

The Lotus Lowdown
October 7, 2022
Maria Francisco, Principal



Renaissance @ Rand Middle School

Start Strong Testing: October 11-13, 2022

- All Renaissance students will participate in Start Strong testing **October 11-13th, 2022**. Tests are designed to be brief, with only one 60 minute language arts, and 60 minute math section in grades 6 - 8. There will also be one 60 minute science test for 6th grade only, which will be on October 13, 2022.
- Please note that students should leave cell phones and/or smart watches either at home, in lockers or they can be collected by staff. No electronic devices are allowed to be possessed by students during the assessment of Start Strong.
- Students **must** bring their own headphones as well for the duration of the testing days. Students who do not have access to their own headphones must notify their homeroom teacher prior to the start of testing.
- [Start Strong Letter to Parents](#)

School Spirit-Week of Respect

- The purpose of the Week of Respect is to emphasize the importance of respecting others, our school, our community, and ourselves, as well as how to prevent harassment, intimidation, and bullying situations. The Week of Respect also emphasizes the importance of character education and teaches strategies on how to be compassionate, thoughtful, caring people in and outside of school. Renaissance Middle School participated in a week of activities designed to celebrate and promote respect, kindness, and a positive school culture. We take great pride in doing all that we can to create an inclusive, safe and supportive environment for everyone who walks through our doors. This week is but one of the many weeks throughout the year that we will foster and promote an environment of respect for all.
 - Thank you to our SAC, Ms. Fossella and our RJ TOSA, Ms. Pastor for planning and executing a fun filled week for our students.
 - Thank you Mr. Colon!!! We celebrated the end of week of Respect with a fun Friday lunch hosted by DJ Colon! During lunch, students then used sidewalk chalk to share their positive affirmations with their school and their community by writing them outside of our school.
 - Thank you to our families, students and staff who donated a tremendous amount of chalk for the Week of Respect culminating activity. We were able to provide chalk for our students to

- Click on the link below to access photos of the week's activities.
 - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11-miokrXJqmhfHylqCZWjvf5BxKe1L9n?usp=sharing>

Land Acknowledgement Ceremony:

- A land acknowledgement ceremony is a formal statement/ceremony recognizing and honoring the relationship between Indigenous people and the land they have resided on since time immemorial. Land acknowledgments are created in order to demonstrate respect, act as a reminder of the ongoing process of colonization of Indigenous lands, and resist the erasure of Indigenous peoples. Providing land acknowledgment is also a traditional practice of many Indigenous communities and individuals.
- Mr. Colon, Renaissance PE teacher, and Mr. Jackson, Renaissance Social Studies teacher and subject matter leader, with help of Mr. Garzon, (7-ELA), Ms. Thomas 7-SS, and our 7th grade students, and guidance from Rev. Dr. J.R. Norwood of the Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribal Nation, led an all-school Native Land Acknowledgement Ceremony where we introduced Renaissance Middle School's Land Acknowledgement Statement to our school community.
- During the ceremony, students shared their knowledge and discussions leading up to our ceremony and described what they learned about the native people who lived here before us. Students and staff alike explained why it is important to honor the people and the land that our school and community is built upon.
- Special thank you to MFEE for funding the purchase of the plaque that will be displayed in the lobby of Renaissance Middle Schools entrance. We would also like to thank Mr. Woodward and students from his Portfolio class for creating a flag that blends both our school symbol, a lotus flower, with a box turtle. *(Several Native American tribes used box turtles as a ceremonial item for seasonal celebrations or dances. The practice continues to this day as some modern-day tribes, like the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Shawnee, Muscogee, and Seminole)*



Bake Sale + Car Wash Donations:

- Thank you to our amazing parent community once again for helping to raise the necessary funds to get our Robotics team up and running. We raised just about enough money during our bake sale and BTSN and we are absolutely thrilled to be able to get started. Our car wash is still on for October 15, 2022 from 9-1pm at the high school's annex building. Tickets will be \$10 at the door but you may still purchase tickets from our office for \$7.

PTA News

Click on the link below for information about PTA meetings, activities, and volunteer opportunities. Email Gretchen Devinsky at ptapres@renaissancepta.org with any questions.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15tKHyeB9OBOf9Yw42mfZSIsCqNL_idfv7y3t6NB6j8/edit?usp=sharing

Kiwanis Club of Montclair:

- We have filled another bin for The Kiwanis Club of Montclair, who is currently hosting a **“Sneakers for Scholarships Drive”**. Please continue to donate your gently used sneakers/athletic shoes. A donation bin is available in the 1st floor Main hallway.

Montclair Community Pre-K Community Service Opportunities for students

The Montclair Community Pre K is hosting a Harvest Festival on October 29th from 10am-12pm at the Montclair Community Prek (49 Orange Road, Montclair) and are in need of student volunteers to help with the festival.

Students who would like to sign up to help may do so by clicking the link [HERE](#). Parents of students interested who may have questions can reach out to Ms. Molly Brennan, Director of Admissions and Fundraising at MCPK by email @ molly.brennan@montclairprek.org.

Nurse's Kaplan's Notes

Per NJ State Law, all 6th graders (11y/o) need 1 dose of Tdap and Menactra vaccines. If you haven't done so, please forward your child's updated vaccination record to the nurse. Parents have been notified.

The exclusion date is 10/24/2022.

All students with Asthma or a Life-Threatening Allergy must have Action Plans signed by the doctor and submitted to the health office with the appropriate medication.

The forms can be located on the MPS website: PARENTS&FORMS;ACTION PLAN.

- Please complete the section that allows students trained by the doctor to self-administer and carry medication with them.

Please remember that without the appropriate action plans and medications, children will be unable to attend Field Trips.

NY JETS Game:



INFORMAL POLL - We are thinking of having a school outing to a Jet game and were wondering how much interest there is. The price per ticket would probably be in the \$50-\$60 range plus parking. A tentative date is the October 30 1:00 game against the Patriots, but no date has been chosen yet. Please email Mr. Stulbaum at mstulbaum@montclair.k12.nj.us if you might be interested. It is not a commitment to buy tickets, but indicating the number of tickets you might buy would be helpful. Extended family and friends would be welcome to join.

Picture Day:

- **SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2022-PICTURE DAY:** More information will be provided as the date approaches.

Music (Ms. Spagnoulo)

- Songwriting
This past week songwriting classes completed and presented their, 'Soundtrack of My Life' google slide project. For this project students created slides identifying and representing different songs from several periods in their life. For example, songs they enjoyed when they were 'little', songs they listened to with family, songs they listened to with friends, and songs they learned to love. Great job being thoughtful, creative and interesting.
- Guitar & Keyboarding Class

This week guitar students learned and played open chords along to our favorite pop songs. In addition, students can now understand what tablature is and how to read and perform simple songs on guitar. Great job!

- Rock Band *New Class!!*

I'd like to announce that this year Renaissance offers a new elective. This Rock Band class is for beginner students. The class provides beginner students the opportunity to explore Rock Band instruments such as keyboard, guitar, bass drums and vocals.

- [Music Pictures](#)

Dance (Ms. Lorusso)

6th grade

Students are exploring, creating, and performing the Elements of Dance in small groups
Space, Body, Action, Time, and Energy.

7th Grade

Students are learning the foundations of Hip Hop Social Dances of 90's and 2000's
Roger Rabbit, Running Man, Atl Stomp, Wu-Tang, Kid N Play, etc

8th Grade

Students this week created a movement in small groups to "Move" by Beyonce. Dancers have also been working on skills and techniques on how to retain choreography.

6th, 7th, and 8th Dance Company

Jazz Dance foundations from basic to advance
*pirouettes, chaîne turns, pada bourrée, grand jeté, etc
Students have been working on choreography and ways to retain movement.

Drama

Character development and improvisation

Time to Move

Students learned the basic steps of the merengue to celebrate Hispanic Heritage with partners. Dancers switched partners consistently throughout the class.

Bring water and wear layers!!

6th Grade:

The Bronx Zoo field trip is coming up on 10/14, please turn in the permission slip ASAP.

ELA Update:

This month In Ms. Jordan's ELA class students learned about each other through writing "I Am From" Poems. They shared their poems with their classmates and were given the opportunity to answer questions from both their peers, and teacher(s). The students really showed their poetic skills, allowing the audience to learn more about them through symbolism and their words. This activity really supported building a sense of community in the classroom.

Currently, the students are reading their first whole-class novel, *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman. They are learning how to summarize their reading, while also building on their narrative skills. September and October are all about Narrative reading and writing in ELA!

7th Grade:

Next week we will have a different schedule. Start Strong testing will be Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct 11 and 12 so students will have a shorter class time. There is no school Monday, October 10.

On Friday, students will be bringing home 2 permission slips as these trips have been approved by the board of education. PLEASE SIGN BOTH AND RETURN NEXT TUESDAY. The cost of the trips is on each permission slip. The 10/21 Harriman Hike is \$5.00 and the 11/18 Philipsburg Manor trip is \$10.00. You can pay for both now or on an as you go basis. We appreciate your help in getting both forms back to us early next week.

Social Studies

Students should have turned in their Covid Time Capsule Assignments. The homework this week is to complete a Media Self Assessment and to complete the Fake News assignment (Parts A and B). The due date is pushed back because of next week's schedule and is due Weds, Oct 12 for the Thomas and Garzon homerooms and Thurs, Oct 13 for the Cullen and Arnette homerooms.

English Language Arts

Everyone should use flashcards to start studying for the vocabulary/ roots test. It will be taken next Thursday (Oct. 13). We have started to look at what a Plot Diagram looks like. Please pick a movie, novel, or play which will be used as an example of a constructed Plot Diagram Project! Students should also choose a chapter (3-15) in which will be taught to the class. Look over the Figurative Language Terms to get an idea the words used in the lessons.

Writing:

All students picked a picture of a protagonist for a novel to be written in the upcoming months. They should start pre-writing about the physical characteristics of the protagonist.

Science:

This week students finished up the classroom building component for their Newton Project. Students are expected to complete the written portion of the project independently by the end of next week.

8th Grade:

Parent Conferences

Any parent/caregiver wishing to meet with the 8th Grade team can make an appointment with Jackson (rjackson@montclair.k12.nj.us). We are available to meet Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 2:pm via Zoom or in person.

We are noticing students are using their cellphones in school (during classes). Please note, the district's policy is that all cell phones must be off and away during school hours. All students have been warned. Please see the Student Handbook for district policy. After the first time a student's phone is confiscated, the parent/s/caregiver/s must pick up the phone from the main office if it is confiscated a second time.

Social Studies

For Latinx History Month, our Friday classes will be dedicated to the viewing and discussion of the film "Walkout". The film is about young Mexican-American students in the Los Angeles public school system fighting to end decades-long discriminatory practices directed against Mexican-Americans. We will end the month learning about the Young Lords Party and its fight to provide social justice, health care, and educational resources to Latinx communities around the country.

ELA

This week, we started reading our first ELA novel of the year: The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros. Please know that if students forget to bring their books home or to school, they are expected to keep up with the reading from the online book version that I posted on our Google Classroom page.

Math

The students will begin an ongoing project of tracking the stock price of a public company. The students will be required to look up the closing price of a particular stock on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and plot those prices on a graph. This will eventually lead to the students calculating percentage growth (hopefully not decline). The goal is to expose the students to real-world scenarios with concepts we are covering in class.

Science

Are all pennies identical? This was our testable question this week as we examined pennies from the 1950's to present time. After analyzing samples of copper and zinc, and calculating their densities, students were able to determine a relationship to the densities of the pennies they had. From this we were able to form a claim from the evidence collected about when in history pennies changed their composition! We continue our study of the atom as we learn about the history of the atom, and begin learning about the structure next week more in depth.

Bagel Sales

We started with **bagel** sales last Friday morning. Mr. Stulbaum will follow up with parents who reached out to "sponsor" a week. Others looking to sponsor a week please email Mr. Stulbaum (mstulbaum@montclair.k12.nj.us).

It involves sending in \$60, I know I originally said \$50 (a good lesson on inflation), and some juice boxes. I will speak about it again on Back-To-School Night for those that missed my prior mentioning of it. Thank you in advance for volunteering. Mr. Stulbaum

● Important Upcoming Dates:

- October 10, 2022 Indigenous People's Day **(School Closed for Students)**
- October 11-13, 2022 Start Strong Testing
- October 15, 2022 Renaissance Car Wash (MHS Atrium)
- October 18, 2022 PTA Meeting 7:00pm Renaissance Cafe
- October 20, 2022 Curriculum Thursday 1:25pm Dismissal
- October 24, 2022 Diwali-School Closed
- October 26, 2022 Picture Day

Indigenous Peoples Day

Indigenous Peoples' Day draws attention to the pain, trauma, and broken promises that were erased by the celebration of Columbus Day. Before his arrival, the indigenous folk were successful self-sufficient communities that sustained life for thousands of years.

Indigenous Peoples' Day celebrates, recognizes, and honors the beautiful traditions and cultures of the Indigenous People, not just in America, but around the world. Their way of life and culture carries wisdom and valuable insights into how we can live life more sustainably.