



Bel Pre Panda Press

December 2019 / January 2020 Edition

Principal's Corner:

First, I would like to thank our awesome PTA and community for your continued support and collaboration throughout October and November. The last two months brought about several firsts at Bel Pre; none of which would have been possible without you! On October 31st our PTA hosted the **1st annual Bel Pre/ Strathmore "Trunk or Treat!"** It was great to see many of our past and present students and families come together for the pre-holiday festivities, held in the upper parking lot. The following day we also experienced our **1st Family Fall Festival**, which many of our students dubbed as "The BEST DAY EVER!" We sincerely appreciate all the hard work of our PTA & school-based committees put into making the festival a day to remember.



I would also like to thank everyone who joined our Kindergartens at Sharp's Farm, our 2nd graders at the Strathmore Concert Hall, our 1st graders at the Smith Environmental Center; and all who joined us during our October 14th Parent Visitation Day. We look forward to seeing more of you in the months to come, as your supportive presence is considered a present.

The Bel Pre Staff and I wish you and your family a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season!

Calendar Items

<p>Wednesday, November 27</p>	<p>Early Release for students. Classes will dismiss at 12:55 p.m. Morning Pre-K will dismiss at 10:50 a.m. There will be no afternoon Pre-K classes</p>
<p>Thursday, November 28 – Friday, November 29</p>	<p>Holiday – School is Closed</p>
<p>Tuesday, December 3</p>	<p>Make-up Picture Day. Order forms are in the main office</p>
<p>Thursday, December 5</p>	<p>No classes for Ms. Wagner’s students</p>
<p>Friday, December 6</p>	<p>PTA Fundraiser at Subway (Outback shopping Center), All Day. Just mention Bel Pre Elementary</p>
<p>Monday, December 9th- 13th</p>	<p>Computer Science WEEK</p> <p>Time to join the World by participating in “The HOUR OF CODE” Ask your child about which day they will be coding!</p>
<p>Thursday, December 10</p>	<p>No classes for Ms. White and Ms. Williams’ students</p>
<p>Friday, December 11</p>	<p>General PTA Meeting at Strathmore Elementary, 6:00 p.m. Come hear more about the PTA and how to help support our schools</p>
<p>Friday, December 20</p>	<p>Winter Sing: NOT ALL CLASSES ARE PERFORMING. Please check with your child’s teacher.</p>
<p>Friday, December 20</p>	<p>Kindergarten Gingerbread Houses</p>

Monday, December 23 – Wednesday, January 1	Winter break. No school
Thursday, January 2	School is Back in Session
Wednesday, January 8	PTA Fundraiser at The Big Greek Cafe , All Day. Just mention Bel Pre Elementary.
Monday, January 20	Holiday - Martin Luther King Jr. Day - School is closed.
Monday, January 20	PTA event at Pump It Up at 12:45 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. Located at 12210 Plum Orchard Drive
Friday, January 24	Early Release for students. Classes will dismiss at 12:55 p.m. Morning Pre-K will dismiss at 10:50 a.m. There will be no afternoon Pre-K classes
Monday, January 27th	Professional Day for Teachers - No School for Students

Districtwide Boundary Analysis Meetings

The MCPS Districtwide Boundary Analysis is an initiative designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of Montgomery County Public School boundaries by analyzing factors such as:

- School facility utilization and capacity
- Student demographics
- School assignment
- Travel patterns

This initiative will result in an analytical assessment and a summary of the community engagement process. It will not make recommendations on potential boundary revisions.

As part of this assessment, a series of regional public meetings will be held in six locations around the county in December and January. All residents of Montgomery County are invited to attend to learn more about the Boundary Analysis process and give feedback on opportunities and challenges with our public schools. Each meeting will have the same format and content. The dates and locations of the meetings are as follows:

- December 4 at Gaithersburg High School
- December 11 at Julius West Middle School
- December 14 at White Oak Middle Oak
- January 7 at Walter Johnson High School
- January 11 at Montgomery Blair High School
- January 14 at Northwest High School

Each meeting will have the same format and content. Learn more at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boundary-analysis.

Join the MCPS Family Engagement Advisory Team

Parents, guardians, and members of the community are invited to apply to be a part of the newly formed MCPS Family Engagement Advisory Team. The purpose of the Family Engagement Advisory Team is to provide opportunities for MCPS families to learn about and provide input and feedback on the district's programs and initiatives.

MCPS is committed to improving students' school experience and academic success and ensuring equitable learning opportunities by engaging families in decision-making and program review. The Family Engagement Advisory Team will meet at least seven times during the school year and members will be required to serve a two-year term.

Applications are due by Friday, December 13. Applications are available at each school, by calling the Division of Student, Family and School Services at 240-740-4620, or online at news.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Family-Engagement-Advisory-Team-Application.pdf.

Winter Weather: Stay Informed

Winter weather is coming soon. MCPS offers numerous ways for parents to learn about school closures, delayed openings, and early dismissals due to inclement weather.

- **AlertMCPS:** [Subscribe to AlertMCPS](#)
 - Receive text messages or emails from MCPS during weather-related emergencies and other major events that impact school system operations. Parents can also sign up to receive alerts specific to their child's school.
- **MCPS homepage:** www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

- **MCPS cable channels:** Comcast 34, Verizon 36 or RCN 89
- **Recorded information:** 301-279-3673
- **Ask MCPS:** 240-740-3000
 - Staff takes calls from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, in English and Spanish.
- **Twitter:** twitter.com/mcps
- **Local radio and TV stations**
 - Please make sure emergency contact information on file at your child's school is up to date.

Visit www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/sources.aspx for more information on how to receive MCPS emergency information.

MCPS Launches United We Learn Contest

Montgomery County Public Schools is launching the fourth year of its student contest, United We Learn. This year's contest, United We Learn: Innovative Communication Challenge, encourages students to think about how communication affects their daily lives, and how technology can be used to enhance communication.

Middle and high school students are challenged to conceptualize an [Amazon Alexa Skill](#) (or series of skills) that shares information of importance about the school district, addresses communication barriers, strengthens the home-school connection, and positively impacts the MCPS community. Alexa Skills uses voice to access and share information. The contest will take place in two phases and MCPS will publish the winning skill(s) and make it available for use.

Elementary school students are challenged to design a web page that shares information of importance about their school, addresses communication barriers, strengthens the home-school connections and positively impacts the MCPS community. The contest will take place in two phases and the winning proposals will be developed into web pages by MCPS Web Services on the students' elementary schools' websites. Winners will have the opportunity to participate in the development process.

To learn more about the contest, visit www.mcpsunitedwelearn.org.

Counselor Corner

Personal Body Safety

In the month of November, we started Personal Body Safety Lessons. These lessons are provided to students in Pre-k-5 classrooms across the district and are designed to teach students to recognize potentially dangerous situations, protect themselves against bullying, child abuse, and sexual abuse, and to take appropriate action if they are unsafe. We discuss safe and unsafe secrets as well as safe and unsafe touches, and empower children by emphasizing their bodies belong to them and they can say "No" if they don't want a touch or it makes them

feel uncomfortable or confused. Children learn that private parts are off limits unless someone is helping them stay healthy or clean (like doctor checkups). Students know that if they encounter unsafe secrets or touches it is not their fault and they need to tell a safe grown-up right away. Be on the lookout for personal body safety tips and talking points!

It is important for your child, and your child's friends, to know they have safe adults in their lives with whom they can confide.

Panda Praise Character Education

Our focus in December for our Panda Praise character education program is on how being courteous is a way to show responsibility and respect at school. Our motto is:

I show responsibility by being courteous.

Week 1 – I show responsibility by being courteous.

Week 2 – I use good manners at school and on the bus.

Week 3 – I line up behind other students carefully and walk quietly in the hallways.

Week 4 – I wait patiently for my turn. I raise my hand and wait to be called on.

Showing courtesy towards others is essential in developing positive interpersonal relationships. Remembering to be courteous helps students become successful in their relationships because they are perceived as responsible, respectful, and friendly by others. It helps students work and learn cooperatively, make a good impression, and be a positive influence – all skills needed to learn and work successfully.

Courtesy can be as simple as sharing classroom materials and equipment, asking before touching something, using polite words, letting someone else go first, or offering someone help. It can be talking quietly, waiting patiently for a turn, and lining up carefully. Students who are “using good manners” are usually acting in a polite and responsible way. They are moving, eating, behaving, and interacting with each other in a safe and courteous manner. This is one way to demonstrate responsibility.

Courtesy can be practiced at home also. Waiting to talk at the table without interrupting, asking for help and things politely, letting siblings or friends go first, remembering to say thank you, and eating with good manners all help a child become a responsible youngster and to grow up to have positive social skills.

In January, we will focus on being ready to learn by cooperating with others. Our motto is:

I show that I am ready to learn by cooperating with adults and students.

Week 1 – I show that I am ready to learn by cooperating with adults and students.

Week 2 – I do my best on my jobs and my schoolwork.

Week 3 - I solve problems and make plans with other students.

Week 4 –I share and use school materials and equipment correctly.

The ability to work and play with others in large or small groups is significant in the healthy social development of school-age children. Children are faced with many group situations in which they need to work together to accomplish a goal, whether it be a sport, a game, a school project, or putting on a play. Families count on their school-age children to join in and share the responsibilities of the family chores as well. Teachers count on their students to do their best work in school.

Working together involves listening to and respecting the feelings and ideas of others, sharing space and materials, and taking responsibility for a part of the task to be done. Children can learn to cooperate by planning together, solving problems, agreeing to group rules, being fair, and then by acting responsibly.

Let's help our children learn the skills needed to cooperate with others. We have so many opportunities to reinforce cooperation at school and at home. When we work together, things go better!

Let's all continue to work together in helping our Bel Pre Pandas be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn!

Message from Mrs. Miller - Staff Development/ Math Content Coach

Fingers are Fine!

As our students are working on understanding counting and understanding numbers, they have an excellent resource that they can use to help themselves...their fingers! PreK, Kindergarten, and First Grade students are encouraged to use their fingers to help themselves solve problems, to check themselves, and to keep track of their counting. At home, you can play some quick games to help them understand numbers better by asking them to show you different numbers with their fingers without having to count them! For example: Tell your child to show you 7 fingers and then watch and see if they have to count or they can just automatically put up 5 on one hand and 2 on the other, or another combination. Try 8 and 9 too. Repeated practice of this game will give your child a better understanding of what numbers look like and how to make them. 2nd graders can use their fingers to help them count on from a number or count back. Remember, using fingers is just fine!

Parent Involvement Committee

Our Bel Pre Parent Involvement Committee is always looking for parents to contribute their feedback and ideas. The committee meets once per quarter to plan events for parents and families and to discuss how to get more parents involved in our school. Our next meeting will be

held on Friday, December 20 at 8:40am and 2:00pm. You are welcome to come to either one. The same information will be shared at both.

Message from Ms. Dupree, Reading Specialist

Reading Tips

Your child will read and discuss more non-fiction books. You can help your child at home by steering him or her toward non-fiction books and magazines about topics he or she likes (e.g. sports, trains, solar system etc.) Ask your child to tell you what they have learned. Have fun reinforcing reading by trying some of the below activities:

Play sound games

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? m - o - p." Hold each sound longer than normal.

Talk about letters and sounds

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm."

Play word games

Have your child sound out the word as you change it from mat to fat to sat; from sat to sag to sap; and from sap to sip.

Writing Tips

Look for your child to do more writing in response to things he or she has read. Your child can write an explanation of a book plot or his or her opinion about a current event. Encourage your child to keep a notebook for writing his or her thoughts about the books they have read. If your child is not writing yet they can draw a picture.

PTA Update

I hope this school year is off to a great start! I want to first of all, thank all of you for your support so far this year. We have had a great turnout at the Fall Festival and other school events. The PTA bridges the gap between parents, teachers, the community and school administration. Our special focus this year will be community building activities where parents and families can meet and interact. I wanted to share with you some quick announcements. And as always, we appreciate any support you can give, whether it be through your time or participation in our events. If you have not joined the PTA yet, please do!

- 1) Spirit Nights:

Keep a lookout for announcements in your children's' folders, emails and social media for Spirit Nights.

2) Upcoming General PTA Meeting:

We will be having our General PTA meeting at Strathmore Elementary on December 11th at 6:00 pm. Please come out and participate. We will be discussing the status of the PTA, upcoming events and taking comments on how we can improve our services

3) Have you registered your Giant Card yet? This is the **easiest** way to raise funds for Bel Pre and Strathmore! If you have not done so and are readying this, right now, go get your phone. Then download the Giant App, register your card. Then go into the "rewards" tab. Once there, scroll down to "A+ Rewards" there you can chose the schools. Select the schools from the list and every time you shop at Giants, the schools will receive a donation! Last year, the schools received about \$2000 from Giant. Let's try to beat that!!

4) The Mid-County Community Recreation Center continues to have wonderful events for families. They will be coordinating with our PTA to host some family game and movie nights in December and January. Look for announcements in your child's folder, email and social media (follow us on Facebook and Twitter!).

5) If you would like to hear more about the PTA please contact us at belprestrathmorepta@gmail.com