

HIGHLANDER HILLTOP

EDITION 10/23

Show your **SCHOOL** Spirit and dress in your school colors of **RED** and **BLACK** or any Portland attire on Monday, October 26th

Good afternoon Middle School Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you well this Friday afternoon. We here at the middle school have been busy preparing to move our students from our hybrid learning environment, to one where almost all students are back in the school-building, 5 days a week. I am looking forward to seeing our student body pass through the middle school doors Monday morning, and I am encouraging all students and teachers to display their Portland Pride by wearing red and black.

We have learned a ton through the past two months that will help propel us forward in our journey through the rest of the year. The first thing is that we have some incredibly resilient students and teachers, who are able to adapt to different scenarios. The second is the importance of building strong relationships. I have been amazed how student cohorts have come together to form strong collaborative units that support each other and hold one another accountable. Just yesterday, I sat with a cohort of students, who admitted that they would have never been found together at the lunch table in previous years, but I was amazed as I watched every single one of them engage in games and conversations with one another in a way that almost brought me to tears. Finally, we learned that we need to cherish the time we have with one another. Teachers could not be more excited to have more access to our kiddos in the building in order to both help and support students who are struggling to keep up with the increased digital demands and have more opportunities to push student conversations to a higher level, with more voices and perspectives entering the room.

We will continue to use an abundance of caution, as we enter this new phase of the year, and I will be going around to all classrooms Monday, to review the updated COVID-19 protocols that we have in place in the building to keep us all safe. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding the full re-opening. I look forward to seeing you Monday. I will be out there waving you in, in my full Tartan garb.

Go Highlanders!

Have a fantastic weekend,

Sincerely,

Chuck Hershon

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



SAVE THE DATES:

10/26: Reopening Day for All

10/27 & 10/30: Picture Days

10/28: 2 Hour Delay

11/3: No School, PD Day for Teachers

11/10: Board of Ed Meeting

11/11: No School, Veteran's Day

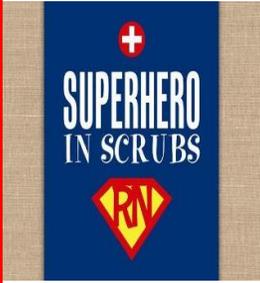
11/23 & 11/24: Parent Teacher Virtual Conferences

11/25 – 11/27: Thanksgiving Break



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/>



NURSE'S OFFICE: Dear Portland Parents,

As we move to full-time in-person learning, we are both happy to welcome more students and hopeful to maintain our open learning environment for as long as we possibly can. Returning to full-time school does NOT mean a return to school as usual. Our new normal means that ANY signs of illness in your child means they MUST stay home.

We have strict guidelines per the State of Connecticut that we must follow and if your child presents with any of the following symptoms, they will be isolated and dismissed home immediately:

Temperature over 100

Shortness of breath

New or uncontrolled cough

Loss of taste or smell

Muscle/body aches and/or chills

Sore throat

Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea, Headache, Fatigue

Congestion and/or runny nose

Close contact (within 6 ft for at least 15 mins) with someone diagnosed with COVID in the last 2 weeks

We are very aware that many of these symptoms are consistent with allergies, mild colds, etc, but unfortunately we are unable to diagnose these conditions here in school. We use our best judgement for children that we have come to know, but for the majority of cases, any child presenting with any of the above symptoms while in school will require either a doctor's note or a negative COVID test (or complete a 10 or 14 day isolation from school depending on symptoms) as well as be free of any symptoms for 24 hours in order to return.

Note that close contact with a positive COVID case requires a mandatory quarantine regardless of symptoms or COVID test results

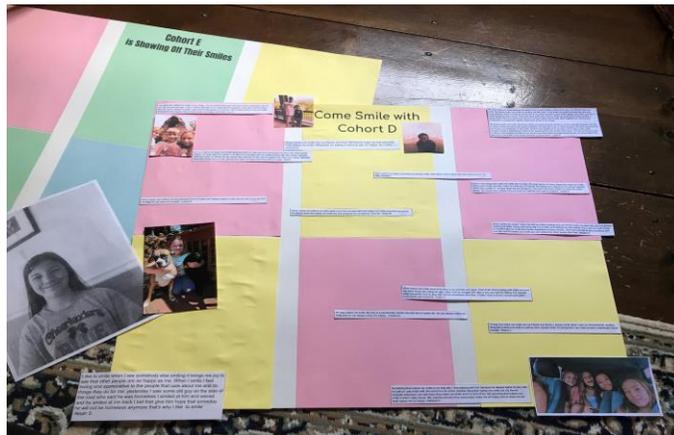
Please make sure to check in with your child each morning regarding the symptoms listed above, and if in doubt, keep them home!

In the case that your child misses school for illness protocol reasons, please reach out to his/her teacher for guidance in setting up academic support during that time.

Also, please make sure all emergency contact phone numbers are current and that we can leave a message if needed. This includes setting up your voicemail and making sure the mailbox is not full. This is extremely important in case of emergency or needing to dismiss your child from school.

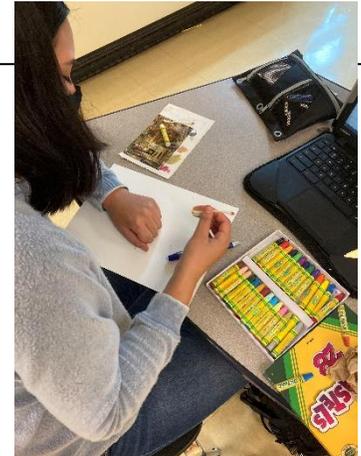
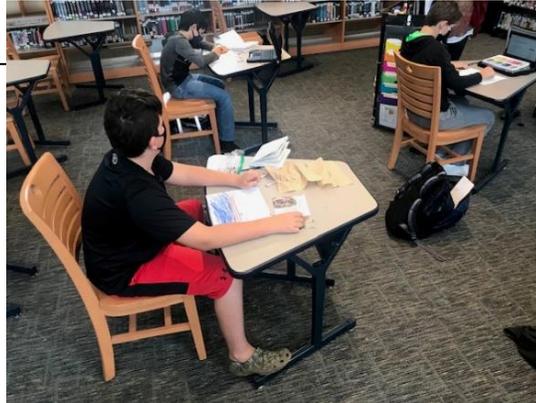
Thank you all so much for your cooperation and for trusting us with your children during these challenging times. We will get through this together! As always, please call the nursing office with any questions or concerns.

7TH GRADE NEWS Our seventh grade ELA students have been familiarizing themselves with Freytag's Pyramid as they continue the work of plotting out the events of a well crafted storyline. They have been interpreting "symbols" from their reading, and recognizing how symbols drive the "theme" of a story. From here students will also evaluate their own storytelling skills as they map out the plot events from their personal narratives. Ask your child about his/her understanding of "exposition" and the "denouement" of a story, and let your clever seventh grader show off newly acquired knowledge from our recent learning experience! They've also been busy showing off those "student smiles" as we piece together a collage representing what their smiles symbolize to each one of them. We're learning a great deal about what can cause a middle school student to slip into a smile, and their positivity shines through!



NEWS FROM THE UNIFIED ARTS DEPT.

Music: The music department would like to extend its gratitude for the support of the Music Boosters, who purchased instrumental masks for the ensemble students as an extra precautionary measure to use in conjunction with instrument bell covers and shields as we enter the colder months and have to play inside. We are also pleased to announce that the instrumental protective gear finally arrived!! Ms. Ketterer appreciates the patience, understanding, and (in some cases) the eager planning of rescue mission road trips from her students when they were informed the equipment had been sent to Portland, Oregon by mistake, and can't wait to start holding more traditional band rehearsals!



8TH Grade NEWS:

Grade 8 math

Students in grade level math are progressing nicely through unit 1. They are learning to apply the laws of exponents to numbers and variables. There will be a quiz and a test coming up before the end of the quarter.

Algebra 1 students are finishing up their Chapter 1 tests this week and have begun reviewing Chapter 2 on real numbers.

All students will be taking the math Aimsweb test later next week.

