Coming Up!

Student Supply Fee Link
https://brentholidaysale.com/products/school-supply-fee

Brent Virtual Open House Link
http://www.brentelementary.org/back-to-school-virtual-open-house.html

Tuesday, September 1, 3 - 6 p.m.
Final Day of Student Supply Kit and Requested Technology Pick-Up

Brent Meal Site Hours
Monday- Friday
10 - 2 p.m.
Free breakfast/lunch bag to go for DC students

Monday, August 31 - Friday, September 4
Virtual Home Visits - See individual teacher communications for details

Monday, September 7
Labor Day
No school for students, teachers and staff

Wednesday, September 9
LSAT Meeting
6 - 7:30 p.m.
Login information in September 8 Tues News

Call for Room Parents!
Thank you to all who have reached out and expressed interest in being a room parent this year -- we need you more than ever. As we enter an unprecedented school year, it’s critical to build connections outside of the classroom, and room parents play a key role bringing parents together and supporting our teachers. It’s a great way to become more involved in the Brent community. Please reach out to Erin Baldwin at erin.baldwin@gmail.com to learn more about the role.

Schedule Change
The New Family Playdate scheduled for Friday, September 4 has been postponed to a later to be determined date. Brent is welcoming new families to Brent for the new few weeks and will reschedule the event after those families have enrolled.

Photos: 5th graders begin SY20-21!
Don’t forget! Pay your $50 school supply fees here: https://brentholidaysale.com/products/school-supply-fee

The Brent Community worked to ensure that all students have supplies and educational materials for the start of school year. Grade level at home supply kits were assembled and distributed to all students. By collecting school supply fees at the onset, Brent ensures that every student has the resources they need to be successful. So please remember to make your payment today!! Lastly, when doing so you may even consider making one for a family in need? Thank you kindly and together we will get through this!

AtoZ Connect - Join the Community!
In the Brent Elementary School Community, connections are so important and now more than ever. Remember, take a moment to enter your up to date information into AtoZ Connect so we can quickly publish our first ever school directory! Help us so we can help to make the connections you might need for important information, resources and family to family support!

To use the directory, click on link below to create an account or login to update your information https://atozconnect.com/cls/re-related_entities_list.php

Brent staff verifies that everyone who applies to join the Brent A-Z Directory is a Brent family so families can be assured that contact information is used appropriately.

Jason Harris
Tues News
New Staff Spotlight
Kindergarten Focus Teacher

What is your teaching and educational background?
I started working in schools directly after finishing my undergraduate degree at Brown University. I did training and co-teaching at the Cape Eleuthera Island in the Bahamas with high school students, as well with young children in a charter school in Boston and DC. After receiving my certification, I taught Pre-K at Powell Elementary School in Petworth, followed by two years as an Instructional Coach in the Division of Early Childhood in DCPS. Over the past two years I was living back in Boston, where I am originally from, as I obtained my Master’s degree in Learning and Teaching from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I am excited to be joining the Brent community back in D.C. this year especially because it is a place that values relationships across the community as a way to promote learning in a variety of different ways.

What would be some of the words your students have used to describe you as a teacher?
I think the best way to answer this question is through direct quotes from students. Two memorable ones come to mind. One is from a Pre-K student towards the end of the year after I asked him a question about something he was doing during his play. He responded with “Why you always ask so many questions?” I think I am naturally curious, and I hope to build that curiosity and critical thinking for students as well.

The second anecdote was right before a field trip in May. One of my Pre-K students’ mom asked her “what are you going to do with your jacket if you get hot on the field trip?” Her response was “well, it depends on whose group I am in. If I am in Ms. Dallas’ [the partner teacher in the class] group she will carry it for me, but if I am in Mr. Harris’ group he will say ‘you can tie it around your waist.’” What I appreciated about hearing this from her was that I had been so clear and consistent in my expectations that she knew exactly what to expect from me. What she knew I would prompt her to do was think of solutions that built her own independence and problem-solving skills as well. I think students and families would say that I support children in taking care of a range of their needs and try to develop the skills to be able to do that work for themselves as well.

Finally, I have had many accusations from children of being “silly” which is why though my first teaching experiences were with middle and high school students, I have found a home teaching young children.

What are your hopes and dreams for kindergarten students and the kindergarten instructional team this year?
I hope that kindergarten students build a joy for learning. I hope that they build a curiosity for the world around them. In addition, I hope that students have the opportunity to build a better understanding of themselves alongside the social-emotional skills to build strong relationships with their peers, even in a virtual setting. I am excited for the kindergarten team to collaborate together to find creative ways to bring students together in virtual communities.

While we all hope to return to in person learning and instruction as soon as it is safe to, we know that distance learning presents both challenges and opportunities.

**What will your approach be to using the virtual platform for kindergarten students?**

One thing that I hope kindergarten students will develop is a willingness to try new things, take some appropriate risks and get comfortable making mistakes. With the virtual platform still being pretty new to everyone, and especially to me as I was in graduate school in the spring, I am hoping to embody that mentality as well in facilitating virtual learning. Within that, I hope to hold onto the principles of building relationships and social-emotional learning alongside differentiation to make sure each student gets what they need. I am excited to try ways to bring those principles out, use my knowledge the ways young children learn best and then see what works so I can continuously improve.

**You jumped right into one of this year’s significant and monumental initiatives by joining the staff’s Anti-Racist Working Group. What do you hope for the outcome of this group and what do you plan on contributing to this important work?**

I am hopeful that the Anti-Racist Working Group can find ways to integrate anti-racist practices and mindsets into everything that we do within the community. I know that this work is hard and requires a sustained effort for a long time across all settings to truly disrupt the systems in society that have created some much inequity. I am personally really interested in the mindsets and mentalities that lead to policies and systems that perpetuate racism or alternatively, promote collective liberation and I hope to bring that interest to the working group.

Thank you to everyone from the Brent community for your warm welcome and support so far. I look forward to getting to know you more this year!

*Photos: Mr. Harris with family.*
Dear Brent Community,

Community, and the relationships and connections that strengthen it, is a core focus of our year at Brent. To build community, we are relying on more traditional mechanisms like morning meetings and small groups; building community in new and unique ways like virtual meet and greets, playdates and eventually informal lunch bunches; and expanding efforts like Home Visits.

For many years, our PK3 and PK4 classes have launched the year with Home Visits. Last year our second-grade team participated in a Home Visit pilot that extended the model. These two experiences cemented their high value and so we have made Virtual Home Visits part of our efforts at all grade levels.

Based on the Flamboyan Foundation and DCPS Family Engagement Collaborative model, Virtual Home Visits seek to ensure that all families have a clear opportunity to build an authentic connection with their classroom (and, for students in K and new to Brent, specials) teachers. Virtual Home Visits acknowledge that the home/school partnership is essential to student growth and are designed so that families can share while teachers seek understanding as to how best to support their students learning at home.

Before the Virtual Home Visit, each teacher outlines some guiding questions and raises their own awareness of any implicit and explicit biases – here we are driven not on what we think we know but rather on what you share. During the conversation teachers will use these guiding questions to listen carefully, get to know one another, hear about Hopes and Dreams, set common expectations for the year, and offer an invitation to continue the relationship in a way that suits each family’s needs. After the home visit, teachers will share general notes with the other adults that will work with your family so that we can all benefit from new understandings.

The Ramp Up schedule at each grade level reveals the significance of the Home Visit model – we are choosing to allocate time for all families to participate in this first week. While this decision means shorter learning blocks at the start, we are confident that the positive long-term impact will be worthwhile and will extend the sense of belonging so important to student success. We are eager to collect your feedback about the Virtual Home Visit experience and believe that is has promise not only as a foundation this year but in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Norah Lycknell