

# Leicester Middle School

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## March Newsletter

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### Important Dates in March:

03/02 Read Across America  
03/07 MCAS Trial Grade 7  
03/08 Friends of LMS Meeting  
03/14 School Council Meeting  
03/17 No School - Prof Dev Day  
03/21 Report Cards to Power School  
03/23 Parents' Night  
03/24 - 03/25 School Play  
03/27 Learning Walk  
03/28 Evening with the Arts

### Connect With Us:



Joyce Nelson - Principal  
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Christopher Fontaine  
Assistant Principal  
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## From the Administration

Dear Parents and Guardians:  
As usual, the Middle School is very busy and the months seem to be flying by.

Since the last newsletter, we have accomplished many things:

- A big plus is that we landed a huge grant that will fund new and exciting classes for Project Lead the Way.
- LMS was chosen to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is considered to be "the nation's report card."



Ms. Joyce Nelson  
Principal, LMS



Mr. Christopher Fontaine  
Assistant Principal, LM

As always, our students continue to amaze us with their kindness towards others. In this newsletter you will read about several projects that the students have completed and a few that are up and coming.

This is going to be a great month for the arts. The school play is coming up this weekend, and the Evening with the Arts is next week. We hope that you can attend these wonderful events.

April is field trip month. The 8th graders will be going to Washington D.C. during the week of April 3 through 7; 6th graders will be going to Nature's Classroom during the week of April 24 through 28. You can find suggested packing lists in this newsletter and on the school's website.

Finally, the Middle School will be holding two open house events that will allow townspeople to walk through the school and get a better idea of the condition of the facility. This is being done in conjunction with a feasibility study to determine if we will renovate or replace the building. Please take note of the dates in this newsletter.

All of these items appear below. Enjoy!

Sincerely,  
Joyce Nelson - Principal  
Christopher Fontaine - Assistant Principal





## HUGE News!

In September, students at Leicester Public Schools will have expanded science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning opportunities thanks to \$63,000 in grant funds that the district was awarded this week.

The Leicester Middle School was awarded a \$28,000 expansion grant from Project Lead the Way (PLTW) in partnership with the Mass STEM Hub. PLTW is a nonprofit organization that designs engaging courses that incorporate STEM through real world challenges. Currently, the middle school offers a PLTW Design and Modeling course which teaches students in grades 6, 7, and 8 about the engineering design process. The school will continue to teach this course



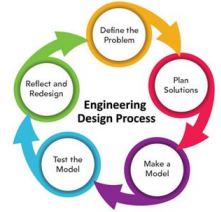
to incoming sixth graders in September, while adding Automation and Robotics for its seventh and eighth graders. The school will be able to use these funds to cover the costs of the durable equipment needed get this new course up and running.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the middle school intends to add a third course, Flight and Space, enabling all middle school students to have a trimester of three STEM courses before going on to high school.

In addition, Leicester High School was awarded \$35,000 from a PLTW grant in partnership with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through its STEM Advisory Council and Workforce Skills Cabinet. These funds will allow the high school to begin offering engineering courses to its students.

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The first course to be rolled in will be Introduction to Engineering Design in which students deepen their understanding of the engineering design process. They will apply math, science, and engineering standards to hands-on projects. The second course to be rolled in will be Principles of Engineering where students explore a variety of engineering topics including mechanisms, strength of structure and materials, and automation, and then they apply what they know to take on design challenges.

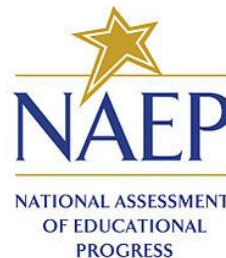


For more information, contact:

Cate Calise, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Phone: 508-892-7040

Email: [calisec@lpsma.net](mailto:calisec@lpsma.net)



In February, Leicester Middle School was chosen to participate in the NAEP assessment process. The NAEP assessment is sometimes referred to as the Nation's Report Card.

Per NAEP guidelines, sixty eighth grade students were randomly selected to take these assessments. The school was instructed to prepare appropriately for English language learners and students with disabilities. Parents of students selected to participate in these assessments were notified in writing prior to the administration of the tests. The tests covered math and English and were taken on Surface Pro tablets. Students got to keep the earbuds that were provided for the assessments.

The site coordinator from NAEP wrote to Ms. Nelson after the tests were completed to report that our students were cooperative, well behaved, and polite, and they took the tests very seriously.



## Curriculum Corner

In April and May, students in grades 3-8 will be taking MCAS 2.0 tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. The original version of MCAS, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, has been administered since 1998.

In 2011 new standards were adopted and Massachusetts joined the Partnership for Advancement of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to develop new assessments to match these new standards. Grades 3-8 students in Leicester took these new PARCC assessments in the spring of 2015 and 2016. Last year, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to develop next-generation MCAS rather than continue with the PARCC assessments. This new MCAS 2.0 will be used to assess grades 3-8 students in ELA and mathematics over the next couple of months. Students in Leicester will take these tests on a Chromebook as they have for the past few years. Although the test has a new name, it will be very familiar to our students in grades 4-8 who have taken similar tests in previous years.

These tests are given to our students as a result of the 1993 education reform law which directed the Board to create a statewide assessment program. Why and how we administer state assessments to our students continues to be a topic of discussion nationwide. As Commissioner Chester states, "It is entirely appropriate for us to examine the content and methods of assessment, the time we spend on testing, how test results best can help to improve instruction, and whether test preparation activities are crowding out more effective uses of classroom time." In Leicester, we strive to make sure that our testing schedule is efficient and causes minimal disruption to classroom instruction.

The results of these assessments are analyzed as one source of data as we work to support parts of our curriculum that are effective and determine where instruction needs to be strengthened. We plan instruction using the standards which

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tell us what our students should know and be able to do at a particular grade level or in a particular content area. Standards guide our work, but these assessments give us valuable information so we can take stock of how we are doing.

## The Launchpad for Your Imagination!



The Leicester Public School Department is proud to announce that Camp Invention will be offered again this summer. Developed with the guidance of National Inventors Hall of Fame inductees and supported by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Camp Invention is the premier summer day experience for curious young minds.

At Camp Invention children are presented with fun, hands-on challenges that encourage creative problem-solving, teamwork, entrepreneurship, and innovation. This summer's curriculum allows children to:

**Create** their own personal, ultimate Spy Gadget Alarm box by taking apart and upcycling everyday machines.

**Explore** a distant new exoplanet and design inventions to create the next Earth.

**Launch** water rockets, build bubble blasters, and engineer giant castles.

**Design** duct tape products and pitch them to mock investors.

Camp Invention is available to students entering K-6. To register your child, visit [campinvention.org](http://campinvention.org) or call 800-968-4332. The details are:

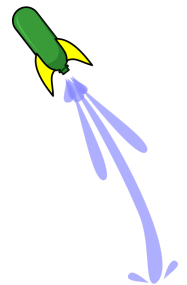
**Dates:** July 10 - 14

**Time:** 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**Place:** Leicester Middle School

**Cost:** \$250/per student (pay online)

If you have questions, contact the Program Director, Christine Bugbee, at [bugbeec@lpsma.net](mailto:bugbeec@lpsma.net).







This year the Middle School is devoting all of its teacher professional development time to Engaging Schools, a program that helps

schools develop a positive approach to school discipline.

Engaging Schools advocates a shift in thinking regarding school discipline, away from traditional punitive practices towards restorative practices. Current educational research shows that traditional disciplinary actions don't really work—or at least, they don't *teach*. They may result in short-term changes, but in reality they promote compliance and little else. By contrast, restorative practices are interwoven into every interaction in the building.

### **What is a restorative practice?**

In an article entitled “Restorative practice in schools,” Alison Williams describes restorative practice as a method that:

- Emphasizes relationships rather than retribution
- Builds empathy and promotes accountability, responsibility and reintegration
- Recognizes behavior as an opportunity for learning, not punishment (although there are consequences)
- Improves a classroom or school climate by providing a way for everyone to change behavior
- Moves people away from negative and blaming attitudes toward wanting to make things right.
- Determines what has/is happening, how people have been/are being impacted, and what needs to happen to make things better
- Gives everyone a voice

### **What is the effect of restorative practices?**

The International Institute for Restorative Practices indicates that the implementation of restorative practices can result in:

- Significant decreases in detention and suspension rates

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- Less classroom disruption
- Greater respect shown for teachers and classmates
- Increased feelings of safety and confidence among students
- Improved student test scores and academic performance
- Greater emphasis on teaching and learning
- Improved school community spirit

At the last professional development workshop, teachers learned how to implement 10 restorative practices ranging from simple check-ins with students and bullying/harassment conferences, all the way to suspension reentry. These are a few of the strategies that were introduced:

**Personal, Academic, Behavioral Check-Ins** - An adult engages one or two conflicting students in brief one-to-one check-ins:

**Academic Questions** - What are you working on? What are you going to do next?

**Restorative Questions** - What happened? What was your role in what happened? Who else was affected by this?

**Morning Meetings/Class Circle** - The teacher facilitates informal circles to build community and trust, share differing perspectives, and engage in problem solving.

**Dialogue Circle** - An adult facilitates a circle with a group of students who are gathered to reflect and discuss serious concerns, issues, or incidents.

**Student/Student Mediation** - With adult supervision, student co-mediators facilitate mediation between two students or a group of students who have engaged in a verbal or physical conflict.

**Problem Solving and Planning Conference** - An adult engages the student(s) in a conference when unproductive and ineffective behaviors, habits, or mindsets are impeding academic success.

Some of these practices take a lot of time and preparation, while others are simple and can be done quickly. The situation dictates which strategy will be chosen. When used consistently and effectively, strong relationships can be formed, helping to minimize interruptions, while strengthening teaching and learning.



Founded by former Governor Deval Patrick in 2011, Project 351 is a youth service organization dedicated to building unity and leadership among 8th graders across the state. Participants are

selected by hometown educators based on their exemplary ethic of service and their values of kindness, compassion, humility, and generosity of spirit. As ambassadors of Project 351, students make a yearlong commitment to changing the world through community service.



To become an ambassador, educators nominate and select a “quiet leader and unsung hero.” Ambassadors are diverse in all ways but share a common passion

for making a positive difference in their community and the world. With that as the criteria, it was very easy to select Delaney Sherman as this year’s ambassador.

On MLK Day, a national day of community service, Delaney and all of the other ambassadors attended a “launch day” at Faneuil Hall in Boston where Governor Charlie Baker welcomed the students and talked about his own journey into public service. The governor indicated that his big brother served as a role model, helping him to gain the confidence needed to get involved in his community.



After the welcome ceremony, all of the ambassadors helped out at the Greater Boston Food Bank by serving more than 26,000 meals!

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As part of her year of service, Delaney will be conducting a clothing drive in conjunction with



This organization provides children from birth to age 12, living in low- income and homeless situations, with the essential items they need to thrive – at home, at school and at play. They supply these items free of charge During the week of **March 27 through March 31**, Delaney will be collecting clothing for this great organization. We hope you can make a contribution of new or “gently used” clothing to children in need across the Commonwealth. Thanks, Delaney, for your dedication to this effort!



The Heart to Heart Toy Drive sponsored by Delia Shea has ended and was a GREAT success! We are proud to announce that Delia QUADRUPLED her goal of 100 toys. She collected a total of 406 toys for Boston's Children's Hospital!

We are so proud of Delia and wish to thank all of the generous people that helped her reach and surpass her goal! On March 21, Ms. Nelson, Ms. Rebello, and Delia went to Boston to deliver the toys. They were met by hospital staff who were overwhelmed with joy. Great job, Delia!







If you had the choice, would you leave \$20,000 on the table without claiming it? With Box Tops for Education, schools can earn up to \$20,000 per year to

use for such items as computers, books, art supplies, sports equipment, and much more.

LMS CommuniTeen is taking on responsibility for collecting and submitting box tops and doing other activities that earn money through this program. There are a few different ways that LMS can earn cash through Box Tops for Education:



1. Regular Box Tops - worth 10¢ each
2. Bonus Box Tops certificates - printed or stickered on a package during a special offer-worth 30¢
3. Bonus Box Tops offers - awarded automatically through participation in various promotional offers such as:
  - a. Box Tops Sweepstakes - We enter a contest.
  - b. Clipboard Collection Drives - You make a pledge to submit a certain amount of box tops to reach a school goal during a drive.

Box Tops for Education also has:

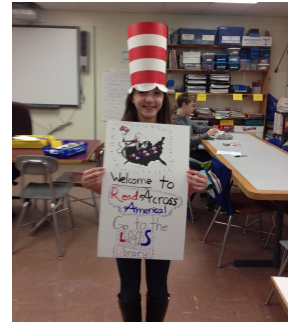
- A cool Bonus App that allows you to scan your grocery receipt, which automatically adds amounts to the school's account - NO CLIPPING! We don't have this up and running yet, but when we do, we will let you know more about it.
- Coupons for discounts on Box Tops products. Imagine saving money on products that you normally buy, while helping the school earn cash.

LMS CommuniTeen is just in the beginning stages of planning how to make the most out of this program. We will keep you informed of how you can help. In the meantime, keep sending in those Box Tops for Education!

Every year on March 2 schools all over the country celebrate **Read Across America Day** in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday.

This year LMS CommuniTeen celebrated this joyous occasion by sponsoring a Read Across America Night in the new LMS library. The group invited their peers to bring their little sisters and brothers to school to listen to *The Cat in the Hat*, make their own unique version of a "cat hat" and enjoy some M&Ms. Read by Mr. Fontaine's wife, the book was projected on a big screen, allowing the little ones to see the pages clearly. It was an interactive presentation that drew the kids into the story.

At the end of the night, all of the children received a Dr. Seuss book to take home. The candy, art materials, and books were donated by the Leicester Walmart. About 15 small children participated in this fun night. Next year, we would like to fill up the entire library!





The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) has had some great events this school year. They worked at the Food Pantry for their annual Thanksgiving and Christmas distributions. The Easter distribution on Tuesday, April 11th will be their next service project.

The students hyped up the soccer teams' opportunity to play under the lights at LHS by implementing a "white out" at

school (where everyone wore white) and by passing out glow sticks and offering face painting at the games.

In December, the group sold Candy Grams (one of our annual fundraisers) during lunches, where students could buy candy canes for others and write special messages. This year we had a lot of different flavors from which to choose!

To round out the fall and early winter, we held another annual fundraiser, a dance. This year, the members decided to host a Pajamuary Dance in early January to welcome students back from break. Everyone wore their cutest pajamas and had a great time. The students did not disappoint with great DJ skills, raffles, decorating and food.

NJHS members are currently working with Primary School teachers on occasion. Some have gone to the school after dismissal to help the teachers with lessons and reading to the little ones.

Once the school play is over, the members would love to hold a Movie Day after school. Our goal is to show a movie on the big screen in the auditorium after school - a movie (on a recommended short list) voted upon by the students - where the only admission fee will be a donation to a charity of our choice (TBD).

The School Store has been dormant for a few years, but the  
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members would like to get it up and running, if not soon, then to get it ready for the next school year. A lot more time and effort goes into it than one thinks.

The biggest news that we have that is fast approaching is the induction of new members for the 2016-2017 school year! The exact dates for letters of notification for eligibility to be sent out and the night of induction are TBD. However, I can tell you that the process will begin as soon as GPA's are calculated for the current 7th graders. They will be announced as soon as possible. Keep your eyes and ears peeled!



Thank you,

Mrs. Duprey, NJHS Advisor and Officers:

Hannah Dufries, President	Jenna Soden, Vice President
Delaney Sherman, Treasurer	Alexa Dufries, Clerk
Kya Birtz, Media Rep.	



The 6th grade class will be traveling to Nature's Classroom during the week of April 24 through 28. Click [here](#) to see the suggested packing list for the upcoming field trip.

The 8th grade class will be traveling to Washington D.C. during the week of April 3 through 7. The suggested packing list for this trip was handed out to parents in person at a recent meeting.







We invite you all to attend a production of this year's school play, The Great American Talent Show.



From renowned playwright Joseph Robinette, the play is a great parody of *American Idol* and *America's Got Talent*. The play is set on the final night of the yearlong TV talent show. Finalists anxiously await their shot at fame and fortune, while three self-important judges — including the brutally honest Brit — cajole or praise each contestant in hilarious ways.

Who will win the tournament of champions? Will it be the girl who sings a ludicrous "heartbreak" song? An eager comedian with laughably old jokes? Perhaps the kazoo-playing one-man band? Come to the show and find out! The production will be held as follows:

Date: Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25  
Time: Friday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 2:00 PM  
Place: LMS Auditorium

Bring the whole family. The laughs are big!



Held in late February, the LMS Talent Show was a huge success.

The students were amazing, funny and, of course, talented. So were some of the teachers who participated in the show.

If you would like to relive the show or see it for the first time, just click on the following link:

[LMS Talent Show 2017](#)

On March 28, the Leicester Public Schools' Departments of Art, Music and Drama present the 21st annual *Evening with the Arts* at Leicester High School. This magical night showcases the creativity, imagination, and hard work of all our students from kindergarten through grade 12.

Free to the public, the doors open at 5:30 p.m. Upon entering, you can choose to take a leisurely stroll through the visual arts galleries, share some food and beverages in the dining commons, and/or attend a variety of live performances. The performance schedule is below. We invite you to come and experience the richness of the Leicester Public Schools' arts programs. It is definitely worth the trip.

Time	Gymnasium	Fine Arts Center
5:30 - 5:50		Memorial School Chorus
5:50 - 6:10	Middle School Band	
6:10 - 6:30		High School Chorus
6:30 - 6:50	Memorial School Band	
6:50 - 7:10		Middle School Chorus
7:10 - 7:30	High School Band	
7:30 - 7:50	Middle School Jazz Band	
7:50 - 8:10		Middle School Drama
8:10 - 8:30		High School Drama





## Building Walk-Through Open House

Recently you received a letter from Dr. Paolucci regarding the maintenance and safety of the school facilities in Leicester. While safety issues are always addressed immediately and regular maintenance is a high priority, a facilities study of all four school buildings revealed that much of the infrastructure of the Middle School has long passed its life expectancy.

As a result, a building committee made up of school and other town administrators, teachers, parents, and townspeople has been formed to study the options, either a building renovation or replacement. To help guide the committee's decisions, it is extremely important to get feedback from the entire community. To learn about the condition of the building and the options for the future, you are invited to attend one of two open houses to be held as follows:

Date 1: April 11 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Date 2: April 27 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

We hope to see you there.



We are pleased to announce that FLMS has become a Federal Tax Exempt Organization, which means we are

classified as a public charity under Internal Revenue (IRC) Section 509(a)(2). Donors to this organization are allowed to deduct any and all contributions under Section 170 of the tax code. The group itself is qualified to receive tax-deductible bequests, devises, transfers, and/or gifts under other sections of the code. As a tax-exempt organization, we are required to file annual tax returns each year.

Minutes from the last meeting can be found by clicking on the following link: [March FLMS Meeting Minutes](#). The next meeting will be held on April 5 from 6:00 to 7:00 in the LMS library. New members are always welcome.

## MCAS Schedule

MCAS testing will be conducted on the following dates:

April 3	ELA	Grade 6
April 4	ELA	Grade 6
April 5	ELA	Grade 7
April 6	ELA	Grade 7
April 7	ELA	Makeups
April 11	ELA	Grade 8
April 12	ELA	Grade 8
April 13	ELA	Makeups
May 2	Math	Grade 7
May 3	Math	Grade 7
May 4	Math	Makeups
May 5	Math	Makeups
May 8	Math	Grade 8
May 9	Math	Grade 8
May 10	Math	Grade 6
May 11	Math	Grade 6
May 12	Math	Makeups
May 15	STEM	Grade 8
May 16	STEM	Grade 8
May 17	STEM	Makeups
May 19	All	Makeups
May 22	All	Makeups
May 23	All	Makeups
May 24	All	Makeups

## Nurse Substitutes Needed!

Are you a parent or community member who is an RN or LPN? Do you have time to work (on call) in our schools? If so, Leicester Public Schools needs you to become a substitute nurse. You can choose your days to work, and training will be provided. It's a great way to give back to your community. Please go online to apply. [Nurse Application](#)