

Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy Principal's Newsletter



January 2023 Lori O'Mara, Principal

Principal's Message

Hello Tiger Families-

I want to take a moment to celebrate some of the amazing things our RKA staff is working on:

- All teachers have been working in instructional teams using students' assessment data to improve classroom practice.
- Reading specialists have been working with intervention groups to assist students in meeting grade level standards.
- Guidance teams and selected staff are doing great work on Social Emotional learning with the students (Restorative Circles, small groups, in class check ins).
- Club Advisors are exposing their students to wonderful opportunities in NYC and beyond!
- All staff have been using Tiger Tokens to acknowledge positive behaviors in students.
- All student and staff completed a rigorous term 1 with standards-aligned examinations.
- All HS staff continue to work on Triple C helping to ensure that all students are college and career ready.

If you are affiliated with an organization which employs youth or provides internship or volunteer opportunities for teens, please consider signing up for the RKA Opportunities Fair. Details to the right.

Lori O'Mara



Upcoming Dates

Professional Development Day; no classes-

Spring Semester begins — 1/31

Spring Musical auditions (HS)-2/1, 2/2, 3:00

RKA PA meeting (virtual)—2/6. 7:00 PM

Fireside Chat w/Principal (virtual)—2/7, 6:30

Sports Jersey Day-2/10

NHS/NJHS meeting-2/13

Valentine's Day -2/14

SLT meeting (virtual)——2/16

You Make a Difference—virtual 2/17

Triple C-2/17

Mid-Winter Recess -2/20-2/24

Cultural Diversity Week -2/27-3/3



These new postcards are going home to deserving students who have contributed to the RKA Community in a positive way! Think of it as a "shout-out" from the school.

Check your mailbox!

Upcoming Dates

"March Into Reading" begins-3/1

PTC Scheduler opens — 3/2

Junior College Kickoff - 3/2

Coffee With the Principal -3/3. 9:00 AM

RKA PA meeting (virtual)—3/6, 7:00 PM

Pi Day-3/14

PSAT for grade 10 -3/15

SLT meeting (virtual)—3/16, 3:00 PM

RNH/RCC Open House—3/21-3/23

NHS/NJHS meeting-3/20, 3:00 PM

SAT for grade 11—3/22

P/T Conference—evening 3/23, afternoon 3/24

End of Marking Period 1-3/24

Grade 6 Family Newsletter

January 2023

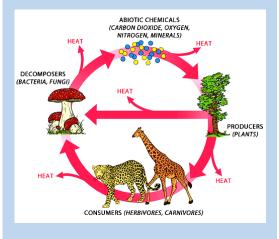
Social Studies



Using the NYC DOE Passport Curriculum, we will be exploring major belief systems of the Eastern Hemisphere. Students will learn their basic tenets, origins, and impact on society, especially in the areas of art and literature. Students will complete a comparative study analyzing the shared values of these systems. We will also examine the importance of the city of Jerusalem to the world's biggest three monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Science

The "Matter and Energy in Ecosystems" unit builds on the understanding developed in the "Populations and Resources" unit. where students learned that the transfer of energy storage molecules is determined by the interactions between consumer and resource populations. While the previous focus was on consumers, this unit expands students' understanding of ecosystems by considering both living and nonliving components-how its producers, consumers, and decomposers meet their energy needs through the processes of photosynthesis and cellular respiration, and how key component of those carbon—a processes—moves between nonliving and living matter. We will also study how sunlight and the atmosphere function within the overall system.





Math/Math Thru Technology

We have finished Unit 4, in which we worked with fractions, learning different fraction operations, and applying our knowledge of fractions to word problems and geometry. In Unit 5, we will focus on decimal operations, and will complete through MTT. Core Math will explore expressions and equations. You can monitor your child's progress on GAMA/Teachhub. Overall averages are now viewable. Please make sure your child is prepared with fully-charged device, sharpened pencils, and graphing composition notebook.

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Read a Good Book!

ELA

We have finished reading our first central text of the year, Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief. We have been using stories, fables, and folklore to help review topics for the midterm. In February, we will be starting a nonfiction unit about civil rights while studying Margot Lee Shetterley's Hidden Figures.



Literature

Students continue to work in book groups. They have worked on many reading skills, including finding the central idea of a text, and identifying key details to support their claims. During midterm week, they completed their iReady Midline Reading Assessment to help measure their progress from the beginning of the year.



Grade 7 Family Newsletter

January 2023

Spanish



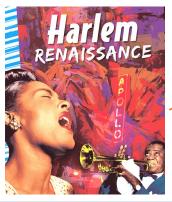
We are studying Unidad 2 of the Level 1 Avancemos program, focusing on authentic culture and real-life communication using Spanish in Mexico. As we practice reading, writing, listening and speaking, we will employ critical thinking skills as we compare the language and culture of Mexico with that of our own community. We will connect to other academic subjects, using our knowledge of Spanish to access new information. Students will learn vocabulary about telling time, school subjects, classroom objects, numbers, and daily activities. We will also be learning the present tense of -ar verbs, the verb estar (to be), and the verb ir (to go).

Social Studies

We are reviewing Units 1 and 2 of the Passport Curriculum. Students interact with primary sources through Notice and Wonder through Quizziz. In Notice and Wonder, students

observe a document and write about what they notice and wonder. In Quizziz, students took a mock exam to practice for the midterm. Through these activities, they are developing critical analysis skills that can be applied to all interactions with historical documents. After this, we will be studying Shay's Rebellion, the beginning of Unit 3: A New Nation—the US Constitution.





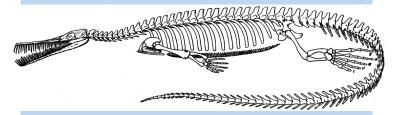


ELA

Students have completed their midterms, assessing reading comprehension and writing skills which we have worked on throughout the year. To coincide with Black History Month, our classes will be engaged in lessons related to the Harlem Renaissance. We will discover various pieces of music, works of literature and other cultural works. We will also study a unit on pandemics throughout history and their impacts on society. In time, we will shift gears and begin to prepare for the NYS ELA exam. Please monitor your child's progress regularly on Google Classroom.

Science

Students are playing the role of geologists working for the fictional Museum of West Namibia to investigate Mesosaurus fossils found both in southern Africa and in South America. They are learning that the surface of the Earth has changed dramatically over Earth's history, with continents and ocean basins changing shape and arrangement due to the motion of tectonic plates. As Earth's surface changes, fossils formed together may be split apart.



Math / Math Through Technology

Students have completed the first section of Unit 5, where they have used a variety of strategies and mental models to add and subtract negative numbers. In section 2, we will extend what we have learned to make sense of multiplying and dividing positive and negative numbers. The work in both of these sections will prepare students to solve equations with positive and negative numbers as we move on to Unit 6. Students will close out the unit with a third section where they apply what they have learned to understand issues in society. They will learn how to solve problems about how temperatures have changes across the world, and how to make predictions about future levels of sea ice and the financial and environmental impact of solar panels and other choices individuals and institutions make to reduce carbon admissions.

Grade 8 Family Newsletter

January 2023

Social Studies

As the new marking period approaches, students have completed their study of World War I, and have taken their midterm exam. Chronologically, the new semester will begin after WWI with "The



Era Between World Wars." They will continue building on skills, including use of higher-level document work, connection making, and reading for analysis. Evidence-based written work will continue as we look toward high school.

We wish you a happy and healthy start to the Spring Semester!

Algebra

We are now halfway thorough the school year and halfway through the curriculum. We have concluded our unit on functions and are going to start our unit on systems of linear equations and inequalities. Students will learn to solve systems algebraically and by graphing. They have homework daily and should also be coming to class prepared with their graphing calculators.

Spanish

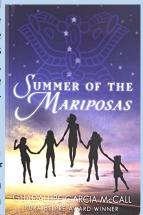
In Unit 5 of Avancemos 1, students are learning to describe a house and household items, indicate the order of things, and describe people and locations. They will also learn important geographical locations through Ecuador and Ecuadorian artists. This will culminate in a project describing their ideal house or apartment.

Review vocabulary * Watch Spanish movies and television
Listen to Spanish music and podcasts * Practice every day
Use apps in Spanish (like "Duolingo")
Put your phone language in Spanish for at least a week!

ELA

In 8th Grade ELA, students have recently completed a book study on *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. Based on students' analysis of the informational text, students utilized the information from the book to guide their investigations and research on the topic of food insecurity in New York City. This culminating assignment tasked students to convince local stake-

holders to address food swamps and food deserts at the policy level in the form of a formal letter. Using the skills we have practiced during this informational text deep-dive, students have been preparing to take the ELA Midterm Exam — 1/23 - 1/24.



In the next unit, students will begin to explore a new book, Summer of the Mariposas by Guadalupe Garcia McCall. As we read the book as a class (and independently for daily

homework), students will engage in discussions and activities that analyze how vocabulary, theme, central idea, point-of-view, figurative language, and other key elements of English Language Arts play an essential role in shaping our understanding of the narrative. Throughout this module, students will explore Latin American folklore and learn to engage with a new culture, and practice social emotional exercises that allow students to empathize and identify with stories that too often remain untold.

Students are also asked to continue developing their independent reading assignments. A formal book report is due every 6-7 weeks based on a grade-level book of their choice – the next book report will be due 1/27.

Living Environment

We are currently in Unit 5, which focuses on how our use of land influences the environment. We start by investigating the different anthropogenic uses and classifications of land, including agriculture, forestry, and rangelands. Then we will transition to discussing nutritional needs, focusing heavily on industrial agriculture and global fisheries.





Tiger Pride!

Redeem those rewards at the Tiger Token Store every Tuesday lunch period!

Punctuality * Respect Independence * Determination Enthusiasm



High School ELA Family Newsletter

Grade 9

We are heating up with our unit on Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451! Through symbolic analysis, we are discovering the multitude of parallels between Bradbury's dystopian world and today's society. This classic novel is also serving as an anchor text to develop and practice our Regents-based argumentative writing skills.



Grade 11

We concluded the first semester with a final that simulated the ELA Regents which will be taken in June. We're concluding Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, culminating with writing literary analysis essays about characters and symbolism in the play. Next up, *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, by the escaped slaveturned-abolitionist. Then we will move into contemporary Black literature, reading Angie Thomas' novel, *The Hate U Give*.



Grade 10

We have completed our first novel study and will now hone our analytical ability with poetry. Teachers will focus on necessary analytical skills which will serve students will on next year's Regents exam. They will learn to identify and explain the most common to the most complex poetic devices. This unit will culminate in a student choice of performative task, which could include the writing of poetry or the collection of an anthology.

Grade 12



Seniors are preparing to read Euripides' play Medea. Students immerse themselves in the play and its backstory. Plays were to the Greeks, as Netflix is to us today. The Greeks loved watching high drama unfold on the stage. We will be doing some acting in class to get to experience the emotions in addition to reading them.

Journalism



We are working diligently to get out the first issue of the school newspaper. Students will begin to learn more about investigative journalism, which is incredibly important because of its potential impact on our society.

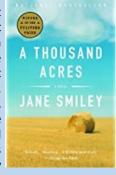
Filmmaking

Film students are studying the structure of storytelling and writing their own five-minute screenplays. We will focus on specific formatting requirements for screenplays. After working on them for a little while we will refine them into something they can actually shoot on film.



AP Literature & Composition

completed the first semester with a final that simulated the AP exam which students will sit for in May. We will be finishing our poetry unit Shakespeare's on sonnets, writing analysis essays, presenting а creative interpretation of a sonnet, and writing our own sonnets. This is a bridge to where we will study



excerpts of various Shakespeare plays and then begin reading King Lear. We will view a Globe Theatre production of Lear and then being Jane Smiley's A Thousand Acres, which is a modern retelling of Lear.

AP Language & Composition

We are finishing Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, following with writing critical analysis essays. *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* is up next, a unit in which we will write two rhetorical analysis essays, highlighted by a study of Queen Elizabeth's *Speech at Shrewsbury*, and complemented by a visual analysis of a highly symbolic portrait.





High School Social Studies Family Newsletter

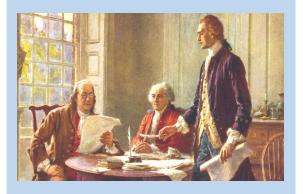
Global Studies—Grade 9

This past term, students completed the unit on belief systems. They learned about the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They also completed their second enduring essay on belief systems. Next up, we will start our unit Classical Civilizations.



Participation in Government—Grade 12

We have just completed our Economics course, with our last projects including the preparation of tax forms and balancing budgets. The finals were on Jan 19th and 20th. Next, we begin our Government class. Our first topics will be the different forms of governments, the foundations of the US, the importance of the Declaration of Independence, the structure of the US Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Federal system. After this, we will practice research and debating skills.



Global Studies—Grade 10

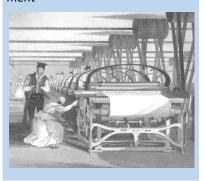
We are in the middle of a unit on World War I and the Russian Revolution. We are studying the long— and short-term causes of WWI, why WWI was a "different kind of war", the outcome and effects of the war, and the causes, events, and impact of the Russian Revolution. We recently had a group debate about which country was most at fault for the start of WWI and completed a writing assignment.



Coming up, we will have a Regents-aligned multiple-choice exam, as well as a document-based enduring essay task incorporating material from this unit and prior units. The NYS Regents exam is in June!

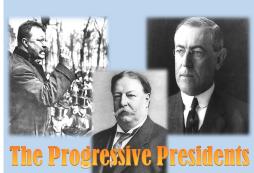
US History- Grade 11

We wrapped up our first term with a creative political cartoon project on a topic of students' choice from the mid-19th century. The major writing assignment of the marking period was a document-based essay about the Reconstruction Era. Next, we will turn out attention to Industrialization and the Progressive Movement



AP US History

We closed out the last semester studying 19th century industrialization and its effect on the economy, politics, the growth of cities, and also the impact on Native Americans and the formers of the Midwest. We will begin the new semester with our study of the Progressive Movement, US Imperialism around 1900, and World War I.



Criminal Law

Last term, students learned to five different standards of proof in law. The class discussed how these standards are applied in a legal setting (whether in criminal or civil court). Students learned about the high burden of "beyond a reasonable doubt" and how this standard is applied in criminal cases. In addition, they learned about the difference between a misdemeanor and a felony, homicide, and the different degrees of murder.



High School Spanish Family Newsletter

Spanish I

Following a cultural lesson about the artist Frida Kahlo, students worked on self-portraits, and practiced vocabulary and verbs of Spanish in Mexico. Students will employ critical thinking skills as they compare the language and culture of Mexico with that of their own community. We will also connect to other academic



subjects, using our knowledge of Spanish to access new information. We are learning about telling time, school subjects, classroom objects, numbers, and daily activities. In grammar, we are learning to verb *tener* (to have), the present tense of *-ar* verbs, the verb estar (to be) and the verb *ir* (to go).

Spanish II

We are focusing on authentic culture and real -life communication using Spanish in Costa Rica. We practice writing, reading, listening, and speaking, as we compare the language and culture of Costa Rica with that of our own community. We will also connect to other academ-



ic subjects, using our knowledge of Spanish to access new information. We are learning how to discuss travel preparations, things we do at an airport, how to ask how to get around town, say where we went, what we did on vacation, and talk about buying gifts and souvenirs. In grammar, we are learning personal a, direct object pronouns, indirect object pronouns, interrogatives, preterite of -ar verbs, preterite of ir, ser, hacer, ver, and dar.

You can support your child at home by encouraging him/her to review vocabulary frequently (a few minutes each day!), to complete assignments, and to use Spanish whenever possible. Read labels.

Watch and listen to Spanish TV ands music. We look forward to seeing our students progress throughout the school year!

Spanish III (LOTE)

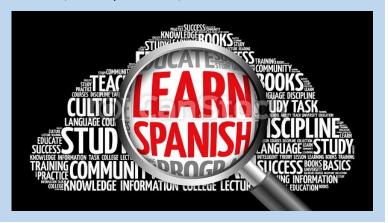
In order to prepare for our exams at the end of the year, students will continue to strengthen their abilities in reading, writing, listening, and listening in Spanish. Using their prior knowledge, they are continuing to enhance their skills as they learn more tenses. We have reviewed the present tense, the

preterite tense, and have also learned vocabulary about camping experience in Mexico. We will soon move on to the imperfect, future, and conditional tenses. We will focus on a a variety of projects and dialogue assignments. Using imagination, we will venture out on exciting adventures in the woods of Mexico and the beautiful beaches of Latin America.



AP Spanish Language and Culture

We are working on Theme 2, Science and Technology. To prepare for our AP exam on May 11th, students will continue to strengthen their abilities. We will be learning about: access to technology, effects of technology on self and society, health care and medicine, innovations, natural phenomena, and science and ethics.





High School Math Family Newsletter

Personal Finance



This marking period, we concentrated on investing in the Stock Market. We examined different, widely-traded stocks like Amazon, Tesla, Disney, and General Motors. We considered the PE ratio, Betha, stock prices, valuation, and risk. Students followed the stock price movements in six companies of their choice. For the culminating project, they created a slide presentation to pitch their favorite stock.

Algebra II

Students have been applying what they know about exponents and radicals to extend exponent rules to include rational exponents. They have been solving various equations involving squares, cubes, square roots, and cube roots. They are learning about a new category of numbers called complex numbers, where they discover the number i, whose square is -1, and are using complex numbers to find solutions to quadratic equations. In our upcoming unit, we will learn about exponential functions and logarithms. They will encounter the constant e, and learn that it is used to model situations with continuous growth rates, leading to working with natural logarithm.

Marketing

Students considered buying and selling a particular product and different ways to mark up products to generate a profit. For the culminating project, students created a slide presentation for a product sales pitch.

AP Calculus AB

We have completed the first six units of the course. Students have learned about the definite integral, finding area under a curve, and some of the original antiderivative formulas. We are almost finished with this. Now, we are analyzing applications of derivatives. Next, we will learn about differential equations, slope fields, and additional theorems. Also, we have been working on AP College Board problems to prepare for our AP Exam. Please monitor your child's Google Classroom and NYCSA.

Geometry

We have finished the first four units of the course. Students have learned the basics of trigonometry in order to find missing side lengths and angles in right triangles. They learned to solve real-life situations involving trigonometry. Next, we will learn bout the properties of three-dimensional solids, including cross-sections of solids, rotations of two-dimensional shapes, volumes of solids, surface area of solids, density with mass, population density, and unit conversion. Please monitor your child's Google Classroom and NYCSA

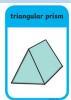












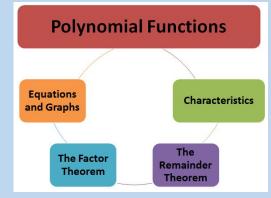


Statistics

We have continued our studies by looking at observational studies and experiments—two designs researchers use to collect data and draw conclusions. We focused on answering questions like: What is the difference between them? What conditions are necessary for each design? Can cause ever be determined? How so? We then continued with an investigation of the normal probability density function to find probabilities and percentiles from normally-distributed populations. Our questions of interest included: What is a probability density function, and how can it be used? What is the standard normal distribution and how does it apply?

Statistics

We are in the middle of our unit on polynomial functions. Now that students have a deep understanding of a plethora of functions, we will try to apply as many of them



as possible. Students have been tasked with creating artistic rendering of an image of their choosing using a combination of graphs. In the past, students have used up to different equations to create anything from album covers to their favorite sneaker. We look forward to seeing what our bright young minds can create.



High School Science Family Newsletter

AP Psychology

We have finished our unit on Learning. We discussed classical and operant conditioning, and learned about the experiments of Watson, Pavlov, Skinner, and Thorndike. We explored the experiments of Bandura and observational learning and discussed in length how these theories and experiments apply to us. We are now in our development unit, learning about development from infancy to adulthood. We are currently learning about Piaget and Vygotsky.

Weather and Climate

Physics

Earth Science

Students are wrapping up their dive into the Earth's interior processes and will now head back up to the surface to explore the phenomena that have shaped our visible world. How does interaction between the Earth's lithosphere, atmosphere, biosphere, and hydrosphere lead to the wide range of beautiful and complex landscapes we see today? For nearly five billion years, the Earth's surface has been constantly built up and broken down by processes taking place above and below the surface. Students will continue to make connections between the interactions of Earth's systems by investigating the rock cycle and the erosional processes of streams, wind, wave action, and mass movement.

Living Environment

We are currently in Unit 5, which focuses on how our use of land influences the environment. We start by investigating the different anthropogenic uses and classifications of land, including agriculture, forestry, and rangelands. Then we will transition to discussing nutritional needs, focusing heavily on industrial agriculture and global fisheries.

Chemistry

AP Environmental Science

Students are currently studying Unit 5, which focuses on how our use of land influences the environment. The unit starts by investigating the different anthropogenic uses and classifications of land, including agriculture, forestry, and rangelands. We will then transition to discussing human nutritional needs, focusing heavily on industrial agriculture as well as global fisheries.

AP Biology

Engineering



Physical Education Family Newsletter

Middle School Health

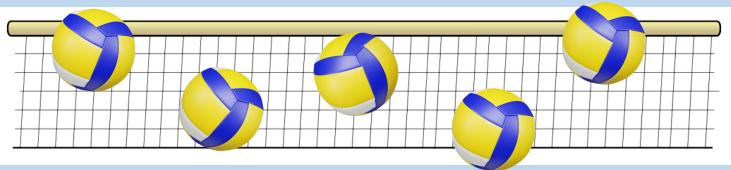
We have completed a unit on Social and Emotional Health, and will now start on our next unit, Violence and Injury Prevention. Lessons in this unit will include: understanding risks and intentional injury, safety rules to prevent common injuries, safety gear and me, and resisting dares. Students work in groups and we have many class discussions during each lesson. After four lessons, students will take a quiz. Please continue to monitor Google Classroom.





High School Health

In the high school section of the unit Violence and Injury Prevention, students will work on the following lessons: the consequences of violence, preventing bullying, preventing cyberbullying, and preventing hazing. Students work in groups and we have many class discussions during each lesson. After four lessons, students will take a quiz. Please continue to monitor Google Classroom.



Physical Education

This marking period, students are learning about the various skills in volleyball, including bumping, setting, serving, spiking, and playing modified games. We are also doing make-up tests for Fitnessgrams: pacer, sit & reach, curl-ups, push-ups, and trunk lifts. Also, a friendly, yet important, reminder for students to please store their valuables/cellphones securely in the locker rooms and to come prepared for class with RKA t-shirt and sneakers.



It's the Arts!

...at RKA

Ms. Hill's Art

Both high school and eighth grade students are completing their unit on collage inspired by the artists Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence. We have been discussing the Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance to make connections to what they are studying in Social Studies. Next up: printmaking. HS core art students will study the art of Kathe Kollwitz, while Andy Warhol's soup can prints will be the focus in the eighth grade.

At the Morgan Library in Manhattan Gerog Baselitz: Six Decades of Drawings

Every Friday "Pay What You Wish" 5:00-7:00 PM themorgan.org

Ms. Zalantis Choir

We have been learning songs from musical theater for all voice types—soprano, alto/belter, tenor, and baritone. Each student will then pick one song they feel comfortable singing as a solo or for an audition. Once we finish this unit, we will begin new choral music for the Spring Arts Festival

Ms. Castiner's Music

Middle School Band

Students have been reviewing music terms and notation from their Method Books. They continue to learn a variety of melodies and skills throughout the book so that they can be ready to learn two or three more songs at a higher level in preparation for their Spring Concert.

HS Kids Rock Guitar Calss

We have spent much of January working in groups of their choosing to form their own "band" where they got to name their group, choose a song to work on, choose the instrumentation it needs, and perform in front of the class. In February, students will learn a variety of new songs, including many songs by Sam Cooke.

Morning Honors Band Club

We continue to welcome new members. Currently, we are working on higher-level songs in preparation for the Spring Concert. It's not too late to speak to Ms. Castiner about joining. We meet Tuesday mornings at 7:30 AM.

In the RKA Library....



Black History Month Gallery Walk

February 13th-17th & February 27th-28th

Created by the RKA Black Student Union & Allies Club

Black History Month Essay Contest—due February 28th.

Write about a little-known Black History fact that took place in New York State.

Ezra Jack Keats Celebration of Writing will be in the RKA Library Fri day, February 3rd, period 8. All student participants in the competition will be invited along with a friend.

See Ms. Loving in the Library for more details.

Ms. Kaminski's Art

AP Art and Design

As students become more familiar with the mechanics of submitting their portfolios (the AP exam) by May 5th, they have the opportunity to continue to take risks with their process, hone their ideas, and execute them. As their body of work grows, they should be able to articulate verbally the inquiry or questions they've been asking themselves since they began this process in the Fall. You can support your kids in their efforts by asking them what they've been exploring, what their challenges have been, and their plans for fine-tuning their work.

Introduction to Ceramics

Students have become proficient in both the hand-building and glazing process. Moving on to our second semester, we will spend a full marking period on the concept of "Form Follows Function" by both creating a tea set that not only fucntions, but has a personal meeting to each student.

Painting Through History

Aside from becoming more proficient using color to create a sense of depth on a 2-D surface, students have explored a range of topics, from abstraction to realism to expressionism, all through exposure to a variety of famous artists. The beginning of the new semester is a great time to reflect on how each students brings their own style to any new challenge presented.

Ms. Mena Morilla's Art

Our students have created expressive self-portraits and creative collage artworks. Now we are exploring the art of printmaking. First, we will learn to create printing plates that hold their design or message. Then, we will learn to transfer images from the plate onto another surface, like paper. We will also study the works of author and printmaker Wanda Gag, and printmakers Favianna Rodriguez and Elizabeth Catlett. Students are excited about this project and eager to see the results!