



# The Polaris Guide



Polaris Expeditionary Learning School  
August 2019

**K-12      K-5      6-12**

**8/13\***

Secondary Registration

Gr 11/12 8:30 – 10:00  
Gr 9/10 10:00 – 11:30  
Gr 7/8 12:30 – 2:00  
Gr 6 2:00 – 3:00

**8/19**

Middle and High School Start  
All students in grades 6 - 12  
Regular Schedule  
No Transition Day

**8/20**

Elementary School Start Day  
Wednesday Early Release

**8/26\***

K-12 PTA Meeting  
Avogadro's Number  
6:30PM

**8/27**

Elementary Parent Info Night  
• Grade 4/5 5:00  
• Grade 2/3 5:30  
• Grade K 6:00 – 7:00

**8/28\***

Secondary Intensive  
Selections out to parents and  
students via email

**8/28\***

Secondary Back to School  
Grades 6 -12  
5:30 – 7:00 PM

**8/30\***

Secondary Student Deadline  
for Intensive Selections  
3:30 Google Doc deadline

**8/29\***

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Medication  
Due for Eco Week

**8/29\***

K-12 Picture Day

**8/30\***

Last day for HS students to  
drop a class with a "W"

Dear Polaris Community,

The 2019 – 2020 school year marks a significant milestone within our K12 Polaris community. This year will begin the tenth year we'll be together as a K12 community following the move into our Moore facility by Lab School for Creative Learning (elementary) and Polaris Expeditionary Learning School (secondary). The kindergarten students who started with us that first year are now starting high school, and many more have followed suit since. I'd like to thank you all for taking a risk and enrolling your students in a school that does things "a little bit differently."

For those who are unaware of the story, or the strides we've taken since our program merged together, I thought I'd take some time to provide a little background information here before you delve into the nitty-gritty details within the remainder of this newsletter. Here's a brief timeline:

- Spring 2010: Polaris attends Lab School's Town Hall meeting to discuss the upcoming merger. Transition Team is formed.
- Fall 2010: Lab School and Polaris move into Moore
- Spring 2011: Lab-Polaris begin operating under one K12 budget
- Fall 2011: Staff begin engaging in Instructional Rounds, visiting classrooms across the grade levels
- Fall 2011: K12 Polaris reps. attend EL National Conference in Kansas City
- Spring 2012: MS students assist with elem. Field Day for the first time
- Fall 2012: Secondary students help with elem. Fun Night
- Fall 2012: K12 music and PE teachers are hired
- Fall 2014: K12 Polaris reps. attend EL National Conference in San Diego
- Spring 2015: PSD Board approves Polaris becoming one school under one name
- Fall 2016: School receives first K12 "report card" from the state
- Spring 2019: SBMT votes to combine the two PTA groups and make one K12 parent group

The Transition Team that was formed in the Spring of 2010 likened our two schools initial relationship to a courtship, perhaps a couple living together but not yet engaged. When we combined our finances in 2011 it felt a bit more like an engagement. Then in 2015, by the power vested in the School Board, we officially got married and took the Polaris name. And now that we've combined our parent PTA groups, I'd say we're at a point where we're having a good time with the in-laws.

Throughout this time there have been many struggles and celebrations, and I appreciate how the community has held its head high and maintained a certain level of optimism for the duration. I expect we'll do more of the same this year as we encounter more struggles and plan more celebrations.

*Joc Gawronski*

## **SECTION 1: K-12 News/Info**

### **Attendance Calls**

If your child is absent, please call the attendance line at **488-8261**. In doing so, we can keep our live lines open for any emergency calls we may need to field at any given moment.

### **Parent Involvement! At EL Schools “We Are Crew Not Passengers!”**

In the 2019 - 2020 school year, we will continue to provide opportunities for families to get involved in their school’s progress. Please read below to find out what roles we have available and how you can contribute to the health and sustainability of our K-12 Polaris program.

We will continue our practice of combining our SAC team with our SBMT this coming year, for the first time our elementary and secondary PTAs will operate as one parent group, and we have a number of school events that parents are always welcome to assist with.

Here are all the opportunities (A-D)...

### **Parent Involvement A: K-12 School Accountability Committee (SAC):**

We’re looking to cast a wide net for parent representation on this crucial team. Not only are we looking for representatives from the elementary, middle and high school grades but we’re also interested in recruiting parents that reflect our overall student population as well. The team meets quarterly and addresses the following topics:

- Q1:** Analyze school assessment data from 2018-19
- Q2:** Review the current progress on 2019-20 school improvement goals and begin working on the 2020-21 Unified School Improvement Plan process
- Q3:** Finalize 2020-21 Unified School Improvement Plan to be turned into the state of Colorado by early April
- Q4:** SAC analyzes 2020-2021 budget and makes recommendations for resource allocation.

### **Parent Involvement B:**

#### **K-12 Site-Based Management Team (SBMT):**

This team will meet quarterly with the SAC as well to address school wide issues, policies, and structures. This group may be involved in school-based decision making that could include, but may not be limited to:

- Traffic concerns
- School structures and/or traditions
- Policies regarding performance expectations
- Clubs and enrichment proposals

As school-based issues arise, this SBMT group will be addressing these issues.

Because we’re a K-12 SBMT we’ll be looking for representatives from all grade levels, please email Joe Gawronski ([joeg@psdschools.org](mailto:joeg@psdschools.org)) if you are interested on serving on this combined SAC/SBMT committee that meets quarterly.

This combined SAC/SBMT committee will meet from 3:30 – 5:00 PM on the following quarterly dates:

- Q1: Oct 1
- Q2: Dec 3
- Q3: Feb 25
- Q4: March 31

### **Parent Involvement C:**

#### **K-12 Parent-Teacher Association (PTO):**

The elementary and secondary parent groups are joining forces this year to explore the idea that “many hands make light work.”

There will be five major fundraisers this year that this group will need parent assistance with, and parents of students of all grade levels are encouraged to help with, to exhibit the notion that “We Are Crew” here at Polaris. The proceeds from each of these fundraising events will have specific elementary and secondary focus with one of the events being a K-12 fundraiser.

Here are the five 2019 – 20 fundraising events with their dates and fundraising focus:

- Fun Night Sept 27  
Elem Fundraiser
- Lost Souls Lair Oct 18, 19, 25 & 26  
Secondary Fundraiser

- Polari-Palooza Date TBD  
K-12 Fundraiser
- Show the Love April 20 – 27  
Secondary Fundraiser
- Fun Run May 22  
Elementary Fundraiser

### **Parent Involvement D:** **Annual School Wide Events**

Each year we have parents that ask, “how can I get more involved?” And each year we typically point out the more “formal” ways of getting involved through the committees and associations listed above. But beyond these opportunities we are always appreciate when we get family support throughout the school year as we hold some of our annual events at Polaris.

If you can’t commit to any of the “Parent Involvement” listed above, then please get in touch and find out how you can contribute to the following events at Polaris:

- Secondary Back to School Night
- Fieldwork and Intensives
- Secondary Dances
- K-12 Student Led Conferences
- K-8 Book Fair
- Vision and Hearing Screening Day
- Secondary Open House
- Secondary Celebration of Learning
- Presentations of Learning
- Elementary Field Day
- Secondary Polaris Games
- Classroom/Media Center Support
- After School Club Facilitation

### **K-12 Picture Day on August 30<sup>th</sup>**

Life Touch will be in the building to take school photos on Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. You can customize your picture package by going to their website at [mylifetouch.com](http://mylifetouch.com). Student ID’s will be distributed on this day by Life Touch.

Life Touch will be providing our school’s Picture Day ID number shortly before the 30<sup>th</sup>. We will provide this ID for the purpose of ordering pictures as soon as it’s available to us.

### **Student Drop-Off**

Polaris does not provide bussing; therefore, it is a busy place to drop off each morning due to the volume of traffic in front of the school. By adhering to the following guidelines, we can reduce the chances of an accident or injury. Please follow these requests when dropping your student off each day:

- Please do not park for an extended period of time in the drop off lane. If you need to bring something in to the school, then please find a parking space in front or in the east parking lot
- Please do not make U-turns in front of the school.
- To prevent the need to make a U-turn, please enter Orchard Pl. from the west via Taft Hill Rd. and get in the queuing area.
- Please do not double park in the drop off lane, queuing area or bike lane.
- Please move as far forward in the drop off lane as possible. Do not idle towards the front of the drop-off lane.
- If you are using the drop-off lane, please do not accompany your child to the school grounds.
- Please observe the 25 MPH speed limit on Orchard Pl.

Please honor these requests so that we can have the safest and most courteous experience possible for students and parents.

### **Gaining Access to the School After Hours**

To ensure that we have a safe school environment, both during school hours and afterwards, we ask that any students who need to enter the building after the regular school hours do so through the front entry doors. The Base Camp door in the Flex Room should not be used to gain access to the building. The room is not always occupied by an adult after hours as BASE Camp kids may be out back or in the gym at any given time. Thank you in advance for honoring this request.

## Parent Driver Information

To drive on any of our various trips off campus a parent must complete the following procedures:

- The parent registers on-line as a [Volunteer in Poudre Schools](#) (VIP)
- The parent completes the “Volunteer Field Trip Driver Application” that we have in the school office or print one of the documents that’s been attached to this newsletter email.
- Lastly, the parent provides a copy of their proof of insurance and driver’s license to the school.

**Each time the parent drives**, a new driver form needs to be completed, but we retain the copies of the insurance and driver’s license for the entire school year. Thank you for providing this information as well as striving to have your children experience the safest fieldwork possible.

## School Breakfast

Polaris offers breakfast to students prior to the start of each school day. If you’d like to take advantage of this opportunity, please drop your student off at least 15 minutes before the start of their school day. High school breakfast will be served from 7:45 – 8:00 and K-8 students can eat breakfast between 8:00 and 8:15.

## New Penguins Joining Us In 2019 – 2020

### Kaitlyn Birdsall – Thomas

Kaitlyn will be serving as our certified elementary art teacher, our secondary photo/yearbook teacher, and she will be co-teaching an 11<sup>th</sup> grade Crew class with our PE teacher, Jeff Schmidt.

Kaitlyn comes to us from a small rural district in eastern Colorado. Although the environment may have been different her, experience there afforded her the opportunity to wear many hats while working at a small K-12 school, very fitting due to what we are asking of her this year.

### Shauna Anderson

Shauna has been a widely used and highly touted substitute within PSD for years. She’s joining us primarily in order to teach French to our high school and middle school students. However,

she is also interested in getting as involved as possible despite her part-time contract.

We’re looking forward to learning from these fine educators, and they are looking forward to learning all that they can about Polaris and what we offer our community.

As many of you know, our K Para, Nicole Bauer, accepted a position at another school and we were afforded some additional para support from the district as well. As a result, we are currently in the process of hiring for two elementary paraprofessional positions as well. These two positions will be filled prior to the start of the school year.

## K-12 PTO Meeting

Our first ever K-12 PTO meeting will take place on Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at [Avogadro’s Number](#). This meeting will begin at 6:30 and will take place on their back patio, weather permitting.

We invite all parents from the K-12 community to attend this meeting to learn more about the merger of the two organizations, the focus areas of our fundraisers, and how we will proceed forward as a K-12 PTO.

We hope to see a wide variety of representatives there so please clear your schedule so that you can make it happen.

## SECTION 2: Elementary News/Info

### Elementary Student Pick-Up

At the end of each day all elementary students will be brought to the front court yard of the school building where they will be supervised by staff. When an elementary parent arrives to campus they have two options to pick up their child:

1. A parent can remain in their car and make their way towards the front the drop-off/pick-up lane as room becomes available. Once the parent is in the pick-up lane a staff member will release the child to the parent’s car.
  - Please safely vacate the pick-up lane as soon as your child is in the car; doing so will allow other parents to move up the line and pick their child up as soon as possible.

2. If a parent prefers to physically greet their child at the end of each day, they may park their car in an available spot on Orchard Place or in the school's east parking lot. After parking they can come to the front of the building and retrieve their child. Before leaving with your child we'd ask that you communicate with the supervising staff on hand.
  - After picking up the student, the parent can then bring their students(s) over to the west playground if they wish to play with peers and interact with other community members. Please note, only children with parent supervision are allowed to go over to the west playground.
  - If you'd like to give permission to have your child brought to the west playground by someone other than the parent, or to have that person bring your child home, please call the front office to alert us of this arrangement. **Any person, other than the parent, who is responsible for supervising or transporting a child from school must be listed as an Emergency Contact person within their school records.**
  - There will NOT be staff supervision on the west playground after school; the responsibility of supervision in this area therefore lies with the parent or the person who is being asked to pick the child up. We ask that the parents actively supervise their child(ren) as he/she plays with others on the west playground.

If a parent or child needs to enter the building after school has been dismissed they must use our single point of entry in the front. This will also be expected even on warmer days when our teachers crack their doors for some air movement in their classrooms.

At 3:30 a staff member out front will blow the whistle signaling the end of our school's supervision time. At this time the entire area out front will be cleared. Students who have a parent there will be asked to go to that parent. Students who are without parents will be taken to the office for late-student pick-up. This process

will help staff identify any student who does not have a parent present.

### Late Elementary Pick-Up

As mentioned above, students who are not picked up by 3:30 will be brought to the office area to wait for their parent or guardian. We know, and understand, that there are times when unforeseen circumstances may arise and prevent one from arriving on time, and at the same time we'd like to avoid a pattern of children being picked up late. To prevent late pick-ups from becoming a pattern we'd ask that you **plan to arrive each day as close to 3:15 as possible.**

If a pattern of late pick-ups does arise, we will notify the parent about our concern and request that they enroll the student into Base Camp; doing so would allow for proper supervision after the 3:30 pick-up time. After the fifth late pick-up, parents will be required to register for Base Camp where their child will be taken if they have not been picked up by 3:30.

### Elementary Parent Information Night Tuesday 8/27 5:00 – 7:00

We hope to see many of you at our Parent Information Night coming up in the second week of school. Because we have so many siblings at the elementary level, we divvy up the evening so that one parent can visit with multiple elementary teachers if necessary.

During this event you will have a chance to meet your child's teacher, learn about our routines and expectations of the classroom, and ask questions.

Please use the times identified below to determine when you should arrive for this informational evening. Please note that we are asking that only parents attend this event, there will be no supervision provided for children.

#### Elementary Schedule:

5:00 – 5:30	Grades 4 & 5
5:30 – 6:00	Grades 2 & 3
6:00 – 6:45	Kindergarten
6:45 – 7:00	K parents Q & A with principal Joe

## 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Parent Event

Because every 1<sup>st</sup> grade student is coming from a returning Polaris family there isn't too much new information to provide them through a Parent Information Night. So, in response, Denise will be hosting a social event for all the returning 1<sup>st</sup> grade students and their families. Here are the quick details:

Where: Avery Park 1101 Castle Rock Dr.

When: August 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00

Suggested items to bring: a blanket to sit on or chairs, question you have for me, any updates with your family, school supplies if you have them.

Siblings are welcome are welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade back to school event.

Please email Denise Gusinde for any additional information.

## Elementary Fun Night!

Our annual Polaris Elementary Fun Night fundraiser runs from **5:30 to 8 p.m. on Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, at Polaris.** It is an enjoyable night out for our elementary community while middle school and high school students get involved in running a variety of fun games and activities. We are planning a karaoke room, a mad science lab, a dance party, carnival games and much more. For parents, there is a competitive, fun and delicious chili cookoff and an excellent silent auction.

Fun Night is also one of the biggest elementary fundraisers of the year, and all the money raised goes directly back in our classrooms, a direct impact on your child's experience here at Polaris.

If you would like to get involved in planning Fun Night, please attend the first PTO meeting on **Monday, Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>, at Avo's.**

## Eco Week Medications

Parents of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, it is time to begin planning for any medications your student may need while attending Eco Week this year. This also includes Health Care Action Plans (HCAP) for certain medical conditions. **Please plan to have any all medications, paperwork and Health Care Action Plans turned into the Polaris Health Clinic no later than Thursday, August 29, 2019.**

## Student Medications

Most family physicians and pediatricians are swamped with pre-school year check-ups, sports physicals and immunization updating. We don't want you to get caught in this traffic jam at your student's physician's office if your student requires medications and or a HCAP.

The Poudre School District (PSD) requires an [Authorization and Release For Administering Medicine to Students at School or School Sponsored Activity](#) for each medication your student may need while at Eco Week.

PSD defines that all medications, whether Prescription, Generic, Over The Counter (OTC), Homeopathic of any type, Cough Drops and dietary supplements must have a **"Separate written Authorization and Release must be submitted each school year for each medication to be administered to a student, and for each change in the dosage, time(s) and/or route of administration."**

## Health Care Action Plans

In addition to medications, if your student has a chronic medical condition that requires a HCAP such as Asthma, Diabetes, Seizure Disorders, Migraine Headaches or Allergies (Bee Stings or food) [HCAP](#) are often prepared by your student's physician. If you have any questions consult with your physician early.

## Food Allergies

This is important information that both our Polaris Kitchen staff and the kitchen staff at Eco Week will need. Please be sure to list or update this information on your student's "Student Profile Form Information". Feel free to stop in the front office to update this information.

Please contact Jeannie in the Polaris Health Clinic if you have questions, need assistance or want to pick up medication or HCAP forms here at school. Health Clinic number (970)488-8268.

## K – 8 After School BASE Camp

Families accessing the BASE Camp Program for after school enrichment pick their child(ren) up on the southeast side of the building. Students in Base Camp will be housed in our Flex Room and

be released to parents from the east Flex Room doors.

To access the Flex Room doors simply pull into the east parking lot and proceed all the way through to the kitchen parking spots to the south. These

spots will be available for pick up so please don't worry about the reserved kitchen parking designation.

If you need more information about [BASE Camp](#) please call them directly at 266-1734.

### SECTION 3: Secondary News/Info

## 2019 – 2020 SECONDARY BELL SCHEDULES

Middle School (grades 6-8)				
	Mon	Tues	Thurs	Fri
Period 1		8:15 – 9:24		
Period 2		9:29 – 10:35		
Period 3		10:40 – 11:46		
LUNCH		11:46 – 12:18		
CREW		12:18 – 12:56		
Period 4		1:01 – 2:07		
Period 5		2:12 – 3:18		
Early Release Wednesdays				
1 <sup>st</sup> Period:		8:15 – 9:00		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Period:		9:05 – 9:50		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Period:		9:55 – 10:40		
4 <sup>th</sup> Period:		10:45 – 11:30		
CREW:		11:35 – 12:02		
LUNCH:		12:02 – 12:37		
5 <sup>th</sup> Period		12:37 – 1:25		

High School (grades 9-12)				
	Mon	Tues	Thurs	Fri
Period 1		8:00 – 9:24		
Period 2		9:29 – 10:53		
Period 3		10:58 – 12:22		
LUNCH		12:22 – 12:57		
CREW		12:57 – 1:32		
Period 4		1:37 – 3:01		
Early Release Wednesdays				
Period 1		8:00 – 8:58		
CREW		9:03 – 9:50		
Period 2		9:55 – 10:53		
LUNCH		10:53 – 11:24		
Period 3		11:24 – 12:22		
Period 4		12:27 – 1:25		

students will

receive their locker numbers and the combinations, parents can pay their [\\$125 Activity Contribution](#) and review their PSD Student Profile for accuracy.

### School Registration

Registration for middle school and high school students takes place on August 13<sup>th</sup> this year. Please refer to the front page of the newsletter for the identified times for the specific grade levels. Please note:

- **No registration activity will take place between 11:30 and 12:30. Please do not arrive during this time.**
- If you have students in multiple grades, you are welcome to come together and register all at once.

Students in grades 6 and 9, along with any high school students who are new to PSD, will be asked to pay a \$50 fee for their PSD issued laptop that they will be using for the remainder of the year (more information below). This \$50 fee may be waived when a family:

- Applies for [Free and Reduced Lunch](#), and qualifies
- Fills out the Fee Waiver form within ParentVue.

If you cannot attend for any reason please call the front office to let us know, we will do what we can to take care of things outside of the registration window.

## Spend Less Time at Registration by Using PSD's School Pay Option!

Poudre School District is in its third year of partnering with a software company that will allow families to pay school costs on-line through the School Pay product. As many of you know, one of the delays in our registration process in the past was due to how fast our credit card machines could process the transactions. By using School Pay, you can now bypass that process by paying in the comfort of your own home.

Please read the attached parent letter and the School Pay FAQ attachments for more detailed information, including how to access and the site and proceed with transactions.

Additionally, if you'd like to expedite the registration process; it may be helpful to know what the process involves, here's the "flow":

### Parent / Guardian

1. Pick up Profile Form in lobby area
2. Verify, hand write any necessary edits to Profile, sign Profile
3. Drop your signed Profile form in box by staff lounge located at the main hallway intersection
4. Head to tables across from Library to review if there are any necessary Important Forms to fill out or pick up
5. Head to Library to pay fees / costs

### Students

1. Pick up schedule
2. Head to hallway and select a locker by grabbing the sticky note
3. Bring sticky to our head custodian Andrew. Andrew will give you the combination to the locker
4. Try out the combination prior to leaving

## Secondary Back-to-School Night Wednesday 8/28 - 5:30 – 7:00

Please join us for our annual Back-to-School night on **Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>**. During this event you will have a chance to meet your child's teacher, learn about routines and expectations of the classroom, and ask a few questions.

During Back-to-School Night we will follow the schedules laid out below. **BE SURE TO BRING YOUR CHILD'S CLASS SCHEDULE WITH YOU!**

## PSD Provided Device Resources

Poudre School District is in its sixth year of running the PSD Provided Device program. We believe access to a mobile device allows digital learning to continue in and out of school. With this privilege comes shared responsibilities. Please support our efforts to ensure a safe online learning experience in school and at home.

- PSD Responsibilities - we believe providing a safe learning environment in the classroom as well as online is essential. We need your partnership to ensure we follow healthy, safe online behaviors.
- Families - discuss digital citizenship and how this opportunity is a privilege that comes with responsibilities and consequences.
- Learners - we need you to share the responsibility for safe online learning. This tool opens access to amazing resources, people, and collaborative learning opportunities.

Please complete the following steps to receive your device.

1. At registration, turn in the signed PSD provided device user agreement and 6<sup>TH</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders pay the user fee of \$50. If you decide to participate after registration, simply submit the completed form and provide the funds to your school's main office. **NOTE: The fee is waived for learners receiving free & reduced lunch. *MUST COMPLETE FREE AND REDUCE APPLICATION and FILLS OUT FEE WAIVER IN PARENTVUE.***
2. Watch & Discuss: "[PSD Provided Device Effective Practices](#)" - Short Video
3. Read & Discuss: [PSD Family & Student Computer Handbook](#) - Reference highly effective guidance for a safe online learning experience.
4. Read, Discuss & Sign: [PSD Provided Device user agreement](#)

Students in grades 7 - 12 will receive their PSD laptops during the first week of school.

Questions?

Dustin Reintsma, PSD Director of Educational Technology  
[dustin@psdschools.org](mailto:dustin@psdschools.org)

Here is the link to all information provided within this section of the newsletter  
<https://www.psdschools.org/academics/instructional-technology/parent-resources>

## Ongoing Secondary Volunteer Opportunities

**Field Experts:** During the 2018-19 school-year our students interacted with over 150 field experts both in and out of classrooms. If you have an area of expertise and would like to share it with students, please let us know and we can partner you with the appropriate instructor who is teaching the related content.

**POL Panelists:** At the end of each year we look to parents to help man our panels for student [Presentations of Learning \(POLs\)](#). Students in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade typically have peers, parents and community members sitting on their POL panels.

**Drivers:** Throughout the year at Polaris, each student gets out of the classroom setting between 20-25 times. During these times we are typically in need of parent drivers if other travel arrangements have not been made.

If you have an interest in driving on any of our secondary Adventure Trips, or the local Intensives, please keep the following dates in mind:

- Week of Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Week of March 9<sup>th</sup>
- Week of May 26<sup>th</sup>

Many parents in the past have had just as a rewarding time on our trips as the students, and we're always looking for those who can dedicate their time and energy to these unique experiences.

Please call (488-8263) Joe Gawronski if you have any questions. 😊

## Accessing PSD's Student Information System (ParentVue)

In 2013 Poudre School District implemented a new student data system called Synergy. With this data system it is possible for parents to access pertinent student data, including grades, attendance and past assessment scores.

Please be aware that none of this information can be accessed by a parent if they fail to check the **Education Rights** box on the annual student profile form. Student Profile forms will be available during the designated registration times on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

## Search and Seizures

Students possess the right to privacy of person as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure as guaranteed by the 4th Amendment of the United States' Constitution. This individual right, however, is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of all its students and staff. School employees (usually administration) may conduct searches when they have reason to suspect that the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff might be in danger.

**Note:** Lockers are school property and may be searched at any time where a reasonable suspicion of a safety or school policy violation exists. This holds true for any vehicle that is also parked on school property.

## Polaris "Grade Alert" All-Calls

At the middle and high school levels Polaris will alert parents via a pre-recorded All-Call if their child is currently failing one or more classes at that time.

Please keep in mind the following details with regards to these calls:

- Teachers at Polaris are asked to update their grades at least every two weeks
- The first "Grade Alert" All-Calls are typically done after the first three weeks of a new quarter
- Subsequent All-Calls of this nature are done every other week
- The timing of these calls could equate to about three calls per nine-week quarter

We also would like to communicate the purpose of these calls:

- To do what we can to assure that families are not "taken by surprise" at the end of any given quarter with regards to their student's grade(s)
- To encourage you to access [ParentVue](#) or Google Classroom to get more details

- about the call prior to you reaching out to a specific teacher about the grade
- To open the channels of communication between you, your child, and the teacher
  - To explore what assignments may be revised for a better grade within our Standards-Based Grading practices
  - To make sure that the teacher, school, parent, and student are all presented with accurate information so that all parties involved can make the best decisions possible to take corrective actions

If you receive such a call, we ask that take the following steps:

1. Go to [ParentVue](#) to get more details regarding the grade(s)

2. Ask clarifying questions of your students about their assignments and/or grades
3. Contact the appropriate teacher(s) to ask clarifying questions:
  - a. What can be revised for a better grade?
  - b. If there are discrepancies between the grade and your child's story, then ask if your child's interpretation is accurate

Please know that there are more students being called towards the beginning of a quarter, then effective problem solving begins to occur, and more students wind up getting passing grades and the "Grade Alert" calls begin to diminish.

## Polaris Glossary of Terms (Fieldwork, Intensives & Adventure):

There are several terms used at Polaris that are unique to our school. In an effort to keep you informed here are some definitions:

**Fieldwork:** Fieldwork days occur several times per year. At other schools they may be referred to as "Field Trips." Fieldwork days are usually experiences outside the school setting that enhance what's being done in classes, provide service learning opportunities, or build community. It's important to be aware of any necessary permission slips as students will not be able to attend without proper permission.

**Intensive Weeks:** During Intensive Weeks teachers create experiences that are outside the typical class setting. These weeks occur on three separate occasions throughout the school year, during this time students cease going to their regularly scheduled courses and experience unique opportunities provided by Polaris teachers. Here are some examples from past Intensives:

- French Cooking
- Photography
- Songwriting & Recording
- CSA work at local organic farms
- ACT/SAT Prep

**Adventure:** Adventure trips occur during Intensive Week, but they are typically overnight, multi-day experiences. Some adventures may not be over-night excursions but do require students to be gone longer than the typical school day (i.e.: Alpine Skiing Adventure / Day Trips). These require much preparation due to proper gear requirements and medical information. Here's a short list of past adventure trips:

- Canoeing the Colorado River outside Moab, UT
- Photography at Colorado's Great Sand Dunes
- Biomimicry, Hawaii
- Backpacking & Yoga in Buffalo Peaks, CO
- Archeological Dig in historical Jamestown, VA
- Native American Culture and Art in Taos, NM
- Coral Restoration in the Florida Keys

## ADVENTURE & INTENSIVES!

Our 2019 Fall Intensive Week / Adventure Trips will take place from September 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>. Please be cognizant of the following as the timeline is right around the corner!

- **8/27** Parents receive Intensive / Adventure descriptions via email
- **8/28** Students get Intensive Google Selection Form
- **8/30** Students identify their top three choices by 3:30 via emailed Google Form
- **9/4** Intensive / Adventure Rosters posted at 1:15PM and emailed to families
- **9/10** Students receive Intensive Packets / Adventure Briefings
  - Permission Slips
  - Gear Lists
  - Week's agenda / plans
- **9/17** All medications and forms are due to Health Office
- **9/17** [Alternate Schedule](#) for all students in 6 - 12
  - PERMISSION SLIPS DUE FOR ALL INTENSIVES / ADVENTURE TRIPS
  - Gear Check for all Adventure trips
  - Payment/Scholarship Applications for Adventure Trips due (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)
- **9/23** First day of Intensives / Adventure Trips depart

### ▪ **Prioritizing Adventure and Intensive Selections**

Students will be emailed their Intensive/Adventure Google form on Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>. Students are asked to make their top four selections via Google Forms by Friday, August 30<sup>th</sup> by 3:30PM.

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 and space is limited
- 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 to accommodate 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. The process described below is how students are selected:

- Students who get top priority:
  - Students who identify their top four choices by the established deadline (8/24)
  - Students who qualify under the Good Attendance Incentive Policy (see below)
  - Students who have earned Honors the previous quarter (3.0 GPA or higher)
  - Students who are earning enough credits to graduate "on-time" (pertains to High School students only)
- Students who are second in priority:
  - Students who complete their Google form by the established deadline
  - Students who have earned Honors the previous quarter
  - 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 Intensive or Adventure Trips; typically they will get one of their top four choices.

### ▪ **Good Attendance Incentive**

- **How Does the Incentive Work?**

- For the September Intensives, if a student has two absences or less in ALL their classes between May 6<sup>th</sup> and August 30<sup>th</sup>, they will receive their top Intensive choice.
  - To qualify for our Spring Intensives in March, a student needs to have five or fewer absences in ALL their classes during the span between the Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - To be eligible for our end of the year Intensive week in May, a student needs to have three or fewer absences in ALL classes during the span between Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **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 the absence limit in any single class results in ineligibility for this incentive.

### ACTIVITY and ADVENTURE Costs!

The Polaris Site-Based Management Team members voted unanimously four years ago to increase the annual Activity contribution from \$100 to \$125. The change came about due to rising costs of transportation, PSD busses, lodging, food, and general costs all around. The Activity Contribution helps pay for Intensive experiences as well as Fieldwork days. In the past these fees helped with the following:

- PSD bus transportation
- Ropes Course Fees
- Overnight fees at the Denver Zoo
- Entry fees into museums, etc.
- Guest musicians for Intensive Week
- Materials for glassblowing, jewelry making, catapults, cooking, etc.

The \$125 Activity Contribution is separate from any Adventure costs. Each Adventure Trip has a separate cost associated with it due to distance traveled and experiences that take place on the trip. These costs for Adventure go towards the following:

- Vehicle rental
- Food
- Gas
- Camping fees
- Entry Fees to parks, etc.