



December 14, 2015



Owl Post

The official weekly newsletter
of Louisa Boren STEM K-8 PTA

Upcoming Events

December 14

Giving Garland Gifts Due 4:30pm

STEM K-8

Thank you to everyone who was able to take a tag off our Giving Garland and provide a gift to a STEM student in need. Your generosity is so appreciated!

December 15

Winter Band Concert by STEM 4th, 5th & 6th grade students 6:30pm

Chief Sealth Int'l. High School
2600 SW Thistle St.
Seattle, WA 98126

December 16

Digital Photography Art Show 5:00pm – 5:30pm

Technology Room

December 17 & 18

Gingerbread House Engineering Showcase Thurs. 3:40pm – 5:00pm Fri. 9:40am – 11:00am

Hallway to Cafeteria

December 18

Spirit Wear Day

STEM K-8

December 18

Author Visit

STEM K-8

[Kelly Milner Halls](#)

December 18

1-hour early dismissal 2:40pm

STEM K-8

Pick your Owls up at 2:40pm.

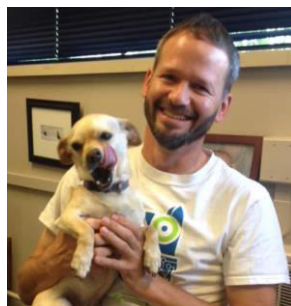
December 21 – January 1

No School

Winter Break

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A Note from Principal Ben Ostrom

Dear Louisa Boren STEM K-8 Families:

Winter Break is approaching and of course there's a lot to fit in before the one hour early dismissal on Friday, 12/18. As a holiday gift bonus, report cards for students will go home on Friday.

STEM K-8 was recognized as a 2015 Washington State School of Distinction last week for being amongst the top 5% of schools in WA for sustained improvement. From the Center for Educational Effectiveness:

The School of Distinction award is the only one in the state currently that focuses on improvement in reading/ELA and math, sustained over multiple years. Achieving this award requires continued, intentional effort from leaders and staff members. It is truly an award that recognizes the accomplishments of a dedicated and focused group of adults doing their best work for their students over several years.

CEE joins with our partner organizations to acknowledge the great work you are doing to benefit student learning and achievement. Our [partner organizations](#) join with CEE each year to honor the school staffs' collaborative efforts that lead to sustained and significant improvement in student achievement.

Congratulations STEM staff--the School of Distinction awards note hard work to improve instructional practice and student outcomes! It's good to have our effort and skills recognized. And we're just getting started--this is the first year STEM was eligible as the award requires student data from three of the previous five years.

STEM K-8's Leadership Team and staff have been working to formalize a school policy for holidays. The Louisa Boren STEM K-8 Holiday Policy included in this newsletter was an effort to formalize current beliefs and practices into consistent guidelines for all classrooms. Please take a few minutes to read it over, and if you have questions or concerns, initiate a conversation with a teacher or me.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Ostrom
Louisa Boren STEM K-8 Principal

Upcoming Events (continued)



White Owl in Winter
From hdwallpapers.com.

January 4
Back to School!
STEM K-8

January 7
PTA Meeting
6:30pm-8:00pm
Boren Library

Please join us! Complimentary childcare provided by the PTA. Discussing standardized testing, middle school roll-up and more!

January 13
2-hour early dismissal
1:40pm
STEM K-8
Pick your Owls up at 1:40pm.

January 14
Winter PBL Display
TBD
STEM K-8

January 18
No School
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 29
Spirit Wear Day
STEM K-8

Winter Band Concert – December 15

4th, 5th and 6th grade band students are excited to bring you their winter performance. The whole school community is invited.

When:
Tuesday, December 15 at 6:30pm

Where:
Chief Sealth International High School
2600 SW Thistle St.
Seattle, WA
98126

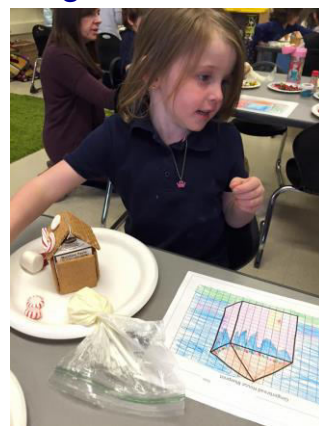


Digital Photography Art Show! – December 16



If you want to see what some STEM photographers have been up to come to the **Digital Photography Art Show** on Wednesday, in the Tech Room from 5:00pm to 5:30pm. Students will present a portfolio of their favorite images taken over the course of the class. Light refreshments will be served. Hope to see you there!

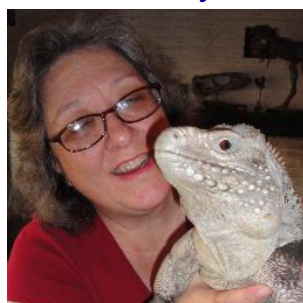
Gingerbread House Engineering – December 17 & 18



Classes started to build their gingerbread structures last week and there was some amazing creativity and innovation. Including these gingerbread house “blueprints”.

Many of the structures will be on display on Thursday after school until 5pm and on Friday morning -- in the hallway leading to the cafeteria.

Author Kelly Milner Halls Visits – December 18



Children’s non-fiction author [Kelly Milner Halls](http://www.kellymilnerhalls.com) will be visiting STEM on Friday.

Kelly will be reading some of her books to the kids and will tell them all about her research into weird and wonderful topics.

Kelly’s visit is funded by the Louisa Boren STEM K-8 PTA.

Upcoming Events (continued)

February

Jump Rope for Heart

Raising money for the American Heart Association.

February 4

PTA Meeting

6:30pm-8:00pm

Boren Library

February 15

No School

Presidents Day

February 16

No School

Mid-Winter Break
(one day only)

March 3

PTA Meeting

6:30pm-8:00pm

Boren Library

March 23

2-hour early dismissal

1:40pm

STEM K-8

Pick your Owls up at 1:40pm.

March 26

3rd Annual STEM Auction

TBD

April 7

PTA Meeting

6:30pm-8:00pm

Boren Library

April 11 – April 15

No School

Spring Break

Check out the school calendar
[here](#).



Bell Times Survey



Recently the Seattle School Board approved Bell Times changes for the 2016-17 school year. Louisa Boren STEM K-8 is scheduled in "Tier 3" which is 9:35am-4:05pm. Read more about the process, vote, and reasoning [here](#).

As part of the agreement for new bell times the school board stipulated that it MIGHT be possible for schools to swap bell times or move to a different tier if changes could be made that are cost neutral. This is a BIG IF and probably unlikely. But we are gathering information about your family's preference on bell times in the event we have the opportunity for change. Additionally it is important to note that the 4:05pm bell time currently listed is a middle school bell time which provides for an additional 15 minutes of contact time for middle school students. Contact time is a negotiated issue that has not yet been resolved at STEM. This means the potential STEM bell time, if it remains at an elementary bell time, would be a 3:45pm end time for all students. Please keep this in mind as you make your votes on this survey.

Please vote here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HNKR9MB>.

Understand that the times are approximate and as noted above could fluctuate (within 5-20 minutes). The survey takes about three minutes to complete. It will help us know what works best for our community.

Hour of Code



[Hour of Code](#) engineers visited STEM students last week, as part of our celebration of Computer Science Education Week. They answered lots of questions about coding and computer science. Our school is participating in the worldwide Hour of Code for the third year.

Stay Connected

[PTA Website](#) – all things PTA (become a member, volunteer, shop and earn, how YOU can be involved).

[STEM K-8 school website](#) – our SPS school website (curriculum, staff details and more).



[STEM K-8 Facebook](#)



[STEM PTA Twitter](#)



[Principal Ostrom's Twitter](#)

[Principal Ostrom's Blog](#)



[Mrs. B.'s Library Page](#)



Holiday Shopping? Earn Cash for our School!

If you're doing some shopping online or in stores don't forget that many of your purchases can benefit our school. Here's a reminder of all the ways to earn money for STEM K-8 when doing your holiday shopping and all year round.



Use [this link](#) to shop at Amazon, and 7% of your purchase amount will be donated to our school. Support STEM and shop in your pajamas from home - what could be better? You can always find our Amazon link on the front page of the [STEM PTA website](#).

Important Note: Shopping via this link earns our school much more money than using *Amazon Smile*.



If you have a Target REDcard be sure to register it in their Take Charge of Education program. 1% of purchases on your REDcard will come back to our school. Visit [Target.com/tcoe](#) or call **1-800-316-6142** to designate Louisa Boren STEM K-8. **Our ID number is: 153701**

If you would like to apply for a REDcard, learn more at [Target.com/redcard](#) or stop in at a Target store. **The REDcard saves you 5% on all Target purchases every day. It's available as either a credit or debit card.**

Grandparents, friends and neighbors are all welcome to participate in the program. The more people we involve, the harder the program works for us. Sadly, Target has announced that the Take Charge of Education program will end in May 2016. So, let's make the most of it while we can!



Make cards, calendars, photo books and more at Shutterfly, Tiny Prints or MyPublisher. Click on our [STEM School Storefront](#) and 13% of your purchases will be donated to our school!

This offer applies to all Shutterfly brands (Borrowlenses, MyPublisher, Shutterfly, ThisLife Tiny Prints, Treat and Wedding Paper Divas).

PCC

Order your \$25 PCC scrip card [here](#). Our school earns 5% each time you use it. You can reload it and use it every time you shop at PCC.

West Seattle Thriftway

Please drop your West Seattle Thriftway receipts off in the donation box in the school office. 1% of the purchase price of every item you buy is returned to our school.

[More Shop & Earn Opportunities on our website.](#)



STEM K-8 Holiday Policy

Why we teach and think critically about holidays at STEM K-8

- To make all children feel accepted and to validate the cultures and experiences of their homes
- To teach about time and cycles of life
- To teach diversity and tolerance by learning about other cultures, traditions and religions
- To teach the virtues associated with particular holidays - peace, friendship, love, etc.
- To create a sense of family or community within classrooms and within our school
- To have fun

Guidelines for Holiday Activities and Celebrations at STEM K-8

- To promote the academic environment of the school and decrease disruptions and emphasis on sweets, Louisa Boren STEM K-8 has instituted a "treat-free" practice for birthdays. If you would like to send something to school with your child to commemorate their birthday, please donate your child's favorite book to the classroom in lieu of food items.
- In a similar vein, STEM K-8 is "treat free" for Halloween, Valentines Day, or other celebrations that may occur.
- We are inclusive and strive to validate all of our students. We pay attention to the balance and the importance we put on particular cultures.
- In addition to not over-focusing on particular cultures, we do not over-focus on a particular holiday *within* one culture. In this way, we are not defining an entire culture or faith through one holiday.
- We are careful to avoid stereotypes when presenting holiday information, putting up decorations and implementing activities.
- We do not teach the religious aspect of only one holiday. We can explain religious aspects of multiple holidays in a matter-of-fact simple manner.
- We involve families as much as possible and as is age-appropriate in the implementation of holiday activities. We will keep families informed of upcoming holiday activities and events. For students whose home culture prohibits a particular celebration or recognition, we will find alternative activities that promote their inclusion in the classroom.
- There are no hard and fast rules about the time that should be spent because the amount of time will vary according to the age, interests and needs of the children.
- As we decide on holidays to teach about, we think about our students and teachers reflect on holidays that have importance to them as individuals. For example, if a teacher has a passion for American history, her class can only benefit from experiencing that passion around Patriots Day. Teachers may also want to consider including holidays that are important to our larger community and city. Teachers are encouraged to discuss with their grade-level partner the list of holidays they are considering.

The policy above is meant to serve as a guide for staff and families as they consider how holiday activities are incorporated into the life of our school. It is our hope that by critically thinking about teaching and celebrating holidays we will more effectively meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student population regarding cultural holiday practices that have so much meaning for children.

This policy was developed through reviewing other school policies throughout the country and in conjunction with careful thought about the needs of the STEM K-8 community (staff, students, families).

Some of the language and format was borrowed from a K-8 school in Boston, which reflected some work from the book [*Celebrate! An Anti-Bias Guide to Enjoying Holidays* by Julie Bisson](#).

This is an evolving document open to feedback and suggestions from the STEM K-8 community.



Announcement from SPS Advanced Learning Department:

Families who applied for advanced learning testing who are worried their student has not yet been scheduled for testing should **wait until Jan. 6 to contact the Advanced Learning office**. Students will continue to be scheduled through the first winter break.

What should I do if I referred my child by the Oct. 8 deadline but he or she hasn't yet been scheduled for testing? No need for concern – not yet. We are continuing to schedule students for testing dates that extend through mid-January.

If you have NOT received a testing date by Wednesday, Jan. 6, please contact us at advlearn@seattleschools.org. Please include your child's name and student ID number in the email.