Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School

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⬩ 45 Westminster Road, Canterbury, CT 06331 ⬩ Phone: 860**⬝**546**⬝**9421 ⬩ Fax: 860**⬝**546**⬝**6289 ⬩

To: Canterbury Board of Education

From: Mr. Ryan Earley

Subject: Opening of School Recap

Date: September 11, 2018

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The Baldwin Middle School opened on August 28th with 181 students and currently have 179 students walking the halls from 8:20am – 3:10pm. The climate and feel of the school year is very upbeat with a clear focus on high expectations, supportive connections, and setting goals. There are some new aspects of the school day that I will share with you below that are worth noting.

**PowerSchool/ PowerLunch Online Program:** Each parent has unique access to this system, which is accessible from the school district website. The areas available for parent access this upcoming school year are more advanced than in the past. Teachers will be updating their gradebooks every 3 weeks (approximately) so that parents are more frequently informed of progress. This information will be in addition to the term grades (progress report/ report card), attendance, and lunch account info already accessible. Regarding the lunch account access, parents can see real time the balance and expenditures. Log in information is available on the website. Student PIN numbers will remain the same for their duration in the Canterbury School District (CES & BMS).

**Building Upgrades:** During the summer, the school roofing construction project began and is expected to be completed during the first weeks of the school year. This project was a complex and coordinated effort between the town, the schools, and the entire community and Baldwin Middle School is committed to alleviating any of the stresses that the project will have on the learning environment as they arise during the project completion. The CAA recently donated an additional filtered water fountain (like the one near the Art room) to be installed outside of the gym and cafeteria.

**Assessment and Curricular Resource Upgrades:** During the spring, students in Grade 5 through 8 participated in the spring administration of the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessment and this test allows the school to determine growth over the course of the school year as related to testing norms and national percentile. This tool serves as the internal measurement in the areas of Reading and Math. The results will be distributed in the near future along with the Spring 2018 Smarter Balanced Assessment score (which serves as the State of Connecticut assessment measurement). Additionally, students will continue to use the following curricular resources for the second year in a row at Baldwin Middle School:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade/ Topic | Resource | Grade/ Topic | Resource |
| 5 Reading | Journeys | 7 Reading | Collections |
| 5 ELA | Wordly Wise | 7 ELA | Wordly Wise |
| 5 Math | Go Math! | 7 Math | Go Math! |
| 6 Reading | Collections | 8 Reading | Collections |
| 6 ELA | Wordly Wise | 8 ELA | Wordly Wise |
| 6 Math | Go Math! | 8 Math | Go Math! |
| The students have access to online tools for these resources and user names and passwords will be shared during the first weeks of school.  |

**Daily Schedule Update:** Students will have 7 45-minute classes per day; 5 core classes and 2 specials and an additional class entitled Bulldog Block. This will be a 30-minute block of time provided for students that will allow for students to receive specialized instruction, time for work completion (structured study hall) as well as an advisory time weekly to focus on goal setting and school wide programming. The day formally begins at 8:20 with a 10-minute homeroom period and classes beginning at 8:30. All students have a 30-minute lunch/recess period which will be separated with Grade 5 and 6 eating together and Grade 7 and 8 eating together. Classes end at 3:03 as students transition back to a 5-minute homeroom period and dismissal beginning with parent pick up at 3:10 and bus dismissal at 3:15. It is important to wait until 3:10 for students to be dismissed for parent pick up and not interfere with class instruction.

**Communication and the School Website:** The school will continue to utilize the school website where 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. The use of the Blackboard mass notification system will be used routinely (mainly the text platform) to keep parents in the know regarding important information.

**Breakfast and Lunch Menu:** The school will continue to post monthly menu offerings on the Food Services page of the school website.

**Grade Level Configuration:** Based on the importance of allowing for ample time for all content areas and enrollment levels, there are two looping teams of teachers at BMS. There is a team of teachers for Grade 5 and 6; and a team of teachers for Grade 7 and 8. This allows 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  | Mrs. Shafer |

\*Math Teacher Update: At this time, the school is in the process of second round interviews and model teaching to be able to fill the position by the end of September. The expectation is to have a recommendation by the next board meeting.

*Next month’s BOE report focus will be the Bulldog Block.*