



Bannockburn Elementary

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

The December 2011 Principal's Newsletter

Dear Parents,

The holiday season is upon us! We hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful, relaxing Thanksgiving with family and friends. December is planned to be filled with school-wide activities and celebrations!

We had a busy month of November with a variety of school events. Parents and teachers met to discuss their child's progress during the Parent/Teacher conferences. The Scholastic Book-Fair was a great success! Thank you to all the parent volunteers who helped during the book fair.

Highlights for the month of December include the **December PTA meeting on Tuesday, December 6th at 7:00 p.m.** in the media center. **On Friday, December 9th**, students in grades K-5 will enjoy a cultural arts assembly. The **PTA Drama club performance will be held on Friday, December 9th and Saturday, December 10th at 7 pm** at Whitman HS. Our annual **Winter Sing is scheduled for Tuesday, December 13th beginning at 7:00 p.m.** The Winter Sing will be conducted by our music teacher, Mr. Milosich, who will lead the students, staff, and parents in singing songs to celebrate the upcoming holiday season. The sing-along will be held in the gym, followed by refreshments in the APR. Parents are invited to attend this wonderful event.

A friendly announcement that the school and MCPS policy for staff accepting gifts from parents/families is that a staff member cannot accept any gift exceeding \$25 in value or a series of gifts exceeding \$100 in value in a calendar year from any person or family. If parents/families decide to contribute to a class gift for the staff member, it must follow the MCPS policy and each parent/family contributing to the gift cannot exceed \$25 in value. For example, if 15 parents contribute \$10 each to make the class gift value of \$150 or 10 parents contribute \$20 each to make the class gift value \$200, then this will be in accordance with the MCPS gift policy. If parents choose to contribute to the class gift, please contact your child's classroom room parent/treasurer.

On behalf of the Bannockburn staff, we wish you and your family a happy holiday season and a safe, relaxing winter break. Each year you graciously entrust your most precious gifts with us— your children. Our staff continues to work hard in providing each and every child with rigorous learning experiences. As we all look forward to the holiday season and winter break with family and friends, we have an opportunity to celebrate on all the great things we have accomplished during the past year. We also have an opportunity to reflect and appreciate all that goes on to make our school and community a great place for our students.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-320-6555 or email at Daniel_Walder@mcpsmd.org. I wish you and your children a safe, healthy holiday season and winter break!

Daniel Walder
Principal

December Events

2nd: 5th Grade In-school field trip on robotics

Kindergarten field trip to Imagination Stage

Individual Photo Make-up Day

6th: PTA Meeting will be held at 7 pm in the media center

7th: MCPS Superintendent's Budget Presentation, 7 pm at Richard Montgomery HS.

9th: PTA Drama Club Performance at 7 pm at Whitman HS

Cultural Arts Performances in the gym at 9:30 for grades 3-5 and 10:30 a.m. for grades K-2

10th: PTA Drama Club Production 7 pm at Whitman HS

13th: Holiday Winter Sing at 7:00 p.m. in the gym

2nd marking period interims sent home for any student in jeopardy of receiving a C /N or lower in any subject

16th: Geo-Bee Finals for grades 4-5.

Dec.24th-January 2nd: Christmas and Winter Break– schools and offices closed; no school for students and staff.

January 3rd: School resumes for students and staff

APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR WINTER WEATHER: As we begin to experience winter weather, it is important that our children come dressed appropriately to school based on the weather. During recess, we plan to get children outside as much as possible, weather permitting, as long as the temperature is 26 degrees or higher, there is no wind-chill, and the ground is not too wet. With outdoor recess, children should wear winter coats, hats, gloves, etc. Students should dress in layers.

HEALTH OFFICE UPDATE: We will continue to update you on any information about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu. At Bannockburn ES, we have experienced very few days so far with a little higher than normal rate of absentees. Some of this we attribute to parents being extra diligent in keeping their sick children at home so that cold and cough germs are not spread. We appreciate parents using their best judgment on when to keep children at home. We will continue to notify parents if their child(ren) is in the health room with fevers or other symptoms that would require the child going home. All schools in MCPS follow the recommendations of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Centers of Disease Control for the prevention of the spread of Influenza in school communities. The primary way to reduce the spread of influenza in schools is to focus on early identification of ill students and staff, staying home when ill, covering your cough and frequent hand washing. Students having a temperature of 100 degrees F or greater with cough or sore throat should stay home and contact their health care provider for further guidance. Please notify the school if your child is going to be home sick. They should not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care.

Students may return to school when they have been free of fever (less than 100 degrees F) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Please contact our school's health room if you have any additional questions.

Bannockburn Elementary Math Newsletter
for Grades 3 through 5 December 2011

Grade 3 Math Class News!

In math 3, students will begin unit 3. In this unit, students analyze and apply numeric patterns as they explore the interrelated concepts of multiplication and division. Students begin the unit by investigating various models and structures for multiplication and division. In Grade 2, students were introduced to multiplication as repeated addition and division as sharing equally. In Grade 3, students work with arrays and comparison problem structures. Building on their understanding of concrete models, Grade 3 students develop efficient ways to represent multiplication and division using models. Instructional tasks assist students in making the connection that multiplication and division are inverse operations. Problem solving is an integral part of the unit as students explore examples of multiplication and division in real world contexts. Practicing multiplication facts with flash cards is a fun and meaningful way to help at home.

Thank you for your continued support! ~Ms. Griffin

Grade 4 Math Class News!

Greetings from the 4th grade math team! We are continuing with Unit 2 in which students will be able to demonstrate mastery of basic multiplication and division fact families, Identify and apply multiples and factors of numbers, solve for the unknown or variable in an equation, generalize a pattern by stating a rule, write and simplify numeric expressions using number properties, and complete a function table using a given rule. It is very important that the kids know their 0-9 multiplication facts by heart. We practice at school, but some home practice would be beneficial. A good free web site is "Multiplication Madness" www.honorpoint.com. Thanks for your support. ~ Ms. DelGuercio, Mr. Mills, and Mrs. Obstgarten

Grade 5 Math News!

Happy December! This first week of December marks the end of our Unit 2 study of geometry. The students have been working hard to review the concepts covered in this unit. We'll use the results of our Unit 2 Assessment to guide any need for re-teaching of particular topics. Then, students will be taking a reassessment as an opportunity to demonstrate any further understanding of unit 2 concepts that were previously missed on the first test. Your child's teacher will announce the retest date as it approaches. The students will then be ready to jump back into the world of multiplication and division! Students will be reviewing various methods of multi-digit multiplication and division. Brush up on two of our unique multiplication strategies (lattice method and partial-product method) at http://everydaymathsuccess.com/pdf/EM_Algorithms.pdf. Closely related to a strong understanding of multiplication and division is the second half of our 3rd unit. We'll be studying decimals, fractions, probability, and percents. Practice the correct way to read decimal numbers by visiting this site: <http://www.coolmath.com/prealgebra/02-decimals/02-decimals-reading-01.htm>. In the midst of all of this math, we wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season! ~ Ms. Levenson and Mr. Oliver

Math 6 News!

Tis' the season for more Math Six,
Your kids will learn lots of new tricks.
In parts C and D of unit two,
We will be learning a lot in our smart little crew.

Decimals, percents, mixed numbers and fractions,
With these they will be learning addition and subtraction.
Not just with numbers, but with pictures too,
What little mathematicians they are coming before you!

These concepts will help when it is time to shop,
They'll help calculate that thirty-percent price drop.
What *fraction* of the quarter is left before break,
What a needed vacation we'll all get to take!

~Ms. South and Mrs. Haigh

Math 7 News!

We are almost there! We have been challenging our brains with new algebraic concepts and are almost done with unit two! As we begin unit 2D, we will be modeling, identifying, and solving 2 step linear equations and inequalities. We will then be graphing our inequalities on number lines. After the blizzard-free break, we will be taking a giant unit two assessment! ~ Ms. South

Dear Bannockburn Parents:

We are very excited to announce that we have created a sister school partnership with Wheaton Woods Elementary School, located in Silver Spring, Maryland. Wheaton Woods Elementary serves 492 students, 80% of whom receive Free and Reduced Meals.

The Montgomery County Public School system encourages the creation of productive partnerships among schools. Sister-school relationships are very common throughout the Walt Whitman cluster. In fact, a majority of the schools in our cluster have sister-school relationships in place.

After consulting with the principal of Wheaton Woods and the BES PTA leadership, we are planning at least two events for this school year that will help to build the relationship between our schools and provide needed support to Wheaton Woods. This fall, we are going to have a coat/mitten/hat drive for Wheaton Woods families. We also intend to sponsor a book drive to benefit Wheaton Woods in the second half of the school year. The PTA's Community Service Committee will be organizing these events in conjunction with BES staff. Please be on the lookout for further information.

We are fortunate to live in a community that places such a high value on community service. Thank you to all of our parents, students, and staff who have contributed to past events such as the Help the Homeless Walk, winter food and gift drives, and Pennies for Patients. Our partnership with Wheaton Woods will give us another opportunity to "give back," close to home.

If you have any questions about this new partnership or would like to get involved in this initiative, please feel free to contact us. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal

Lisa Sorkin
PTA Co-President

Allison Harrison
PTA Co-President

Math Facts Fluency Program

As a part of our continuous effort to enrich and strengthen student learning at Bannockburn, we will be implementing a math fact fluency program in 1st-5th grade beginning next Monday, December 12th.

Our focus upon math fact fluency is well-founded in current research about mathematics. Several studies indicate that students who are able to recall basic facts with automaticity are more confident in math and, thus, are more likely to attempt problems that require higher-order thinking.

Our math fact fluency program will involve basic fact practice within the school day as well as outside of school. Each week will end with a brief fact assessment that focuses on individual student growth rather than competition between students. Fact fluency instruction in school will not be done at the expense of conceptual math development. Rather, it will serve to bolster the high-quality math instruction that students are currently receiving.

- At the end of every week, students in 1st-5th grade classrooms will complete a 1-minute fact fluency challenge.
- When a student completes a fact fluency assessment with accuracy, he or she graduates to the next level for the following week's math fact challenge.
- The goal is continuous self-improvement; not student-to-student comparison.
- Fact fluency will be measured by [level attainment](#) within each operation.
- Fact practice happens daily at school and at home.
- More information on the math Facts Fluency Program is available on our school website.
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/bannockburnes/templates/default.aspx?id=211566>

From Our School Counselor

Elizabeth Whiting

December 2011

Fairness

Fairness is the value of the month the 4th graders presented on the front bulletin board. Looking in the dictionary and considering fairness or being fair is more complicated than one would think. Being fair does not always mean being equal. As the students discussed, being fair can mean making things equal by sharing, compromise, or taking turns. It can also mean not cheating, having assistance with something that is harder for you than for others, making sure all know the rules of a game, accepting responsibility for a mistake so that someone else isn't blamed, being considerate of people with disabilities, and that very important rule, treating other people as you want to be treated. Ask your children what they think is the meaning of the word fair. This makes a great dinner table discussion.

When Can I Leave My Children Alone?

Holiday time! --So much to do and get done-- so many places to go! What to do with the children?

The answer to this question differs depending on the needs of your child but Maryland Family Law 5-801 states that: A person who is charged with the care of a child under the age of 8 years may not allow the child to be locked or confined in a dwelling, building, enclosure, or motor vehicle while the person charged is absent and the dwelling, building, enclosure, or motor vehicle is out of the sight of the person charged unless the person charged provides a reliable person at least 13 years old to remain with the child to protect the child.

Leaving a child 8 years old or older alone for short periods of time is permissible but requires preparation of the child in safety procedures. They need to know what to do in case of an emergency, how to reach you, call 911, and how to give their correct address for help. The child must be responsible and know what your rules are for answering the door or phone. For any child with special needs, age 8 may be too young. When children are old enough and responsible enough to stay alone it can certainly be handy for the parent as well I remember.

Big Questions

The religious celebrations of December remind me of what public schools do not and cannot teach. This is as it should be. Only families can teach their children what they believe to be the nature of some of the biggest questions of life that all people consider and wrestle with. Is there a god? Or not? Where do people go after they die? Is there a heaven? Where does life originate? Children ask these questions and learn from families and from the religious institutions families may attend. They need these discussions. It helps them understand their place in the structure of this world. You may find yourself answering questions this December. I'm sure you will be answering these questions with respect and tolerance for differing beliefs. Respect and tolerance is something we at Bannockburn can agree on and do teach. It is one of our core values. Have a Happy December and Winter break.