Coming Up

Thursday, August 25
ECE Start Day for Students with last name beginning with A - L

Friday, August 26
ECE Start Day for Students with last name beginning with M - Z

Monday, September 5
Labor Day
No School for students and staff

Wednesday, September 7
Back to School Night
6:30 - 8 p.m.
ASL Interpreters Provided

Sunday, September 11
Brent Welcome Back Picnic
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
X Park (3rd and D SE)

Wednesday, September 21
Brent Picture Day
Uniform Free Day

What is Tues News?
Welcome to this school year’s first edition of Tues News. Tues News is Brent’s weekly newsletter that is sent home to all families. The newsletter covers upcoming events, student and staff accomplishment and news from DCPS. Every Tuesday, check your child’s communication folder or Brent’s website under the Parent tab. If you have news or announcements, please email Denise Diggs at denise. diggs@ dc.gov.

Photos:  First Day of School, Brent Elementary 2016!

Remember visit www.brentelementary.org, like Brent on Facebook and follow Brent on Twitter @brentelementary for up to date information on Brent happenings!
Back to School Night – Wednesday, Sept. 7

Brent Back to School Night will be next Wednesday, Sept. 7 6:30 – 8 p.m. Principal Young will introduce Brent staff and discuss schoolwide initiatives. After Principal Young’s presentation, parents will visit their children’s classrooms, meet the teachers, and learn about classroom goals and expectations for the year. This is a wonderful opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the upcoming year at Brent. It is an adults only event, so please plan accordingly.

Save the Date: Sunday, September 11, Brent’s Welcome Back Picnic

The Brent community is hosting a school-wide day of fun, food, and entertainment to welcome all families to the Brent community on September 11 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at X park. Please see attached flyer for more information!

Bring books for Brent Used Book Sale

Please gather up your used and no-longer-needed children’s and young reader books -- and bring them to Brent by Friday, September 9. The Brent PTA will be collecting books in the front entrance and on the stage in the multipurpose room. This year’s book sale that will be held on Sunday, September 11, as part of the Brent Family Welcome Picnic. All proceeds will support the Brent PTA.

Volunteers to sort books on Friday, September 9, and sell books on Sunday, September 11, are also needed. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Sarah Carr at sarah@sdcarr.com or Ellen Psychas at epsych@hotmail.com.

Urgent: Room Parents for Classroom and Specials Teachers Needed ASAP!

Welcome back to school! As the school year gets underway, the PTA is seeking parents who would like to be room parents in their children’s classrooms.

Room parents are hubs of communication. Working closely with teachers in your child’s classroom, room parents help to organize classroom activities and events like field trips, class play dates, parent gatherings and other events. Room parents obtain parent volunteers, create a classroom roster and help keep families informed about school-wide issues, events and fundraisers. Each class can have more than one room parent in order to share the responsibilities.

The following teachers already have room parents for this year Sadowsky (ECE), Montgomery (ECE), Hannigan (Kindergarten), Yokum (1st), Kadash (2nd), Berg (2nd), Kraemer (3rd), Maschari (3rd), Bettina (Library), and Mangiaracina (Science). If you are interested in volunteering to be a room parent or would like more information, please contact me at christina.muedeking@gmail.com.

Natural wonders needed for the science room

Students are invited to bring in any natural treasures they find to the science room any time. Cicada shells, dead bugs of any kind, cool leaves, seed pods, sea shells, neat rocks, anything you find, we’ll take. Over the years, the science room has amassed quite a collection thanks to donations like this.

Day Volunteers

A big thanks to all the volunteers who came out on Saturday for Brent Beautification Day. Everyone pitched in to help spread mulch, trim trees, repaint the blacktop markings and repair the kickball field benches, and many other little things. Special thanks to Carlson Klaphtor for managing the event and to Starbucks and Harris Teeter for donating food and drink! See photos.
The 2016-2017 school year has started off strong at Brent! Our students quickly settled back into routines, reconnected with old friends and started making new ones. Thanks to all the families who worked at Saturday’s Beautification Day! The grounds at Brent looked great. So as we all launch into the school year, I have a couple of important reminders:

First, please remember that I have an open door policy with the Brent community. If you need to speak to me, you can try to catch me in the mornings at drop off, schedule an appointment by calling the main office at 202-698-3363 or send me an email to peter.young@dc.gov. I welcome your feedback in areas that Brent is excelling and areas that need additional attention.

Second, please remember to submit health and dental forms. These are required enrollment documents and need to be submitted every year for every student.

Third, volunteer to be a room parent. This is a critical need for Brent so sign up today.

And finally, with the amazing Brent staff, dedicated parents and wonderful students, I know this year is going to be Brent’s best ever. So thank you for being a part of the Brent community and I look forward toward our year together.

In partnership,

Peter Young

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Diana Williams
Parent Spotlight
PTA President 2016-2017

On behalf of the entire Brent Community, thank you for serving as PTA president. First, how many kids do you have? What grades?
I have three - my youngest is Wade, who started in Mrs. Hill’s third grade class this week. Next is Harry, who left Brent this year and is now entering 5th grade at Washington Latin Charter School; my oldest is Viva, who’s in 6th grade at Latin.

What brought you to DC?
My husband, James, took a temporary work assignment here in January 2009 so we moved from Oakland, California. It was supposed to be about 12 months.
We rented in a neighborhood known for its schools, just over the Northwest DC line into Maryland. My husband’s job became permanent so we weren’t moving back to California. James took the kids and me to Capitol Hill for an outing one weekend because he’d lived there in his 20s. I was astounded. What was this place? And why wasn’t I living here? For months after, I’d drive 45 minutes from my NW neighborhood to go to Hill playgrounds and sort of ac-cost other moms. Where did they live? What school? Did they like it? What about Middle School (yes, even then!)?

Why did you come to Brent?
There was something about Brent that felt like home. I liked many other schools, but I had a gut feeling about Brent that made me want to belong there. I came to a PTA meeting when I was assessing schools and the kindness and openness shown to me by other Brent parents was powerful.

Why did you get involved in the PTA?
I wanted to understand how things worked. I came to Brent at a time of controversy over the school’s after care programs. There were two separate, parallel after care programs, one that offered “enrichments” and one that was straight up aftercare. The families that could afford the enrichments did that one; everyone else did the other. These two systems raised complex and raw feelings about race and economic status and some of the public conversations were difficult. Principal Young worked with parents to create the single system we have today. I liked the fact that there were edges and differences of opinion. It seemed real and I wanted to be engaged in the debates.
What motivated you take a leadership role this year?
I have two more years at Brent. In looking back six years, to when my family entered in 2011, I can see Brent in fact was at a pivotal point in time. Impacted by rising property values and the universal preschool policy that attracted new, more affluent constituents to public schools, Brent had already gentrified tremendously by the time I got here. It’s continued to do so.

Yet we are not a monolithic community of upper middle class or wealthy people. We have poverty in our midst -- as does nearly every community in our country. We also have an achievement gap.

Our school is a place of opportunity, where kids are exposed to science, to music, to art, to good teaching. What is our responsibility as a community to ensure every single child in our building meets the same high standards? These questions made me want to lead the PTA this year, because I feel the whole of Brent needs to be engaged in answering them.

Is there a Cliff’s Notes version of the Strategic Plan?
Yes. Here goes: A group of Brent parents and staff lead a Strategic Planning process in 2014/15 to get an informed look at how Brent is doing when compared to schools of similar sizes and demographics in DC. The punch line? Brent benefits from small class sizes, a high-performing curriculum and an unusual array of enrichments. But it lags some comparable schools, most notably Mann Elementary, in terms of student achievement.

The Plan identifies a key solution for Brent: adding more teaching staff in all classrooms. This will involve significant fundraising, and a careful look at how we are judging success.

I hope other parents join me this year in understanding what’s in the Strategic Plan, and in crafting ways to make sure we are filling our gaps.

I’d like Brent to have a zero achievement gap. I can envision a future story in Washington Post about the small public school on Capitol Hill that erased its achievement gap while all students’ performance soared. This imaginary story-of-the-future will be framed and hung in the entry hall in Brent – the story of how Brent’s community decided to put resources and passion behind making sure every child soared.