



# Middle School Newsletter

January 2020

## 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



Happy New Year! Welcome back from break! I hope the break provided all students and families with some time away from the screen and opportunities to connect and have fun, despite it being a very different winter break.

Coming back to school in January is the perfect time of year to set goals for the second half of the 2nd quarter and the school year. Please be sure to actively log into the Parent Portal to view your child's grades as well as visit the grade level website to view current learning and assignments. Progress reports were shared with families just before winter break. These provide an added layer of communication for how your child is performing in their classes. **The second quarter ends on**

**January 22nd.**

**On January 11th**, we are excited to welcome students back into the building for the hybrid learning program. During the week of January 4th, you will receive confirmation on your child's learning schedule (A or B) and their learning model (remote or hybrid) that will start on January 11th. We will also be hosting a virtual parent support session on **January 12th** about self-management and ways parents can support their child in this area of need. An invite will be sent the first week of January.

We understand that navigating online learning can be difficult. [Here is a recording from a parent visual learning session in December that supported families with Google Classroom and Parent Portal.](#) The first week of January we will host another Virtual Learning Support Session for families on Tuesday, January 5th at 3. 5th Grade Families can attend for support on Zearn and should fill out this [form](#) if interested, and 6th-8th grade families can attend for support with Amplify Science and should fill out this [form](#) if interested.

During the month of December, all students took the NWEA MAPS reading and mathematics assessment. This is a computer-based normed referenced test that provides students with an updated RIT score which aligns to a lexile reading level. Although reading and performing math on grade level is the ultimate goal for students, we focus on and celebrate growth. Students will be reflecting on their scores and setting goals during crew for their reading and math growth for the second half of the year. We will re-assess all students at the end of the year. Please connect with your child about how they did. If you are looking for ways to support your child's reading and/or Math, please contact your child's ELA and/or Math teacher.

Have a safe and healthy January,

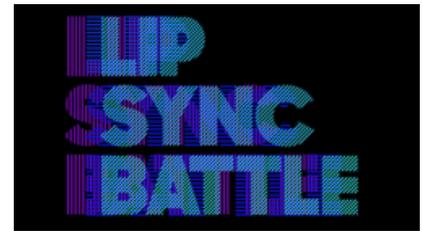
**Mrs. Lindsay Lee - Principal**



Hello Middle School Families!

Welcome back! January and the new year allows for us to reflect on the previous year and set some new goals or resolutions. This might be a good time to think about setting some goals around building resiliency and self-management skills with your middle schooler. Learning at home has been really hard. Something that makes the process a little easier is setting up daily routines. This helps students get into the habit of following a schedule and making school a priority in their day. When creating schedules, it is important to build in time for breaks to reset and recharge for the rest of the day. This will help with feelings of burning out. On your child's asynchronous days, they can follow the office hours schedule to complete their work and meet with their teachers for extra help.

In January we have a few exciting student events coming up! On **January 22nd** our Student Government will be hosting our annual **Lip Sync Battle!** The Student Government will meet, develop a plan and communicate with the community when we get back from break about the details of the event. **On January 29th**, we will be hosting our monthly **Grade Level Community Meetings** during morning crew. This provides an opportunity for students to connect with the entire grade level, engage in a competition and have fun!



We look forward to Seeing our hybrid students back in the building!

Have a Joyous January!

**Mrs. Amy Meshulam - Assistant Principal**

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## P.I.R.R SPOTLIGHT



PIRR Spotlight for the month of December focused on students that are demonstrating our PIRR Trait of Responsibility. We wanted to recognize students that have been demonstrating responsibility by completing all of their assignments, coming to class on time, and participating in the learning. **Congratulations to the nominees for the month of December for demonstrating our PIRR trait of Responsibility.** We recognized our students during our Grade Level Community Meetings on December 22nd.

### 5th Grade Crews:

**Dytche:** Zyrell Autman  
**Kubiak:** Adelyn Paterson  
**Coyle:** Aniyah Wood  
**Campbell:** Trevor Minor

### 6th Grade Crews:

**Hoerner:** Josiah Brown  
**Cooke:** Christian Irizarry  
**Brunner:** Atila Davis  
**Sprowal:** David Washington  
**Gentile:** Michael Hogan  
**Scanlon:** Isabella Kilonsky  
**Bailey:** Lily Suraf

### 7th Grade Crews:

**Hartke:** Tyler Schroeder  
**Close:** Alixandrea Broccolo  
**Steffan:** Farnaj Chowdhury  
**Frost:** Simier Sweet  
**Camp:** Muarece Szymanski  
**Hahn:** Chase Hargrove  
**Brew:** Tamia Rainey  
**Slepian:** Julia Griffin

### 8th Grade Crews:

**Matos:** Janee Long  
**Hills:** Kaylin Lyle  
**Tomasik:** Angelo Vasiliadis  
**Smerda:** Mateo Vance  
**Mastrangelo:** Micaela Vera  
**Ritchey:** Clementine Gianadda  
**Raham:** Ryleigh Berenson

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### SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH AT HOME

Developing healthy coping strategies is not an innate ability and as children continue to grow, there are some ways parents and caregivers can assist in helping them obtain good mental health habits.

#### Talk About Mental Health At Home

There is still a stigma surrounding mental illness which discourages people from talking about any mental health challenges they may be facing. When we talk openly about mental health, you are promoting a safe environment that will encourage youth to seek support and help when it is needed.

#### Model your own healthy habits

Children learn by observing. When adults use positive coping strategies to manage life's stressors, youth are more inclined to develop and use their own strategies.

#### Spend time together as a family

Children need love, time and attention. Setting time aside to be with your child produces a stronger bond, making them feel valued and loved. Invite them to join you in an activity you enjoy to reduce stress. Incorporate these activities into your family's weekly routine and acknowledge their mental health benefits.

#### Encourage regular exercise

Children and adolescents need at least 1 hour of daily physical exercise to promote health development, and exercise is one of the most effective strategies for maintaining a healthy mind. Exercising stimulates chemicals that improve our moods and allow us to channel negative energy positively.

#### Praise your child's efforts and behavior

When we are praised on something we did, we feel good about ourselves, and our confidence and self-esteem increases. Praise also helps to motivate kids and encourage them to continue to try new things.



#### Create calm spaces

When we are fatigued and stressed, or we are struggling with mental health problems, our brains process environmental cues (lights, sounds, etc.) differently. Create a comfortable space and minimize clutter in your home to promote a positive mood and minimize overstimulation. To learn more, click [HERE](#).

<https://www.mentalhealthdnys.org/>



### Self-management.

Parents are reporting that student self-management is by far the biggest hindrance to student's success in this virtual/hybrid and ever changing school landscape. If your child is struggling with self management strategies, you are not alone!

We asked students and teachers to identify some of their biggest struggles when it comes to managing themselves as well.

### Here is what we found:

1. Distraction is the biggest issue.
2. Following a schedule is difficult on asynchronous days (days when they don't have classes).
3. Self-motivation

### Know that we have several strategies in place to help your child be successful.

1. Every student is taking health class. So far this year, they developed routine goals about sleep, eating routine, exercise/movement and strategies to put in place for academic success. Check in with your child about these ideas to support.
2. In crew, they have had lessons on social media and screen time. You can support this as well at home with helping your child make a plan for when to access their phones/games. Maybe they can set their own goals and strategies around putting the phones/games away while in class and using them on breaks or after work is completed, as an incentive.
3. We've created an asynchronous schedule for your child to follow. If they follow this schedule and do the work at the scheduled times, they can access their content teachers if they get stuck on homework. You can find that schedule in your child's crew google classroom.
4. We have shown students and parents too how to manage their work in the to-do list on google classroom and how to check their grades in parent portal. Encourage this at home as well and consider checking it with your children on a regular basis (2-3 times/week) to stay on top of it so it doesn't become an overwhelming list of assignments. If you are wondering how to use google classroom and parent portal, [see this 19 minute video](#) that is also found in the weekly parent communicator for step-by-step directions.
5. To address self-motivation, crew leaders help students check their assignments and grades weekly. Staying on top of things is half of the battle. It can be discouraging to get behind. You can help your child to stay self-motivated too by helping them envision how they will feel when they accomplish their goals! This is also something we talk about with students on a regular basis during academic.
6. And last but not least, we are hosting a parent webinar (about 20 minutes long) in January. Look for a link to come!
7. As always, if you have questions, suggestions and or issues, please reach out to your child's crew leader and/or administration.

### We are Crew!

Jessica Kauffman, Expeditionary Learning Gr. K-12

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## STUDENT GOVERNMENT WITH MS. SMERDA & MRS. MASTRANGELO

Thank you to all of the families who purchased apparel from the Student Government online store! All of the proceeds will be used to help plan some incredible events for our students.

The **Music Video / Lip Sync Battle** will take place virtually on January 22nd. More details about the event and how to participate will be sent home as we approach the date.

If your child is not yet in Student Government but is interested in joining, please have him or her email Ms. Smerda ([smerdad@tapestryschool.org](mailto:smerdad@tapestryschool.org)) or Mrs. Mastrangelo ([hohls@tapestryschool.org](mailto:hohls@tapestryschool.org)).

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to either of us.

Happy New Year,

Ms. Smerda & Mrs. Mastrangelo

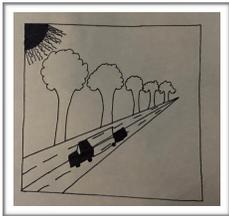


### Visual Art 5-8

This month students in Visual Art explored linear perspectives in landscapes. Each student participated in a one-point perspective contour line exercises which rendered objects leading to the illusion of space and form.

Within their compositions students incorporated a terrain of their choice. This then will lead to an interactive landscape with actual organic matter to represent trees, grass, grave, stones, and other forms of matter.

Damire D. Grade 7



Semier S. Grade 7



Trinia H. Grade 8



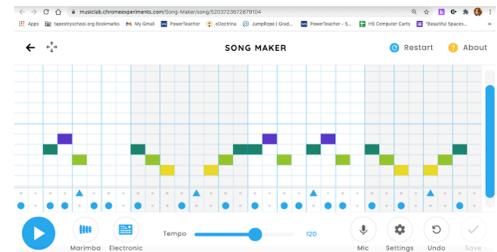
Wesley S. Grade 8



### Music

Students in 5th and 6th grade continue to work on the genre unit. We have studied blues and jazz, exploring prominent musical artists and key features of each genre. In the blues genre, students wrote their own lyrics to a 12-bar blues song.

Students in 7th and 8th grade continue to work on their unit on video games. Students have designed the basic premise of a game, including the plot, key characters, levels, and other special features. They have also been practicing creating songs with google chrome lab. They will eventually use the chrome lab songs to create a soundtrack for their characters and levels.



### Performance Art

#### Grades 5 and 6

This month students were required to draw and color a visual representation from one of the myths that was discussed in our lessons. Upon completion, students were required to submit a video justifying their creative choices and complete assignments related to characterization. Their final lessons to complete quarter two will incorporate more video submissions and their visual representation on a t-shirt to present their final product.

#### Grades 7 and 8

This month students wrote a poem entitled, "What Matters to Me" followed by a video recitation of their work. They will soon apply symbolism to their poetry and subsequently create a symbolic visual representation of their initial work. Their final lessons to complete quarter two will incorporate lessons that assist them in developing visual imagery and ideas through sense association to create a spoken word poetry piece as a performance artist. Students will also create a symbolic representation on a t-shirt to present their final product.

## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ARTS (CONTINUED)

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## HEALTH OFFICE UPDATE WITH NURSE BURNS, RN

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### *Why Do Kids Become Overweight or Obese?*

**Diet and Lifestyle:** Much of what we eat is quick and easy - from fat-filled fast food to processed and prepackaged meals. Portion sizes, in the home and out, are too large.

**Exercise and Physical Activity:** Many kids do not get enough physical activity. Older kids and teens should get 1 hour or more of moderate to vigorous exercise every day.

**Genetics:** Genetics can play a role in what kids weigh. Our genes help determine body type and how the body stores and burns fat. People in the same family tend to have similar eating patterns, levels of physical activity, and attitudes toward being overweight or obese.

### *How Can We Prevent Overweight and Obesity?*

The key to keeping kids of all ages at a healthy weight is taking a whole-family approach. Make healthy eating and exercise a family affair. Get your kids involved by letting them help you plan and prepare healthy meals. Take them grocery shopping with you. Teach them how to make good food choices.

Cut down on TV, phone, computer, and video game time and discourage eating in front of the TV. Eat meals together and serve a variety of healthy foods. Encourage kids to eat breakfast every day, have at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily, and limit sugar-sweetened beverages.

### *Try to avoid these common traps:*

- Don't reward kids for good behavior or try to stop bad behavior with sweets or treats.
- Don't have a clean plate policy. Even babies turn away from the bottle to send signals that they are full. If kids are satisfied, don't force them to keep eating. Reinforce the idea that they should eat only when they're hungry.
- Don't talk about "bad foods" or completely ban all sweets and favorite snacks.

### *What Health Problems Can Obesity Cause?*

- Bone and joint problems
  - Shortness of breath that makes exercise, sports, or any physical activity more difficult. This can also make asthma symptoms worse or lead kids to have asthma.
  - Restless sleep or breathing problems at night, such as sleep apnea
  - A tendency to mature earlier.
  - Liver and gallbladder disease.
  - High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, heart failure and stroke.
  - Self esteem issues, eating disorders, depression and substance abuse.
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## HEALTH OFFICE UPDATE WITH NURSE BURNS, RN

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Talk to your kids about the importance of eating and being active. Be a role model by eating well, exercising regularly, and building healthy habits into your own daily life. Make it a family affair that will become second nature for everyone.

**Nancy Burns, RN, BSN**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS UPDATE

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Athletics continue to find roadblocks and ways to break through as safe activities during this pandemic. It is unfortunate that this has put so much of the normalcy our student athletes love and hold dear on hold. In recent news NYS public high school sports has pushed back the pending start date of high risk sports to January 18th. For those of you that were excited to get winter sports started like Basketball we will have to put things on hold once again. With this being said, safety is of the utmost importance. My heart goes out to all the High School athletes that may not have a season if Covid-19 cases don't improve in our area. We will continue to keep you posted as the state gives us updates and guidance on what extracurriculars could potentially happen this spring when we could move things outdoors. With this being said as families try to find ways to keep your household active and healthy in these winter months. Students take those remote lessons your Physical Education teachers are sharing with you and continue to train yourselves from your homes and neighborhoods. Stay active and healthy Thunderhawks we will see this through!

**THUNDERHAWK PRIDE!**

**Mr. Marc LaMorticella - Athletics Director**



## COUNSELING CORNER - MS BEDELL

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Happy New Year! I am excited to begin a new year with our middle school students. Even though our school building is not running in its typical fashion, we are constantly thinking of ways to engage our students; helping them to feel a part of the middle school community. The "Among Us" Club began in December and will run from 3:30pm-4:15pm throughout the school year. New remote clubs will also be starting as the year continues, and we welcome ideas and volunteers to run these programs. It is crucial that students feel connected to other kids, which in turn promotes a sense of belonging. Please reach out if you need anything. Stay safe and healthy! Jessica

**Ms. Jessica Bedell - Counselor**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL UPCOMING EVENTS

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December 23-January 3: Winter Break

January 4: Return to school, 100% virtual learning

January 5: Parent Virtual Learning Support Session, 3:00 (5th: Zearn/6-8: Amplify)

January 8: No School, PD Day for Staff

January 11: Start of hybrid learning

January 12: Parent Virtual Learning Support Session, 3:00 (Student Self-Management)

January 18: MLK Jr. Day, No School

January 22: Quarter 2 Closes

January 25: Quarter 3 Begins

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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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.