Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School

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**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS JULY 2017**

**Message from the Main Office:**

I hope all have been enjoying the summer months so far. The weather has been wonderful and I encourage all to take advantage of the down time before the hustle and bustle of the school year, and activities get going. I have spent much time on the water fishing and kayaking, reading, and spending time with family. It is so important to stay active and taking in what southern New England has to offer. I cannot wait to hear all about the adventures that occurred during the summer!

In the following pages, I wanted to share some information regarding the upcoming school year and some of the changes and topics that may be on your mind. If there are any specific questions, please feel free to contact me anytime at rearley@canterburypublicschools.org.

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**Welcome Our New Faculty:**

There will be two new faculty members joining the BMS staff. Mrs. Kaitlyn Shafer will be the Grade 7/8 Science teacher and Ms. Mariah Rae will be the district school psychologist. Mrs. Shafer brings years of experience focused on middle school science as all are excited to work collectively to enhance the science offerings for all students and Ms. Rae comes to us from the University of Connecticut and looks to create a professional foundation here in Canterbury.

**New Grade Level Configuration:**

Based on the importance of allowing for ample time for all content areas and enrollment levels, there will be two looping teams of teachers at BMS. There will be a team of teachers for Grade 5 and 6; and a team of teachers for Grade 7 and 8. This will allow teachers to teach one content area for two consecutive years and allow classroom expectations to be known which will allow for smoother yearly transitions.

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|  | Grade 5/6 | Grade 7/8 |
| Reading | Mrs. Messier | Mrs. Waters |
| Language Arts | Mr. Blonshine | Mr. Durham |
| Math | Mrs. Farland | Ms. Quinn |
| Social Studies | Mr. Brady | Mr. Yaworski |
| Science | Ms. Merendina (Hedler) | Mrs. Shafer |

**Homeroom Information:**

Based on enrollment, students will be assigned a homeroom which will meet twice daily for morning announcements and dismissal. You will see the times specifically in the Daily Schedule section of this memo. There are only so many options for homeroom teachers so please understand this as you receive this information later in the summer. Our school enrollment will be one of the lowest in decades, which means less options and choices available.

**Information about Specials Classes:**

Students will have 2 specials classes daily and they will meet 2 times per week for the duration of the school year. Students in all grade levels will access Spanish, Family Consumer Science, Technology, Art, Physical Education, and Music. Band will also offer student lessons for those interested in playing an instrument.

**Student Daily Schedule:**

Students will have 7 50-minute classes per day; 5 core classes and 2 specials. The day formally begins at 8:20 with a 10-minute homeroom period and classes beginning at 8:30. All students have a 40-minute lunch/recess period. Classes end at 3:00 as students transition back to a 10-minute homeroom period and dismissal beginning with parent pick up at 3:10 and bus dismissal at 3:15. (There will be no study hall period at the end of the day, such as 8th or 10th period, which occurred in the past.)

**Student Belongings and Lockers:**

Students in Grade 5 and 6 will have coat racks or in-classroom lockers in which to keep their belongings during the day. Students in Grade 7 and 8 will have individual lockers outside of the classroom in which to keep their belongings during the day.

**Bus Transportation:**

Students taking the bus to and from school will have assigned seating determined by the school administration and it is imperative that these seating assignments be followed. Bus routes will be shared with parents during the end of August and will be posted on the school website accordingly.

**Use of the School Website:**

The website www.canterburypublicschools.org was overhauled during the past year and serves as a major communication tool between school and home/community. On the website, one can find all important forms available, current school and district calendars, and links to ways to communicate with teachers and staff members. Please take the time to bookmark this site and visit often for up to date information.

**Student Athletics:**

Athletic offerings for students this fall are girls and boys soccer. Information about try-outs and practices will be shared the first weeks of school and the season runs until the first week of November. Forms and information are available on the Athletics page of the school website.

**Student Assessments:**

The school district has piloted the NWEA MAP assessment for students in Grade 4-7 last spring and will continue to use this assessment in place of the STAR test in the future. This assessment allows for students and teachers to set annual growth goals and receive percentile scores based on national norms. The test in Reading and Math breaks down student scores to subcategories based on the standards and will allow for more specific planning to help all student achieve proficiency in those content areas. Student reports will be available during the beginning of the school year after the fall testing session to allow for growth from the spring to be calculated. Teachers will be receiving professional training with this assessment throughout the upcoming school year.

**Teacher to Parent Communication:**

During the school year, teachers will utilize the “Friday Folder” in all grade levels as a way to communicate consistently with parents. This is a labor-intensive process, so there will be an expectation for parents to sign and return weekly.

**School Supplies:**

Each child will receive a student planner. All students should have individual ear buds or headphones to use during the day. Specific classroom supplies are listed below:

For Grade 5 and 6 students: accordion style file binder, pencils, red pen, highlighters, 6 spiral notebooks (100pgs.) independent reading book, and separate gym clothes to change into.

For Grade 7 and 8 students: book covers, pens and pencils, folder per class, 1.5 or 2.0 inch three ring binder, graph paper, lined paper, scientific calculator, coloring materials, independent reading book, and separate gym clothes to change into.

**First Day of School:**

The first day of school is Monday, August 28, 2017.

**Open House:**

BMS Open house is Tuesday, August 29, 2017 from 5:00- 6:00pm.

**Parent Advisory Council:**

The PAC will continue to meet to discuss ways to support the learning environment at BMS and have open dialogue for current concerns. Meetings are located in the main office conference room at 5:00pm. The meeting dates are as follows: 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, and 12/12 for the first part of the school year.

**School Pictures:**

Charleen’s Portrait Studio will be providing student pictures again this year. BMS school picture day is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2017. Order forms will be shared and also posted on the website.

**Thank you for your continued support of education.**

**Mr. Ryan Earley**