



BURNT MILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA NEWSLETTER

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February 24, 2010

Vol. 24

Dear Parents, Teachers and Students;

What a winter we have had this year! As the snow from the biggest winter storm melts on our streets, at Burnt Mills we are gearing up for an exciting month ahead. A big thanks to all you parents, guardians, teachers and students for braving the weather to come to the January PTA meeting. We had to cut that program short due to inclement weather and are now very excited to be able to host another meeting in March. Don't forget to save the date for the next PTA meeting on **March 2, 2010 from 6:30-8:00 pm.**

We have many exciting discussion topics for this meeting, one of which is - Food! Food! Food! Is it really possible to have a healthy diet in this day and age of fast food and TV dinners? In keeping with Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" Campaign, our March 2nd discussion will explore ways you as busy parents can still make time to think about a healthy diet for your kids and make it happen!.

To commemorate Black History Month, Mrs. White will present on the accomplishments of Africans and African Americans.

We will also be hearing about practical ways we can help our kids prepare for middle school from Eric Minus, Principal from Francis Scott Key Middle School. This is a do not miss discussion for parents of our fourth and fifth graders so mark your calendars!

We would like to thank all of the Burnt Mills PTA members for their support. We always welcome new members to the PTA as we work to achieve our goal-100% parent/family membership in the PTA. If you have not already- sign up today! There will be a sign up sheet available at the PTA meeting. Membership is only \$10 per individual and \$15 per family annually. We make a little go a very long way!

Important dates to remember:

- **Thursday, February 25:** Poetry Slam Assembly
- **Friday, February 26:** Early release day K-12.
- **March 27-April 6:** Spring Break

Thank you,

Ms. Brown
PTA President

Kindergarten

Greetings Kindergarten Parents,

Habari gain? This is Kiswahili for “What’s the news?”

We hope you were able to visit the Burnt Mills Watoto Village (Children’s Village). Our children got to visit an African village, which was located in the All Purpose Room. The children even tried on African clothing on Thursday February 18, 2010.

Math

In math, students are developing a sense of “time”. They are expected to describe when an event happens, (i.e., in the morning, at night, before school, after school, yesterday, today, tomorrow, etc.). They are also beginning the unit on “Measurement”. The children will compare lengths of objects and measure objects using non-standard units. They will use paper clips, blocks, or popsicle sticks as measuring tools. At the end of the quarter, the children will learn to identify two and three dimensional shapes.

Reading and Language Arts

In reading, kindergarten students will continue to sharpen their foundational skills. They are speaking in complete sentences using the words (he, she, you and I) correctly in sentences. They are retelling stories using the events that happened in the beginning, middle and end of a story. The students are using rhyming words and dividing words into syllables. Kindergarten sight words are studied daily. This quarter, students will read for literary experience (Fairy tales) and they will read to be informed. The author study for this quarter is Rosemary Wells.

Writing

In writing, kindergartners are sequencing and labeling pictures. They will learn to develop an opinion and provide evidence to support the opinion. They will write to persuade and will be introduced to writing friendly letters.

Science

In science and social studies, students continue to work on the unit “Myself and Others”. They will measure themselves, compare their height with that of their classmates, measure their hands, and “grab” small objects to see how many they can pick up in one handful.

Asante sana (thank you very much) for all the help you give your child.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School Kindergarten Team

Grade 1

Dear First Grade Parents,

Thank you very, very much for the academic support that you have given to our first graders during the first half of this school year. The first grade team looks forward to your continued support and collaboration as the school year proceeds. Together, we can provide our students with a very successful and rewarding school experience.

Math

We are completing Unit 3 addition and subtraction facts up to 10 and gathering, organizing and displaying data. Students have learned to interpret data in terms of most and least. Next, we will move on to Unit 4, which focuses on the study of “Geometry”. We will be learning about two-dimensional and tri-dimensional shapes. Students will also learn about the different forms of measurement, which will include finding the length, weight and capacity of objects.

Reading

We finished our mid-year Mclass testing. Our first graders showed tremendous progress in reading. We are working with fiction stories and our focus is on folktales. We are learning about the distinct characteristics of folktales and differentiating them from other fiction stories. We will revisit non-fiction texts to focus on *main idea* and *supporting details*. Students need to continue learning the first grade high-frequency words, as well as, read at least 15 minutes every evening.

Writing

Students will continue writing on various topics to improve organization, ideas, capitalization and punctuation.

Science

We are completing our “Construction” unit. We have investigated the physics of force, motion and equilibrium through many hands-on activities such as constructing fences, walls, towers and bridges.

Social Studies

We are finishing our unit on “Economics”. Students have learned about goods and services and how to identify and make smart economic choices. Next, we will begin Unit 4, which will focus on “Telling About Ourselves”. We will study history, culture, traditions and customs.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School First Grade Team

Grade 2

Dear Second Grade Parents,

The Second Grade Team welcomes you back after our unexpected mid-winter break, thanks to the snow. We would like to thank you for your support by having the students read and complete their reading and math homework. Kudos to you!

Math

For this quarter, students will be working on “Fractions”. The Students are also learning to recognize the American standard system of measures (inches, feet, and yards) as well as the international metric system of measurement (millimeters, centimeters, and meters).

Please encourage your child to practice his/her basic addition and subtraction facts nightly. Explain to them the difference between the systems of measurement and emphasize to them the concept of fractions in the daily things you do at home with them. This may include tasks such as measuring while cooking, the portioning of foods to include desserts.

Reading

Our students are reading to be informed. They will also begin reading folktales, tall tales, and biographies. With the Terra Nova 2 testing approaching, the students will also have instruction on testing strategies.

Our author study focus for the 3rd quarter is Faith Ringgold. Please encourage your child to read about this author at home. You can help your child become informed about this author by encouraging him/her to read books by Ringgold and, if possible, have your child access articles about her on the internet or from your local library.

Please make sure that your child is reading for at least twenty-five minutes each night. Your child is to log in the number of minutes that he or she reads each night on the monthly reading log. Your support in this effort will be of great benefit to your child.

Writing

Our students will focus on writing to persuade. The goal of persuasive writing is to convince someone to think the way you do. Persuasive texts are written for a variety of reasons such as:

- To put fourth a point of view
- To achieve a goal
- To encourage people to buy a product

Spelling/Grammar

In spelling, our students will continue to explore spelling patterns including those with long and short vowel sounds.

In grammar, students are exploring homophones. Please help your child at home by having him/her identify homophones in daily speech, for example, (where-were-wear), (deer-dear), (their-there-they're). Students are also learning the rules for the use of contractions and latter writing.

Science

We have started our second unit in science in which the students will be learning about “Balance and Weight”. It would be of great help if you would do activities at home with your child that requires them to think about balancing, weighing, and measuring.

Social Studies

The focus of Unit 3 in Social Studies is “Biographies”. The children will be introduced to individuals who have been able to influence the outcome of historical events and lead people to adapt to change. Our second grade students are presently exploring the meaning and significance of African-American History Month.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School Second Grade Team

Grade 3

Dear Third Grade Parents,

As we continue the third marking period, let’s remember to keep up the hard work. We still have lots of learning to do during the remainder of this year ☺. Next month your child will take the Maryland School Assessments (MSA). This is a chance for your child to show off how much he/she has learned so far in school. The third grade MSA testing dates are as follows: Reading will be administered on March 8 and 9, 2010. Math will be administered on March 15 and 16, 2010. Please make sure your child gets the proper amount of rest during the testing period. Lack of rest can have an affect upon a child’s performance. We also ask that you make every effort for your child to be present in school and on time daily during those days. We know they will do a great job!

Math

We are currently working on our fourth math unit for the year. During this unit, we are focusing on “Geometry”, where we are building upon second grade content. Students will need to look at an angle and know if it is greater, less than or equal to a right angle. They will also need to categorize two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. We will be taking the Unit 4 assessment starting on Tuesday, March 3, 2010. Please refer to the Math Unit 4 Newsletter for additional information.

Reading & Language Arts

This month, we will conclude our study of poetry and figurative language. We will be working on test taking skills and we will also start reading historical fiction books. The historical fiction genre is characterized as stories that are set in times long ago and they seem as if they could have happened. On your visits to the local library, please look for stories of this genre for your child to read during their daily reading at home.

Science

Our current science unit is “Crime Lab Chemistry”. We are in the process of finishing up this unit and we will be starting on our new unit. We will also be studying waves and vibrations.

We appreciate all of the cooperation we’ve received from home. When students perceive teachers and families as a team, they undoubtedly will perform more consistently and proficiently. Thank you for all your hard work!

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School Third Grade Team

Grade 4

Dear Fourth Grade Parents,

Thank you, parents, students and all of the wonderful people who continue to engage our students in different learning experiences as we prepare them to take the Maryland School Assessments (MSA).

Math

In math, our students have been learning about decimals, fractions, percentages and equivalencies.

Reading

During quarter 3, students will be studying plays, biographies, autobiographies and memoirs. We encourage our students to continue their daily reading at home for at least forty minutes and to keep a reading response log. This will help to develop their fluency and comprehension skills.

Science

Students are discovering and learning that *matter* is anything that has mass and takes up space. Matter can change its state without losing any mass. Students will also learn that each season has different weather conditions and that the *Sun* causes water to change forms on *Earth*, but does not change the amount of water on *Earth*.

Social Studies

Students are studying the topic of “Government and Civics” during our social studies and reading time. They will learn about the absence of individual rights in the colonial era, especially for African-Americans. Students will learn about today’s individual responsibilities and rights, the three branches of our governmental system and the importance of civic participation. They will also construct a timeline of the history of individual rights in Maryland.

Please review your child’s planner and homework. Also, support your child’s learning by complementing on his/her work every day.

Sincerely,

The Burnt Mills Elementary School Fourth Grade Team

Grade 5

Dear Fifth Grade Parents,

The fifth grade team has helped the school raise over \$400 in two weeks for the *Burnt Mills Cares Haitian Earthquake Relief Fund*. We are continuing to raise money until the end of the school year. Haiti is still in dire need of our help. Please continue to send in your donations.

Math

In Mr. Casey’s and Mr. Scrivener’s math classes, students have been working hard and preparing for the Unit 3 math assessments. We are starting Unit 4, which focuses on “*Data and Statistics*” and we are currently preparing for the Maryland School Assessments (MSA).

Reading

In reading, all classes have been learning about the elements of a play and about the “*Science Fiction*” genre. We are also rigorously preparing for the MSA by taking practice tests and discussing good test taking strategies.

Writing

In writing, students are still focused on writing with “*Voice*”. When a writer writes with voice, the writing is full of energy and life, the writer makes you want to read more, and the writing matches the writer’s personality. We are finishing our final monthly BCRs in preparation for the MSA.

Science

We are beginning our “*Astronomy*” unit.

Social Studies

The fifth graders have been learning a lot about African-American history through literature, lessons, and discussions. We also learned a lot about African-American history on our fabulous field trip to see the play, “**Black Journey**” at Howard University. While preparing for their wax museum, Mr. Casey’s class is learning a great deal of knowledge about Black Americans who have made major contributions to the world.

Sincerely,

The Burnt Mills Elementary School Fifth Grade Team