



Leota Middle School Parent Newsletter

December 3, 2021

Good evening Leota families,

I hope you and your family enjoyed the few extra days off this past weekend. I enjoyed some fun family activities and time just to relax a bit. I can tell that the Leota staff and students were able to recharge their batteries as well and are prepared to launch into December! There are few upcoming events and reminders I'd like to highlight as we head into winter break in a couple of weeks:

- Please join the Leota Middle School Music Department in the LMS Gym on Wednesday, December 8th for their first live concert in TWO YEARS! The Choir and Orchestra will perform at 6:30pm and the Cadet and Symphonic Bands will perform starting at 7:30pm. Masks and Social Distancing will be REQUIRED!
- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys basketball is in the middle of their season and they would love to have you come cheer them on. Each team's game schedule can be found on the [Leota athletics calendar webpage](#).
- As the days get darker during the winter and streets/sidewalks can be slippery during cold days, please remind your child to use extreme caution on their way to and from school. This is especially important for those who walk or ride bikes to school. Safety first!
- Our next D, F, & A auto notifications will be sent out on December 17th. In the meantime, parents can continue to monitor their child's progress on Schoology and ParentVue.
- Last, but not least, I want to introduce Sydney Fee who will be working alongside me as an assistant principal for the next week and a half. Sydney comes to us from Bothell High School where she is the ASB Coordinator. Sydney has her principal certification so she has joined our team for a bit while Mrs. Gregor is away.

I hope you and your family have a fantastic weekend!

Sincerely,
Bryan McNiel
Interim Principal



***Please check the Leota Calendar for upcoming dates as well. There may be new items added or changed since the mailing of this newsletter. Thank you!**

- December 6 Periods 1-6 + Pride
 Green Team Club 2:30 Room 619
 6th Boys Basketball TMS@LMS 3:30
 7th Boys Basketball LMS@TMS 3:30
 8th Boys Basketball LMS@TMS 5:00
- December 7 Periods 1-6 + Pride
 Yearbook Sales Open through January 7
 Season 2 Sports Team Photos 2:30 Gym
 Star Time: 2:30 Library
 Yearbook Club Meeting 2:30 Room 711
- December 8 Blocks 1,2,3
 Batch Testing During First Period
 Leota MS Winter Concert: 6:30pm Gym
- December 9 Blocks 4,5,6 + R&W + Pride
 6th Boys Basketball NMS@LMS 3:30
 8th Boys Basketball LMS@NMS 3:30
 7th Boys Basketball LMS@NMS 5:00
 Star Time: 2:30 Library
 Future Problem Solving: 2:30 Room 601
- December 10 Periods 1-6 + Pride
 Bookworms Book Club 2:30pm
- December 13 Periods 1-6 + Pride
 Drama Club 2:30 Theater
 8th Boys Basketball CPMS@LMS 3:30
 7th Boys Basketball CPMS@LMS 5:00
- December 14 Periods 1-6 + Pride
 Star Time: 2:30 Library
- December 15 Blocks 1,2,3
 Batch Testing During First Period
- December 16 Blocks 4,5,6 + R&W+Pride

6th Boys Basketball KMS@LMS 3:30
8th Boys Basketball LMS@KMS 3:30
7th Boys Basketball LMS@KMS 5:00
Star Time: 2:30 Library

December 17 Periods 1-6 + Pride
Bookworms Book Club 2:30pm
D/F and A Notifications to be e-mailed home.

Leota Yearbooks on sale December 7th - January 7th

If you have not purchased a yearbook for your student and want to, they will be going on sale starting December 7th. Yearbooks are \$28.00 and can be purchased either online via [Online Payments](#) or in the office with check, cash or credit card. If you are not sure if you have already purchased one you can check on your Touchbase account or in the office. If this is a hardship for your family please contact your student's counselor or Mr. McNiel.

If you have any questions please reach out to Mrs. Spencer @ 425 408 6503 or mspencer@nsd.org

Info from Nurse Deb:

Local Community Support Info Share:

At NAMI Eastside, we are working to improve the quality of life for those affected by mental illness. We offer support groups as well as educational opportunities at various locations throughout eastern King County.

NAMI Eastside Mental Health Support Groups offer insights, emotional support as well as successful strategies for coping with everyday challenges, plus are led by nationally certified facilitators with lived experience of mental illness. All support groups are free, do not require insurance, and are held on a drop-in basis with no required length of participation. Offerings include:

Family Support Groups:

- NAMI Eastside Family Support Groups are peer-led support groups for any adults with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. Gain insight from the challenges and successes of others facing similar experiences.

Peer Support Groups:

- NAMI Eastside Peer Support Groups are safe and confidential spaces for adults living with mental illness. These groups meet weekly and are led by individuals with lived experience
- Visit the link below for more information. To protect you during this time of social distancing, our support groups are now online. Visit the link below for more information: <https://nami-eastside.org/online-offerings/>

Family to Family Classes:

- NAMI Eastside is hosting Family-to-Family Classes **beginning on January 4th and February 24th**. The class will meet online on Tuesdays (Jan. start) or Thursday (Feb. start) from 6 - 8 PM. Register and see more info at: <https://nami-eastside.org/classes/>

COVID Vaccines:

The health room continues to see questions on the expanded COVID vaccine availability for 5–11-year old's. Everyone age 5 years and older is currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. COVID-19 vaccine options for teens and children include:

- Pfizer: age 5 years and older
- Johnson & Johnson: age 18 years and older
- Moderna: age 18 years and older

There are several info links on our district website page for COVID vaccine location options at: <https://www.nsd.org/covid19/vaccinations>

Additionally, if you have questions about COVID vaccination and your child, it is highly recommended to reach out to your child's primary care provider to discuss the current COVID vaccine recommendations as it relates to your child's current health plan.

Mobile Clinics at Your Student's School (5-11 years of age):

NSD continues planning and scheduling clinics that will take place at your student's school during the school day based on availability of community resources. Check back periodically at the following link for more details and updates:

<https://www.nsd.org/covid19/vaccinations/covid-19-vaccination-clinics-5-11>

Additional Vaccine Location Options for all ages:

Click the Vaccine Locator button or check the King County vaccination sites listed below for site schedules, drop-in options, and available vaccine types.

<https://www.uwmedicine.org/coronavirus/vaccine>

<https://vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov/>

Public Health vaccine sites at Auburn, Kent, Bellevue Eastgate, and Seattle are using a waitlist for appointments (drop-in appointments are unavailable). Register to be waitlisted or schedule appointments (depending on availability) at:

<https://yourcovidvaccine.kingcounty.gov/en-US/>

General Vaccine Information for all in King County is available at:

<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/vaccine/distribution.aspx>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED DURING LUNCHTIME

Volunteers are still needed at lunchtime! To help our students spread out at lunch, we need adult volunteers to help monitor outdoor lunch areas. We have a fantastic crew of parents and grandparents, but we need a few more to ensure adequate coverage every day. Your help is especially needed on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. You'll get to see your child at lunch, meet some wonderful staff and teachers, and become familiar with the inner workings of Leota. Weekly and biweekly shifts are available. Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084baeaa23a2f58-help1>. If you have questions, please contact Carol Dillingham at caroldillingham@outlook.com or 206-427-3817.

Please visit the following links to become a volunteer.

Northshore School District Volunteer sign-up:

<https://www.nsd.org/get-involved/volunteer/become-a-volunteer>

Volunteers will be required to **submit a proof of vaccination or medical/religious exemption.**

Lost & Found

Our lost & found in the cafeteria is overflowing with water bottles and sweatshirts! Please encourage your child to check the lost and found while they're at lunch, before everything gets donated during winter break!



YEARBOOK PHOTOS REQUEST

Is your student involved in something fun or interesting outside of school? If you'd like a chance for your student to be featured in this year's yearbook, please send pictures of sports, clubs, activities, travels, or anything else to leotamsyearbook@nsd.org. Please make sure to include the student's name.



Leota Middle School

Home of the Lions

Respect · Empathy · Effort



COUNSELOR'S CORNER MONTHLY DIGEST



Hello Leota families, we hope you were able to relax and decompress during the Thanksgiving break. Although we have been back with in person school since September, it seems through many conversations with students, families, teachers, and office staff that many are continuing to struggle for a variety of reasons. In addition to adding the holiday season,

It is our hope that during this holiday season you will find ways to 1) take time for yourself - even if that means taking something off your plate, 2) connect with family(ies) and friends, and 3) go outside, take a deep breath of the cool crisp air, and when possible see the sunrise and/or sunset and marvel at its beauty - enjoy the outdoor scenes around us.

In this issue: SBIRT and general results · National Human Rights Day and Month · Symptoms of Anxiety and Strategies of coping with Anxiety · Academic Support · Things to do during winter break · Crisis Numbers

LMS Team:

Erin Palmer
6th Grade
epalmer@nsd.org
425.408.6521

James Kim
7th Grade
jkim@nsd.org
425.408.6520

Taryn Bakkane
8th Grade
tbakkane@nsd.org
425.408.6513

Ethan Blackstone
Mental Health Therapist



The counseling team at Leota finished the SBIRT Mental Health and Wellness Screening. We surveyed over 600 6th-8th graders (not including those who were absent, opted out, or declined) over the span of 6 weeks.

Here are some general statistics from the survey.

- 15% reported feeling bullied, threatened, or harassed
- 45% reported feeling anxious
- 26% reported feeling continuously worried
- 29% reported feeling no pleasure in doing things
- 26% reported feeling depressed, irritable, or hopeless
- 9% reported self harm
- 6% reported suicidal ideations
- 80% reported there is an adult at school who will help them if needed
- 67% reported there is an adult who care for them at school
- 72% reported there is an adult that tells them they did a good job
- 78% reported there is an adult who listens to them when they have something to say



In the end, we were able to partner with families and support students at both home and school. We met with many students, provided support, and connected others to necessary services.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home — so close and so small they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little

meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.” -Eleanor Roosevelt



NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH

December recognizes National Human Rights Month. This month and every month to follow, everyone in the United States is encouraged to come together and stand

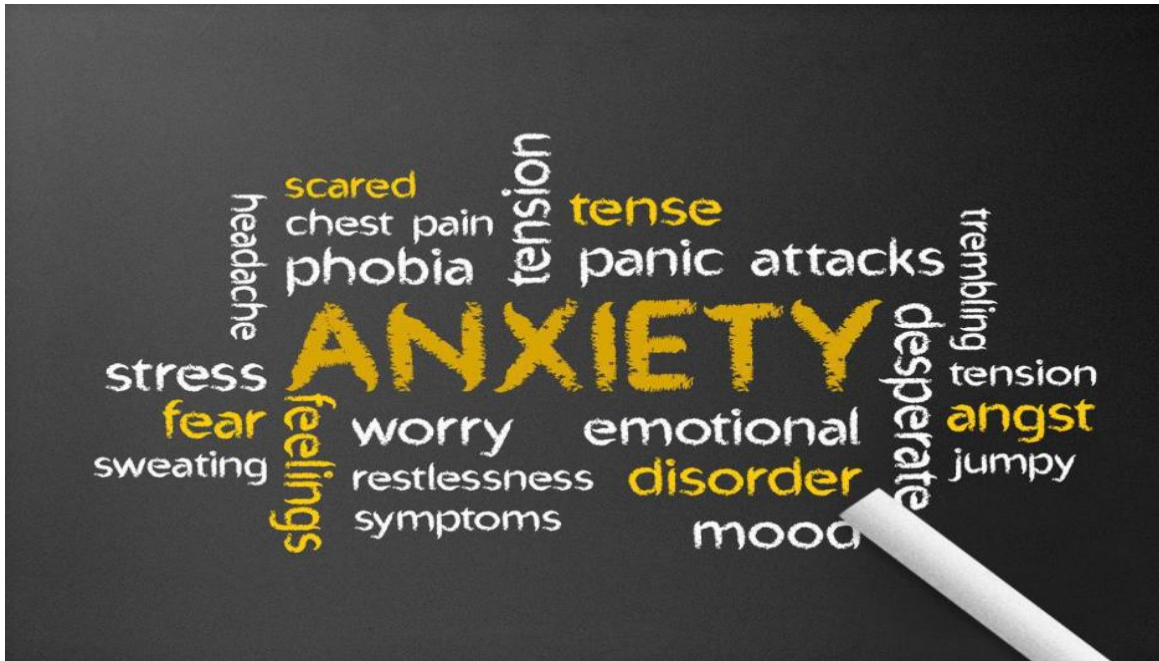
up for equality, justice, and the dignity of all humans. December is a time to honor the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an international document stating the fundamental rights and freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. These rights include freedom from discrimination, the right to equality, and the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.

HOW TO OBSERVE #HumanRightsMonth

Use #NationalHumanRights and #HumanRights to post on social media. Spread the word about the importance of treating everyone around us with respect, dignity, and kindness no matter their gender, age, race, political views, or social status.

National Human Rights Month is about acknowledging that people are people, plain and simple. If we take the time to learn about other cultures, we will begin to see things from their perspective and be able to better understand them as real people. This month, we are all challenged to learn more about a specific culture (or several) that may make us uneasy or hesitant. Give yourself a little history lesson and chances are, you'll change your preconceived notion about that particular group of people. <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/national-human-rights-month-december/>

Take some time to watch <https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/humanrightsmonth>



Symptoms of anxiety in teenagers <https://childmind.org/article/signs-of-anxiety-in-teenagers/>

Symptoms of anxiety vary widely, from withdrawal and avoidance to irritability and lashing out. Anxiety is often overlooked because teenagers are good at hiding their thoughts and feelings. But these are some of the behaviors that might be a sign that a teenager is anxious.

- Recurring fears and worries about routine parts of everyday life
- Irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Extreme self-consciousness or sensitivity to criticism
- Withdrawal from social activity
- Avoidance of difficult or new situations
- Chronic complaints about stomach aches or headaches
- Drop in grades or school refusal
- Repeated reassurance-seeking
- Sleep problems
- Substance use

Strategies in coping with anxiety in teenagers

Ethan Blackstone · MMFT · Sound Health · Leota

- **Grounding:** This is used to help reset the brain when you are overwhelmed. Pick something that can distract your senses, and focus entirely on that one thing for 10 – 15 minutes. One example of this is listening to music, but only focusing on one instrument at a time, rather than the whole song.

- **Breathing:** Steady breathing can help a great deal when paired with other techniques. Breathing regulates the part of the brain that gets cut off when stressed out, so it can keep your mind from becoming clouded.
- **Vent:** Have someone or something you can vent to. Pick a friend or family member, and make an agreement with them. They are allowed to vent to you when they are having a bad day, and you can vent to them when you are having a bad day. If you don't feel comfortable doing that, then record a video of yourself venting. The important thing is to speak your feelings out loud.
- **Keep notes:** Take 10 – 15 minutes to write down your anxieties in a journal, and then try to set your mind elsewhere. Remind yourself that your worries will still be in the journal, even if you relax for a bit. So, it's okay to take some time to yourself.
- **Ask yourself why:** Seems like common sense, but few people actually do it. We often feel a certain way, but we forget why we feel that way. It is important that we remember to ask ourselves where our thoughts and feelings come from. The brain makes shortcuts that lead us to sometimes assume things that might not be true when examined closely.
- **For dealing with self-harm with anxiety:** If you are struggling with self-harm, there are some other means of getting frustration or stress out that might help. Using a rubber band on your wrist, dunking your hand in ice water for short periods of time, finding old junk that you are allowed to break or even just punching a pillow. All of these might help, depending on what you are feeling. The above coping skills also can help with self-harm. Remember that self-harm is bad, not because you are strange or wrong, but because hurting ourselves is a dangerous way of dealing with stress.

Academic Supports:

Grade Check/Guide: We recommend you check your student grades weekly. You can access their grades and missing assignments through ParentVue. Schoology is a wonderful resource to view daily lessons and assignments, but grades are posted in ParentVue/StudentVue. Tips to support a positive experience for you and your student:

- Honor their efforts. If their assignments are complete or if you see an improvement, celebrate their successes!
- If your student is missing work, help them to come up with a plan to complete the task and turn it in! The middle school brain is still building skills around organization and executive functioning. Helping them identify next steps will support their skill building in this area.
- Follow up with teachers as needed.

For additional information on our district tools, click [HERE](#)



STAR TIME: LMS STAR TIME meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school from 2:30-4:00 (there is an activity bus available for students as well). The goal of Star Time is to help students get caught up on missing assignments, and focus on current projects and assignments.

FREE Tutor.com through KCLS:

- The tutors are specialists and take subject area tests before being hired.
- Students can meet with a tutor for up to 20 minutes (with two questions) as many times as they need to in a day.
- There are Spanish speaking tutors and the interface can be in Spanish as well as English.
- They also provide a service to provide students feedback on papers. The student can submit their paper and will receive it back within 12 hours with comments for how to improve it.
- It's available with live support each day from 2 p.m. to 12 a.m. - our students can get live help when they are doing their homework.



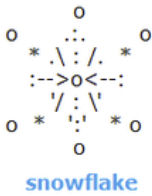
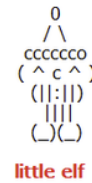
Link: <https://kcls.org/teen-subject/a-z-resources/>

Username: 417+student id number /

Password: last 4 digits of student id

Things to do during winter break

- Enjoy a hot cup of cocoa with whipped cream or marshmallows
- Build a gingerbread house
- Make paper snowflakes
- Bake cookies share with family, friends, and neighbors
- Have a movie marathon
- Take a wintry hike
- If it snows, go outside!
- If it snows, build a snowman, igloo, or fortress (use those minecraft skills outside)
- [Drive around and enjoy holiday lights](#)



<https://www.momsarefrommars.com/moms-blog/winter-holiday-keyboard-characters>

We wish you all a wonderful holiday! Please reach out to your student's counselor if you need assistance. If you or someone you know needs immediate support outside of school hours, please contact one of the following:

- Call Teen Link: 206-461-4922, 6:00-10:00 pm nightly, staffed by teens
- Text Teen Link: 866-833-6546, 6pm-9:30pm
- 24-hour Crisis Line: 1-866-427-4747, to speak with an adult crisis expert
- National suicide prevention crisis line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Reach a Crisis Counselor - Text HOME to 741741
 - Anxiety, Eating Disorders, Depression, Suicide, Self-Harm
- Dial 911 if you have an emergency and need help

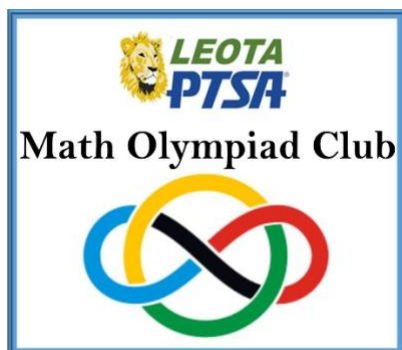


MAKE IT A GREAT MONTH LIONS!!!



community.

Can you believe it is December already?
Please see below for some exciting events as we close out the calendar year. Math Opportunities for our kiddos, and additional opportunities for our



Leota Math Club is partnering with NCHS Math Club to provide Math Olympiad focused sessions for our Math Club students. The goal of these sessions will be to introduce the students to Problem solving skills and how to approach Math Olympiad questions. We hope the sessions will improve the accuracy and the speed in which students can solve Math problems.

- When: every Wednesday (unless notified) from 3-4:30pm PST
- How: Online via Zoom (details below).
- Format:
- 3pm - 3:45pm NCHS students will lead the meeting by providing guidance w.r.t problem solving etc
- 3:45pm - 4:30pm - we expect students to work in groups. This will help the students to form teams and understand the working style of one other to be able to get best outcome from tournaments.

If you would like to sign up for Math Olympiad communications and get notified about these weekly sessions or upcoming Math tournaments, please sign up Leota Math Club communications from Leota PTSA website. ([Math Olympiad Club \(leotaptsa.com\)](https://leotaptsa.com)) . Parents who are interested to volunteer may please contact matholympiad@leotaptsa.com



December Staff Appreciation

Winter Break is just around the corner! We would love to set up a table of cookies, baked goods, and candy bars on Wednesday, December 15 for staff to put together their own little gift bag of treats to take home for the holidays. Please specify what you plan to bring in the sign up, so that we can avoid too much of one thing. <https://signup.com/go/ZMzmSgA>



As we enter the giving season, the PTSA is looking to host a Stuff the Truck event, where we have opportunities to give back to our communities in different ways. In the meantime, as one way, wanted to call your attention to Threads and Treads; an NSD clothing bank at Canyon Park Middle School that accepts the following (in good condition):

- 5T-adult XL, (most in need of men's clothing)
- Shoes (kids and adult sizes)
- ALWAYS in need of underwear & socks (NEW only please)

To donate clothing and shoes, meet up at Leota parking lot during drop off or pick up can be arranged OR you may drop donations off anytime at the bin on the porch of 18107 NE 191st Street (blue house on corner). Please contact contact@leotaptsa.com for questions and/or arrangements.

Any donations made are tax deductible as Threads and Treads is 501(c)3.

- Cash donations can be made through PayPal at https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=57RVTT87D3ZFU; all cash donations go to purchasing socks and underwear!
- Amazon Wish List: https://www.Amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1T55CCCJBOS5Y?ref=wl_share