

The *SUNFLOWER*

A Newsletter from Braeburn Elementary School

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Dec. 8, 2016

Jeffrey F. Sousa
Principal

A Message from the Principal...

I am amazed by the speed at which the school year continues to move and how much enthusiasm our students possess in their daily learning endeavors. While writing I am reflecting on the months of September, October and November and I realize how quickly time does pass and how much our children have grown. I am very proud of our students as they work hard to gain and apply new knowledge inside and outside the classroom. Now that December is here it provides us all the opportunity to look back at the current year and to focus on the new year ahead.

As we move forward into the month of December we are reminded of all of the accomplishments, challenges and opportunities that this year has brought and what our new goals will be for the new school year and beyond. Some highlights to conclude this year are:

- our Student Council's food drive ending on 12/14
- our school choir performing for St. Mary's Home on 12/9 from 1:00-3:00 pm
- our Winter Concert on 12/14 beginning at 7:00 pm
- our winter recess beginning 12/26 and ending on 1/2
- our Positive Behavior Assembly focused on the theme for December "Be Proactive"

Please take time to ask how your child(ren) are demonstrating being proactive at school and home.

Habit 1:

BE PROACTIVE

I'M in charge of me

I take initiative

I am a responsible person

I do the right thing without being asked, even when no one is looking.



I choose my actions, attitudes & moods.

I do not blame others for my wrong actions.

Looking ahead to setting goals I want to share the following article written by Bobbi DePorter of Quantum Learning Network:

The middle of the school year is a great time for families to check in with students on goals. Setting academic and personal goals helps motivate, energize, and focus students, and it is a valuable skill that will benefit learners throughout their lives. Parents can help students set and achieve these goals. Goal-setting can be tedious, even intimidating, for some students. Parents can support students in this process by following these steps: pick it, map it, do it, own it, and celebrate it.

Pick it. Encourage your child to consider his or her dreams and passions and pick goals that are important and meaningful. Guide your child to think about, “What motivates me? What would inspire me to give my best effort? What would make me feel good while I’m doing it? What achievement would make me feel proud?”

Map it. After your child picks a goal, help map the path from where he or she is now to where the child wants to be. Offer the following analogy: If we want to drive across the country from New York to California, we don’t just get in our car and start driving—we get a map, pick a route, and follow it until we get to California. With your child, analyze different approaches and define clear steps to reach their goal. For instance, if the goal is to get a higher test grade in a tough subject, each quiz or project is a step on the path to the higher goal: earning an A.

Do it. Once you and your child have mapped a path to their goal, encourage him or her to take action, focus on the first step and give it his or her best effort. Remind your child that no goal is ever reached without focused action.

Own it. As your child makes progress toward their goal, help him or her to take responsibility for making it happen. Teach the mantra, “If it’s to be, it’s up to me!” Reflect with your child. Ask, “How are you doing? What’s working? What’s not working? What can you or your family change to get to this goal?” From there, analyze the map, and make changes to the plan if necessary. Help your child keep a positive attitude and own mistakes as well as successes. Remind your child that if something comes along that holds him or her back temporarily, to look at the experience as feedback. Failures, or bumps in the road, can provide us with information we need to succeed. Reinforce the message that we can learn from our mistakes and move on with new, valuable knowledge.

Celebrate it. Acknowledgment and celebration are huge parts of achieving goals. Acknowledge every effort and celebrate your child’s mini-successes along the way to achieving a goal. This builds his or her confidence and motivation. Your child will feel good and understand that perseverance will result in another mini-success and finally goal achievement. Try going through the goal-setting process as a family. Pick a family goal (perhaps a charitable activity) and work together to achieve it. After the family experience, have each family member pick a personal goal. Support and acknowledge one another as you move through the above steps. Success is assured when students believe in themselves and in their ability to achieve. Parents are key to helping them believe and succeed.

Wishing her the best.....

Susan Piazza has decided to retire from her position as our clerical paraeducator in our main office. Her last day will be December 31st. Susan has dedicated 5 years of her career here at Braeburn and 3 years at Duffy and other district positions. **Thank you Susan** for caring for our students, teachers and parents and making Braeburn the special place that it is. You will be missed! Please join me in celebrating Susan and her retirement endeavors.

I want to wish you all a wonderful holiday season filled with peace, health, joy, and happiness as you experience lasting memories with family and friends.

Jeffrey F. Sousa
Principal

CURRICULUM CORNER

Minds for Math

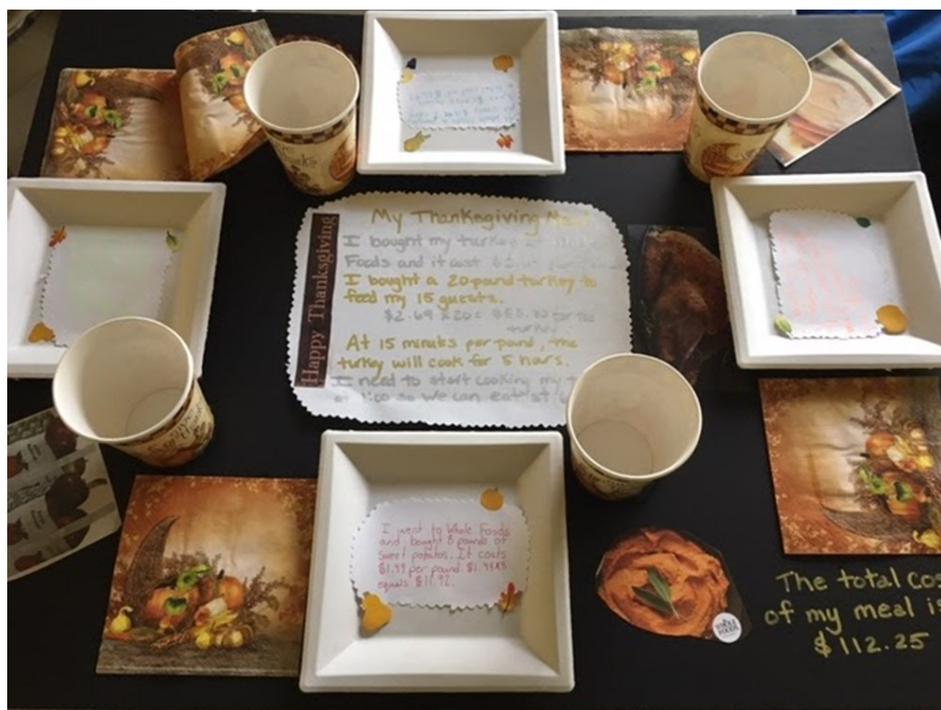
Did you know that most Fortune 500 companies look for interpersonal, analytic and reasoning skills when evaluating candidates for new jobs? In a recent Education Update article from ASCD (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development), author Kathy Checkley reminds teachers that research shows that “when we put too much emphasis on memorizing formulas and using timed tests to measure how quickly students can add, subtract, multiply or divide we may be helping students develop math phobia.” Stanford mathematics professor Jo Boaler emphasizes the fact that math that is taught conceptually instills confidence in students and allows them to see themselves as capable mathematicians.

Most adults were taught math using rote memorization as the main instructional strategy. We memorized formulas and ways to complete math equations, but many of us had little conceptual understanding about what it was that we were doing. We also had difficulty explaining our thinking, because we were not often asked to do so. We just received our math papers back with red X's or circles indicating which problems we got wrong. As a result, many of us today do not see ourselves as “math people” or consider ourselves math confident.

So, how do we change this mindset with our students today? The answer is by making math “real” to students. We can teach students how to add two fractions with unlike denominators using a formula, but to make math relevant and to build conceptual understanding, creating a real world situation makes the learning seem more interesting and more attainable. Giving children real problems to solve such as asking them to double or reduce a recipe when all ingredients listed are fractions, allows students to feel that what they are doing is meaningful. It is something they will use in their own lives. We want our students to learn to be able to engage in productive struggle and to stick with something in order to feel the satisfaction of solving a problem where the answer did not come quickly to them. It is also vital that children have fully developed math vocabularies. They must understand math terms and be able to use them in context of the problem in which they are trying to solve.

The best way to build math confidence in your child is to celebrate mistakes and use them as opportunities to grow. Brain research has shown that when students make mistakes, synapses in the brain fire and the brain continues to grow. When we build classroom cultures that value mistakes we foster persistence and a willingness to keep trying. Below is an example of a Thanksgiving meal math project completed by one of our grade 5 students.

Ellen Cercone, Curriculum Specialist

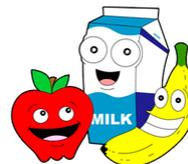


BRAEBURN CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
<i>Mon, Nov 14-Wed, Dec 14 Student Council Food Drive</i>		
Thurs, Dec 8	6:30-7:30 pm	PTB Meeting, Cafeteria
Fri, Dec 9	9:00-11:00 am 1:00-3:00 pm	Fitness Friday Picture Re-take Day Choir to St. Mary's Home
Wed, Dec 14	9:30-10:30 am 7:00-8:00 pm	Winter Concert for Students Winter Concert for Families
Tues, Dec 20	9:00 am-2:45 pm	Gr. 4 High Touch-High Tech
Thurs, Dec 22		Pajama Day
<i>Sun, Dec 25</i>		<i>Christmas Day</i>
<i>Sun,, Dec 25-Sun, Jan 1</i>		<i>Chanukah</i>
<i>Sun, Jan 1</i>		<i>New Year's Day</i>
<i>Mon, Dec 26-Mon, Jan 2 Holiday Recess-No School</i>		
Tues, Jan 3		Back to School
Wed, Jan 4		Family Night-Non-electronic Activities encouraged
<i>Fri, Jan 6</i>		<i>Epiphany-Three Kings Day</i>
Thurs, Jan 12	6:00-7:30 pm	Snuggle Up and Read Night
<i>Mon, Jan 16</i>		<i>Martin Luther King Day-No School</i>
Tues, Jan 17	7:45 am	Student Council Meeting, Library
Thurs, Jan 19	6:30-7:30 pm	PTB Meeting, Cafeteria
Fri, Jan 27		Fitness Friday



Next Edition of
The Sunflower will
be Date Reminder
Version:
Thursday,
December 22, 2016



**Monthly Lunch
Menu**

Please visit the WHPS
website for our monthly
lunch menu at:

<http://www.whps.org/page.cfm?p=2084>



The Braeburn teachers and staff would like to thank our PTB and all of the generous parents who contributed to the incredible lunches, breakfast and snacks during Parent/Teacher Conference week. We all enjoyed the delicious lunch from Max Downtown, wraps from New York Deli, Lena's soups and salads and Bruegger's bagels. And how we all enjoyed the homemade treats!

We extend a special thank you to Steven and Paige Abrams for the generous donation of the Max Downtown food and to Joanne Callahan, Ayelet Connell, Kristin Dolan, Nicole Gamache, Alicia Guildner, Laurie Haynes, Katie Heller, Sophia Kokini, Lindsey McPhee, Jess Miranda, Elaine Nigro and Andrea Sweeney for their time and contributions.

The Braeburn Teachers and Staff



Responsible Students

As it is important that children learn to be responsible for their homework, lunches, instruments, etc., please consider letting your child go without something he or she has forgotten. You are sure to be pleasantly surprised with the long-term results!

If it is absolutely necessary to drop off items for students during the school day, please label the items and leave them on the drop-off table in the foyer.

Although the office staff cannot interrupt classroom instruction, they will do their best to notify the classroom teacher of the item(s) in a timely manner.

Thank you for your cooperation.



“Note to School”

All families received a “Note to School” pad in the First Day Packet. It is important that you send in a “Note to School” for any day your child’s *regular* dismissal plan changes.

Dismissal plans should be arranged *in advance* so that students *arrive* to school with a “Note to School” explaining the dismissal change. Changes to dismissal plans after the school day has begun are discouraged, short of changes required for emergency situations.

Playdates, etc. arranged *after* the school day begins would require parents to meet their children as usual and see them off to their playdate.

A “Note to School” about the dismissal change is your *first option*, not emailing the teacher after the school day has begun, as many times teachers may only be able to check their email before and after school.

In an emergency situation, please contact the school office. Also, please let the office know if you are in need of another “Note to School” pad.

Thank you.

Food Drive



This year, the student council representatives are collecting non-perishable cans and boxes of food for our annual food drive. We have a lofty goal of collecting 2,000 cans or boxes to help restock the food pantry and support Braeburn families. We would greatly appreciate it if you could donate a can or box of food for this cause. The food drive will run from November 14-December 14th. Thank you in advance for your help.

**School Picture
Re-take Day is
Friday,
December 9
9:00-11:00 am**





Special Notice to 5th Grade Parents

Bristow Middle School Enrollment Process

Bristow Middle School will be holding its enrollment for the incoming 6th graders in January. Bristow Middle School is a school of choice, drawing its diverse population from all neighborhoods in West Hartford. In the 2017-2018 school year, Bristow will enroll 420 students in grades 6 through 8.

All 5th graders who reside in West Hartford and are attending West Hartford Public Schools are automatically included in this process. Other 5th graders who reside in West Hartford and attend a private, parochial or inter district magnet school like The University of Hartford Magnet School are also eligible, although they need to apply to be included in the process and verify they reside in West Hartford with our Residency office.

Each 5th grader will receive a number randomly, which will establish the choice order. This number will be mailed home to parents on January 19, 2017. In order to help parents make an informed choice, two informational meetings will be held at Bristow Middle School on Monday, March 6, 2017 and Thursday, March 9, 2017 at 6:30 pm. Parents can choose to attend either of these meetings as they are both the same. Students are invited to attend these meetings with their parents. **We recommend you attend one regardless of the number your child receives so you are prepared in case we get to your child's number.**

For information about Bristow and full details about how this enrollment process works, please visit the Bristow website at

<http://bristow.whps.org/>

You can also call or email the principal, Steven Cook, at

860-231-2100/ or Steven_Cook@whps.org



Important Policy Notice

Although we love our dogs, we must ask that you leave yours at home when you come to the school. We have a number of children who are frightened of and/or allergic to dogs. Also, we have no way of knowing which dogs are friendly, "hypoallergenic", vaccinated for rabies, etc.

Thank you for your cooperation.



From Our Crossing Guard:

Thanks to everyone who gave candy for the military troops. All the candy was sent out; a total of 137 boxes in all and four bags to a VA Hospital.

Thank you for your generosity.

Susan Hodge

Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) Class of 2017:

Are you interested in making a difference in the lives of West Hartford children by expanding your parental toolbox to include leadership and advocacy skills? Then, we have a great opportunity for you. The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) trains, inspires and empowers all parents to become effective advocates for children. To learn more about this dynamic program which begins in January, please contact Sara Barczak at sbarczak@bridgefamilycenter.org or call Charter Oak's Family Resource Center at [860-929-5575](tel:860-929-5575). There is no cost to participate in this leadership

Public Act 16-189

We believe that it is vital for all students in West Hartford Public Schools to be able to efficiently and effectively use digital tools that empower them in all phases of the learning process, including research, problem solving, content creation, communication, and collaboration. We also believe that we must be committed at all times to protecting students' privacy and providing them with a powerful and safe educational experience. To that end, the West Hartford Public Schools follow the legal requirements of Public Act 16-189 to promote the safety and security of all students and staff.

In compliance with Connecticut State Law, we update online programs used within the district that house student data. The programs may be used district-wide, in a very small number of classrooms, or with individual students. The list will be updated each time the district enters into a new contract where student data is housed. For more information on the specifics of Public Act 16-189 and updates of vendor agreements, visit www.whps.org/pa189.



A Great Holiday Gift For Teachers

The Foundation for the West Hartford Public Schools' *Teacher Thank-You Gift* program is a great way to acknowledge wonderful and talented teachers.

Make a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation of \$10 or more per teacher. Teachers receive a special card indicating a gift has been made in their honor. These gifts support our Teacher Grant program investing funds back in our schools for various educational programs.

The Foundation is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to raising money from the community to invest in our schools. For more information, visit our website at www.fwhps.org, call 860-561-8755 or email us at fwhps@westhartfordct.gov.



Teacher Gift Order Form

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

Parent's Name _____ Student's Name _____

Street Address: _____ City/Zip _____ Phone _____

Email: _____

Teacher's Name(s) _____

School _____

Send certificate to me **OR** Send to my teacher

Please make checks (\$10 minimum per teacher) payable to Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools and send to 50 S. Main St., Room 420, W. Hartford, CT 06107. Contributions are tax-deductible. **DEADLINE: 12/15/16**



EMERGENCY PLANNING WITH YOUR FAMILY

It is vital that parents speak with their children so that they know what to do in the event of an early closing. Everyone should have a plan in place *before* there is a need for one. A possible snow storm is well publicized in advance and should initiate a detailed conversation about your family's plan.

For Bus Students:

Parents who may not be home at the early dismissal time should make sure that their child knows the order of the 3 to 5 possible neighborhood homes they should go to if necessary. If you choose to, show your child where an extra house key is kept. Tell your child to call you (home and cell) upon their safe arrival.

Do not plan to call the school to pull your student from a bus line due to bad weather. **Plan ahead and send a note in with your child** if bad weather is expected and you do not want them to ride the bus.

For Pick up Students:

Children who usually get picked up will wait in the normal pick up areas.

Do not plan to call the school to let your child know that it may be someone other than you picking up. **Plan ahead and send a note in with your child** if bad weather is expected and a change has been made as to who is picking up.

For WHEE Students:

- If school is cancelled due to inclement weather, WHEE is also cancelled.
- If school is delayed, WHEE is also delayed by the same amount of time.
- If school is closed early due to inclement weather, WHEE will not be in session.
- If afternoon activities only are cancelled, WHEE will not be open.
- WHEE Telephone Number: 860-561-4088

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Superintendent of Schools determines the necessity for a snow day, delayed opening or early closing of school due to weather conditions or other emergencies.

Parents will receive a phone call via the Connect-ED Rapid Notification Service informing them of a school closing, delayed opening or early closing. The phone call would be issued no later than 6:30 am.

Please use the following sources for information about **snow days, delayed openings, early closings and cancellation of afternoon activities only:**

TV Stations: Channel 3, 5, 6, 8, 30

Radio Stations: FM Radio: WTIC 96.5, WRCH 100.5;

AM Radio: WTIC 1080

WHPS website: whps.org

DELAYED OPENING:

- All before school activities (band, orchestra, choir) are cancelled.
- Buses will be delayed for the same amount of time that school is delayed.
- WHEE is also delayed by the same amount of time that school is delayed.

EARLY CLOSING:

Early closing dismissal time is 1:00 pm.

Our Connect-ED Rapid Notification Service will call and email all contacts you provided on your Emergency Contact Form.

If the weather forecast indicates that weather conditions may warrant an early closing, parents should remain alert and arrange to have someone at home to meet children.

- Plan ahead and send a note in the morning with your student outlining your early dismissal plan.
- Do **not** plan to call the office or email teachers with a dismissal plan during the day of a bad weather event.
- Tell your child the 3 to 5 possible homes they should go to, in a specific order if you will not be home.
- If you choose to, show your child where an extra house key is kept.
- Tell your child to call you (home and cell) upon their safe arrival.

All children will be sent home or must be picked up.

Walkers will walk and bus students will board buses.

WHEE is not in session when there is an early closing.

WHEN AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES ONLY ARE CANCELLED:

WHEE will not be open.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

We send all children home except if an emergency arises where children absolutely cannot be dismissed. In such an unusual instance, children will be kept safely at school.