



Berkshire Bulletin

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Baltimore County Public Schools

Visit us on our website: www.bcps.org/schools/ces/berkshire

FROM THE DESK OF MRS. CIULLA



Greetings!



A SPECIAL VISIT

Berkshire Elementary will be visited by the Southeast Area Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Lyle Patzkowsky and his assistant, Mrs. Jennifer Mullenax. We are excited to have them come to our school to observe our hard-working children. I know they will be impressed by our students' higher level thinking skills, vocabulary development, good behavior, and their overall engagement in the RIGOROUS instructional program provided by their teachers.

Your child's success is in large part due to your support and the message that you share with him or her on a daily basis about the importance of education and the behavior and attitude that is needed to learn. **KUDOS!!!!**

ATTENDANCE



I want to stress the need for your child to attend school each and every day and to be on time. This allows for a consistent instructional program without any learning gaps. Your child will be happier and will gain confidence about his or her reading, math, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education skills. Of course, we all know that illness and emergencies cannot be avoided, but whenever possible, please make appointments after school hours or on days when school is closed for students.

A NOTE IS DUE TO YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM TEACHER ONCE YOUR CHILD RETURNS. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE THE DATES OF YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE(S) AND THE REASON. UNLESS THIS NOTE IS RECEIVED, THE ABSENCE MUST BE CONSIDERED **TRUANCY**.

PTA



Our PTA continues to grow as families, teachers, and staff join; however, we need more members to meet our goal. We encourage EVERY family to join the PTA, as this organization does so much to help support the educational programs of Berkshire Elementary School. Membership dues this year remain \$6.00 per family. Thanks so much to all who contributed to the Yankee Candle Fundraiser. It was a great success!

From the Desk of Mrs. Ciulla (Cont.)

PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO READ THE SECTION BELOW REGARDING VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION



I want to again extend a personal thank you to those parents, family members, guardians, and the many others who have signed up to volunteer at Berkshire Elementary School. Many of you have been trained and are ready to go! You will be hearing from classroom teachers and others very soon regarding volunteer opportunities.

For those of you who have not yet signed up to volunteer, but are interested in this exciting opportunity, please stop into the office and pick up a volunteer application.

There will be a **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION** held on Monday, October 26th at 8:00 AM in the library. **Please keep in mind that parent field trip attendance is considered volunteer service. According to Baltimore County Public School policy, ALL PARENTS attending field trips need to participate in this orientation. If you do not get the orientation, you WILL NOT be able to attend scheduled field trips with your child. There can be no exceptions.**

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL



GOOD NEWS!

The Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Transportation and the Baltimore County Police Department came to our school several weeks ago to survey our traffic congestion during arrival and dismissal times. They will now be working with Baltimore County Department of Civil Engineering to brainstorm solutions. A study by this department is currently underway. All offices are very empathetic and supportive of our needs. A very special, "Thanks", for your patience during a sometimes frustrating situation!!!!

As you bring your child to school and pick him or her up at the end of the day, please remember not to park in an area that blocks anyone's driveway. There have been complaints about this issue within the community at large and the police department will be monitoring this situation. Vehicles stopping and parking in "No Stopping and Standing" or "No Parking" zones will be ticketed.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK



Please join us in spending the day and observing your child as they learn and grow. The visitation schedule is listed below for your convenience and planning purposes.

Grade Level Visitation Schedule:

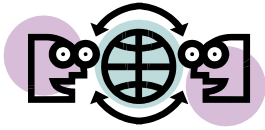
(Visitation will begin at 9:00 AM daily. Please enter the front of the building and sign in.)

- Monday, November 16th: Pre-K
- Tuesday, November 17th: Grade 2 and Grade 1
- Wednesday, November 18th: Kindergarten and Grade 5
- Thursday, November 19th: Grade 3 and Grade 4
- Friday, November 20th Grandparents Day

Due to limited space in the cafeteria, we ask that visitors **not** eat lunch there. Parents/guardians are welcome to sit with their child(ren) during breakfast and enjoy the refreshments provided by the PTA .

From the Desk of Mrs. Ciulla (cont.):

FIRST QUARTER PARENT CONFERENCES



Parent conferences will be held for the first quarter on Thursday evening, November 19th from 3:30 until 6:30 PM and again all day on Monday November 23rd. Please mark your calendars and set up your appointments with your child's teacher. We value our collaboration with you! More sign up information will be coming from teachers in the very near future. Watch those "Monday Folders."

PARENT-SCHOOL COMPACT



This agreement will be shared by your child's teacher and discussed between you. This is an agreement between you, your child, and school personnel to work together to improve your child's academic achievement and social development as a school community. Please look for this compact to come home in the "Monday Folder" along with this bulletin. Please review.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN



Please review the plan attached to this newsletter. This plan was developed by a team of Berkshire Elementary School parents and teachers in order to promote and support you as a part of the parent community.

PARENT WORKSHOP



Berkshire Elementary School has had the real privilege of becoming a part of the "Wide Reading Take Home Program." Two professional development workshops will be held for you to learn about the workshop and your role as parents, family members, and guardians in this program at home. This program is designed to give your children time to practice and enjoy their reading at their independent reading level. You won't want to miss this training.

Thursday, November 19, 2009
10:00-11:00 a.m.
Cafeteria

Thursday, November 19, 2009
7:00-8:00 p.m.
Library

Please sign up using the attached tear off sheet on the Wide Reading Parent Workshop in this bulletin.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD IMPROVE ACADEMICS?



One of the focuses for this school year continues to be mathematics improvement. Please practice the math facts with your child for ten minutes per night. Knowing math facts automatically will help your child when he or she needs to add, subtract, multiply or divide. Check with your child's teacher to see which level facts you should be practicing and as always, please be sure your child completes his or her homework thoroughly each night.

APPRECIATION

My sincere thanks for all that you do for your children in support of their development as good students and citizens.
My best,
Vicky Ciulla
Principal

BERKSHIRE CALENDAR

NOVEMBER



Mark your calendars now with these important upcoming school events.

<u>DATE:</u>	<u>EVENT:</u>
Monday, November 2:	Picture Make-up Day, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Tuesday, November 3:	PTA Ice Cream Social, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 5: Thursday, November 5:	First Marking Period Ends Grade 5 Field Trip to Philadelphia
Friday, November 6:	Professional Development Day—Schools Closed for Students
Tuesday, November 10: Tuesday, November 10:	PTA Market Day pick up, Café., 4-6:30 p.m. Reading Night, Gym and Classrooms, 6-8 p.m.
Monday-Friday, November 16-20:	American Education Week
Monday, November 16:	Pre-K Visitation
Tuesday, November 17:	Grades 1 and 2 Visitation
Wednesday, November 18:	Kindergarten and Grade 5 Visitation
Thursday, November 19:	Grades 3 and 4 Visitation
Friday, November 20:	Grandparents Day
Tuesday, November 17: Tuesday, November 17:	Turkey Trot, Berkshire Fields, 3:30-4:30 p.m., 4th and 5th grade students PTA McDonald's Night, North Point Blvd., 5-7 p.m.
Wednesday, November 18:	Turkey Trot rain date, Berkshire Fields, 3:30-4:30 p.m., 4th and 5th grade students
Thursday, November 19: Thursday, November 19: Thursday, November 19:	Distribution of Report Cards Wide Reading Parent Workshop, Cafeteria, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Wide Reading Parent Workshop, Library, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Friday, November 20:	PTA Movie Night, Gym and Café., 6-8 p.m.
Monday, November 23:	Elementary Conference Day, Schools Closed for Elementary Students
Wednesday, November 25:	Grade 4 Field Trip to Maryland Science Center, 9:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.
Thursday, November 26- Friday, November 27	Thanksgiving Holiday, Schools Closed

Grade Level Happenings:

Pre-Kindergarten:

The Pre-K students are continuing to show great improvement so far this year!

In October, we were all able to go on a field trip to a pumpkin farm. We wanted to thank all of the chaperones who were able to attend. The student's had a great time and learned a great deal about farms! In reading this month, the student's will begin learning sight words. We will be sending home pre-decodable books that you can practice reading with your child. They should be able to read the book on their own because all of the words that are in the book are words that we have learned in class. We will also continue to practice identifying the aspects of a book such as the front, back, top, bottom, title, author, illustrator, and reading left to right.

In November, we will be having parent-teacher conferences. These conferences will be held towards the end of the month so please remember to sign up for a time so that you can see how your child is progressing in Pre-K. Please continue to check your child's book bag each night because important information is sent home most every day. We look forward to hopefully seeing you during American Education Week this month!



Kindergarten:

Kindergarten is so very *thankful* this month for our students & their families for all of the hard work they've been doing so far this school year. We have settled into our routines and are growing more & more each day. We can't believe it is already November and soon Conference Day will be with us. Please remember that kindergarten conferences are mandatory this first quarter; we will review your child's progress report at that time. As in the past, we'll also be offering day and evening times to better accommodate your schedule. Please be sure to watch for these conference sign-ups to come home in your child's folder.

While November goes by fast, we'll be packing a lot of learning into the next 4 weeks. In Phonics, we'll continue to learn letter names, practice forming letters correctly, and begin working with letter sounds. We'll learn to manipulate these sounds to make and read short words as well. Keep practicing your sight words (old and new) so that you can read the decodable books that come home. In Shared Reading we'll continue with books about fall, farms, and plant life cycles. Our literacy centers find us becoming more independent as we practice skills like following directions, matching letters with their sounds, retelling stories through drama, creating a book to read on our own, and much, much more. We'll also continue to learn new strategies to help us become better readers; so far our favorite is "Act Out New Words." In Math, we'll continue to practice our counting and one-to-one correspondence. We will also continue to work on making numbers correctly & recognizing numbers instantly. We'll begin looking at how to compare numbers to tell which is more or less, comparing the length of objects, and using new math vocabulary.

Please remember to have your child do his/her homework & practice the sight words each night in his/her planner and return your child's folder daily. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone & we look forward to seeing all of you at conference time!

Grade Level Happenings:

First Grade:

Happy November! It's hard to believe that Halloween has come and gone, and that Thanksgiving will be here before we know it. Our field trip to the pumpkin farm was a tremendous success. Thanks so much to all of you who helped make our trip run so smoothly. We also want to thank all of you who sent in items for our Halloween Party. We truly appreciate all of you!

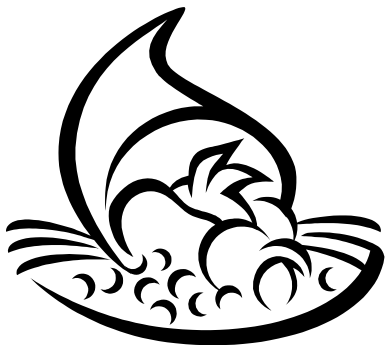
Now that we are fully into our routines here at school times seems to be moving very quickly. Here's what's happening this month...

Reading:

Our reading groups and literacy centers are in full swing. The children are learning a variety of reading strategies. Every child has a bin full of "just right" books for practicing these good reader strategies. They will also continue to use their schema to make connections to the books they read.

Math:

We will continue to build our understanding of addition by using our strategies to help us master our addition facts to 12. Please have your child practice their basic math facts at home. Thank you for your continued support!
First Grade Teachers



Second Grade:

We are delighted with the hard work and effort shown by our successful second graders! Students continue to demonstrate good choices about their behavior by remembering the important steps of "listening" and "following directions". During the month of November, we will be learning about the following topics:

- **Math:** We are developing our knowledge of place value to 100 and money. We are skip counting, recognizing odd and even numbers, and identifying and counting coins during Unit 3. All students would benefit from authentic practice at home by using and counting real coins as much as possible. Look for math games in your child's Parent Folder.
- **Reading:** We will continue reading stories about camping, city parks, and pond animals during our *Nature Walk* theme. We will be practicing **thinking strategies** such as monitoring comprehension, questioning, and evaluating. During reading, students will compare and contrast, categorize and classify, and identify facts and opinions.
- **Language:** We will learn about the different types of sentences such as statements, questions, commands, and exclamations. We will also use sensory details to write a descriptive paragraph.
- **Science:** Our *Exploring Animals* unit will continue and we will begin our first Primary Talent Development unit, *Branching out with Trees*. This unit encourages students to think "like scientists" by demonstrating inquisitive and communicative behaviors.
- **Wide Reading:** We would like to thank you for being great reading coaches to our students! We know they are enjoying taking home their "leveled books" and reading to you for 15 minutes each night. We appreciate your help in sending all books back to school the next day. Your home support means a lot!

Grade Level Happenings:

Third Grade:

Happy November! It's hard to believe that Halloween has come and gone, and that Thanksgiving will be here before we know it. Thanks so much to all of you who helped make our Halloween Parade/Party run so smoothly. We truly appreciate all of you who sent in items! Below you'll find information about what we'll be doing during November. We hope it is informative!

Writing: Both third grade classes will continue with Writer's Workshop! We have completed a Personal Narrative and they turned out excellent! We were very proud of their hard work during their first 3rd grade writing piece. This month we will be starting our next writing piece which is "Instructions." We will be making a special treat and writing the directions for making that treat!

Math: *Please be sure to review your child's homework with him/her on a daily basis. Should you have any questions about a particular problem, please remember to contact us.* We have completed Units 1 and 2. We started Unit three which focuses on Adding and Subtracting two and three digit numbers with regrouping. Remember to have your child practice their basic facts on a daily basis! This is key to staying on track in math!

Reading: We will continue using our *reading strategies*: asking questions, monitoring and clarifying, visualizing, making connections, making predictions, evaluating, and summarizing. Please remember that your child should be reading 15 minutes at home everyday. Ask them questions about what they have read!

Thank you for all of your support!

Third Grade Team



Fourth Grade:

In Reading we are finishing our "Journeys" theme. We will then be reading "American Stories". Mr. Matamoros' class will be starting "The Twenty-One Balloons." In Math, we will be learning multiplication and division concepts and facts. We are continuing to "Take a Closer look in Space." Our next unit for Science will be Fossil Detectives. Fourth grade will be sending home information in the near future about our upcoming field trip to the Science Center. We appreciate your continuing support at home.



Fifth Grade:

The fifth grade is anxiously awaiting the Philadelphia trip scheduled for this week. We have been learning about the colonies in Social Studies and seeing historical firsthand will make this learning meaningful.

It is hard to imagine that the first quarter is coming to a close. Please be on the lookout for information about conference day and night. We would love to meet with all of you regarding the progress of your child.

As we move through our math units, the skills needed for success will become more difficult. Please help support us at home by reviewing basic multiplication and division facts each evening with your child.

We are looking forward to a great second quarter!

Reading and Literacy News:

BCPL Summer Reading Participants

Many boys and girls registered for the Baltimore County Public Library Summer Reading program, *Be Creative @ your Library*. The following students will receive a white Sneaks certificate for registering online: Olivia J., Angel R., Andrew T., Katerina Z., Madison D., Emma G., Dylan K., Jon M., Madison Z., Jasmine B., Chasity J., Melissa K., Shane K., Hunter C., Hope E., Michael H., Mirza K., Musse T., Tyler H., Jasmine J., Julia S., Zachary S., Destiny Z., Austin D., Valense G., Darian H., Justin H., David M., Yeabsira T. and Jillian V. The following boys and girls will receive a gold Sneaks certificate for trying to reach their goals: Kaitlyn M., Madison M., Kaylee B., Kassie J., Austin W., Shane W. and Emily M.

The following girls and boys will receive a gold certificate and a book for reaching their goals and completing the program: Arianna B., Jordon K., Alejandra B., Dayveon E., Abigail V., Megan J., Shaylea G., Robert S., Daniel G., Tarren G. and Marisa Hernandez and Layla S.

Library Bags

Every student visiting the Berkshire Library Media Center received a *Safe Place Contract* to be signed by an adult and returned to Mrs. Fiero. A place safe from little ones, pets, food and drink protects our library books. Every student who returned the contract received a plastic drawstring bag for toting and protecting library books. Each week library books are to be returned in the library bag. As we say in the library, "No bag, no books." If something happens to the bag you may substitute a plastic bag that will protect library books from spills and backpack leaks.

UT-OH Books

Two spills, a torn book cover, scribble and crumbled pages spoiled our "No UT-OH" goal for the year. Please remind Berkshire students to keep their books in their safe places at home. Keeping library books in the plastic library bag will help prevent spills and leaks.

If you have any questions or concerns or just want to say, "Hi," see Mrs. Fiero in the library.

Vocal Music:

What's happening In Vocal Music?

Mrs. Spence's music students K-4 are preparing to celebrate the Halloween season. They will be learning many new songs, adding movement, as well as instrumental accompaniment. They will also engage in some of their favorite Halloween games.

The 5th grade students are demonstrating some fantastic singing skills, as they continue to prepare for our winter concert, a program you don't want to miss.

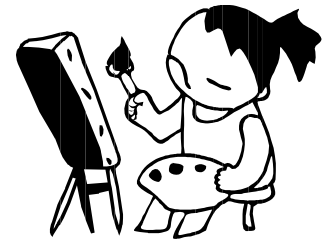


P.E. NEWS:

Our fall season in P.E. has gotten off to a terrific start! We are currently wrapping up cross-country and are about to begin the table tennis unit. Your children may be going outside during the fall months, so please send them to school dressed for P.E. outside. This month we are holding our second annual **Turkey Trot** for the 4th and 5th graders. Please return the Turkey Trot permission slip by the assigned time. In addition, tennis shoes must be worn for Physical Education classes. Sandals, crocs, dress shoes, boots, and flip flops are not appropriate footwear and should not be worn to P.E. class.

ART:

In art, students are learning the principles of good poster design and lettering. Third graders are creating posters for the Baltimore County Fire Department's annual contest promoting fire safety. Fourth and fifth graders are working on posters illustrating the importance of daily physical activity for a contest sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education. Everyone is doing an outstanding job!



Counseling Connection:

It is hard to believe that fall is almost half over! So far this year, I have implemented weekly guidance lessons in the areas of personal safety, friendship, bullying prevention, and career awareness in grades 3 and 4. Pre-K and kindergarten students will participate in monthly lessons in the areas of developing understanding of self and others, friendship, and personal safety. Many other students also meet with me individually and in groups. Some students have participated in small friendship groups already. Beginning in December, I will run groups for students whose parents are separated or divorced. If you would like your child to participate in this group, please contact me in the counseling office. Every effort is made to schedule these groups during non-academic times. All students are eligible to be in groups if requested.

Mrs. Gardill
School Counselor



MAGNET NEWS:

The deadline for magnet applications is November 30, 2009. The applications should be sent to Office of Magnet Programs, 6901 Charles Street, Towson, MD 21204 (not to the schools). There are no late acceptances.

PTA DONUTS FOR DADS:

Thank you for making this a family literary success. Over 190 dads, guardians, and family members attended this event with their children. Thanks for your support. Stay tuned for Munchkins with Moms in the Spring.



ECO CLUB:

The ECO Club is an after school club for any 3rd, 4th, or 5th grader who is interested in learning about helping the environment. We will be meeting the third Tuesday afternoon of each month from 3:15-4:15 p.m. These students need to have a signed permission slip to be allowed to attend. This year our activities will include weekly collection of paper recycling from every area of the school (except the cafeteria), maintenance of the gardens by the front and side of the school building, and many other research and fun projects we will accomplish. In 2006, we became a Green School of Maryland through our environmentally good practices. This year, we will apply to become recertified as a Green School as we must reapply every four years.

Added to our paper recycling this year, we will also continue to collect ink cartridges from computers as well as juice bags. As you finish your ink cartridge from your home or work computer, please send it to school with your child and they can present it to the ECO Club for recycling. Also, you can send in empty juice bags with your child and they can place them in the recycling containers in the cafeteria. We will earn money for the school from this project. Mrs. Ruetz, Ms. Lowers, Ms. Greaver and Mrs. Grevey will be the monitoring teachers for ECO Club.

Health Suite:

As Flu Season continues please remember that being vigilant with hand washing is your best defense against germs.

Supplies of the H1N1 Flu Vaccine have been limited due to slower production. This web site lists the Baltimore County Community Clinics for those who are in the first group due to risk factors. These risk factors are: under the age of 24, pregnancy, and other health conditions such as asthma. Please check this site before leaving your home as many have been postponed.

<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/health/index.html>

Our In School Clinic is still planned for our students although the date may change due to vaccine supply. Please make sure you and your emergency contacts are familiar with the Health Suite phone number which is 410-284-0931. You will receive calls from this number if your child becomes ill during the school day.