

The Guide

Polaris Expeditionary Learning School January 2019



K-12 K-5 6-12

Thurs 1/10*

Kindergarten Parent
Information Night
5:00 – 6:00PM

Mon 1/14*

Elementary PTO Meeting
Avogadro's Number
6:30PM

Mon 1/14 – Fri 2/1 *

Parent Perception Survey Window
Open (elementary)
Student Perception Survey
Window Open (secondary)

❖ **See attachments in Newsletter
email**

Tues 1/15*

Secondary Parent Action Crew
(PAC) Meeting
Purple Cup Café
7:00PM

Tues 1/15*

Intensive Selection Google Forms
sent to secondary **PARENTS** via
email

Wed 1/16*

Intensive Selection Google Forms
sent to secondary **STUDENTS** via
email

Fri 1/18*

Secondary students submit top
four choices for Intensives via
Google Form
Deadline of 3:30 PM

Mon 1/21

NO SCHOOL/ MLK day

**MORE INTENSIVE DATES LISTED
IN THE BACK OF THIS
NEWSLETTER**

Dear Polaris Community,

The School of Choice time of year is upon us once again, and although it may be too early to determine what your plans may be for next fall, the time to take some action may be here for some families.

Each year, as second semester rolls along, there is frequent chatter in the community about which students will be staying at Polaris and which may be venturing elsewhere for various reasons. These discussions are more common at the fifth and eighth grade levels due to the transitional time of these specific grade levels. When the staff hears of these “plans” that kids discuss but we typically don’t respond in any manner unless we get confirmation from the family that the student is going elsewhere.

When Polaris families have decided to enroll elsewhere it has been very helpful and appreciated when they have alerted us of their plans as early as possible. The earlier we know of a vacant spot the sooner we can fill it with another student on our waiting list. And the more accurate we are in our enrollment numbers the less risk we take in being under enrolled, which in turn, makes it difficult to budget with consistency.

You see, as a 100% School of Choice option in PSD, we have a dilemma that the neighborhood schools don’t experience. Neighborhood schools are often taken by surprise by how many students move into their attendance area and they get an influx of funding due to an influx of new students. They, in turn, use their extra funding to accommodate the influx of students. We on the other hand don’t serve a neighborhood, so we’re typically taken by surprise when we find out at the last minute how many students are NOT returning to Polaris. When we do get late notice of a family not returning it can be difficult to fill that student’s vacant enrollment slot, it becomes especially difficult to fill the closer we get to the start of the school year. For more information on school budgeting feel free to check out [this link](#).

Here are some other points to keep in mind with School of Choice and enrollment in PSD and Polaris:

- Once you’re enrolled in Polaris you never have to complete the SOC application to remain enrolled at Polaris.
- If you’re debating on whether to stay or go, especially at the secondary level, we’d ask that you read the “Redefining Rigor” article that was attached to this newsletter email. This clarifies what our goals are when it comes to a “rigorous” education.
- If a family chooses to go elsewhere, please know that we do our best to provide you with “accurate information so you can make the best decisions possible.” We continue to respect and honor your student even though we may miss them next year as a Penguin.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the front office and we’ll be sure to answer as many of your questions as possible.

Respectfully,

Joe Gawronski

SECTION 1: K-12 News/Info

Kindergarten Parent Information Night!

Please tell everyone you know about Polaris' Kindergarten Parent Information Night on Thursday, January 10th at 5:00PM!

Julie Siddens and Joe Gawronski will provide school and classroom level details about our Kindergarten program as well as answer any questions about Polaris and the Expeditionary Learning model.

If you know of any families that are interested in starting their child off at Polaris be sure to let them know of this upcoming event.

Polari-Palooza Is Coming Soon!

The first Polari-Palooza will be on Saturday, March 9, at Wolverine Farm. Tickets will go on sale soon for this fun evening of socializing and fundraising, with good food and drinks, live music and auctions. Please help us put together a great event. We are currently seeking corporate sponsors if you can help ask local businesses for support, and we also need silent auction donations. A couple of parents have already contributed one-of-a-kind jewelry and art for the auction. Thank you for the contribution and keep them coming. Email us at PTO4polaris@gmail.com if you can help.

Better Selves Project

Who do you admire most in the Fort Collins community? Who do you know that exhibits outstanding character?

7th and 8th graders are seeking inspiring members of the Fort Collins community for an interview and photography project in English class. Students will write up a profile and publish their article and photography on a web site as well as in an Old Town gallery during a First Friday event this summer. So, who are we looking for in the Better Selves project? Every day individuals in Fort Collins who exemplify positive character traits. Please see this [poster](#) for more information about the types of character traits we hope to celebrate. If you can, please take a moment to complete [this survey](#) to nominate as many people as you like. We would like you to consider as many diverse personalities as possible (occupation, religion, ethnicity, ability/disability, political affiliation, gender, orientation, etc.). Please also take the time to clarify why you are nominating this person. It would be great if you also shared the survey and poster with

your friends and social networks (filtered for local connections, please). Thank you!

Attendance Reminder

Please note that all secondary students who are more than 20 minutes late will be marked absent for that class period. If the tardy/absence is not excused this will activate an attendance call even though your student was at school that day.

Please remember to call the attendance line at 488-8261 to excuse student absences and/or tardies.

SECTION 2: Elementary News/Info

PTO News

Join us at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 14, at Avogadro's Number for our monthly PTO meeting. We will discuss Polari-Palooza, the Scholastic book fair, field day and more. We will also meet on Feb. 11 at the same time and place.

Donate to Polaris

Please consider donating to the Polaris PTO. You can bring a check or cash to the office, or donate through [your SchoolPay account](#) (<https://psdschools.schoolpay.com/link/Polaris-PTO-Direct-Donation>).

As a reminder, so far this year, the PTO has funded:

- Ipads for each elementary classroom
- 50 percent of the cost for the grade 4/5 Eco-Week trip
- Classroom books
- New playground toys
- Running club supplies
- Fun Night materials and supplies

SECTION 3: Secondary News/Info

News from the Parent Action Crew

Our next secondary Parent Action Crew (PAC) meeting will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 15th from 7:00 – 8:00PM at the Purple Cup Café.

Please come a few minutes early and grab a warm drink or snack and show your gratitude to The Purple Cup for their continued support of PAC and Polaris!



Medication Drop-Off Date for Feb. Intensives

All completed Medication Authorization & Release Forms and Medications must be turned into the Health Office by Parents or Guardians no later than Tuesday, Feb. 5th, 2019.

Medication forms are needed for students who will be participating in overnight (Adventure Trips), or medications needed during the day, during school hours (Intensive Trips). If you already have medication forms on file for the 2018/2019 school year a duplicate medication form is not needed.

Please contact Jeannie in the school Health Office with questions, 488-8268, or stop in to pick up medication forms. These forms can also be downloaded from the PSD website. Follow the link below to download medication forms. Remember, a separate form with your student's physician and parent/guardian signatures must accompany each medication.

Standard Medication Form:

<https://www.psdschools.org/webfm/12160>

Self-Carry Medication Form For Asthma-Allergy Medications:

<https://www.psdschools.org/webfm/12162>

Self-Carry General (HS Students ONLY)

<https://www.psdschools.org/webfm/12162>

Health Care Action Plan – Allergies

<https://www.psdschools.org/webfm/10606>

Health Care Action Plan – Asthma

<https://www.psdschools.org/webfm/7234>

Books and Bears Service Project Results

6th – 8th grade students in Matt's crew made an effort to bring a positive message to children and teens at Poudre Valley Hospital and Medical Center of the Rockies. Students have decorated over 50 delightful place mats and holiday cards. Families donated money, over 100 books, stacks of coloring books, and dozens of stuffed animals to the cause. We also received outstanding support from Clothes Pony (who donated books as well as gave us a 15% discount on stuffed animals) and Old Firehouse Books (who donated proceeds from a holiday shopping event and also gave a 15% discount on books). We are very grateful to all of the generous support and contributions made during this initiative. There is no doubt...we are Crew!

ADVENTURE & INTENSIVES!

Our February Intensive Week / Adventure Trips will take place from February 11th – 15th.

Please be aware of the following as the timeline is right around the corner!

- 1/16 Students receive Intensive Google Doc through their school email
- 1/18 Students identify top four choices via Google Doc by 3:30 PM
- 1/23 Intensive / Adventure Rosters posted and emailed to families
- 1/29 Students receive Intensive Packets / Adventure Briefings – 3 pm
 - Permission Slips
 - Cost
 - Gear Lists
 - Week's agenda / plans
- 2/5 PERMISSION SLIPS DUE FOR ALL INTENSIVES / ADVENTURE TRIPS / **ALT Schedule**
- 2/5 PAYMENT DUE for Adventure Trips (if paying by this deadline is a hardship, or paying in general is a hardship please contact Pam DeVoe to make alternative arrangements or to put in a request for Scholarship Funds)
- 2/11 First day of Intensives / Adventure Trips depart

▪ **Prioritizing Adventure and Intensive Selections**

All students will be asked to provide their top four choices of Intensives and Adventure Trips via their Google Doc by 3:30 on 1/18. It is difficult to give all students their top choices due to the following reasons:

- Some Intensives / Adventure Trips are highly desirable by many students
- Some Intensives / Adventure Trips are held to a smaller number due to risk management issues
- We simply can't accommodate every student on an Adventure Trip due to our trip capacity and the number of students we have enrolled.

To do our due diligence in accommodating as many students as possible, we devised a prioritization process to make such selections. This process was approved during the March 2010 School Improvement Team meeting. **This is how students are selected IF the demand for any particular experience is higher than what can be accommodated:**

- Students who get top priority:
 - Students completing their Google Form by the deadline of 1/18 at 3:30
 - Students who qualify under the Good Attendance Incentive Policy (see below)
 - Students who have earned Honors the previous quarter
 - Students who are earning enough credits to graduate "on-time" (pertains to High School students only)
- Students who are second in priority:
 - Students completing their Google Form by the deadline of 1/18 at 3:30
 - Students who have earned Honors the previous quarter (3.0 or higher GPA)
 - Students who are earning enough credits to graduate "on-time" (pertains to High School students only)
- All other students who don't qualify under the above-mentioned criteria will then be placed in an alternate Intensive or Adventure Trip

▪ **Good Attendance Incentive**

○ **How Does the Incentive Work?**

- During the window from 8/27/18 through 1/18/19, if a student has **four absences or less** in ALL their classes when it comes time to sign up for Intensives, that student will be given priority when selecting their first Intensive choice. Please note that three tardies in any single class is equal to one absence.
- To be eligible for our end of the year Intensive week in May, a student again needs to have four or fewer absences in ALL classes in the window from 1/22 through 5/3.

○ **What else do I have to consider to be eligible for this incentive?**

- Be aware that all UNEXCUSED and EXCUSED absences are counted towards this policy. The only absences that aren't affected by this policy are SCHOOL EXCUSED absences.
- Be aware that every three tardies in any particular class adds up to the equivalent of one absence.
- Remember that exceeding three absences in any particular class results in ineligibility for this incentive.