



October 17, 2016



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

## Upcoming Events

**October 19**

**5:30 PM**

### ***Testing and Our Kids***

Concord International PTA invites you to hear Dr. Wayne Au of UW Bothell speak about the systemic inequities surrounding standardized testing. Limited child care. Light dinner. Spanish interpretation.  
*South Park Neighborhood Center*  
8201 10th Ave S 98108

**October 26**

**2:05**

### ***2-hour early dismissal***

**October 27**

**6:00 PM**

### ***STEM K-8 Harvest Festival Potluck***

Celebrate the season with STEM friends and family.  
*STEM K-8 Gym and Cafeteria*

**November 2**

**6:30 PM**

### ***STEM K-8 PTA Meeting***

The second general meeting of the year. See minutes from the September meeting [here](#).  
*STEM K-8 Library*

**November 3**

**9:30 AM**

### ***ELL Coffee Talk***

The ELL Department invites you for coffee, treats and conversation. Come ask questions about your child's participation in ELL programs at STEM and get to know our staff.  
*Staff Lounge at STEM K-8*

**November 18**

**TBD**

### ***STEM K-8 Community Movie Night***

*STEM K-8 Library*

## A Note from Principal Ben Ostrom



STEM K-8 Families, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) made an ambitious commitment. In the words of Superintendent Nyland: "Eliminating opportunity gaps and ensuring educational excellence for each and every student is the issue of our time. While Seattle Public Schools outperforms like districts academically, we have the 5<sup>th</sup> largest academic achievement gap in the nation between black and white students. While we are making progress, we are also

committed to doing better."

Seattle Public Schools kicks off a new campaign to eliminate opportunity gaps called #CloseTheGaps this week. Seattle Education Association is promoting October 19 as a day of solidarity to bring focus to racial equity and affirming the lives of SPS students – specifically our students of color. In support of this focus, some staff will choose to wear Black Lives Matter t-shirts, stickers or other symbols of their commitment to students.

The Louisa Boren STEM K-8 PTA Advocacy Committee invites students and their families to stop by and visit their resource table in front of the school the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 19. They will have stickers available with the Black Lives Matter/We Stand Together design by John Muir Elementary School art teacher Julie Trout, available for students and families who would like one. Students may choose to wear Black Lives Matter t-shirts on this day with their uniforms.

In tackling racism, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Education Association, and STEM K-8 are not promoting Black Lives Matter as a political movement. Our goal is to raise awareness about the struggle to address educational inequality in our country and school system. Staff wearing Black Lives Matter t-shirts are not saying that All Lives Don't Matter. They are making a statement about visible and violent racism in the treatment of African Americans in this country; one that aims to start conversations about creating a more equitable school with our students and families

We grow our capacity to create equity through dialogue that starts with listening. In the words of African American educator Lisa Delpit, "...a very special kind of listening, listening that requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds. We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment, and that is not easy.... I contend that it is those with the most power, those in the majority, who must take the greater responsibility for initiating the process."

Some resources for learning about racism and Black Lives Matter, and addressing those topics with children are included below. Resources on this list are not being endorsed by SPS, but are offered to further learning and dialogue.

### Teaching Tolerance

- Talking Race (any level) <http://www.tolerance.org/talking-race>
- What's Fair (elementary school) <http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/what-s-fair>
- Toolkit for Ferguson, U.S.A. (preparing yourself to teach about race and racism; any level) <http://www.tolerance.org/ferguson>
- Teaching Ferguson, USA (middle and high) <http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-49-spring-2015/feature/ferguson-usa>
- Teaching about Race, Racism, and Police Violence: <http://www.tolerance.org/teaching-about-ferguson> (middle and high)

## 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](#)

## Get Involved

*Are you looking for a way to get involved? All current opportunities are listed on STEM K-8 [Sign Up Genius Page](#).*

### **Volunteers Needed This Week**

[Harvest Fest Volunteers for game stations and clean-up](#)

[Help Mr. Adams in the gym during the Bicycle Unit](#)

[New York Times Book list on Race](#)

[Ben & Jerry's \(yes that Ben and Jerry's\) 7 Ways We Know Systemic Racism is Real](#)

[San Francisco Unified School District Library Guide on BlackLivesMatter](#)

Undoubtedly this week's activities will produce mixed feelings at STEM K-8. Conflicting viewpoints provide opportunities to grow community. I look forward to conversations with staff and families in the coming months as we work to provide equal opportunities for all students.

Sincerely,

Ben Ostrom  
Principal, STEM K-8

## Harvest Festival Potluck, October 27

Mark your calendars now! On, Thursday, October 27 at 6 pm, join STEM K-8 friends and families to celebrate the fall season with games, crafts and a potluck. Costumes (not too scary!) are encouraged but not required. Bring a dish to share, the PTA will provide plates, utensils, water and lemonade. We need help to make it all happen; we're seeking volunteers for game stations and clean-up. [Sign-up here](#).

## Direct Give Fundraising Campaign Counting Down

We're more than halfway through the October Direct Give Fundraising Campaign, have you given yet? Every dollar makes a difference! **Our goal is \$35,000 in the month of October.**

### **To Donate:**

- [Submit a payment online](#)
- [Did you want to setup recurring payments?](#)
- Checks can be made out to: Louisa Boren STEM K-8 PTA. Return the donation form to the STEM K-8 PTA mailbox at STEM or mail to: STEM K-8 PTA 5950 Delridge Way Seattle, WA 98106

