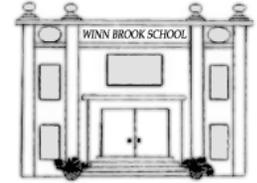


Words from Winn Brook



November 20, 2017
www.belmont.k12.ma.us

Principal's Newsletter

Janet Carey, Principal

Change in Concert Format

With the arrival of our new music teacher, Ms. Bettinelli, we decided that it was time to reevaluate the format of our winter concert. While we love the fact that it brings our entire community together to share the gift of music, we also worry about the safety implications of overcrowding. Parents' primary goal in attending is most likely to see their own child(ren) perform. We understand that this is often challenging with approximately 500 children on the gym floor. In light of these challenges, we have identified our goals for the concert and plan to pilot a change in format.



Goals:

- To foster a sense of community.
- To allow students to see one another perform.
- To ensure safety (if we had to evacuate).
- To allow parents to see their children perform.

New Format:

Week of December 18th

Whole school **rehearsal** (without parents) This would bring our school community together and allow the children to see one another perform.

December 21st

9:10 - 9:40 am Gr. 3-4 concert with parents
9:40 -10:10 am Open houses (at teachers' discretion)
10:10 -10:40 am K-2 concert with parents

Benefits:

- Parents would have a better chance of actually seeing their children.
- All parents should be able to find seats.
- Students and staff would come together as a school community during the rehearsal.
- If we had to evacuate, it would be quicker and more orderly.

We look forward to seeing you on December 21, 2017 and will be asking for your input as we evaluate this pilot.

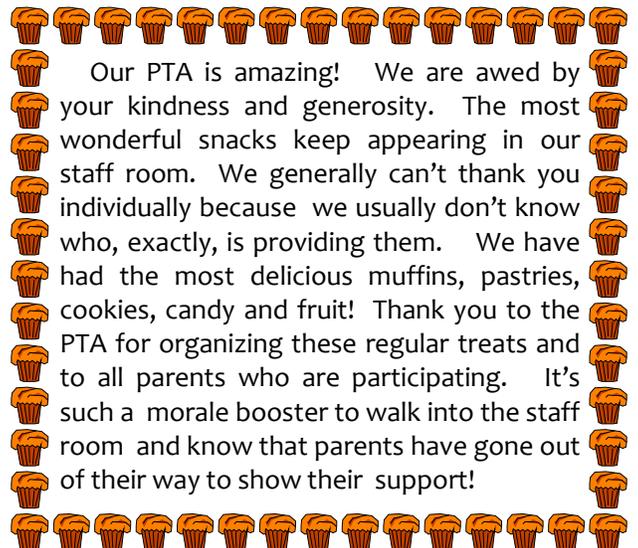
Update on Joey's Park

Some parents have asked if we have seen any signs of rats migrating into the school from the park. We have seen absolutely no signs of rats within the building. Our custodian, Mr. Daye, routinely inspects the school for any signs of rodents. Additionally, a pest control company does regular inspections.



We did find a dead rat on a wall outside the building on the Cross Street side. It is unlikely that it came from the park because the pest control company has been using traps. It is possible that someone in the area is using rat poison which led to this unexpected surprise.

The rodent activity in the park has slowed and a natural repellent has been placed around the burrows to deter new activity. The Recreation Department is working with the Health Department and pest control company to carefully monitor the situation. They hope to open the park in the near future. It will be important, however, to keep the area clean and free of the food waste which attracts the rats.

 Our PTA is amazing! We are awed by your kindness and generosity. The most wonderful snacks keep appearing in our staff room. We generally can't thank you individually because we usually don't know who, exactly, is providing them. We have had the most delicious muffins, pastries, cookies, candy and fruit! Thank you to the PTA for organizing these regular treats and to all parents who are participating. It's such a morale booster to walk into the staff room and know that parents have gone out of their way to show their support!

Spirit Week

Spirit Week was a big success! Students and staff enjoyed three days of unusual attire with Pajama Day, Wacky Hair/Hat Day and Sports Day.



Emergency Preparedness

School administrators have worked with the Belmont Police Department in order to keep our safety procedures aligned with research on effective practices. Although it is disturbing to think that we live in a world where we have to prepare for the possibility of a dangerous intruder, just as we practice fire drills, we also need to practice other emergency response protocols. This will help to ensure that they are effective and that, in the event of such an emergency, students and staff react without hesitation. During the month of December we will be conducting one such practice drill.

While we want our students to be prepared for an emergency, we do not want them to become anxious or fearful. Therefore, teachers are presenting information in a similar way. Although each teacher may vary the wording slightly, we plan to frame the message as follows:

Every day, we do things to keep ourselves safe. Let's think of some examples. What do you put on when you ride a bike? What do you do before you cross the street? Another way we stay safe is by practicing for things that probably won't happen, but it is good to be prepared just in case. One way we do this at school is to practice fire drills. We have not had a fire, but we practice getting out of the building anyway. When we do a fire drill, the first thing we do is stop what we are doing and listen for directions.

*One day soon, we're also going to practice a drill with a different alarm sound. Just like in a fire drill, what you need to remember is to **stop and listen to my directions**. I may tell you to sit by the pink sign, or I may tell you to follow me outside.*

We will evaluate our response time and effectiveness and share that information with parents after the drill.

Dismissal Safety

Please be aware that we will not dismiss your children to friends, neighbors, or unfamiliar relatives without your permission. If you need to change dismissal plans, please send a note to school with your child. If it is a last-minute, unforeseen change, please call the office (617-993-5700). No matter how well-meaning, it is imperative that you do not try to take a friend or neighbor's child without authorization. Although the intention may be to be helpful, it can be alarming when a child is not waiting where a parent expects him/her to be.

Upcoming Events

- ⇒ 11/22 **Early Release Day**, 11:50 am dismissal, **No afternoon childcare**
- ⇒ 11/23&24 **NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving** 
- ⇒ 11/27-12/1 **PTA Book Fair ***
- ⇒ 11/29 **Game Night 6-8pm in the cafe***
- ⇒ 12/4-8 **Toy & Gift Drive for DCF *** 
- ⇒ 12/7, 11 & 14 **Gr. 4 Boott Cotton Mills Museum Field Trip**
- ⇒ 12/18 **Tanglewood Marionettes for K**
- ⇒ 12/21 **Winter Concert—see p. 1 for schedule**
- ⇒ 12/25-1/1 **Winter vacation—NO SCHOOL**

* PTA sponsored events

PTA News

Mark Your Calendars

Book Fair November 27 to December 1

Game Night November 29

Gift & Toy Drive Dec 4 to Dec 8

As Thanksgiving draws near, we feel so grateful to be a part of this wonderful community, which is so diverse yet united in our support of our children. The year has started out so well and we look forward to sharing with you the results of our annual appeal for family donations next week.

Toy & Gift Drive

As parents, we hope our children can have the experience of helping others in need. This holiday season, we will again be collecting unwrapped new toys (no toy weapons please) that will be given out through the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families for children, infants up to age 10, who might not otherwise receive gifts. Starting December 4, students can put donated gifts into the boxes next to each classroom. Thank you for your participation in this important school project!

Book Fair

Mark your calendar now for the Book Fair! For a week, we will be open before school, in the afternoon, and in the evening for you to browse through and buy from a curated selection of quality new books from Scholastic. It's a great way to check gifts off your holiday list, treat your young readers to inspiring new titles, and contribute books to your teacher's classroom through the Wish List program if you choose.

Game Night

On Wednesday evening of Book Fair week, join us for Game Night! Try out new GameWright games such as Sushi Go And Feed the Kitten with your kids. Purchases are optional, but the games make great gifts. 50% of the game purchase proceeds go to support Winn Brook. We hope to see you there!

Winter Weather Reminders

Now that the weather is finally turning cold, it is a good time to review our winter recess procedures and recommendations for dress. Since the children benefit from fresh air and active play, we send them outside for recess unless the weather is particularly wet or drastically cold. As you are probably aware, a layered approach is generally the best way to cope with winter conditions. The layers help conserve body heat while children are outside and enable them to adjust to interior temperatures that may vary as they travel to the gym, lunch, and specialists' classrooms. **Students will only be allowed to play in the snow if they are wearing the appropriate gear** (snow pants, boots, hats and mittens/gloves).

Early releases related to weather will be avoided; however, in the unlikely event that an unscheduled early release is necessary, **it is crucial that we have accurate contact information for parents and**

guardians. Please send us any updated information. It would also be a good time to create a contingency plan for childcare should school be cancelled or delayed. Please take some time now to ensure that everyone in your family knows the plan for an unexpected school closing or delay.

Delayed school openings, as well as school closings, are announced on :

- ♦ *WBZ radio (1030 AM) and TV (channel 4)*
- ♦ *WRKO radio (680 AM) and WHDH TV (channel 7)*
- ♦ *WCVB TV (channel 5).*
- ♦ *The BPS website (www.belmont.k12.ma.us)*