Coming Up

**Wednesday, September 13**  
PTA Board Meeting  
6:30 – 8 p.m.

**Friday, September 15**  
Principal Coffee  
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.  
ASL Interpreters Provided

**Tuesday, September 19**  
Diversity Working Group Meeting  
6:30 - 8 p.m.

**Friday, September 22**  
Professional Development Day  
No School for Students  
Springboard Available

**Sunday, September 24**  
PTA Fall Picnic  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 27**  
PTA General Meeting  
6:30 - 8 p.m.  
Childcare Provided  
ASL Interpreters Provided

**Monday, October 9**  
Columbus Day  
No school for students, teachers and staff

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**Field Experience Shirt Order Form**  
If your child would like a new Brent field experience shirt to wear on all class trips out of the building complete the attached order form and return to your child’s teacher by Friday September 15 so that we can put in the order. These shirts will help teachers and chaperones quickly identify all Brent students while on a field experience, improving the safety of our field experience program. Please keep this shirt at home and have your child wear it on all field experiences. There is no cost for the shirts.

**Brent Family Picnic**  
**Sunday, September 24**  
Please join us Sunday, September 24, from 11-2 at X Park for the Brent family picnic, welcoming all Brent community families to the new school year. Enjoy live music, bounce houses, face painting and other fun for kids. Additional activities include a book sale and bake sale! Tickets are $10 in advance (buy online at brentelementary.org/picnic) and $20 day of. All proceeds benefit the Brent PTA. Picnic food available for purchase or you’re welcome to bring your own. Visit brentelementary.org
org/picnic for more information or to buy tickets.

**Volunteers needed for school welcome picnic**

Brent’s Welcome Picnic takes place Sunday, September 24 from 11 - 2 p.m. in X Park. If you can spare an hour of your time to help out that day, we’d really appreciate it. Sign up online at http://tinyurl.com/hkhcl2z.

**Calling all Brent Bakers!**

Whether you love to bake or just love baked goods, we need your help! Please sign up to bake something (purchased items welcome, too) to be sold at the Brent family welcome picnic on Sunday, September 24. All proceeds benefit the Brent PTA. Please visit https://www.razoo.com/story/1rJP7uw0ikq4i_zAbKsBLLSGNDINFOxdxzd7kiMcZkQk/edit?usp=sharing.

3) Help us sell books and set up/clean up the book sale on Sunday, September 24. We will move the books to the park and setup from 9-11 am, sell books from 11 am-2 pm, and clean up from 2-3 pm. Please volunteer for a 1 or 2 hour shift. Sign up at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rJP7uw0ikq4i_zAbKsBLLSGNDINFOxdxzd7kiMcZkQk/edit?usp=sharing.

**Books and volunteers needed for Brent used book sale!**

The Brent PTA holds a used book sale for all types of children’s books every year, and this year the sale will be part of the Fall Picnic on Sunday, September 24. Donating books that your family is done with is a great way to clear out your house. Buying used books from the sale is a great way to get quality reading material for your child(ren) at an affordable price (and reclutter your house). And volunteering for the sale is a fun way to meet other parents and support the school community!

1) Please gather up all of the children’s and young readers’ books that your family is done with and bring them to Brent by Thursday, September 21. There are collection boxes in the front entrance to the school and on the stage in the multipurpose room. All proceeds from the book sale will support the Brent PTA, and all leftover books will be donated to Reading Partners DC, a local nonprofit that helps DC students master essential reading skills. So they will be going to a great cause no matter what!

2) Please come help us sort books on Friday, September 22, from 9 am-Noon in the multipurpose room. This is a professional development day, and you are welcome to bring your children with you. Feel free to come for a half hour or hour or whatever time you can spare. Many hands make light work! Sign up at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rJP7uw0ikq4i_zAbKsBLLSGNDINFOxdxzd7kiMcZkQk/edit?usp=sharing.

**Fun Run And Breakfast for Jefferson Academy**

The Mandarin Oriental Hotel in SW Washington is sponsoring the 7th Annual FANtastic 5K fun run/walk around The National Mall. Part of the proceeds from the run/walk will go to Jefferson Academy and the event will be followed by a Silent Auction at the Mandarin Oriental. The Run/Walk is Sunday, November 5, 2017 at 9am. The fee to participate in the 5K is $45 per person and includes pre-race snacks, stretching session, event t-shirt and post-race breakfast at the hotel. To sign up or get more information, go to: https://www.razoo.com/story/Mandarin5k

**Paint Nite Event to Benefit Jefferson Academy**

If the idea of drinking wine and painting on a canvas at a world class hotel is appealing to you, we have found your thing. The Mandarin Oriental is hosting such a thing. Get a group of friends together, leave the kids at home. Wine, canvas, art supplies and instruction all provided by the hotel and all the proceeds go to support Jefferson Academy. For more information or to buy tickets, go to: https://goo.gl/dGrtAw

**Friday September 15th is International Dot Day**

International Dot day is a global celebration of creativity, courage and collaboration based on the wonderful book The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds. The Dot is the story of a caring teacher who dares a doubting student to trust in her own abilities by being brave enough to “make her mark”. What begins with a small dot on a piece of paper becomes a breakthrough in confidence and courage, igniting a journey of self-discovery and sharing, which has gone on to inspire countless children and adults around the globe. Stay tuned to see the many ways Brent’s artists will be making their mark and celebrating this special day!

**Please Remember to Keep Dogs off the Playground**

We know that dogs are also a part of the Brent community. However, per DCPS regulations, please keep dogs outside the fenced in playground and the Brent grounds. Brent uses every inch of the playground and front yard.

**Dogs off the Playground**

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Dear Brent Families,

The first Principal’s Coffee of the year is this Friday, September 15th from 8:30-9:30 in the main vestibule (in the case of rain and indoor arrival, we will start in the main office). Principal’s Coffees are designed as a monthly forum and discussion formatted much like a panel and driven by your wonders and areas of interest. Whether you have a question or are simply drawn to learning from the questions of others, Principal’s Coffees are a way of staying connected to the purpose and intentions behind our Brent goals, actions and ways of thinking. I hope to see you there!

Just before each monthly Principal’s Coffee, the Tues News Principal’s letter will be a deeper dive into a specific lever of growth – this week, our deep dive is around building faculty capacity through professional development.

At Brent, we believe that our faculty is our key lever for growth and change. This belief is based on long-standing research that high-quality teachers impact student growth more than any other school-based factor, and the practical idea that it is our faculty that makes our high-level goals meaningful through planning, teaching and reflecting.

Just as we honor and strive for student growth, so we must consider faculty growth. We are privileged to have a faculty that wants to grow; this mindset is not something to take for granted and as it is a core strength of the Brent community. To meet this desire, we consider professional development across a variety of forums.

The LEAP Professional Development Model

Last year, DCPS introduced the LEAP Professional Development model. Each week, our LEAP Leaders (Sara Ewbank for Upper Grades ELA, Amy Harding-Wright for Primary ELA, Whitney Paxson for Math, Julia Sadowsky for ECE, and me for Special Subjects) engage with faculty members in structured professional development sessions that include an exploration of best instructional practice, an examination of student work and data, and planning. Also embedded in the LEAP model are weekly observations and teacher/LEAP Leader debriefs around the work accomplished in team sessions – here, we are intentionally connecting learning to individual practice and the intended impact on students.

DCPS Professional Development Days

DCPS has scheduled seven professional development days across the school year (there is no school for students on those days, so mark your calendars: 9/22, 10/27, 12/1, 1/19, 2/16, 4/27, and 5/25). On those days, teachers across the District gather for collective learning focused on student social-emotional needs, an extension of LEAP work and school-based planning. These days are an important opportunity to stretch capacity by engaging with teachers outside of the Brent community.

Faculty Inquiry Groups

A faculty inquiry group is a form of professional development in which teachers identify and investigate questions about student learning and instructional practice. A diversity of faculty inquiry groups allows us to pose key areas of research, experiment in our practice and reflect on actions that, depending on the outcomes of that research, might extend to other members of the school community. This year, all grade-level and content teams have selected an area of inquiry because we value choice as a driving principle; when we choose our areas of interest, we are more likely to implement our work with commitment and fidelity. The goal of inquiry groups is not implementation with perfection but rather a place to encourage risk-taking and excellent mistakes. Our inquiry topics include:

- ECE/K: How can we use a study of learning standards and classroom walkthroughs to strengthen the bridge between our ECE and K classrooms and supporting students and families through that transition?
- 1st Grade: How can we use a student-led conference model to deepen student ownership of their learning?
- 2nd Grade: How can we embed social emotional learning through structured play?
- 3rd Grade: How can we use student work and data protocols to strengthen math instruction and growth?
- 4th/5th Grade: How can we study student learning to design targeted math seminars?
- Special Subjects: How do we make student thinking visible to better understand and respond to a common set of student habits of minds?
Outside Professional Development
As leaders of our own learning, our faculty often identifies professional development opportunities outside of our school and system. Through PTA and DCPS funding, we seek to support attendance whenever possible, asking those who attend to return and share their learning with colleagues. Some examples include Readers/Writers Workshop trainings at Teachers College, Reggio Explorations from a general study of the model to more specific ideas like using photography as a language of learning in the classroom, and education conferences organized by national groups like the National Science Teachers Association or the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (where our faculty might also present their areas of developing expertise).

Instructional Coaching and Mentoring
Although instructional coaching and mentoring is embedded into the LEAP model, it is also a discrete mechanism for individual teacher growth. Here, instructional leaders work alongside of teachers (in planning, modeling practice or helping to notice student understanding) in an area of self-defined growth.

As we seek to invest in our faculty capacity, we also examine the direction and effectiveness of our actions. Our faculty will come together on a quarterly basis for extended faculty meetings to build a sense of team, deepen our cultural competency, notice trends across student learning and identify ways to respond to those trends. Our Academic Leadership Team and LEAP Leader Team meet weekly to design our work and to support one another in its execution, and we will also work with a well-established coach of coaches to ensure that we extend the knowledge and skills of those who lead this work at Brent.

At Brent, we seek growth relentlessly because it is that very pursuit that defines the greatness of a community.

Sincerely,
Norah Lycknell

What would be some of the words your students have used to describe you as a teacher?
In the past students have described me as approachable and caring. Some would even describe me as goofy and funny, however, it takes a couple of months into the school year for students to discover that side of me.

What is unique about fourth grade and fourth graders?
This year in fourth grade, I am excited to teach the social studies curriculum of early American history from Native American to the founding of the United States.

What are your hopes and dreams for your students this year?
I want all my students to discover what type of learner they are and give them the knowledge and skill so that they can grow to their full potential. I also hope that they gain a deeper understanding of who they are as individuals and keep discovering what their interests are.

What is your teaching and educational background?
After serving in the Army, I completed my BA in history from George Mason University in 2013 and Master’s in elementary education from Hawai’i Pacific University in Honolulu in 2015. After graduating I taught fifth grade for two years at Alvah Scott Elementary.

Tell us how the start of the school year is going for your class?
We are still working on building our classroom community focusing on mutual respect and learning basic procedures.
What is your teaching and educational background?
I graduated from George Mason University in 2014 with a Bachelor’s in Sociology. Immediately after I graduated, I moved to Arizona to participate in the TNTP- The New Teacher Project, which is similar to Teach for America. During my first two years of teaching, I taught 3rd grade in South Phoenix. My last year of teaching, I was a second grade teacher in a charter school in Tolleson.

Tell us how the start of the school year is going for your class?
As the weeks progress, I think the students are beginning to know me as a teacher, and I’m learning more about them as my students. We are working towards building relationships of trust and respect, which I am looking forward to- so that we can all grow and have a successful school year.

What would be some of the words your students have used to describe you as a teacher?
One word that my students would always call me was, “mom”. At least once or twice a week, “mom” would slip out of my students’ mouths, and would be followed by a giggle or a smile. I’m assuming that I reminding my students of their mothers, which was fitting because I would always refer to them as my kids in conversations. My students also would say that I was kind, caring, and loving.

What is unique about fourth grade and fourth graders?
I would say that fourth graders are a lot more independent. They have great problem-solving skills, and can figure out a lot on their own. Teaching younger children, I definitely was always having to give solutions, or do simple things like tie shoes. So, having independent students is definitely a great thing.

What are your hopes and dreams for your students this year?
My hopes and dreams for my students are not just that they will grow academically, but that they will also grow socially and emotionally. I think we focus so much on being book smart, and passing scores, that a lot of times we forget students are still children who are blossoming into young adults. They need our guidance to help them navigate this world- whether it be helping them find themselves, their purpose in life, or helping them pick the right set of friends. All of these are important in their growth as little humans.