

# Back-to-school tips for from students



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If you have school-age children, then you've probably already received a "welcome back-to-school" letter from your student's principal or a list of necessary school supplies from a teacher. You might have also received advice from one expert or another about how to best prepare your child for the new school year.

But one source of advice on getting ready for that summer-to-school transition is often overlooked — advice from the students themselves! So, I reached out to a few knowledgeable children in the region who attend Oregon Connections Academy. They represented various grade levels, and offered some really insightful responses.

"Having your desk clean and organized for the school season is important so that way you don't have anything from last year that you don't need. And, find out what classes you are going to take so that way you can make folders for them." That organizational tip is

from 16-year old Isabella Ramos, from Sublimity, and her 13-year-old sister Addy. Isabella will be a junior at the online public school in the new school year and Addy is starting 8th grade. The Ramos sisters added, "Don't be afraid to get to know your teachers, they are really nice and just want to help you. Also, go to events because it's a great way to make friends."

The Peterson sisters from Molalla help each other throughout the school year and are happy to share tips for success with other students. Ingrid Peterson, an incoming freshman, puts her focus on academics. "The week before school starts, try warming up your brain by doing multiplication cards and writing exercises to get your brain geared up for school." Younger sister Grace, entering 8th grade, recommends students help their brains adjust with better sleep. "Start getting into routine a few days prior — such as going to bed early, and getting up early." Audrey, a 4th grader added, "make sure you have all your supplies," while 2nd grader Raquel suggested students, "organize your workplace."

Christian White from Salem is a junior enrolled in the school's ASCEND

Career and Technical Education program in the business and management pathway. Christian suggests students, "look into the materials you're given or classes you're assigned, so that way you can be ahead of the game."

"My best advice to students would be to focus on your well being," said 17-year-old Mikayla Wood from Scio, a senior enrolled in the ASCEND medical pathway. "Summer includes many fun and exciting opportunities to better yourself but also offers those chances to let your guard down and spend less time on your mind and body. Remember to focus on you! Do something to revive your mind and bring rest and eat right while enjoying exercise to prep your whole body and being for the upcoming school year."

These students offered some sensible suggestions for ways their peers can get their new school year off to a great start. However, as parents there are many other areas of daily life to consider and your children may have their own concerns or new things they want to try going into a new school year.

Communication is key. It's important to check in with your student each day for even a few minutes to find out how

things are going. Spending time reading or doing other learning activities together is especially important with younger children.

Moving to a new school or into a new grade band, like from elementary to middle school, can also be stressful for children. Ask your student what kind of support they need from you and you might be surprised at the creative solutions they suggest.

For those students who have a little anxiety going back-to-school this year, and even those who don't, I want to leave you with a line from one of my favorite children's books by author A.A. Milne. It's the part where Christopher Robin said to Winnie the Pooh, "promise me you'll always remember: 'You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.'"

I hope every Oregon family starts the new school year off strong!

*Susan Pollnow is Oregon Connections Academy Middle School Assistant Principal from Salem. Enrollment is now underway for the 2019-2020 school year. For information please visit: [www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com/Events](http://www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com/Events) or call (800) 382-6010.*

## Glacier

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Those seeds left behind will sprout and become new pine trees. The connection between the whitebark pine and the Clark's nutcracker is an ecological bond that allows the bird to get energy-rich food and the tree to have its seeds planted. Each species helps the other and together they both survive. Scientists call this mutually beneficial relationship symbiosis.

At 6,400 feet I leave the last of the straggling trees behind and enter a world of constant wind. The few remaining plants squat low in rounded cushions of tight growth. Deep taproots quench their thirst and fuzzy leaves prevent water loss. Bright blossoms attract the attention of determined pollinators. At 6,800 feet sprawling circular mats of dwarf juniper look like alpine putting greens. Ground hugging growth is the only way to survive up here.

At 7,200 feet my breath comes in short gasps. I step trailside and look directly down on the lower portion of the White River Glacier. Dislodged rocks and small boulders litter its frozen surface. The old snow near the glacier's snout is pink. Climbers call it watermelon snow.

It is algae that thrives at low temperatures. The red pigment absorbs heat, providing the algae with a small amount of water as the top layer of snow melts.

### If you go

**Directions:** To prevent traffic congestion at Timberline Lodge, visitors are encouraged to take the Mt. Hood Express shuttle bus from the Sandy Transit Operations Center located at 16610 Champion Way in Sandy, Oregon. The cost is \$2.00 each way. Details and schedule are available at [www.mthoo-dexpress.com](http://www.mthoo-dexpress.com).

**Length:** 4.25 miles round trip

**Duration:** 4 – 5 hours

**Elevation gain:** 2,500 feet

**Age range:** suitable for fit adults

Watermelon snow is an important source of food for the tiny ice worms that inhabit glaciers.

At 8,500 feet the clarity of this high bright world is radiant. I am filled with the joy that only a mountain can bring. A rhythmic pounding reverberates in my ears. Is it the mountain's heartbeat or my own?

I choose a sequestered spot in the lee of a boulder and study the ice. From its natal grounds just below the summit the White River Glacier spills down an enormous cliff. Hundreds of feet beneath the top layer of this frozen mass the bedrock is being abraded and quarried by the enormous weight of the ice as it slowly moves downslope. Huge crevasses cleave its surface as it stairsteps to the



Crevasse in White River Glacier on Mount Hood BOBBIE SNEAD / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

southeast. The glacier sweeps through a raw canyon to fill the infant White River with its meltwaters. It is difficult to grasp the significance of this glacier's size, even in its current shrunken state.

My eyes follow the route of this morning's hike, starting a couple of miles below and climbing the steep ridge all the way up to the rocky spot where I sit. Looking to the summit

again, I spot a wisp of steam rising from the fumaroles known as the Devil's Kitchen. The mountain exhales softly from its volcanic core. The evanescent vapor comes as an alpine benediction. It signals me to go back down to the everyday world. I will return.

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