

The Lotus Lowdown

January 27, 2023



Maria Francisco, Principal

Lotus Lowdown/Principal's Bulletin Biweekly Starting February

As a means to condense the amount of information going out to families on a weekly basis, I have decided to send out the Lotus Lowdown/Principals bulletin on a biweekly basis. The next Lotus Lowdown will go out to parents on February 10 and February 24, 2023.

PTA Super Bowl Boxes: \$10 each

Our PTA in conjunction with our 8th Grade team will be selling super bowl boxes for \$10 each. Half of the proceeds collected will go to the PTA and half will be the payout. If you are interested in purchasing a box for the super bowl, please email our PTA president, Gretchen Devinsky at ptapres@renaissancepta.org or contact Mr. Stulbaum @ mstulbaum@montclair.k12.nj.us

#GOJETS

Student Council Candy Gram Sales:\$3

- Deadline to order Feb 7th
- \$3 per Candygram
- Raffle- the person who buys a candy gram gets put into a raffle and a winner is picked on Valentines day. Prize is something like a \$10 gift card. One raffle ticket per candygram purchased. 3 winners, 1 from each grade.

Calming Spaces:

We are so grateful for the families who have donated to our SATp initiative of creating calming spaces for our students in classrooms. With our families help and donations, we have been able to gather enough resources to supply one classroom per grade with all that is needed to create a calming space for student use. A calming space is a designated space in a classroom where students can go when they need to regulate emotions (calm down). As you know, we are implementing calming spaces in conjunction with our Zones of Regulation program. We plan to begin using these spaces over the next week and will share photos with families in our next bulletin. Again, we are so grateful to all who helped make this possible.

Math Midterms:

The Math Midterm will take place on 1/30 and 1/31 during student's scheduled Math Classes. The Midterm will cover the first half of the year's concepts and standards. Midterms count for 5% of a student's Final Math Grade. Teachers will review concepts with students in preparation for the Midterm. Should you have any questions, please contact Mr. Gazzillo @ rgazzillo@montclair.k12.nj.us

Renaissance Middle School Stem Fair: March 30, 2023 6-8pm

The Renaissance Science Fair has been a staple of the science curriculum for over 20 years. Now 2023 will bring a new format more in line with our current dynamic curriculum. Every student at Renaissance will select and complete a project to present on the night of March 30th, 2023. Each grade level science teacher will assist students with clarification of instructions, choosing a topic, and monitoring progress. Students should choose something they are passionate about and there will be awards for exemplary work. Judges from outside the school will be choosing winners from specified STEM categories. Students will “enter” their project in the category to which it is most suited. As an example, you may have 25 students from all three grades competing in the “Earth and the Environment” category depending on their project topic. If you have questions, reach out sooner rather than later. Let's go!!!

[STEM Fair Student Packet](#)

Renaissance to host Winter Social: February 17, 2023

Our student council is busy at work planning our winter social that will take place in February. DJ PAP will be on the ones and twos to entertain our students on the dance floor. Admission to the social is \$5 and will be paid at the door. Our PTA will partner with us as well and will sell pizza and snacks so be sure to send students with extra money.

Spanish:

Throughout the month of January, students in Spanish Novice I,II, and III have been preparing for the Spanish Olympic Games on January 30th and 31st. The two-day event consists of the following events: Reading, Translating, Storytelling, and the favorite action-packed Gladiator competition in which students hear words in Spanish and act them out at lightning fast speeds.

Students in Novice Spanish II and III will begin to prepare for the National Spanish Exam during the months of February and March. Renaissance students will take part in this national contest the week of March 27th.

Students with excellent participation during these months will be invited to our second annual Red Bulls game on April 15th. Two teachers and six students from Granada, Spain, will also be visiting our school and attending the event with us! Please note that although we will be attending the game together this is not a Board of Education sponsored event.

Music:

Don't forget to sign up for chorus if you love singing. Chorus will be offered for semester 2 as a Friday Elective. Course description below.

Chorus- 6th, 7th & -8th Grades

If you love to sing and you're passionate about music, join the Renaissance Singers. As a group, we will learn to develop the one instrument that is always with us...our voice! Students will work on proper technique, tone quality, and harmony. This group is open-minded to all styles of music. Bring your love for your music, your favorite songs, and your energy to sing!

Author Willie Mae Brown to visit Renaissance Middle School February 8, 2023

Willie Mae Brown is a visual artist as well as an author who began writing stories about her childhood in 2012 and reading them in public in 2015. She is known for infusing her personal

narratives with the vernacular of her Southern upbringing and has read at numerous public events including Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations at Brooklyn Borough Hall, as well as at many special events across the city, in her home state, and beyond. *My Selma* is her first book. We are absolutely thrilled to host Ms. Willie Mae Brown and grateful to our PTA president, Ms. Gretchen Devinsky for making this presentation possible for our students.

MSU robotics opportunity at Buzz Aldrin on Feb 8, 2023

Participants in the Project Computer Science Girls (PCSG) club have been invited to a special opportunity on Wednesday, Feb 8, from 2:30-4:30 at BAMS. It is being presented by MSU.

The content of this two-hour visit is to inform and engage the students with respect to robotics and AI. We feel that this is a worthy opportunity for these aspiring girls in STEM and we hope that consideration can be made for them if they choose to take part.

[Notice to Parents](#)

A Message from SEPAC:

[SEPAC Resource Fair](#)

6th Grade:

Students should bring their own water bottles and headphones to school regularly.

Students should also charge their Chromebooks every night.

ELA Update:

In ELA, the students finished our second whole-class novel *The Outsiders*. Many of them really enjoyed the book. They learned and discussed the many complicated themes displayed in the book, for example, the idea of classism in society, analyzing stereotypes, the theme of questioning "who are *the outsiders* in society?," as connected to the book and also in the real world. They also discussed the idea of "family" as it related to the characters in the book.

Lastly, they learned to "stay gold" or true to who they are no matter the conflicts that they encounter, which is also shown through the many characters in the book.

The students wrote their first Literary Analysis Essay, where they identified and supported a common theme between the book "The Giving Tree," by Shel Silverstein, and the short story "Mother and Daughter" by Gary Soto.

This month and also in February, they will continue to write Literary Analysis Essays, and transition into learning the skills to comprehend poetry, and nonfiction texts.

7th Grade:

Field Research Trip

On February 17th, the 8th-grade students will be taking a trip to the Meadowlands Environmental Center in Lyndhurst, NJ. Students will be engaged with a morning/afternoon science workshop titled Biobasics. We are encouraging students to wear multiple layers as there will be outdoor components no matter rain/shine. Students also need to bring their own lunch to eat on site. Permission slips will come out the week of February 13th.

Math

The math midterm will be this coming Monday, January 30 (Stulbaum/Babu), and Tuesday 31st (Noori/Jackson). There will be an optional extra help session at the main branch of the library this Saturday the 28th from 10-12 on the 3rd floor.

Science

This week students have been introduced to our upcoming STEM Fair coming on Thursday, March 30. Students officially have access to all documents regarding the event and are being asked to form a testable question for their project. The first deadline has been shared. To reinforce science process skills, we have begun our lessons on CER, (Claims, Evidence, and Reasoning) which teaches students how to share strong arguments in scientific writing in an experiment or when analyzing formal data. We will be practicing this skill for the rest of the year from our curriculum and this will be needed for their own STE.M project.

ELA

This week, we analyzed chapters 8-15 in our novel: A Lesson Before Dying. Just a reminder that we are watching the film in portions throughout the next couple of weeks alongside reading the novel. Students are engaged in conversations revolving around the characters, setting, and conflict while connecting it to real-world issues such as injustice.

Social Studies

The entire 8th grade will be watching the film "Glory" next Friday. The film is about the all-Black 54th Regiment of Massachusetts. The film is a part of our Civil War curriculum. Before we view the film, students will read and analyze President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

8th Grade:

Field Research Trip

On February 17th, the 8th grade students will be taking a trip to the Meadowlands Environmental Center in Lyndhurst, NJ. Students will be engaged with a morning/afternoon science workshop titled Biobasics. We are encouraging students to wear layers as there will be multiple outdoor components no matter rain/shine. Students also need to bring their own lunch to eat on site. Permission slips will come out the week of February 13th.

Math

The students are starting on a new unit called Exponential Functions. The end of the unit focuses on Exponential Growth. A small assignment will include the students define Albert Einstein's alleged quote "Compounding is the world's 8th wonder"

Science

Are you eating metal when you eat breakfast cereal? This week students explored the role of iron in our body and proved that iron can be extracted from breakfast cereal. Iron is not only a transition metal from the periodic table but an essential mineral for our body. Students had to design their own tests in groups to determine if iron is really in their cereal.

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Important Upcoming Dates:

- January 27,, 2023 International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- January 30-31, 2023 Math Midterms (6-8)

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY JANUARY 27, 2023

From 1941 to 1945 Nazi Germany and its collaborators committed the systematic murder of over six million Jews. The Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, was Nazi Germany's "Final Solution" for eliminating all Jewish people within Nazi Germany's grasp. By the end of this heinous act, roughly two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population had been murdered. The United Nations designated International Holocaust Remembrance Day on November 1, 2005. Join us on January 27 for International Holocaust Remembrance Day when we remember the Nazi's act of genocide so that no one else will suffer like that again.

[Additional resources/information](#)