



TRAILBLAZER NEWS

January 2026

MARCUS WHITMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL



Dear MWMS Families,

Happy New Year! As we welcome 2026, we are excited to continue our journey of learning, growth, and community at Marcus Whitman Middle School. This is a time for fresh beginnings, setting goals, and embracing new opportunities both in and out of the classroom.

Our staff is committed to supporting your children academically, socially, and emotionally. From planning experiential learning opportunities off campus to grade-level initiatives focused on academic achievement and fostering empathy, kindness, and teamwork, we are dedicated to providing meaningful experiences that help every student thrive. Engaging assemblies, hands-on lessons, and collaborative projects are just a few of the ways we are working to inspire curiosity and growth.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. Together, we will make 2026 a year full of learning, growth, and memorable experiences for all of our students.

Wishing you and your family a happy, healthy, and successful New Year!

Warm regards,

Tara Ranzy
Principal

January Advisory Updates

- **7th & 8th Grades – High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP):** During January advisory, students will work on their HSBP lessons in SchoolLinks. Please ensure your child brings a charged Chromebook each week.
- **6th Grade – Bullying 101 & Assemblies:** Students will continue Anti-Bullying lessons including special assemblies with the Principal to support social-emotional learning.



8th Graders Visit the Pacific Science Center in Seattle, WA

We are so proud of our 8th graders, who recently represented Marcus Whitman Middle School with excellence at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle! Their curiosity, teamwork, and enthusiasm were on full display, and they made our school community shine.

A huge thank you to our chaperones for supporting this memorable experience and helping ensure the day ran smoothly. Your time and dedication make opportunities like this possible for our students.

We look forward to more exciting learning experiences in the months ahead!

Parent–Principal Conversations

We're excited to launch a series of Parent–Principal meetings this year to connect, share updates, and hear from families. Meetings will alternate between virtual and in-person formats for easy participation.

Schedule:

- **January:** Virtual – Thurs, Jan 29, 9:00–10:00 a.m.
In-Person – Thurs, Jan 29, 6:30–7:30 p.m.
- **March:** Virtual – Wed, Mar 25, 6:00–7:00 p.m.
In-Person – Wed, Mar 25, 10:00–11:00 a.m.
- **May:** Virtual – Tues, May 19, 9:00–10:00 a.m.
In-Person – Tues, May 19, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Extras: Coffee and donuts will be provided at in-person meetings, and we hope to offer parenting books for families.

Stay tuned for more details and mark your calendars. We look forward to connecting with you!



Blazer Basketball Tryouts:

IMPORTANT: Players must be registered on “Finalforms” and have everything completed to tryout. *This includes a **doctor’s physical.** Make sure your child checks his/her school email and signs all necessary documents after registering to be eligible to tryout.*

Where: MW Gym.

When: Monday - Wednesday Jan 5, 6, and 7

Times: **Monday-** **All** grades will check in and tryout together from **3:00-5:30pm.**

Tuesday- **All** grades will check in and tryout together from **3:00-5:30pm.**

(First cut will be made after Tuesday tryout)

Wednesday- Everyone who made first cut will check in and tryout together from 3:00—5:30 ***(Final cut will be made after Wednesday’s tryout)***

Coach Bryce

7th Grade - Planning Ahead for High School and Beyond

Marcus Whitman is excited to support our 7th graders as they prepare for next year and explore their future opportunities! This year, students will engage in the High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP) and the 8th grade registration process to help them start thinking about their academic and personal goals.

High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP) - January Advisory Sessions

During advisory on January 7, 14, 21, and 28 (8:55-9:27 AM), students will focus on key components of their High School and Beyond Plan in an app on classlink called Schoolinks. They'll explore possible career pathways, take a practice SAT, and create academic SMART goals.

These lessons are designed to help students explore their interests, hobbies, and potential career areas—supporting them as they plan electives for 8th grade and beyond.

Registration Presentation - Week of February 2nd

Students will receive guidance on course options and planning for 8th grade during their scheduled Social Studies class. Check in with your student to discuss their course choices for their 8th grade year.

This process helps students identify strengths, discover interests, and begin thinking about their future—laying a foundation for success in high school and beyond.



Marcus Whitman is excited to support our 8th graders as they begin their journey to high school! Please mark your calendars for these important events designed to help students and families learn about course options, meet staff, and feel confident about the transition.

High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP) - January Advisory Sessions

During advisory on January 7, 14, 21, and 28 (8:55-9:27 AM), students will focus on key components of their High School and Beyond Plan in an app on classlink called Schoolinks. They'll explore possible career pathways through assessments, take a practice SAT, and create academic SMART goals.

Students will submit their HSBP draft, including their résumé draft, on April 22. They will also participate in a financial aid learning session on May 6.

Registration Presentation - February 5

Students will receive information about course offerings and the steps for completing their 9th-grade registration in their Social Studies class. Students will bring home a SKHS course catalog and it can be accessed [online](#).

Elective Fair at MW - February 10 (During the School Day)

Students will explore high school programs and elective options with SKHS staff on campus.

Incoming Freshman Night - February 10, 5:30-7:00 PM

Families are invited to SKHS for an evening event to learn about programs, meet staff, and get ready for the transition to high school.

We look forward to partnering with you during this exciting next step! Let us know how we can support you.



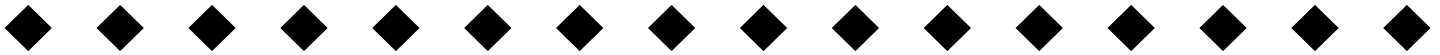


TSA Club





For the month of December, TSA put their skills to work to build Graham Cracker Houses. Over two days, the kids designed and constructed their houses using only edible items. It was a fun sticky mess and they did a great job.



The Science teachers took 178 8th grade students and 31 parent/family chaperones to the Pacific Science Center on December 11th to engage in the Human Systems interactive system as well as all the other interactive displays.

The students exceeded the Marcus Whitman expectations and represented our school in its best light. Had several staff members at the Science Center comment on how well behaved our students were. The chaperones also made this possible and we could not have done it without them.

Students started out the day on a long bus ride (flooding issue created a two and ½ trip) there and also another long trip home due to accidents in the Seattle area but over were great and very well behaved. The bus drivers all complimented us on how well our students were on both ways.

Thank you, parents and guardians who had to come, pick up your students for being flexible and supportive of our stall. Overall, it was a great day and experience for all.

Helpful hints to encourage school attendance.....

Develop back up plans for getting your children to school in bad weather. Check to see who can give your children a ride to school if you aren't able to take them or the bus doesn't arrive.

Keep your children healthy. Maintain a regular bedtime and morning routine. Ensure students eat a good breakfast every morning or check to see if your school serves breakfast. Ensure your children visit their medical provider and have received their vaccines, including flu and Covid. Stress hand washing, particularly before and after eating, and after using the restroom.

Communicate with the school

If your student is going to be absent :

Please call the Attendance Office (360-874-6170), or

E-mail the Attendance Specialist (meddles@skschools.org),

Or, enter the absence on skyward.

If your student is going to be late:

Please call the Attendance Office,

Or, send your student in with a note,

Or, verbally excuse it when you come in to the building to drop your student off.

After School Clubs

Culinary Clubs meets Thursday in Room 101 from 2:50 – 4pm.

DRAMA TEAM - Drama Team meets Thursday from 2:45 – 3:45 in the theater. Be sure you have your permission slip turned in. Everyone is welcome!

Marcus GSA Club: The Marcus GSA Club is a group where students can connect, share their experiences, support one another, and be great allies for members of the Marcus LGBTQ+ community. Whether you are an LGBTQ+ student, a friend, or member of a queer family, you will find a welcoming home here. GSA meets every Thursday after school until 3:50. A permission slip signed by student and parent must be submitted before participation. You can get a permission slip from the Main Office.

POKEMON Club - If you love Pokemon, this is the club for you. We talk Pokemon, trade Pokemon and catch them all. Meet Wednesdays from 2:50—3:50. Be sure you have submitted your permission slip before you attend.

STEM Club—TSA is the perfect club for middle school students who love to explore, build, and compete! In TSA, you learn hands-on skills in areas like robotics, engineering, and design, while also developing teamwork and leadership abilities. TSA meets Thursday in Room 112 (Woodshop) from 2:45—3:45. Permission slips are at the main office.

Unified Club! Get ready for another year of fun events, engaging activities, and inspiring inclusion school community **Unified Club**. We will meet in room #203 Mrs. Schroeder's room, from 2:45PM-3:45PM. First day will be Wednesday, Sept 24th. This club is a space for students of all backgrounds to come together and feel like they have a voice and belonging, We offer unified robotics competitions (2nd year) and sport activities. Please fill out an application and turn it into ASB. See you there!

Weight Lifting Club will be meeting Tuesday and Thursday in the Weight Room. Time is from 2:50 pm to 3:50. This club is for students interested in learning how to lift weights for personal fitness or maybe getting ready for a sport. Permission slips are at the main office. Advisors Mr. Zappey and Mr. Dan

Running/Walking Club—Join the Marcus Whitman Running/Walking Club. We meet on Monday afternoons from 2:50 to 4:00 starting in Room 107 starting November 10th. See Mrs. Kogan if you have any questions. Just need a water bottle and a comfortable pair of shoes.

We're excited for **Winter 2 Sports — Girls Basketball and Wrestling!** Tryouts begin on **Monday, January 5th**. If your child is interested in participating in either of these sports, please read carefully to make sure they're completely ready.

Eligibility & Registration

To be eligible to try out, **students must be 100% registered and cleared in [FinalForms](#)** by 2pm - Monday, January 5th.

This includes:

- Completed **[FinalForms](#)** registration with the specific sport selected (including parent & student signatures on all forms)
- Current **[Sports Physical](#)** (valid for 13 months from exam date)
- Paid **[ASB Fee](#)** *

Students **will not be allowed to participate** if their Registration or Sports Physical is incomplete by 2pm - January 5th.

(Click here for to find [Optional Sports Physical](#) locations.)

⚠ Please note: You must login and select your child's sport in [FinalForms](#) as soon as possible to receive sport-specific tryout information. These details will be sent out in a separate ParentSquare message in the coming weeks.

Tryout Details

Tryouts begin **after school on Monday, January 5th**.

Students should meet their coaches in the **Commons immediately after school**.

Attendance will be taken before students go to the locker rooms to change, and eligibility will be verified in [FinalForms](#).

Tryout times vary by sport, but families should plan for students to stay **until 5:00 PM** (Girls Basketball may go until 6:00 PM due to participation numbers).

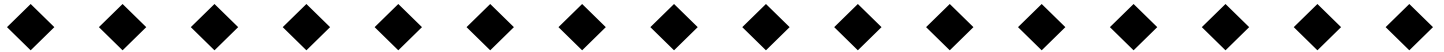
Because of the high number of students trying out, attendance at all tryout days is very important.

- Tryouts and practices are **closed to all spectators**.

Wrestling Match Schedule

All games start at 4:00 pm

DATE	OPPONENT	PLACE
Jan 21	Poulsbo	Marcus
Jan 27	Mt. View	Mt. View
Jan 29	Ridgetop	Marcus
Feb 2	Sedgwick	Marcus
Feb 4	Hawkins	Hawkins
Feb 9	Curtis	Curtis
Feb 11	Cedar	Cedar
Feb 23	Central	Marcus
Feb 26	Fairview	Marcus
Mar 3	JV Tournament	North Kitsap HS
Mar 15	Championships	Central Kitsap



Girls Basketball Game Schedule

All games start at 3:30 pm

Date	Opponent	Place
Jan 22	Fairview	Fairview
Jan 27	Mt. View	Marcus
Jan 29	Ridgetop	Ridgetop
Feb 2	Cedar	Cedar
Feb 4	Klahowya	Klahowya
Feb 9	Hawkins	Marcus
Feb 11	Central	Marcus
Feb 24	Kingston	Kingston
Feb 26	Curtis	Curtis
Mar 4	Sedgwick	Marcus

C-Team Girls Basketball Game Schedule

All games start at 3:30 pm

DATE	OPPONENT	PLACE
Jan 16	Cedar/Sedgwick	Marcus
Jan 22	Cedar/Sedgwick	Cedar
Jan 30	Cedar/Sedgwick	Sedgwick

The South Kitsap School District provides equal educational and employment opportunity without regard to race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation – including gender expression or identity, marital status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Equal access to activities, facilities and program is provided to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. District procedure complies with all applicable state and federal laws.

The Title IX Officer and Section 504 Coordinator with the responsibility for monitoring, auditing and ensuring compliance with this policy are:

Compliance/ADA/Title IX Coordinator:

Will Sarett,
Executive Director of Human Resources
2689 Hoover Avenue SE, Port Orchard, WA 98366
360-874-7071
sarett@skschools.org

Section 504 Coordinator:

Cristin Blaskowitz,
Director of Special Services
2689 Hoover Avenue SE, Port Orchard, WA 98366
360-443-3627
blaskowitz@skschools.org

Gender Inclusivity Compliance Officer:

Monica Zuber,
Assistant Superintendent for School Leadership
2689 Hoover Ave SE, Port Orchard, WA 98366
360-874-7003
zuber@skschools.org