

The Berkshire Bulletin

First Quarter
Newsletter 2023-2024

Principal's Message

A note from Ms. Brooks

We are excited to be entering into the new year! As we enter the new year, we are asking for your continued support with consistent attendance and showing positive behaviors. We have many evening events throughout the school year and workshops for parents and families. If you have ideas for workshops or support, please share these ideas with Ms. Wright, Community School Facilitator.

The safety of all students and staff in Baltimore County Public Schools is of the utmost importance to all of us. If you are picking up your child(ren) for early dismissal, you must have your ID with you and sign them out. Your assistance in keeping our students and school safe is appreciated.

As the days become colder, we are noticing that many students are coming to school early to wait for our doors to open. Students should not arrive to school until 8:30 a.m. each morning as staff are not on duty to monitor students until that time. Please make sure that your child is coming to school every day with a coat, hat, and gloves in the cold weather. We have extra hats and gloves in the Community Resource Room if students need them.

We'd like to thank our community partners for helping families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are so excited about how many families were supported by our partners. Our partners include the Preston Mitchem Foundation, DOFFA Dafe Oweh Family Fund for Africa, Hunger for Change- Margaret Blum, Abba's House, Dundalk, Boy Scouts, private individual donors from Whiting-Turner and Kelly Benefits, also Ravens Roost and other private donors.

**With regards,
Principal Brooks**



Upcoming Events:

- December 4-8: Book Fair, Library
- December 6: Book Fair Night, Library, 4-6 p.m.
- December 6: Literacy & STEM Night: Adopt A Pet, Cafeteria, 5-6 p.m.
- December 12: Winter Concert, 6-7 p.m.
- December 13: Grade 1 Field Trip to Robinson Nature Center, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- December 22: Winter Break begins at the end of the school day. Asynchronous Learning Day for all students, Schools & Offices close 3 hours early
- January 2: Schools Reopen
- January 15: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Schools & Offices closed
- January 19: Second Marking Period Ends – Schools close 3 hours early for students
- January 29: Report Cards Distributed

Lost & Found

We have already accumulated a collection of jackets and lunch boxes that have been found and placed on our Lost & Found table. If your child is missing an item, please call the office at 443-809-7008.

No Pets on School Grounds

No pets are allowed on the school grounds during the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Principal's message continued:

Attendance:

Parents, *Attendance Matters!* Help your child succeed in school and build the habit of good attendance by:

- Setting a regular bedtime and morning routine which includes packing your child's bookbag the night before. Sleep Well!

Padres, la asistencia importa! Ayude a su hijo a tener éxito en la escuela y a desarrollar el hábito de una buena asistencia:

Establecer una rutina matutina y a la hora de acostarse que incluya empacar la mochila de su hijo la noche anterior. ¡Dormir bien!



*Perfect Attendance for
First Quarter
2023-2024 School Year*

Prekindergarten

*Marie C., Kylie H. V., Tina J., Kritika K.,
Kimora K.*

Kindergarten

*Jaxson B., Leslie B., Thiago D. G., Kaiden F.,
Hank H., Arrian M., Uriel M., Dylan M.,
Marik O., Adriana R. R., Eli S., Aaliyah S.,
Grayson S., Liam V. L., Abel W., Alec W.,
Briellen W.*

Grade 1

*Ahmad A. R., Jayla A., Layla B., Payton B.,
Camden B., Madison C., Averie C., Kinsley C.,
Celeste F. F., Drake H. V., Keziah M., Mano
N., Kalíyon P., Dennis S., Agam S., Fateh S.*



*Perfect Attendance for
First Quarter
2023-2024 School Year*

Grade 2

*Iszadora A., Masyn A., Vanessa C-V,
Retine C., Arianna C., Martina D.,
Mackenzie G., Cylas H., Zion J., Mina
K., Michael K., Bryce K., Leah K.,
Dominic L., Jeremy L., AJ L., Alicia M.,
Elise P., Justin R-S, Promise Y.*

Grade 3

*Eshan A., Jad A., Vance B., Emir B.,
Katherine C. S., Anthony C-V, Nicholas
C., Riley C., Edison D. C. D., Mario D-G,
Belter E-L, Gabriel E-L, Liam H.,
Autumn J., Vincent K., Kevin L.,
Ariana L., Caleb M., Ariadne M. C.,
Noah P., Sharif R. G., Emma T., Bastian
V-L, Brylie W.*

Grade 4

*Kimberly C. S., Abner C. R., Prunelle C.,
Connor C., Maggie F., Natalie G., Marco
G. C., Andrea G. P., Thomas G-B,
Makayla J., Nicoletta K., Nevaeh K.,
Joselyn L., Jarol M. C., Jace O., Jesser Q.
G., Za'Kaiah S., Dylan S., Cameron S.,
Kourtney T., Anthony W.*

Grade 5

*Yassir A. E. A., Madisyn A., Izaiah C.,
Zyanya C-M, Alaysia D., Basma E. A.,
Violet F., Laila G., Danny G-L, Alana L.,
Myah L., Kaylee L., Diego M-P, Bryan
M. R., Mariam M., Estaylin M. C.,
Vincent P., Anderson R. M., Alessandro
R-M*

Library News

Did you know....

- November is National Family Literacy Month!
- Students are checking out 2-3 books each week.

A Note From Mrs. Nowakowski

- Book Fair is Monday, December 4th to Friday, December 8th
- We NEED VOLUNTEERS ☺

A Peek At What We Are Learning

Kindergarten Unit 2: Online Safety

First Unit 2: Digital World/Online Safety

Second Unit 2: Destiny (Library Platform)

Third Unit 2: Reading Online (eBooks)

Fourth Unit 2: Reading Online (eBooks)

Fifth Unit 2: Digital Tools

Missing Books?

- Have your student check their desk at school, backpack, bedroom, etc.!

Pre-Kindergarten

Students have been working hard to learn the rules and routines of school. We have been learning to count from one to 10. We are also trying to master the letters of the alphabet and their associated sounds. In the coming weeks we will begin our second unit: Our Environment and constructing our very own coral reef.

Kindergarten

Happy Winter Kindergarten! Your teachers have been thoroughly impressed with your engagement and enthusiasm during 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 story elements and concepts of print in fiction and making connections in nonfiction text. Ask your child about logging into AMIRA! Amira is our new differentiated AI tutoring program to support early literacy skills. Read or be read to each night for 15 minutes. Research shows it helps children become more fluent readers.

We will be wrapping up our health unit and moving into science where we will discuss how push and pull helps us solve problems. We took our first field trip to Farmer Stan's farm to learn about agriculture. Thanks to all our families volunteering to join us.

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, composing and decomposing numbers to 10 with a variety of ways to represent numbers.

First Grade

In phonics we are working hard reviewing letter names and letter sounds and blending them together to read and spell words. Students should know all letter names and their sounds and work on sounding out words as they read. We encourage you to read at home with your child every day! Practice will help your child grow stronger as a reader.

In writing the class is becoming more confident in their own writing as we write our own essays. We are concentrating on neat, legible handwriting, as well as capital letters at the beginning of the sentence and punctuation at the end.

First Grade Continued

We are learning about complete sentences, proofreading, and adding details to our writing. Please encourage your child to write at home also. Greeting cards, letters, grocery lists, and stories are all great practice.

We are also spending time with number concepts and patterns in math and number corner. Students are practicing addition and subtraction strategies, like counting on, doubles, and make 10. We are learning to solve and write story problems and count by 5's and 10's. The students are working hard to complete their daily homework as well, which is great review and reinforcement. Thank you for your home support! The students are settling into life as first graders. We are excited to see where the year goes!

Second Grade

Second graders have started off the year nicely and they are continuing to participate in a positive manner while learning and interacting with others.

This quarter students have been working on the following: Math, unit 1, students learned efficient strategies to represent and solve word problems involving addition and subtraction. They also learned efficient ways to count and how addition and subtraction are related.

Math, unit 2, students are learning how three-digit numbers can be expressed in different ways using place value and what models can be used to solve double-digit problems. Also, students are measuring the length of objects and learning how measurement concepts connect to the base ten system.

ELA, module 1, students learned about what it means to be a good citizen at home, at school, and in the community. We read about characters and real people who are good citizens and how our actions can make a difference to others. Students also wrote a personal narrative about something they have done to make the world a better place.

ELA, module 2, students learned about examining the world around us and about making new discoveries. We read books about different kinds of matter, explored things that are new and unusual, and even noticed things about fine art! Students also wrote a descriptive essay about a place they want to visit!

Phonics, students have been blending, building, and writing words with short vowels, long vowels, digraphs, open and closed syllables, and inflectional endings. Students have been practicing these skills by reading decodable texts using high frequency words. Please encourage your child to reread these books each night.

Second Grade continued

Students are also reinforcing their literacy and math skills by using the online programs *Amira and Legends of Learning*.*

Content, health, students learned about mental, emotional, and physical health. Throughout the unit students gained knowledge that will help them make healthy choices and decisions. Students also learned how to advocate for the healthy choices that they decide to make.

Science, students have been using the Engineering Design Process to plan, create, build, and test a wall. Students have been collecting data to determine the strength of their wall and using the data to suggest ways to improve the mortar to make a stronger wall. They are also learning that different kinds of matter exist and many of them can be either solid or liquid, depending on the temperature.

We appreciate the support of all our families!

Third Grade

We are looking forward to a productive second quarter of instruction and learning!

Phonics: We will continue to use our sound spelling cards to help us write words, practice sight words, read decodable books, and work on word analysis skills.

Language Arts: Third graders will build their knowledge about the documents and symbols of the United States, with a focus on the nonfiction genre. We will read texts and view videos about why certain things came to represent the values and ideals of our country. Children will also choose three things they read about – people, places, holidays, documents, and symbols – and write an expository essay about what each means to our nation and why. Third graders will also build their knowledge about plays, with a focus on the drama genre. We will read texts and view videos about the features of classic and contemporary plays. Children will also write an opinion essay about whether or not the stories in this module worked well as plays.

Math: Please continue to work on basic math facts at home. Basic math facts are important because they form the building blocks for higher-level math concepts. When your child masters his/her math facts, it will be significantly easier for them to solve more difficult problems.

It is very important to promote as much independence as possible by having your child complete and return their homework by the end of each week and keep their take home folders organized.

As always, thank you for all of your support and the third grade teachers wish you well!

Fourth Grade

Hello fourth grade families! What an amazing first quarter of the year we've had! Students have adjusted well to the changes that they have experienced moving into fourth grade, and we are beginning to hit our stride. We'd like to thank all of you for your continued flexibility, perseverance, and support as we commence another great year of learning.

In math this month students finished their second unit, "Multi-Digit Multiplication and Early Division," and will begin the third unit, "Fractions and Decimals." In this unit students will work with a variety of tools to model, read, write, compare, order, compose, and decompose fractions and decimals. Their investigations and explorations will range from the purely mathematical to applied, as they determine strategies to solve real world problems. Students are encouraged to continue working towards mastery of their multiplication and division facts, as this will help them with our upcoming future units.

Students in the Advanced Academic Math class are currently working on a unit on, "Adding and Subtracting Fractions." In this unit students add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators using a variety of strategies to find common denominators. Some of these strategies include using money, clocks, double number lines, and tables. Students will then extend these strategies and models to compare, add, subtract, and solve story problems involving fractions, as well as to make generalizations about finding common denominators. Finally, students will gain explicit experience with greatest common factors and least common multiples as they find common denominators and learn to simplify fractions.

In English Language Arts, students have finished module 2, "Come to Your Senses," and have moved on to module 3, "Rise to the Occasion." In this module students will listen to, read, and view a variety of texts that present them with examples of overcoming challenges. A genre focus on historical fiction provides students with opportunities to synthesize ideas, identify plot elements, and identify themes to better understand unfamiliar texts. As students build their vocabulary and synthesize topic knowledge, they will learn that with personal courage and the support of family, friends, and community members, people can face any challenge. Please encourage your child to read independently on an appropriate level for them to continue to strengthen their literacy skills. In content students have begun their first social studies unit "Geography & Economics in the United States." In this unit students will explore how the geography of our

Fourth Grade continued

country has affected the people living there and how people adapt to, modify, and impact their environment. They will do this by interpreting a variety of maps, comparing the physical aspects of different regions, locating and describing physical and human made features of the United States, describing how geography impacts the people of a given area, describing ways and reasons that people modify the land, and explaining community growth and its consequences on our environment.

Fifth Grade

Hello fifth grade families! It's hard to believe that we're already through the first quarter of the year. We'd like to thank you all for your continued flexibility, perseverance, and support as we commence another great year of learning. Please continue to reach out to your child's teacher with any questions or concerns that you may have. In math this month students finished their second unit, "Adding and Subtracting Fractions," and will begin the third unit, "Place Value and Decimals." In this unit students will study skills and concepts related to place value, from reading, writing, and comparing decimals to rounding and examining the decimal patterns of multiplying and dividing numbers by 10. Students will also use whole number strategies and place value understanding to add and subtract decimals to the hundredths. We encourage students to continue working towards mastery of their multiplication and division facts, as this will help them with our upcoming future units. To help with this goal students can access Legends of Learning or Prodigy at any time to practice these facts and any skills that were learned in class. Students should be using their Home Connections book to complete homework nightly (Monday through Thursday). Ask your student to show you some of the great work they've been doing this year!

Students in the Advanced Academic Math class have completed a unit on area and surface area in which they have explored and identified how to find the area of triangles, parallelograms, and some quadrilaterals. They also learned to find the surface area of rectangular prisms and square pyramids. Currently the fifth graders are working through a unit about ratios (an association between two or more quantities). Students investigated finding the unit price of products and the constant speed of moving objects by using double number line diagrams. In reading we are flying through our new HMH curriculum. This month we are starting Module 3: Natural Disasters. Students will be exploring the unique characteristics of nonfiction texts and their text structures.

Fifth Grade continued

These include cause and effect, sequential order, and compare and contrast. Students will be using these skills to deepen their understanding of our stories as well as their vocabulary. Additionally, we encourage students to read independently on their Guided Reading level to continue to strengthen their literacy skills. They have each received a monthly reading log to track their reading progress!

In content students learned about environmental sustainability and biodiversity by participating in a super fun BioBlitz field trip to North Point State Park where they were able to determine how energy and matter cycle through an ecosystem. Students got to closely examine the vast variety of life forms within specific regions of the park. They learned how to tally different subgroups of life, and electronically document their findings onto a Maryland Department of Natural Resources database. We also had a big science unit this quarter called "Blast Off." In this unit students worked with chemicals to determine which chemical interactions caused the greatest reaction. The goal was to determine which combination of elements would create the fuel to propel their rockets the highest. The event culminated with a fifth grade rocket launch on the basketball courts. The student teams really took a great deal of pride in the rockets they built, and the combination of chemicals and volumes they chose.

Ms. Doyle (Instrumental Music)

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students worked on keeping a beat. First and second graders worked on recognizing the music symbols quarter note, eighth notes, and quarter rests. The third graders began playing their recorders and can play B, A, and G. The fourth graders played the violin in Exploratory Music. The fifth graders began lessons on their instruments and began to learn music for the Winter Concert which was held on December 12, 2023.

Mrs. Spence (Vocal Music)

Students have been exploring their voices by singing both alone and with a group, performing movement activities, learning new songs, partner dances, echo clapping, and leading their own Rules rhythm.

Primary grade students have been learning all about fall and performing scarf activities to songs about the fall leaves.

Fourth and fifth grade students are working very hard in preparation for their Winter Concert.

Mr. Sabiston (Physical Education)

Everyone had a great time at the Turkey Trot! Thank you for participating! We appreciate the donations for physical education equipment. We are purchasing Cup Stacking Timer Displays with the funds raised from the Turkey Trot.

Sneaker Reminder! Let's have the best time possible while being safe in Physical Education. Please be sure that your child remembers to bring flat soled athletic shoes on the days he or she has Physical Education class. Shoes such as Crocs and Ugg's are not safe Athletic shoes. Thank you!



Nurse News

Handwashing is important for everyone! Handwashing is an easy, inexpensive, and effective way to help your family stay healthy. Studies have shown that handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related sicknesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu. Make handwashing with soap and water a healthy habit to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Help your kids develop handwashing skills and make handwashing a part of your family's daily life. Handwashing can become a lifelong healthy habit if you start teaching it at an early age. When your family is healthy, you don't have to worry about missing school, work, or other activities. Help your children make handwashing a healthy habit at home, school, and play by:

- Teaching kids the five easy steps for handwashing – wet, lather, scrub, rinse and dry – and the key times to wash hands, such as after using the bathroom or before eating.
- Giving frequent reminders so that handwashing becomes a habit and a regular part of your child's day.
- Leading by example by washing your hands.

All the best! Erica Axilrod, RN, School Nurse
eaxilrod@bcps.org Health Suite: 443-809-5820



Happy Holidays!



Berkshire Student Artists Gallery

Pre-K artists created painted pumpkins with circle and straight lines.



Zoe



Andre



Briella



Cameron



Cristian N.



Christian B.

Kindergarten artists explored different lines in their paintings inspired by Spanish Artist, Joan Miro.



Thiago



Eli



Liam



Marlee



Briellen

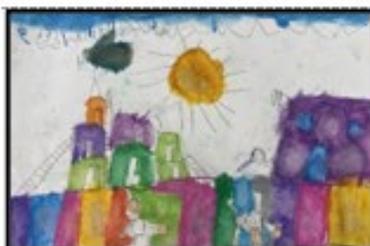


Uriel

Grade 1 artists painted colorful buildings and structures inspired by artist, Xul Solar from Argentina.



Jaden



Angeliq



Emily

Grade 2 artists created paintings inspired by Pop Artist, Romero Britto from Brazil.



Mia



Elise



Zion

Grade 3 artists created mood through their Tree of Life paintings inspired by Carlos Catasse from Chile.



Jordan



Paisley



Boston

Grade 4 artists created self-portraits inspired by Frida Kahlo from Mexico.



Nevaeh



Makenzie



Nicolletta



Natalie

Grade 5 artists documented their lives through visual diaries inspired by Antuoco Chicaiza from Ecuador.



Rosselin



Danny



Alessandra



Sophia



Genesis



Laila