



BEL PRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/belprees/>

A MESSAGE FROM OUR Ms. BROOKS

Happy 2019-2020 School Year Bel Pre Families!

I trust this newsletter finds you and your children in great spirits, well-rested and eager for 2019-2020 school year! It continues to be an honor to serve the students, staff and community of Bel Pre; a school community that I have had the privilege of leading and nurturing over the last few years. It is with great enthusiasm and pride that I approach each school year. I want to welcome all of our returning students and families and extend a very warm welcome to those joining Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and/ or the Bel Pre community for the first time.

As I write, Bel Pre is hosting over 330 students participating in our Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) programs under the leadership of our very dedicated assistant principal Dr. Sookhee Plotkin. We are thrilled that so many families took advantage of this opportunity to expand our students' learning; strengthen basic skills; and interact with peers in a variety of learning experiences. We'd like to extend a special "thank you" to all of our parents who supported their child's consistent participation.

In addition to the summer learning opportunities offered at BPES, our award-winning building services staff have been working around the clock preparing the building, classrooms and campus for our students' return in a few short weeks. There have been a few embellishments made to our building that I believe our students will enjoy; thanks to the generous contributions of a few community partners! Additionally, the Instructional Leadership Team and I have continued our work through analyzing student data and attending professional development opportunities in order to continue and elevate our charge in preparing students for success and life-long learning.

Successful student learning thrives with open communication and an active parent-teacher-school partnership. It is imperative that your child maintain punctuality and regular school attendance in order to develop positive work habits and ensure their success in school. It is our sincere hope that we will continue to be collaborative partners in assisting students in being successful in school. We encourage all families to participate in our school activities and events throughout the year. We look forward to another successful school year.

In this newsletter and the "Back to School" tab on our website you will find important information that will help families in planning for the upcoming school year. As mentioned, I encourage parents/families to visit and volunteer often and become a member of our fantastic Bel Pre/ Strathmore PTA as we embrace our motto "**Two Schools...One Community.**"



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PTA

Dear Parents:

On behalf of the Bel Pre / Strathmore Parents Teacher Association (BPSPTA), we want to welcome you to the 2019-2020 school year! As you are running about buying school supplies and enjoying the last few days of summer, we wanted to share with you some information on the BPSPTA. We are a Volunteer run group that acts as an advocate for our students and schools and as a liaison to the schools. We sponsor many enrichment activities such as assemblies, field trips and other events. We do this through generous participation in fund raising events as well as your membership and donations. Furthermore, we have also sponsored parent interest talks on a variety of subjects and have hosted community events such as the Spring Luau. We are looking forward to a successful and fun 2019-2020 school year and look to you for your outstanding support. For those who are already members, please considering renewing your membership. For those who have not yet joined, please consider joining. And as always, we welcome Volunteers and we do have a couple of board positions open. For more information, please write us at belprestrathmorepta@gmail.com or stop by and talk to our members at any of our events. Thank you and have a great 2019-2020 school year!

Tia Masters-Bryant, PTA President

REGISTRATION

School begins **Tuesday, September 3, 2019!** If your child is not currently enrolled in their home school, please click on the following MCPS link for instruction on "How to Enroll Your Child in School": <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/enroll/>. Based on our commitment to student safety, **student registration will not take place 8:00 a.m. – 12:00p.m. Tuesday, September 3rd**. Appointments to assist families with the completion of enrollment paperwork will be provided for a later time of the day.

BEGINNING OF THE YEAR REMINDERS

- Parents are strongly encouraged to attend our **Back to School Nights** and **Open Houses**. Most frequently asked questions will be answered at those events. See the "Calendar Events" for dates and times.
- Bel Pre staff members will ride our morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) buses the **first week of school** to guide and assist students through bus procedures.
- Parents are welcomed to walk their students to class **on the first day**. After the first day staff members will be on hand to support students in need of assistance transitioning from the school foyer to their classrooms, in order to help foster student independence and assist with school safety.



CALENDAR EVENTS

- **MCPS Back to School Fair: On Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** at the **Lower Level of Westfield Wheaton**. The Back-to-School Fair is a great way to learn about the school system's programs and services, along with resources from government agencies and community partners. School system staff will be on hand to answer questions about MCPS curriculum and programs. MCPS will provide free transportation for families from several shuttle stops.
- **Kindergarten Back to School Night: On Thursday, August 29, 2019 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**, you and your incoming kindergartener are cordially invited to our *Kindergarten Back-to-School Night* which will begin with a general session in the all-purpose room and end with classroom visits where students will meet their teacher. Class lists for kindergarteners will be posted on the front windows of the school by 8:00 p.m. August 28th and will remain posted through September 3rd. During this event please take time to stop by our PTA table to join. We look forward to seeing you!
- **Open House/ "Take a Peek at Your Seat":** Our annual *Open House* for 1st and 2nd Grade students and families will take place **Friday, August 30, 2019 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** This is an opportunity for students and parents to meet their new teacher. There will also be an information and resource fair taking place in our All-Purpose Room. Families interested in applying for Free and Reduced Meals are encouraged to do so at this event.
- We look forward to seeing everyone **Tuesday, September 3rd, 2019** for the **First Day of School**. Our school hours are from **9:00 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.** The doors will open at 8:40 a.m. **Students should not be dropped off prior to 8:40 a.m.**
- **Grades 1 and 2 Back to School Night:** Please mark your calendars for our 1st and 2nd grade *Back to School Night*, **Tuesday, September 24th** beginning at **6:30 p.m.** This is an important night of introductions and explanations of academic opportunities.
- **Donuts with Dad: Friday, September 27th 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.**
- **Open House** for parents will take place **Monday, October 14th, 2019**
- **Student Picture Day** will take place on **Tuesday, October 15th, 2019**

**Please visit the MCPS website for early dismissal days, school closing at other important dates. Adjustments to this calendar may be made during the year and you will be notified of them. The MCPS website is <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/calendar/>.



STAFF UPDATES

We say farewell to a few Bel Pre family members who are seeking new opportunities based on changes in allocations, opportunities for professional growth, or making family changes. Though we are sad to see them go, we wish them well on their new journeys.

We say farewell to the following BPES staff members as they explore new career opportunities inside or outside of MCPS:

Lita Clarkson-Carter, Carol Greene, Ashley Golatt, Mada Gray, Clara Johnson and Kevin Tom. We wish them the best on their new journeys.

We would also like to send a special congratulations to **Emily Black** on her retirement. We appreciate your service to the BPES community over the years!

The following staff members will be taking their knowledge, experience, and ideas to new teaching positions at Bel Pre:

- Joisee Biles, Kindergarten
- Blanca Gallardo, Pre-K Para-Ed
- Susan Riley, Intervention

We are happy to welcome some new additions to Bel Pre! Each brings a unique gift and talent to support students. All are well qualified in their disciplines, and are looking forward to contributing to a positive school climate and strong instructional program. Join me in welcoming our new Bel Pre family members:

- Danielle Cohn, Kindergarten
- Monica Ford, 2nd Grade
- T'yahna Graciano, Special Ed
- Elizabeth Han, Physical Ed
- Rachel McMullian, Paraeducator
- Joy Medley, 2nd Grade
- Sheyli Ribeiro, 2nd Grade
- Ceejay Scott, Paraeducator
- Leslie Seymour, Intervention
- Rachel Terry, 2nd Grade
- Dawn Traub, .5 Pre-K PEP
- Nathaly Urias, Paraeducator
- Emily Webb, Art



SCHOOL HOURS

School Hours	9:00 AM - 3:25 PM
Teacher Hours	8:20 AM - 3:50 PM
Students Enter the Building	8:40 AM
Instruction Begins	9:00 AM
Morning Prekindergarten classes	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Afternoon prekindergarten classes	12:55 PM - 3:25 PM

- ❖ In order to maintain the safety and security of students, students **should not** be dropped off before **8:40 AM**. There is no supervision provided before this time.
- ❖ The late bell rings at 9:00 AM. Students arriving to school after this bell rings **MUST** report to the main office to order lunch and get a late pass to class.
- ❖ Dismissal begins at 3:25 PM.
To ensure safety of all children, please do not drive in the bus loop or park along the entrance driveway and bus loop.

We encourage parents to send students on the bus beginning the first day of school so we can accurately determine transportation needs and dismissal procedures. **Please remember there is no supervision for students prior to 8:40 a.m. In order to support the prompt opening of the instructional day at 9:00 a.m., children should arrive at school between 8:40 and 8:55 a.m.** It is critical that families support their children's timely arrival at school. Arriving on time to school is one important example of teaching students to honor time frames.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Daily attendance is an important part of your child's success in school. In the rare instance your child must be absent from school, parents are asked to telephone the school by 8:45 a.m. to notify the office of the reason. **We have an answering machine, so you can leave your child's name, teacher, and the reason for the absence. The child must bring a note from home upon his/her return.** Parents should keep children at home when a child has a fever, a communicable disease has been diagnosed, or lice nits have been found. After three consecutive days of absence, a physician's note is required.

Absence Policy

- AM absent, if they arrive more than 2 hours late
- PM absent, if they leave more than 2 hours early
- If they are absent for more than 2 hours during the school day, it's considered a ½ day absence
- If they are present for less than 2 hours of the entire school day, it's considered a full day absence



BUS INFORMATION

Please review the attached [morning](#) and [afternoon](#) bus route schedules serving Bel Pre and the [letter](#) from Transportation. We strongly encourage all parents to please send their children to school with the school bus services beginning **the first day of school**. Bel Pre staff members will ride the buses to and from school September 3rd through 6th, to review bus riding routines, expectations and safety precautions. Please designate the dismissal drop off bus location for your child on the enclosed form, “**Student Emergency Information form (Yellow card) and [Student Identification Badge](#).**” It is very important that both the school and the bus driver know where your child is to be **dropped off in the afternoon**. Dismissal changes can only be accepted from a parent or guardian via a personal phone call to the office **prior to 2:30 p.m., or by a written note sent to school**. This policy helps us ensure a safe dismissal for all of our students.

ARRIVAL

All students, whether they are bus riders or car riders, will enter the building, using the main entrance, beginning at 8:40 a.m. In order to ensure the safety of all students, it is important to follow posted signs.

Parents who will be **dropping off and/or picking up** students by car will need to use the parking lot entrance to the side of the building. Please look for the signs designating student and carpool drop-off areas. In the morning, parents will be directed to drop students off in an area where they can use the sidewalk to get to the school's main entrance. In the afternoon, our regular car riders will be dismissed from the double doors on the right side of the building, where cars will be able to line up around the sidewalk for pick up. Please check where your car seats are located in the car and ensure that your student can get out of the car on the passenger side of the car (the SIDEWALK side). Please note, cars will not be permitted to enter the front bus loop to drop off or pick up students during (8:15-9:15 AM) and dismissal (2:45-3:45 PM) times.

It is critical for student safety that cars do not enter the bus lane during posted arrival and dismissal times. To ensure student safety, we ask all car drivers to please follow the road signs regarding arrival and dismissal locations. Thank you for your support in these very important matters of safety.

As students arrive at Bel Pre the first day of school, 1st and 2nd graders **should go directly to their assigned classrooms**. *Kindergarten students should be taken to the All Purpose Room (APR), where they will be greeted by their teacher.* Students who are



new to the school and have not attended the Open House should come to the All Purpose Room for assistance. Staff members will be available to assist our students. If you bring your child to school in the morning, please make certain that the child and the school know the plan for his/her leaving school in the afternoon. Children who arrive by bus, will go home on the same bus unless instructed differently by a parent. **It is critical that your child wears the attached identification badge the first two weeks of school. Staff will be referring to students' identification badges to determine the mode of transportation home, unless told otherwise.**

DISMISSAL

Dismissal begins at 3:25 p.m. In the afternoon, our regular car riders will be dismissed from the double doors on the right side of the building, where cars will be able to line up around the sidewalk for pick up. Bus riders are dismissed from the main entrance, the all-purpose room, or gymnasium, depending on the arrival time of the bus and student grade level. Parents who would like to pick up a child who normally rides the bus are asked to come into the building and to sign their child out. **It is very important that the school is aware if a child who normally is a bus rider is being met by a parent. Children may not go home in an alternate manner or alternate bus without written parent permission or the parent actually coming to the school to pick the child up.** Please do not hesitate to call the school for any clarification that may be needed.

Students who are picked up from school early will be called from class when their parent or guardian is present in the main office. We strive to maximize instructional time in the classroom. Please allow 5-10 minutes for dismissal.

EMERGENCIES

Please complete the attached **Student Emergency Information form (Yellow card) and Student Identification Badge**. **Return both documents to your child's teacher during Open House or on the first day of school.**

Please develop a plan with your child that will cover the following emergencies:

1. No one is home when the bus arrives after school.
2. School is closed early due to weather conditions.
3. Unexpected needed pick up of your child due to illness or other emergency.

Your support to provide for your child in the event of an emergency is greatly appreciated.



SCHOOL MEALS

Breakfast will be served daily beginning on Tuesday, September 3rd, the first day of school.

We are pleased to announce that all students at Bel Pre Elementary School will have the opportunity to eat breakfast in their classroom each morning at no charge. Breakfast will include milk, juice or fruit, and an entrée such as French toast sticks, bagels, breakfast sandwiches, and yogurt. Breakfast will be delivered to the classrooms and students will eat in their classrooms as they arrive to school. Breakfast will be available between the times of **8:40-9:00 a.m.** Parents of students who do not wish their children to participate in the breakfast program should let their respective classroom teachers know. This program, entitled Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA), is funded with money from the Federal School Breakfast Program and the Maryland State Department of Education.

Our school is one of 40 Montgomery County Public Schools that will be offering this wonderful classroom breakfast program. Research shows that this program helps students perform better in class and improves attendance and tardiness. Staff in classroom breakfast schools also report that students complain less often about being hungry and tired. We are fortunate to be among the Maryland schools selected to participate in this program.

We will continue to serve lunch in the cafeteria. Students may bring lunch or receive a school lunch. The application for *Free and Reduced-Price Meals* will be available at the start of the school year. Please refer to the attached flyer for information about the School Nutrition Accountability Program (SNAP) and the cost of the school lunch. **Our school cafeteria manager will be available during Open House on Friday, August 30th from 1:00-2:00 p.m. to take lunch deposits for students' lunch accounts.** We encourage you to visit our cafeteria manager for this purpose during Open House.

MEDICATIONS

All student medications need to be brought to the health room by a parent. All medications that are brought to school (even over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, cough drops, etc.) must be administered under supervision. This policy covers even short-term use. Please contact our school health room technician to obtain the proper forms. If your child will need medication for the opening of school, please contact the school office ahead of time to obtain the appropriate papers. **At no time may a student carry medication in a lunch box, pocket, or book bag.**



VISITOR POLICY

All Montgomery County Public Schools have access control systems (ACS) to enhance school-based security. The ACS consists of a surveillance camera installed at the school's main entrance. Signs will direct a visitor to push a button to alert main office staff of your arrival. A remote locking system, controlled from the main office, will allow entry into the building during the period between students' morning arrival times and afternoon dismissal times. When a visitor arrives during these times, they will be prompted to press an alert button at the main entrance. Office staff will communicate with the visitor and provide controlled entry into the school. All visitors will be instructed to report to the main office to sign in. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the ACS, all other entrances to the school building will remain secured at all times.

Once in the school, visitors will receive a badge to wear while in the school building and are expected to return the badge before leaving the building. The safety and security of our students and staff are an MCPS priority, and this system is intended to enhance MCPS security measures to ensure a safe and secure learning and working environment. Parents bringing items for their child (lunch, homework, etc.) will be asked to leave the item with front office personnel so that instructional time remains uninterrupted. If you would like to speak with your child's teacher during the instructional day, the office staff will leave the teacher a message to call you when they do not have students in the classroom. Parents are always welcome to leave their child's teacher a note or send an email. **After the first day of school, students should be able to walk to their classroom on their own. This will help foster student independence and assist with school safety.**

MEETING WITH TEACHERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Should you require a meeting with a staff member, please email or call to schedule an appointment. Please do not plan to stop by before, during, or after school for an unannounced conference; this includes dropping off and picking up your child from day care. Teachers are often in meetings, planning sessions or preparing for the school day. ALL visitors and volunteers must sign in at the main office where they will receive a visitor's sticker. We appreciate your cooperation.



BE WELL 365



MCPS has launched a new initiative, Be Well 365, which will address the physical, social and psychological well-being of students. We know that students perform better academically when they are healthy in body, mind and spirit.

Be Well 365 will ensure that students have the necessary skills to:

- Become positive members of the school and broader community
- Manage their emotions
- Build academic and social resilience
- Identify and access support for themselves or a friend
- Peacefully resolve conflict, and
- Make positive decisions

Use this link for more information:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-services/wellbeing/index-new.aspx>