Coming Up

March 24 - April 24
Distance Learning

Thursday, April 16
Emancipation Day Holiday (school closure)

Wednesday, April 22
Virtual Community Meeting
8 - 9 p.m.
Login information distributed Monday, April 20

Friday, April 24
Records Day (school closure)

Key Contact Information
Main Office Mobile Line
202-590-7458

Brent General Email
brentelementary@k12.dc.gov

Website
brentelementary.org

Facebook
facebook.com/BrentElementarySchool

Twitter
twitter.com/brentelementary

Instagram
Instagram.com/BrentBears

Brent Bears 60 Minute Challenge

Brent Bears are Brave, Empathetic, Active, and Responsible! This week, we hope to connect as a community and inspire one another by sharing the ways each of our families strive to achieve 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Show us how you stay active by sharing messages, photos, and videos on Instagram (@brentbears), Twitter (@brentelementary), and Facebook (Robert Brent Elementary School). #brentbears #brentbears #activebrentbears
Important – Please Review -
Enrollment Update for SY20-21

DCPS is still working on an enrollment process for SY20-21. Enrollment forms have not been released. As you all know, the enrollment process is somewhat antiquated. Families are required to complete a series of forms and present residency verification documents in person. Information from those forms is entered into a database. A critical way families can make the process more efficient is by providing residency verification through completing a short survey about state tax filing. The District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has partnered with the Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) to assist with verifying residency as part of the annual enrollment process for District of Columbia public and public charter schools. Visit https://sled.osse.dc.gov/ResidencyVerification/2546 today to complete the survey. Families who successfully complete the survey do not have to present residency documents.

Complete the 2020 Census!
Once every ten years, the federal government does a census to count everyone in the United States. We want to make sure each person in our Brent family is COUNTED in 2020, as it will impact our city and her people for the next decade to come. Complete the form that you received in the mail or follow the instructions at this link https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html

Week Four Family Survey: www.tinyurl.com/BrentWeekFourSurvey
As we begin to capture feedback about some elements of our distance learning approach, we hope that you will take a few minutes to respond to the questions in the Week Four Family Survey. This survey is intentionally limited in scope. This is for two main reasons: to ask for your input on a relatively narrow set of topics for the time being, as we reflect on plans already in motion, and to help us gather some basic input here as we consider other mechanisms for collecting feedback in the coming weeks. Note that if you have more than one child, you are welcome to fill out the survey more than one time, considering the experiences of each child. Thanks very much!

Math & Science Day
On Friday, April 10th, Brent had Math and Science Day and first Catch-Up Day. Students had the opportunity to tour Mr. Mangiaracina’s backyard, try a nature scavenger hunt, create Paul Klee inspired shape art and try their hand at matchstick puzzles among several offerings. Some families engaged in Math & Science related activities of their own design including conducting an egg drop challenge, measuring as they cooked, and dyeing eggs. Thanks for sharing your day with us! The link to the landing page will remain active for families that want to explore additional activities (https://tinyurl.com/brentmath)

See photos.
Virtual Back to School Night

Thank you to all who attended Virtual Back to School Night last Tuesday.

We started with a general presentation and broke into small groups based on parent/guardian interest. In case you missed it or if you would like to review the materials provided, the general and small group presentations can be found here: https://dck12-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/norah_lycknell_k12_dc_gov/EmSV4rGWjFhMmgd_6WMdECA8PZYCE9xk4Qcxvi7YNqPg?e=aqCjgd.

We also promised responses to the questions offered in the chat:

1. Should we plan on doing virtual learning until June?

Brent is designing plans for virtual learning through the end of the school year in June. Though at the time of publication we have not received official word from the Mayor’s office or from DCPS, we think it wise to place in place a long-term plan. That plan allows us to prepare the remainder of the school year in a distance learning format, to pivot back to in-person learning, and/or to accommodate rolling in-person and distance learning periods in the Fall.

2. We’ve periodically been asked to fill out progress logs for our kids. How important is that? Meaning, if we accidentally forget to fill these out is it impactful in any way? Daily progress logs are easy things to lose track of given all the chaos. If we do need to do it, could we do it weekly instead of daily?

One of our core distance learning goals is connection. Connection means not only social connections but also tracking and responding to student engagement. At certain grade levels, progress logs allow for that tracking and are currently very helpful to providing feedback and planning future instruction. However, we hear your point that progress trackers can be burdensome. We are researching other ways to track engagement - from apps within Teams to submitted assignments - and will only rely on progress trackers where the teacher cannot otherwise observe the work but it is important to do so to enable responsive planning (such as tracking student center choices in PK or a reading log in the upper grades).

As to the weekly-rather-than-daily part, yes. Many parents appreciate the choice between a daily and weekly tracker or assignment submission. Right now it is a choice that some grade levels are giving. By the start of Week Give, we will broaden that choice wherever immediate submission is not required for instructional planning.

3. Any chance it would be possible to get weekly plans prior to Sunday evening?

Maybe. Right now, along with delivering live and recorded instruction, teachers spend the current week planning for the next one. Meanwhile, the leadership team spends time learning from our teachers to revise big goals for the next week. On Saturday, we put both the grade level and school part together to finalize our designs for the week. We have had trouble hastening that rhythm while still maintaining a sense of purpose and quality. But as the systems of distance learning become more perfunctory and the decisions a bit narrower, we will keep working to get teachers the information they need to send the weekly email earlier.

4. Do you have any advice on keeping your student from migrating from a lesson to a goof-around web site (e.g. a Disney cartoon) the minute your back is turned? I toggle between two kids and two computers in different rooms each morning and wind up playing games of whack-a-mole to keep my low-integrity children on task!

Even in the school building, we spend lots of time keeping our students on task, whether establishing proactive systems or giving frequent reminders. Your plight is a reasonable if frustrating one. With our goal of growing student independence, which launches this week, we will provide families with age-specific resources that describe reasonable expectations for student independence and focus, ways to set norms and routines at home, and ways to respond to success or deviations with consequences and rewards.

For now, this resource (https://assets-global.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/5e83b41b7df0210d47588d12_Supporting%20Families%20with%20PBIS%20at%20Home%20FINAL.pdf) provides helpful tips and can essentially be summarized as: set a routine, outline and record tasks and goals for the day, give positive praise as goals are met, and deliver a reward for successful completion. In the example above, you might set a goal for on-task behavior (no more than ___ reminders) and then add a few extra minutes of play - or even a screen time choice if you feel comfortable - if the goal is met.

The Virtual Back to School Night small group presentations (linked above) are also chock full of ideas.

5. The only one request I have is if PE could be recorded for the week rather than daily. Typically a lot of our PE happens at the end of the day, so if it could be recorded the next day or at the end of the week, that would be very nice.

Yes!

6. How can the school help us talk to our kids about this? Talking through how hard this is, why it’s important to keep focus on learning, etc.

We will now include mental health support team information in Mon-News. Its aim is to support families as
you have sticky and complex conversations at home. Please remember that in addition to your teaching team, Stephanie Young (social worker: stephanie.young@k12.dc.gov) and Dayon Hairson (behavior technician: dayon.hairston@k12.dc.gov) are available to answer your questions, provide ideas, or work directly with a student.

7. Separate from must-do vs can-do can you be clearer on what filters through into attendance/progress reports vs keeping students in practice/ready to go when we return?

This week’s MonNews principal’s letter outlines our general grading policies. On April 27th (the start of Term 4), we will communicate the skills that are critical to gain before the end of the school year. We hope these skills will further enable families’ choices about what learning to prioritize.

By DCPS policy, attendance is not formally recorded. You might hear from a faculty member if a child has not visibly engaged in distance learning for more than one day, but this move is to maintain connection rather than to solely communicate accountability.

We are offering learning experiences because we think they are important and worthwhile. We still value that families are balancing different things and will have to make choices about those learning experiences. No family or child will be penalized for those choices.

Thanks to our Bears for Showing they Care!

We are so proud of our Brent Bears for showing us how much they care about their families, their communities, and the world around them for Brent Bears Care Week. Check out these photos of our Brent Bear Care on Display.
Dear Brent Families,

It’s Week Four! Though we still have a road ahead, let’s also take a moment to celebrate that we have gotten this far. Thank you for all that you are balancing and for being our partners in this Distance Learning adventure.

Week Four and Five will focus on Feedback and Growing Student Independence.

By “Feedback” we mean:
- Collecting feedback from our stakeholders. Please find the Distance Learning Week Four Family Survey at www.tinyurl.com/BrentWeekFour-Survey (https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7kagKk6zM0qSt5md8rwKmkKaFXhPoOhMhq_RuJ271bFURVdYWERCUKpLJg5MzQxVjhWQ1FKVTJGUY-QIQCNOzPwc). The survey closes on Sunday, April 19th at midnight. We will use this survey data to focus in and collect a second round of feedback at our Community Meeting on April 22nd from 8-9pm.
- Sharing and ultimately implementing best practices for student feedback across grade levels.
- Setting Term 3 Grading Policies:
  - While a student’s work can be recognized in report cards, no student will be penalized for work not completed or learning not accomplished during the Distance Learning period.
  - Attendance for the Distance Learning will not be noted on Term 3 Report Cards. DCPS has asked that schools track engagement as a point of interest but not attendance as a requirement.
  - Report Cards and abbreviated comments will be emailed to families on May 7th and May 8th.
- Previewing Term 4 Grading Policies:
  - For Term 4, we are identifying the critical skills to be addressed in each content area and at each grade level. We will communicate those skills to families on April 27th so that families are further able to prioritize points of engagement and student work.
  - Though we will continue live and recorded instruction, we are planning to shift to a more project-based approach for the term, especially in reading and writing. Much of our live instruction will consist of students sharing their project work and setting goals for revision and/or extension.
  - Term 4 grading will focus on those critical skills but, like Term 4, students will not be penalized for work not completed.
  - By narrowing to a set of critical skills, we are being realistic about the scope of Distance Learning and ensuring that we are clear about the learning students have and have not done at the start of the next school year. With this information in hand we can be prepared to differentiate from day one.

By Growing Student Independence we mean:
- All grade levels will set developmentally-appropriate expectations for student independence in the Distance Learning setting and will share those goals with families. We know that children can feign more helplessness at home than at school, a dynamic likely exacerbated by the underlying stress and anxiety of the quarantine. These expectations for student independence allow us to norm across environments.
- We will compile suggestions to grow toward those expectations and will offer support when that growth is interrupted.

If you have any questions about these goals and the accompanying descriptions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Norah Lycknell
Principal