

SEPT. 2025



WELCOME BACK



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT OUR
WEBSITE OR CALL US
MS354.COM,
718-774-0362**



FEATURE STORIES

SEL CORNER

STAFF & STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

PARENT CORNER

SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Principal's Message

SCHOOL IS BACK

Dear MS 354 family,
Welcome to a new school year. We are excited to partner with you to ensure every student learns, grows, and feels safe and valued. Our school's priorities continues to be academic rigor, strong social-emotional support, inclusive practices, and clear, caring communication with families.



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- Regular, clear updates about curriculum, assessments, and events.
- Timely responses to questions to questions and concerns.
- Strong routines and structures that help students stay organized, motivated, and on track.
- Explicit supports for students with diverse needs, including, including English learners and students with IEPs.
- A safe , respectful, and inclusive school climate where bullying is not tolerated.



HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Establish predictable routines for homework, meals, sleep, and screen time.
- Stay engaged with your child's learning; ask about what they're studying, review assignments, and celebrate effort as well as achievement.
- Communicate with teachers early if you notice changes in motivation, attendance, or well-being.
- Volunteer or participate in school activities as you are able; your involvement matters.



PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



Welcome to to another great school year MS 354 family. I have been at the helm of this wonderful institution for the past 20 years and I have learned a lot during this time. In the Principal's Corner I would be sharing some of my expertise and insights into middle school childhood education. Each month, I will feature a column offering valuable tips, activity ideas, and reflections on fostering growth and development in our young learners.

DAILY HABITS & ROUTINES



SLEEP & WAKE TIMES

Aim for enough rest each night - many middle school students do best with roughly 9 hours each night. A regular schedule will help your brain learn better.

MORNING ROUTINE

Prepare materials, check your planner, and set a clear plan for the day.

ORGANIZATION

Write down assignments, tests, and after-school commitments (you can use a simple binder or folder system). Check it every day.



ATTENDANCE

Attend school regularly and on time.

- Being in class every day is one of the best ways to get good grades and do well on tests..
- Showing up regularly reduces stress and helps you feel more sure of yourself.
- Each day at school is a chance to practice communicating, resolving conflicts, and building friendships with your classmates and teachers.
- Being part of the school community helps you feel connected and gives you a sense of purpose.
- The school community can provide you with a strong support system that helps you grow emotionally and intellectually..



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Deannie Duncanson



Hello everyone! I'm Deannie Duncanson, and I am proud to be a part of the MS 354 faculty. I have been working at MS 354 for the past 3 years, and I have been an educator for the past 8 years. I truly enjoy helping students start their day off positively and feel supported throughout the year. I have a deep passion for guiding students to succeed academically and socially. Outside of school, I enjoy running, crafting, and spending time with my family.

FUN FACTS

- ***Favorite Hobby:*** Crafting
- ***Favorite Season:*** Summer
- ***Favorite Food:*** Tostones

- I am bilingual
- I'm an amateur artist and love crafting.
- I am a daredevil, I like zip lines and ATVs
- I love coffee and can't start my day without a cup!



611



ZARA FLEARY

Hobbies:

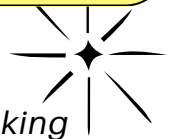
I love to doing hair and nails and making jewelry.

Subject:

I LOVE math - I like solving equations. Ms. Green is really great! She shows me different ways of solving problems.

Future Goals:

I would like to be a chef.



702



NATOLY BOYCE

Hobbies:

I like cooking, baking and drawing.

Subject:

My favorite subject is Social Studies - I like learning about history.

Future Goals:

I would like to be a chef when I grow up. I like seeing the reactions on my family's face when they taste the food that I have made.

803



AALIYAH FERGUSON

Hobbies:

I love playing the steel pan, dancing and playing games.

Subject:

My favorite subject is Social Studies - I like learning about the past and My teacher Ms. Mitchel helps me to stay on track.

Future Goals:

I would like to become a nurse because I would like to help people . Also, this would make my mom happy because she wanted to do nursing.



VIRTUAL ACADEMY



This school year we are pleased to offer a structured, school-led online program that offers courses primarily online.

PROGRAM FEATURES

Teacher-led live sessions

Continuous progress monitoring

Asynchronous activities

Student support services (counseling, tutoring, SEL supports)

WHY IT MATTERS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Smooths the transition to high school: Builds digital literacy, independent learning habits, and self-advocacy early in adolescence.

Support facilities that house and rehabilitate animals until they find forever homes.

Supports diverse learning needs: Provides flexible pacing for students who are behind, ahead, or who require alternate formats due to health, family responsibilities, or anxiety.

Builds essential 21st - century skills: Virtual collaboration, online research, digital citizenship, and time management are core competencies for college and the modern workforce.

Promotes equity and accessibility: Helps students with transportation barriers, medical needs, or scheduling constraints participate in quality instruction.

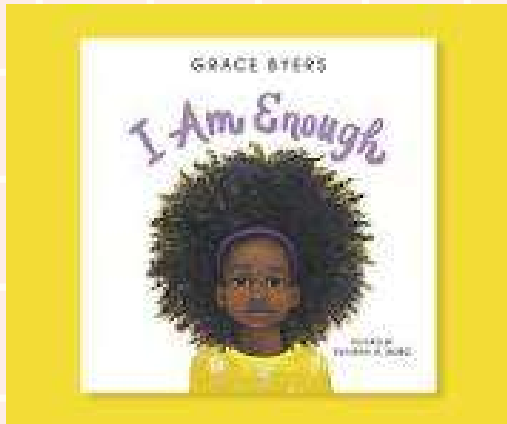


BACK-TO-SCHOOL

BOOK OF THE MONTH/THEMES

SEPTEMBER 2025

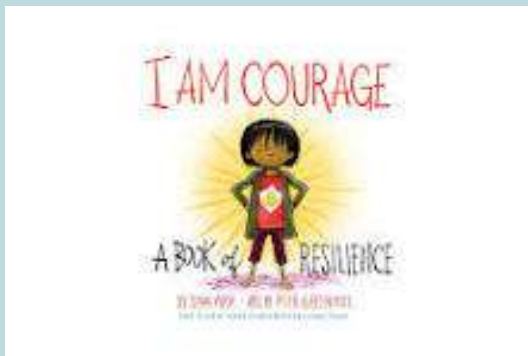
GRADE 6



I AM ENOUGH BY GRACE BYERS

"I Am Enough" is a book by Grace Byers that celebrates self-worth, kindness, and diversity for children. The story is a lyrical ode to self-confidence, encouraging readers to embrace their unique qualities and to show respect and kindness to others, regardless of their differences.

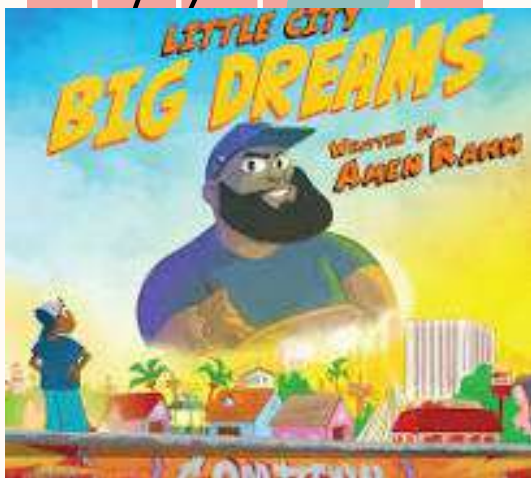
GRADE 7



I AM COURAGE BY SUSAN VERDE

I Am Courage is a book by Susan Verde that teaches children about resilience and finding inner strength through affirmations and illustrations

GRADE 8



LITTLE CITY BIG DREAMS BY AMEN RANN

The book focuses on his journey of building the academy into a restorative community and his efforts to inspire students to love reading, find purpose, set goals, and develop perseverance.



Monthly Theme

Book of the Month

October 2025



What Color is Your Day
by Camryn Wells

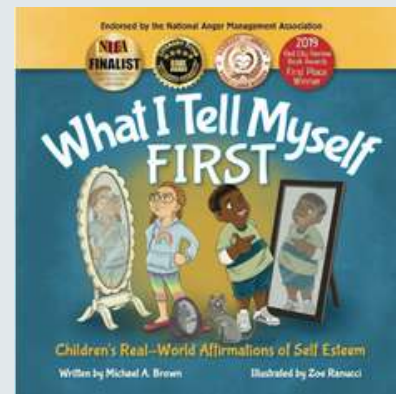
Grade 6



What Color is Your Day? is a children's book that helps readers identify and understand their emotions by associating them with colors, promoting emotional intelligence and self-expression.

What I Tell Myself First by
Michael A. Brown

Grade 7

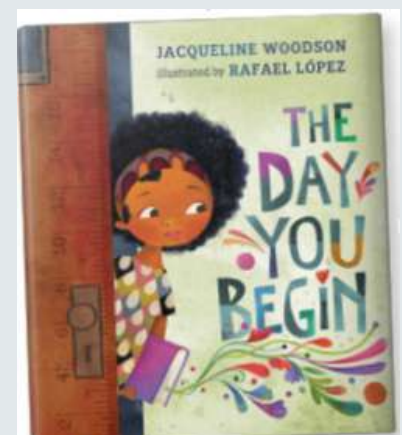


This book builds self-esteem through realistic affirmations, encouraging children to love themselves first, accept their limitations, and understand that failure is a part of learning.

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline
Woodson

This book is about finding the courage to connect with others when you feel different, using a lyrical and reassuring tone. It emphasizes that sharing your own unique experiences, from your lunch to your stories, can help you find common ground and build friendships, even with those who are completely different from you.

Grade 8





Academies 2025



Basketball

Volleyball

Track

Football

Step

Cooking

Visual Arts

**Science
Technology**

Robotiics

Soccer

Swimming

Dance



Violin

**Cheerleading/
Cosmetology**

Esport

**Entrepreneurship/
Hydroponics**

Steelpan





ATTENDANCE AWARENESS

EVERY DAY COUNTS !!!

Why Attendance Matters:

Having your child go to school every single day during the school year is the number one thing you can do as a parent to aid your child's education.

- **Academic Success:**

Regular attendance is directly linked to academic growth, with students who attend school daily being better prepared to learn and succeed.

- **Social-Emotional Development:**

Consistent attendance fosters confidence, allows for the building of friendships, and provides students with essential social and emotional support

- **Impact of Absence:**

Missing just a few days early in the school year, particularly two or more days in any month, increases the likelihood of missing significantly more school later in the year.

September is
Attendance
Awareness
Month



PTA

The School of Integrated Learning



PTA President's Message

by Antoineta Meekins

Grand Day M.S. 354 Families! My name is Antoineta Meekins and I have been a parent at this school since 2022 with my first graduating June 2025 and my second, now in seventh grade. With what this school community gave my first child, Amir-Saheed, I knew that I wanted to bring our second child, Amarii, here as well. The dedication to students, holistically, at M.S. 354 was the reason I wanted to be able to show up in a different way and as PTA president. I want this year to be a year that you, your child(ren), and staff will know that their voices are heard. A year when children leave an event, they feel joy, when guardians leave a workshop/meeting, they feel empowered, and when staff join us in a space, they feel appreciated. The executive board and I are here to build community and to support you and your child(ren) in any way we can! Like you, our children come first and when we keep this in mind, I know this will be a great year!

MEETING DATES

September 25, 2025

October 16, 2025

November 20, 2025

December December 18, 2025

January 15, 2025

February 12, 2025

March 19, 2025

April 19, 2025

May 21, 2025

June 18, 2025



Join the PTA





DAD BRING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL DAY



Thank you to our fathers and father figures who demonstrated the power of showing up!

At MS 354 we encourage fathers and father figures to actively participate in their children's education, which leads to improved academic performance, better behavior, and increased confidence for children.

If you missed this event - more events are on the way.

DYCD | **NYC** Children's Cabinet | **NYC** YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE

Dads Take your Child to School Day

Be there. Build trust. Make memories.
Your involvement strengthens what your schools begin.

Thursday, September 18th, 2025

DADS Take your Child to School



MEN@WORK



CALLING ALL OF OUR AMAZING DADS & FATHER FIGURES!!!

We're very lucky to have you looking after and caring for our students every day. Their happiness is yours and your happiness is ours.

Please join our Mentoring, Educating, & Nurturing Initiative at MS 354.
Your voices matter!!

We will meet monthly, share and create opportunities to support you and our students, & celebrate each other.

For More information reach out to Mr. Cormack our Parent Coordinator at 718-774-0362 or email at ecormack@schools.nyc.gov.

Thank you so much!

Happy Birthday September

Grade 6

JAMES M. 9/03
LEONIDAS G. 9/06
BENJAMIN U. 9/29

Grade 7

KARISHMA D. 9/05
KYESHA J. 9/22
KAITLYN S. 9/25
LORY A. 9/27
JYMEKE 9/29

Grade 8

RASIEL M. 9/11
NICHOLAS P. 9/13
KEMANUEL C 9/13
CAMERON S. 9/18
JANAYA E. 9/18
OSIRIS 9/22
KIMARA W. 9/26

Grade 8

AKHI J. 9/01
KHALIQ O. 9/05
SHIRLEY J. Grade 8
AKHI J. 9/01
KHALIQ O. 9/05
SHIRLEY J. 9/10



HAPPY BIRTHDAY OCTOBER

Grade 6

MIYAH S. 10/10

JALYN C. 10/24

CURTISA. 10/26

Grade 8

EMPRESS W. 10/01

JARED H. 10/05

VICTORIA W. 10/08

JOSIAH J. 10/08

KEIMAI P. 10/08

SOLELL M. 10/16

JEREMIAH W. 10/20

TAYLOR W. 10/24

LIAM C. 10/25

YEHOU-NIC 10/25

AALIYAH F. 10/27

Grade 7

ISAIAH G. 10/01

JAYDEN P. 10/05

ZARAH R. 10/05

GEORGE G. 10/09

KAYDEN R. 10/13

JAYDEN V. 10/18

LATRELL T. 10/24

MESSIAH H. 10/24



DIGITAL PLATFORMS



I-READY

To see the For Families report, parents will need to log into their students' dashboard and use the access code to see the students' results; Parents can also find resources at the Family Center link i-readycentral.com/familycenter/
FAMILY REPORT CODE

BY1F8N

NYCSA

NYCSA Parent Portal

You can sign up for an account by entering a few basic details.

- See students grades, test scores
- Take classes in Parent University
- Report Bullying
- Access forms for your child
- Reset your child's DOE account password
- Access SupportHub
- <https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc/>



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

September 15 - October 15



ABOUT HISPANIC HERITAGE

Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated from September 15 to October 15, honors the history, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic Americans and people from Spain, Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. It began as a week in 1968 and was expanded to a month by President Ronald Reagan in 1988, with the mid-September start date chosen to coincide with the independence days of several Latin American countries.

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Highlighting Contributions:
- It recognizes the profound impact and achievements of Hispanic and Latino Americans throughout U.S. history and in various fields, including innovation, leadership, and community advocacy.

KEY ASPECTS

- Recognition of Independence:
- The month begins on September 15, the independence day of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile also celebrate their independence days within the observance period.

CULTURE

- Celebration of Culture and History:
- The month provides an opportunity to learn about and celebrate the rich tapestry of Hispanic and Latin American cultures, which include diverse traditions, art, food, and music.



SEPTEMBER 11

REMEMBERING THE FALLEN



Quote

"Even the smallest act of service, the simplest act of kindness, is a way to honor those we lost, a way to reclaim that spirit of unity that followed 9/11."

What Happened on 9/11

On September 11, 2001, almost 3,000 people lost their lives during the attacks at the Twin Towers, Pentagon and aboard United Airlines Flight 93. At 8:46 a.m. EST, American Airlines Flight 11 (traveling from Boston to Los Angeles) hit the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City in what we now know as the 9/11 terror attacks. At 9:03 a.m. EST, United Airlines Flight 175 (traveling from Boston to Los Angeles) hit the south tower of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Today the staff guided students to understand the pivotal moment in our history, while developing critical thinking, ethical reasoning, empathy, and civic responsibility.



- Students were introduced to a basic timeline, geography, and the idea of cause and effect in history.
- students read short firsthand age-appropriate accounts, discussed multiple viewpoints, and evaluated sources.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS



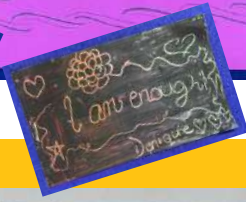
Our school community was encouraged to wear pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

"WE FIGHT CANCER TOGETHER"





VISUAL ART



SEPTEMBER

Affirmations

Students began the school year by learning about the power of positive affirmations and creating drawings of their affirmation words in art.

Name Drawings

Continuing with the theme of identity, students created drawing of their names in which they transformed the letters of their names into a kaleidoscopic and radial pattern by repeating their name eight times around a central point in a unique font.





HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

IN ART

Alebríes

Students in 6th and 7th grade learned about Alebríes, sculptures of colorful fantastical creatures originally designed by the Mexican artist, Pedro Linares. Students designed their own Alebríes by imagining their own unique creatures and constructing them from aluminum foil, tape, cardboard, tissue paper, and paint.



Learning About

Dia de los Muertos



For Hispanic Heritage Month, students learned about Dia de los Muertos celebrations in Mexico and the United States. Students studied the many ways that people honor and celebrate their ancestors and loved ones on this special day. Students observed the use of skull and skeleton imagery in traditional artwork, makeup, and crafts like sugar skulls and then created their own symmetrical skull mask designs in art.



Dia de los Muertos is celebrated on
NOVEMBER 1



October Awareness Causes

Breast Cancer Awareness

A global campaign to raise awareness of breast cancer, its impact, and the importance of early detection and treatment.



Domestic Violence

Aims to educate the public about domestic violence and show support for survivors.



National Depression & Mental Health Screening

Focuses on the need for accessible mental health screenings and awareness of depression.



Health Literacy Month

Aims to raise awareness about the importance of health literacy for making informed health decisions.



ADHD Awareness

Highlights the prevalence of ADHD and supports individuals and families affected

by it.

