
The Watershed Gazette

March 2021

Principal Update

March “roaring in like a lion” meant something different for Watershed this year. Instead of a crazy weather pattern, we have reopened to welcome some students back to in person learning and our Turtles have stepped up to the challenge! Both staff and community members have shown flexibility and support in enormous ways which have reinforced my view that Watershed is truly a special place. I want us to shout to the rooftops how amazing this community is!! One of the ways you can add your voice to mine is through the BCPS Stakeholder Survey. We are looking for 100% participation from all of our Watershed community. We can do this, Turtles! I know we can! Click [here](#) to take the BCPS Stakeholder Survey. The survey closes on March 26, 2021 so don't hesitate - take it now!

Your Principal, *Jori Widney*

Important Dates to Remember

March 18th - DEI committee meeting 7 pm
March 23rd - WPCS Board meeting 6 pm
March 25th - Maryland Day
March 26th - Spring Break Begins (March 26-April 6)

Breakfast and Lunch are free for every student this school year:

[March 1-12 menu](#)

[March 15-26 menu](#)

Contents

[Principal Update](#)

[Important Dates to Remember](#)

[Update from the Health Suite](#)

[Grade level updates](#)

[Kindergarten](#)

[First Grade](#)

[Second Grade](#)

[Third Grade](#)

[Fourth Grade](#)

[Special Area Teams](#)

[Music](#)

[Parent Committee Updates](#)

[Watershed Board Updates](#)

Introduction to our new School Nurse

Hello Watershed Family,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Flordelyn Torres and I am your new School Nurse, but you can call me Nurse Flor. I was born and raised in the Philippines and immigrated to the USA in 2002. I have been a nurse since 1997 where my background as a young nurse was in the Nursery/NICU area. I also worked at the University of Maryland for 7 years and in Geriatrics for 3 years, but I enjoy Pediatrics the most. There's never a dull moment, it keeps me on my toes, and makes me aware of my age.

My husband is also a nurse and we have one child who turned 13 last month. Outside of Nursing and family, my other passion is cake decorating. I have made cakes through a non-profit for children who are sick or had finished chemo, making children smile even for a little bit, in my own small way.

I am looking forward to getting to know your little ones.

Please don't hesitate to call (443-809-2103) or email me for any concern (ftorres@bcps.org).

Nurse Flor

Grade level updates

Kindergarten

In Open Court phonics we will finish up our last letter sounds and move on to begin learning about long vowel sounds. Please hold onto those Predecodable and Decodable books for your child to bring to school for independent reading, if they will be joining us in the classroom. In Math we will continue to work with shapes by constructing and drawing as well as composing and decomposing. Keep using the links provided in the weekly choice boards to explore Math Learning Center apps to help your child use shapes in different ways. Live Number Corner will take the place of your daily video. Students will begin working with teen numbers as far as 10 and some more.

Our major focus for the next month will be on helping students to adjust to our new learning environment. We will be touring our campus and identifying what it means to be part of our classroom community.

First Grade

Welcome to March! Many of us are returning to hybrid learning, and this is a big change! Our schedules and routines will look different, and we will do our best to help make this transition back to in-person learning as easy as possible! Project Time will focus on procedures, routines, and setting 'what to expect' before we transition back into the building. Afterwards, our Project Time will revolve around reviewing math, social studies, and science standards through exploring Special Spot writing times, activities, and other experiences (TBA!). We will continue to practice previously introduced standards and skills in both Bridges Math curriculum and Open Court Phonics as we adjust to the new routine. An emphasis will be placed on Social Emotional Learning and support, especially in the first 2-3 weeks once we begin hybrid learning. There is so much to learn about how to be in school again, and our goal is to ensure the students returning to face-to-face learning feel safe and cared for while at school. Then, we will begin to reintroduce a new curriculum as the routine settles in. We appreciate your continued support through these big changes for our younger learners!

Second Grade

We are excited to begin hybrid learning in second grade! We know this will be a time of transition for families, students, and staff. We are grateful for all the support and positivity from our Watershed families.

In order to guide students through this transition, we have been working on building "Cool Down/Calm Down Kits" with students using materials from home. We have asked students to locate materials that they can use during down time between classes. For example: books, stuffed animals, fidgets, coloring materials, etc. We also created a "Digital Down Time" folder for students (this can be located in both second grade homeroom course pages in Schoology) with links to a variety of fun and educational websites.

Although we have shifted focus to hybrid learning, we are still building student capacity to problem solve in math and increase fluency in reading. In addition, we are excited to be working with innovation team members Mrs. Guelcher and Mr. Mendel. Their knowledge, enthusiasm, and ability to integrate content areas will enhance student learning experiences during Unit 3.

Third Grade

In Math this month we are finishing our unit on adding and subtracting large numbers. We have emphasized starting with an estimate as a gauge of whether or not our answer is correct and showing the work for our problem solving. Next, we will be moving on to a unit on measuring mass, time, and volume and an introduction to fractions.

During Innovation and Reading, we have spent time this month honoring many of the contributions made by African Americans. We have used read alouds, Discovery Education videos, and articles to focus on the bravery and perseverance of just a few of the many inspiring people.

In March we will begin our next Innovation unit of study entitled, We Are All Connected. We will be studying a variety of ecosystems and species within those systems. The focus will be on the ways that each creature within that ecosystem plays an important role and how everything depends on one another. We look forward to engaging in these interesting explorations with your children.

Fourth Grade

We have been reading the novel, Hoot, by Carl Hiaasen and using it to examine story elements, practice identifying adjectives, learn new vocabulary and to learn about burrowing owls. Students are working on creating a 'Zoo Critter Identification Card' that tells about the threats posed to the burrowing owl and describes the owl's appearance and habitat.

Math has been moving at a fast pace this quarter. We will continue to use Wednesdays as an opportunity to reinforce the skills that we are learning throughout the weeks. Please don't hesitate to contact Ms. Kemp if you are interested in having your child meet one-on-one or in a small group to reinforce math skills!

Special Areas

Music

This month in music, k-2 will be learning more about the musical concepts introduced at the beginning of the year, while developing whole body listening skills and the ability to explain the sounds heard around them. Grades 3 and 4 are beginning a unit on conducting patterns, in order to explore the idea of leadership while incorporating new learning about meter, musical expression, and ensemble skills.

Parent Committee Updates

Thank you to everyone for attending DE&I's Parent Chat. It was great to connect and share our thoughts and be supportive of each other during the reopening. Families will have the opportunity to give feedback and ask questions in a Google form that will be available.

One of the themes that we see reoccurring is trust. Trusting has become more difficult to do in recent years. But we, as the Watershed community, need to trust. We need to trust that the school has taken the necessary steps to keep everyone as safe as possible. We need to trust that parents and caregivers have made the right decisions for their families about whether to return or not to return at this point. We have to trust that parents and caregivers of students who are returning will take the right steps with their children, in the event of any illness, to keep everyone else safe. We have to trust that teachers will be doing everything that they can to meet these new challenges and make sure that their students are safe and are learning. We are all invested in seeing Watershed reopen and stay open.

We want to thank Mrs. Widney, all of the teachers, and staff that have worked tirelessly to start to reopen the school. Parents and caregivers, whether you are returning or staying virtual, the Parent Committees are also here to support you and your needs. Please feel free to contact us.

Watershed Board Updates

Rain Garden progress:

While we have been at home learning virtually, big things have been happening at Watershed! Our partner Blue Water Baltimore has finished the grading and masonry on our beautiful new raingarden! Fourth Grade has been hard at work selecting plants and is working on a field guide as we speak-- and we can't wait to start adding plants in the spring. The rain gardens divert over an inch of rain from 5,598 square feet of rooftop away from the storm drain, equivalent to 551 cubic feet (4,121 gallons) during the average rainstorm. That's roughly 163,000 gallons per year to help our watershed!



Committee Lead needed

The WPCS Board is still in need of a WPCS parent or family member to chair the Parent Volunteer & Wellness Committee. Responsibilities include:

- organizing classroom volunteers under the direction of individual teachers

--support the Volunteer Hour Coordinator (also on Parent Volunteer Committee) in implementation and administration of the Family Commitment policy by encouraging, tracking, and reporting volunteer hours

--organizing celebrations for Teacher Appreciation Week in May, and

--reporting to the WPCS Board quarterly by providing a review of past and upcoming activities

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a parent liaison, please email Katy Chib at board@watershedpcs.org

We want to hear from you

The board of Watershed Public Charter School values and encourages input and feedback from the public during board meetings. Near the beginning of each board meeting, there will be an established 30-minute time slot dedicated to stakeholder comment and feedback that will be listed as such on the meeting agenda. Prospective speakers are encouraged to sign in on the Stakeholder Comment and Feedback Sign Up sheet prior to the start of the meeting, which will be available near the entrance of the room. When meetings are held virtually, those who wish to speak should email the board prior to the day of the meeting at board@watershedpcs.org. A maximum of ten speakers will be drawn at random and will speak in the order they are selected; speaker time is limited to three (3) minutes each and will be monitored by the Board President. Board members will not respond to public comments within the same board meeting except to ask clarifying questions.

When speaking, speakers are asked to give their full name and be respectful of the board and members of the public when speaking. Speakers should address members of the board and be ready to respond to questions for clarification from the board if asked. The board does not discuss personnel matters in open board meetings. Inappropriate comments or behavior are discouraged. Inappropriate behavior is defined as insults, obscenities or profanity, attacks against any person in their personal capacity, and/or physical violence or threat thereof.