HIGHLANDER HILLTOP 3/19

Happy Final Friday of Winter,

I want to start this week's newsletter by thanking all of the parents that reached out to me this week to talk about school safety, in the wake of recent events. I have tried to reach out and call any parent that has called the office or sent me an email, and want to continue to encourage any parent who would like a 1:1 conversation to let me know. Being able to directly reach out and converse is one of the things I love about Portland Middle School's small size.

As a school, we have spent a great deal of time this week talking with students about what we do at school to keep students safe, and what things we can do better. At advisory this week, students came up with some excellent questions and ideas; and we will be following this up with grade level assemblies next week, where we will continue to outline our safety procedures, move forward with some new plans for improving our physical and emotional safety; and continue to focus on the idea of being an upstander with the mantra of "see something, say something."

Three improvements that we have made include:

- Implementing new locked door protocols, that enable any staff member or substitute to more quickly and effectively secure a class into lockdown.
- Adding a security camera hub to the middle school main office.
- Planning for locker distribution, so that personal belongings that are not needed for class can be left safely and securely outside of each cohort's classroom.

The original topic of next week's PTO meeting was going to be on social media; however, we will be shifting the topic to be focused on school security, so that I can share further details about these changes, and get feedback from parents on other improvements we can make. Our Student Council will also be coming to present a few fantastic ideas that they have for improving our school climate. I encourage all who are able to attend, and will be recording the meeting, so that it can be published directly on our school website. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Chuck

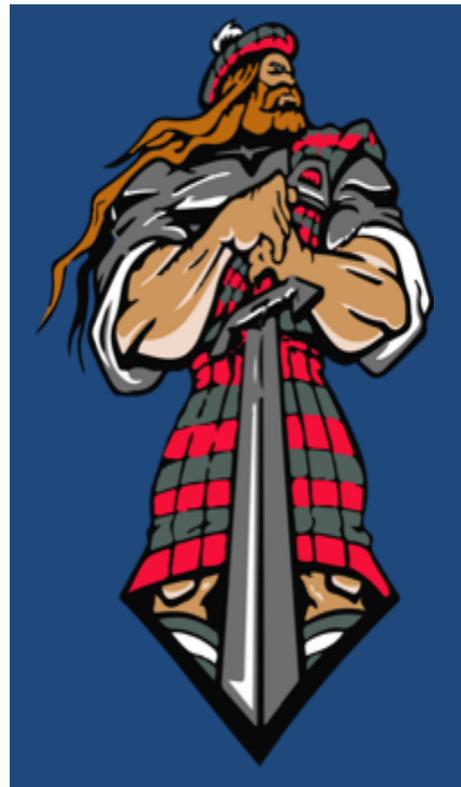
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Chuck Hershon
Principal - Portland Middle School

SPRING SPORTS IS BACK!!!!!!!!!! Please see the attached document for detailed directions on how to register your child. Registration for sports participation at Portland Middle School is facilitated in part by a web-based registration application. This application is used by parents/guardians to register student-athletes for all interscholastic sports at Portland Middle School and Portland High School. The window will close on April 3rd, 2021.

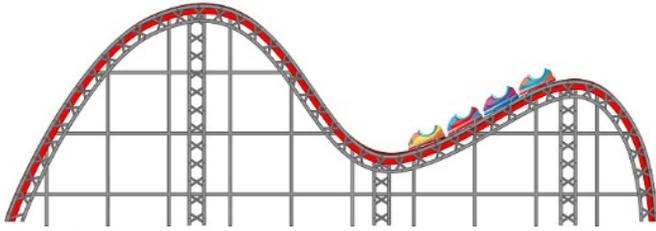
Please contact Michele Iannello at portlandad@portlandct.us with any questions.

<http://www.familyid.com/>



8th Grade News:

Eighth grade science students closed up their look into the chemistry of energy drinks recently. Students wrote about the effects of the ingredients on young people and decided if they felt there should or should not be regulations about purchasing the drinks. It was a somewhat eye opening experience for many of the students.



Currently, we are beginning our studies of physics. For these units, we will be applying our new knowledge to how a roller coaster works. Students have created their own models and we will continually make connections between our new learning and these models through the unit. They will be running a number of computer

simulations to investigate motion, forces, and Newton's Laws as well as running simulated coasters. It is a fun unit that has many real-world applications for them.

7th Grade News:

During our study of cells, the seventh grade students discovered why cells need to divide. They learned that this is how the body grows, replaces old cells, and even repairs a broken bone. At the conclusion of the cell unit, our seventh graders demonstrated their understanding of the process of mitosis by creating a "Mitosis Foldable." Enjoy some of their wonderful handiwork!

