

**Brent Elementary School**

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**Syllabus for Grade 4  
2016-2017**

Joan Griffin McCabe – Room 304

Sarah Werstuik – Room 303

Victoria Winters – Room 302

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# Grade Level Information

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## Contact Information

Fourth Grade Team	<i>brentfourthgraders@gmail.com</i>
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Sarah Werstuik	<i>sarah.werstuik@dc.gov</i>
Victoria Winters	<i>victoria.winders@dc.gov</i>

For urgent needs during the school day, please contact the Brent Elementary School office at **202-698-3363**.

You can access our grade-level website at: <http://brentelementary.org/site/grade4/>  
On the website we will post our biweekly newsletters, homework helpers, and a calendar of events. We encourage you to check the website regularly for updates.

## Communication

Each child will receive a Communication Folder to deliver handouts and notes from school-to-home and home-to-school. **This folder should come home nightly and be returned every morning; please plan to check your child's folder every evening and remind your child to turn in any notes or signed papers.** On Tuesdays, the folder will contain the Brent TuesNews. Teacher will also communicate through biweekly newsletters. Please plan to read these newsletters thoroughly, as this is how we communicate announcements, upcoming events, and share curricular information.

For questions about your child's performance or other concerns, please e-mail your child's teacher directly. We will respond to all inquiries or requests within 48 hours.

# Daily Schedule

Based on DCPS guidelines, our students will have 120-minutes of literacy Instruction daily (including reading, writing, and word study), 90-minutes of math instruction daily, and 135-minutes of Social Studies/Science instruction weekly. In addition, our students have one 45-minute Special Class each day (Physical Education, Music, Art, or Spanish, Science).

	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>8:45-9:00</b>	Morning Work	Morning Work	Morning Work	Morning Work	Morning Work
<b>9:00-9:20</b>	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
<b>9:20-10:10</b>	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop
<b>10:10-10:30</b>	Word Study	Word Study	Word Study	Word Study	Word Study
<b>10:30-11:45</b>	Math Investigations	Math Investigations	Math Investigations	Math Investigations	Math Investigations
<b>11:45-12:15</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>12:15-12:45</b>	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
<b>12:45-12:55</b>	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time
<b>12:55-1:45</b>	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop	Reading Workshop
<b>1:45-2:00</b>	Read-Aloud	Read-Aloud	Read-Aloud	Read-Aloud	Read-Aloud
<b>2:00-2:20</b>	Social Studies / Science	Social Studies / Science	Social Studies / Science	Social Studies / Science	Social Studies / Science
<b>2:20-2:30</b>	Closing Meeting	Closing Meeting	Closing Meeting	Closing Meeting	Closing Meeting
<b>2:30-3:15</b>	Special	Special	Special	Special	Special

# Curriculum

## Math

This year we are transitioning from the Investigations Math curriculum to Eureka Math by GreatMinds. Eureka Math is a comprehensive math curriculum created to meet the needs of Common Core shifts. During the first part of the year, we will be primarily working from the Investigations curriculum which emphasizes reasoning about mathematical ideas, developing fluency and content grounded in meaning, and creating engagement through games and manipulatives. Over the course of the year we will be incorporating more components of Eureka Math, including structured fluency practice and significant conceptual work with place value. We will provide more information throughout the year about our transition to Eureka and how you can support your child in math.

## Literacy

We use the Reading and Writing Workshop (Units of Study) curricula designed by Columbia University's Teachers' College for our literacy instruction. The Units of Study in Reading and Writing are aligned to the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. Each unit includes high-quality literature, which teachers use to model specific reading or writing strategies that students emulate in their independent work. You will get regular updates on our current reading and writing units and teaching points in our biweekly newsletters.

## Social Studies | Science

The DCPS Social Studies standards guide our history, geography, economics, civics, and political science instruction. In fourth grade, students will explore North American history from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century through the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century. We use the Harcourt "Reflections" textbook and other primary and secondary sources to study Native American civilizations, the Age of European Exploration, British Colonization, and the Revolutionary War.

We use the Next Generation Science Standards to plan our Science instruction. *Please refer to the Science Long-term plan for more information about what students will be studying in their weekly Science Special outside of class.*

## Units of Study

It is expected that the units of study will be implemented in the order in which they appear on the calendar below. However, we have accounted for some flexibility in the schedule, and will make adjustments as necessary to meet the needs of our students. We will make any updates available on our class website.

# Units of Study

## September – December 2016

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>DATES</b>	8/22 – 8/26	8/29 – 9/2	9/6 – 9/9	9/12 – 9/16	9/19 – 9/23	9/26 – 9/29	10/3 – 10/7	10/11 – 10/14	10/17 – 10/21	10/24 – 10/27	10/31 – 11/4	11/7 – 11/12	11/14 – 11/18	11/21 – 11/24	11/28 – 12/1	12/5 – 12/9	12/12 – 12/16	12/19 – 12/21
<b># DAYS</b>	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	3
<b>WRITING</b>	<b>The Arc of the Story: Writing Realistic Fiction</b>							<b>Boxes and Bullets: Personal and Persuasive Essays</b>						<b>Writing in Response to Reading</b>				
<b>READING</b>	<b>Interpreting Characters: The Heart of the Story</b>					<b>Reading the Weather, Reading the World: Purposeful Reading of Nonfiction</b>						<b>Author Study: Reading Like a Fan</b>						
<b>MATH</b>	<b>Factors, Multiples, and Arrays: Multiplication and Division 1</b>			<b>Multiple Towers and Division Stories: Multiplication and Division 2</b>						<b>Size, Shape, and Symmetry: 2D-Geometry and Measurement</b>					<b>Landmarks and Large Numbers: Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System</b>			
<b>SCIENCE / SS</b>	<b>Leader in Me</b>			<b>The First Americans</b>						<b>From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes</b>					<b>Cultures Meet</b>			

# Units of Study

## January – June 2017

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
<b>DATES</b>	1/3 – 1/6	1/9 – 1/13	1/17 – 1/18	1/23 – 1/27	1/30 – 2/3	2/6 – 2/10	2/13 – 2/16	2/21 – 2/24	2/27 – 3/2	3/6 – 3/10	3/13 – 3/17	3/20 – 3/24	3/27 – 3/30	4/3 – 4/7	4/10 – 4/14	4/24 – 4/28	5/1 – 5/5	5/8 – 5/12	5/15 – 5/17	5/22 – 5/26	5/30 – 6/2	6/5 – 6/9	6/12 – 6/14
<b># DAYS</b>	4	5	2	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	2.5
<b>WRITING</b>	<b>Journalism</b>					<b>Bringing History to Life</b>							<b>The Literary Essay: Writing About Fiction</b>					<b>Revision</b>					
<b>READING</b>	<b>Historical Fiction Book Clubs</b>					<b>Reading History: The American Revolution</b>										<b>Social Issues Book Clubs</b>							
<b>MATH</b>	<b>Landmarks and Large Numbers (continued):</b> Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System		<b>Fraction Cards and Decimal Squares:</b> Rational Numbers					<b>How Many Packages? How Many Groups?:</b> Multiplication and Division 3			<b>Describing the Shape of Data:</b> Data Analysis		<b>Moving Between Solids &amp; Silhouettes:</b> 3D Geometry & Measurement			<b>Penny Jars and Plant Growth:</b> Patterns, Functions, and Change							
<b>SCIENCE / SS</b>	<b>Settling the Colonies</b>				<b>The American Revolution</b>							<b>Governing the Nation</b>					<b>Earth and Human Activity</b>						

## Assessment

Fourth graders are assessed in a variety of ways, formally and informally, throughout the year. As part of DCPS, all fourth graders take the Achievement Network (ANet) interim assessments and iReady Math. Teachers use this assessment data to determine student progress and guide further instruction.

In the spring, fourth graders take the PARCC assessments. The PARCC assessment is computer-based and matches the Common Core standards. More information about PARCC and our school's testing window will be provided later in the year.

Along with these standardized assessments, our students will take mid-unit and end-of-unit math assessments as part of our math curriculum. They will have chapter tests based on our Social Studies units, and they will have periodic book quizzes and vocabulary tests. These assessments will be sent home for families to review.

In addition, to support our work with the Reading and Writing, students will complete pre- and post-unit assessments for each Unit of Study. We use the Fountas & Pinnell Assessment System to determine students' independent reading level. Running record reading assessments will be administered two to four times per year, as needed.

Teachers will communicate about student progress and performance through quarterly report cards, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and graded work sent home.

## Homework

In fourth grade, students will receive nightly homework Monday-Thursday, starting the 4<sup>th</sup> week of school. Nightly homework will include reading for at least 30 minutes, filling out a reading log, writing a short reading response or other ELA (writing, grammar, vocabulary) task, and completing one sheet of math practice. In addition, students will be expected to do additional reading or studying for social studies and other subjects as assigned/needed.

While students should complete their homework independently, we ask that families help their children by establishing a consistent homework routine, including a regular time and place (such as a desk or the kitchen table) to do homework. Students are expected to turn in completed homework every morning.

At various points throughout the year, students will need to have access to a computer with a keyboard and Internet access to type assignments or conduct research. If your family does not



have access to a computer or a reliable Internet connection, please let your child's teacher know and we can make accommodations for students to work before or after school in the library.

Students will also receive personalized login information for IXL.com, a math website. Teachers will provide a list of suggested skills for students to work on, based on the current math unit and individual needs. We suggest that students spend 30 minutes on this site 2-3 times per week.

## Classroom Management

We use the Responsive Classroom approach to creating structure and building a strong classroom community. Whenever possible, we empower students to be independent thinkers and problem-solvers. We use interactive modeling to introduce and reinforce appropriate behavior and language; we employ logical consequences to address misbehavior, and hold class meetings to reflect, set goals, and celebrate achievements.

Each classroom at Brent has a designated area where children can calm down and regroup safely and quietly. Students may be asked to take a break in their classroom or in a "buddy classroom" if they demonstrate or decide they need space or time to refocus their thoughts or regain control of their emotions. Students may also be asked to complete a written reflection during or after their break in order to share their thoughts and reflections. If your child fills out a Reflection Sheet, it may be sent home for a parent/guardian to sign. We ask that you use this opportunity to discuss appropriate behavior with your child.

## Field Studies

At Brent Elementary School, we believe that field experiences are an essential part of the curriculum. These opportunities provide firsthand experiences that enrich and extend the instructional program. Every trip is planned to meet specific objectives, but also to enable students to connect classroom learning to the real world.

All expenses are covered by the Field Experience Fee payable to the Brent PTA via the school website at the start of the year. This fee covers travel and programming expenses, as well as your child's **field experience uniform shirt, which is required for trip days**. Families will receive communication a few weeks prior to the field experience that will include curricular connections, as well as a link to Permission Click, an online platform that will replace traditional paper permission slips. Using Permission Click, parents can digitally give approval on any device.

Chaperones are essential to the success of our Field Experiences. We hope that you'll have the opportunity to join our class on at least one Field Experience so you can see firsthand the real-

world learning that strengthens our in-school studies. Prior to chaperoning, you will receive a handout of frequently asked questions, as well as specific information about the trip.

### **Proposed Field Trips:**

- **National Museum of the American Indian:** This field trip is an extension of our Social Studies unit on Native Americans. Students will learn about the cultures and traditions of various North American tribes.
- **American Art Museum:** This field trip also connects to our Native American studies. The museum features an Indian Gallery with more than 400 paintings that capture the “manners and customs” of the Plains Indian tribes in the 1830s.
- **Newseum:** This field trip is an extension of our Journalism Writing Unit. Students learn about the purpose of the elements on the front page of a newspaper, including nameplates, bylines, photo captions, and more.
- **Claude Moore Farm:** This field trip is an extension of our Social Studies unit on colonial life in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century America. At the farm students will be able to participate in a range of activities that would have been performed by people during this era including candle making, carding wool, pounding corn, and 18<sup>th</sup> century games.
- **Mount Vernon:** This field trip supports our learning about early Revolutionary figures, most notably George Washington and his role in the founding of the U.S (post-Revolutionary War). Students will participate in a guided tour that includes a tour of the mansion, the slave quarters, and the grounds of the farm.
- **Kenilworth Aquatic Garden/ Bladensburg Waterfront Park:** We will take two field trips as part of the “Rice Rangers” program, a conservation effort to help restore the Anacostia Watershed into a healthy ecosystem. Student will tour various parts of the Anacostia River and plant native seedlings that they grow at school.

## **Volunteering**

Our fourth grade team loves support from friends and family members! We frequently need assistance with photocopying, organizing, filing, labeling, and other classroom jobs. After the first six weeks of school, we also welcome volunteers to work with students during the school day, either reading individually or with a small group of students or supporting specific projects or activities. If you are not able to volunteer during the day but still have some time to contribute, we do have some tasks that can be completed at home.

Please check our website and newsletters for volunteer needs throughout the year.

## **School-Wide Information**

For more information on school policies, please see the Family Handbook, available at [www.brentelementary.org](http://www.brentelementary.org).

## Contact Information

Principal, Peter Young

*[peter.young@dc.gov](mailto:peter.young@dc.gov)*

Before- and After-School Care, Vivian Hill-Lawson

*[vhlawson@springboardschool.com](mailto:vhlawson@springboardschool.com)*

PTA President, Diana Williams

*[dmewilliams@hotmail.com](mailto:dmewilliams@hotmail.com)*

For urgent needs during the school day, please contact the Brent Elementary School office at **202-698-3363**.

## Communication

**TuesNews:** Every Tuesday, families will receive a newsletter, known as the “TuesNews.” This newsletter will provide valuable school-wide information about upcoming programs, classroom highlights, weekend activities, and other essential information. Please plan to set aside time every Tuesday evening to read over this newsletter.

**Website:** Our school website site, [www.brentelementary.com](http://www.brentelementary.com), provides a calendar of upcoming events, information on each classroom teacher and special programs, in addition to copies of important forms. Check the website regularly for updates and new pictures!

**Family Handbook:** This comprehensive handbook with details on school policies, uniforms, and other important issues. Copies are available on the website or in the Main Office.

**Connect Ed Phone Calls:** DCPS and Brent Elementary use Connect Ed Phone calls to communicate critical information. If you do not receive at least one Connect Ed phone call before Labor Day, please contact the Main Office to verify the home phone number on record.

# Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for academic success. Students should arrive at school prepared to learn every day. **Students are expected to be in their class “parking space” on the playground (or at designated location during inclement weather) at 8:35 AM. Students who are not in their classrooms at 8:45 AM will be marked tardy.**

When students are absent, Brent follows the DCPS Attendance policies. A student’s absence will be considered “excused” only if it meets one of these requirements:

- Illness or medical cause experienced by the student
- Death in the student’s immediate family
- Quarantine, contagious disease, or infection (by direction of authorities)
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Medical or dental appointments for the student

**In order for absences to be excused, a parent or guardian must provide the office with a written note including the student’s name, teacher’s name, and reason for the absence on the noted date.** Students with more than three unexcused absences as well as students with frequent tardiness will be referred to the social worker for counseling and an intervention plan.

# Food and Nutrition

Brent Elementary uses Chartwells-Thompson School Dining Services for breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is free for all students and is served in the cafeteria from 8:15 AM to 8:35 AM daily. Parents can view lunch account statuses and add funds at the machine in the Cafeteria or online at [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com). **Student lunch costs \$1.25 daily.** Free and Income based reduced priced are also available. Contact the Main Office for more information.

Whether you buy your food at the school cafeteria or bring it from home, **Brent encourages families to pack healthy snacks and lunches for their children that include lots of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains.**

**Brent is a NUT-FREE SCHOOL.** This includes both peanuts and tree nuts (such as almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc.). Brent has students with severe allergies to nuts that can be triggered simply by coming into contact with a surface that has nut residue on it, including keyboards and tabletops. Healthy alternatives to peanut butter that do not trigger allergies include soy-nut butter and sunflower seed butter, which are available in many super markets.

# Uniforms

**All students must wear their school uniform every day**, unless otherwise notified. The uniform consists of a **hunter green** or **white collared shirt** or blouse and **hunter green or khaki pants**, shorts, skirts, skorts, or jumpers. Brent Elementary School shirts (t-shirts, polo shirts, and sweatshirts) are also appropriate with hunter green or khaki bottoms. Closed-toed shoes with rubber soles are required for Physical Education. Students are expected to wear safe, functional shoes and clothes that they can put on and off independently.

If students arrive at school without their uniform or wearing inappropriate clothing, parents will be contacted to bring suitable clothing and/or students may be asked to change into school provided uniform clothes.

# Celebrations

Throughout the year, we have many opportunities to celebrate the season and acknowledge student learning as a school community, including Concerts, Museum Exhibition Nights, and Publishing Parties. In addition, teachers plan opportunities for family members to come into the classroom, share with each other, and recognize students' achievements. We also have various activities and events during the year for students to have fun and make memories together, such as school assemblies and Field Days.

Some holidays may be acknowledged during the year in individual classrooms as they pertain to class goals and grade-level standards. Instruction about holidays will be conducted in an objective, neutral, non-devotional manner and will serve a secular educational purpose.

**We will not celebrate holidays with food**, both out of respect for families who do not observe holidays or celebrations and for children who have food allergies and are not able to participate in food-related celebrations.

Student birthdays may be acknowledged in individual classrooms during the school day, in ways that do not interfere with instruction. **We will not celebrate birthdays with food.** *Families are encouraged to consider donating a book or game to their child's classroom in lieu of food treats.* Family members are also welcome to spend time at lunch or recess with their child on (or around) his or her birthday, perhaps by visiting during morning meeting and sharing something special about your child with the class.