

# PUTNEY CENTRAL SCHOOL

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### NEWSLETTER

October 3, 2024

#### Welcome to the Frist Middle School Newsletter of the Year!

These newsletters are intended to provide updates about what is happening in the Middle School, and share important information. We will send these newsletters monthly. If you have questions that remain unanswered or if you have follow up questions, please reach out to your child's advisor at any time!

#### Important Dates

- Friday, October 11th – Forest Day with 8th grade performances
- Friday October 18th – PowerSchool Checkin #1
- Wednesday, October 30th – Mountain Day – All MS hike!
- Friday, November 1st – Quarterly Grades Check in

#### What is Forest Day?

Forest Day is an annual Fall tradition at PCS centered around our 8th graders performing their fairy tales (including hand-made puppets and props) throughout the forest classrooms for our elementary students. It's a time when our whole school is in the forest celebrating the accomplishments of our 8th graders. All 8th grade families are invited (details to come)



A Scent from a recent Team Time of collaborative challenges



## What's Happening in English Class with Ms. Dixon?

6th graders have just begun their study of Greek Mythology through the world of Rick Riordan's novel, *The Lightning Thief*. The novel introduces readers to figures from ancient Greek mythology in a contemporary setting, and provides an opportunity to evaluate how stories from a different time and place continue to resonate and feel fitting. As we read, we will be exploring the question of why Greek myths continue to be relevant and popular today.

There is a daily independent reading expectation. Students have their own copy of the novel and there are links to the audio book on GoogleClassroom. Please support your student by helping them establish a daily routine of reading. Identifying a reliable place and time to read is ideal.

7th graders have just begun reading the novel *Long Walk to Water*. The novel asks readers to consider what we can learn from those who have survived the greatest tragedies and become determined to help others. The novel contains emotionally challenging topics such as war, displacement, family separation, hunger, dehydration, and death. Yet, at its core, is an undeniably uplifting message of resilience and hope.

There is a daily independent reading expectation. Students have their own copy of the novel and there are links to the audio book on GoogleClassroom. Please support your student by helping them establish a daily routine of reading. Identifying a reliable place and time to read is ideal.

8th graders have just finished writing original bird-centered fairy tales. They are shifting from being writers and embarking on the journey of becoming storytellers in preparation for Forest Day on October 11th. On Forest Day each 8th grader will perform their fairy tale, with the help of a handmade sock-puppet, to the younger grades in various forest classrooms.

Please support your student by having them tell you their fairy tale. The goal is not for students to memorize their story exactly as it is written, but rather to feel comfortable telling their story in an engaging way.

### **Team Time Schedule:**

**This year we will be rotating through 5 themed weeks for our Team Time. The themes include:**

- **Middle School Town Meeting**
- **Team Building Games**
- **Kindness Project**
- **Forest Time**
- **Social Emotional Learning**



# PowerSchool Info

## What's PowerSchool?

PowerSchool is an online platform that allows parents to log in and track how students are doing in their classes - are assignments in?

How are their grades?, etc.

## How do I access PowerSchool?

Over the next week, please stay tuned for a video tutorial on how to access your child's powerschool.

## Will Powerschool be updated regularly?

Yes. New this year, our middle school teachers are committed to bi-weekly grade updates in powerschool.

## If I see my child is missing assignments, how can I support them?

We recommend asking them what they need to do, and if they are confused or you need more information, please reach out to their advisor for support!

## Science Updates

Currently in science we are studying phenomena related to our Earth, Moon, and

Sun system and using evidence from investigations as well as models to explain what causes the phases of the moon, solar eclipses, and lunar eclipses. Soon we will investigate what causes the seasons using the migration patterns of Arctic Tern as a guide.

We will wrap up our unit with a science seminar, where we will debate whether a moon that orbits an exoplanet will experience lunar eclipses if its solar system contains two stars at its center. We will finish the unit with an end of unit assessment, then start our next unit on the History of Earth and plate motion.

## Grading Explanation

We want to take a minute to help understand our middle school approach to grading:

In all of our core classes, students will receive letter grades on the following, in addition to standards-based proficiencies

- 40% - Classwork: Investigations and class activities.
- 20% - Habits of Character and Participation.
- 10% - Argumentation: Written report or seminar.
- 30% - End of Unit Assessment: Test or Project.

**Late/Missing Work:** It is highly encouraged to stay up to date with work and turn in assignments on time to learn concepts in a coherent way. Each assignment is given to help build knowledge and practice skills, so it is in the student's best interest to complete work at the time it is received. If work is not turned in after the assignment has been due for a week, it will become a 50% on Powerschool. If there are circumstances that prevent the work from being done within the time frame (ex: illness, moving, events outside school, special circumstance) then this will not be the case, and it will not affect the student's grade.

**Revisions:** Students may revise any classwork or scientific argumentation for up to full credit for the assignment. Students may revise any unit assessment for up to half credit. Any revised work can be accepted until the end of the current quarter. Revisions are highly encouraged as they provide a second learning opportunity and give more practice on concepts!



## Math Update from Mr. Sebold

**6th:** We started the year with a personal graph project as well as working on our expectations for group work throughout the year in math class. We also did a project related to volume. We have started the year with our Illustrative Math Curriculum and the first Unit is all about Area. Specifically we will learn about the area of triangles and parallelograms. As the unit progresses we will eventually talk about surface area. The students have workbooks in which they have regular work and practice problems to complete.

**7th:** We started the year with a personal graph project as well as working on our expectations for group work throughout the year in math class. We also did a project related to volume. We have started the year with our Illustrative Math Curriculum and the first Unit is all about Scale Drawings. The big project at the end of the unit is to make a scale drawing of a room where they live or go to school including all the entry points as well as furniture or other fixtures or features of the room. The students have workbooks and there is a slight increase in the expectation for independent work with the practice problems compared to 6th grade. I post the weekly practice problems on Wednesday mornings in Google Classroom as I did last year.

**8th:** We started the year with a review of transformations which was the last unit we worked on last year. Then the students did a math/art project related to tessellations or rotation. Afterwards we quickly began the main focus of 8th grade math which is linear relationships and we are about halfway through this first unit which explores the idea of slope and graphs. We will likely have our first test before the indigenous people's day weekend. I post the weekly practice problems on Wednesday mornings in Google Classroom as I did last year.



## Social Studies with Mr. Riddle

**6th Grade:** 6th Grade will be reviewing and practicing their geography skills based on the National Geography Standards, and then to apply those skills in a series of scenarios based on surviving when the attacks come to your own neighborhood. This includes mapping the outbreak, and resettlement.

**7th and 8th Grade:** 7th and 8th graders are concluding their study of equity this week. Equity is a crucial concept for middle schoolers, as they begin to recognize inequalities in the world around them. Next, we will apply this understanding as well as the 7 aspects of civilization, to analyze ancient civilization. Students will explore how different groups—such as the working classes, women, and enslaved people—interacted with the seven aspects of civilization and the distribution of them throughout these old and fascinating cultures.

### **Middle School Schedule:**

Here is an example Middle School schedule, so you can see what our days look like!

PCS Middle School Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
8:30	Skills Block	Skills Block	Skills Block	Skills Block	Skills Block
9:00	Core Class #1	Core Class #1	LAMPS	Core Class #1	Core Class #1
9:50	LAMPS	LAMPS	LAMPS	LAMPS	LAMPS
10:35	LAMPS	LAMPS	LAMPS	LAMPS	LAMPS
11:20	Core Class #2	Core Class #2	LAMPS	Core Class #2	Core Class #2
			11:40 X-Period (Study Hall)		
12:10	Outside Break				
12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50	Core Class #3	Core Class #3	Team Time	Core Class #3	Core Class #3
1:40	Outside	Break	Club Time	Outside	Break
1:55	Core Class #4	Core Class #4		Core Class #4	Core Class #4
2:45	Dismissal				

## **Introducing the PCS Chronicle!**

Every week a group of 6th and 7th graders make a weekly publication during skills block, which is distributed throughout the school. Articles are a combination of important news, editorials, informational and opinion pieces, designed and written by students. Here is our first edition!

[PCS Chronicle Issue #1](#)