School News & Information

- **Principal’s Coffee:** Please join me this Thursday from 10:00-11:00 a.m. for my second Principal’s Coffee. Parents will have an opportunity to learn about and use the new Chrome Books and hear the results from our Gallup Poll Student and Staff Engagement survey. I look forward to see you there!

- **MCPS 2015 Parent Engagement Survey:** Survey information and instructions will be mailed on or about February 17, 2015, directly to the homes of a sample of parents in each school via the U.S. Postal Service. If you receive the survey, I encourage you to complete the survey as soon as possible. Completing the survey will help me and my staff better understand your needs and improve connection between home and school.

- **PARCC Update:** In March, students in grades 3-5 will take the online PARCC assessments in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics. These assessments replace the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). The PARCC assessments are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and will measure the essential literacy and problem-solving skills that students need to be successful in college and careers. While many current state tests do not measure the ability of students to think critically and apply their knowledge, PARCC will test writing skills and critical thinking and problem-solving skills in depth. These critical thinking skills are an integral part of MCPS Curriculum 2.0. To prepare our students for this new online assessment, we have scheduled PARCC practice sessions. PARCC practice sessions will occur on the following dates:
  - Grade 3: Feb. 9 from 9:30-11:30 am
  - Grade 4: Feb. 12 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:15 – 3:15 p.m.
  - Grade 5: Feb. 13 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

The following websites provide additional information for parents about the PARCC assessments: [www.PARCConline.org](http://www.PARCConline.org) and [parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/](http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/)

- **March PTA Meeting – Curriculum 2.0 Math and PARCC:** Do you want to learn more about the math curriculum and the PARCC assessment? If so, please attend the March PTA meeting where you will learn about the new assessment, how we are preparing the students for the assessment and how the math curriculum is aligned to the PARCC assessment. Mrs. Marcoux, our math focus teacher and school test coordinator, will be the presenter.

- **Burnt Mills’ Buddies Program:** Our new mentoring program will begin Monday, February 9th. The purpose of the program is to provide students with positive adult role models who care about their academics and social emotional needs. At BMES we understand the importance of helping students make constructive and healthy decisions that promote hope, personal well-being and social behavior. Students identified to participate in the program will be selected by teachers and administration. If you have questions about the program, please contact the
assistant principal, Mrs. Dunn.

- **Fifth Grade Fundraiser: Candy Grams:** Please support the 5th graders by purchasing a Candy Gram for $1 each. Candy Grams will be on sale from February 3-12th. All you need to do is complete a red candy gram note and return with cash payment to your child’s teacher anytime between February 2-12. Candy Grams will be distributed to students on Wednesday and Friday.

- **Family Engagement Committee Meeting:** The next FEC will be Wednesday February 4th from 3:45-4:45 p.m. By the end of the meeting, participants will have discussed opportunities to increase parent engagement focused specifically on math curriculum and instruction. If you have ideas to share, I encourage you to attend the meeting.

- **Valentine’s Day Parties:** Valentine’s Day parties will be held in classrooms on Friday, February 13th from 2:15-3:00 p.m. Classroom teachers will communicate with parents regarding treats, activities and Valentine’s Day cards. Please inform your child’s teacher if you do not want him/her to participate in the Valentine’s Day party. We will have an alternative activity for those students. Parents are welcome to attend the parties!

- **Indoor Recess Options:** In an effort to get students outside as much as possible on days when the field and playground area are muddy or snow covered, we have developed an indoor recess blacktop rotation schedule. Operating on a rotating schedule (week A or week B), grade levels will alternate weeks when they can go outside and play on the blacktop area only. In addition, teachers have the Wii gaming system in their classroom for student to enjoy dance and exercise moves. When available, students may also use the gym.

**Staff News**

- Beginning February, 4th, Dr. Lively the general music teacher, will be on extended medical leave for approximately six weeks. Mr. Marcus Williams will serve as her long term substitute.

**Counselor’s Corner from Mrs. Soukas**

During February, I will teach counseling lessons about citizenship. Students will learn how to do their share to make their school and community better and ways to protect the environment. Citizenship also means being cooperative and getting involved in community affairs, staying informed, volunteering, and voting. Additionally citizenship has to do with being a good neighbor, obeying laws and rules, and respecting authority.

I will continue having lunch bunches with students as well as doing individual and group counseling. This Friday, February 6th, fifth grade students will meet with the counselor from Key Middle School to learn about registration. Be sure to ask them what they learned when the counselor visited. If you have any further questions about middle school and how to register, please feel free to contact me. Parents, please call or email me if you need any community resources or need support with your children.

**Partial Spanish Immersion News from Mrs. Plawner**

We are very excited to partner with the Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES) program in order to provide students with immersion-based foreign language in Spanish. Students in grades 4 and 5 will have an
opportunity to increase their exposure to the Spanish language and delve deeper into various topics and skills. The intention of this class is to provide students with additional practice and instruction to prepare them for the rigor of the Middle School Immersion Program as well as assist in thinking, speaking, writing, and reading more proficiently in Spanish. As of right now, some parents have expressed an interest in a Wednesday class, after school from about 3:45 – 4:45 PM. If there is enough interest, the class will begin around the end of February through the end of May. It is $170 for the 12-week program. Please contact Gloria Plawner by this Friday, February 6th, if you are interested in your child attending.

Important Dates to Remember
- Feb. 3 – PTA Meeting 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 4 – Family Engagement Committee Meeting 3:45-4:45 p.m.
- Feb. 5 – Principal’s Coffee 10:00-11:00 a.m.
- Feb. 13 – Valentine’s Day Parties 2:15-3:00 p.m.
- Feb. 16 – HOLIDAY – Presidents’ Day (schools and offices closed)
- Feb. 17 – PTA Executive Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
- Feb. 19 – Spanish Immersion Interest Meeting (formerly known as Open House) 9:30-11:00 a.m.
- Feb. 23 – School Improvement Plan (SIP) Meeting 3:45-4:45 p.m.
- Feb. 24 – Partial Spanish Immersion PSI Parent Meeting 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 27 – Early Release Day (students released at 1:00 p.m.)

Reminders
- Is your child missing a coat or hat? Please check the lost and found for unclaimed clothing items such as coat, gloves, hats and scarves.
- Unfortunately, we have had a few issues with buses arriving late to pick up students in the afternoon. If you find that your child’s bus is taking longer than usual to arrive at the bus stop, please call the transportation office and let them know. The number is
- When packing your child’s lunch, please consider healthy snack items such as pretzels, fruit/vegetables or yogurt. Please do not pack candy or soda in your child’s lunch.
- Please make sure you check your child’s backpack, folder and student planner daily for important classwork papers, school news and teacher notes.

We have high expectations for all students because every student matters!

Vision: To provide every student with a sense of hope in a culturally relevant and challenging learning environment that embraces critical thinking, values diversity and promotes self-awareness and health relationships.

Mission: To prepare every student to be college and career ready by expecting the best from everyone, every day!

Core Values: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship
Kids of Character Pledge

We are Kids of Character at BMES. Every morning on the announcements, students start their day by reciting the Kids of Character pledge. The pledge is below. Please practice it with your child and remind them how important it is to be a kid of character!

I pledge to be a kid of character.
I will be worthy of trust.
I will be respectful and responsible,
    Doing what I must.
I will always act with fairness.
    I will show that I care.
I will be a good citizen,
    And always do my share