

Greetings,

Happy New Year. I hope you and your family and friends have had an enjoyable Holiday Break. I wish you a wonderful year of health and happiness.

Our return back to school tomorrow brings us to our mid year point with midterms for full year courses and finals for Semester One courses scheduled from Friday, 1/17, through Thursday, 1/23. A more detailed schedule will be shared with you in next weeks Principal Message, however, please note that all testing days (1/17, 1/21, 1/22 and 1/23) are half-days with students dismissed at 12:15. Please encourage your student/s to access their teachers and utilize FLEX block to best prepare for these assessments.

As many households of students who took the 2019-2020 PSAT know, student scores have not been released. Our PSAT test coordinator has been in contact with the College Board and have been informed our scores are on hold pending an investigation of a possible irregularity. Information shared at this time is that investigations typically take a few weeks followed by a ten day window for final results to be released. I will share out updates once I have more information.

Over the holiday break Stoneham High School lost a fellow Spartan with the passing of Kristen Polizzotto on December 21. Her positive impact on our community as a school counselor, coach, colleague and friend was profound. To say she was loved would be an understatement. She will be missed, but her school spirit, love of students and connection with community will be constant. Thank you Kristen, once a Spartan always a Spartan!

Save the date

1/15: Early release day; 2:16 dismissal
1/17 - 1/23: Midterms / year long classes and Finals / Semester One classes.
1/20: MLK Day, No school
1/24: First day Quarter 3 and Semester Two
2/3: Powerschool Updated with finalized Quarter 2 and Semester One grades

Athletics

Winter sport teams are in full swing. Many exciting games and competitions to be seen. Come on out and support our Spartans. January Athletic calendar can be found [HERE](#).

Theatre

The drama club is in active rehearsal and preparation for the upcoming METG competition. Their entry will be a Ray Bradbury short story, *The Veldt*. The METG competition begins on february 29. More details to follow soon.

Flex Block

Enrichment opportunities for 1/7 - 1/14 [HERE](#)

ACCESS Testing for English Language Learners

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

What is ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is an English *language proficiency* assessment for Grades K-12. The test is administered every year to help school districts monitor the English *language development* of students identified as *English language learners*.

What is the purpose of the test?

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 measures students' abilities to understand and produce English and within school settings. The four sections of the test are Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.

Why does my child have to take the test?

Your child is identified as an *English learner**. Your child will take the test every year until his/her scores meet the criteria to exit the language support program.

When will my child take the test?

Massachusetts schools will administer ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 during the predetermined designated window of January 6 through February 7.

How are the test scores used?

Scores from ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 can be used in many ways. Parents can use the scores to advocate for their child. Teachers use the scores to plan instruction and assessment. Districts use the scores to evaluate their language support programs, to monitor student progress in acquiring English, and to determine if a student is eligible to exit an English language support program. Scores are also used to meet federal and state accountability requirements.

When will the results arrive?

The results of the ACCESS 2.0 testing are tentatively scheduled to arrive to school districts on May 26, 2020. Your child's individual report will be mailed home before the end of the school year.

If you have any questions regarding ACCESS testing please contact your student's EL teacher.

Ms. Rittner - High School

Mrs. McGlaulin and Ms. Bolton - Central Middle School

Mrs. Carey and Mrs. No- Robin Hood Elementary

Ms. Wernig and Mrs. No - South Elementary Mrs. Mihos - Colonial Park

Good Things at SHS

Student Newspaper

The Spartan Spirit / Volume 8 Issue 3 December 2019 [HERE](#)

Library

We now have a subscription to National Geographic Digital Archives. Thirteen decades of worth of publications for our students to access.

Community Engagement

A few SHS peer leaders, a RISE star and their "bro" hosted a Hot Chocolate bar at the Stoneham Community Dinner Holiday meal tonight.

We thank them for their friendly hospitality and loyalty to their community!



Project Lead the Way Biomedical Program

On December 18 students enrolled in the PLTW Biomedical program had the amazing opportunity to learn about brains and brain pathologies by a guest speaker from the McLean Hospital in Belmont, MA.

Dr. Maddox is the director of McLean's "Brains Matter" Neuroscience Education and Outreach Program. She works as an assistant neuroscientist in the Neurobiology of Fear Laboratory at McLean Hospital and an Instructor in Psychiatry at the Harvard School of Medicine

She is actively investigating the molecular and epigenetic (*the study of changes in organisms caused by modification of gene expression due to the environment rather than alteration of the genetic code itself*) mechanisms that underlie mood, anxiety, and trauma-related disorders, employing a combination of behavioral, pharmacological, and molecular manipulations.

Dr. Maddox is actively investigating the role that hormone signaling cascades play in mediating the neurobiological and circuit-level mechanisms that contribute to these disorders as well as examining mechanisms associated with responses to electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).

During her visit, Dr. Maddox talked extensively about her experience in becoming a Neuroscientist. I really appreciated the emphasis she gave to the fact that when we are still in High School, we don't necessarily know what we want to be when we "grow up", she encouraged the students to try many things and be curious, and explore many things. She also highlighted that making mistakes is essential to learning, moving forward and eventually contribute to new discoveries. A philosophy that our PLTW courses take to heart. Dr. Maddox also underlined the importance of acquiring and using critical thinking and communication skills in order to be successful in whatever the students will do in the future.

Finally, Dr. Maddox, talked about mental health and how any kind of mental dysfunction can be linked to physiological changes in our brain. She is a strong advocate of eliminating the stigma around mental illness in order to treat these diseases the same way we approach any other disease we might be affected by.



