



# Owl Post

Week of December 7, 2020

## Upcoming Events:

**December 10<sup>th</sup> 6:30PM-8:00PM** | PTA Zoom Meeting

**December 15<sup>th</sup> 3PM-6PM** | Library Curbside Check-Outs/Returns

**December 18<sup>th</sup>** | 1-hour early dismissal

**December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 – January 1, 2021** | WINTER BREAK (NO SCHOOL)

**The STEM PTA needs your help! We have openings that need to be filled for Vice President, Co-Treasurer, Advocacy Chair & Race/Equity Chair. See details below!**

**To JOIN THE PTA, please use this link:**

**<https://www.memberplanet.com/packetview/louisaborenstemk-8pta/louisaborenstemk-8pta>**

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## Message from Principal Ostrom:



### **Louisa Boren STEM K-8 Families,**

Take care of yourselves! The Covid surge and convergence of untold other stresses on families and communities require extra precautions while also making sure to get outside as a basic health care routine.

STEM has been transitioning 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade PE, Music, and Technology Specialists classes to their own Seesaw classrooms. This has created a few complications. This week 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders join 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders in separate Seesaw spaces for Specialists. Separate instructions are attached (in original Messenger email) for accessing multiple Seesaw classes from both iPads and laptops for any families that run into challenges.

Some families expressed concerns about Seattle Public Schools decision to administer interim SBA checkpoints to 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students two times/year in reading and math. These checkpoints are much shorter, more focused, and without the high stakes associated with the comprehensive year-end SBA testing students and families are used to. These reading and math assessments will take approximately a class period each, and results will be used by classroom teachers to plan instruction with a better understanding of students' skills. The first round of SBA checkpoints will be primarily administered during January, with the exception of a few trials before winter break to identify and troubleshoot challenges in advance. Families that don't want their children to participate can simply email their classroom teacher and Jody Hapgood at [jahapgood@seattleschools.org](mailto:jahapgood@seattleschools.org).

Stay healthy, brilliant, and sane,

**Ben Ostrom**  
**STEM K-8 Principal**

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Please help with STEM's Virtual Giving Tree for STEM Families this year:

Louisa Boren STEM K-8

## *Giving Tree for STEM Families.*

Support our community who need the most support this season with gift cards for groceries over the breaks & gifts for their families. Danielle, the school counselor, will be organizing.



Donations can be sent by check or PayPal to the STEM PTA. Indicate that this is for the holiday giving tree. Anything received after Dec 18 will be a general donation.

Contact [fundraising@k8stempta.org](mailto:fundraising@k8stempta.org) if you have questions.

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From Mrs. B:



SPS Librarians learned some people are trying to log into Tumblebooks from the K – 2 ipads with the app and needed log in information provided below.

If you access Tumblebooks other than through SPS Clever, use this URL for automatic log-in.

[http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/auto\\_login.asp?U=seattleschools&P=books](http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/auto_login.asp?U=seattleschools&P=books)

The username outside of Clever is: Username: **seattleschools** Password: **book**

**READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!**

## Upcoming STEM Outdoor Library Dates

\* Storms, SNOW/ICE, Reduced Covid Phase cancels events.

**Tuesday, December 1st 3-6 pm Holiday Crafts HOLDS by 11-30 please**

Tuesday, December 15th 3-6 pm 15th Holiday/Winter Holds by 12-11

**Happy 2021!**

Tues., Jan. 5th from 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri. Dec. 18th

Tues., Jan. 19th 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri. Jan. 15th

Tues., Feb. 2nd 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri., Jan. 29th.

Tues., Feb. 23rd 3-6 pm. Please have your holds by Fri., Feb. 12th.

Tues., March 9th 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri., Mar. 5th.

Tues., March 23rd 3-6 pm. Please place holds by Fri., March 19th.

Tues., April 6th 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri., April 2nd.

Tues., April 20th 3 -6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri., April 9th.

Tues., May 4th 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri., April 30th.

Tues., May 18th 3-6 pm. Please place your holds by Fri., May 14th!

**READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!**

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## LGBTQ+ NEWS & Resources:

### Hi there, LGBTQ+ Families Dinner Families and Friends!

We wanted to send some love your way along with an event update! This year has been tough for many reasons and that toughness has been punctuated by our inability to convene for our beloved LGBTQ+ Families Dinner event. Know that we miss you all and that we are still dedicated to holding virtual space for our families! With this in mind, we share our new plan with you!

We invite you to our...

LGBTQ+ Families Dinner Series!

This LGBTQ+ Families Dinner Series is a virtual opportunity for people to connect across shared identities and experiences. Each event in the series is specifically intended for the group highlighted by the event. If you belong to more than one group, you are *of course* welcome to come to each event that aligns with your experience.

Here are the events!

**12/10 [LGBTQ+ Families of SPS Students and LGBTQ+ Students and their Families](#)** – *specifically for LGBTQ+ Families of SPS students and LGBTQ+ Students and their Families as well as SPS Staff*

**01/21 [LGBTQ+ Families of SPS Students](#)** – *specifically for LGBTQ+ Families of SPS Students*

**02/11 [LGBTQ+ Students and their Families](#)** – *specifically for LGBTQ+ Students and their Families*

**03/18 [LGBTQ+ Elementary School Students and their Families](#)** – *specifically for LGBTQ+ Elementary School Students and their Families*

**04/08 [LGBTQ+ SPS Staff and their Families](#)** – *specifically for LGBTQ+ SPS Staff*

#### Agendas

12/10/2020

5pm-6pm

5pm – Welcome

5:10pm – Keynote Speaker

5:20pm – Student Speaker

5:30pm – Student Performance

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5:40pm – Facilitated Discussion

*2021 Events*

*5pm-6pm*

5pm Welcome

5:10pm-5:50pm Facilitated Discussion

5:50pm Close Out

Brennon Ham is your host and contact for these events. Feel free to reach out to Brennon if you have any questions.

**Brennon Ham** (*pronouns: Brennon/they/he/she*)

Health Education Specialist/Trainer, Health Education Department

[brham@seattleschools.org](mailto:brham@seattleschools.org)

[Health Education Department](#)

Ed.M. Candidate, Education Policy and Management

Harvard Graduate School of Education

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## Counselor's Corner:

Hi STEM community,

Hope you & your family were able to do find some joy this past week. With the holidays, the days getting shorter and darker, and COVID lingering- this time of year might be particularly hard. We may be used to spending time with loved ones but are unable to this year. This article from ChildMind has some good tips for reducing stress, helping kids cope, and making new traditions during these next few months:

<https://childmind.org/article/holiday-during-the-pandemic/>

For the STEM Counseling Program- I am starting classroom lessons next month on managing anxiety & stress. No doubt useful skills for all ages! We will also be continuing to distribute gift-cards/financial support to families in need. If you would like to be considered- please let me know. We are also collaborating with the PTA if families would like to donate to these holiday funds! Check the Owl Post & PTA Website for more info.

Remember you & your families mental health comes first over all else!

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Danielle Blechert  
School Counselor  
[dblechert@seattleschools.org](mailto:dblechert@seattleschools.org)

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COVID-19 Community Resources: <https://www.uwkc.org/need-help/covid-19-resources/>

"I believe that all organizing is science fiction- that we are shaping the future we long for and have not yet experienced" -adrienne marie brown

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### Open letter from STEM K-8 parent, Shawn Murphy re: SBA testing

Last Monday I read in my K-8's weekly newsletter that we would begin interim SBA (Smarter Balanced Assessment) testing in December and January. I found this shocking since we are in the midst of a global pandemic with large numbers of Americans who in addition to the health crisis, are also experiencing unemployment, food insecurity and homelessness. Since I had not heard of our school doing interim testing in previous years, other than for targeted groups, I decided to contact District staff, school board directors, OSPI and DEEL (the city's Department of Education and Early Learning) for more information.

For background, I am a staunch opponent of the SBA and have had both of my students opt out of taking it. I object to the SBA on the grounds that the test is racist, ableist and classist and that the best indicators of who will do "well" on the test are the student's socioeconomic class. Additionally because those of us who choose not to participate in SBA testing receive a zero rather than a null score, the results are statistically inaccurate-especially in schools with high opt out rates of 10% or more. Because of the test design, grading, and implementation the information the tests can offer is information that teachers and the District already have access to; we know who has resources and who does not.

My first information stop was with the city. I wanted to know if DEEL was requiring SBA data from levy sites for their grant funding. I heard back from Dwane Chappelle the head of DEEL, that the city is not only not requiring SBA data, they are also eager to be flexible and work with levy sites in this challenging time.

Next I wrote to Dr. DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer at Seattle Public Schools, to clear up a few questions I had. She let me know that the decision to do interim SBA testing has been made by senior District staff, it is not a requirement of the state or federal government. She said classroom teachers would use the information to share with families and to inform each building's work on their CSIP (a self help plan in place at each school).

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I was able to consult with a few SPS teachers who have tremendous knowledge of SBA interim testing. I learned that there are two types of tests available, cumulative and clustered. One teacher I spoke with was frustrated because they have been told to administer the clustered variety, which centers on a cluster of standards after having been told not to prioritize some of those same standards because they currently have so little time with the children. Teachers also noted that ordinarily they would allot a few days to interim testing but because of the way their schedules are now, testing could monopolize an entire week of class time. Teachers are also frustrated to be asked to do something so close to the break without any advanced notice and time to prepare. Teachers also mentioned the tremendous difficulty of getting testing ID numbers out to families and that third graders will not have had experience taking the SBA test with its challenging split screen and will be left to tackle it at home, many without support.

Other concerns that have come up center around testing security. When a student is taking a test at school they do so in a very secure environment with stringent testing protocol. When students take tests at home, there are no guarantees that answers aren't coming from outside sources like parents or the Internet.

As a parent of two special education students one concern that I have is about testing accommodations. If students like mine were at school they would have access to accommodations mandated in their IEP's. If my students take these tests at home, while I'm working full time, my students will have zero support or accommodations.

Further, I am concerned that once again the District didn't read the room, as they say, before making this decision. Where was the community engagement? None of the families I'm in regular communication with on the two PTA boards I serve on or the two school communities of which I am a part of are clamoring for testing at this juncture. The consensus very much seems to be that we are all doing the best we can in the midst of very challenging and unsafe circumstances and the priority should be serving students and families where they are at, not adding additional hurdles.

So if teachers aren't in favor of conducting interim testing, families aren't currently in need of this information, and neither the city, nor state nor federal government are asking for, or requiring this data, that only leaves the building's CSIP plans as a reason to do this testing. I'm going to have to mention the obvious in response, our students are not in the buildings and will not be any time soon. The idea of focusing on the traditional work of a continuous improvement plan during this time ignores the reality that we are living in a completely different mode and need to place top priority on our students and educators right now, wherever they really are. Their immediate needs come first.

I am calling upon all families of 3-8th graders to opt out of SBA interim testing and speak out about this unnecessary use of time and classroom resources. I am calling upon our school board directors to pushback on this decision by senior district leadership and I am asking senior district leadership to reconsider this incredibly unrealistic ask of our already overtaxed educators and our students, many of whom are



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holding on by a thread while others are already on their way out the door. Conducting testing of this nature in what will be the most difficult winter of many of our lives is the wrong choice and it sends the wrong message to students and families. It makes the District look cold hearted, out of touch and overly preoccupied with data instead of with the very kids they should be working to serve.

If you would like to opt your 3-8th grader out of Interim Smarter Balanced Assessment please see instructions in Ben's letter on the first page of this Owl Post.

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## Our Student, Our Stories Featuring STEM Families!

Seattle Public Schools Health Education Office and local Seattle photographer Nate Gowdy have joined forces to highlight the stories of our amazing LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more) students in Seattle Public Schools, as well as LGBTQ+ staff in a photo book and portrait exhibit.

The "[Our Students, Their Stories](#)" project showcases the strength, resilience, and unapologetic pride of these queer and trans students. This project also highlights the loving and supportive families of these LGBTQ+ young people, as well as shines light on some LGBTQ+ staff who help lift up queer and trans youth in big and small ways every day.

The photo book and stories gathered will be used to inform staff training, classroom education, community engagement, parent education, and to celebrate our students' individual journeys today, and act as a touchstone for future generations.

*This would make a wonderful holiday gift!*



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## Calling all STEM Adults! Please we really need your help!

*Have you ever considered volunteering for a non-profit Board? Now is your opportunity! The [Louisa Boren STEM PTA](#) is seeking volunteers to fill two officer positions for the 2020-21 school year! Our Executive Board needs a **Vice President and Co-Treasurer** and our General Board has openings for our **Advocacy Chair and Race & Equity Chair**. Our PTA is active, organized, and committed to the well-being of our school community. Our work is grounded in equity; we support school activities to fill gaps in District funding, including annual library book purchases, project-based learning supplies, classroom resources and supplies, substitute teachers, and teacher development. Please consider offering your time to support our kids and teachers during this upcoming year! Contact Angela Wallis, nominations committee chair, at [secretary@stemk8pta.org](mailto:secretary@stemk8pta.org), or 206-999-2132 with questions, or to demonstrate your interest!*

### **Louisa Boren STEM K-8 PTA Executive Team Vice President and Co-Treasurer Roles and Responsibilities**

The STEM K8 PTA Board of Directors is engaged, active, and committed to providing funding and activities to engage all students and teachers. We look forward to filling this important position for the 2020-21 school year. The Vice President position “rolls up” to President for the 2021-22 school year (a two-year commitment).

#### **VICE PRESIDENT** Duties of the Vice President include:

- Leading committees as needed;
- Participating in at least one major fundraising initiative;
- Participating in and volunteering for school and PTA events;
- Depositing and signing checks as needed;
- Participating in monthly meetings and other communications with the school Principal and PTA President;
- Planning membership meeting agendas with the President;
- Preparing for the President position in year two;
- Meeting other parents, learning about STEM and the school district, and having fun!

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**CO-TREASURER (a two-year commitment; position rolls up automatically to Treasurer in year 2)**

**The duties of the co-treasurer include:**

- Supporting the treasurer role;
  - Stands in for treasurer as needed and learns the role within the executive team;
  - Attending all executive team and board meetings;
  - Performing monthly bank statement reviews;
  - Serving as co-chair of the budget committee with the treasurer;
  - Serving as chair of the mid-year and year-end financial review committee ensuring these two reviews are completed yearly;
  - Participating in and volunteering for school and PTA events.
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## SHOP AND EARN - RAISE FUNDS FOR STEM

You can support STEM through the shopping you already do!

A full list with links to participating stores is online:

<http://stemk8pta.org/get-involved/shop-earn/>

*Please note that some stores may still list our school as "K-5 STEM"*

	<p><b>Amazon</b> - Use the link below or connect through our school website to Amazon. They send us a check based on the amount you purchase. <a href="http://stemk8pta.org/get-involved/shop-earn/amazon-com/">http://stemk8pta.org/get-involved/shop-earn/amazon-com/</a></p>
	<p><b>Bartell Drugs 'B' Caring Card</b> - Up to 4% of your purchase amount is contributed to our school. Register your 'B' Caring Card in-store, on-line, or call 1-800-931-6258. Once registered, have the cashier swipe your 'B' Caring Card at the checkout or type in your 10-digit phone number.</p>
	<p><b>Box Tops for Education</b> – Use the new Box Tops app to scan your receipt. The app will find participating products purchased at any store and instantly add cash to our school's earnings online.</p>
	<p><b>Shutterfly &amp; Tiny Prints</b> - Use our School Storefront to earn 8% for STEM. <a href="http://stem.shutterflystorefront.com/">http://stem.shutterflystorefront.com/</a></p>
	<p><b>West Seattle Thriftway</b> – 1% of the purchase price of every item you buy is returned to our school. Drop off your West Seattle Thriftway receipts in the donation box in the school office.</p>
	<p><b>Fred Meyer &amp; Kroger</b>– A digital account is needed to participate in Fred Meyer Community Rewards. If you already have a digital account, simply link your Shopper's Card to your account and add STEM.</p>