



Mears Middle School

# Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

Friday, February 5, 2021

## *Mears Welcomes #1 New York Times Best Selling Author*



Mears Librarian, Ms. Heather Fleming, and the student members of Battle of the Books were excited to welcome acclaimed author James Dashner to a club meeting this week. Mr. Dashner is the #1 New York Times best-selling author of the *Maze Runner* series. Mears' young reading enthusiasts were thrilled to have the opportunity to speak directly with such an accomplished writer of young-adult literature.

# Stay Informed and Get Involved

## Quarter 4 Family Survey Window Closes Today, Friday, Feb. 5

Mears Parents and Families,

As you are likely aware, ASD continues to plan for students to return to school for in-person instruction beginning on March 15, the first day of the 4th quarter. We understand that many families are excited about the reopening of our schools and the return of students to classrooms. We are also keenly aware of other families who, understandably, are not yet comfortable sending their children back to school at this time.

In our ongoing effort to meet the needs of all of our students and their families at Mears, we will be offering a few different instructional options to our students for the 4th quarter.

- **Mears At-School:** For those who wish to return to the building for daily in-person instruction by Mears teachers and staff.
- **Mears Online:** For those who are not ready to return to the building, yet wish to maintain their connection with Mears and its teachers and staff. **Note: For this option, please select “Other” on the survey and type in “Mears Online.”**

**Selecting the “Mears Online” Option**

Parent plans for those planning a change in program

9. Which program do you plan to attend for the fourth quarter? If you have any questions about these options, please contact your school for clarification.

ASD at School - This is the neighborhood school option that is scheduled to return to the building for in-person learning quarter four. This option does require students and staff to wear masks and follow health precautions at school.

ASD Virtual - This is an online homeschool learning program. Students use APEX and eDynamic online courses which are facilitated by teachers from around the District. There are weekly office hours available for students to ask questions. This program works best for students who can work independently and who have parents or guardians who have sufficient time and abilities to monitor and manage their student's schoolwork.

ASD Home School (PAIDEIA) - PAIDEIA is an ASD school that is designed for parents who want to homeschool. This program works best for students with parents or guardians who have sufficient time and abilities to monitor and manage their student's schoolwork.

A non ASD home school correspondence program or private school

Other - please specify.

Mears Online

To select the “Mears Online” Option, check the “Other” box and write in “Mears Online.”

- **ASD Virtual:** For those who would prefer a highly independent online asynchronous learning experience supported by highly-qualified ASD teachers and staff.
- **ASD Homeschool:** For those who wish to customize their online learning experience at one of ASD’s homeschool options: Paideia, Frontier, Family Partnership

Please use this survey link to indicate your preference for the 4th quarter at Mears:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NW85QCF>

# Teachers and Staff Meeting Schedule

- Monday/Feb. 8 --** Staff Meeting  
Planning and CT after school
- Tuesday/Feb. 9 --** Planning and CT before and after school
- Wednesday/Feb. 10 --** Collaborative Teams, 8:00-9:00am  
Canvas Open Hours Support Session, 9:00-10:00am  
Parent/Teacher Drop-in Meeting Sessions via Canvas Zoom  
1st Block -- 12:30-1:00pm  
2nd Block -- 1:10-1:40pm  
3rd Block -- 1:50-2:20pm
- Thursday/Feb. 11 --** Planning and CT before and after school
- Friday/Feb. 12 --** Planning and CT before and after school
- Monday/Feb. 15 --** **No School/President's Day**

## Upcoming Dates for Families

### **Drop-in and Meet Your Student's Quarter 3 Teachers**

#### **Wednesday, Feb. 10, 12:30-2:15pm**

- Optional Drop-in Parent/Teacher Sessions via Zoom -- Mears teachers will be available via their class Canvas zoom links to meet with parents and families to discuss current student progress. Come drop-in to greet your student's teachers!
  - 1st Block -- 12:30-1:00pm
  - 2nd Block -- 1:10-1:40pm
  - 3rd Block -- 1:50-2:20pm

### **Mears Welcomes New 6th Grade Families**

#### **Thursday, Feb. 25, 6:00-7:00pm**

- **6th Grade Family Welcome and Orientation** -- This online event is for all families of 6th graders planning to attend Mears next school year, 2021-22. We are excited to welcome new and returning families by introducing members of our incredible staff, along with an overview of Mears exemplary core and elective course offerings and extra-curricular activities.

# ASD Return to School Update

## ASD Back-in-School

### Key Points

- ▶ The plan prioritizes elementary school students returning first because of their challenges with online remote instruction.
- ▶ The plan addresses equity concerns by identifying students who may need extra support in middle school and high school.
- ▶ The plan allows the District and community to build confidence in the mitigation protocols and provides time to make adjustments while phasing students back into schools.
- ▶ Prioritizing in-person school for small groups of students who need additional support will reduce some of the need for summer school and keep more students on track for graduation.
- ▶ ASD Virtual will remain an option for all grade levels.
- ▶ The District will continue making announcements around the 1st and 15th of each month.

In January, middle and high schools throughout ASD reopened their doors to small groups of students for in-person support and instruction. While the majority of students in the district are generally showing success while learning online, the students selected for the small in-school programs have demonstrated a need for additional support.



### 10-Point Panther Path of Safety

- 1 When on the Mears campus, keep your mask on at all times.
- 2 Maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and your fellow students.
- 3 Please always walk the one direction indicated by the hallway arrows.
- 4 Do not gather or socialize in the hallways: go directly to your class each period.
- 5 Do not touch your face.
- 6 Frequently wash your hands and use hand sanitizer.
- 7 Request to use the restroom and place your restroom marker outside.
- 8 Lockers will not be used.
- 9 No guests in the building: students and staff only.
- 10 Be safe for yourself and others.

The small in-school program at Mears will support students, while at the same time allow school personnel the opportunity to fine tune safety protocols and build community confidence as we prepare for a broader reopening of school at the beginning of 4th quarter on March 15.

Here is a link to the [ASD School Safety Plans](#), where you will find all the details for Mears' Covid safety protocols.

As always, I will continue to provide our school community with updates in this newsletter, which is published every Friday. Go Panthers!

*The 10-Point Safety Plan used by all students and staff at Mears.*

# Students Encouraged to Join National Junior Honor Society



Attention: Current National Junior Honor Society Members

8<sup>th</sup> graders who were inducted into National Junior Honor Society last year will have our next meeting February 10<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. We will begin planning our first service project and talk about officer positions!

All current members should have received an invite to our NJHS Canvas Page.

Email Mrs. Lambert if you have not received the invite:  
Lambert\_Marah@asdk12.org



Are you interested in joining National Junior Honor Society?

Here is the NJHS application link:

<https://forms.gle/wWGhnUtPbjBMC9AA>

Applications are due: February 15<sup>th</sup>

Contact Ms. Sison or Ms. Lambert if you have questions!

Sison\_Mia@asdk12.org    Lambert\_Marah@asdk12.org

Requirements:

- 3.5 Average GPA (Q1 and Q2)
- Love for Community Service and Leadership



# Panthers are Writers

## Write It Like Amanda!

Amanda Gorman is the youngest poet/writer to read at a presidential inauguration. She's also our nation's first youth poet laureate. And she's only 22! You can watch her perform again at this year's Super Bowl.



In this month's contest, you will write a poem while experimenting with some of the same techniques Amanda Gorman used in her poem, "The Hill We Climb." Select a line from Ms. Gorman's poem to use as the title or first line of your poem.

Submit in Panther Pictures Course inside Canvas.

Advance to slide 2 for more information.

Entry deadline: Friday, Feb 26th.

### "The Hill We Climb"

If you missed her, you can listen to Amanda recite her poem here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp9pyMqnBzk>

To read the poem, [click here](#).

You might choose the lines:

*We close the divide because we know, to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside*

Or,

*But while democracy can be periodically delayed it can never be permanently defeated*

Or,

*We will not march back to what was but move to what shall be*



Continue to Slide 3

### Write Amanda-Style!

1. After selecting a first line from "The Hill We Climb," write a poem in which you describe a scene, express a belief, or share an observation.
2. The recommended length for your poem is 8 to 16 lines, but it can be shorter or longer.
3. Find places where Ms. Gorman uses rhyme, alliteration (repetition of sound) and repetition of words and phrases. Apply some of these same techniques in your poem.

*That even as we grieved...*

*That even as we hurt...*

*That even as we tired...*

*benevolent but bold*

*...bruised but whole,*



*Then victory won't lie in the blade*

*But in all the bridges we've made*

*That is the promised glade*

For all contest details go to: [Mears Creative Writing Contest Information](#)

## January Flash Fiction Winners:

Winner: Ella Wheelles for her story, "A January Night."

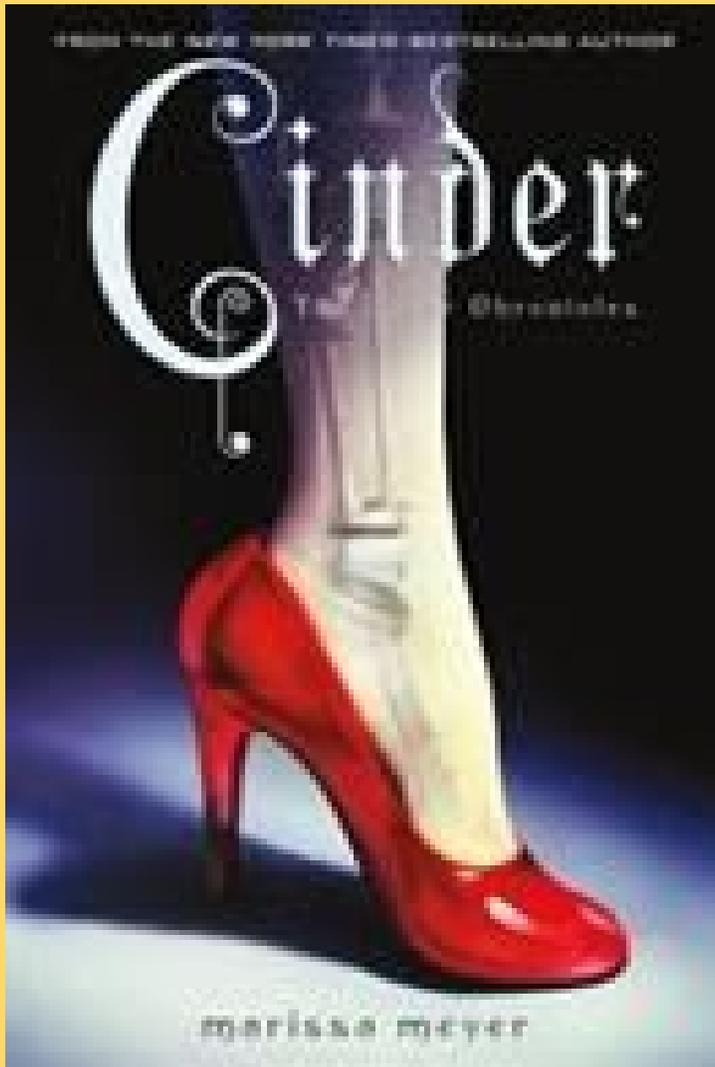
Runner-up: Molly McBride for her story, "Tik Tok Gone Viral."

Links to January's winning entries:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uMD4jPhZ\\_3JA77417HWEv7AEYUDee5RP/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uMD4jPhZ_3JA77417HWEv7AEYUDee5RP/view)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hfwwsoak9\\_IXTH9n90Lf7geYC-1RBDXN/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hfwwsoak9_IXTH9n90Lf7geYC-1RBDXN/view)

## Panthers are Readers Mears Reads Book Club



EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

February's book club meeting will be on Tuesday, February 16th, at 2:15PM. We will be discussing *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer.

If you would like to join us on Feb. 16th contact Mrs. Fleming at 742-6432, [fleming\\_heather@asdk12.org](mailto:fleming_heather@asdk12.org), or through a student's Inbox in Canvas, to ask for the Zoom link.

## Curbside Pickup

Jane Mears Library  
**CURBSIDE  
PICK  
UP**



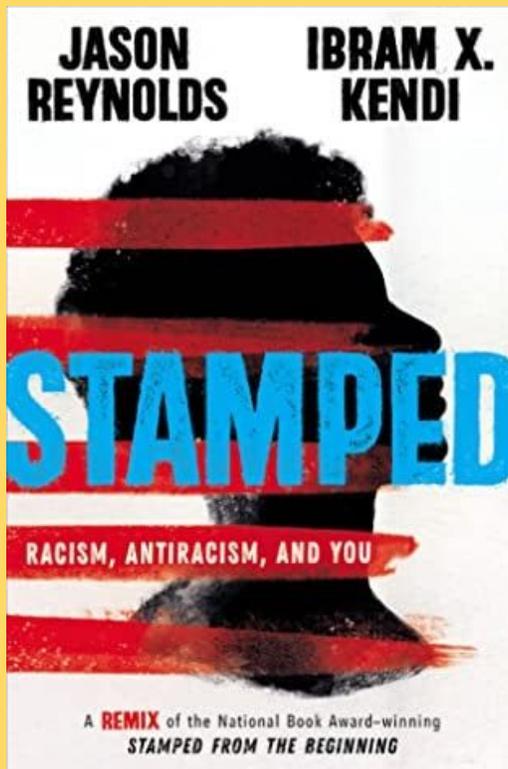
- 1** PLACE HOLD  
in the Mears catalog
- 2** WAIT FOR  
NOTIFICATION  
email, Remind, etc.
- 3** PARK & CALL  
Tues. & Thurs.  
9am -5pm

More information/details at: <https://mearslibrary.weebly.com>

Curbside pickup of library materials is still going strong! Books and puzzles can be checked out and picked up. Contact Mrs. Fleming at 742-6432, [fleming\\_heather@asdk12.org](mailto:fleming_heather@asdk12.org), or through Canvas Inbox in a student's account.

Go to the [Mears Library website](#) for more information, help, and resources.

## Anchorage Reads



The annual Anchorage Reads project kicked off on February 1st. The description from the [website](#) says, “Anchorage Reads is a community led program to promote reading, literacy and community-building by inspiring people of different ages and backgrounds to talk about the same book.”

The title chosen for 2021 is *Stamped from the Beginning: A definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi, and the young adult version, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds. The Mears library has a limited number of books to give away. Contact Mrs. Fleming if you would like a copy.

Information on where to find copies, virtual activities and discussions, and other resources, is available on the [Municipality of](#)

[Anchorage Public Library website](#).

# Mears Counseling Corner

If you need any assistance in preparing for the 3rd quarter, please let our counselors know by filling out a HELP Ticket:

<https://www.asdk12.org/domain/4978>



Your Counselors

Brent Haugen,  
907-742-6428

Caitlin Burr,  
907-742-6424

Crysta Svendsen,  
907-742-6426

Visit this link to meet Mears Counselors:

<https://sites.google.com/asdk12.net/mearsteachervideointros/home>

## Recently Updated: ASD's Health and Safety Covid Matrix

ASD's planning and decision-making process for determining the District's risk level for conducting school takes multiple community factors into consideration. The District conducts this process in close conversation with the Municipality of Anchorage and the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

In recent months, organizations such as the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the World Health Organization have expanded their guidance and resources regarding safely providing public education. This new information includes a range of metrics and other criteria that allows districts, in close coordination with state and local health officials, to revise and adapt school opening guidelines based on the unique context of their community.

Here is a link: [ASD's Covid Matrix](#)



# Mears Middle School Anchorage, AK

PTSA

**Congratulations** to Mears' New President Curt Ehrhart and Sheila Hill as our new Treasurer.

Mears PTSA still has open leadership positions, including Vice President and Secretary. Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering to support this great organization and our wonderful school community.

## PTSA Fundraising Opportunity

2020 was a rough year for all businesses; the Black Cat Cafe is no exception. The lack of income means we need to get creative with our fundraising. Let me introduce my nominee: "Ducks 4 Bucks"!



**Event Description:**

We are selling Ducks for \$4 on our school store at the following link:

<https://mearsptsa.memberhub.store/store/items/671092>

We will securely attach your order number(s) to our yellow rubber duckies. These ducks will be fired from a *student* built [trebuchet](#) at target 200 ft. away. *If* the duck can successfully hit the target, you be awarded a hoodie from our school store!



a  
will

We currently sold more ducks than anticipated and we **need** PTSA assistance for this event.

I'm currently in **need** of

- social media type person
- graphics person
- writer
- few camera operators that are not afraid of flying ducks

More information at the **next** PTSA meeting. *By the way, did you pay this year's dues?*



<https://twitter.com/MearsPtsa>

First person to retweet my “Ducks 4 Bucks” post gets a free [20 oz Metal Water Bottle](#).

## The school store now has masks!

Order online and you can pick up at the school while supporting the PTSA!

<https://mearsptsa.memberhub.store/store/items/123659>



**Thank you for the continued support** of the Mears PTSA. Our school store sells PE approved clothing, beanies, baseball caps, hoodies, and more is online

[www.MearsPTSA.com](http://www.MearsPTSA.com).

Join Mears PTSA Membership and become part of an organization that is the leading Child advocacy group in the Nation. You not only become a member of Mears. But Alaska PTA and National PTA. Membership benefits include Office Depot/Office Max, Hertz, and more. Learn more at [www.MearsPTSA.com](http://www.MearsPTSA.com)

Ways you can help us raise funds doing your day to day shopping and holiday shopping.

**Amazon Smile** [smile.amazon.com/ch/92-0138999](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/92-0138999)

**Shutterfly** <http://mearsptsa.shutterflystorefront.com>



*Thank you, Tom and Bart!*



Here's a photo from earlier this week of Mears Campus Supervisors, Mr. Tom Fischer and Mr. Bart Parker, who have been essential to the successful operation and management of Mears Quarter 3 in-school program. Both staff members not only work on a daily basis supporting students in the building, but they also help ensure social distancing, food and computer distribution, and transportation. We couldn't do this without both of you!

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## **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](#)