

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Working Together for Student Success

Message from the Principal—Dr. Francine M. Schaffer

Welcome to the Bridge Center! We are glad you are here! The Bridge Center family is looking forward to working with you and your students. We welcome you to become a part of our family. We hope you will find this newsletter helpful. Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns. If you'd like to volunteer in our Center, please give us a call. I can be reached at 410-887-6832 or via e-mail fschaffer@bcps.org.

Bridge Center Program Highlights

Bridge Center serves middle and high school students from the northwest, southwest, and southeast areas of Baltimore County. Students referred to the Bridge Center receive intensive services in a small, supportive, and structured academic setting. Each student stays at Bridge Center for up to three weeks before entering his or her community school or another appropriate program. Students are assessed informally and receive counseling services as well as intensive instruction in English, reading/science, and mathematics while at the Bridge Center. They also participate in skills classes including drug education, wellness education, social skills, student service learning, technology skills, and study skills. The Bridge Center also has a Wellness Center that provides comprehensive, confidential health care to the enrolled students.

When students leave us they continue to receive support from teachers and social workers assigned to the Center. Bridge Center's mission is to provide a "bridge" between the program's student support plan and the comprehensive school. Through the instruction and preparation received at the center, each student will be ready to achieve academic success when he or she enrolls in their neighborhood school.

Bridge Center Staff

The Bridge Center Staff includes forty-one professionals coming to us with varied levels of expertise and experience. The staff represents a collaborative effort among Baltimore County Public Schools, the Baltimore County Department of Social Services, the Baltimore County Department of Health, and the Baltimore County Department of Juvenile Services. All staff members are deeply committed to the mission of our school. Some of the Bridge Center based staff are Deborah Miller, administrative secretary; Donna Shockett, facilitator; Bettie Lindsey, facilitator; Jan Uehlinger, social worker supervisor; John Helie, high school counselor; Charles Thomas, middle school counselor; David Covert, substance abuse counselor; Cynthia Simmons, Charissa Pretto-Huie, and James Footman (middle school teachers); Kripa Kelly, Esther Quinn, Richard Wheatley, and Angela Weems (high school teachers); and Susan Shafer, nurse practitioner. Bridge Center staff that support students once they transition to their neighborhood school include Patrick Simms, Michael Wilson, Janice Saul, Kari Anderson-Hoehn, Christine Powell, Kim Mari, Denise Kickham, and Tanya Douse (itinerant teachers); Andrea Keen-Avery, Anita Gerwig, Laura Stinemire, and Tanya Todman-Taylor (itinerant social workers) round out the list.

Transportation

Transportation is provided and arranged on an individual basis. Generally, we use community bus stops. Should you have questions about this service, please contact Bettie Lindsey at 410-887-6832.

Breakfast and Lunch

The Office of Food and Nutrition Services has implemented a new policy this school year. If you do not have a younger child in BCPS, you will be asked to complete an application for free and reduced meals in

order to determine eligibility for these services. Should your student be eligible BCPS will provide breakfast and lunch. If a student is not eligible, students can purchase breakfast and lunch at a cost of \$1.55 (regular price), .30 (reduced) and \$3.00 (regular price), .40 (reduced), respectively, or they can bring their lunch. Questions should be directed to Bettie Lindsey at 410-887-6832.

Behavioral Expectations

On the first day of enrollment each student will receive an overview of Baltimore County Public Schools *Student Behavior Handbook* and the *Sexual Harassment Brochure*. This handbook and brochure are important as they describe each student's role and responsibility in maintaining a safe and secure learning environment. Students will be asked to sign a statement indicating that the policies have been explained to them. They will also be required to share this information with you. You will need to sign a statement, which includes permission to photograph. Students must return the signed statement to me.

Our Code of Conduct is simple.

- Be Responsible
- Be Respectful
- Be Safe

In addition, we have delineated Bridge Center's policies on the use of electronic equipment, student dress, use of computers, and behavior in the classrooms and hallways. There is a separate sheet, entitled "Bridge Center Code of Conduct" which you must sign.

Surveys

As a part of our School Improvement Plan and our true desire to provide a quality program we will ask each of you and your students to complete a survey upon the student's exit from our program. We will explain those surveys at the initial meeting.

We appreciate you taking the time to complete the surveys. We value your input!

Emergency Cards

Upon entry into our program you will be asked to complete emergency cards which will include key telephone numbers and ways to reach you in the event of an emergency. This information is extremely important to us so please be sure to complete these cards accurately. Should information change be sure to notify us. We will share this information with the each student's neighborhood school upon the student's exit from Bridge Center.

Attendance Policies

Daily attendance is the key to academic success. We need your help in making sure your child is present each and every day. In the event of illness, please be certain to provide a note of explanation on the next day the student attends explaining the reason for the absence. If a student arrives late or requires an early dismissal, please provide a written note explaining the reason.

School Supplies

The projected stay at the Bridge Center is approximately 15 – 30 days. Students will need a notebook, paper, dividers, pen, and pencil. If you are unable to supply these items, please let us know at the intake conference and we can assist.

Early Closing/Delayed Opening

Announcements regarding early closings and late openings will be made via the radio and television. Please make arrangements ahead of time in the event that schools close early or are delayed. Each student should know those arrangements. Information is also posted on the Baltimore County Public Schools website (www.bcps.org).

School and Teacher Websites

We invite you to check our school website for important information. In addition, each teacher has posted important information on

their individual sites. Many of their sites contain links to valuable resources that will help students achieve success. Check those sites out at <http://bridgecenter.bcps.org/>.

Notification of Availability of Asbestos Management Plans

Baltimore County Public Schools' Asbestos Management Plan contains information on our inspection, re-inspection, response actions, and post-response activities, including surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. You can review this plan at the Department of Physical Facilities, 9610 Pulaski Park Drive, Suite 204, Baltimore, Maryland, 21220, or at the school or office with which you or your children may be associated.

Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Newsletter Information

On July 1, 2008, the Maryland General Assembly directed the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with the local school systems, to develop and adopt a model policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation in schools. The Maryland State Board of Education approved its model policy on February 24, 2009.

As a result of MSDE's model policy, the Board of Education of Baltimore County approved the new Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5580, "Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation," which prohibits students from engaging in intentional conduct involving bullying, harassment, or intimidation, which can substantially interfere with a student's educational opportunities, or any acts of retaliation against those who report instances of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

The “*Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*” used to track alleged instances of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is available at the Bridge Center office or on the Baltimore County Public Schools’ website under the “Student” and “Parent” tabs. You may contact our school for additional information or assistance at any time.

Bridge Center Open House

You are invited to join us for an Open House on October 7, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Find out why we “bridge” the gap for our students. Please RSVP at 410-887-6832.

Revised Attendance Rules

The Maryland State Department of Education has revised the rules for determining how much of the school day a student needs to be present to be recorded as ½ day present or full day present. A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance four hours or more of a school day. A student is counted present for ½ day if the student is in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours. The student will be recorded as absent if the student is in school for less than two hours.