



**BURNT MILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA
NEWSLETTER**

[HTTP://WWW.MCPS.K12.MD.US/SCHOOLS/BURNTMILLSES](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/burntmillse)

October 27, 2009

Vol. 21

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Parents/Guardians, Teachers and Students:

I would like to thank all of the parents/guardians, teachers and students who attended **Back-to-School Night** and **Open House**. It was wonderful to meet and converse with you all regarding your praises, ideas, and concerns for the upcoming school year. I am looking forward to collaborating with you as the year progresses. In addition, I would like to congratulate the new 41 certified members of the PTA! You are truly part of an elite team, and your son/daughter has earned a stamp in their **Passport to Participation** card! I am hopeful that many more will join and earn their stamps.

Potential members, you are still able to send membership dues through your child, or at the upcoming PTA meeting, the cost is \$10 for individuals and \$15 for family. Come and join us at the 1st Annual Volunteer Drive! You can plan your year and all of your **Passport to Participation** stamps in advance! Come and network, meet staff, other parents, enjoy light refreshments and win door prizes! Learn about upcoming events such as **Math Night, Technology Night, Talent Show, Reading Night**, and many more. Committee chairs will be available to solicit your help in helping these programs come to fruition.

November reminders:

- Monday, November 2- Professional Day for Teachers-NO SCHOOL
- Tuesday, November 3-PTA Meeting at 6:30 pm
- Wednesday, November 11 and Thursday November 12-Early Release and Parent Conferences
- Wednesday, November 11-Report Card Distribution

Special thanks to Horizon Daycare for providing free child care for the PTA meeting on Tuesday, November 3, 2009!

Thank you,

Ms. Brown
PTA President

Kindergarten

Greetings Everyone!

Kindergarten students have been working hard in all subject areas.

Math

In math, students are learning to sort objects by shape, size and color. They are also creating graphs, using survey questions that they ask one another. Students are extending and copying patterns with concrete objects and learning to recognize patterns in the environment. They are also making patterns with words or body motions. Have fun practicing patterns at home using buttons, pennies, nickels, dimes, pasta, etc. Don't forget to practice position words, especially the words *before*, *after* and *between*. Try lining up toys facing in one direction, and then ask which toy is *before*, *after* or *between*.

Reading and Language Arts

Concepts About Print

Reading aloud with a child is very important for developing literacy skills. Your child can practice following print from left to right and top to bottom. He/she may even tell you about the characters and setting in the story you are reading, just like we've been practicing at school.

Literary Experience

Students are retelling stories by talking about the beginning, middle and the end of a story; predicting what happens next; and, using pictures to tell something about the story. They are listening to books by Margaret Wise Brown. The next time you and your child visit the public library, look for books by this author.

Phonemic Awareness

Students are developing phonemic awareness by learning rhyming words, poems and songs. They are also learning letter names and sounds. Please continue to work with your child at home with these skills.

Reading to be Informed

Students have been introduced to informational text and how to look at pictures to gain meaning. For example, what can you learn about spiders just by looking at the pictures in a book about spiders? Some textual features that students are introduced to include: the index, table of contents, bold print, labels, etc. Kindergartners are also looking for signs and symbols in their environment. While taking a walk with your child, look for signs and symbols, which includes stop signs, exit signs, symbols for bathrooms, etc. Have fun walking and talking together!

Sight Words

Your child might be pointing out sight words they have learned such as *I, a, the, like, see, you, and, or, up*. Please continue to work with your child on the twenty-five kindergarten sight words that have been sent home. Start with only two words each week, and use the one and two letter words, then progress to the three and four letter words. If your child knows the twenty-five kindergarten words, ask your child's teacher for the *first grade* words!

Writing

Students are developing their writing skills like they have learned to talk. First came babbling, then a few simple words. They acquire writing skills like this, too: first, scribble; then meaningful marks; then letters; and, finally a few misspelled words. You may see a mixture of capital and lowercase letters, large spaces between words, and a period at the end of a sentence or maybe not. Encourage all writing, and also refer to the twenty-five kindergarten sight words, for words they can “borrow.”

Science

Our science unit is about living things. Students are working on using their five senses to explore their world. Cook some popcorn and ask your child how they are able to see it, smell it, feel it, hear it and taste it.

Social Studies

In social studies, Kindergarteners are learning that rules protect us. Please review the importance of rules at home and school. This also goes with our new social skills program *Stop and Think*. Ask your child, “Did you stay on green today?” If they were mostly green in September, they had a Popsicle party. This October’s reward is 20 extra minutes of recess! Go Green!

Continue to work with your child on letter recognition, letter sounds and sight words daily. They cannot have too much practice in these areas. Don’t forget to read to your child everyday. Look for sight words and let your child read them to you in the book. Also let your child point to the words while you read and ask them to tell you something that happened in the beginning, middle and end of the story. Enjoy this quiet time with your child!

Sincerely,

The Burnt Mills Elementary School Kindergarten Teachers

Grade 1

Dear First Grade Parents,

Our students are having a great time learning everyday. Fall is here now and the students must come in each day prepared for the cool weather. Long sleeved shirts, sweaters, jackets are appropriate for now.

Math

In our mathematics class, students are currently finishing Unit 1. They are working with number sense, identifying patterns and solving number stories. Students are also developing the concepts of one less, one more, the number in between and the number that is 10 more and 10 less than a given number. Next, we will focus on testing and then move on to Unit 1b, which consists of odd and even numbers and continuing patterns.

Reading

In reading, students are working on story elements, characters, setting, and problem solving. They will continue to review before, during and after reading strategies. Please encourage your

child to read each night for 20 minutes and take the time to ask him/her questions about what they read.

Science

In science, students are still working with rocks, sand and soil. Our next unit will be coming shortly. The students enjoyed collecting rocks and observing earthworms.

Social Studies

First grade students are working on Unit 2/Where We Live. They will learn about our earth, land, water, natural resources, weather and seasons, city, town, and suburbs as well as our country and our country's neighbors.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School First Grade Teachers

Grade 2

Dear Second Grade Parents,

Thank you very much for the academic support that you are giving our second graders during the first quarter of this school year. Our second grade team looks forward to a successful school year as a result of your continued support.

Math

In math, our second graders will have completed Unit 1 of the curriculum, which focused on recognizing, describing, extending and creating repeating and increasing patterns using models and numbers. They also explored ways to use patterns to continue numerical sequences and identify the rule for the numerical sequence. Students have also had an exciting time conducting surveys, organizing information, and graphing data. Unit 2 of our second grade math curriculum will focus on geometry concepts.

Important Note: Please encourage your child to practice his/her basic addition and subtraction facts nightly.

Reading

In the weeks to come, second graders will be reading to be informed. They will identify and analyze text features such as the table of contents, index, captions, labels, graphs, charts and tables. Identifying and analyzing these text features will help students locate and comprehend facts and information quickly.

Please make sure that your child is reading for at least 20 minutes each night. Your child is to record the number of minutes that he or she reads each night in the monthly reading log that is sent home at the beginning of each month. Your support in this effort will be of great benefit to your child.

Writing

During the second quarter of the first grade writing class, our students will engage in writing to inform. Our writing focus coincides with our reading for the quarter, which is reading to be informed.

As you make your family visits to the local library, please encourage your child to check out informational texts.

Science

In science, we are concluding our “**Life Cycle of Butterflies**” unit. The students have observed the metamorphosis of a butterfly. In other words, they observed their caterpillars grow, develop into a chrysalis, and then change into a butterfly. They are currently waiting for the chrysalis to change into a painted lady butterfly. Once the butterflies emerge, we will have a “**Release Celebration**”. Ask your child to keep you abreast of the “**Release Celebration**” date so that you may attend. While we are awaiting the delivery of our next science kit, we will wrap up our study of the life cycle of the butterfly.

Social Studies

In social studies, our focus during the upcoming second quarter will be the history and culture of Native Americans in the United States. Our social studies focus will coincide with our national recognition of Native American Month.

Looking Ahead to TN2:

We have begun our preparation for the TN2 assessment, which will be administered in April 2010. Our students are participating in daily language activities that focus on skills related to capitalization, punctuation, grammar and spelling that will be assessed on the TN2 assessment. They are also using a variety of test taking strategies in effort to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School Second Grade Team

Grade 3

Hello Third Grade Families,

It was nice to see so many of you at back to school night. We hope to see you again soon. The first marking period ends October 30, 2009 and reports cards will be sent home in the Wednesday folders on November 11, 2009.

Math

In math, students are currently working on three-digit addition and subtraction with regrouping. They are learning how estimation applies to the real world application of using money. We will finish the month with our Unit One assessment. Please be sure your child completes their review packets.

Reading/Writing

Reading for information is now the focus of reading instruction. We will read informational/nonfiction texts and identify the author's purpose and text features. During writing, we are focusing on the 6+1 Writing Trait of Organization. Students are to have clear main ideas, supporting details and a conclusion.

Science/Social Studies

Third graders will continue their exploration of plant growth in science by observing their plants. Students are very excited about the growth of their plants and they enjoyed our field trip to Brookside Gardens! The students were highly encouraged to share their Brookside Gardens experience with you, too! Students will continue their study of economic resources and will also identify natural, capital, and human resources.

We are very excited about the parent support we have and look forward to continuing and growing our relationship. You know the saying, "*It takes a village to raise a child.*" We are the village. Remember to support instruction at home by reviewing your child's homework; talking to your child about what he/she has learned; and, providing books that you can read together. Also, contact your child's teacher when you need support.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School Third Grade Teachers

Grade 4

Dear Fourth Grade Parents and Students,

We have made great academic gains although we are only two months into the school year! Be sure to encourage your child to continue to do his/her best academically and behaviorally.

Math

In math, the students are preparing to complete the Unit 1 assessment. Students will be required to demonstrate their knowledge of geometry, place value and data analysis concepts on the unit assessment. In Unit 2, students will extend their knowledge of numeric patterns and relationships. Mastery of basic multiplication facts will help students to make estimates and perform operations with large numbers. As they develop their fluency with division facts, knowledge of the relationship between the inverse operations of multiplication and division will be simultaneously reinforced during instruction.

Reading

In reading, students will end quarter one reading informational text. As they read informational text, students will identify text features, highlight and summarize important information, and develop the skill of skimming and scanning text. During small and whole group instruction, special attention has been given to vocabulary. Students are learning to connect new vocabulary to known concepts and everyday experiences.

As we delve into quarter two, students will read realistic and historical fiction. During realistic fiction instruction, students will identify the characteristics of the genre, explain the importance of the setting and compare themes. As students read historical fiction, they will identify cultural ethnicity and historical reference. In addition, they will develop their understanding of mood and theme within the text. Students will be introduced to books by Eloise Greenfield. They will learn about the author's life and the influence of historical and personal experiences.

Spelling

In spelling, we are currently identifying words that have the long "i" and short "i" vowel sounds. Students were given a list of words that have those sounds, based on their reading level, that consist of basic and challenge words. The students have been engaged in weeklong activities to reinforce their familiarity with the sounds and spelling of these words.

Writing

In writing, we are still focusing on the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing. We are identifying what good writing looks like and examining each trait closely to make sure that our writing consists of each one. The students have gained an understanding of the importance of adding details to their writing. In addition, they have been working on developing a main idea and writing details that support the main idea. The students will also develop the skill of identifying run-on sentences and incomplete sentences.

Science

Students will continue to develop their knowledge of the ecosystem in their science class. As they observe their terrariums and aquariums, they will take a closer look at the living and non-living things within each environment. Through their observations and research, they will explain how each depends on the other for survival. They will also be able to explain what all living things need to grow and survive. As quarter two approaches, students will learn how pollution impacts the ecosystem. Students will also be engaged in a variety of experiments to reinforce this understanding.

Social Studies

In social studies, students used maps of Maryland to identify its economic activities and created stories summarizing their knowledge of these activities. In the next few days, students will begin learning about Native Americans in Maryland. Students will participate in a group project in which they will research a traditional Native American group.

Sincerely,

The Burnt Mills Elementary School Fourth Grade Teachers

Grade 5

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It's hard to believe it is almost the end of the first quarter! The fifth grade teachers want to thank all the parents who showed up for Back to School Night! There was a lot of information presented, so we also want to thank you for your patience during that time.

Math

In Mr. Scrivener's and Mr. Casey's math classes, students have been finishing a unit on factors. Near the end of October, students will be assessed on their knowledge of Unit 1. Students recently began Unit two, which focuses on Geometry. Specifically in this unit, students will identify properties of geometric figures; classifications and applications of geometric figures; geometric representations; transformations of figures; and, congruence and similarities of figures.

In Ms. Gottlieb's Math 6 class, students have begun Unit 2. This unit consists of four small sections. First, students will begin working with fractions, decimals, and percents, followed by estimation, multiplication and division of fractions and ratio and rates. Student will be hard at work, as this unit will be taught for thirteen weeks. Please be sure to look for daily homework, as students will be assessed weekly.

In Ms. Gottlieb's Math 7 class, students have also begun Unit 2, which consists of four small sections. First students will work with exponents and scientific notation followed by formulas and expressions, integers and finally equations and inequalities with integers. Students will extend their prior understanding of powers and exponents to negative exponents as well as using scientific notation to compare the magnitude of numbers and to compute with very large and very small numbers. During the third section of Unit 2, students will compare, order and represent rational numbers in equivalent forms. They will learn how to add, subtract, multiply and divide matrices containing integers. Please be sure to look for daily homework, as students will be assessed weekly.

Reading

Our fifth graders are becoming pros at working in literature circles and learning to discuss and comprehend the text they are reading. Students recently finished up with our historical fiction genre and were assessed on that genre. Over the past couple of weeks, students were introduced to the informational text genre. They have been working on identifying organizational text structure within a piece of informational text.

Writing

In writing, students finished their focus on the ideas trait for the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing and have begun working on the ***Organization*** trait. This is not to say that students can now forget what information they have learned about main ideas and staying on topic. Each of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing will blend together throughout the year in each of their writing pieces. Each of the fifth grade classes is working on an informational text project. For this project, students were placed in groups and researched about a pre-approved topic. Now students have started writing informational articles with their groups using information they learned through their research. Later, students will work in media to publish their work using the software program, Microsoft Publisher.

Science

In science, students will continue working on the unit of force and motion. Students will continue completing investigations where they will hypothesize and record findings of force and motion.

Social Studies

Over the next few weeks in social studies, students will begin applying their knowledge of what it means to be a United States citizen and causes and events leading up to the Revolutionary War.

As you can see, fifth graders have been extremely busy and productive over the first few weeks of school. We have so many wonderful weeks of fun learning ahead and we are all looking forward to a wonderful school year.

Sincerely,
The Burnt Mills Elementary School Fifth Grade Teachers



Dear Parents:

Give your child a journal and have him/her write about what they have read. Provide questions to help him/her write responses:

- What is the problem in the story?
- How was the problem solved? Which was the most interesting character? Why?
- Why did the author write this story?

Ask your child to compare a book to another familiar book:

How are the characters alike or different? Do the stories take place in similar settings? How are the illustrations the same or different? What part(s) of the story or book do you like best? Why is this your favorite part?

Ask your child what type of mood the story or chapter in a book creates: *How did the author create that mood: Was it with words? Was it with pictures? Did the author use drawings?*

If your child has read more than one book by the same author, ask: *How are the books similar? How are they different?*

Don't forget: Discuss new words. For example, "This is an *enormous* pumpkin. What is another word for *enormous*?"

Did your child tell you about the word of the week? ***predict***

predict means to tell what may come next



Words already introduced to students:

illustrate ***describe*** ***analyze summarize*** ***explain***

*Please continue to read with and to your child. **Happy Reading!***