

HIGHLANDER HILLTOP

EDITION 10/9

Message from the Principal

Happy Friday Highlander Families,
As Dr. Britton mentioned earlier this week, the decision has been made to move toward a full reopening, starting on October 26th. We will continue to monitor community health data, as we move toward that date, and begin working on our logistical planning to prepare for the increase in students in the building each day. We will continue to do everything that we can to mitigate the risk factors of COVID-19, including maximizing social distancing, requiring masks for all students and staff, and ensuring frequent clearing and handwashing. We know that parents have been following this process throughout the fall, and that many of you may be considering changing the program that your child engages in, based on this decision. If the full reopening does result in you moving your child from PVLA to full in person, or from in person to PVLA, please complete this attached [survey](#), sent out earlier this week.

I for one am excited to be welcoming students back into the school 5 days a week. It will result in an increased sense of normalcy and community, with the ability to focus our attention solely on those students in our classroom, as opposed to having to facilitate multiple lessons at once. I will be sending out an updated version of the COVID-19 Protocols Handbook next Wednesday, 10/14, and following it up with a principal's roundtable discussion with parents that evening from 5:00pm-5:45pm. I hope to see many of you then, as I share some details on this next phase of opening, and take any questions that you may have.

Here is the [link](#) to that Google Meet.

Please note that the middle school will be remote next Wednesday, as the high school will be using the entire secondary complex to facilitate a socially distant administration of the PSATs and SATs. During that day, the middle school will be conducting our fall running records virtually, and teachers will be scheduling students into intervention groups to support them with making up work, now that progress reports are now visible in Aspen. All other students will be provided with multiple extension opportunities by both their unified arts and academic teachers to engage in throughout the day as well.

I want to thank each and every family for your support and flexibility as we continue to adapt our programming to best fit the needs of students. We will continue to work hard to ensure that all students are connected with success here at Portland Middle School.

Sincerely,
Chuck Hershon

 [@ChuckHershon](#)



Next Week's Hybrid Schedule

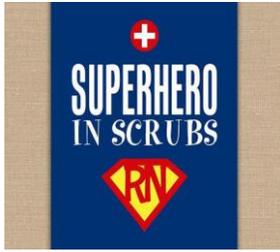
Monday 10/12	Tuesday 10/13	Wednesday 10/14	Thursday 10/15	Friday 10/16
No school	Blue at home	At Home Learning Day for All	Blue in school	Blue in school
No School	Red in school		Red at home	Red at home



SAVE THE DATES: Important Dates in October

10/12: Columbus Day (No School)
10/14: Parent-Principal Roundtable
10/28 & 10/30 Picture Day

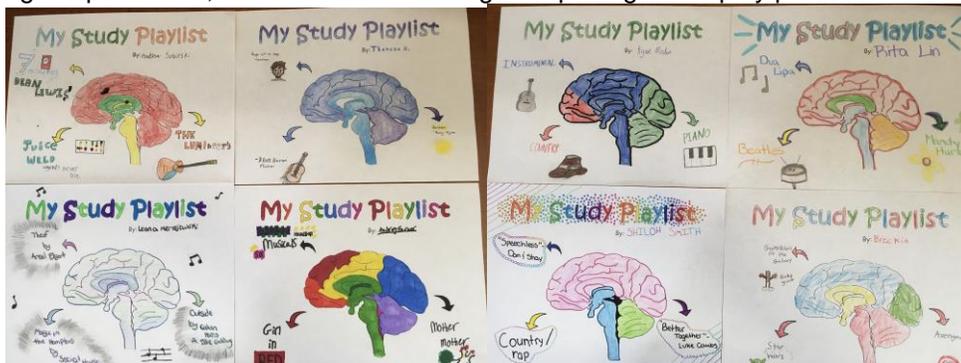




NURSE'S OFFICE: Parents - As we move to re-open for full-time in person learning, please remember that we are still operating under DPH rules, and that **any of the following symptoms will be sent home and require a Dr. note or negative Covid test as well as being symptom free for 24 hrs to return to school:** fever/chills/body aches, new cough/Shortness of breath, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, severe headache, congestion/runny nose. **If in doubt, keep them home** and contact the homeroom teacher and advisory teacher for assistance with online learning. Please reach out to the nurse with any questions. Thank you for your cooperation. 860-342-1880

7TH GRADE NEWS With the new month comes new 7th grade challenges, quizzes, tests and other assessments to make sure our students are on track. One of the keys to success is being present both within school and in virtual meetings. I quote: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." By the time you read this (hopefully) we will have had a good soaking rain to break the dry spell throughout the state. Meanwhile, the 7th grade team will continue to encourage your child to: "Keep your face towards the sunshine - and the shadows will fall behind you."

In **Science**, after learning that music is one of the multiple intelligences, we discovered that music has an effect on several regions of the brain. We culminated the lesson with the students creating a personalized "Study Playlist." (see photos) During the past week, students have also begun exploring the inquiry process.



Students have been doing a wonderful job in presenting their "Who Am I" slides during their **ELA** classes, and we have enjoyed getting to know them so well this early into the school year. Especially insightful have been the slides depicting their "symbol of self" and what they see as their "super power," their greatest strengths or skills! Students have also shown off their narrative writing skills as they drafted their "It Happened to Me" personal narrative pre-assessments. We are now beginning an author's study of Roald Dahl as we prepare to evaluate how a master storyteller crafts a narrative nonfiction story from his own childhood experience. We will focus on plot structure as we walk through this moment in Roald Dahl's early life, as well as applying our inference skills to interpret the "character" of Roald and his band of boyhood friends.

In **Illustrative Math 7** classes, students continue to enhance their skills using Assistments. The skills we have been working on include: attempting every Assistment, completing all the problems, doing work on paper where necessary and submitting a picture of the completed work. We are also taking advantage of EdPuzzle which are videos with questions embedded in them. The EdPuzzles that have been our focus are summaries of each lesson. The first quiz is right around the corner.

In **Pre-Algebra**, students have successfully taken their first quiz! We are now entering the world of adding and subtracting integers. I have included a virtual number line in the current lesson to help them on their journey to "the dark side"! (negative numbers)

Social Studies students have been introduced to a new style of grading that we will use this year. Our mission is to be equitable and transparent; we are going to be using a standards-based grading approach for our social studies scholars. Parents will see the usual mix of assignments (quizzes, tests, homework, etc) but they will all be classified as practice. For our quarter grades however, you will only see your child's progress as it relates to four standards. Each student will have multiple attempts to show mastery, and their grades will clearly indicate the skills on which they meet or exceed the standard, and those on which they need more practice. Mr. Raines encourages you to reach out to him should you have any questions about this system.

PJ DAY DAY!!!!

NEWS FROM THE UNIFIED ARTS DEPT.

Attention all Art Enthusiasts!

Portland Middle School Art Club is beginning this week! The Art Club Survey has been emailed to all Portland Middle Schoolers and the responses are rolling in. Don't miss out! The official start was Thursday October 8 and will continue on many Thursdays throughout the school year. Art Club will begin virtually with hopes of some in-person attendance in the future. Questions? See or email Ms. Szerejko

Here is the survey in case anyone missed it:

ART CLUB SURVEY

Attention musicians! Middle School Jazz Band is coming back! Anyone interested in joining the group and playing jazz standards along with popular music like "Uptown Funk", "Havana", "Moves Like Jagger", and more should send an email to Ms. Ketterer at sketterer@portlandct.us. Middle school is the time to join as all band instruments, in addition to piano, guitar, bass guitar and drum set, are welcome. Email Ms.Ketterer to join in on the fun!



8TH Grade NEWS: Students are in the midst of reading *The Outsiders* in order to practice close reading and analytical skills. Students are studying stereotypes and character traits within the novel as well as other fiction and nonfiction texts.

