

The Watershed Gazette

January 2021

Principal Update

Happy New Year Watershed! 2021 is going to be an even bigger and better year for our school. Please keep an eye on ClassTag, your personal email, social media - every digital platform! - to make sure you stay in the "know" for the reopening of schools. The metrics for reopening schools and the plan for Baltimore County Public Schools reopening are available on the BCPS website. Please check it regularly!

Now onto NEXT school year - SY2021-22. We need to know your intent for enrollment for next year. Do you plan to continue to enroll your child at Watershed or have other plans? Please let us know by completing this google form by Friday Feb. 5th:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWR1i4kpiWMj6uVO3cpLzbhQd6LZcJUQAAbFz9DChQRC2aGw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Your Principal, *lgr* **Widney**

Important Dates:

Jan 4: Schools Reopen for Virtual instruction
Jan 5: Communications Committee Meeting
Jan 12: Virtual Open House (9am-9:30am)
Jan 12: Virtual Open House (4pm-5pm)
Jan 18: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No School
Jan 27: Schools close 3hrs early for students
Jan 28: Environmental Action & Facilities Committee at 3pm
Jan 29: Second Marking Period Ends
Feb 1: Parent Volunteer and Wellness committee 7pm
Feb 1: Lottery application deadline for new students
Feb 2: Parent Communications Committee meeting 6:30pm
Feb 5: Completed Declaration of Intent for 21/22 SY
Feb 5: First Friday Parent's Event

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Update from the Health Suite

We are now in the thick of winter. The holidays are over and we are still in the midst of virtual learning. This is an important time to stay consistent with mask wearing, hand-washing and limiting social contacts. It is also an important time to get outdoors and get some exercise in! The physical and mental health benefits of exercise are well documented.

At the time that I am writing this, the weather has still been pretty mild, and I am trying to step away from screens and Get Outside as much as possible. But on days when that may not be possible, my children and I have been enjoying these Super Hero Workouts! Give it a try!

Let me know if I can support your family in any way.

Nurse Alice
amaunz@bcps.org

Grade level updates

Kindergarten

We're looking at homes, traditional clothing, games, schools, and foods. If you, your family, or friends have examples of these different things please email us a photograph with the person's relationship to you (uncle, friend) what they're wearing, doing, eating, or celebrating. Soon we will be creating a market stand from a country that represents the products of that country for our End of Unit 2 Project.

In phonics we're continuing to work on letter sounds, blending, and segmenting. We will have learned the vowel sounds for a, i, and o by the end of the month. If your child is still having trouble distinguishing the vowels sounds have them look at their mouth in a mirror as they make the sounds and pay attention to the differences in their mouth shape and tongue placement. We also use movements for each sound. For the short a sound, we put our hands on the side of our face and yell the /a/ sound. For short i, we either pretend that we're being tickled or scrunch up our faces into an icky face. For short o, open your mouth and say /o/ using your finger as a pretend tongue depressor. We hope these little tricks help your child differentiate their vowel sounds!



In math this month we will be focusing on adding, subtracting, measuring, and money. Students will practice creating number lines from scrambled numbers and identifying numbers missing from number lines. We will work with story problems about forest animals and students will be invited to create their own story problems with animals in their environments as well. As we begin measurement with comparing lengths of objects, students can start using words such as “longer” and “shorter” to describe objects in the world around them. As an introduction to concepts about money, we will begin to identify different coins and their values. See if your child can help you count out spare change you find in the couch cushions!

<https://www.myplate.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Whats%20MyPlate%20All%20About%20Infographic%20%282013%29.pdf>

<https://www.today.com/parenting-guides/teaching-kids-respect-diversity-t177717>

First Grade

First Grade is hard at work learning all about the world around us - from the planets in the solar system to the landforms that make up our Earth. We've practiced how to read maps as well as made some! We are also learning about how to write about what we are discovering. We are expanding what we know about sentences and how they end (with a period, question mark, or exclamation point). We are branching further into writing by learning about what makes a paragraph, and the jobs that different sentences have in a paragraph.

In Math, we've been counting by fives and becoming more familiar with doubles facts. We'll use what we know to add and subtract facts up to 20. Don't forget to spend some time practicing each day on First In Math!

Our phonics work has been covering lots of sounds and spellings. We know that 'ck' makes the same sound 'k' makes at the end of a word, and some letters get doubled at the end of a word to help make the sound. We've also been reading and sounding out lots of words. Blending sounds into their words is really important for reading and spelling.

Second Grade

Quarter Two Project

Students have been learning about invasive species during their ELA small group sessions. Their end of unit project is to create a Public Service Announcement about an invasive species of their choice. This project will include the species place of origin, current location in Maryland, harmful and/or helpful behaviors, and facts about the species. We are having a lot of fun learning about animals in second grade and cannot wait to see what students come up with for their PSA's!



Phonics

In phonics, students have been diligently working on long vowels with the CVCe spelling pattern (ex. name, home, bike). Our next unit will focus on long vowel digraphs. A helpful rhyme for these spelling patterns is, "When two vowels go a walking, the first one does the talking." For example, the word rain has the "ai" digraph and the word seat has the "ea" digraph.

Vowel sound-spelling patterns can be extremely difficult for beginning readers, especially as students are switching from short vowel sounds to long vowel sounds. Encourage students to sound out the word and then ask themselves if it makes sense. If not, switch the vowel sound. For instance, if the sentence says, "We stay inside when it rains," and the student reads it as, "We stay inside when it rans," ask them to reread the word and change the vowel from short Aa to long Aa.

Math

In math, we are continuing to focus on place value (ones, tens, and hundreds) as well as adding and subtracting on an open number line. During Unit 2, students learned how to make skip jumps of 1 and 10 on an open number line. As we move into Unit 3, students are being asked to make skip jumps of 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's. We know this is a lot of new content for students and are grateful for their perseverance! For more math practice, please go to the following website: <https://mathathome.mathlearningcenter.org/>. Although we encourage families to use the second-grade materials, feel free to explore third if your child needs an extension or first if your child could benefit from some extra practice.

Please download the attachment, "Pure Edge Exercises" for brain break ideas and stretches that students (and parents/teachers!) can do between classes.

Third Grade

In the month of January, the third grade team will continue on the educational path that began as we started the 2nd quarter. For Math, we will start the new year with addition and subtraction of 3-digit numbers. We will use rounding to the nearest ten and hundred and estimation to help determine whether or not our answers to problems make sense. We will continue to work on long vowels and writing for our Phonics time. And for Innovation, we will be exploring the challenges that students all over the world face gaining access to books and education. We have already read a story from Colombia, South America and Chad, Africa. We will continue by touching on other countries including Afghanistan and the United States. Additionally, we will learn about aspects of culture, maps, and geography along the way. Students are well into their novels during Reading, and they are practicing various comprehension skills during the close reading time. We are enjoying the work we are doing with your children and are looking forward to the time ahead.



Fourth Grade

We are truly enjoying the energy, politeness and thoughtfulness of our 4th graders! In ELA/Science/Social Studies/Writing class (also referred to as "Integration/Writing", fourth graders are writing summary paragraphs about Benjamin Banneker, adding details about his many scientific studies. We will soon be studying the concept of 'land surveying' and Global Information Systems while examining the geography of the United States. Students are also beginning to study the locations of U.S. states, with the goal of learning all 50 locations.

We are currently wrapping up Unit 2 in Bridges Math. Unit 2 has focused on multiplication strategies for 1 and 2 digit multiplication problems. We started the unit using more concrete models of multiplication including area models and base 10 area pieces. As we moved through the unit, we began moving to strategies including multiplying by 10s, 100s, and 1000s and using ratio tables to help solve multiplication problems. Students have begun using more efficient strategies to solve larger multiplication problems. Next week, we will introduce division problems that have remainders. We will then be taking the Unit 2 Post-Assessment next week to wrap up the unit.

Looking ahead, Unit 3 will introduce students to fractions and decimals. Students will be working with equivalent fractions as well as comparing fractions and decimals. Students will also be working to add and subtract both fractions and decimals.

To support students with math at home, continuing to practice multiplication facts will help students as we move forward into Unit 3. The flash cards that came in students' supply kits are a helpful tool to reinforce multiplication facts and help students recall facts automatically.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS - Please send in any rinsed gallon-size milk jugs or water bottles for an upcoming activity about planting seeds. Thanks!

Special Area Teams

Art

Kindergarten will explore how artists around the world use locally available resources to create traditional craft.

1st grade will explore the art of storytelling through sequential art and animation.



2nd grade will continue researching natural and man-made materials to design their material superhero trading cards. Then they will design a cast of villains based on their study of invasive species.

3rd grade will investigate the role of architects and interior decorators by designing a home for an animal client based on their needs and wants.

4th grade will investigate native plants and observational drawing techniques to create a field guide for the Watershed community.

Physical Education

Kindergarten will be wrapping up throwing and catching, and transitioning into striking.

First and Second Grade will be working on dribbling with our hands and feet. It would be helpful to have a bouncy ball, but we can always make adaptations if you don't have one.

Third and Fourth will be working on the skill related components of fitness. We will be covering speed, reaction time, balance, power and agility.

Music

Happy New Year, Watershed Families!

Continuing our musical journey into this quarter, we are expanding our knowledge of musical notes and rhythms through games, songs, and hands-on musical composition. Students will begin to learn about and incorporate thoughtful movement into our learning about different types of music. We will be focusing on how to produce great sounds with our voices, sing in tune, and read notes on the staff. Grades 2-4 are honing their Curwen solfege signs, so you might see your students signing along with their class, and hopefully practicing asynchronously. In K and 1st, we are keeping our white boards handy for music class so we can begin to notate musical ideas synchronously. We will continue to use online tools, such as Chrome Music Lab, to develop our own music and learn dynamics, melody, and rhythm.

Counselor's Corner

January's counseling theme is Personal Safety and Decision Making. I strongly encourage you to review the parent letter before I am scheduled to meet with your child's class. Lessons will begin the second week of January. I will send out a classtag



announcement with the date and time that I will be giving the lesson as it gets closer. If you have any questions please reach out to me via email, sholmes4@bcps.org.

Parent Committee Updates

Parent Wellness and Volunteers

The Parent Volunteer and Wellness Committee Liaison, Shanae Walker, has recently decided to step down as committee liaison. We thank her for all of her hard work and time spent at student dropoff and pick-up, and running the Volunteer and Wellness Committee. She will be missed. Her departure does leave an opening as the parent liaison for the Parent Volunteer and Wellness Committee. If you are interested in being the parent liaison or a co-liaisons, please contact info@watershedpcs.org if you are interested.

Parent Communications

The Communications Committee also would like to hear from you about this newsletter! There were some significant changes starting in December's newsletter regarding the layout and the content. Did you find it readable? Engaging? Did we have the right content? Was it too long? Was it missing information that you want to see? We want to continue to improve and the only way we can is if you email us the good AND the bad. communications@watershedpcs.org.

[BCPS' response to Events on 1/6/2021](#)



Watershed Board Updates

Another winter hibernation is on the books for the Watershed Turtles! We heard from Ms. Diana and Emily at Irvine Nature Center who also showed us several animals that hibernate, Ms. Wixted from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Ranger Laura from Cromwell Valley Park. Each grade learned about hibernation or dormancy in their own special way and then we all spent our winter break hibernating! We can't wait for Earth Week!!



REMINDER: The 21/22 School Year Lottery is open!

Currently enrolled students do not need to reapply. If currently enrolled students have a sibling who is not currently enrolled at WPCS, but would like to in the 21/22 SY, they should apply before February 1, 2021.

<https://info.watershedpcs.org/index.php/enroll/>

Please share with your networks! At this time we only have kindergarten spaces available, but will collect waitlist applications for all grades.

Click on the link for an amazing article about our school from Jessie Lehson, WPCS Executive Director in the [Children and Nature Network News](#).



