



Bobcat Pride

Ensuring Reading Success Through "Well Checks"

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As our children grow, most of us see growth and weight charts at the doctor's office. This information is put on a chart that shows where a child stands compared to other children and how fast they are growing. These charts help doctors to understand if children are growing properly or if something may be of concern, enabling them to intervene, or do something to help as soon as possible.

Doctors use children's height and weight as "Well Checks", or vital signs of development. We all know how important it is for our children to "grow" in reading as well. In fact, successfully learning to read beginning at an early age is

probably one of the most important factors in a child's learning, both inside and outside of school.

Because reading and reading growth are so important, on a regular basis, all elementary schools within DeKalb CUSD 428 will give all parents with students from grades K-5 "Well Check" information indicating how well their child is developing reading skills. We now know what goals of the reading "Well Checks" should be, and will give this information to you three times per year. These reading "Well Checks" will be done in September, January, and May of each school year. By sending home these results we will be able to inform you of how much reading growth your child has

made throughout the year, and what may be needed in order for your child to become a truly successful reader. As a school staff, we are excited about our ability to know where all of our students are at on their path to being successful readers and learners. We hope that you are excited as well.

At an upcoming PTA meeting I will share more about our "Well Checks", address box and whisker graphs that will be distributed at parent-conferences and how they play an important role in the Response to Intervention Process (RtI).

Sincerely,
Ms. Spears



National Hispanic Heritage Month September 15th-October 15th

During National Hispanic Heritage Month we celebrate the traditions of many different Hispanic Americans. These include foods, music, clothing styles, and building designs.

The ancestors of Hispanic

Americans came here from Spanish-speaking countries. Today, most Hispanic Americans come from Mexico. The second largest group is from Puerto Rico, an island in the Caribbean Sea. Others come from other Caribbean Islands, Central America, and

South America. More than 42 million Hispanic Americans now live in the United States. Most live in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Arizona, New Mexico, Illinois and New Jersey.

See pg 2: Cultural Celebrations

Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School

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Friendly Reminders

- ☺ Sept. 12th First Day for EC
- ☺ Sept. 15th: Open House 6:30-8:00
- ☺ Sept. 15th: Holiday Gift Fundraiser Kickoff
- ☺ Sept. 17th: Midterm (1st Qtr)
- ☺ Sept. 30th: Fall Fest 5:00 p.m.

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Latino Heritage Month

Many Hispanic Americans are famous in the United States. And, the following Hispanic Americans represents some of the best examples of making worthy contributions to our Country.

FAMOUS HISPANIC AMERICANS

Supreme Court Justice Sony Sotomayor— On August 8, 2009 she was sworn in as the 111th justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Her appointment marks the first time a Hispanic American has served on the Court, as well as being only the third woman to occupy a seat.

Luis Walter Alvarez— He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1968. He helped design a ground- controlled radar

system for aircraft landings and with his son developed the meteorite theory of dinosaur extinction

Ezequiel Cabeza de Baca— He was New Mexico's second governor, and was the first elected Hispanic governor in the United States. DeBaca County, New Mexico is named after him.

Dennis Chavez—As a US Senator, he battled for the rights of Hispanic residents and Native Americans in his home state, New Mexico. He was a senator

for 27 years, from 1935-1962. Chavez tried to stop discrimination against workers based on their race, religion, or ethnic background. He played a major role in the establishment of an agency to protect workers, known as the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

If you want to learn more visit Brooks and/or your local public library.

Article courtesy of Positive Promotions



In the Know

Announcements

To stay informed, please review our school webpage, our PTA link and school calendar online on a regular basis.

Elementary School Handbook for Parents and Students 2011-12

Once received it is of great importance to review this year's handbook. It provides a plethora of information regarding district policies and procedures.

Please take care to sign and return the, "Required Signature Page"

Attendance Policy

If your child(ren) are going to be absent from school for any reason please call (815)754-9936 as soon as possible. There is an after hours voicemail for your convenience.

Please note that students are considered tardy after the 9:00 bell. Two

tardies equal one unexcused absence. Not only do tardies affect the child's attendance record, but it causes disruption to the classroom.

This article continues on page 3

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Courtesy of Ms. Kim Miller

Art News

Hello,

My name is Janna Hunt and I am the art teacher for Littlejohn, Brooks, Lincoln, and Jefferson this year. I teach first through fifth grade and look forward to visiting your child's classroom several times each month.

Students will have a chance to explore the various areas of art such as drawing, painting, design, printmaking, col-

lage, craft, and 3-D media. They will also discover some of the ways that art functions in society such as storytelling, designing, recording history, expressing culture, mastering craft, exploring style, creating careers, and celebrating beauty in the world around us.



All student work is kept at school for shows and exhibits until the last day of art, at which time we will prepare a portfolio of our work and take it home. Please look for the art displays in your school next time you visit!

Janna Hunt

Elementary Art

PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

What is PBIS? It is a systems approach to preventing and responding to school and classroom discipline issues. PBIS develops school-wide systems that support staff to teach and promote positive behavior in all students. By reducing behavioral problems, PBIS creates and maintains safe learning environments where teachers can teach and students can learn.

At Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School we are merging the tenants and principles of Great Expectations with PBIS. To begin with, our school-wide motto is, "Follow the CAT". "C" stands for Citizenship, "A" is for Act Respectfully, and "T" is for Think Responsibly.

This motto was created by Ms. Baccheschi, Third Grade Teacher and PBIS Coach. The inspiration is from our Great Expectations Character Pledge.

Within the first week of school, grades K-5 engaged in a school-wide training regarding PBIS Expectations. Throughout the week students traveled from station to station learning what is appropriate in various places like the cafeteria, playground, bus, etc. Students also learned that our purpose is to catch

them "Following the CAT". Through the collection of "cat cash" and bobcat paws students are recognized individually and collectively through various recognitions. If earned, recognitions takes place 1-2 times a month and school wide celebrations takes place monthly.



Follow the CAT
Image discovered by Dr. Lisa Becker, School Psychologist

The PBIS Committee will share more information at a Brooks PTA meeting later in the fall.

Please free to contact your child's teacher for more information.

In the Know

Regular attendance is crucial to the educational welfare of all students. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Pick Up Procedures

If for any reason you decide to pick your child up at school instead of having them take the bus home, it is of great importance that you send a note to the teacher on that day. Unless a note is received or you have called the school 30 minutes before dismissal due to an

emergency your child will be placed on the bus. For safety reasons we will not remove a child off the bus once they have boarded. Thank you in advance.

School Bus

Safe transportation of students to and from school is of utmost importance. To insure the safety and protection of our children, it is imperative that students follow the general bus rules as well as the direction of the driver. It is imperative that all bus rules are under-

stood, enforced and obeyed by students, parents and staff.

Dress Code Policy

Even though Autumn is upon us, from time to time the weather may remain warm. During warm weather I would like to ask for your help in ensuring your child is minding the dress code policy. The handbook states that short/skirts needs to be reasonable in length, all tops must have straps

See pg 5; In the Know

Build Good Character

Good character is taught, not naturally acquired. You are your child's first teacher and your words and actions have tremendous impact. Use every opportunity to teach good character. It will give your child the tools needed to make wise decisions throughout his/her life.

- Help your child learn to use words, not violence.
- Insist on good manners and respectfulness (e.g., saying "please" and "thank you," not interrupting when others are speaking, obeying directions). Teach the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you want to be treated.
- Discuss the importance of honesty and trustworthiness.
- Encourage independence. Allow your child to make choices and learn to accept their consequences.
- Point out positive examples in real life or in TV shows or movies. If you see a negative example, ask your child what the person should have done.

Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School

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"Promoting Academic Excellence and Sound
Character"



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Brooks School would like to wish all the students born in August and September, Happy Birthday and may all your wishes come true. We would also like to wish the following staff members Happy Birthday.

Mrs. Joan Bredendick, Media Assistant: Aug. 16th

Mrs. Joan Bereman, Title 1 Teacher: Sept. 2nd

Ms. Abby Mignone, Individual Assistant: Sept. 7th



Welcome to Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School

On behalf of Brooks PTA, we would like to welcome you to the 2011-2012 school year. Every year the Brooks PTA provides thousands of dollars to enhance and support your child's education. Last school year the PTA was able to provide \$22,491 toward the following items for Brooks Elementary School.

3 Smartboards and Projectors, 4 Document Cameras, Field Trips, Books for Students, School Assemblies, Books for the Library, Fine Arts Week, Classroom Requests, Library/Computer Improvements, Teacher Appreciation, Track and Field Day, Family Fun Nights, Classroom Subscriptions, Year End Parties and Establishing New Events and Activities.

Of course, without parent and teacher support, none of this would be possible. Therefore, we encourage you to become a part of the Brooks PTA. By becoming a PTA member, you are supporting Brooks Elementary School. PTA membership does not require attendance at PTA meetings. The PTA encourages you to volunteer at Brooks Elementary School as much or as little as you want through ideas, time or donations.

The following is the list of PTA officers and board representatives for the 2011 - 2012 school year.

Tracey Harris - Co President
Victoria Newport - Co President
Laurie Jencks - Vice President
Michelle Brantley - Secretary
Heather Borgardt - Board Representative

Missy Giles - Board Representative
Cara Bartel - Board Representative
Jenny Franzene - Board Representative
Shelli Nelson - Board Representative
Lisa Williams - Yearbook Board
Representative

See page 5: PTA News

PTA NEWS CONTINUED

Please email any suggestions, thoughts or questions to the PTA email address at gbrooksPTA@yahoo.com. We look forward to working with all of you to make the 2011-2012 school year a great success.

Attached you will find important information for the 2011-2012 school year. Please complete the forms and return them as a packet to your child's teacher before Wednesday, September 21st.

**Our first PTA meeting will be on Tuesday, October 18th @ 6:30 pm in the Brooks Library.
Hope to see you then!**

In the Know Continued

Dress Code Policy

that are at least one inch wide, and tops must cover the midriff. Students who do not adhere to the policy as written on page 16 will be sent to the principal's office. They will be offered the opportunity to change into appropriate attire. If the student is not able to do so, parents will be notified to bring appropriate clothing. Students who receive subsequent referrals for dress code violation may receive a disciplinary consequence. It is our expectation that students dress appropriately for school. With your help, we can accomplish this goal.

YMCA & Brooks Afterschool Program

Kishwaukee Family YMCA is partnering with Brooks Elementary to offer afterschool care for youth in grades K-5. The program runs at Brooks from 3:45-5:30, on all full school days. They began on Wednesday, September 7th. The cost of the program is \$11 per day; scholarships and fee assistance is available.

Youth who attend afterschool programs are known to perform better academically and develop skills such as self-regulation, communication, problem solving, team building, negotiation and critical thinking. It's also a healthy way for children to stay active and productive when the school day ends.

Forms are available in your school or at the link below. Please note that all payments should be submitted to the Y.

http://www.kishymca.org/after_school.html

Ensuring School Success

- Children with high self-esteem excel in school. Build your child's confidence and self-worth by giving constant praise-efforts as well as successes. Show your love with frequent hugs, kisses, and kind words.
- Expect the most from your child. Don't let your child settle for "good enough" if you know he/she can do better. Help your child set goals and chart progress along the way.
- Read to your child often.
- Ask your child about school each day, then listen attentively.
- Take an active part in school life by joining your school's PTA, volunteering in the classroom, and attending school functions.
- Make home a place for learning. Help your child practice reading, writing, math and other school skills.
- Encourage creativity and constructive play. Do arts and crafts, puzzles, and educational activities together.
- Limit your child's media viewing time to two hours or less a day. This includes time spent watching TV, playing video games, and surfing the Internet.
- Insist on good attendance and punctuality.
- Be a good role model. Show how much you value education and enjoy learning.