



## Monroe Township School District News & Updates

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[Click here to view the 2022-2023 school calendar as a PDF \(revised  
8/17/2022\)](#)



### SCHOOL WEBSITE LINKS

*\*Please visit your individual school website link for more detailed information regarding school start times*

Applegarth

Mill Lake

Oak Tree

Barclay Brook

MTHS

Woodland

Brookside

MTMS

Falcon Care

## Happy New Year!

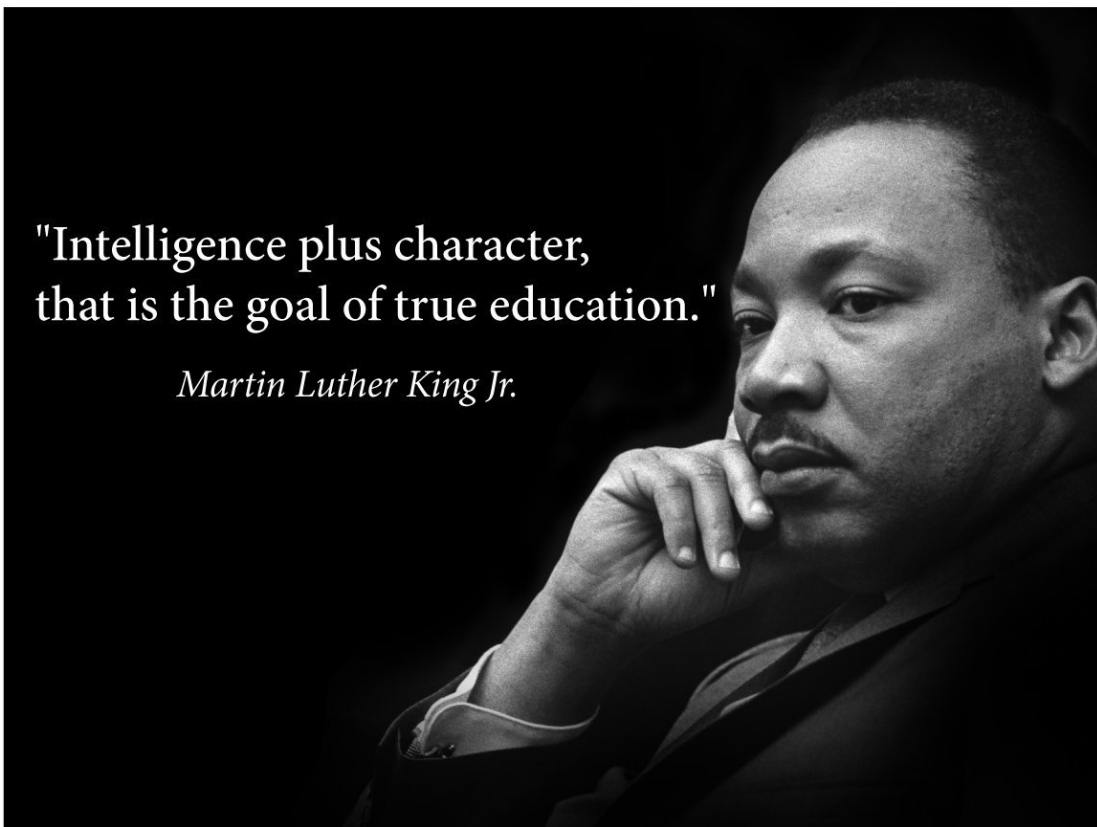
We hope this message finds you well and that the holiday season brought joy and happiness to your homes. As we kick off 2023, we wanted to express our gratitude for your continued support and dedication to our schools. Together, we are making a positive impact on the lives of our students and shaping the future. Let's work towards another successful year filled with learning, growth, and achievements. Here's to a fantastic 2023!

## Martin Luther King Jr. Day

As we look ahead to Black History Month, we recognize the importance of honoring the achievements and contributions of Black Americans. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy serves as a shining example of the impact one person can have when they fight for justice and equality. Let us come together to celebrate the progress we have made and continue to work towards a brighter future for all.

"Intelligence plus character,  
that is the goal of true education."

*Martin Luther King Jr.*

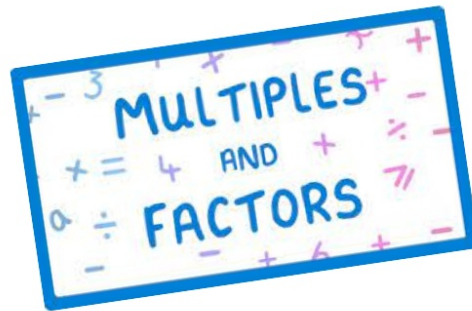


# Applegarth Elementary School

## **Mrs. Patel's Amazing Race!**

Mrs. Patel's math class explored factors and multiples in an engaging activity requiring them to "race" in a parody of the popular television show. Students rotated through multiple stations. Once the mathematics challenge was completed in small groups, students had to complete a brain break low-key physical activity. Students, once energized, went to the next station to complete the next station. The lesson was differentiated so that students who had already mastered the skills ran the stations to assist other classmates.

Students were highly motivated and engaged in their Amazing Race!



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## **FISH Tank**

One of our fifth graders, Nikitha Ganeshpandi, is taking a big interest in helping to promote awareness of climate change. Along with her former teacher, Mrs. Farkas, Nikitha designed a "Shark Tank" style competition that gives students an opportunity to create an original, innovative business idea, product, or service that will assist in ending climate change.

Nikitha is reaching out to business leaders within the community to help with judging and at this time student teams are signing up on the Google page for the competition.

May the best idea win the Applegarth FISH Tank!!



## Fun Learning in Fifth Grade

There's been some "Fraction Action" in Ms. Seramba and Mrs. Gentile's math class! Students started with a review of finding equivalent fractions, comparing, and converting improper fractions into mixed numbers. To make it seem a little less like work, Fraction Tug-o-War has kept it fun and exciting. Once adding and subtracting fractions became a breeze, mixed numbers showed up. To get a grasp on it, the students used fraction tiles to visually manipulate the mixed numbers. This was a fun partner activity.

January has come and gone with no snow! To make it feel a bit wintery in class, the students competed in a STEM Challenge. Teams brainstormed, planned, and constructed a "snowball catapult". It was an exciting day in the "snow" when each team tried to launch their "snowball" the furthest.

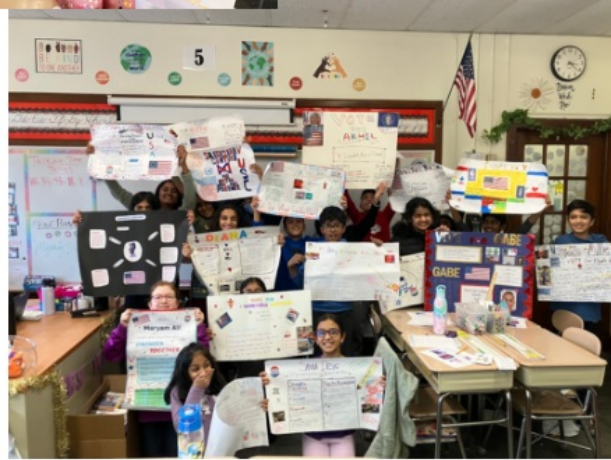
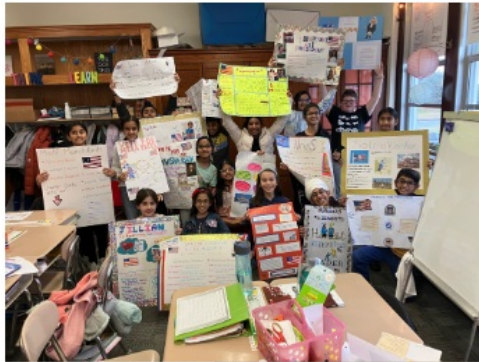




## What's Going on in Miss Potter's Class?

After learning about the Revolutionary War, students created posters and presentations to campaign for the first president of America. The class was able to vote on who they thought deserved to be president based on their poster and presentation.

In another activity, Miss Potter's students researched countries around the world and created beautiful, colorful travel brochures.



## State School of Character

Applegarth School is honored to have been awarded the designation of State School of Character. We are so excited, as the designation involves implementing many programs to support 11 principles of character and showcasing the school through a lengthy application process.

This endeavor was spearheaded by fifth grade special education teacher Adrienne Shanfield, and involved many Applegarth staff members working as a committee. Thank you to Mrs. Shanfield, the Character Education committee, all of the Applegarth staff members who implemented the 11 principles of character in their daily instruction and interactions, and our parent supporters who wrote testimonials about the school for our application!



## Mr. Russo's Class Sit-In

To honor the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, Mr. Russo's class read about the peaceful resistance measures implemented by black Americans during the civil rights movement.

The class practiced, developed props, and acted out a play entitled *Sitting Down for Dr. King* with great energy and enthusiasm. This student production was very well done and a great educational experience for the class!



## Barclay Brook Elementary School

### Barclay Brook has GREAT Kids!

At Barclay Brook School, we emphasize the importance of Social and Emotional Learning in all aspects of our day. We use the Zones of Regulation to help students identify and categorize their emotions into four zones with the goal being to help students independently regulate their emotions. The "Green Zone" is optimal for learning and our school uses the acronym "GREAT" to identify the traits of a Barclay Brook student in the Green Zone. When students are in the Green Zone, we are looking for them to demonstrate Growth Mindset, Respect, Empathy, Acceptance, and Trust.

Classroom teachers and special area teachers were asked to identify one student who consistently demonstrated GREAT behavior this past trimester. We had an assembly before winter break where the GREAT winners were announced and honored. One of the most wonderful aspects of the assembly was the way in which all the students cheered for and celebrated the GREAT Kid winners. They were truly excited for their classmates who were nominated, which reinforced that all our students are truly GREAT Kids!

Please join us in celebrating and congratulating our GREAT Kid recipients for the first trimester! We are so proud of them!





## Holiday Sing-A-Long

Barclay Brook celebrated the beginning of winter break on December 23 with a festive PJ Day and a Holiday Sing-a-Long! All students gathered in our gymnasium where they sang and danced to holiday songs!



## Brookside Elementary School

### HOLIDAY SPIRIT SHINES AT BROOKSIDE

The Brookside School community came together to show generosity, kindness, and compassionate spirit of the holiday season. The parents, staff and students came together and collected items for needy families in Trenton, Hamilton, Neptune, and Asbury Park. The third grade students made individual goodie bags and boxes of toys/books; the fourth grade students collected items such as socks, gloves, scarves and hats; and the fifth grade students collected toiletries, such as toothbrushes/toothpaste, shampoo/conditioner, soap, and lotion. The staff came together and donated boxes of various household items for the adults.

**Thank you to students, staff, and parents for making this holiday season special for so many families.**

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### STUDENT COUNCIL

Brookside student council collected food for local families and food bank organizations in December. Students advertised the collection by making posters, they went from class to class to remind students about the food drive and answered any questions from students. Student council students organized and sorted the food to get it ready for families and food banks. Student Council fall representatives would like to thank the Brookside community for all of your contributions to the drive.

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# WINTER STEM DAY

On Friday, January 6th, the fourth grade classes at Brookside Elementary School participated in a fun-filled Winter STEM Day. Each of the six classes rotated through various challenges all geared towards a winter theme. Students worked collaboratively to problem solve, brainstorm, execute a plan, and reflect with their peers.

Students were put to the task to design and build a snowball launcher in Mrs. Freeman's classroom. Ms. Ludmer and Ms. Cruz had students create their own snowmen out of classroom materials such as cups, paper plates, pipe cleaners, aluminum foil, and q-tips, just to name a few. The next challenge involved students in Mrs. Manfredi and Mrs. Ratcliffe's room building an igloo that is designed for a LEGO person to live in.

Ms. Herbstman had students create a winter Olympic game, such as snow football, igloo building, or a sledding race. Fourth graders in Mrs. Corvinus and Mrs. Pavese's room engaged in the snow scoop challenge. Students needed to create a scoop that would collect the most snow, using only two fingers. The final challenge was creating a 3-D snowflake in Mrs. Nagle and Mrs. Brown's room. There is snow-thing better than some winter STEM activities after returning from break!





### Ms. Tolnes' Class LEGO Challenge

The first LEGO brick created decades ago, can still fit together with LEGOs made today. We learned that interesting fact and many more! Not only are LEGOs one of the most popular toys in the world (seven LEGO sets are sold every *second* and over 120 million bricks are made *every day*), but they can even make us smarter! On Friday, January 13, Mrs. Tolnes' class at Brookside Elementary School celebrated their hard work with a LEGO themed day. In addition to a directed drawing, virtual field trip to LEGOLand, using LEGOs to solve for area, and learning about the history of the LEGO company, we participated in the LEGO Cup Challenge. Each student had to get one cup of LEGO bricks and then they were given 15 minutes to create something using EVERY brick! Creativity, engineering, and imagination sprung to life as the students took a cup of random pieces and turned them into works of ingenuity! While working with LEGOs stimulated student creativity and problem-solving skills, it also helped us expand our growth mindset. We learned that Ole Christiansen, the inventor of LEGO was faced with failure many times. As a matter of fact, the students counted no less than eight times he could have given up and walked away from his dream. But he never did, and we all have his determination and spirit to thank! Ole said, "Only the best is good enough," and we agree! If you are doing your personal best, you are already succeeding!



### Mill Lake Elementary School





Mill Lake's Kindness Rock Garden Dedication Parade, Mrs. Kreiger, and Mrs. Huey-Colucci's 3rd Grade class.

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Mill Lake's Kindness Rock Garden Dedication Parade, Ms. Crawford's 2nd-grade class, & Ms. Papandrea, and Mrs. Pandolfi's 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade class.



Mill Lake's Kindness Rock Garden Dedication Parade, Mrs. Cipolla's 1st Grade class.

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Board members, Carmen Alvarez and Gail DiPane visit Mill Lake School.

## Monroe Township Middle School

**Congratulations** to the MTMS Science Olympiad Team. They scored 5<sup>th</sup> out of 15 schools that competed in the Regional Science Olympiad Competition on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>.

**They will be moving on to the “States Science Olympiad Competition”!  
Best of Luck to them!!**

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MTMS Team Odyssey completed an Escape Room about the Spies of the American Revolution called "Escape the British". Using a spy wheel, invisible ink, a mask letter, and the Culper Code Book, students worked together to solve 3 locks and deliver 6 messages to George Washington in under 60 minutes. Congrats to our 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winners: Siya Desai, Jiya, Ava, Juliet, Riona, Anjana and Srinethra and the other 9 groups that were able to Escape!



MTMS 8th grade students in Mrs. Hillmans Fundamentals of Engineering class worked hard to complete a T-Bot!





Check out this impressive artwork by MTMS Mrs. O'Grady's Art classes honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



**Congratulations to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade band students for performing a wonderful concert on December 6<sup>th</sup>.**



Their parents and peers were entertained with a collection of holiday and non-holiday themes music conducted by Mr. Rattner and Mr. Snyder. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade flutes were also featured in a small ensemble piece conducted by Ms. Burrel. Great job to all to students!

**Congratulations** to the Purple Jazz, Gold Jazz, Falcon Jazz, and percussion ensembles of MTMS for performing an exciting concert on January 17<sup>th</sup>.



Bravo to the cast and crew of the “Most Epic Birthday Party Ever” for performing a successful show on Friday January 20<sup>th</sup>.

After 3 weeks of intense rehearsals, the MTMS 6<sup>th</sup> grade students developed the show under the direction of Lisa Costantino into a highly entertaining production.

## MTMS Chef Colletti’s classes made the most delicious Ultimate Cinnamon Rolls!



A new lunch menu is being offered in the MTMS cafeteria starting in the month of January 2023. It features Chicken Tikka Marsala or Chickpea Tikka Marsala, served over rice.



Last month we offered samples for all to try, and we received nice feedback from students and staff. We hope the new menu will be very popular. **“Bon Appetit”**



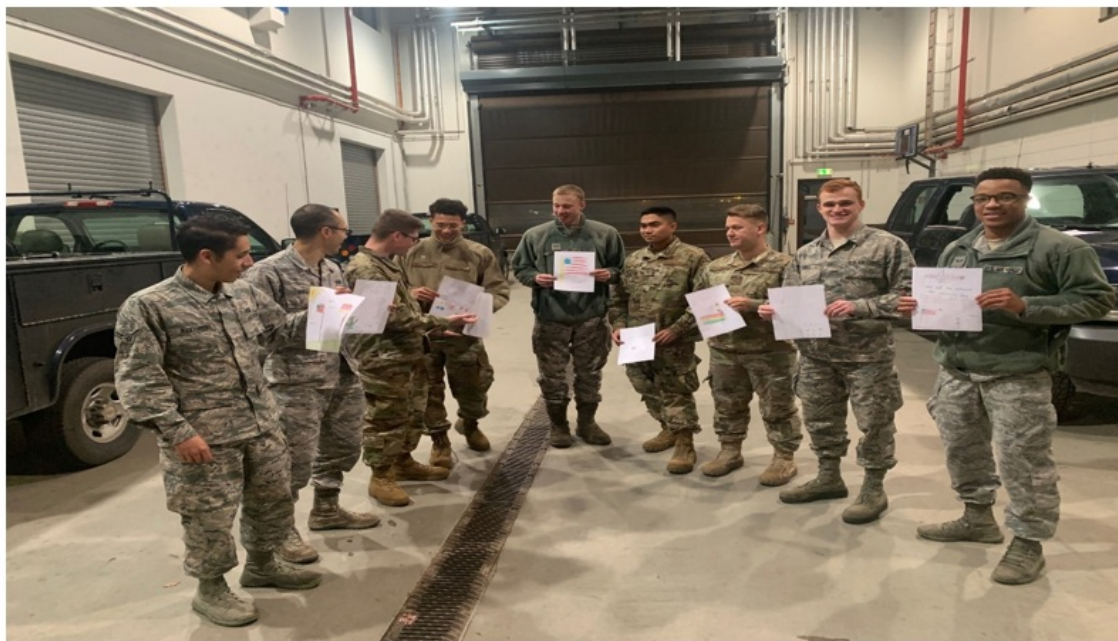
MTMS 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Computer Literacy student created One Word projects and Vision Boards that Display their information of the year!



Oak Tree Elementary School

## Oak Tree Second Grade Students Thank Air Force Veterans

This year second grade teacher Mrs. Zappolo decided to make her class lesson on Veterans Day a little more meaningful. Mrs. Zappolo has a nephew who is a Senior Airman in the US Air Force stationed in New Mexico and it is his first year back in the states from serving overseas. First her class watched a Scholastic News video and read the accompanying article on Veterans Day, keeping in mind what is a veteran, why is Veterans Day held on November 11, and how can we show how much we appreciate what they do for us. Next, the class brainstormed how they can show appreciation to local Veterans as well as their teachers' nephew and his base. They decided to color and hang a flag on their car window that read "Thank you Veterans" for our local Vets to see as their parents drove through the neighborhood. Then room 7 got busy writing letters to Dominic Zappolo, SrA, and his base. The children were anxiously awaiting news that the letters were received. Below is a photo of the Airmen reading those same letters. They were thrilled to receive the photo!





## Oak Tree's Falcon Voices

Falcon Voices is a new student committee that was created at Oak Tree School this year. The goal of the student committee is to allow the selected students to share their opinions and feedback about school related activities and events. The committee, comprised of students in grades 1-3, meet once a month to engage in dialogue opportunities and offer ideas on how to make our school an even better place. For example, in the month of January, students conversed about ways to improve bus safety and create a promotional video! Third grade teacher Mrs. Luberecki and Mrs. Dinsmore oversee the program.

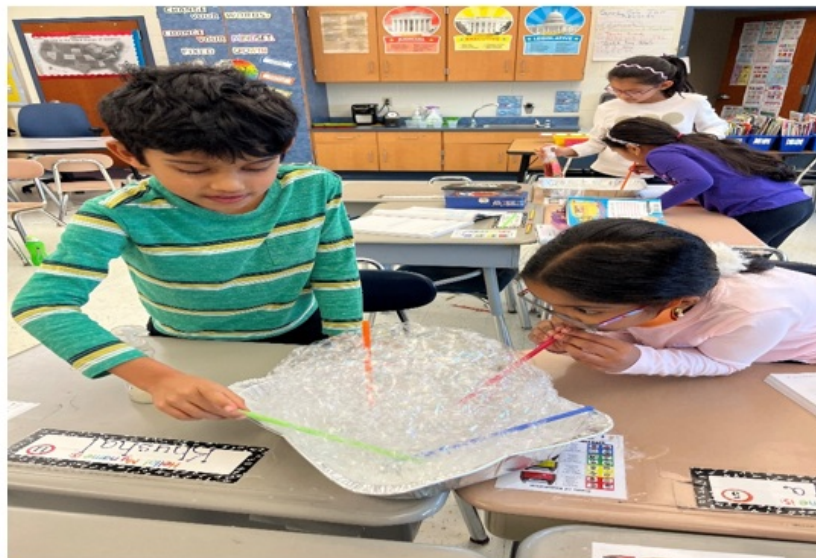


### Science Lessons in Mrs. Zappolo's Class at Oak Tree

Science is no mystery to the students in Mrs. Zappolo's Class. In a recent lesson students studied properties of matter using Mystery Science. "Why do we wear clothes?" Student explored different properties of materials used for clothing. They tested materials for absorption, softness and flexibility and created a hat that protects from the sun.



In a different lesson second grade students conducted an inquiry for our Inspire Science series, "Gas Has Mass". Our scientists answered the question does gas take the shape of its container?



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### Student Council Presents...Leaders Who READ

This past month Student Council members were working on leadership skills! Students are focusing on public speaking, which is going to help them in becoming our future leaders. Student Council representatives read a pre-approved picture book to classes in grades K-2. They spent the last few weeks practicing and preparing to read out loud to a class. Once they were ready students were assigned a few classes to read to, and they did AWESOME! Students and teachers enjoyed it so much that they would like to make it a monthly occurrence! We are so proud of our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade representatives!







## Storywalk at Oak Tree

Olivia Rich, Syna Goyal, and Kayla Katransky, three former Oak Tree students, were thinking of ways to serve their community in anticipation of earning the Silver Award. They had fond memories of Oak Tree, and all three students love reading. They had reached out to former Media Specialist, Mr. John Gleason, and inquired if there was anything the library could use. Mr. Gleason shared that he would love if our students could read a book outside. The scouts of Troop 80996 researched it and learned about a concept called a Storywalk. They thought it would be a great idea for students to be able to read outside while playing and getting exercise. Working all summer long and into the fall, the girls constructed the ten frames and poles and painted them purple and gold. The pages of the book are enclosed in Plexiglass which is removable so that the book can be changed in the future. The current book is ***After the Fall*** by Dan Santat, a beloved text for elementary students. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> the Storywalk was delivered, and Oak Tree students were able to enjoy the newest addition to our playground on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Many thanks to Olivia, Syna, and Kayla for selecting Oak Tree as the recipient of this worthwhile project. Presently the scouts are in the process of fulfilling the paperwork to earn the award. We wish them the very best.



(revised article included in last moth's issue)

## Woodland Elementary School

### Woodland School News

The Woodland advanced band and chorus students performed their winter concert for both students and parents. Mrs. Leung, chorus teacher, and Miss Zerilli, instrumental band teacher, conducted a well-planned and enjoyable performance.





Ms. Ciccarella's class watched a movie and wrote poems in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. day.

Ms. Fleming has coordinated a virtual author visit scheduled on February 1<sup>st</sup> for World Read Aloud Day. Tanya Lee Stone is an American author of children's and young adult books. She writes narrative nonfiction for middle-grade students and young adults, as well as nonfiction picture books. Her stories often center women and people of color. All fifth-grade classes have been invited to attend.

Ms. Hyer, art teacher & Mrs. Duzkiewicz, media center coordinator put together a makerspace project. This project is from author Grace Lin in honor of Lunar New Year. Students would use the instruction sheet (or watch the video) to make an origami paper cut rabbit for the Year of the Rabbit.

Mrs. Cote/Mrs. Hoskin's class created volcanos as a STEM activity. Students learn how volcanoes form and grow.



## MARK THE DATES

February 17  
Staff 1/2 Day In-Service



4 Hour Session

**February 20**

Schools Closed - President's Day

**February 22 - 23**

K-5 Parent/Teacher Conference

4 Hour Sessions Grades K-5

**February 20**

4 hour Session Grades K-5



**Monroe Township School District  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING DATES**

[Click here to view the full list of 2023 Board of Education meeting dates](#)

For more information about the Monroe Township Board of Education, click here: <https://www.monroe.k12.nj.us/domain/13>

**2022 Board Members**

Ms. Chrissy Skurbe, Board President  
Ms. Karen Bierman, Board Vice President  
Ms. Carmen Alvarez  
Ms. Kathleen Belko  
Ms. Gazala Bohra  
Ms. Gail DiPane  
Ms. Katie Fabiano  
Ms. Kate Rattner  
Mr. Peter Tufano

**Jamesburg Representative**

Ms. Michelle Scott

**Student Board Members**

Ms. Hetvi Thakker  
Mr. Shivank Lattupally

**Upcoming Board of Education Meeting :**

**Wednesday, February 15, 2023**

Board of Education Meeting 6:30 High School Media Center

<https://monroeps.webex.com/monroeps/onstage/g.php?MTID=e2f271c3deffd2325b938c568f486ceb4>

Meetings are held in the High School Media Center and will be live-

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### MTHS ATHLETICS

View the MTHS Athletics website <https://monroetownship.rschoolteams.com/> to keep current with upcoming athletic events at Monroe Township High School!



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STUDENT REGISTRATION &  
DOCUMENTS

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