



# TRAILBLAZER NEWS

APRIL 2026

## MARCUS WHITMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Spring Energy & Student Growth

As spring arrives, we often see a shift in energy — longer days, more movement, and a natural sense of restlessness, especially in adolescents. This season of growth and change mirrors what many of our students are experiencing developmentally. With that increased energy can come both positive momentum and, at times, challenges in focus, emotions, or decision-making.

Providing structure, opportunities for connection, and meaningful activities can make a significant difference. Encourage your child to stay engaged in school, pursue extracurriculars, and stay connected to positive peers and adults. This helps channel that energy into purpose and growth — especially during moments that may feel difficult or overwhelming.

### March Kiwanis Student of the Month Winner

Congratulations to last month's **Kiwanis Student of the Month**,  
**Aunyah 'August' Donnelly!**

Kiwanis Student of the Month — Aunyah "August" Donnelly

We are incredibly proud to celebrate August, who exemplifies what it means to be a well-rounded student. She leads with kindness and genuine respect, consistently puts her academics first, and goes out of her way to make those around her feel welcomed and valued.

August is actively involved in ASB, AVID, Marcus Mentors, and Drama — and she truly does it all, and does it all well. No matter the setting, she shows leadership, responsibility, and positivity. She will work with and support anyone, making sure those around her feel welcomed and valued.

Beyond her academic commitment, August leads by example and treats others with genuine respect. She is a true role model for her peers and a positive representation of our school community.

August, we are proud of your dedication and character. Keep striving and accomplishing your goals — you represent MWMS well!

## Class Change Requests

As we move further into the semester, class schedules have now been in place long enough for students to settle into routines, instruction to progress, and teachers to establish learning expectations. Because of this, we are no longer able to grant additional schedule change requests for this semester.

Late schedule changes can disrupt student learning, impact class balance, and make it difficult for students to fully engage in the coursework already underway. Our focus at this point is on supporting students in the classes they are currently enrolled in.

If your student is experiencing a concern related to their schedule, please reach out to the counseling office so we can work together to support their success within their current classes.

Thank you for your understanding and for partnering with us to support a consistent learning environment for all students.



## Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences

We're looking forward to connecting with you during conferences, **April 7–10**. This is an important opportunity to celebrate your child's progress and partner together in supporting their success. We strongly encourage all families to attend. More information forthcoming.

### Modified schedule that week:

	<i>All students</i>	<i>Regular schedule</i>
Monday, Apr 7		
Tuesday, Apr 8	Periods 1, 3, 5	8:10–11:15 AM (early dismissal)
Wednesday, Apr 9	Periods 2, 4, 6	8:10–11:15 AM
Thursday, Apr 10	Periods 1, 3, 5	8:10–11:15 AM
Friday, Apr 11	Periods 2, 4, 6	8:10–11:15 AM

### Conference hours:

Tuesday, Apr 8	12:15–7:00 PM (dinner break 4:00–5:00 PM)
Wednesday, Apr 9	12:15–3:15 PM
Thursday, Apr 10	12:15–3:15 PM

## **Late Arrivals & Early Dismissals**

Consistent attendance and punctuality are essential for student success. When students arrive late or leave early, they miss important learning and disrupt the classroom for others.

Students arriving after 8:10 AM must check in at the main office with a parent or guardian. Students leaving early must be signed out at the main office. Early dismissals should be rare — reserved for unavoidable circumstances only.

Students may not be signed out after 2:20 PM Monday–Friday to ensure a safe and orderly dismissal. Thank you for helping us protect instructional time for every student.



## **Why Late Start Wednesdays Matter**

School begins at 8:55 AM on Wednesdays (breakfast from 8:25 AM). This time serves two important purposes.

First, teachers use the early morning for collaboration and professional learning — planning lessons, analyzing student progress, and aligning instruction so every student benefits from high-quality teaching across every classroom.

Second, when students arrive, they begin in Advisory — the foundation of our school culture. Advisory builds:

- Character — responsibility, resilience, and empathy
- Connection — peer relationships and a sense of belonging
- Emotional intelligence — self-awareness, healthy decision-making, and navigating relationships

These skills are among the strongest predictors of long-term success — in school, in careers, and in life. Please encourage your child to arrive on time every Wednesday. When every student is here, we can do the vital work of raising not only strong learners, but strong human beings.



# Save the Date!

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE FAMILIES

8th Grade Promotion June 9  
Ceremony 1:45 to 2:45 PM  
Doors open 1:15 PM

## **Entrance and Parking:**

Enter through the commons or main office

Park in staff or portable lots (no parking in front due to buses at dismissal)

## **Seating:**

Bleachers only, limited space. Please keep balloons off bleachers to avoid blocking views

Students will practice on June 8 and learn their seating side. Ask them so you can sit nearby for photos  
More details coming soon.

# ¡Reserva la fecha!

FAMILIAS DE 8.º GRADO

Graduación de 8.º grado: 9 de junio  
Ceremonia: 1:45 a 2:45 p. m.  
Apertura de puertas: 1:15 p. m.

## **Entrada y estacionamiento:**

Entrada por el área común o la oficina principal.

Estacione en los estacionamientos para el personal o en los estacionamientos portátiles (no se permite estacionar frente a la escuela debido a la salida de los autobuses escolares).

## **Asientos:**

Solo gradas, espacio limitado. Por favor, no coloque globos en las gradas para no obstruir la vista.

Los estudiantes practicarán el 8 de junio y aprenderán su lado de asientos. Pregúnteles para que pueda sentarse cerca para las fotos.

Próximamente más detalles.



# APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 STRENGTHENING YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

The SBHASO invites you to join us for a community conversation around youth behavioral health.

Please join us to meet and collaborate with a wide variety of youth-serving community partners, including:

- o treatment providers
- o social service partners
- o community-based organizations
- o educators
- o law enforcement
- o state and local government
- o Managed Care Organizations

Please register using the link or QR code below:  
[Community Conversation Registration](#)



Hosted by Salish Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization



Salish Behavioral Health  
Administrative Services Organization

## Event Details

4/29/2026

12:00 – 4:00pm

Learn about youth resources across the Salish region

Meet and engage with community partners who support youth in the region

Help identify regional service gaps, community needs, and create action plans

## RED CEDAR HALL

Address:

1033 Old Blyn Hwy  
Blyn, WA 98382

## Need more information?

Please contact  
Stephanie Thelen at  
SThelen@kitsap.gov



## **SPRING BREAK BEGINS**

**APRIL 13th THROUGH APRIL 17th**

We hope everyone has a fun and restful break.

April 20th starts the last 8 weeks of school.

Let's get to school on time and be ready to work hard so everyone can finish the school year strong.

### **Free Parent Resources — Main Office**

Through our Title I program, we have a selection of free books available for families to borrow. Stop by during conferences or any time during school hours. Topics include:

- Student mental health & anxiety — supporting your child through stress and emotional challenges
- Responsibility & positive behavior — building healthy habits and accountability
- Understanding trauma — how trauma impacts learning and behavior
- Financial literacy & life skills — preparing students for independence

---

Thank you for your continued partnership. We look forward to seeing you at conferences — and to a wonderful spring together.

# Highlight - STAR Assessment Summary: 6th–8th Grade

Fall & Winter Comparison — 2024–25 vs. 2025–26

**Across all three grade levels and both testing windows, the 2025–26 school year shows substantial gains in student proficiency compared to the same points in 2024–25. Every grade level improved in both math and reading, with math showing the most significant growth overall.**

**6th Grade** made steady progress in both subjects. Math proficiency jumped 24 points in the fall (29% to 53%) and 23 points in the winter (29% to 52%). Reading rose 15 points in the fall (40% to 55%) and 12 points in the winter (40% to 52%).

**7th Grade** posted the largest math gains of any grade level. Math proficiency increased 32 points in the fall (15% to 47%) and 27 points in the winter (15% to 42%). Reading also improved significantly, up 17 points in the fall (42% to 59%) and 14 points in the winter (42% to 56%).

**8th Grade** showed strong and consistent math growth as well, with proficiency rising 31 points in the fall (22% to 53%) and 30 points in the winter (22% to 52%). Reading gains were more modest in the fall (49% to 56%, +7 pts) but strengthened by winter (49% to 59%, +10 pts).

Overall, these results reflect meaningful improvement in student achievement at every grade level. Math proficiency more than doubled in 7th and 8th grade compared to last year, and all grade levels now show more than half of students performing at or above benchmark in both subjects.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Your student may become more independent at the Middle School level, however, there are still volunteer opportunities such as:

- Tutoring students/Assisting the teacher
- Band/Choir/Orchestra Assistant
- Help with Student Events
- Fieldtrip Chaperones
- Teacher Appreciation events



**Volunteer applications are available in the Main office and are required to be in place before volunteering.** Applications will be sent to the District Office for processing.

# After School Clubs

**The Allies GSA Club:** The Allies 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 Tuesday after school until . A permission slip signed by student and parent must be submitted before participation. You can get a permission slip from the Main Office.

**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

**Unified Club!** Where Students Belong! This club is a space for students of all backgrounds to come together and feel like they have a voice and belong. Along with meeting new friends, games, snacks, and activities, that help students grow and build a sense of community with sports and activities. We meet every Wednesday from 2:50—3:50 pm.

**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.

**D & D Club** - In this club, students will run and play weekly games of D&D. Experienced players and newbies are all welcome! Club will meet Mondays, 2:45—3:55.

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

**DRAMA TEAM** - Be a part of the spring musical and other acting performances. We meet the 4th Tuesday of each month from 2:50—3:30 and more often during performance season.

**Running Club:** Running club will begin on November 4, 2:50 to 4:00 in room 108. This club will be meeting once a week to explore good running habits, learn to stretch and warm up correctly and to do onsite and off site running. All are welcome, even those who may not be able to run YET! Great way to stay in shape and learn good stretching and warm up practices.

## Open to all 8th graders!

Share your story in the **8th Grade Speech Contest** on “Lessons I Learned in Middle School That I Will Carry Forward.” Inspire your classmates and be heard. If you are selected your speech will be performed by you at the 8th Grade Promotion on June 9th.

Pick up a flyer in the Main Office or Library for full details on how to participate.

### Timeline

- March 30: Contest opens
- April 22: Speeches due (2:45 PM)
- April 27 – May 1: Committee review
- May 4: Top 3 finalists announced
- May 11 – 15: Finalist presentations
- May 18: Winner announced
- June 9: Speech delivered at 8th Grade Promotion



**¡Abierto a todos los estudiantes de 8.º grado!**

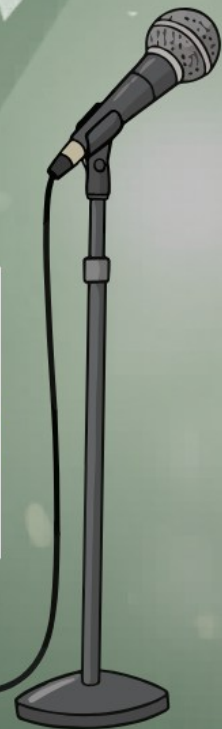
**Comparte tu historia en el Concurso de Oratoria de 8.º Grado, bajo el tema: «Lecciones que aprendí en la escuela media y que llevaré conmigo». Inspira a tus compañeros y haz que tu voz sea escuchada.**

**Si resultas seleccionado, tú mismo pronunciarás tu discurso en la Ceremonia de Promoción de 8.º Grado, el 9 de junio.**

**Recoge un folleto en la Oficina Principal o en la biblioteca para obtener todos los detalles sobre cómo participar.**

### **Cronograma**

- **30 de marzo: Apertura del concurso**
- **22 de abril: Fecha límite para la entrega de discursos (2:45 p. m.)**
- **27 de abril – 1 de mayo: Revisión del comité**
- **4 de mayo: Anuncio de los 3 finalistas principales**
- **11 – 15 de mayo: Presentaciones de los finalistas**
- **18 de mayo: Anuncio del ganador**
- **9 de junio: Discurso pronunciado en la ceremonia de promoción de 8.º grado**



**Intramural Volleyball - 3:30 start  
round robin format**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Games</b>	<b>Place</b>
Apr 3	Game 1 MW vs JS Game 2 JS vs CH Game 3 CH vs MW	Marcus
Apr 24	Game 1 JS vs CH Game 2 MW vs JS Game 3 MW vs CH	Cedar
May 1	Game 1 CH vs JS Game 2 MW vs CH Game 3 JS vs MW	Sedgwick

**Cross Country Meet Schedule - 4:00 start**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Place</b>
Apr 1	Jamboree	Marcus
Apr 22	JS/Mt. View	Mt. View
Apr 28	KSS/Curtis	Curtis
May 6	Hawkins/CK	CK
May 13	Hawkins/FV	Poulsbo
May 20	KSS/Hawkins	Marcus
May 26	South Futurist	Sedgwick
May 28	WSMS League Championships	Woodward

## Football Schedule - 4:00 start

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OPPONENT</b>	<b>PLACE</b>
Apr 23	Cedar	Marcus
Apr 29	Central	Central
May 6	Hawkins	Hawkins
May 14	Sedgwick	Marcus
May 21	Cedar	Marcus
May 28	Fairview	Fairview

## Intramural Flag Football - 3:30 start round robin format

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Place</b>
Apr 3	Cedar/Sedgwick	Marcus
Apr 24	Cedar/Sedgwick	Cedar
Apr 30	Cedar/Sedgwick	Sedgwick

## Volleyball Game Schedule - 3:30 start

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Place</b>
Apr 1	Jamboree	Sedgwick
Apr 23	Sedgwick	SKHS
Apr 28	Fairview	Fairview
Apr 30	Central	Marcus
May 5	Ridgetop	Ridgetop
May 7	Mt. View	Marcus
May 12	Cedar	Cedar
May 14	Kingston	Kingston
May 19	Hawkins	Marcus
May 21	Curtis	Marcus
May 28	Poulsbo	Poulsbo

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:zuber@skschools.org)

