Coming Up!

Monday, December 14 - March 1, 2021
Myschooldc Lottery
visit myschooldc.org to apply

Tuesday, February 9
Brent Community Meeting on Virtual Learning
7 - 8 p.m.
hits://us02web.zoom.us/j/87568175526
Meeting ID: 875 6817 5526
Passcode: Brent2020!

Saturday, February 13
Community Book Exchange for PK, K and 1st
1:30 - 3 p.m.
Garfield Park
Sign up for the PK-1 Playdate at:
https://cutt.ly/mkuZ8oh

Monday, February 15
Presidents Day
No school for students, teacher, and staff

Tuesday, February 16
100th Day of School

Brent Bears Celebrate
THE 100TH DAY OF SCHOOL!

Ways to Celebrate at Home:

| COLLECT & COUNT 100 ITEMS |
| Legos, leaves, books, blocks, figurines, what do you have 100 of? |

| MAKE A 100 COLLAGE |
| Cheerios, confetti, gum balls, pebbles, feathers, buttons, the possibilities are endless! |

| REFLECT ON THE PAST 100 DAYS |
| How were you feeling on the 1st day of school? How are you feeling today? How have you changed? |

| FAMILY MOVEMENT CHALLENGE |
| As a family, what exercise can you complete 100 of? (jumping jacks, squats, mountain climbers, etc.) |

FEBRUARY 16TH
Wednesday, February 17
DWG February Meeting
A discussion on Tema Okun’s characteristics of white supremacy culture
8 p.m.
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87587074059?pwd=N3ZMajNqciuNVF6STJrRGR5YnhhZz09
Meeting ID: 875 8707 4059
Passcode: 639099

Friday, February 19
Deadlines for video submissions for the Brent Black History Month Living Wax Museum

Saturday, February 20
Lego Challenge
10-11:30 p.m. Register Today
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1G5zHDc4bbG21Ftzb0bgd1p42D-b22Ta0nMevT43t4zc/edit
Community Book Exchange for Grades 2nd and 3rd
1:30 - 3 p.m.
Garfield Park
Sign up for the Grade 2-3 Playdate at: https://cutt.ly/KkuXKIO

Friday, February 26
Black History Month Virtual Wax Museum
Brent PTA Trivia Night
8pm
https://fundly.com/brent-trivia-night

Saturday, February 27
Community Book Exchange for 4th and 5th
1:30 - 3 p.m.
Garfield Park
Sign up for the Grade 4-5 Playdate at: https://cutt.ly/gkuX3qH
Virtual LEGO Challenge - Register today!

As part of our Fun’d February, the Brent PTA is hosting a fundraising LEGO Challenge on February 20th, 10-11:30 am. Join other Brent families for this friendly virtual competition modeled after the reality TV show Lego Masters. Teams can be made up of Brent Bears and their parents or caregivers.

Registration is $50 and all proceeds will go to support the Brent Annual Fund. Labyrinth Games & Puzzles will be judging the competition.

Teams will sign on to Zoom at 10 am to hear instructions for their challenge and will have an hour to work on their project. At 11 am, each team will present their work. The winning team will receive a gift basket provided by Labyrinth. Join us for some FUN’d! If you have any questions about this program, please email Margaux at margauxmanleylima@gmail.com.

Register here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1G5zHDc4bbG21Ftzo6bgd1p42Db22Ta0nMevT143t4ze/edit

Black History Month Living Wax Museum

In honor of Black History Month, students at Brent Elementary School will present a Virtual African American Living Wax Museum. The virtual wax museum will be done completely at home with the student dressing up and someone recording their performance. The theme for this year is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.” The Virtual Wax Museum will take place on Friday, February 26, 2021, with an all-school viewing. All submissions of videos should be emailed to dayon.hairston@k12.dc.gov by February 19. Please read this letter for more information and sign up here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7ka-gKk6zMoqSt5md8rwKMvLH3fe mP09lq0AllwLffyFUNVpESUgw UUJCOuhLVTVVQlJEMTINWVE-1Ni4

CommUnity Book Exchanges for Black History Month Start This Saturday

Brent celebrates Black History Month with grade-level book exchange play dates. The events will be held in Garfield Park on Saturdays in February. Attendance for each event is capped at 10 families to promote distancing. Sign up now to reserve a spot at your grade level’s playdate!

When/Where: Saturdays 1:30 – 3pm at Garfield Park (2nd and F Streets SE)


Grades 2-3: Saturday, Feb. 20. Sign up for the Grade 2-3 Playdate at: https://cutt.ly/KkuXKIO

Grade 4-5 Saturday, Feb. 27. Sign up for the Grade 4-5 Playdate at: https://cutt.ly/gkuX3qH

Bring: A book to exchange for Black History Month. Bring your best-loved book by African-American author or focused on African-American characters to trade with a classmate. Want to buy something new to share instead? Consider the Coretta Scott King award winners Coretta Scott King Book Awards - All Recipients, 1970-Present | Round Tables (ala.org). Nothing to share? Not a problem. DWG will happily provide books for each event so all Brent Bears leave with something new.
Save the Date for Trivia Night - Friday, February 26 at 8 p.m.
Join the Brent Community for our first ever Trivia Night Friday, Feb 26th at 8pm. This meeting of the minds is sure to be a “fun’d thing” to do during a cold winter night! Purchase Mulligan Codes in packs of 1 or 3 to help your team get closer to the prizes or enhance your evening with the VIP Refreshment Package! This is a great chance to connect with other parents like we normally would at drop-off and in-person events! See you there! Register Here: https://fundly.com/brent-trivia-night

**Suggested donation of $50 per household or $75 to pre-select your team. Teams will discuss answers for each round via Zoom breakout rooms

Proceeds from Trivia Night will support PTA fundraising efforts which offset about a third of Brent’s non-DCPS operating budget. PTA funds cover a large portion of the school’s non-personnel expenses, allowing the school to use DCPS funds for additional staff like focus teachers and movement coach. Additionally, PTA funds support professional development for teachers, smart boards and other classroom supplies and community events.

DWG Book Study: Courageous Conversations – Tuesday, February 18 from 11 - noon
As a part of the Brent Diversity Working Group’s ongoing efforts to foster conversation and growth around conversations about difficult subjects such as race, racism, ethnicity, and privilege, we’re engaging in a conversation and shared reading of Courageous Conversations About Race by Glen Singleton. Our hope is that through a robust discussion and deep study of the text we’ll learn to deepen and sustain conversations about racism across the community.

Objectives:
Build foundational common knowledge of race, equity, and skills for engaging in conversations about these topics
Identify text to self connections
Build community and identify applications to the Brent Community
Please read chapters 4 & 5. The text can be ordered at East City or borrowed from Brent (email Brent-DiversityWG@gmail.com if you’d like to check out a copy).

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84544396517?pwd=K1d5TUpvakUrSFLLUWNQeDQ0YotMUT09
Meeting ID: 845 4439 6517
Passcode: DWG

Please reach out to BrentDiversityWG@gmail.com if you’re interested in joining us or if you’d like to learn more. We’ll meet regularly on zoom and plan to read 2 chapters, discuss, and engage in some of the ideas generated from reading and experience. Even if you weren’t able to read the chapters, you’re welcome to join in the discussion.

DWG February Meeting Announcement
In lieu of DWG’s February meeting, we instead encourage you to attend Integrated Schools DC virtual discussion on white supremacy culture. Hope to see you then!

Read Tema Okun’s characteristics of white supremacy culture ahead of time and think about which characteristics are present in your school-based or community organizations.

Join us on February 17th at 8 PM via Zoom for a discussion. We'll share how perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, only one right way, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, I’m the only one, progress is bigger/more, objectivity, and/or right to comfort show up and how we can counteract them.

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87587074059?pwd=N3ZMajNqcituNVF6STJrRGR5YnhnZz09
Meeting ID: 875 8707 4059
Passcode: 639099
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,87587074059#,,,,*639099# US (Washington DC)
+13126266799,,87587074059#,,,,*639099# US (Chicago)
Dial by your location
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
Meeting ID: 875 8707 4059
Passcode: 639099
Find your local number: https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbVoXY4Xq3
Dear Brent Families,

As of February 1st, or the start of Term 3, 70% of our Brent students are in an all-virtual setting and 30% of our students are in a form of in-person learning, split evenly between full time and hybrid models which are aligned to levels of prioritized need.

Between March 1st and March 15th, we will be growing our in-person student populations at grade levels with one in-person class but at least three or more classes overall: ECE, K, 2nd and 4th. ECE families have already received a survey with possible models; 2nd and 4th will receive their survey this Wednesday, and Kindergarten will receive theirs next Wednesday. By March 15th, we expect to introduce over 100 additional in-person students, bringing our in-person/virtual split to 50/50. At that point, based on the constraints and DOH guidelines described in this Tues News ReOpening Community Corps (RCC) update, we will reach our capacity for in-person learning classrooms and seats.

As long as the DOH guidelines stand (and they are in line with the CDC research about factors that contribute to safe and sustainable school reopening), so will Brent’s in-person capacity limit. There are facts and myths about why this capacity limit exists and, of course, lots of nuance and interpretation around both. The facts lie within the constraints and guidelines. The
myths tempt us to oversimplify or distract. By addressing some of the myths with context, we can give ourselves permission to move forward in an informed way and to take up the battles that will get us closer to our goal of a typical school year:

Brent teachers have volunteered to return to in-person learning both before the WTU/DCPS reached an agreement (Term 2) and at numbers far greater than the DCPS average (Term 3). We have more teacher volunteers than classroom spaces, though the demand to maintain virtual instruction means about 50% of each grade level’s teachers must remain virtual. Where staffing is a more significant concern is around coverage. Unlike in a regular year in which coverage can be provided through special subject scheduling, in-person learning now demands 1.5 adults for every classroom we open.

All staff members currently in-person or scheduled to be in person by March 1st have received access to the first administration of a Pfizer vaccine. The other 50% of our staff has not been vaccinated and nor have they heard about a plan to have access to vaccinations.

Teachers work on Wednesdays. You have heard a lot about how planning periods have shifted to that day, planning that positively impacts student learning across the rest of the week. At the start of the new year, all teachers host targeted small groups or sessions in the morning and planning times/team meetings in the afternoon.

We are still collecting Middle of Year (MOY) standardized performance data but the information we have so far show rates of academic progress similar to last year. We have assessed about 60% of students across grade levels and are ready for our understanding to be confirmed or to change with more information. And once aggregated, we will share the data with the Brent community.

Space is a significant challenge but not the only issue we have to solve. Our classroom and public spaces are stretched. While additional learning spaces would provide flexibility, those spaces also require funds for additional staff: teachers, coverage and operations/custodial support.

With our current capacity reached, constraints understood, and myths analyzed, we are free to consider the actions that will get us closer to a typical school year for all students. We do not have control of everything, but we have control over many things. Here are our focus areas for the months ahead:

Offering alternative in-person activities for students learning in a virtual posture. Working with the LSAT, PTA, DWG, and Room Parents, we are working to create guidelines and structures that will allow students to make interpersonal and academic connections.

Growing our virtual learning practices. Come to tonight’s Community Meeting at 7pm to share your perspective on virtual learning, both what is working and what could be working better.

Collecting and analyzing academic and social emotional data to help us predict and build the structures and programs to support students in the long term.

Planning for summer and fall programming. Even as we wait for clear parameters from the system in which we operate, will develop plans that respond to a range of possibilities and prioritize equity of access.

Lifting up enabling forces like community advocacy, budget planning and fundraising to address our two most significant barriers: space and a staffing model that recognizes we need 50% as much staff to operate fully in the current environment.

The way we all approach these enormous challenges matters. I take for granted that we all want what is best for our students and will work tirelessly to achieve it. I implore us as a community to lift one another up and not tear one another down; to ask tough and real questions because we are curious and because we demand accountability; to embrace the complexity; to balance reality and innovation; and, most of all, to make the decision to trust one another’s intentions, to monitor that our intentions and impact match as much as possible and to forgive one another when they do not.

This period is temporary but the consequences of our approach will likely last for our lifetimes. For sure, it’s a weighty responsibility to care for our youngest generation. Let’s show them that though we’ve defined “together” differently in the last year, the notion remains that we are better together.

Sincerely,

Norah Lycknell