



Portland Public Schools Virtual Student Welcome Letter 2020-2021

August 24, 2020

Dear Portland MS Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! If you are reading this letter then you have signed your student(s) up for virtual learning for the 1st semester at Portland Public Schools. We hope this experience is successful and that you feel fully supported by the school district. Please read through the following details to learn more about the virtual learning experience through PPS. You can also find other information regarding this fall on our Covid-19 website - <http://www.portlandk12.org/Content/covid19>.

Brightspace

Brightspace is a Learning Management System and is new to Portland for this school year. You can think of a Learning Management System as a backpack with everything a student will need for a virtual course. Students will access content, complete and turn in assignments, and communicate with teachers all within Brightspace. Our teachers fill that “backpack” with all the information and resources for the school year. To access Brightspace students will use their school Google account and password. **If your student does not know their school Google account and password, they should contact their Enrichment Teacher.**

This week (8/24/30-8/28/20) students will be expected to do the following -

1. **Watch the following video on student schedules -**
[Student Schedule & Block Schedule Video](#)
2. **Welcome Back Video -**
[Welcome Back Video from Mrs. Davis](#)
3. **Watch the following Brightspace Tutorial -**
[Student Brightspace Tutorial](#)
4. **After you have watched the Brightspace Tutorial, please visit each of your courses. There may be a welcome video or a syllabus posted. Please explore the courses prior to Monday, August 31st. All coursework will begin on Monday, August 31st.**

Parents will have their own access to Brightspace as well. If you have multiple students at Portland you will be able to access all of the information within one login. Currently there is a programming glitch that is preventing Brightspace from “talking” to the parent portion of Skyward. We are hopeful that will be fixed soon and we will get training videos and login information out to parents once fixed.

Calendar and Time

Virtual students are expected to complete the same calendar year as our in-person students. They are also expected to spend the same amount of time working on their courses as our in-person students.



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Students may access courses day or night and on the weekends to ensure that they complete all assignments.

Here is the current school calendar -

[Portland Public Schools 2020-2021 Calendar](#)

Asynchronous Learning

The Virtual Option is not a “live” educational experience. Students will not be required to log in during specific times of the day but should be logged in every scheduled day. Teachers will not provide live instruction but instead upload all of the content for their course in Brightspace.

Pacing

The Virtual Option is teacher paced and not student paced. What this means is that we will have deadlines and course content completion dates established and communicated by our teachers. This virtual option will not allow a student to work too far ahead or fall too far behind. It is extremely important that students pay close attention to due dates and pacing guides established by our teachers. Once your child is in Brightspace they will notice that the entire course is not visible. This is because our teachers will build the course as they teach in-person instruction. This will ensure that our virtual and in-person students are accessing the same content this year.

Students should try to stick to their school schedule. We are on block scheduling this year so I would encourage students to focus on the 4 classes they have per day. Please see the weekly block schedule set up below as well as the 1st quarter block schedule calendar.

[Portland MS Red/Grey Block Schedule](#)

[Portland MS "A" & "B" Daily Schedule](#)

Contacting Teachers

Students and parents should use the communication tools within Brightspace and/or email to contact teachers for support. Your child’s enrichment teacher will be reaching out once a week to have two-way communication with their virtual students. It is important that parents and students respond to this communication. Every teacher is teaching both in-person and virtual students. Because of this they will not be available during the day while they are teaching in-person students. This may cause delays in return emails or calls. Our goal is to develop quality lines of communication that work for parents, students, and our staff.

Here is the Portland MS Staff Directory -

[Portland MS Staff Directory](#)



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Grading

- Grades will be issued in accordance to our normal grading scale.
 - All student grades can be found in Skyward. Access to missing assignments is also there.
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Student Expectations

Students participating in virtual learning are expected to complete the following on a daily basis -

1. Login to Brightspace and visit their courses in their day's schedule ("A" Day or "B" Day)
2. Complete daily coursework or assignments
3. Check student email

Students (and parents) participating in virtual learning are expected to complete the following on a weekly basis -

1. Respond to communication from the teacher 2 times per week. This communication may be directed towards the student and/or parent. It may come in the form of an email, phone call, or virtual meeting.
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Other Information:

- Download the Brightspace app on your phone! The app is called "Brightspace Pulse". You will have to type in "portland.brightspace.com" and then your student can login. The app only allows you to view as a learner, not as a parent. This will allow you to receive updates on when your student(s) has something due.
 - Please read through all communications that come from the school. Although some may pertain more to the in person students, it is important to note that not all communication will.
 - September 11th is picture day. You should have received a picture form in the mail. I will send more specific information on that.
 - We will have a textbook deployment day for 1 or 2 courses. I will send out a follow up message with more details about a day and time.
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Although I will not see your student on a daily basis, I hope they know they can reach out to myself or any other staff member at any point in time. Please feel free to email or call me if you or your student(s) have any questions, or want to set up a virtual meeting.

Sincerely,

Leanna Davis
Principal