



Monthly Newsletter



Exploris was part of the National Green Strides Tour, and our student ambassadors proudly showed our programs and connections to nature to a contingent of visiting dignitaries from the federal Dept. of Education and the state Department of Public Instruction

### Inside the Issue

## LAWSUIT SETTLED

Exploris settles long-standing dispute over property

## LOTTERY SEASON

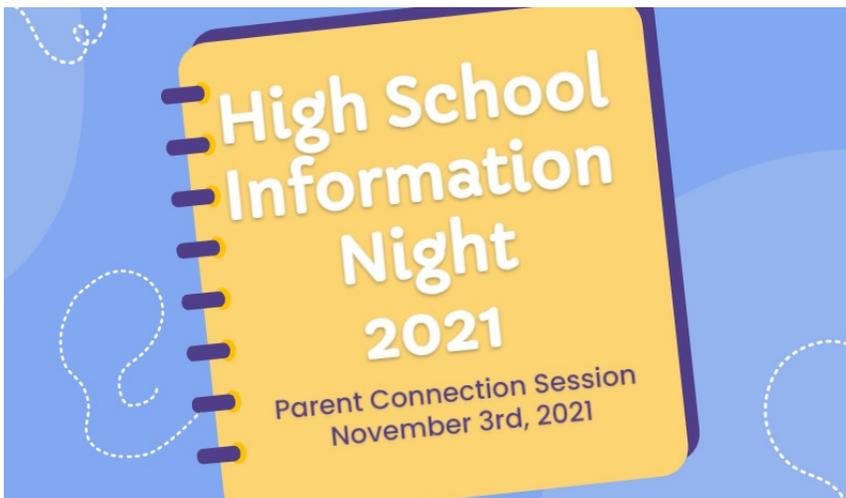
Recruiting and Open Houses

## TIKTOK CHALLENGES?

Help your scholar make good choices!

## DID YOU MISS HIGH THE HIGH SCHOOL INFO NIGHT?

On November 3rd, School Counselor Michelle Duncan and Middle School Director Deb Brown presented information about high school options for Exploris students, including how to register for your base school, apply to magnet and early college programs, and local charter high school options. It's not too late to check out the recordings! If you missed the sessions or want to review (or preview for younger grades!) you can click on these links for the [Slide Deck](#) and [Zoom Meeting Recording](#) (Pass code to view the video is cp%V@BD4)



# Exploris Settles Property Lawsuit



The Exploris School is pleased to announce we have settled our lawsuit concerning the development on Kindley Street in downtown Raleigh, pending final approval on subdivision of the land parcel and on the bank's release of any liens on the property.

The settlement includes conveyance to Exploris of a parcel of land at the site of the planned Gateway project. Exploris will now be able to use that land parcel either as the location of our new school, or as a property we can sell to help finance a new K-8 school at a different location. We wish to thank our Facilities team, our Board members, and our Leadership team for their months of work to bring this matter to a successful conclusion.

# RECRUITING SEASON AND LOTTERY OPENING!

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HELP US CONNECT WITH NEW FAMILIES!

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## OPEN HOUSES

### ZOOM OPEN HOUSES

- WED. DEC 8TH 10:00 AM
- SUN. JAN. 9TH AT 4:00 PM
- MARCH 9TH 6 PM OPEN HOUSE FOR ACCEPTED FAMILIES

### WALKING TOURS

- WED. JAN 12TH 5-7 PM
- BOTH CAMPUSES
- SIGN UPS COMING SOON!



North Carolina Public Charter Schools are free programs open to any student who is a resident of the state. Admission is by open lottery, and Exploris is excited every year to meet with families who are searching for a program that will be a great fit for their scholar. Our lottery is now...

**LIVE at This Link and will close on Friday, Feb. 4th 2022.**

Due to continuing Covid concerns, we will hold our Open House Q & A sessions over Zoom (link will be published on our website) and offer self-guided walking tours so prospective families can get a peek inside our current buildings. Our Student Ambassadors will join us on the call so families can still hear authentic voices of our enrolled students. Please share these dates widely with any families you know who may be interested in an Exploris education! These sessions will also be taped and posted on our website.

# FALL FESTIVAL

CHECK OUT SOME SCENES FROM OUR AMAZING FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL ON OCTOBER 29TH!



Our first Family Fall Festival was a huge hit! Complete with games, a fire pit, contests, prizes, food trucks, and even a DJ for dancing, the event had an amazing turnout and even the weather cooperated for a night to remember. Special thanks to our dedicated PTO and all the volunteers who planned, set up, worked the event, and cleaned up! This is sure to become an annual fall highlight!





## HOLIDAY STRESS

With cooking, cleaning, budgets, shopping, family visits, travelling, etc, the time period between Thanksgiving and New Years can bring as much stress as it does joy for many families. Add in Covid-related concerns or families who have experienced a loss and this year we know may be even more stressful than the past.

Our counseling team has put together some resources that can help:

[5 Things to Do When the Holidays Aren't Exactly Uplifting](#)

[Managing Stress and Expectations During the Holiday Season](#)

[Managing Parenting Stress Over the Holidays](#)

[How to Take the Stress Out of the Holidays](#)

Nov-Dec 2021

## COUNSELOR CORNER



Have other counseling needs or questions?

**counselor@exploris.org**

to go to all counseling support staff.

**Michelle Duncan**, Lead School Counselor, Lunch Programming Coordinator, McKinney Vento Coordinator, 504 Coordinator

**Matt Moreland**, School Counselor

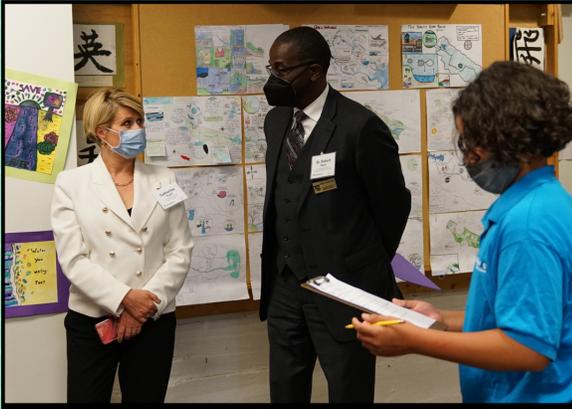
**Ryan Boney**, counseling intern

**Lori Mauro**, Clinical Social Worker

**Additional resources for families in Wake County can be found at [this link](#).**



# Green Strides Tour 2021



## ***U.S. Department of Education Participants***

Cindy Marten, Deputy Secretary

Staci Monreal, Senior Advisor, Office of the Deputy Secretary

Jorge Santiago Moreno, Confidential Assistant to the Deputy Secretary

Andrea Suarez Falken, Director, U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

## ***National Non-Profit Participant***

Victoria Holmes, Managing Director, Green Schools National Network

## ***NCDPI Participants***

Catherine Truitt, Superintendent of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Dr. Robert Taylor, Deputy Superintendent of Student and School Advancement

Dr. Lynn Harvey, Director of District Operations

Jon Long, Architect of School Planning

Nathan Maune, Section Chief of School Planning

Freebird McKinney, Director of Government and Community Relations

Julie Pittman, Special Assistant to the Superintendent: Educator Engagement

Mary Lee Gibson, Public Information Specialist

Blair Rhoades, Communications Director

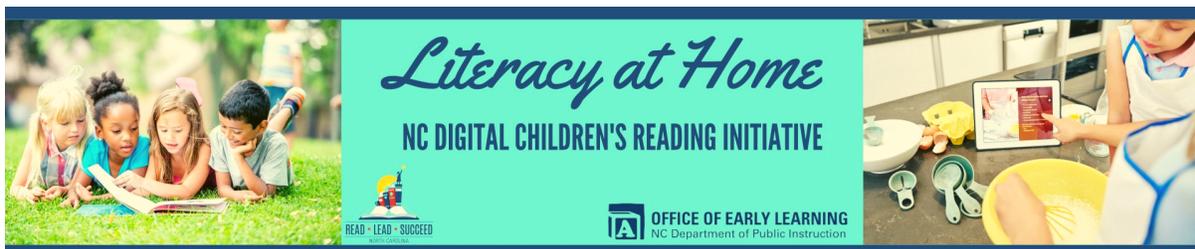
On October 19th, Exploris Middle School hosted the National Green Strides Tour, and was the only charter school in NC selected for this visit. Our student ambassadors led dignitaries from the National Department of Education and the NC Department of Public Instruction for discussion and tours of Exploris's curriculum and practices in environmental education. Exploris is a Green Strides Award Winner from 2014.

LITERACY AT HOME

# CHILDREN'S DIGITAL READING INITIATIVE



Check out this new offering from the NC Department of Public Instruction, [Literacy at Home](#). This digital resource provides literacy activities at each grade level, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Families and communities may access this resource for activities that specifically target the literacy skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and oral language. When children grow in each of these foundational areas they are well on their way to becoming proficient readers.



# New Faces & Familiar Faces in New Places!

## Please Welcome:

- **Madison Stevens** as our new Interventions Teaching Partner at the Elementary School
- **Fenessa Monroe** as our EC Teaching Partner at the Elementary School
- **Nikki Kovach** as our Global Arts Digital and Media Literacy Teacher at the Middle School. Nikki previously subbed for us long-term in the ES Art program, and is taking over from Christina Franklin, who is leaving full time teaching.
- **Abby Nick**, joining us as an additional position in Middle School EC



## Please Look For:

**Chris Duncan**, currently at the Middle School in our EC program, now working more directly with our elementary students!

# Student Behavior



## Partnering to Bring Out the Best in All Our Scholars

### What is Responsive Classroom?

*RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM* IS A STUDENT-CENTERED, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING APPROACH TO TEACHING AND DISCIPLINE. IT IS COMPRISED OF A SET OF RESEARCH, AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES DESIGNED TO CREATE SAFE, JOYFUL, AND ENGAGING CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

IN EXPLORIS CLASSROOMS, THIS INCLUDES THE FOUR KEY DOMAINS OF ENGAGING ACADEMICS, POSITIVE COMMUNITY, EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVE TEACHING.



### What's Going on with Kid's Behavior?

#### *And How Exploris is Responding*

Like schools across the country, Exploris has seen an uptick in behaviors that don't meet our school expectations, including backtalk, name calling, arguments, and even vandalism and fighting.

Students are working hard to process the stresses of being back in social environments. Our staff uses the Responsive Classroom techniques, which align with our Core Values and long-standing Exploris practices like Crew Time/Morning Meeting. Our responses to disruptive student behavior are centered on relationships, restorative practices, and logical consequences.

Please partner with us at home by reviewing with your scholars our Student Code of Conduct and reaching out to your crew teachers and counseling staff if we can help support you at home.

# TIKTOK AND KIDS

*Updates for Families*



## WHAT IS A TIKTOK "CHALLENGE"?

Basically, anything that goes "viral" and gets lots of people to attempt the same thing, often including filming and sharing it. Some are harmless like dance routines, some are helpful like the "Ice Bucket Challenge" from a few years ago, and others are harmful, like the "Devious Licks" challenges that encourage kids to vandalize and destroy school property and film their activities to post. Exploris Middle has dealt with some bathroom vandalism this fall connected to these challenges. Families, you are our best allies in stopping this behavior.

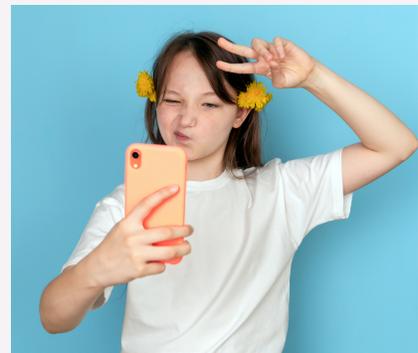
- Check and supervise what apps your scholars use
- Talk with them about the need to be Upstanders and not Bystanders
- Remind them of the very real consequences-- from disciplinary to criminal-- that can come from school vandalism, aggression, or violence

## HAVING FUN-- & STAYING SAFE!

By now nearly all of you will have encountered TikTok, a social media app that lets you share and upload videos directly from your phone.

TikTok can be a fun way to connect with other people and share content, from dances to funny pet videos to even some great educational uses. But like all social media, it can be abused and offers some dangers and pitfalls, especially for young users. TikTok is supposed to be used **ONLY** by students ages 13 and up, but a quick input of an older birthday often means even very young children are accessing content. Here's a few questions to ask if you are going to allow your scholar to use TikTok

- What are the privacy settings? TikTok lets you set usage to help protect your kids from predators and inappropriate content, including different settings for different ages, and a Family Pairing setting that allows adults to see all postings and content
- How much time are they spending on this and other apps? Screen addiction is a real and growing problem with our kids!
- For more information, check out [Common Sense Social Media](#) for some helpful tips and guides.



# CARPOOL REMINDERS

HELP KEEP US ALL SAFE AND MOVING QUICKLY!



## HOW TO HELP EVERYONE GET THROUGH CARPOOL

Most days, most of our cars, drivers, and kids get through the carpool line efficiently, and most importantly, safely. THANK YOU!

Lately we've noticed an uptick in drivers who are not following our carpool rules-- whether it's people new to driving carpool or drivers who need a refresher, please remember that our carpool pattern is designed by the City of Raleigh and we are legally obligated to follow the directions and traffic patterns.

Here are a few key reminders:

- **MAKE RIGHT TURNS ONLY**, both arriving and leaving the schools. Yes, this might mean you have to drive around the block, but it's crucial to avoid backups and preventing accidents.
- **DO NOT LOAD/UNLOAD ON THE SIDEWALK.** Drivers must pull all the way into the carpool line in the front of the ES or in the Ugly Monkey Parking parking lot before children can enter or exit the vehicle
- **WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS.** Please put down the cell phone and make sure you are watching for children and for directions from staff.





## TEACHER HOURS

Earlier this year Exploris School Board member Leah Friedman led our staff through a discussion of communication protocols, specifically on how 24/7 access to work notifications and emails can disrupt work-life balance and lead to increased stress. The staff set some internal guidelines on how to limit work-related communications outside of school hours.

For our families, we know sometimes evenings and weekends are when you have the most time to devote to contacting the school. We invite you to try to limit your communications with your crew teachers and with school staff to within school hours wherever possible, and to use some great new tools like "schedule send" to help manage communications so they don't arrive at all hours of the day and throughout weekends and breaks.

Please remember that per our Family & Student handbook, staff members have 24 to 48 hours to respond to messages, and that when emails arrive in the middle of the teaching day, staff may need some time to research, reflect, and/or investigate an issue before they are able to fully respond. If after that time period you have not yet received a reply, please do resend, because sometimes an email or phone message can get lost in the busy and often-interrupted course of the school day.

Our goal is always to be responsive and available to all our Exploris families, and we find our staff is often better able to do their main job of being present for your scholars if they have some more time to respond to emails and phone calls. Thank you for helping us stay connected to you in ways that balance all the responsibilities our staff are managing daily!

# YEARBOOK NEWS



## YEARBOOKS & ADS ON SALE NOW!

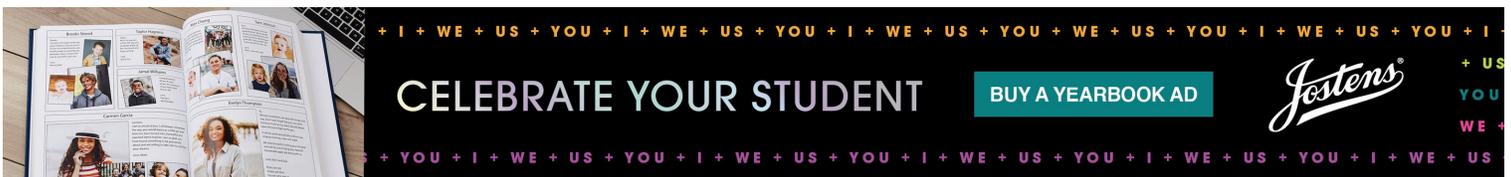
*Order both online!*

Think of all those first day of school pictures and selfies the kids take all year-- 10 years from now, will they know how to find those pictures? They will if they have a yearbook! The Exploris yearbook is created by our own students and is the official record of the school year. Books are on sale now at the link below!

Also, families can order a tribute ad for any student to celebrate their year! Ads can also be created for a club or to thank a special teacher or team! The process is easy and starts by clicking the links below. Space is limited, so please order early to make sure your ad can be included!

Got a great picture of a classroom activity or afterschool event? The yearbook staff also invites everyone to send in those wonderful photos to help us have a more inclusive book! Just use the QR code to the right.

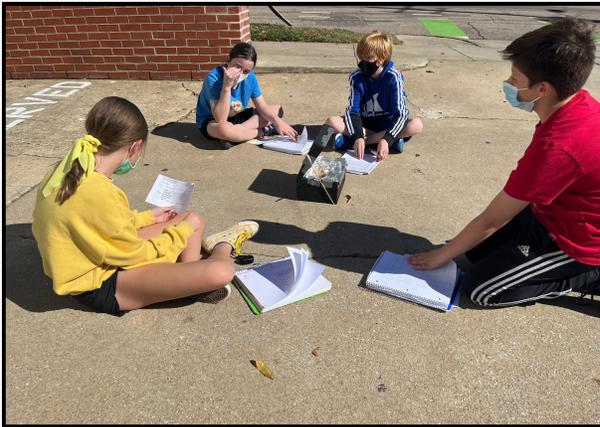
[Order yearbooks and personal ads by clicking this link and going to Jostens.com](#)



# A Peek Inside Our Classrooms



**Featuring 1st grade Keith Haring Chalk Drawings, 2nd grade group collages, 3rd grade's visit to Videri and Escazu Chocolate factories, 6th grade's Solar Oven project, and 8th grade's water filters builds and Design for Change project**



Save

The

Date

## CHECK OUT THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!



**DEC. 10TH**

**Family Movie Night at Exploris Elementary School! Bring chairs, blankets and snacks and join us on the lawn for a family movie night outside, sponsored by the Exploris PTO!**



**DEC. 10TH**

**For over 20 years Exploris students have celebrated Human Rights Day, and on the 73rd anniversary of the UDHR you are invited to watch the recitation of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the 8th-grade students of The Exploris School. Watch for links to this on-line event!**



**DEC. 17TH**

**In recognition of the extra stress students and staff have been coping with this year, Friday December 17th, which is currently an early dismissal day, will be converted to a full vacation day. School will be closed for Winter Break on Friday, December 17th-- please note this change!**

A winter landscape featuring snow-covered evergreen trees and a blue sky with light clouds. The scene is bright and festive, with snow covering the ground and the branches of the trees. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

**Wishing All Our Exploris  
Families a Wonderful  
Winter Break!  
See You in 2022!**