

THE TUES. NEWS

August 29, 2017

BRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSEUM MAGNET PROGRAM

Coming Up

Wednesday, August 30

Back to School Night 6:30 - 8 p.m.
ASL Interpreters Provided
Childcare will not be provided.

Monday, September 4

Labor Day
No School for students and staff

Wednesday, September 6

LSAT Meeting 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Friday, September 8

Brent Picture Day
Uniform Free Day

Wednesday, September 13

PTA Board Meeting
6:30 – 8 p.m.

Friday, September 15

Principal Coffee
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Back to School Night – Wednesday, August 30

Brent Back to School Night will be next Wednesday, August 30 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. Principal Lycknell will introduce Brent staff and discuss schoolwide initiatives. After Principal Lycknell's presentation, parents will visit their children's classrooms, meet the teachers, and learn about classroom goals and expectations for the year. It is an



adults only event, so please plan accordingly. ASL interpreters will be provided.

Photo: DCPS Chancellor Antwan Wilson visits Ms. Kadash's class.

Springboard's Elective Registration is now open.

Springboard's fall programs are taught by local community experts, and offer multiple opportunities for kids to explore fun and creative activities! **Register by September 15th to secure your spot!** Please note, some classes may be cancelled if enrollment is low. To help avoid cancellation, it is best to register early. Please email enrichments@springboardkids.com for questions about Springboard's elective program.

The PTA Wants to Hear From You

One of the major focuses of the PTA this year is reaching out to our community. Now we need your input. The fall is traditionally when Brent and the PTA host our community building events. This year we are considering multiple events and we would like to hear from you which event(s) you like best. The PTA will be polling the community during Wednesday's Back to School night. Please come, participate, and help us put on the best events for our community.

School Picture Day – Parent Help Needed

School Picture Day is coming and so is the opportunity to help make memories for parents and grandparents. On Friday, September 8th, parents volunteers are needed to assist the photographers and teachers while the pictures are being taken. Parents are needed to help with line management and last minute face wiping and hair combing. Picture taking begins right away in the morning and continues into the early afternoon. Assistance for all or part of the day would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to make the magic happen on Picture Day or have questions, please contact Ms. Diggs (denise.diggs@dc.gov).

Parent help wanted with brentelementary.org website updates

The PTA needs help updating the school website for the new school year and throughout the year. If you have experience with website updating through a CMS, we'd love to have a team of parents who could devote a small amount of time periodically to keeping the site current and useful to the community. The school website is a Weebly site (experience with Weebly not required). Please contact Diana.rubin@gmail.com if you can help.

Library News

Library After School Clubs

This year, Brent's librarian Ms. Bettina is offering two afternoon clubs starting the week of October 2.

Library Lovers Club:

This club is geared toward 1st and 2nd graders who love story time. We will read and talk about books,

do follow-up activities, and explore our school library catalog and resources that the Public Library system has to offer. Library Lovers Club will be held Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:15 pm.

Book Lovers Club:

This club is geared toward 3rd through 5th graders who love to read. Participants will decide on the books that we will read and discuss together. Book Lovers Club will be held Monday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:15 pm. To sign up, please contact Ms. Bettina at bettina.schewe@dc.gov.

National Book Festival This Saturday

The National Book Festival will be held this Saturday, September 2 from 9:00 am to 7:30 pm at the Convention Center. Many authors of beloved children's books will present and sign books. A variety of fun activities will be offered as well. Please visit <https://www.loc.gov/bookfest/> for details.

Photo: Early Childhood Teacher Emma Bailey greets her students on the first day



Principal Update

Dear Brent Families,

As we begin our second week of school, the Brent community is settling into a routine. Our students have chosen their first just right books; writer's journals reflect early ideas; and mathematicians have tried on initial forms of discourse that will guide them in increasingly complex problem solving. It is also a time of assessment – from measuring reading levels to putting forth early wonderings in our science lab – actions that will help us understand what our students are able to do now and what they will be able to do next.

With the first days of school behind us, we look forward to sharing our routines and the course of the school year at Back to School Night on Wednesday, August 30th from 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Back to School Night is an event for Brent adults (a reminder to consider childcare) to come together and envision the year. We will begin in the multipurpose room promptly at 6:30 p.m. where I will have the pleasure of sharing our school goals on behalf of the Brent faculty; there we will also conduct a family poll to determine a new set of family events designed to grow inclusion, a key facet aimed toward bolstering the strength of our whole community. Two identical sessions in classrooms will immediately follow; the second for those

families with multiple Brent children. Classroom sessions, often hosted by grade-level teachers, will communicate the social-emotional and instructional curriculum that our students will enjoy. Back to School Night is not an individual parent conference nor do we aim to convey every detail; we enter this important event knowing that it is a balcony view and that further dialogue and events like Parent Conferences will fill in more specifics on the ground. The evening is a launch to the exchange of ideas and goals that will compose the entire school year.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday. Please look for an opportunity to provide feedback on Back to School Night in next week's TuesNews. As much as we have crafted the evening with your needs in mind, so do we want to reflect and improve our practice for the future.

Sincerely,

Norah Lycknell
Principal



Sara Saxton
5th Grade
Staff Spotlight

Welcome to Brent Elementary! Tell us about your educational and professional background!

Thank you! I feel very fortunate to be a part of such a caring community. I have been amazed at all the support I have received already from the Brent staff and parents. Brent has a very welcoming feel!

After graduating from George Washington University with my B.A., I took a full-time job at a childcare center where I had worked part-time while in college. I knew I wanted to work with children and it was there, during some of the summer camps that we held, that I realized that I wanted to teach. I then decided to pursue my master of arts in teaching. I moved up to Boston and received my M.A.T. from Simmons College. After a year long internship in a 3rd grade classroom, I moved to Port Kaituma, Guyana and taught 7th grade math through the WorldTeach program. It was extremely challenging but opened my eyes much more to how much students can do with a loving adult to support and encourage them. After that, I moved back to Boston, and started teaching 5th grade in Newton, MA. During this time, I

Photo on left: Saxton family in Kenya

met my future husband and, after four years, we relocated to D.C. I continued teaching 5th grade in Arlington, VA for four more years. We were very fortunate to be able to move to Nairobi, Kenya in 2014. While there, in addition to giving birth to our second child and beginning a masters in special education through Lesley University, I also taught the equivalent of 4th grade at a British International school for two years. We were excited to move back to D.C. this summer. I am very pleased to be starting a new chapter at Brent!

Tell us how your class did the first week of school!

The class did awesome! Awesome seems to be a popular phrase for my class to describe things. I do think it describes them all well. Each of them settled in at his or her own pace and we are working to build our classroom community!

What are your hopes and dreams for your students this year?

My hope is that in June each student can look back on this 5th grade year and recognize how much they each have grown as a person. In addition to be able to see academic growth, I also hope they will sense their growth towards becoming more confident and more kind individuals than they already are.

What would be some words your students have used to describe you as a teacher?

My last class in Nairobi would often make me cards and thank me for being "good at math" and kind and funny. I still chuckle at all the ones about me being good at math.

This is an historic year for Brent, having two 5th grade classes. What is unique about 5th graders?

5th graders have something to them that is unique since it is the last year of elementary school. Each student is a bit of a young child but a bit of a pre-teen at the same time. Each day, they are starting to figure themselves out better and better. They are inquisitive, often intuitive. They are old enough to have formed solid opinions about world topics and are able to express them more coherently than in younger years. They are fascinating to have conversations with!

How will you prepare our 5th graders for middle school?

Many 5th graders have a tendency to look ahead to middle school from the first day of 5th grade but 5th grade is such an important year itself! While we will continue to encourage independence and responsibility, the academic rigor is increased also. Departmentalizing is important as well. It gives students access to more teaching styles, increases their adaptability to different classroom settings and helps to teach students better time management skills that are crucial for middle school.



Photo: Ms. Saxton's children, Anna, 4, and Kellan, 2.

Clarification of Teacher Gift Policy – Please Review

In a partnership between the School Chapter Advisory Committee (an elected committee of faculty members invested in policies, procedures and contributions of those they represent) and Principal Lycknell, Brent will follow the DC Government Code of Conduct, a set of District statutes and regulations that apply to all District government public officials and employees. Under the District's laws and regulations, as a general rule, a District employee may not, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept a gift. All language below uses the term "teacher" as a reference to any person Brent Elementary and DCPS employs.

There are 2 exceptions to this rule that will allow parents to show appreciation for their children's teachers, but that will limit the amount of funds that can be contributed this year.

The exceptions are:

1. collective gifts totaling \$10 or less per person donating per occasion (totaling no more than \$20 per year from each contributor),
2. individual gifts totaling \$10 or less and totaling less than \$20 over the year. If individuals have given a teacher \$20 in gifts during the year, they cannot contribute to the collective gifts.

What does this mean? Each family can contribute no more than \$10 to a holiday class gift for the teacher, and in the spring that same family can contribute no more than \$10 to a Teacher Appreciation Week gift. Or a family may choose to give its own \$10 gift dur-

ing the holidays and for Teacher Appreciation Week, but then cannot contribute to the class gift.

Room parents who collect funds at the beginning of the year, rather than collecting funds during the holidays and in advance of Teacher Appreciation Week, have been informed to request only \$20 per family for 1st-5th grade for the year and \$40 per family for ECE and Kindergarten for the year (because those classes have a teacher and an aide to show appreciation for). Funds needed by a class for any other non-gift purpose (for example, for a class picnic) will need to be collected separately this year.

The law does specifically exclude greeting cards and items with little intrinsic value from its definition of a gift. Examples of items of little intrinsic value are plaques, certificates, and trophies. If your child wants to make a card or a friendship bracelet or some other small homemade gift for the teacher, that will not violate the gift law....and would undoubtedly be welcomed with a big smile.

Brent parents have always been very giving people, so we appreciate your understanding of the importance of this change and of everyone working within this policy. Should a teacher receive a gift outside of the policy's bounds, the teacher is compelled by law to return the gift or anonymously donate it, which can be awkward for all involved. Please help our faculty avoid those situations by upholding the outlined policies.