Upcoming Events

December 20
Winter Solstice Music Festival
6:00pm
A wonderful night of musical performances by the STEM K-8 Band and Choir.
Performers arrive no later than 5:45pm.
STEM K-8 Cafeteria

December 21
Last Day of School
1-Hour Early Release
Spirit Wear Day

December 22-January 6
Winter Break No School

January 7
Back to School!

January 9
Auction Committee Meeting
7:00pm – 9:00pm
All welcome!
Uptown Espresso Delridge

January 10
PTA Meeting
6:30pm – 8:00pm
All welcome!
Complimentary YMCA childcare provided by the PTA.
STEM Library

January 21
Martin Luther King Day
No School

January 25
Spirit Wear Day

January 30
Day Between Semesters
No School

January 31
Auction Committee Meeting
7:00pm – 9:00pm
All welcome!
Uptown Espresso Delridge

A Note from Principal Ben Ostrom

We’re putting our noses to the grindstone and packing in a week of learning before winter break. School activities are on the schedule until the very end. Thursday, December 20 at 6:00pm we will host a Winter Solstice Music Festival in the school cafeteria. Our Middle School choir and beginning, junior, and advanced bands will all be performing. A reminder that student performers should be at STEM by 5:45pm.

At last Thursday’s PTA meeting, School Board member Leslie Harris talked about the upcoming February 12 vote to renew two vital school levies: the Educational Programs and Operations Levy (EP&O) and Building Excellence V (Bex V) Levy. Click on the following link to read her 2019 Levies Presentation. Both are renewals (not increases) of existing levies, and contain funds that will support STEM K-8. More information and resources can be found on the SPS Levies Webpage. It’s important to recognize that because WA changed the way it allocates funds to schools last year, even if both levies pass, Seattle Public Schools will face a $40 million budget shortfall for the 2019-20 school year. Understanding state funding and being aware of legislation is unfortunately one of the requirements of being a parent in our state!

Ben Ostrom
Principal
Louisa Boren STEM K-8

STEM K-8 PTA Membership Vote on Levies

On Thursday, December 13 the STEM K-8 PTA general membership voted to endorse Prop 1 & 2, Operations and Capital School levies, on the February ballot. Please see the end of this Owl Post for more information on the levies and Governor Inslee’s budget proposals.

2nd grade and kindergarten STEM students supporting the 2013 levies in the first year of our school. New pics to come once we get some signs! If you see these two in the middle school hallway, don’t tell them we put pics of them in the Owl Post!
Winter Solstice Music Festival

**When:** Thursday, December 20. 6:00pm  
**Where:** STEM Cafeteria

We are looking forward to a wonderful night of musical performances by STEM band and choir students.

Performers should arrive no later than 5:45pm. For those students who will not have transportation back to school at that time, there will be supervision here at STEM so that they can stay at school instead of “dashing” home and “dashing” back to school.

Middle School Band Students: This is a REQUIRED performance used as assessment.  
5th Grade Band Students: 5th grade students are invited to perform but performance is not required.

For Middle School and 5th Grade Band and Choir the appropriate “concert” dress is:

- white shirt/blouse and black pants/slacks/skirt *or* all-black dress (full length or to the knee)

- black dress shoes (no sneakers)

Please, no colors, patterns, or stripes.

If students don’t have concert dress at home, they or their parent/guardian can contact Jody Hapgood in the school office, [jahapgood@seattleschools.org](mailto:jahapgood@seattleschools.org), for access to the PTA’s Uniform Closet.

Dr. Matt Okun  
Boren STEM K-8  
Instrumental Music  
MTSS Interventionist  
206-252-8462  
[mkokun@seattleschools.org](mailto:mkokun@seattleschools.org)

Giving Garland – Still Time to Donate!

The deadline to donate to the STEM K-8 Giving Garland has been extended to the last day of school. In support of our student community that needs extra support during the holiday season (for groceries or gifts) we are collecting gift cards *in any amount to any place*. This allows our families to decide how they can best support their family’s personal needs, so cards for groceries, toys, clothing - anything is appreciated. Please mark the amount on the card and leave it unwrapped. **Bring cards to the school office by 12/21.**

Anything STEM families donate will be shared with our friends at our local title one community school Sanislo Elementary, located just up the hill from STEM. So if we bring in $500 in gift cards we will give $250 to families at Sanislo. Many families at both schools need support, so please share this message outside of the STEM community. Gift cards can be mailed to: 5950 Delridge Way SW, Seattle, WA 98106.
Counselor’s Corner - Holiday Resource Support

Here is a fantastic list of holiday resources for families in need. It includes free holiday dinners, events and gifts. It’s too big to include in the Owl Post so please CLICK HERE to read it on the PTA website, where you can also download it. I have hard copies available at school. The first few on the list don’t cover our area, but scroll down for resources for the Seattle area and all eligible families. The free holiday activities section is worth a look for everyone!

Danielle Blechert
pronouns: (she, her, hers)
School Counselor
Louisa Boren STEM K-8
206-252-8509
dnblechert@seattleschools.org

Kiln Put to Good Use!

Thanks so much to Natasa Dragas and Brian Sheppard for donating a kiln to our school, and to Megan Miller Thorberg for getting it installed and working! Last week, 4th graders were busily crafting clay totems as part of their study of NW peoples.

Volunteering for Field Trips or Helping in the Classroom? Please Read

If you are interested in volunteering at STEM for field trips, classroom help, etc. you MUST complete a Volunteer Application every year. You will need to have with you at the time your current driver’s license, proof of three years of residency in the State of Washington, and an email confirmation that you have watched the Adult Sexual Misconduct Video. If you have not lived in Washington for the past three years then you must order a National Background Check, which is $21.00.

Applications MUST be completed in full at a minimum of two days prior to the day of your volunteering, otherwise you will not be able to participate. If you have any questions please call me.

Thank you!

Jody Hapgood
Attendance/Office Assistant
Louisa Boren STEM K-8
5950 Delridge Way SW
206-252-8450
jahapgood@seattleschools.org
Know any families interested in joining the STEM K-8 community? We will be hosting school tours and open houses in January and February. These tours are open to any families of children entering kindergarten through 8th grade. We host separate elementary and middle school tours to address the specific questions and concerns of each group. If you would like to volunteer to lead a tour, email tours@stemk8pta.org.

Current STEM K-8 Students are automatically assigned to STEM and do not need to re-enroll. This includes 5th graders (5th graders are automatically assigned to 6th grade at STEM). Enrollment is for new students. Unfortunately, STEM pre-school students are not automatically assigned to kindergarten at STEM. If you have a preschool student and you would like them to attend STEM, you need to apply for STEM through Open Enrollment.

**Open Houses**

No reservations are necessary to attend an Open House.

- Middle School Open House will take place on Thursday, January 31 from 6:00–7:00 pm
- Elementary Open House will take place on Thursday, February 7 from 6:00–7:00 pm

**Elementary School Tours**

For families of prospective elementary (K-5) students, tours are conducted from **9:00–10:30 am** on the following dates:

- January 22
- January 25
- January 29
- February 1
- February 5

[Reserve your spot](#) on one of these tours.

**Middle School Tours**

For families of prospective middle school (6-8) students, tours are conducted from **10:15–11:45 am** on the following dates:

- January 29
- February 1
Holiday Shopping? Earn Cash for our School!

If you’re doing some shopping online don’t forget that many of your purchases can benefit our school.

Use [this link](#) to shop at Amazon, and 7% of your purchase amount will be donated to STEM. You can always find our Amazon link on the home page of the [STEM PTA website](#). **Important Note:** Shopping via the direct link earns STEM much more money than using Amazon Smile, but if you don’t think you’ll remember to use the direct link every time you shop Amazon, then please select STEM K-8 as your Amazon Smile charitable organization.

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

Save the Date!

Our annual auction is coming up on March 23 at the Hall at Fauntleroy. There will also be a Spring Fling Art event selling prints of auction artwork and more – date to be determined. Logo by STEM parent Heidi Baughman (who also designed the STEM K-8 Owl).

Want to help with the auction? All are welcome at the upcoming auction committee meetings: Jan 9, Jan 31, Feb 27, March 13, March 20. 7-9pm @ Uptown Espresso Delridge.

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**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**
Washington State PTA Statement on Governor Jay Inslee’s 2019-21 Budget Proposals

“Washington State PTA (WSPTA) is very pleased with the direction of the Governor’s proposed two-year budget,” said Michelle Nims, president. “At the top of our priorities is increasing the staffing for student well-being, including additional nurses, social workers, behavioral health specialists, psychologists, and counselors. This budget starts with our highest needs districts and phases in for all districts in future budgets. That’s a great start and critical to the success of students across the state.”

In addition, Nims said WSPTA was pleased to see training for paraeducators, increased funding for career and technical education, money to address teacher shortages, and more dual language programs included in the spending plan. Several other proposals, such as the proposal to return to local levies as a percentage of a district’s budget, will require a deeper dive into details and implications for school districts and the students they serve.

“While we fully support the $1 billion for school construction assistance, we feel there is still work to do to change the outdated formulas that put more of a burden on local taxpayers to build schools. We would also like to see a second round of grants for schools to build more classrooms to meet smaller K-3 student ratios. When the legislature sets policy for all-day kindergarten and smaller class sizes, it needs to back up that policy with the funding to build the additional classrooms,” said Nims.

“We look forward to working with the Governor’s office and legislature to support initiatives that build on previous investments to improve school funding and student outcomes.”

WSPTAs 2019 legislative platform can be found here.

Washington State PTA’s vision is that every child’s potential becomes a reality. We accomplish this through our mission for PTA to be a powerful voice for children; a relevant resource for families, schools, and communities; and a strong advocate for the well-being and education of all children.

What’s on the February 12, 2019, ballot for Seattle Public Schools?

Seattle Public Schools will ask voters to consider renewing two critical levies—one to fund day-to-day operations and one to fund construction to add capacity and rebuild aging schools.

1. Renewal of the Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy

- **Funding for critical day-to-day school operations**, such as additional school staff beyond what the state allocates and instructional materials.
- **Helps bridge the funding gap** between what the state funds and what Seattle students need. For instance, the state funds nine nurses per year, but the district employs 63.
- **Funding for Special Education** to ensure our 7,000 students who need special education services have the supports they need. The district spends $140 million a year for special education, but the state only funds $68 million a year.
- **Helps close the opportunity gaps** by continuing to provide programs to support our most vulnerable students.

2. Renewal of the Building Excellence V (BEX V) Capital Levy

- **Replaces or modernizes eight aging schools**: Rainier Beach High School, Mercer International Middle School, Aki Elementary, Kimball Elementary, Montlake Elementary, Northgate Elementary, John Rogers Elementary and Viewlands Elementary.
- **Adds classrooms, removes portables.**
  - Addition at West Seattle Elementary
  - Adds 1,908 new seats across the district
  - Removes 76 portables throughout the district
  - Expands Original Van Asselt to serve as an interim site
- **Improves safety and security at EVERY school.** Secure entrances and school sites, earthquake safety improvements, upgrade fire alarm systems.
- **Provides all schools equitable classroom technology and support for student learning.**
- **Plans for the future.** Funding for the design phase of future projects, including Aki Kurose Middle School and Sacajawea Elementary, and to plan for future schools.

What is the cost for the two education levy renewals?

The levies are not a new tax. They renew the current levies, which end after 2019. Currently, homeowners pay $1.10 per $1,000 of assessed home value (2018) for the EP&O. If approved, the levy rate would drop to $1.05. The capital levy rate of $.90 per $1,000 is the same rate as requested for BEX IV, which started in 2014.

If approved, the combined cost for both measures is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tax rate per $1,000 of assessed home value for both levies:</th>
<th>For a house valued at $700,000, the yearly cost for Seattle Public Schools property taxes:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$1.95</td>
<td>$1,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$1.78</td>
<td>$1,244</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>$1.62</td>
<td>$1,132</td>
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Why do schools need levies?

School districts are funded through state, local and federal dollars. But there’s currently a gap between what the state funds for K-12 education and what Seattle students need. So, every three years, the district asks voters to consider renewing the operations levy. In addition, school construction is primarily funded by local voter-approved capital levies.

For more information on our levy renewals, visit: [www.seattleschools.org/levies](http://www.seattleschools.org/levies)

To learn more about our budget and why we rely on voter-approved school levies, visit: [www.seattleschools.org/budget](http://www.seattleschools.org/budget)