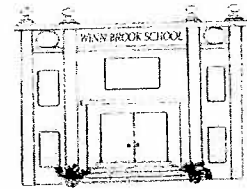


Words from Winn Brook



September 17, 2010
www.belmont.k12.ma.us/

Principal's Newsletter
Janet Carey, Principal

New Security System

Beginning Wednesday, September 22, the new security system will go into operation at Winn Brook. Although the Belmont schools provide a very safe learning environment, the district is making an additional effort to control access to the buildings while school is in session. This is part of a larger town-wide security plan which includes other municipal buildings in Belmont.

What does this mean for Winn Brook?

Entry procedures will not change for students. During drop-off, parents will be asked to say good-bye at the door rather than entering the building. Parents who need to enter, must be "buzzed in" through the front doors, sign in at the office, and wear a visitors' badge. Only those in need of the handicap entrance and students who arrive late may be "buzzed in" through the Cross St. doors.

What time will the building doors be locked?

The doors will be open for student entry and dismissal. Otherwise, entrances will be locked during the school day.

What happens during recess?

The doors will remain locked, but staff can open any door with their identification badges. The cafeteria doors will be monitored during lunch recess so that students may enter to use the restrooms.

What happens during concerts and special events?

The custodial staff will make arrangements for doors to be open during special events such as concerts.

What are the cameras for?

The cameras serve two purposes. First, they are used to see who is asking to be let into the building and to ensure they report to the office. Second, the exterior cameras are used to record vandalism and other issues outside the building. The video is recorded and stored for future use if needed by police or other town authority. All requests for access to the video must be made to

the Superintendent's office and will be acted upon according to the provisions of the applicable statutes.

Why make this change?

We strive to be a warm, welcoming school community. I truly enjoy having the opportunity to greet so many of you in the morning. Although it will take some time to adjust to entry procedures that do not bring parents into the building with their children each morning, the change will help us to maintain a safe and secure environment. Given the security issues that impact our society, we believe that student safety must be our top priority, even when procedures may impact the way in which we interact and communicate.

Return of Library Lending

As a result of our significant budget challenges and the failed override, we lost both our library aide position and the elementary librarian who covered all four schools. Without adequate staffing, we had to limit our book lending to teachers. It was no longer possible to manage the weekly book borrowing to which students were accustomed.

Fortunately, the district was recently awarded funds from a federal grant targeted to save or restore jobs in public education. These funds put a temporary "band aid" on our libraries enabling us to resume book circulation for students. The number of library aide hours are a fraction of what we have had in the past, so we will be reliant on the assistance of parent volunteers to help with circulation and the shelving of books. Although I am very pleased that library books will once again be in students' hands, we still do not have the ability to run a true library program where students are taught research skills. Furthermore, I am concerned about the likely deterioration of our computer lab. Our library aide played a key role in maintaining the computer lab and there are not enough hours with the new position for that practice to continue.

Our PTA will be contacting parents about volunteer opportunities in the library. Your help will be needed and greatly appreciated! For more information on elementary positions funded by the jobs grant, see page 3.

Bus Monitors

We'd like to extend our most sincere thanks to those parents who volunteered to ride the buses while the drivers and children were becoming accustomed to the routes and routines. Our volunteers helped to ensure that bus service ran smoothly and students felt comfortable. A special thanks to Rebecca Leeb who coordinated the following volunteers.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Kate Delhome | Pam Banks |
| Joanna Tzouvelis | Heather Sundahl |
| Beth Barmakian | Sandy Mulkern |
| Kim Hurley | Ali Yamin |
| David Hurley | Lynn Delise |
| Vanessa DiMauro | Cindy Estes |
| Mary Thomajan | Stephanie Leydon |
| Muriel Medard | Maeve Giangregorio |
| Bonnie Friedman | |

New Faces at Winn

✓ Ms. Peterson	Preschool Aide
✓ Ms. Goldberg	Professional Aide Kindergarten
✓ Ms. Colavito	Classroom Assistant Kindergarten
✓ Mr. Torchia	Professional Aide Grade 1
✓ Ms. Cannatella	Professional Aide Grade 1
✓ Ms. Manoli	Professional Aide Grade 1
✓ Ms. Elson	School Psychologist
✓ Ms. English-Sand	Resource Teacher
✓ Ms. Pandolfo	Grade 3 Teacher
✓ Ms. Graber	Grade 4 Teacher
✓ Ms. Richards	Lunch Aide



*As of September 10th,
the Winn Brook School
has an enrollment of
501 students.*

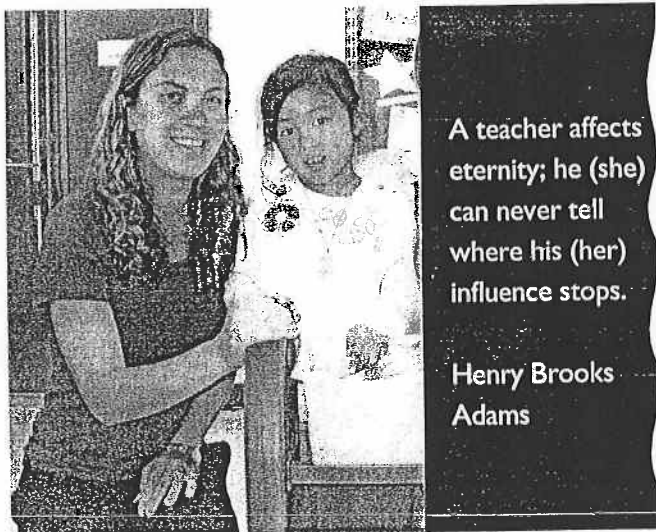


Upcoming Events

- ⇒ **9/20-24** PACK Week to promote fruit & vegetable consumption
- ⇒ **9/21** Curriculum Night for grades K-4, 7:00-8:10 pm, schedules for each grade level went home in backpacks.
- ⇒ **9/23** Preschool Curriculum Night, 6-8 pm
- ⇒ **9/30** School picture day
- ⇒ **9/30** PTA Ice Cream Social, 6:00-7:30 pm
- ⇒ **10/11** NO SCHOOL, Columbus Day
- ⇒ **10/15** Sibling pictures, 3:00 pm
- ⇒ **10/12** Pumpkin decorating, 2:50, PTA special activity
- ⇒ **10/12** First PTA meeting, 7:30 in the cafeteria
Please join us!
- ⇒ **10/13** Pumpkin decorating, 2:50, PTA special activity
- ⇒ **10/14** Pumpkin decorating, 2:50, PTA special activity
- ⇒ **10/25** Saturday Morning Music School begins, CMS
- ⇒ **10/27** Early release day for parent conferences

School Advisory Council

The SAC ensures that parents and community members are involved, in a meaningful way, in school-based decision making. The council meets regularly with the principal of the school in order to assist in the identification of the educational needs of students, review the annual school budget, and create a school improvement plan. The council has openings this year for two parent representatives. The SAC meets after school, approximately once a month. In accordance with the Education Reform Act, parent members are to be elected by the parent body. Should more than two parents volunteer, the PTA will run an election. If you are interested in becoming a member of the School Advisory Council, please contact Mrs. Oteri (617-993-5700.)

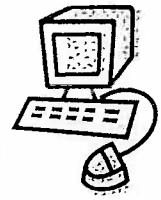


**A teacher affects
eternity; he (she)
can never tell
where his (her)
influence stops.**

**Henry Brooks
Adams**

Guidelines for Email Use

Email communication is a common practice for many people. School personnel all have email accounts and do their best to check messages once a day. Their primary focus however, is not their computer; it is their students. They have very little time during the day to access and respond to email messages. Although this form of communication is convenient, quick, and easy, it needs to be used carefully since the tone and intent can be misunderstood due to the lack of facial or voice cues. Parents are asked to keep the following guidelines in mind as they write email messages to school staff:



- ⇒ Email sent through a public account is not considered private communication between parties and as such, nothing of a sensitive nature should be disclosed in email messages.
- ⇒ Email communications should be brief, concise, and if warranted, should be a request for a personal contact (phone call or note) if feedback is necessary.
- ⇒ Email is not a substitute for a conference, nor should it be a problem-solving tool, especially when children and their learning issues are the topic.
- ⇒ Time sensitive information should not be included in email messages as teachers may not be able to read or pass along, within the expected timeframe, information that has an impact on a child's daily routine.
- ⇒ Email communication should be used as needed. It should not be a daily messaging tool used as a convenience.

At times, teachers and teaching teams may establish email protocols with families that are mutually agreeable and which support students. It is important that we manage technology so that it remains a tool and not a replacement for individual conversations about students and their issues.

Federal Jobs Grant

Earlier this week, the School Committee fully endorsed the plan that Dr. Entwistle and the Leadership Council developed for the expenditure of \$331K in federal Education Jobs Grant funds over the next two years. Our primary goal was to use this temporary funding to achieve sustainable gains that live on beyond the projected life of these jobs. The plan impacts all levels of the school system. Below is an outline of those new positions that will have an impact at the elementary level.

Literacy: The elementary schools now share a .6 Literacy Specialist. .4 has been added so that the four schools will share a full-time Rtl (Response to Intervention) Literacy Specialist.

Mathematics: A .6 Rtl (Response to Intervention) Math Specialist will be hired next year to be shared among the four elementary schools.

Library Access: Each school will have a portion of a library aide position (1.0 shared among the four elementary schools) so that we can allow students to borrow books. The number of hours that the aide is at Winn Brook will be a fraction of what we have had in the past; however, it should be enough to restart the circulation of books.

K-12 Guidance: A full time guidance/student services specialist will be hired for 1 ½ years to work on a comprehensive K-12 guidance curriculum to encompass behavior, bullying, and social/emotional/mental health issues.

I am pleased that Belmont received these federal funds and that these new positions were endorsed by the School Committee. For more information and a complete list of the positions funded throughout the district, please visit our website (www.belmont.k12.ma.us) and look under "Web News."

Important Reminders:

- ⇒ There is no staff coverage in the schoolyard until 8:35 am. Please do not allow students to arrive prior to this time.
- ⇒ We must have a note if there is a change in your child's usual dismissal routine.

Changes to Our 3rd and 4th Grade Music Programs



Last year, the Superintendent initiated a series of "Return on Investment" (ROI) inquiries. One of those was to examine the Elementary Instrumental Music Program in the context of the entire elementary curriculum. As a result of that ROI, changes were instituted in an effort to use our instructional time most efficiently and effectively. The chart below reflects the changes.

Last Year
⇒ All 3rd graders had two 30 minute periods of general music per week.
⇒ All 4th graders has one 30 minute period of general music and one 45 minute chorus period.
⇒ Some students elected to take instrumental music on Wednesdays while those who did not register remained in their classrooms.

This Year
⇒ All 3rd and 4th graders have one 30 minute and one 45 minute music period per week.
⇒ During the 45 minute period, some children receive instrumental instruction while the others participate in general music.

The new model maximizes regular classroom instructional time, keeps instrumental instruction within the school day, and provides 3rd graders who are not involved in the instrumental program with additional music instruction each week. As a result, all students in grades 3 & 4 will receive 75 minutes of music instruction per week.



A Message from Ms. Shaughnessy, School Nurse

Food allergies are very real and a concern for our school. Many of our students have allergies to foods such as milk, eggs, nuts, and wheat. If exposed to these foods, a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis may occur. Symptoms of anaphylaxis can include hives, wheezing, blood pressure drop and even death. The only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to avoid the offending food.

Winn Brook School has many measures in place to protect students with food allergies. The school staff is trained in allergy awareness and in the use of Epi-pens (medication used to treat anaphylaxis). Students are encouraged to wash their hands frequently. Classrooms with identified allergy students may request that other parents not send in snacks containing the know allergen. Also, we discourage the use of foods for celebrations and teach students not to share their food. These measures are part of the school's food allergy protocol and have proved successful in keeping our environment safe for all students.

Your cooperation with the school in managing students with life threatening food allergies is requested. Please call the clinic at 617-993-5706 if you have any questions or concerns.

