



# Middle School Newsletter

September 2019

## OUR MISSION

*To educate and inspire a diverse community of K-12 learners by engaging them in rigorous real-world learning experiences which prioritize intellectual, social and emotional growth.*

## LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL, MRS. LEE



Dear Middle School Families,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year at Tapestry Middle School!

Middle school is such a crucial time in a child's life and we are so fortunate and honored to support you and your child during this time.

We have built a responsive work plan as a leadership team that will guide all the learning experiences your child will engage in this school year. This year's work plan which is organized into 3 Dimensions of Student Achievement through EL--Mastery of Knowledge and Skills, Character and High Quality Work. I feel confident that through this work **we will advance equity, academic and character excellence in our inclusive and responsive educational community.**



## Education

### Dimensions of Student Achievement

Dimension of Achievement	Students	Teachers and Leaders
Mastery of Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Demonstrate proficiency and deeper understanding:</b> show mastery in a body of knowledge and skills within each discipline</li><li>• <b>Apply their learning:</b> transfer knowledge and skills to novel, meaningful tasks</li><li>• <b>Think critically:</b> analyze, evaluate, and synthesize complex ideas and consider multiple perspectives</li><li>• <b>Communicate clearly:</b> write, speak, and present ideas effectively in a variety of media within and across disciplines</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessments are <b>rigorous, meaningful, and aligned with standards</b></li><li>• <b>Use assessment practices</b> that position students as leaders of their own learning</li><li>• Use <b>meaningful data for both teachers and students to track progress</b> toward learning goals</li><li>• <b>Engage all students in daily lessons that require critical thinking</b> about complex, worthy ideas, texts, and problems</li></ul>
Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Work to become effective learners:</b> develop the mindsets and skills for success in college, career, and life (e.g., initiative, responsibility, perseverance, collaboration)</li><li>• <b>Work to become ethical people:</b> treat others well and stand up for what is right (e.g., empathy, integrity, respect, compassion)</li><li>• <b>Contribute to a better world:</b> put their learning to use to improve communities (e.g., citizenship, service)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Elevate student voice and leadership</b> in classrooms and across the school</li><li>• <b>Make habits of scholarship visible</b> across the school and in daily instruction</li><li>• Model a <b>school-wide culture of respect and compassion</b></li><li>• <b>Prioritize social and emotional learning</b>, along with academic learning, across the school</li></ul>
High-Quality Student Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Create complex work:</b> demonstrate higher-order thinking, multiple perspectives and transfer of understanding</li><li>• <b>Demonstrate craftsmanship:</b> create work that is accurate and beautiful in conception and execution</li><li>• <b>Create authentic work:</b> demonstrate original thinking and voice, connect to real-world issues and formats, and when possible, create work that is meaningful to the community beyond the school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Design tasks that ask students to apply, analyze, evaluate and create</b> as part of their work</li><li>• <b>Use models of excellence, critique, and multiple drafts</b> to support all students to produce work of exceptional quality</li><li>• <b>Connect students to the world beyond school</b> through meaningful fieldwork, expert collaborators, research, and service learning</li></ul>

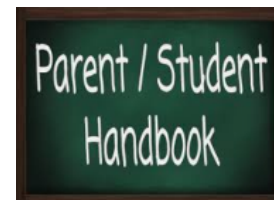
## CONTINUED LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL, MRS. LEE

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Recently the 2019 NYS Mathematics and ELA Assessment results were released. A key point when reviewing the data is our ability to see growth the longer students are educated at Tapestry. For example, last year's 8th graders grew by 6% in Math and 15% in ELA from 6th grade to 8th grade. Overall performance results for 2019 were:

<b>ELA</b>	<b>6th grade: 51%</b>	<b>7th grade: 36%</b>	<b>8th grade: 30%</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>6th grade: 30%</b>	<b>7th grade: 20%</b>	<b>8th grade: 35%</b>

Individual testing reports and analysis will be sent to each family that participated last year. Thank you for attending our second annual *Meet Our Crew Night* that took place on Thursday, August 29th. It was lovely to have so many familiar and new faces in our beautiful space. **We had a 70% attendance rate!** At *Meet Our Crew Night* or during the first week, students and families received a copy of the updated **Student and Family Handbook**. Students are encouraged to bring the signed acknowledgement form back to school asap. The first crew to do so will win a pizza party. Within the handbook, there are updates to our attendance policy, dress guidelines, electronic policy and code of conduct. If you have any questions, feedback or would like to hear more about these policies, please attend the first **Principal Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting on September 24th at 8:15 AM**. This will also allow for the first **Coffee with the Counselor** meeting with Jessica Bedell, the middle school counselor at 9:00 AM. During this time, Ms. Bedell will provide support in the domain of navigating social media with a middle school student.



Have a wonderful September,

**Mrs. Lindsay Lee - Principal, Gr. 6-8**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL CULTURE WITH ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,

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Welcome Back Middle School,

We are so excited to kick off the 2019-2020 school year! We were so happy to see so many of our families and students attend our *Meet Our Crew Night*. As you learned, Crew is an important structure at Tapestry Charter School. Within the Middle School, crews stick together for all three years. The students learn to build relationships with a small group of students and their crew leader. The crew leader also serves as the first line of communication between the school and families. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's crew leader.

As the Assistant Principal in the Middle School, I also have the role of DASA Coordinator. DASA stands for Dignity for All Students Act. Within this role, I am responsible for investigating any claims of bullying or harassing behavior. If you suspect any instances of bullying, please reach out to me or the middle school counselor, Ms. Bedell and we will conduct a complete investigation of the incident. We will always follow-up with you and communicate what we can about the investigation.

The first month of school we will be focusing on building relationships within our crew and creating norms, structures and routines to have a safe and welcoming environment. I will be traveling with your 6th and 7th grade students on Fieldwork the first week back. I hope this experience builds lasting relationships within crews. Crews will continue their team building efforts throughout the month of September in hopes of creating trusting relationships.

We look forward to a new and exciting year! Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns!

**Ms. Amy DiMaggio - Assistant Principal, Gr. 6-8**

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### **STEPHEN BREW - GR. 6-12 GUITAR TEACHER**

Mr. Brew is an extremely passionate teacher who wants to change his students' lives through music! He has taught guitarists of all ages and levels, and believes that we all have musical ability. He received an undergraduate degree from SUNY Fredonia, a Masters degree from Syracuse University, and a Doctorate degree from Indiana University. When he's not rocking out, he loves to run half marathons, read history books, and spend time with his wife and young son!



### **MICHAEL HOCKWATER - GR. 7 ELA EXPEDITIONARY LITERACY**

Mr. Hockwater received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Adolescence Education & English from Canisius College and his Masters of Education degree in Literacy from the University at Buffalo. He is passionate about teaching, learning, and working with middle school students. Mr. Hockwater has taught many different subjects to students in grades K-8 in Buffalo Catholic Schools and is looking forward to incorporating his past experiences and subject knowledge into his Expeditionary Literacy course at Tapestry Charter Middle School where he seeks to inspire a love for learning and a passion for reading and writing in his students. Outside of the classroom, Mr. Hockwater loves to read, hike, and travel. He is excited to join the Tapestry Middle School team and is looking forward to a fun and learning-filled year with his students.



### **JACOB JAY - GR. 6-8 BAND TEACHER**

Mr. Jay is a graduate of SUNY Buffalo State, where he received a Bachelors of Music in Music Education as well as a Minor in Digital Music Production at the University of Arkansas at Monticello where he completed a Masters of Music in Jazz Studies. Jacob enjoys performing music throughout WNY with groups like the Jay/Sharp Quintet, and the Buffalo Jazz Collective Repertory Orchestra.

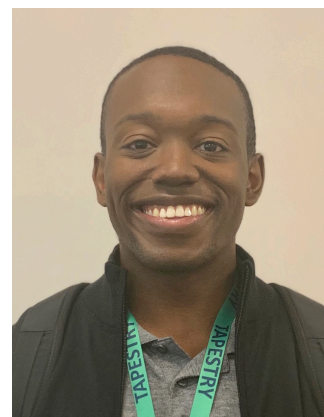
**The Middle School is excited to announce adding 3 new support employees from City Year. City Year partnered with Tapestry for the 2019-2020 school year. City Year assists schools to help bridge the gap by providing diverse, talented and trained young adult tutors, mentors and role models who work alongside teachers to support student success.**



**PENNY SIMMONS  
GR.6 SUPPORT**



**HANNAH DICKSON  
GR.7 SUPPORT**



**MILES WOODARD  
GR.8 SUPPORT**



## PI.R.R SPOTLIGHT

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PIRR Spotlight is a great way to recognize specific students in the building for demonstrating our core values of PIRR (Perseverance, Integrity, Respect, or Responsibility). Each month we will focus on a different value and the crews will select which student has displayed this core value consistently throughout the month. Please look for our PIRR Spotlight nominees each month in this section of the newsletter or on the bulletin board in the upstairs hallway.

Here is the list of values by month for the 2019-2020 school year:



**September:** Perseverance

**October:** Integrity

**November:** Respect

**December:** Responsibility

**January:** Perseverance

**February:** Integrity

**March:** Respect

**April:** Responsibility

**May:** Perseverance, Integrity, Respect & Responsibility - P.I.R.R.

## ENRICHMENT WITH MRS. MIRANDA

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### NWEA MAPS Assessments

Last year, Tapestry started using NWEA MAPS assessments as another data point for students' progress in reading and math. Students take these computer assessments three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). Every fall, students are given a growth goal based on national norms. Throughout the year, students spend time in crew and class reflecting on their growth and setting action steps to help them achieve those goals.

In middle school, all students receive an enrichment period, which is focused on strengthening students literacy and math skills. Students are grouped by similar strengths and needs and are provided strategic strategies to help them grow as readers and mathematicians. As the school year progresses, students are periodically reassigned based on their growth.

**Stephanie Miranda, Instructional Coach, Gr. 6-8**

## EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING (EL) MRS. KAUFFMAN

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### What is EL Education?



As you may know, we are an EL Education school. We are the only EL Education school in Buffalo NY. Which begs the question, "What is EL Education?"

EL Education is a national organization that partners with hundreds of schools across the country. Their philosophy of teaching embodies character education, doing high-quality work with students by engaging them in the world around them through expeditions and mastering skills and knowledge that prepare them for the 21st century.

There are multiple structures that you will see this year that are unique EL structures to Tapestry. Feel free to ask your child what these structures are all about throughout the year!

-Crew

-Student-LED Conferences

-Community Meetings

-Teambuilding

-Expeditions

-Fieldwork

-Intensives

-Showcases

-Student-engaged assessment

We believe that these structures and more create a learning environment where kids can claim the following!

*We get smart to do great things.  
We accept academic and personal challenges.  
We are crew.*

**Jessica Kauffman, Expeditionary Learning Gr. K-12**

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## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ARTS

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Welcome to Arts Majors!

Our arts staff is very excited to work with your children throughout this school year. Teachers at Tapestry have worked very hard over the summer to continue to develop and implement the revised New York State Standards in their specialized content area to improve our curriculum, programming and scaffolding for arts majors here at Tapestry Charter Middle School.

All students in grades 6-8 will receive instruction in the arts (art, dance, theater, and/or music). If your child was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade last year, he or she should have chosen an arts major, giving all Tapestry students an opportunity to focus on one art form and develop his or her own talents and skills. Students will remain in their chosen major for grades 6-8 to complete a full scope and sequence of their arts major.



### VISUAL ARTS

In the month of September students in Visual Art, grades 6-8 will take their time to become familiar with their studio environment and available equipment to ensure the success and safety as an artist at TMS. Each scholar will be introduced to their class syllabus, develop routines, and learn the studio norms. Please check with your child to have their syllabus signed and returned in a timely manner.

### GUITAR

In the month of September, guitar students will become familiar with classroom rules and begin making music. Students will learn how to obtain guitars in an orderly fashion, handle instruments with care, sit with proper posture, and arrange materials appropriately. In terms of music, students will begin working on ensemble pieces right away, focusing on hand position, left and right hand technique, dynamics, expression, and ensemble performance. Please make sure your child signs and returns the syllabus in a timely manner.

### BAND

In the month of September instrumental band students will meet their new teacher Mr. Jay. Students will receive a band handbook the first week of class. Please review this handbook with your students and return the band handbook signature page by **Friday, September 13th**. Students will also be assigned instruments in the first two weeks of class. There are a limited number of Tapestry owned rental instruments and it is recommended that students rent instruments from their local music stores if possible. Mr. Jay recommends Northtown Music, Twin Village Music, and Alder Creek Music for student rentals. Mr. Jay is very excited to start the school year and to make music with all of you.

### DANCE

Great news: we are in a larger studio space which makes it more convenient to expand your movement possibilities! With some changes in the schedule, it is important this school year for females to show up for class **already dressed** in their **required solid black** leggings, and guys to arrived in class wearing their black sweat pants due to time constraints. Expect to present your work for our Tapestry community in Community Meetings with opportunities for featured performance spotlights such as solos and duets from our class units!

### THEATER

How exciting it is to be in an art form that can take place ANYWHERE: the classroom, the staircase, the school announcement speaker, the cafeteria, even the elevator! Bring your most outrageous selves to do things like re-tell a historic event, demonstrates a Tapestry norm, or act out a dramatic scene while learning along the way. Lights - Camera - Action!



## WELLNESS & HEALTH WITH JESSICA MASCLE

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Going back to school is difficult for families in many ways. There are logistics to figure out, supplies to buy, emotions to manage, and very importantly, routines to set. From a health and wellness in schools perspective, this last item is essential. Here are some good routine tips for your families to implement to thrive and not just survive this September!

### MORNING ROUTINES

- Get up earlier than your children and spend some time preparing yourself for the day - take time to stretch, to remind yourself of your goals, and to clear your mind.
- Wake your children up as sweetly as possible. Use a gentle tone.
- Have all of their clothes, lunches, and backpacks ready to go the night before to avoid scrambling and being tardy.



### AFTER-SCHOOL ROUTINES

- Get creative when you ask your children about their school day. Ask them questions like “tell me a time today when you felt excited about something you learned,” or “tell me about a time when you felt confused by what you were learning,” instead of, “how was school today?”
- Give your child the opportunity to play outdoors and decompress before beginning homework time.
- Choose healthy snacks like fruit over highly processed foods like chips.

### BEDTIME ROUTINES

- Consider a technology ban for the whole family an hour before bedtime.
- Have your child take a warm shower or bath before bed. Incorporate soothing and calming elements like lavender and moisturizing oils.
- Have your child crawl into bed and share with one another something that you are grateful for.

Following these routines consistently can have a significant impact on the transition back to school. Your children will come to look forward to the structure you are providing as well as learning to take responsibility for their own self-care.

**Jessica Mascle, Wellness & Health Gr. 6-8**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS UPDATE

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**THUNDERHAWKS** we hope you all had a healthy active summer. This upcoming school year will present opportunities for middle school students to be part of the sport teams and clubs here at Tapestry. We encourage students to start the year off by joining us in the fall season. This is a great way to get in-shape and spend time with friends playing Soccer or Volleyball. All permission slips and schedules are complete and will be distributed during the first week of September. Families, please have your annual sport physicals handed in and completed by your primary physician. Middle School students must have a completed physical handed in in order to participate in and Fall Sports.

The coaches and physical education teachers are excited to continue the tradition of **THUNDERHAWK PRIDE!** If you have any questions please feel free to email me at [marc@tapestryschool.org](mailto:marc@tapestryschool.org)



**Mr. Marc LaMorticella - Athletics Director**

## SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE WITH MR. BALLACHINO

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Welcome back everyone! I am looking forward to seeing everyone back for another great school year. Please always feel free to reach out directly to me if you have any questions regarding servicing and/or needs for your child this school year. I can be reached at 716 332-0754 x2109 or at [dominic@tapestryschool.org](mailto:dominic@tapestryschool.org).

**Mr. Dominic Ballachino - SPED & 504 Director**

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## COUNSELING CORNER - MS. BEDELL



Welcome back! We are very excited for the 2019-2020 school year and to have your child back with us at Tapestry Middle School! Student Government's first official meeting will be September 16th after school until 4:00pm. If your child is interested in joining please plan on having them attend this first meeting. There will be a lot of information and reminders going out to students. If you have any questions regarding anything, feel free to call me at 716-332-0755 ext 1060. Looking forward to working with you!

**Ms. Jessica Bedell - Counselor, Gr. 6-8**

## UPDATES FROM NURSE BURNS IN THE HEALTH OFFICE

### 2019-2020 School Year Immunization and Physical Exam Requirements:

NYS Education Law requires that a physical exam be done on all new entrants (including kindergartners), and at regular intervals during enrollment. (**Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11**). Parents/Guardians must furnish a health appraisal signed by their primary care physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant by **September 15th** in the years that are associated with mandated examinations.

NYS Education Law requires parents/guardians to provide an Immunization (shot) record that indicates their child has received, or has appointment(s) to receive the required vaccine(s) in order to attend school. Proof of immunization must be submitted to the health office by **September 15th**. Per NYS Education Law students without proof of immunization must be **exempt from school** until proper documentation is received.

- **Medical Exemptions:** to immunizations must be submitted annually. Medical exemption forms are available at your primary care physician's office or the health office.

- **Religious Exemptions:** are NO longer accepted. As of June 13, 2019 Governor Cuomo signed legislation removing non-medical exemptions from school vaccination requirements for children. Any child without proof of required immunizations by 8/28/19 will not be permitted to attend school on 9/3/19.

As always, feel free to contact the health office with any questions or concerns at [Burnsn@tapestryschoo.org](mailto:Burnsn@tapestryschoo.org) or 716-204-5883 ext. 1007

**Nurse Burns, RN, BSN**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>September 3, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 6 First Full Day of School - 8:00 AM - 3:07 PM</b>
<b>September 4, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 7 &amp; 8 First Full Day of School - 8:00 AM - 3:07 PM</b>
<b>September 5, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 6 Fieldwork to Broadway Hope Ropes Course @ 9:00-3:00</b>
<b>September 5, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 8 Rowing Fieldwork to the Westside Rowing Club @ 8:45-2:45</b>
	<b>- Crew's Attending - Marino, Hills, Flores</b>
<b>September 6, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 7 Fieldwork to Letchworth State Park @ 8:15-3:00</b>
<b>September 6, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 8 Rowing Fieldwork to the Westside Rowing Club @ 8:45-2:45</b>
	<b>- Crew's Attending - Raham, Matos, Smerda, Ritchey</b>
<b>September 24, 2019</b>	<b>Gr. 6-8 Back to School / Open House Night @ 4:00-5:00 PM</b>
<b>September 26, 2019</b>	<b>Gr.6-8 Principal Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting &amp; Coffee with Counselor Bedell @ 8:15-9:30 AM</b>
<b>October 4, 2019</b>	<b>Harvest Festival, K-12 @ 4:00-7:00 PM</b>
<b>October 8, 2019</b>	<b>Tapestry Community Association (TCA) Meeting @ 6:30 in the High School Library</b>
<b>October 9, 2019</b>	<b>Middle School Picture Day</b>
<b>October 9, 2019</b>	<b>Marking Period 5-week Quarter End</b>

## CONTACT INFORMATION

65 Great Arrow Avenue

Phone Number: 716.332.0755 | Fax Number: 716.332.0758 Website: [www.tapestryschoo.org](http://www.tapestryschoo.org)



Tapestry Charter School is an arts-integrated, K-12 Expeditionary Learning, tuition-free, public school located in the city of Buffalo, NY. Founded by passionate individuals who shared a commitment to choice, accountability, and excellence, Tapestry received approval from the State University of New York Board of Trustees to open in September 2001.