



# Ben Franklin Herald

NOVEMBER 2009

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School

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## From the Principal

The first quarter of the '09-'10 school year is officially in the books and I cannot recall a more productive one to date. We completed our first benchmark assessments in both reading and math using the new NWEA test. This product will provide us with more real time data that will be useful as we plan instruction as well as monitor your child's learning.

November celebrates COURAGE as our Heartwood Character attribute of the month. This comes in perfectly with our honoring of our veterans on November 10<sup>th</sup>.

As part of a district wide effort to improve the safety of our schools, Ben Franklin will conduct what we call a "lockdown drill" on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm. The state police helps us plan and conduct this drill, so I ask that you not be alarmed if you happen to see their presence on this particular day.

On a much lighter note, this is the season that we give thanks for all that we have! I am thankful for the inspirational teachers, staff members and colleagues who are dedicated to serving children! I am thankful for the parents and volunteers who provided our students with snacks during our fall tests, chaperoned field trips such as Lutherlyn and in many ways help make all of our programs possible. I am thankful for an amazing PTA! Your support of this school is invaluable! We have much to be thankful for this season!

Best wishes,

Michael Minnick, Principal  
Ben Franklin Elementary

\*\*Please read and return the last page of this bulletin as it provides the school with information regarding early dismissal days due to inclement weather. \*\*

## CLASSROOM NEWS

### KINDERGARTEN

We had a great time on our field trip to Yellow Creek. Thank you chaperones, for all your help. The Halloween parties were terrific! We appreciate all the time and effort put into the parties to make them a special day for the children! We have learned about drug safety and fire safety. The fire department visited with a simulation trailer, we practiced an escape plan and found fire hazards. This month we will begin our unit on the five senses. We look forward to seeing you for Parent Teacher Conferences later this month. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

### FIRST GRADE

November is a busy month for first grade as we honor our Veterans on November 10<sup>th</sup>. We will be learning about the Pilgrims and the First Thanksgiving in social studies and our Solids and Liquids module in science. We will incorporate the heartwood attribute of courage in these November activities. In math, we will focus on number patterns, telling time, counting money, and solving simple addition and subtraction problems. In Reading, we will continue to build our sight word vocabulary, practice segmenting words, and read stories from Unit 2 in our Treasures anthology.

### SECOND GRADE

Second graders are working hard to learn basic addition and subtraction facts. Use of classroom games, flashcards, and computers make this a fun experience for them. The children also get practice with daily timed tests. If your child is on the elephant, bear, or beaver test, it is especially important to study the basic addition facts at home. The goal is to build **fact power**. By fact power, we mean quick recall without the use of aids. By the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, your child should have mastered all of the basic addition and subtraction facts. Knowledge of these facts is critical for future success with higher-level concepts in math.

Children at this level are learning some important concepts in reading. In order to help with this process, have your child read a W.E.B. book at home **each evening**. This daily homework is a very important part of your child's reading program. Nightly reading at the child's

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

November 10-	Veterans' Day/Grandparents Day
November 11-	No School Veterans' Day
November 13-	Picture Make Up Day
November 25-	Parent/Teacher Conferences No school for students
November 26-30-	No School
December 1-	School Open
December 3-4-	Santa's Workshop
December 9-	Holiday Band/Choral Concert at East Pike at 7 PM

independent reading level helps to develop a student's new skills even further. Our classroom libraries provide each child with a multitude of choices from which to choose for their nightly reading. If your child forgets to bring a book home, a book from your at home collection can be used that night.

Second grade is a key year in reading development. There is a major difference in the reading skills of the children that read nightly and the ones who do not. Enjoy the books your child selects and help them increase their skills in reading. Make W.E.B. and important segment of your nightly routine. You will notice a difference in their skills as the year progresses.

### **THIRD GRADE**

The students are currently exploring and learning about addition with regrouping, telling time, and counting money. Our Language Arts theme will continue to focus on investigations, with our next theme to focus on discoveries. We have just completed our desert unit and will begin learning about the Southwest Native Americans. The students have also been involved in various projects and activities preparing for Veterans' Day.

### **FOURTH GRADE**

November's math classes will continue to focus on multiplication and division facts. Each child has a set of fact triangles to practice with at home. We will be moving into multiplication problems with one and two digit multipliers. In science class we will be finishing our rocks and minerals unit. The students are involved in projects presentations labs. In social studies we will begin to study the state regions. In reading students will be finishing up our World Series baseball unit. Also, they will continue to read stories from Treasures and complete related activities.

### **FIFTH GRADE**

In November, our math classes will focus on reviewing basic division facts, and expanding our study to include division by one and two digit divisors. This math unit also gives us an opportunity to use the estimation skills that we learned in Chapter 3. We will also be expanding our knowledge base of math vocabulary, divisibility rules, and an understanding of prime and composite numbers. Reading classes will be reading selections on the theme of Discoveries. The main strategy for this month is summarizing. This reading unit also provides practice with skills in making inferences, main idea and detail, and recognizing problems and solutions.

In science, students have been learning and exploring movement and motion in our Fun in Motion Unit. The month of November begins with students creating marble mazes in small groups. We will still be exploring how objects move, various types of movement made possible by the interaction of our muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems, and comparing different factors that affect motion on earth and in space.

### **SIXTH GRADE**

In Social Studies, the family history projects that culminate our immigration unit will be introduced this month. Please look for this information to come home so projects can be started. Any upcoming family gatherings are great places to ask questions and discover family stories. Students will be developing their engineering skills as they study "*Models And Designs*" in science. In addition to reading novels in class, Mrs. Horvath's students are also required to do some independent reading outside of her class as part of the Book-It! Program. These chapter books should be pre-approved by Mrs. Horvath. The *Book-It!* program began last month and continues through March. Additionally, they will study *measurement* as well as *patterns and number theories* in math class with Mrs. Beard. We have completed the first quarter and we look forward to accomplishing our second quarter goals.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Fourth grade students in Technology Class are learning to keyboard using a speedskin, the polyurethane cover for the keys, which promotes touch-typing skills. Students are now working at their own pace, moving through a sequence of activities. Each lesson introduces two keys. Various games give students the opportunity to practice touch-typing in an exciting and fun format. Warpspeed teaches students to type quickly and accurately from copy. It provides a test situation at the end of each lesson, as it records both speed and accuracy. Look for a progress report in your child's first report card.

Fifth and sixth graders should be working to strengthen their touch-typing skills. Technology class this year does not allow for instruction, but each student should continue to develop this skill as they work at the computer or on any keyboard.

Please help your children develop effective keyboarding skills by reinforcing good habits whenever your child is at a computer. A speedskin is not necessary at home as long as students look at the monitor and not at their fingers as they keyboard.

### **COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

The Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) assessment is well underway. Students in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades have completed the assessment already. The MAP tests are used to determine your child's instructional level and to measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year to year.

Just a reminder....

On the IASD website ([www.iasd.cc](http://www.iasd.cc)) there is a link devoted to helping parents address specific issues with their child. On the left-hand side of the page there is a link called "Parent Resource Page." On this page there is information pertaining to ADHD, dealing with death, eating disorders, study skills, and many others. Please take a moment to look at this site; there is a great deal of information.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

Student Council has been busy planning a year of fun for the entire building. November will be an exciting month for students at Ben Franklin. The Love Basket collection will begin on Monday, November 16 with "Team-Up To Fight Hunger" kick-off. Students and faculty are encouraged to wear their favorite team apparel. We will be collecting nonperishable food items throughout the entire week. The grade level that brings in the most items wins Spirit Points for each of their homerooms- this is a big one!!!

On November 24 STUCO will be sponsoring the first Movie Night of the year. The night will begin at 4 pm (right after school) and parents will need to pick-up their child at 7 pm. More information will be sent home soon. If you are interested in helping, please contact Miss Tokar or Ms. Polosky.

Congratulations to Miss Palya, Mrs. Laverick, and Mr. Rado as their homerooms won the past two Spirit Day Points. The homeroom with the most points at the end of the year will win a Spirit Surprise.

## **ART**

Kindergartners have been cutting and gluing colorful projects to strengthen fingers, while first graders created a picture using secondary colors. Second grade architects are designing Russian buildings with "onion domes," while third graders are creating sculptures inside of a shoe box. Fourth graders will soon construct an Egyptian sarcophagus using clay, and fifth graders are getting ready to draw self-portraits using a grid. Sixth grade will begin a printmaking lesson using linoleum.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

K-2 students will be working on ball skills this month. Students will be working on skills such as bouncing and catching, bouncing and passing to a partner, and shooting balls into hoops. 3rd to 6th grade students will be working on various levels of basketball skills. Students will be working on dribbling, passing, shooting and basketball game skills.

## **GENERAL MUSIC**

We're nearing a busy time of year for choral music performances. Parents please mark your calendars for these upcoming events. The Ben Franklin Singers (a small group of 6th graders) will perform at both Veterans' Day assemblies, 9:30 AM and 1:30 PM on November 10 here in our gym. All 5th and 6th grade students are members of the Ben Franklin Chorus. Their annual holiday concert will be held in the East Pike multipurpose room on December 9 at 7:00 PM. The students and I are looking forward to sharing our musical achievements with you.

## **NURSE**

Physical examinations are required for students in kindergarten or first grade and also for students in sixth grade. If your child has had a private physical, please return the completed form to the nurse. If you prefer to have a school physical for your child, Dr. Twal will be

conducting school physicals at Ben Franklin on Friday, December 4. A school physical permission form will be sent home to all students who have not turned in a private physical form. Please return these forms as soon as possible.

In September hearing screenings were conducted for students in kindergarten through third grade. I am now in the process of conducting vision screening for students in all grades beginning with kindergarten. A referral form will be sent home for any student not passing the hearing or vision screening exams. Remember, the vision screening is a basic exam and not a replacement for a complete exam by an eye specialist. The American Optometric Association recommends an eye examination by 6 months of age, at three years of age, before first grade and every two years thereafter.

## **K-KIDS**



## **WE BUILD**

K-Kids will be collecting food items with STUCO this year for the Love Basket. Please bring in non-perishable food items November 16-20. We will collect the food and donate it to ICCAP. Spirit points will be awarded!

We are collecting "used" greeting cards. We cut off the front cover and give them to the inmates at Pine Grove State Correctional Institute. They use them as post cards to send to their families. This is an ongoing collection, we will be doing it throughout the year. Please send in any type of greeting cards that you will just throw away and we will "recycle" them. The collection basket is next to the office.

We are also collecting for Terra Cycle again this year! We will officially begin the collection in November 2009. The class that collects the most items each month will have a chance to win a cool Terra Cycle Bag! Watch for more information coming soon!



### **SECRET SANTA'S WORKSHOP**

Santa's Workshop will be held this year on Thursday, Dec. 3, and Friday, Dec. 4. Students can shop during their class's assigned time. There will be great items in a variety of price ranges, starting as low as 25 cents. Once again, each child will be provided \$3 for spending, courtesy of the PTA and 84 Fundraising Services. Envelopes for sending in additional money will be going home prior to the workshop. Any questions? Please call Andrea Ebeling at 724-463-8248 or Amanda Owens at 724-349-0272. Happy holidays!

### **PARENT VISITATION**

Melissa and Rita would like to give a special thanks to the parents that came to the parent visitation day. The kids enjoyed seeing mom and dad at school and the parents enjoyed coming too. We would also like to thank the PTA members for making the day successful. Thank you, Mark and Jamie Kunselman, Michelle Ferrington, Stacey Kovalchick, Donna Swatsworth, Christine Slupek, Dana Smathers, Trisha Kessler, Mr. Minnick and Kathy Bruner.

### **FUNDRAISER**

A big "Thank you" to everyone who participated in the PTA's annual fall fund raiser! Our items were delayed a bit and now are being delivered on Tuesday, Nov. 3. Pick up will be from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Money should be collected upon delivery of the items. All money needs to be turned in by Tuesday, Nov. 17. Checks should be made out to "Ben Franklin PTA." Please call Andrea Ebeling at 724-463-8248 or Amanda Owens at 724-349-0272 with any questions. Thanks again!

### **VETERANS DAY**

The Ben Franklin Elementary Veterans' Day celebration will be held Tuesday, November 10, 2009. This is our annual program for our Ben Franklin Elementary School grandparents and veterans. The program times are 9:30AM (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades) and 1:30PM (K-2 grades).

### **PTA REFLECTIONS PROGRAM**

Our Awards Program will be held on Thursday, November 5 at 6:30 p.m. We hope to see a good turn-out this year, so please remind and encourage your young artists, and please mark your calendar!

### **MARKET DAY**