



Bannockburn Elementary

301-320-6555 | 6520 Dalroy Lane, Bethesda MD 20817

The Principal's Newsletter-February 2011

Dear Bannockburn Parents,

We are now two weeks into the third quarter of the school year. We hope you are excited about the progress your child has made so far. Bannockburn Elementary staff are focused and committed to providing all students with a rigorous instructional program. Students are continuing to receive challenging learning opportunities on a daily basis, whether it is through accelerated instruction or additional support and extra practice. The month of February also marks the beginning of the third marking period. This week, second quarter report cards and comment sheets were sent home to parents and /or guardians. If you have not already done so, please review the report card grades with your child and sign and return the report card envelope to your child's teacher. Please call your child's teacher if you have any questions, concerns, or if you would like to have a parent-teacher conference to discuss your child's progress.

During the month of January, students and staff enjoyed a variety of activities from our annual winter chorus performances and a wonderful math day full of various activities. We also enjoyed an assembly on bullying prevention. A special thank you to our community service team of Mrs. Whiting, our school counselor, parents Linda Scott Lane, Kate Robinson and Susan Shipp for organizing the Pennies for Patients Fundraiser which raised \$1,398.76. Another thank you goes out to our Math Day committee co-Chairs Hali London and Aeysha Chaudhry along with everyone on the committee - Lindsey Spindle and Susan Shipp. It was another successful event in a large part to the volunteers consisting of Bannockburn ES parents, high school volunteers and grandparents. Volunteers shared a variety of assignments from setting up the event, facilitating math stations, and cleaning up. Thank you to everyone for your wonderful support.

We have many exciting events taking place during the month of February, such as our **Student Capacity Study Meeting on Thursday, February 3rd, Career Day on Friday, February 11th, PTA Expansion meeting also on Friday, February 11th, classroom Valentine's Day parties on Monday, February 14th from 2:15-3:15 p.m., No School on Presidents' Day, Monday, February 21st, Jump-Rope for Hearts activity, on Tuesday, February 22nd for Kindergarteners only, and Jump Rope for Hearts activity, on Wednesday, February 23rd for Grades 1-5, and our monthly Principal's Coffee at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 23rd.** Please note the important dates on the next page and add to your family calendars.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-320-6555 or email at Daniel_Walder@mcpsmd.org.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal

Important February Dates

- 1st: PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the media center
- 2nd: Report Card Distribution
- 3rd: Student Capacity Study Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 10th: **Meeting at Pyle MS** for Incoming 6th grade parents, 7:00 p.m.
- 11th: Career Day, a.m.
PTA Expansion meeting, 9:30 a.m. in Portable #2
- 14th: Valentine's Day Parties, 2:15 p.m. in classrooms (2nd grade parties are held from 1:45-2:30)
- 15th: Snow date for Meeting at Pyle MS for Incoming 6th grade parents, 7:00 p.m.
- 18th: Cultural Arts Show-Smithsonian Discovery Theater, a.m.
- 21st: NO SCHOOL—Presidents' Day
- 22nd: Jump Rope for Heart—Kindergarten only
Student Capacity Study Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the media center
- 23rd: Jump Rope for Heart—Grades 1-5
Principal's Coffee, 9:30 a.m. media center
- 25th: 1/2 of the 5th grade to the Smith Center
Incoming Kindergarten Parents Coffee, 9:30 a.m.—APR
- 28th: 1/2 of the 5th grade to the Smith Center

Information on Maryland School Assessments for Grades 3-5

Next month, our third, fourth and fifth grade students will be participating in the Maryland School Assessments (MSA), which assesses our students in both Reading and Math. We anticipate a continuation of individual student success, however, we encourage parents to assist in the following ways which include:

- Work with your child on his/her homework each night.
- Ensure your child is reading independently every night. Reading can vary from fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Ask your child comprehension questions to ensure they understand what they are reading.
- Review basic math facts: multiplication, division, addition and subtraction
- Make sure your child is in attendance for the state assessments (please see assessment chart below)
- Make sure your child has plenty of rest the night before and a healthy breakfast on testing days.
- Communicate to your child that they have been working hard all year and they are prepared for the test. All they need to do is their best and "stick with it."

Teachers will be sending reminders home about dates for testing, information on test-taking strategies and ways parents can help.

<u>Testing Grade Level</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Testing Dates</u>
Grades 3 & 4	MSA Reading	March 7 & 8
Grade 5	MSA Reading	March 9 & 10
Grades 3 & 4	MSA Math	March 11 & 14
Grade 5	MSA Math	March 15 & 16

Valentine's Day Parties

The Valentine's Day parties will be on February 14th. The Valentine's Day parties will begin at 2:15 p.m. We ask that all parents and visitors sign in and receive a visitor pass before going to the classroom. Classroom party planners need to make sure that the treats and snacks during the party include healthy options.

Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee

Bannockburn Elementary will be holding an Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee for parents who will be sending their child(ren) to Kindergarten at Bannockburn next fall. The Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee is scheduled for February 25th from 9:30-11:00 a.m. This event is for parents only. Please call the main office at 301-320-6555 to RSVP. In order to enter Kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year, you must live in the Bannockburn school boundaries and your child must be five years old on or before September 1, 2011. The Incoming Kindergarten Coffee will provide parents with a sneak peek into the Kindergarten program and the Kindergarten Orientation process.

Application and Selection Process for Elementary Foreign Language Immersion Programs

If you are interested in having your child attend the Elementary Foreign Language Programs (Chinese, French, Spanish), the immersion lottery process application dates are from February 1 to April 8th. Parents may participate in the immersion lottery process using the Elementary Immersion Interest Form. The form and directions will be available on the Montgomery County Public Schools website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms, at our school's main office and by calling the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services at 301-529-2040.

Student Transfer Application Season is February 1st through April 1, 2011

Montgomery County parents and families who have circumstances which requires a change in school assignment for their children may begin the process during the transfer season, which will be held from February 1 through April 1, 2011. Students are expected to attend their home schools, but in certain circumstances, a change in school assignments may be approved. The transfer process begins in the home school, where the parents may request an assignment change form. For more information about the transfer process, please contact Mrs. Errigo in the main office.

Cold Weather Reminder

Please be sure to send your child to school dressed for the weather. An idea to consider is having your children layer clothing, so that the child can take off a sweater or sweatshirt depending on the varying temperatures. In addition, students should have a warm jacket, gloves and a winter hat for arrival/dismissal and outdoor recess. We have noticed many children wearing shorts and no jackets when it is in the 30's and 40's. We strive for the students to have outdoor recess everyday, weather permitting. In order for the students to go outside for recess, the temperature needs to be above 25 degrees (including wind-chill) and reasonably dry/damp conditions on the recess blacktop and wood-chip area. We believe that the time outdoors each day is important for the children as a way to release energy and build concentration for afternoon instruction. With the current chilly temperatures students will need a winter jacket, winter hat, and gloves for outdoor recess.

Wednesday Envelope Reminder

Every Wednesday, BES Wednesday envelopes are sent home containing school, PTA, county and state information/flyers. Please remind your child to return the Wednesday envelope to their teacher the next day or by each Friday.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available for school field trips. Please contact your child's teacher or the Bannockburn School office if such help is needed.

From Our School Counselor

Elizabeth Whiting

February is Caring and Empathy Month

February is **Caring and Empathy** month at Bannockburn. Caring and Empathy are part of our ethics. I have always liked this passage on the importance of caring from the book, Promoting Social and Emotional Learning. *"Caring is central to the shaping of relationships that are meaningful, supportive, rewarding, and productive. Caring happens when children sense that the adults in their lives think they are important and when they understand that they will be accepted and respected, regardless of any particular talents they have. Caring is a product of a community that deems all of its members to be important, believes everyone has something to contribute, and acknowledges that everyone counts.—Caring is a spoken or an unspoken part of every interaction that takes place in the classrooms, lunchrooms, hallways, and playgrounds."*

Empathy means trying to understand another's thoughts and feeling. Author, Michael Obsatz says, "having empathy involves understanding someone else's situation and caring about him or her. Being able to clearly express your feelings can lead to empathy, an important skill because it builds bridges between people."

How can parents help develop empathy on a more personal level? Parents can help children look at situations through the other person's eyes. How does that person feel when no one will play with them? Wouldn't it be a kind thing to do to send a Valentine to every student in the class? How do you feel when someone laughs at you when you make a mistake? Understanding other points of view and feelings is the first step in responding sensitively to others. No one does this perfectly. How we as adults respond when we hear others using unkind words or actions is duly noted by the children around us. If we do make a mistake and are unkind to someone, it is quite powerful for a child to hear an adult say they are sorry. These questions and discussions can help your child become a more caring person.

Our many community service projects also help. Jump Rope for Heart this month will be another opportunity for kids to make a difference.

Career Day

Career Day will be the morning of February 11 this year. Our roster of parent presenters includes:

Dewey Barlow--NASA--Civilian Space Exploration

Michael Bobbitt--Producing Artistic Director--Adventure Theater

Jeff Brueggeman--AT&T - Internet Policy, Security, and Resource Potential

Lance Crist—International Oil and Gas Investing—World Bank

Gregg Rothschild--Lawyer-Capitol Hill Aide/Lobbyist

Josh Silver--Fair Lending and Housing

Anne Adelman Taswell--Clinical Psychologist

Jonas Wechsler--Foreign Service Officer--Civilian Response Corps

Jonathan Weisman--Journalist--White House Reporter

Every 3rd, 4th, and 5th grader will have the opportunity to hear three different speakers. Thinking about interests and talents and hearing our career speakers helps children begin to explore the many possibilities and options for interesting and worthwhile occupations.

February 2011 Math Newsletter for Grades 2 through 5

Grade 2 Math Class News!

2nd grade math students will take their unit 3: computation assessment the first week in February. Then, we will move on to unit 4! Unit 4 has two sections, 4A-fractions and 4B-measurement. Throughout February we will focus on 4A-fractions. In this unit we will model, read, and write numerals for fractional parts of regions and sets.

~ Ms. Fioritto

Grade 3 Math Class News!

Brr! Its cold outside but Unit 4 is keeping our third grade math students nice and busy. In the first part of this unit, students explore and describe two-dimensional figures. As their knowledge of geometry vocabulary and concepts grow, students will develop more sophisticated ways of classifying figures. Students will use terms such as polygons, right angles, pentagons, and octagons to classify figures. In addition to classifying two-dimensional figures, instruction focuses on how tools can be used to draw figures with symmetry or congruence and how language can be used to describe these concepts. The idea that changing the position of an object does not affect its attributes also is investigated as students describe and represent slides, flips, and turns of two-dimensional figures. In the second part of the unit, students will analyze and classify three-dimensional figures. The instructional emphasis is on relating three-dimensional figures to their two-dimensional counterparts. Please continue to practice basic multiplication facts each night as we will continue to use these facts going forward. Thank you for your support at home! ~Ms. Ferrari, Ms. Griffin, and Ms. Gugerty

Grade 4 Math Class News!

Greetings from the 4th Grade Math Team! We are progressing though Math Unit 3, which includes the students will compare and order fractions and mixed numbers, compare decimals to the hundredths using numerals, pictures, and objects, describe the relationship between fractions and decimals, add and subtract fractional numbers with like denominators using models and pictures, add and subtract decimals using models and pictures, solve problems involving estimation with fractions and decimals, list all possible outcomes for a simple probability situation, express the probability of an event with equally likely outcomes as a fraction and multiply fractions and whole numbers using models and pictures. Thanks for your support, and contact your child's teacher with any questions or concerns. ~ Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mills, and Mrs. Russell

Grade 5 Math News!

We hope you've felt a sense of a fresh beginning to our 3rd quarter together! The 5th-grade math students are still working hard on their third unit of study. We've covered quite a bit of information and a range of concepts so far. With our unit test approaching in mid-February, we feel that is particularly important to keep the multiplication and division skills that were reviewed in the first part of the unit fresh. Therefore, please practice double- and triple-digit multiplication, multiplication of decimals, division of multi-digit numbers, and division with decimals in the dividend. With our present focus on fractions and decimals, it's easy to forget these earlier concepts. You'll be receiving specific information on the unit test and suggestions for at-home review from your child's teacher shortly. Thank you again for your support at home. Homework completion continues to be strong! ~ Ms. Levenson, Mr. Oliver, and Ms. Rardin

Math 6 and 7 News!

In Math 6, we will begin our unit study of geometry. We will begin to study the relationships among angles, sides, lengths, perimeters, and areas of two-dimensional figures. We will also look at how geometric figures can change position and maintain the same attributes on a coordinate plane. What does an acorn say when he grows up? (Ge! om-e-try.)

~Ms. Recchiuti and Ms. South

In Math 7, we will begin our unit study on defining and applying the properties of similar figures using ratio and proportion to create scale drawings and models. We will be looking at the relationships among ratios and how they compare. What is 1 kilogram of falling figs? ...(1 Fig Newton) ~ Ms. South

PTA Co-Presidents' Letter

Sick of the same old evenings at home this winter? If so, we hope will attend the February 5 parent social at 7:30 p.m. at the Bannockburn Clubhouse. This is our one adults-only social this year and will be a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and make a few new ones in a fun setting. The PTA will be hosting a mini-auction at the social, which will include some great excursions and activities with your child's teachers as well as some fun social events with other BES parents.

As you know, MCPS has undertaken a capacity study at Bannockburn to determine how our school can help with overcrowding at Wood Acres ES. MCPS estimates that Wood Acres will be over capacity by 200 to 250 kids by 2014. To address this problem, MCPS is considering several options, including (1) a large addition at Wood Acres to accommodate these children, (2) a large addition at Bannockburn ES, and (3) smaller additions at each school. A simultaneous capacity study is being conducted at Wood Acres. The object of these studies is to determine the maximum size of the possible additions. Of note, MCPS is calling these "capacity" as opposed to "feasibility" studies. MCPS is trying to answer the question: what CAN be done in terms of expansion. Ultimately, if MCPS decides to build an addition, the process will continue with a full-blown "feasibility study." Moreover, if any type of addition is chosen for Bannockburn, a boundary study will be conducted to determine which students currently within the Wood Acres boundary lines would move to Bannockburn. MCPS has said that any possible addition at Bannockburn would not be completed before 2014-2015.

MCPS scheduled five community meetings to give BES families, BES staff, and the community at large a chance to meet with MCPS staff and the hired architect to discuss their initial proposals. All of these meetings are open to the public. The purpose of the meetings is to develop project goals and design options. Should the Board of Education adopt one of the options, MCPS would then hope that the Board Of Education and County Council would fund the next step of official drawings and specifications for the 2011-2012 school year. After that time, we understand that additional community meetings will take place. The meetings are cumulative; so each meeting builds on the ideas developed at the meeting before and ideas discussed at the meetings are continuously incorporated into the ongoing designs. WMCRP Architects, which has been tasked with initial drawings for the capacity study, has set up a web-page at <http://www.bannockburn.wmcrponline.com/Podcast/Podcast.html>, which will include information on the project and drawings as they develop through the meeting process.

The first community meeting was held on January 4. The architect provided some sketches of the proposed addition. Attendees, including current and future Bannockburn parents as well as neighbors, expressed concerns about parking, drop-off areas, traffic issues and the limitations of current core spaces (cafeteria, gym, media center, playground, etc.) to accommodate additional children, as well as many other issues. The January 18 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

There are 3 remaining meeting dates:

- February 3 at 3:45 p.m. at BES
- February 22 at 7:00 p.m. at BES
- March 1 at 7:00 p.m. (in conjunction with our March PTA meeting) at BES

The PTA will also provide opportunities for BES parents to discuss the expansion at the PTA meeting on Tuesday, February 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center and on Friday, February 11 at 9:30 a.m. in Portable #2. These are not official community meetings and MCPS representatives will not be in attendance.

Without doubt, an expansion at Bannockburn will impact families currently at the school. For some, it will mean attending Bannockburn during the construction phase which is expected to last about 18 months. For others, it will mean sending children to a Bannockburn that is larger – and possibly significantly larger – than our current school. For these reasons, we urge you to get involved in the process now. Please come to the community meetings. Ask questions. Raise issues. We are working hard to achieve the best possible outcome for our children – and we need your help.

The coming months will also provide many opportunities for you to advocate for your children on important matters such as class size and staffing at Bannockburn. The Whitman Cluster provided testimony before the Board of Education in January on these issues, using Bannockburn's kindergarten experience as an example of what happens when class size is increased and adequate staffing is not provided. Please take a look at the testimony on our PTA website at <http://www.bannockburnpta.org/communications/mcpsadvocacy.html>. We will continue to send out Bannocknets announcing important meetings we hope you will attend as well as other steps you can take to support appropriate class size and staffing in our cluster, among other priorities.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who helped make the 2011 Math Day a success. The efforts of committee chairs Hali London, Susan Shipp, Lindsey Spindle and Aeysha Chaudhry made this a very special day for our kids.

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PTA Co-Presidents

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