

February, 2018



NYC DOE

**M.S. 129**  
**Academy for Independent Learning & Leadership**  
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**Raymond Granda, Principal**

# M.S. 129 Family Newsletter



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## Making Progress

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The second marking period is over and we are in the third quarter. This is a short marking period but it is very vital to your child's progress. The students will be taking the ELA and math exams, therefore, keeping focused is our top priority.

Encourage your child to take advantage of the tutoring sessions during lunch, after school, and on Saturdays. Help them to understand that pushing hard for the few weeks ahead will be worth the sacrifices they make. Also ensure that your child is in school every school day and on time.

As we begin the second month of the year, consider the progress you and your family have made with your non-negotiable goal. Read and discuss the excerpt of the article below to help you keep on track.

### **"How to Stick to Your New Year's Resolution"**

Thirty-five percent of people who make New Year's resolutions break them by the end of January. Only 23 percent of everyone who makes a resolution will see it through to completion.

Are you part of the 77 percent who make resolutions only to find you've given up before you ever really got started? Let's break down how that happens. One of the most common reasons we break our New Year's resolutions is that we get a little too ambitious when we make them and we over-commit. As a result, 40 percent of us blame our busy schedules for our lack of follow-through. It's easier to keep just one resolution rather than several.

Progress reports are a good way to keep yourself motivated and moving in the right direction toward your goal. Without them (and sometimes despite them) we can become discouraged. When we're discouraged, we tend to give up on the goal, but try to stay focused! Researchers have found that a few off-days from time to time doesn't have much effect on your overall success. Instead of giving up on your goal when you have a setback, take things one day at a time.

<https://newsela.com/read/lib-break-new-year-resolution/id/38531>

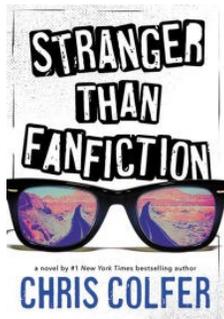
**Consider:** What small steps can you and your family take in reaching your goal? Discuss the author's claim that "we get a little too ambitious ...and we over-commit". What suggestions does the article present that will help with over ambitious goals? Do you agree? Why/why not?



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## Suggested Reading for February

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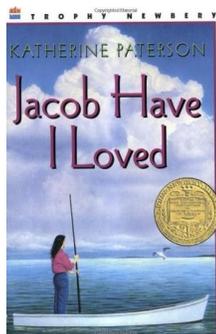


### ***Stranger Than Fiction*** by Chris Colfer

TV star Cash Carter shocks four of his fans when he accepts their invitation to join them for a cross-country road trip—and the surprises continue as they get to know the boy behind the famous face. With the paparazzi on their trail, the fivesome set off on a life-changing journey, in which Cash's fans discover they don't know him as well as they thought they did. Colfer, who became famous playing Kurt on Glee, knows a thing or two about the ups and downs of life under a microscope.

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/blog/teen/februarys-best-books-teens/>

### **MS 129 School Library Feature**



### ***Jacob Have I Loved*** by Katherine Paterson

The remarkable Newbery-winning classic about a painful sibling rivalry, and one sister's struggle to make her own way. Sara Louise Bradshaw is sick and tired of her beautiful twin Caroline. Ever since they were born, Caroline has been the pretty one, the talented one, the better sister. Even now, Caroline seems to take everything: Louise's friends, their parents' love, her dreams for the future. For once in her life, Louise wants to be the special one. But in order to do that, she must first figure out who she is... and find a way to make a place for herself outside her sister's shadow.

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/337058.Jacob\\_Have\\_I\\_Loved](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/337058.Jacob_Have_I_Loved)

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## Reminders

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- **Saturday Academy:** February 3, and 10, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- **School Leadership Team Meeting:** February 7, and 28, 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM
- **Student of the Month and Perfect Attendance Breakfast:** February 9, 8:45 AM in Lunchroom
- **Valentine's Dance:** February 13, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- **2nd Marking Period Report Cards Sent Home:** February 15
- **Lunar New Year:** February 16 school is closed
- **Midwinter Recess, Including President's Day:** February 19 — February 23 school is closed

# Helping Parents & Kids Connect

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## Let Freedom Win

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**A Family that plans together, stays together.**

**February 1st is National Freedom Day.** Talk to your family about what freedom means to you. Help your children understand why it is important to stand up for their rights to maintain their freedom. Also discuss the responsibilities that come with the rights of living a free life. Consider the areas in which your family's freedom may be challenged. Identify at least one solution to help you regain or maintain complete freedom as individuals, a family and a community.

**February 11th is National Inventor's Day:** What new ideas do you have? Parents help your children to use their natural abilities to create things. In the process, don't forget about yourselves. What natural abilities do you have that you can develop? Check out [www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com) for ideas.

**Make your prediction:** February 2nd is Ground Hog Day. Will spring arrive soon or will the winter be for another six weeks? Based on a Pennsylvania Dutch tradition, if the ground hog sees his shadow on February 2nd and returns to his den, winter will be six weeks longer. What do you say? Have a healthy wager in your family. What will you do during those six weeks; whether there's winter or spring temperatures?

**Brooklyn Botanic Garden:** Brave the cold for some outdoor fun during the garden's wintry events for all ages on the first Sunday of February and March. When cabin fever hits the family, explore the garden's landscape on a nature walk with naturalist Bradley Klein, as he points out birds, mammals, and insects that remain active during the season. Then little ones can enjoy special hands-on discovery workshops and story time. Free with garden admissions.

<https://www.timeout.com/new-york-kids/things-to-do/first-sundays-at-brooklyn-botanic-garden>

**The Bronx Zoo:** Although the Bronx Zoo is our neighbor, many students have not visited. The zoo is free every Wednesday. Take a tour over the Midwinter Recess. "The temperature has dipped, but the zoo is not in hibernation. We've got lots of fun things you can do in winter. Come see the big bears roam, the sea lions swim, then hop into an indoor exhibit for a taste of warmer weather. "

<https://bronxzoo.com/winter-wonderland>

**NYC School Midwinter Recess is February 19-23, 2018, so expect some attractions to be more crowded than usual.**

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## Kids Corner

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As February is celebrated as Freedom Month, below is a list of seven books for middle schoolers based on social justice featured by Barnes and Noble. Explore them to read about an issue important to you.

*"The Breadwinner Trilogy"* by Deborah Ellis  
*"Stella by Starlight"* by Sharon Draper  
*"A Little Piece of Ground"* by Elizabeth Laird  
*"One Crazy Summer"* by Rita Williams Garcia  
*"Operation Redwood"* by S. Terrell French  
*"Sylvia and Aki"* by Winnifred Conkling  
*"Return to Sender"* by Julia Alvarez

With the ELA and math exams close, many students may be wondering "How do I ensure that I do well?" Being prepared is the best way to ensure the performance you desire. Use the following study strategies to help you prepare for all of your assessments.

- Give yourself enough time to study: set aside time that is only for studying.
- Organize your study space to ensure that you can work without clutter.
- Review your class notes everyday.
- Explain your answers for others; a study group will help.
- Take breaks and eat healthily.
- Set aside time to relax as well; only ensure its not during your study time.

Finally, here are a few websites that can help you explore topics or get help with academics.

**newsela.com** – news articles modified for different reading levels

**readworksdigital.com** - nonfictional and literary passages with questions and vocabulary strategies

**thirteen.org**– presents academic videos

**<http://www.thirteen.org/get-the-math/>** - solve real life algebra problems

**readwritethink.org**– help with writing papers

**litpick.com** - booklists and book reviews