

HIGHLANDER HILLTOP

EDITION 11/20/2020

Dear Highlander families,

This week, we began making entrance-ways gratitude with our advisories here at PMS. This gave our students an opportunity to express themselves and communicate what they are grateful for in their lives. While this is a work in progress, I have attached a few samples of what the students have begun working on to the newsletter.

I am incredibly grateful to just how well students have responded to my message both last and this week about the importance of following our safety protocols in regards to COVID. I have seen a huge improvement in student compliance to these expectations, and have had some wonderful conversations with students about what other measures we can take to ensure a safe environment. I am proud to report that to date, we have not had any incidents of COVID at Portland Middle School.

Unfortunately, one thing that we do not have control over is how well those same mitigation strategies that we use in school (social distancing, frequent hand sanitizing, mask wearing), are used and enforced in the community. Community spread is still on the rise, and as Dr. Britton noted last night, and early today, we will be moving to Distance Learning, starting November 30th, due to the impact that community spread has had on our ability to fully run our schools. I will be sending out more information on the logistics of this shift to Distance Learning, early next week.

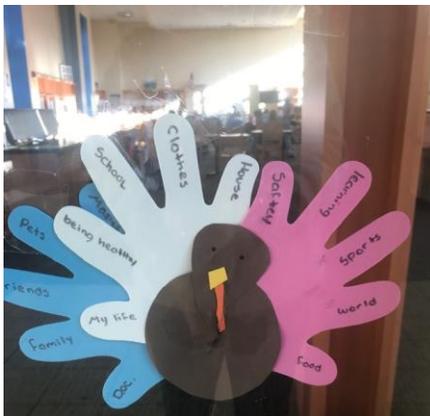
In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, and stay socially distant.

With warmest regards,

Chuck Hershon



 [@ChuckHershon](https://twitter.com/ChuckHershon)



Portland Middle School 1/2 Day

Day A		Day B	
Period	Time	Period	Time
1	7:45-8:31	1	7:45-8:31
2	8:35-9:21	2	8:35-9:21
3	9:25-10:11	3	9:25-10:11
4	10:15-11:00	4	10:15-11:00



REMINDER TO SIGNUP

<https://www.portlandctschoools.org/middle-school>



Middle School Yearbooks are available to purchase! The 7th Grade Computer Science classes are starting work soon on this year's Yearbook. The price is \$20 and can be ordered online now! Follow the website below:
<https://www.iostens.com/apps/store/customer/1037183/Portland-Middle-School/>

7TH GRADE NEWS The 7th grade students are hard at work this month! If you were to visit the floor, you'd have to look out for some paper airplanes buzzing around. Be careful though, or you might trip over someone deep in focus over their *Giver* books or math workbook sitting in the hallway.

In social studies we've begun to work on our world cultures and symbols unit, with a focus on how culture influences the way we interact. We began our study by looking at the cultural symbols that divide Americans as a way to bring our study into the "real world" of our students. Hopefully, some of these conversations have made it home to the dinner table. We're going to facilitate this learning by developing our inquiry skills and research strategies between now and the break.

NEWS FROM THE UNIFIED ARTS DEPT.

From World Language:

In 7th grade students are learning to talk about activities that they like and dislike. We have been working on our listening and speaking skills.

In 8th grade students have been learning how to discuss their classes and schedule. We have been working on numbers 1-100 and how to tell time.

For Drama:

Announcing the 2020-2021 School Play: *10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine!*

"If you're spending a long time at home, it can be a challenge to keep yourself occupied.

Luckily, *10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine* is full of handy solutions, from putting on a musical with your dog, to becoming an announcer for a made-up sport, to making friends with an inanimate object. Hey, we promised handy solutions - we never said they wouldn't be strange. Whether or not you're inspired to take up origami and squirrel observation, this flexible new play written especially for actors to perform online is sure to bring a laugh to anyone who finds themselves unexpectedly indoors."

This year's play will be directed by Ms. Ketterer and Mrs. DeRose.

Be on the lookout for information regarding auditions and rehearsals after the holiday break!



8TH Grade NEWS:

8th Grade News...

Science students are wrapping up their unit on The Nature Of Science after carrying out an at-home experiment of their own design. Students needed to come up with their own testable question and devise a quick experiment to collect data to test it. Conclusion writing will be reviewed next in the classes.

Our next unit will begin our study of Matter & Chemistry. The complete topic will take many weeks to complete as we go from learning about atoms, molecules and compounds, then end with chemical change. The underlying focus of the entire unit will be about energy drinks. What is in an energy drink? Is it natural or artificial? What does it do to the human body? Ultimately, are they safe for middle school aged kids? Students will learn all about chemistry and be able to reflect on the questions as we conclude it later this winter.