

The Berkshire Bulletin

First Quarter
Newsletter

Principal's Message

A note from Ms. Brooks

We've just finished the first quarter and the year is moving by quickly. I cannot believe that it's almost December already!

We are still Team Berkshire in spirit even though we are all working remotely from our homes. We send you best wishes for this Thanksgiving and holiday season! We miss seeing you in person and want to be supportive to you and your families. Please continue to reach out to us through email or school phone at 443-809-7008. During these strange times, we wish you and your family well and hope that you are healthy and safe. Our School Support Team is available to your child if they are having a hard time coping during these stressful times. Our counselor, Mrs. Brown, Social Worker, Mr. Stengel, Nurse, Mrs. Stiltner, and MTSS teacher, Mrs. Amoruso are here for you. Mrs. Brown can schedule virtual counseling sessions if needed. Feel free to reach out through email.

While we know that having your child work from home is challenging for families, it's critical for students to remain engaged in learning every day. Attendance is just as important online as it is in person for school. Teachers work each day to monitor students who are participating in learning. We know that children have appointments and other life events so if these occur, please send an email as an absence note to your teacher. We will keep record of these. The attendance team meets weekly to monitor and attendance and develop interventions for families with attendance concerns. These include, phone calls, letters, required virtual parent conference, Pupil Personnel Worker referrals, home visits, and States Attorney's letters. We never want to forget the students who are working hard to be present every day. Expect acknowledgement for students who are present every day! We are sending out certificates and showcasing students on the announcements!

Our new building is almost complete, and our old site will soon be demolished. Contractors are working hard to dismantle the grounds and preparing for them to become our new baseball fields and playground. We are excited about our new building. There are still contractors working on the grounds and on finishing work inside. I will be hosting a virtual tour for families soon through Google Meet! More information will be forthcoming.



Upcoming Events:

November 13 – First Marking
Period Ends

November 16-20 – American
Education Week

November 26-27 – Thanksgiving
Holiday, School and Offices Closed

November 30 – Report Cards
Distributed

December 1 – Prekindergarten
Conference Day, No
Prekindergarten Sessions

December 2 – Prekindergarten &
Elementary Conference Day,
Schools Closed for Elementary
Students

December 23 – Christmas
Holiday/Winter Break begins at the
end of the School Day

January 4 – Schools Reopen

January 18 – Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr. Day, Schools & Offices
Closed

Principal's message continued

January 27th – Schools close 3 hours early

This winter we have several virtual family learning events planned. Our Family Wellness Night is being hosted by our Climate Action team on Tuesday, December 8 at 5:30pm on Google Meet. There will be workshops for parents on stress management and techniques for balancing life at home with the kids. It's all about your wellness! Our

January 29th – 2nd Marking Period ends

Reading Action team has planned Berkshire's StarBOOKS Café....Where we love to read a LATTE! This will take place on Monday, December 21, 2020 from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm on Google Meet. It will be an evening of learning and fun!

We are still preparing for when school reopens for students. When they do reopen, all students must wear masks to school every day in order to enter the building. We are ordering hand sanitizer, extra masks for school use, and some plexiglass partitions for learning areas as well as other PPE. We are looking forward to the day when we can all safely return to school.

Math and Reading Tips

Home is Where the Math Is...

"How to incorporate learning mathematics at home in your everyday life!"

- Explore math in everyday life — counting out forks to set the table, pouring from a gallon of milk, telling the time when his favorite TV program begins. When kids realize that math is all around them, they begin to relax and see its meaning in their lives.
- Show how math is more than learning addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Math also teaches us to analyze, reason, and plan. These are useful skills that transfer over to reading and writing as well.
- Model analytical and mathematical thinking. Be a problem solver, pose questions, and find solutions. Talk about likenesses and differences and explain your reasoning.
- Encourage your child to explain his problem-solving process so you can understand his reasoning.
- When driving to school or the store, talk about how numbers help us determine how fast we drive, the distance traveled, the mileage the car gets per gallon of gas, and how long it will take to get home.
- Expose your child to money in her early school years. Have her collect coins in a piggy bank and count them out regularly. If she receives an allowance, have her keep track of the amount or start a bank account.
- Have your child use an analog and a digital watch to learn both methods of telling time.
- Incorporate games involving numbers and math into playtime — from flash cards for learning basic math facts to board games involving money, time, and logic.
- Post a chart of math facts in your child's room. Some activities and games can help kids memorize math concepts.

Attendance Matters! Make sure your child is logging into their Google Meet each day!! Please call school if you are having trouble with technology.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: @Berkshire_BCPS
Check out our homepage: <http://berkshires.bcps.org>

Reading Tips

November's Reading Tip for Families by Ms. Duffek, reading specialist

Be thankful for great books this month! Here is a tip from Reading Partners, a national nonprofit program:

Read at Home! Reading regularly at home provides children with the practice they need to become great readers. Remember, “The more kids read, the better they read,” and the same holds true for the opposite effect, “the less kids read, the poorer they’ll read.” Beyond practice time, reading at home reinforces a positive attitude around reading—kids start to enjoy reading!

The best way to incorporate reading in the household is to devote 20 to 40 minutes, at the same time every evening, to family reading time. Make it part of a routine, as discussed in tip #1 (setting routines). Another fun idea is to have children read to their pets, siblings, or stuffed animals, like a game.

December's Reading Tip

Give your child the gift of reading this holiday season! Here is a tip from Reading Partners, a national nonprofit program:

Be a Great Reading Partner! It's no fun to read when you're forced to or feel embarrassed and ashamed to read. Building trust and supporting a child reader is crucial as a reading partner. Here are some tips for becoming a great reading partner:

- Be patient and encouraging.
- Read aloud and track the words with your finger as you are reading.
- Read the same stories over and over. Try reading the same stories in different ways, with different voices to make it fun and interesting.
- Ask questions about the story while you're reading to gauge comprehension.
- Pick books that are at the right level for your young reader—5+ mistakes on one page is too hard. No mistakes or only one mistake per page is too easy.
- Gently correct mistakes and re-read the entire sentence.
- Give positive feedback and tell the reader he or she is doing a great job.
- NEVER: Bribe, nag, criticize, judge, or add pressure by making a big deal about reading.

January's Reading Tip

Warm up with a good book this winter! Here is a tip from Reading Partners, a national nonprofit program:

Bring books everywhere! Incorporating books into everyday activities will continue to help children become more familiar with books and will encourage everyday reading. Place books in every room of the house, in the car, and take books everywhere. Remember, according to the Family Education Network, children with an array of reading materials around them and in their homes score higher on standardized tests.

Happenings Around the School

Grade Level Highlights

Pre-Kindergarten

Prekindergarten started our year with *Getting to Know You* meetings so we could introduce ourselves and to take a few minutes to meet with our parents and students. It was wonderful to see how excited everyone was to get started learning. Classes began on Monday, September 21st. Over the past few weeks, we have covered a lot of information and the students have been doing a very good job. Everyone seems happy to be joining our online classroom to work on our learning about numbers, shapes, letters and sounds, and breathing techniques to help us remain calm. With such a wonderful start to the year we are going to have a great time in Room 124. We are looking forward to the time when we can all be together in our beautiful new classroom.

Kindergarten

Happy Fall Kindergarten! Your teachers have been thoroughly impressed with your engagement and enthusiasm during virtual learning. You have shown perseverance and dedication during the first quarter. Keep up the good work!

In phonics, your child will begin identifying individual letters and the sounds they make. This will promote their word building strategies in order to read and write simple words. We will also be identifying the beginning and final sounds in words.

In ELA, the strategies we will be focusing on are visualizing and identifying key details utilizing the illustrations in fiction and nonfiction text. Continue to access RAZ Plus for a library full of leveled texts and read for fun!

We will be wrapping up our social studies unit “Rules” and moving into health which we will discuss self-care and how to stay healthy and avoid germs. Kindergarteners took their first virtual field trip on Thursday, November 12th. A representative from the Fire Museum took us on a trip around the fire house and gave us some fire safety tips. This was an exciting adventure!

Count us in for some SHAPES! We will continue to rote count to 20 and beyond and subitize (recognize a total number of objects without counting). Our next unit will be focusing on shapes and their attributes and composing and decomposing numbers to 10 using a variety of ways to represent numbers.

First Grade

Happy November! We are thankful for our first-grade students! We are fully into our virtual learning routines and developing our work habits and virtues as first graders. We greatly appreciate your commitment in helping your child succeed online and attending virtual school each day!

Here’s what’s happening this month . . .

In reading, the students are continuing to practice their phonics skills and are learning a variety of reading strategies to develop comprehension. Every child has “just right” reading books to choose from for practicing their independent reading in RAZ Plus. Please continue practicing sight words on a daily basis and reading the Core Decodable Phonics books.

In math, the students continue to learn about the calendar, number patterns, and counting skills during our daily number corner. They will continue to build problem solving skills and their understanding of addition by using strategies to help master addition facts to 12. Please have your child practice basic math facts at home. Flashcards are a great tool for this! Thank you for your continued support!

Second Grade

We are so thankful for all our students! Second graders are continuing to do a nice job of participating in a positive manner while learning and interacting with others. This month we will be working on the following topics: addition and subtraction, reading literary and informational texts, and discussing the purpose of rules.

In math, students will learn strategies for multi-digit addition and subtraction within the range of 0 to 100. Students will use the number line to practice “skip-jumps” based on multiples of 5 and 10. They will also

Second Grade continued

add and subtract 2-digit numbers and use the base ten structure of collecting ones and tens. Please keep practicing math facts at home each night for added reinforcement.

In reading, students will read a variety of literary and informational texts about animals. Students will also use various print and text features, such as: images, charts, diagrams, and captions. They will ask questions in order to demonstrate an understanding of key details, ideas, and connections between scientific ideas and concepts in a text. In phonics, students will build, blend, and write words with long vowel sounds and practice reading decodable texts using high frequency words. Please encourage your child to read each night.

In social studies, students will explore the purpose and need for rules in various settings inside and outside of school. They will also analyze how communities can activate their civic voice to make positive change.

Students should access the online platforms: First in Math and Raz-Plus Reading for additional practice. As always, thank you for your support!

Third Grade

Hello third grade families! We cannot believe we are already at the end of the first quarter of school. We want to thank you and your children for your hard work and perseverance throughout our digital learning journey so far. In our second math unit we will be focusing on addition and subtraction. We will be learning to round numbers to estimate sums and differences as well as use different strategies to add and subtract three-digit numbers. Subtraction with regrouping is a challenging skill for third graders. (For example, 32-16, when you do not have enough ones to subtract the 6 from the 2 you will need to regroup). Please practice this at home with your child and encourage him/her to log onto First in Math to increase fact fluency! In reading, we are focusing on reading fables and historical fiction to determine the author's message and central idea. Please encourage your child to read daily and ask them questions about what they read. We love seeing your children every day in class! Please continue to encourage them to join our Google Meetings and engage in our lessons. Grades are continuously updated in Schoology so please log in to stay updated on your child's progress. Thank you for your support!

Fourth Grade

Hello 4th grade parents and guardians! We just finished our first unit in ELA. Students worked on identifying the main idea and details in nonfiction text. We examined the author's purpose for writing and identified the difference between first-hand and second-hand accounts. Students also worked with fiction text by identifying important events in the beginning, middle, and end of the story. We examined the problem identified in the beginning of the text and the theme or lesson the author wanted us to learn. We will continue to practice summarizing fiction and non-fiction texts. For the end of the Unit 1, students were required to research a topic of concern, take notes, and summarize learning in writing. Many students were excited to share and listen to each other's learning during our virtual learning time.

In mathematics, Unit 1 focused on place value, addition, and subtraction. Unit 2 focuses on strategies and properties of multiplication. To help with fluency, we recommend students independently play the math games on First in Math. By grade 4, students should successfully be able to answer 100 basic addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts within 5 minutes. Please check your child's score on "Just the Facts" in addition, subtraction, and multiplication to see if he/she is meeting the goal.

In content, students have finished one unit in health, social studies, and science. In marking period 2, we will begin a new social studies unit on the study of Indigenous People of North America.

We know it has been difficult for many families to adjust to the new style of learning. Thanks so much for your continued support in ensuring your child has a quiet place to learn and focus on instruction. Thank you also for checking your child's grade within each course to ensure all assignments are completed.

Please email your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks so much!

Fifth Grade

First quarter has been a unique and exciting learning experience while our 5th graders learned how to navigate and manage our full-time remote learning school day.

Fifth Grade continued

During this time, we have been amazed to see students who have been persevering through unfamiliar territory, helping their fellow students (and teachers!) to navigate our virtual classroom, and rise to the challenge of meeting the expectations for our rigorous fifth grade curriculum.

In ELA, students recently completed our unit on *Where Ideas Begin* and have been working hard in our next unit, *Putting a Plan into Action*. Students have learned skills such as determining: main idea, theme, author's point of view; summarizing texts, meanings of words; comparing and contrasting elements of a text; drawing evidence from texts to support analysis, reflection, and research; supporting ideas with key details; writing: narratives, opinion pieces, knowledgeably about a subject, to convey ideas and information; applying phonics and word analysis to decode words; understanding figurative language; and reading accurately and fluently to support comprehension. Through our focused ELA curriculum, students are learning and applying core reading and writing skills that will continue to serve them throughout 5th grade and beyond. Please continue to have students read at home at least 15-20 minutes each night and encourage them to reflect on what they have read through conversation or journaling.

In math, students have recently completed their *Decimal Place Value, Addition, and Subtraction* unit where they represented powers of ten using exponential notation; applied place value concepts to compare, order, estimate, and round decimal numbers; and calculated sums and differences of decimals by using models, properties of operations, and place value understanding. Students have now begun their *Multiplying Whole Numbers and Decimals* unit wherein they will use models, drawings, and strategies based on place value to multiply whole numbers and decimals. Students are encouraged to continue practicing and mastering basic multiplication facts at home in order to make learning more complicated mathematical concepts easier. Also, students can access Pearson and First in Math at any time to practice and extend skills learned in the virtual classroom.

In advanced academics math, students have recently completed the *Whole Number and Decimal Operations* unit where they focused on the deep understanding of our number system through fluency in computations with whole numbers and decimals and finding common factors and multiples. Students have now begun the *Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities* unit wherein

they will write and evaluate expressions, write and solve equations, and write and represent inequalities. Students are encouraged to continue practicing and mastering basic multiplication facts at home in order to make learning more complicated mathematical concepts easier. Also, students can access Pearson and First in Math at any time to practice and extend skills learned in the virtual classroom.

During Quarter 1, 5th grade students moved through all three different Content areas! In September, students completed their first health unit wherein they learned: how to manage strong emotions, respond to stress, use interpersonal communication to enhance their health, and how to cope with grief and loss. After that, students moved on to social studies where they began to learn about America's Colonial Regions. In this unit students learned how the geography of the colonial regions affected the economic activity and the lives of the colonists. Students did this by interpreting maps, identifying the 13 colonies, and learning about the three colonial regions of New England, the Middle Atlantic Colonies, and the Southern Colonies in detail. Students also learned about the hidden figures of African History, as well as the painful truths behind Triangular Trade and cash crops in the Southern Colonies.

We ended the quarter with science where students completed the *Space* unit. During this unit, students learned: how science influences agriculture, about the great African-American scientist and Marylander Benjamin Banneker, how we prove that we live on a spherical earth, how gravity pulls down, what a star is, how distance affects brightness, earth's rotation and its affects, and earth's orbit around the sun and its affects. Students have also been busy recording important weather-related data in an online almanac that we will use for an important project later in the year.

Students should continue to monitor their grades on Schoology on a regular basis in order to ensure that they are completing and submitting all required assignments in a timely manner. If students are missing any assignments, they are encouraged to complete them for homework, or during independent asynchronous learning times on Wednesdays. Thank you for your continued support and let's continue to have an amazing year!

Highlights from the Special Area teachers



Please check your child's course updates and grades in Art, Library, Music, and PE in Schoology to see how he/she is doing for each subject area. Please encourage your child to seek our help if he or she needs it. We go over each lesson during class and students are given time to complete their assignments while they are in class with us. We are doing our best to help your child so please reach out to us if needed.

Ms. Roberts (Art Teacher): sroberts3@bcps.org

Mrs. Way (Library Teacher): hway@bcps.org

Ms. Doyle (Instrumental Music Teacher):
tdoyle2@bcps.org

Mrs. Spence (Vocal Music Teacher):
vspence@bcps.org

Mr. Sabiston (Physical Education Teacher):
tsabiston@bcps.org

Art students were provided with sketchbooks and basic supplies to work with at the beginning of the year. If you did not get the supplies from school, please call the school to set up a time to pick them up. Students are also encouraged to use paper and supplies at home to complete the assignments.

The green folder displayed in each course's School Page contains the current week's lessons and assignments. Previous lessons and assignments are in the yellow folder. The purple folder contains any tutorials or resources that might be helpful. Thank you for your support!

This Week Lessons and Assignments

Current week lessons and graded assignments are located inside this folder.

Quarter 1 Previous Lessons and Assignments

In this folder, you will find previous lessons and assignments covered in Quarter 1.

Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

Tutorials

How To

Nurse's Corner

Hello parents and guardians! Here are a couple reminders that I would like to share with you:

Immunizations: Immunizations must be up to date to attend Baltimore County Public Schools. If you have been notified that your students' immunizations are not up to date or your child is in need of a vaccine, please provide proof of vaccines or contact the School Nurse with any questions. Your student may not be able to attend in-person learning if proof of immunizations is not submitted before in-person learning begins.

If your child does not have a health care provider or you require assistance obtaining the required vaccines, your child may receive vaccines through the *Baltimore County Department of Health* by appointment only. Please call the Baltimore County Department of Health at 410-887-2705 to schedule an appointment.

Cold/Flu season is upon us! Even in the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the influenza virus is still going to make its presence known. The CDC recommends the flu vaccine for any person over the age of 6 months, including pregnant women. Please see your family doctor, local pharmacy, or the Baltimore County Department of Health to get your flu vaccine.

Remember the Flu FACTS: Residents are encouraged to remember the flu FACTS in order to prevent the spread of contagious viruses, including the seasonal flu: (*Taken from Baltimore County Department of Health*)

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water
- Always get an annual flu shot
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Take time off if you have symptoms
- Seek care if your symptoms get worse

Supporting Your Student's Health Needs in the Virtual School Setting: Contact the school nurse with any new or existing health conditions so we can make the proper health accommodations in the virtual school setting, and eventually in the building. I am available through email, phone, and virtual Google Meet appointment.

Sarah Stiltner, RN --- School Nurse
ssiltner@bcps.org (Best way to contact during virtual learning)



(443) 809-5820 (Health Suite Number- I am notified via e-mail of all voice messages left)

Baltimore County Department of Health:

For COVID 19 Questions: 410-887-3816

For Immunization Clinics: 410-887-2705