



**Capitol Hill Elementary**  
***"A great place to grow!"***  
8401 SW 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97219  
(503) 916-6303

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August 28, 2020

Dear Capitol Hill Families,

It feels like we have been on summer break since mid-March so it is a little hard to believe that the start of the 2020-2021 school year is right around the corner. Still, I hope you are able to soak up every final moment of summer possible until we return for our first day of school. Grades 1-5 will start school on September 2 and Kindergarteners will begin on September 8. I have some long-awaited information about the structure of the school year that I hope will help you as you prepare for your child to participate in Comprehensive Distance Learning. The entire Capitol Hill Staff greatly appreciates the trust you have in us as we strive to provide the best experience possible for your child in an online environment.

With that being said, I want to acknowledge that distance learning is going to look a lot different this year than it was in the fall. Students and teachers will have a full day's schedule with portions being live with a teacher and other portions being reserved for independent student work which may be on or off the computer. If your child is unable to attend the live sessions of instruction, they can still participate because teachers will be recording each session and making it available to them. The independent work can also be done according to your family's schedule which offers some degree of flexibility to you.

Although our teachers are working very hard to prepare for the school year, they are still learning how to use some of the new platforms and programs that they will be using to teach while we are distance learning. We all feel a bit like first year teachers at this point. We know that this may be a little messy as we learn how to do school in a brand new way but we are excited that we will be learning together with you and your child. We honor your expertise as parents and partners in helping our children be successful.

Sincerely,

Aimee Alexander-Shea

Principal



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### **Welcome Video**

Please watch our "[Welcome to the 20-21 school year, Capitol Hill](#)" video on YouTube.

### **Remind App**

Last spring, PPS started using the Remind app to streamline all communication to our families. Since we have been told to send all communications to families through Remind, I strongly encourage you to download the Remind app on your cellphone or go to [www.remind.com](http://www.remind.com) to set up an account if you have not already done so. Use the code **8ege6da to join** Capitol Hill.

### **Soft Start**

Last week, PPS sent [communication](#) to families about a 2-week soft start this school year. The purpose of the Soft Start is to allow teachers to build connections with individual students and families, as well as the classroom community without a heavy focus on academics. The soft start will also give teachers, students, and families time to learn the technology that will be used in Comprehensive Distance Learning. While the first two weeks are dedicated to community-building and technology exploration, our students will engage with a rigorous curriculum this year. Their experience in Comprehensive Distance Learning will be more robust than it was last spring.

During soft start, you can expect our teachers to:

- Teach a 30 minute lesson each morning.
- Meet one time with you and your child individually for a brief get-to-know you chat. (Morning and afternoon times will be available.)
- Hold a welcome back information session for the grade level. (This will be recorded and made available to families who cannot attend.)

Your child's teacher will send you a welcome letter with the soft start schedule and more information by September 2. Please be on the lookout for it.

### **Daily Schedule**

Our start and end times will be 8:00-2:15, which are the same as a regular school day. Schools are using our regular schedule because many families have childcare already scheduled at these times and it allows families to get to Nutrition Hubs to pick up meals, if needed.

Throughout each day, students will spend part of their time synchronously, or working with their teacher, and some time working asynchronously, or working independently. [This document](#) gives examples of different types of synchronous and asynchronous activities your child might experience. Your child's teacher will provide you with their individual class schedule prior to the first day of school.

### **Aligned Curriculum**

This year, teachers will be teaching the same lessons in classes at each grade level. This will ensure that all of our students are getting consistent instruction and activities. It will also allow your child to collaborate with other children even if they don't have the same teacher.

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be taken each school day this year. Students will be counted as present if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Participating in a video class
- Communication from the student to the teacher via chat, text message, communication app, or email
- A phone call between the teacher or EA/Paraprofessional with the student, or, for younger students, with the parent
- Posting completed coursework to a learning management system or web-based platform or via email
- Turning in complete coursework on a given day.



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### **Nutrition Services**

Nutrition Services will begin serving meals again on September 2. The following is information that will help you get breakfast and lunch for your child if you want.

- Where: Meals will be available for pickup outside 38 schools. [Click here](#) to see the full list of schools/sites.
- When: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3 to 5 p.m.
- Other details: Students will receive five days' worth of meals each week. On Monday, they will get 2 days' worth of breakfasts and lunches; on Wednesday, they will get three days' worth of meals.

If you do not live near a nutrition hub or need assistance accessing meals, you can fill out this [form](#) to request that meals be delivered to you.

### **Free and Reduced Lunch Applications**

Income guidelines to qualify for free and reduced breakfast and lunch have changed. Even if you do not plan on getting breakfast and lunch for your child, you should apply if you think you might qualify because eligibility for the free or reduced lunch program has other benefits, as well, such as reduced or waived fees for certain district-sponsored activities.

*To Families Using SchoolCafé to Submit a Free and Reduced-price Meal Application:*

- Families can now submit a new meal application for the 2020-21 school year.
- Families who do not meet the 2020-21 Federal Income Guideline may qualify using the 2020-21 Oregon Expanded Income Guidelines. Please go to the PPS Nutrition Services website <https://www.pps.net/Page/2464> for more information.

*2020-21 Free & Reduced-Price Meal Benefits - Oregon Expanded Income Guidelines*

The State of Oregon has increased the income guidelines for free meal eligibility in the 2020-21 school year from 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 300% of FPL. This means more families may qualify for free meals using the Oregon Expanded Income Guidelines instead of the Federal Reduced Income Guidelines. For additional meal benefits information including how to submit a meal application, please refer families to the PPS Nutrition Services website at [www.pps.net/nutrition](http://www.pps.net/nutrition).

*To Families Who Use SchoolCafé to Pay for School Meals:*

- Due to the high volume of refund requests last school year, the autopay setting was disabled. Sign into your SchoolCafé account to either:
  - Delete your autopay settings to discontinue payments, or
  - Update your autopay expiration date to continue payments
- If you set up alert notifications and requested a refund, the alert was deleted. If you would like to continue receiving balance alerts, please set up a new one.
- If there was a credit balance on the student meal account at the end of the school year, it automatically rolled over to the 2020-21 school year for the student(s) to use. If you would like to request a refund or to donate to a student in need, please submit your request via SchoolCafé or email [nssupport@pps.net](mailto:nssupport@pps.net).
- If the account had an outstanding/owing balance at the end of the school year, it automatically rolled over to the 2020-21 school year. Families have the following payment options:
  - Send a check to PPS Nutrition Services, 501 N. Dixon St, Portland, OR 97227.
  - Submit an online payment via SchoolCafé. NOTE: There is a 5% fee and a minimum payment of \$15 per transaction.



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NOTE: If the total amount cannot be paid in full, payments can be made in installments. Families will continue to receive notifications until the balance is paid off.

For general account related questions, please call PPS Nutrition Services at 503.916.3247 or email [nssupport@pps.net](mailto:nssupport@pps.net).

#### **Tech Support**

As you work with familiar and new programs and platforms, please remember that if you encounter an issue, IT is there to help you. You can contact them by emailing [support@pps.net](mailto:support@pps.net) or calling 503-916-3375.

#### **Community Conversation**

We will be hosting an online Community Conversation on September 1, 6:00-7:00pm. Please use this [link](#) to join. I would like to collect questions before the meeting so that I can tailor the presentation to your needs. If you have any questions, please fill out this [survey](#) and submit it by Sunday, August 30. You can submit as many questions as you like.

#### **Kindergarten Orientation**

We will be hosting an online Kindergarten Orientation on September 3, 6:00-7:00pm. Please use this [link](#) to join. We will be providing general information about Capitol Hill as well as information about what you can expect in your child's Kindergarten classroom. I would like to collect questions before the meeting so that I can tailor the presentation to your needs. If you have any questions, please fill out this [survey](#) and submit it by Tuesday, September 1. You can submit as many questions as you like.

#### **Special Thanks**

Ian Murray for donating and building a beautiful new covered learning area in our garden! He did it to earn his Eagle Scout designation. What an amazing job he did. I can't wait to get back to school so we can use it.