

The Lotus Lowdown

January 6, 2023



Maria Francisco, Principal

Semester 2 Elective selection: January 12-16, 2023

On January 12, 2023, Elective teachers will present to all students to review the electives that will be offered for Semester 2. Immediately following this presentation, we will send the selection forms via the student's google account. They will be emailed to students. We will also email the Course Description Booklet for students/parents to review in case questions arise regarding certain electives. Please do keep in mind that classes are capped so selections will be provided on a first come first serve basis. It is extremely important that all selection forms are completed by 1/16/23 so that we can schedule students accordingly.

Important information regarding CELL PHONES.

We are experiencing disruptions to instruction caused by students *constantly* using their cell phones in school (during classes). We really need our parents to assist us with this. 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. Please note that the policy includes lunchtime and recess as well.

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 and every time thereafter.

Dr. Kistner presents on Positive Discipline @ our PTA Meeting on 1/4/23.

Children are programmed to connect with others from the moment they are born. Children who have a strong sense of belonging to their community, family, and school are less likely to misbehave. They must develop important social and life skills in order to be effective, contributing members of their communities.

Positive discipline is a method of instructing and directing children by clearly stating what behavior is acceptable in a firm yet gentle manner. 'Punishment' refers to ways of gaining control by enforcing rules or regulations and punishing undesirable behavior. *Discipline* is derived from the Latin term discipline, which means "to instruct or teach." People learn best when they feel comfortable and connected to others in the framework of safe relationships, according to recent brain studies. As a result, the purpose of positive discipline is to teach children by first establishing a secure relationship with them.

Dr. Kistner, Renaissance School Social Worker and Child Study Team member engaged parents in an interactive one hour session to discuss effective discipline strategies that parents can utilize that will lead to a change in behaviors. Parents engaged in conversations regarding behaviors they struggle with and shared examples of how they attempted to address the behaviors. Following the presentations and share outs, Dr. Kistner made herself available to parents with questions. Huge THANK YOU to Dr. K for providing us a very informative evening and to the 30+ parents who joined.

We plan to conduct more informational sessions for parents on various topics as they year goes on. Stay tuned and be sure to join our PTA by contacting Ms. Gretchen Devensky @ ptapres@renaissancepta.org

Ugly Winter Sweater Contest:

On Friday, 12/23/22, Renaissance Middle school held our annual "Ugly Winter Sweater Contest". Students worked on the sweaters (donated by staff) in advisories to decorate "Ugly Winter Sweaters" for the staff members who donated the sweaters. We had over 20 staff members participate by showcasing our students' creativity by participating in a runway style contest. DJ Papi, also known as Ren's very own Mr. Colon was our MC and guest DJ. We also were so pleased to welcome both Mr. Smith and Mrs. Granderson back to Renaissance to help with judging. Additionally, 6th grade parent, Ms. Jada Roman and Mr. Inyang, (BOE representative) were also both part of the judging panel. We would also like to thank Ms. Phaedra Dunn, 7th grade parent and board representative and Ms. Melanie Deyshar, board representative, for coming to show support for our students and staff! Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. Gazzillo, for planning and executing such a wonderful event for our entire school community. Pictures linked below.

[Ugly Sweater Contest Pictures](#)

NJHS Eligibility criteria:

The National Junior Honor Society was founded in 1929. The qualities of scholarship, leadership, citizenship and service apply to the selection process for this prestigious organization. To be considered for induction, 7th and 8th grade students need to have a 92.5 average in all subject areas for the first 3 marking periods. There are additional requirements for consideration as well. Please review the PPT below for further information. Should you have any questions, please email our NJHS advisor, Ms. Lanza at jlanza@montclair.k12.nj.us.

[National Junior Honor Society Requirements](#)

NJHS students to begin peer tutoring:

As a means of providing community service opportunities for our students who are interested in becoming National Junior Honor Society members and for our current NJHS members, we will start peer tutoring on 1/19/23. In February, peer tutoring will take place on 2/9/23 and on 2/16/23. March tutoring dates will be forthcoming. If you would like for your child to **become** a peer tutor, please have your child speak with Ms. Lanza to sign up. This is only for students who are already NJHS members or currently meet the criteria for induction. (described above)

If you would like to sign your child up **for** peer tutoring please fill out the google form below.

[Click here to sign your child up to receive peer tutoring](#)

Student Council Meeting: (Ms. Girardi)

Hello everyone and happy new year! Our first Student Council meeting for 2023 will be held on **Tuesday, January 10**. The meeting will run from **3:15 - 4:00 pm**.

We will discuss ideas/suggestions for our upcoming "Week of Service" to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. We will also be discussing Candy Gram sales for Valentine's Day next month.

Please note that we will be **changing our meeting location to Room 111** (Ms. Dunn's room) on the first floor. Any questions please feel free to reach out to Mrs. Girardi.

Renaissance Students Participate in NJ Science Olympiad Tournament at NJIT

Science Olympiad competitions are basically academic track meets, consisting of a series of team events. Each year, a portion of the events are rotated to reflect the changing nature of genetics, earth science, chemistry, anatomy, physics, geology, mechanical engineering and technology. Emphasis is placed on active, hands-on group participation. Our students did a tremendous job-meeting on their own after school to ensure they put their best foot forward. We are proud of all of our participants and look forward to an even better outcome next year!

Nurse Kaplan Updates:

Nurse's Notes

We are 100 % compliant on the immunization records. THANK YOU to all six graders and new students.

Thank you very much for complying with the school policy regarding Emergency Medication and Emergency Action Plans. Without them students will not attend field trips.

Let's keep fighting the Flu and COVID-19.

Prevent-Winter-Viruses

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/winter-virus-tips-fact-sheet.pdf>

Consejos para Prevenir los Virus de Invierno

www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Winter-Virus-Tips-Fact-Sheet--es.pdf

Music:

Guitar and Keyboard classes are looking for AA battery donations. Please bring batteries to room G5. Donations are greatly appreciated.

Band Classes

'Peer to peer facilitation'

This past Thursday, 6th Grade Band members were invited into 8th Grade Band class to hear the group perform. After performing, 8th Grade Band students shared their experiences playing woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. 8th Graders provided advise, techniques and strategies on how to be a better musician.

Songwriting:

This week songwriting classes started a project called 'Create Your Own Rock Band'. Students made up original band names, song titles, touring cities and customized original t-shirts and album covers.

Announcement!!

The Music Department will be offering chorus classes to all grades. Chorus will be an elective class taking place on Friday's period 3&4. Please be sure to choose chorus on your elective choice sheet for semester 2.

6th Grade:

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

Students should also charge their Chromebooks every night.

Students should remember to clean out their lockers before the holiday break.

Please also remember to have students charge their chromebooks if left at school during the break.

Math Update:

This week we continued our unit on Integers and focused on the Coordinate Plane. Students completed interactive online practice to reinforce the concepts. To strengthen these skills, we also played a Four Quadrant version of Battleship, which proved to be a fun way to help students master the topic.

7th Grade:

7th Grade Math Update: We are in the process of interviewing candidates for the 7th grade Math position. We have interviewed everyone that has applied to date. Unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful in finding someone who is a good fit. This is a result of many things. Hiring a teacher in the middle of the year is always tricky. The current teacher shortages add additional obstacles to the hiring process.

We want to ensure that we hire someone who is skilled not only in content; we are hoping to hire someone who is both an excellent Math teacher and also someone that can connect and motivate middle school students.

We have a plan in place to provide coverage for classes until we find someone. Beginning the week of January 17, 2023, we will have various certified Renaissance teachers (mostly Math) assigned to 7th grade math to cover the material and classes. I felt this was the best approach in attempts of minimizing the impact on student achievement due to staff absences/resignations.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me (mfrancisco@montclair.k12.nj.us) should you have any questions or concerns.

Loaner Chromebook Policy:

1. You can only take a loaner and/or charger during Advisories.
2. You must sign out the loaner and sign it back in.
3. You MUST return the loaner and/or at the end of the day.
4. If you do not return the chromebook by the end of the day, you lose the privilege to check out a loaner for 5 days.

****** To be clear, you are not allowed to take out a loaner for more than one day & you are not allowed to loan a loaner to a friend. Your classmate must do this on their own.**

Social Studies: In class, we are making the transition from Spain's colonization of America to France and England. Homework for this week is to complete the Florentine Codex assignment, posted in Classroom. Students are creating 3 or more slides on a skeletal slide file, including a 10 sentence response to the questions on Slide 2 along with appropriate images as evidence of their points.

Science: Students learned the difference between conductors and insulators and should be able to build a series circuit and a parallel circuit (on a simulation anyway). Try it <https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulations/circuit-construction-kit-dc> . Next week we will be starting another hands-on lab building these circuits and documenting how resistance changes a circuit.

Language Arts: Be ready for a Vocabulary Test on Monday. We have read over the plot of Friday's Opera and "My Papa's Waltz's ambiguity.

A Message for 8th Grade students from Montclair High School

Please join us on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 for an information session regarding Career and Technical Education opportunities for current 8th and 9th grade Montclair Public School students. Essex County Schools of Technology representatives will visit Montclair High School on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, at 6:30pm in the LGI to share information with you regarding CTE and academic course offerings that may be of interest to you. The presentation is approximately 45 minutes long and will cover shared time/full time program options, career and technical areas and the application process. There will be a brief question and answer period at the end of the presentation. We look forward to seeing you there!

Kind regards,

Sophia Kenny
Director of School Counseling skenny@montclair.k12.nj.us

8th Grade:

Chromebooks

Students must bring their Chromebooks to class charged and ready to go. Too many students come to class with their Chromebooks not charged, or without their chargers. Please make sure to bring your Chromebook charged and ready for classes.

Field Research Trip

On January 13th, the 8th grade students will be taking a trip to Saint John's the Divine in Manhattan where they will tour and observe the geometric architectural design and how geometry played a huge role in the building of the church. Permission slips will go out next week. The trip costs ten dollars covering the guided tour and the bus. Students will bring their lunch. This is the first time we are going on this trip so we are very excited!

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 can meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 2 pm via Zoom or in person.

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

Students are working on proving ionic versus covalent bonding in chemistry.

Social Studies

Students are learning about the reasons for the Civil War. Was it (The Civil War) to save the Union, maintain state's rights, or over the issues of slavery? We will be discussing this topic and more over the next few weeks.

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.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- January 16, 2023
 - January 26, 2023
 - January 30-31, 2023
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day; School Closed
Curriculum Thursday; 1:25 pm Dismissal
Math Midterms (6-8)