

The Bear Essentials - News You Can Use!

Welcome to our two new Assistant Principals—Sophia Barton and Jim Carter. We are so excited and pleased you have joined us at the Lake! Ms. Barton will succeed Mr. Langley and be our 3rd-5th Assistant Principal. She comes to us from Lilburn Elementary and is part of the GCPS' Aspiring Leaders Program. Ms. Barton has 11 years of teaching experience and earned a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from South Carolina State University, a Masters in Early Childhood Education from Piedmont College and her EdS in Educational Leadership from Cambridge College in Boston, Massachusetts.

Mr. Carter will fill our new Title I Data Administrator Principal position. Mr. Carter joins us from Harbins Elementary where he most recently taught 5th grade. Fluent in Spanish, Mr. Carter has been teaching for 14 years and has earned his Bachelors in Elementary Education and also in Music from Brigham Young University and his MEd in Education Leadership from Mercer University. WELCOME to both of these new Berkeley Lake Bears!

If you missed Science night Tuesday evening, you missed a lot! Thanks to the 400+ folks who attended and were mesmerized by our meteorologists, astronomers, geologists, volcanist, chemists, researchers, robotics experts, and so much more. Chairs Jenny Jenson and Kyle Hardin certainly outdid themselves. I was particularly excited about all of our school Science Fair entries and the high quality of these projects. Our children did some AMAZING work! Hats off to each of you and to Ms. Bentley who sponsored the Science Fair.

Kudos to our 3rd graders and Tracy Baird on the Helping Hands campaign this week. Not only did we raise dollars to support Berkeley Lake's Care Team, but 3rd grades donations helped replenish our school's pantry that had been depleted over the holidays. Thanks to each of you who donated to help others in our school who need this boost.

If you are not one of the 200+ folks who have already filled out their parent input form regarding their child's class placement for next year, please do so. Your insights are invaluable to us as you know your child best. Two of our grade levels started our class list meetings this week. It's a loooong process-but we think worth the time because we try to match students to teachers and peer groups that will optimize their learning experience next year. Thanks again for your input on this.

Duluth Cluster Schools Foundation is again providing our faculty with a chance to apply for grant money. You can count on the fact we are working on applications for consideration. Thanks to all who support this organization that supports our cluster schools.

On Thursday evening, it was my privilege to speak to the members of Berkeley Lake Pack 650 and help them earn some Beltloops. Scouting offers wonderful experiences for children to grow in so many ways. I'm honored to support the many scouts at Berkeley Lake.

This week we received our midyear progress report on our students' work with Successmaker software.

If you don't recall, this is the individualized software program in reading and math provided by GCPS for every student. Our results looked good. Please encourage your child to do their best on SME.

OK, I blew it! I wrote in last week's Bear Essentials that Terrific Thursday notices were going home last Friday. They didn't. They are going home today along with invitations to our Berkeley Lake After School Tutoring. Both programs start the week of 2/6.

Along with these, the long-awaited CogAT and ITBS results for our 3rd and 5th graders are in Friday folders as well. The test publishers told us that the delay in receiving these (we usually get them in December) was because both assessments were renormed. I am VERY excited about our school results! Remember that the ITBS compares our students' achievement to 3rd and 5th graders across the nation and that the 50th percentile is the average score. I am please to share that our English/Language Arts Total average for our 5th graders is at the 60th percentile and our 3rd graders at the 63rd percentile. WOW! Even better, our 5th graders achieve in the top third of the country—their average Math Total was at the 66th percentile compared to the rest of the nation and our 3rd graders' achievement average was even higher—at the 73rd percentile!!! Z-O-W-I-E! These are our school averages. Again, you will see your child's results on the reports sent home today. I am holding a Muffins with McLeod next Tuesday morning, 1/31, at 7:30AM for all who would like to learn more about interpreting their child's results or just to answer questions about these evaluations in general. I hope you can join me in the front office conference room. If not, feel free to call me with your questions about these assessments at 770-446-0947.

A tip of the hat to the Gonsalves family who own the UPS store on Peachtree Industrial (where the Publix is) and held a fundraiser for Berkeley Lake over the holidays, giving us a percentage back of their earnings from Berkeley Lake parents who shipped with them. The class who had the most participation in the fundraiser was Ms. Burrough's 3rd graders. They earn a pizza party and our school earns a check. Thanks to all who participated to support our school.

You will see some new and familiar faces around Berkeley Lake next week who will be joining our faculty. First, Ms. Amy Parsons will rejoin our PE staff in the same position she was in last year as Ms. Diazgranados moves into her Title I-funded position. Other "new" Title I-funded teachers include Ms. Asa Valente, Ms. Rita McCormack, Mr. Emmett Dupree and Ms. Heather Parnell. Our own Ms. Carolann Brown will join us full-time, supplementing her current day by helping us at Title-funded support. Each of these teachers will be working with students that have been identified as at-risk in reading and/or math. This obviously helps those students, but actually helps all students by lowering teacher/pupil ratios. We welcome these Bears!

As I peek ahead to next week's (cont'd)



Berkeley Lake Elementary School
Volume 4, Issue 21

January 27, 2012

Important calendar dates :

- 1/27 Pick up Scrip Orders
- 1/30 Adult English Class
- 1/30 Strings Club
- 1/31 Muffins with McLeod, 7:30AM, "Test Scores Explained"
- 1/31 Chess Club
- 2/1 Adult English Class
- 2/3 School Tours 10AM
- 2/3 Scrip Orders due
- 2/4 5th gr Saturday Writing Workshop, 8:30-10:30
- 2/6 Adult English Class
- 2/6 Strings Club
- 2/6-2/10 4th Grade Helping Hands
- 2/7 Chess Club
- 2/7 BLAST
- 2/8 Adult English Class
- 2/8 BLAST
- 2/9 School Council Meeting—noon
- 2/9 Terrific Thursdays begin
- 2/10 Pick up Scrip Orders
- 2/11 5th Gr Saturday Writing Workshop
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**Check out your child's
Friday Folder for the
Perfect Attendance/
Gold and Silver
Honor Roll Students!!
We are so proud of
you!!**

(cont'd)

I see 5th Grade's Saturday Writing Workshop starts 2/4. This is an example of another way our faculty is going above and beyond for our students. We are so blessed to have teachers who truly care about our children.

That's it for this week. Have a terrific weekend!

Dr. McLeod