

BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS



The Principal's Newsletter

Burning Tree Elementary School

Nancy L. Erdrich, Principal

October 2008

You are invited to visit school on
Monday, October 13th
9:15-10:30 a.m.

MCPS's visiting day is an opportunity for parents to spend time in their child's classroom. Come experience the wonder of being back in elementary school again.

It is hard to believe that we are more than halfway through the first quarter. Your children have been working hard and we are now in the rhythm of school. Here is what is happening at Burning Tree...

Upcoming Events

International Night: We look forward to seeing a great turnout on Thursday, **October 16th** at 6:30 p.m. for our annual International Night. The flags are hung, and I look forward to the Parade of Nations and the country exhibits that represent the great diversity in our student population. Come one and all to the night that celebrates our diversity and uniqueness!

SGA Elections: Speaking of candidates, our SGA (Student Government Association) elections are fast approaching. Fourth and fifth grade students will be running for president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The candidate's speeches will be videotaped and shown in the classrooms, and the election will be held during the **week of October 20th**.

Walk for the Homeless: We will have our yearly Walk for the Homeless on **October 28th** during recess (rain date, October 29th). You will be receiving more information shortly. It is a wonderful opportunity to raise your child's awareness of people/children who are less fortunate than we. Please contact Mrs. Whalen, our counselor, or Julie Zembrak if you are interested in participating or helping.

Mock election: Our second grade will be holding a mock national election on **October 30th**. Everyone in the school will have an opportunity to vote for the candidate of his or her choice in a closed ballot election. Posters will focus on the responsibility of voting rather than supporting particular candidates. It will be interesting to see if Burning Tree can predict the outcome of the national election.

Safety and Security

Everybody must sign in: Our primary interest is to keep your children safe and secure at all times. This is why we keep all of the doors to the building locked at all times. Please use the front entrance at all times to sign in and get a visitor's badge. We appreciate your compliance with this safety procedure.

Code Blue/Code Red: We recently had our first Code Blue/Red drill. This is an exercise to ensure that our children are safe should there be a dangerous situation in our area.

Inside Burning Tree

Staffing: We worked hard to get another first grade teacher and I am happy to report that our new first grade class is up and running. We worked hard to get another paraeducator position to support inclusion of our learning center students, and we were successful. We are now fully staffed.

Hallway Floors: We are in the process of replacing the floors in the main hallways. The work is being done during the evening hours after the students leave, and both the workers and our own building service team double vacuum every night. All tile has been removed, and the process of replacing the tiles has begun. I have been told that there will be no odor. Work should be completed by next weekend. Special thanks to the PTA for funding two lines of colored tile in the hallway. The children will now have a path to follow when they walk in the halls. The touch of color will really brighten up our halls!

Conversion to Heat: MCPS maintenance has converted BTES from air conditioning to heat. Please have your child dress for the weather during this transitional time.

From the Health room: Each year children at Burning Tree Elementary School get head lice. Children play in close contact with each other, exchange personal items and sleep over at each other's homes. Be alert for the signs of head lice. The most common sign is intense itching on the back of the neck and head. If you observe your child scratching, check the head for nits (eggs of head lice) attached to the hair shaft. Eight cases of lice have been found in our school. A letter was sent home on October 6th asking parents to check their child(ren) daily, and we are asking you to please be vigilant. Although only a few cases have been found, we can't be too careful. If your child comes down with lice, please treat him/her as per the directions sent home last week, and inform our school health tech. The teachers are also talking to their students about behaviors that contribute to the spread of lice.

Teaching Responsibility: Should your child forget his/her instrument, we ask you not to bring it to school. It is your child's responsibility to remember his/her instrument.

Play dates: Play dates should be arranged beforehand and both parents should send notes. (I am told that the PTA has a terrific "Note to the teacher" pad that is perfect for this.) Many teachers don't read their e-mails during the day, and the office has been swamped with play date messages. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to get the message to the child.

A Partnership: Our newest club, the First Lego League, is open to fourth and fifth graders. It is co-sponsored by the NSWC Carderock. The first session focused on building Lego bridges, under the direction of eight scientists. Through experimentation, the students discovered the structural design that supports the greatest weight. The students will eventually build Lego robots. There will be another First Lego League session next semester. When the time comes, please encourage your daughter to attend. Only three of our 29 participants are girls.

Parent Conferences: Have you signed up for parent/teacher conferences to be held on **November 11th and 12th**? If not, please contact your child's teacher.

Thank you! Thank you!

Support at home: Thank you for making sure that homework is completed and turned in daily. Interims were sent home last week to keep you informed of your child's progress and what you can do to support

your child's learning at home. The first quarter ends on **October 31st**, and there is still time for re-taking assessments and turning in missing homework.

Healthy moves: Kudos to **Ms. Loftus** for getting our Fitness Frog program, and your children, up and running during lunch! Individuals and classes get credit for each lap they walk or run around our field, and there is a healthy competition among the classes at each grade level to see which can complete the most laps. The class challenge starts fresh each month. Encourage your child to get moving and participate. You can check the bulletin outside the all purpose room to see how each class is doing.

After school clubs: Thanks to **Mr. Wells, Mrs. Shapiro, Mrs. Payne, Mrs. Kunst, Ms. Driscoll, Mrs. Granof, and Mrs. Flicker** for hosting after school clubs, to **Ms. Evans** and **Ms. Bernstein** for organizing a club for our learning center students, and to **Ms. Loftus** for creating a basketball skills and drills club.

Picture Perfect: Our school is looking more and more beautiful every day. Thank you to everyone who attended Beautify Burning Tree. Wow!

Supporting our sister school: Representatives of our PTA and I met with the principal of our sister school, Broad Acres Elementary School, on October 8th to find out how we can best support them. One immediate need they have is Halloween costumes. Please contact Minki Chatterji if you have a costume to donate. More information will be coming soon on other ideas.

Walk to School Day: Walk to School Day was an incredible success. It was great to see so many students and staff members stretching and walking together. Thank you, PTA, for sponsoring such a healthy event.

Math Presentation: A special thank you to all of the parents who came to the PTA meeting Monday night to learn about the MCPS math curriculum. We hope it clarified some of your questions about how math is taught at Burning Tree. Special thanks to Mrs. Granof, Mrs. Shapiro and Mrs. Dieckman for their informative presentations.

Principal's Advisory committee: Thank you to Cindy Campbell, Doreen Rosenthal and Olivia Lei (parents), and Mrs. Dieckman, Mrs. Shapiro, Mrs. Drake, Mrs. Richter, Mrs. Rosenberg and Mr. Tark (staff) for attending the first meeting of the Principal's Advisory Committee. This focus of the committee will be to provide a forum for generating new ideas on best practices in education and home school partnerships. We will also focus on reviewing our School Improvement Plan. If you are interested in joining this committee, please call Cathy Shaub at school at 301-320-6510. We are interested in having a cross representation of parents from all grade levels.

Upcoming Dates

Monday, October 13	Parent Visiting Day – 9:15-10:30 a.m.
Wednesday, October 15	Cultural Arts assembly: “African Roots, Latino Soul” - Grades K-2 – 9:30 a.m.; Grades 3-5 –10:30 a.m.
Thursday, October 16	International Night – 6:30 p.m.
Friday, October 17	No School
Wednesday, October 22	Principal's Coffee – 9:30 a.m. Individual Picture Day
October 28	Walk for the Homeless – 12:10-1:20 p.m.
October 31	Halloween parade and parties