

Welcome
to
Brunswick
Junior High School



BRUNSWICK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
BRUNSWICK, MAINE 04011
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MANDY LEWIS,
PRINCIPAL

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May 15, 2020

Dear Fifth Grade Families,

I am excited to share with you our transition plans for your current fifth grader! Over the next few weeks, BJHS teachers, counselors, and other important staff members are excited to participate in the following transition activities:

- ❖ **Current Sixth Graders Visit HBS:** During the week of May 25, 2020, sixth grade students and one of our sixth grade teachers will join all homeroom virtual meetings to talk through some highlights that fifth graders can look forward to when becoming a Husky at BJHS. There will also be time for a Q+A with the sixth graders and sixth grade teacher.
- ❖ **Current Sixth Graders Tips and Tricks:** As a follow up to the homeroom visits, sixth grade students and teachers will create a video to share with all fifth grade families with information. This video will be shared by June 5, 2020.
- ❖ **Introduction of Important BJHS Staff:** We are in the process of creating an introductory video to send out so that you and your fifth grader will be able to meet some of the important adults at BJHS. We hope to have this shared with you before your student participates in the homeroom visits with sixth graders.
- ❖ **Fifth Grade Family Information Night:** On June 2, 2020 at 6pm, Gabe Schuft and I will hold a Zoom meeting for any family who would like to participate. School counselors, sixth grade team leaders, and administration will share an overview of sixth grade and then provide time for questions. For those who are not able to participate, we will share a transcript of the event afterward.
- ❖ **Advice from Departing Eighth Graders:** The final transition event will be a video full of advice from the departing eighth graders. We will share this final piece on June 12, 2020.

Students' schedules should be finalized by June 12, 2020. At that point, the schedule will be viewable on Powerschool and will also be sent through the mail. As always, if you have any questions, please reach out!

Warm regards,
Mandy Lewis

Mandy Lewis
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BJHS Transition and Orientation Program

Welcome 5th Grade Students and Parents to Brunswick Junior High School! Below is a description of our transition program's components. Our goal is to welcome your family to our school and make sure every student is ready to learn from day one!

BJHS Information Night – The purpose of this meeting is to welcome parents to the junior high, educate parents about what BJHS has to offer, address parent concerns, and answer questions. BJHS representatives will include the principal, the assistant, the school counselors, and sixth grade teachers. This event will be hosted on Zoom and details will be shared in advance.

Transition Forms – Fifth grade teachers complete transition forms for students. The information provides sixth grade teachers with some background knowledge. In addition to academic performance (such as math and reading levels), it includes information about personal organization, leadership, and social skills. We use the forms to ensure balanced teams (a mix of abilities, fifth grade classrooms, gender, etc.). The forms also serve as a reminder for special accommodations a student may require.

Visits to HBS – Sixth grade students and a sixth grade teacher visit elementary classrooms through virtual meetings to help answer any questions fifth graders may have.

School Counselors – The sixth grade counselors communicate with the HBS staff to receive information about individual students. This information is vital to helping students make a smooth transition, as well as having them feel safe and cared for in their new environment.

Open House – Open House is scheduled for the week prior to the start of school. Our hope is that parents and students come to BJHS together, wander the halls, start to feel comfortable, meet new teachers, and check out their locker location. They may even practice opening their lockers!

First Day of School – Seventh and Eighth graders have a delayed start on the first day. This is done to give sixth graders space and time to get acclimated to the new building. The morning begins with an “all hands on deck” approach where all upper grade level teachers assist sixth grade teachers and students. The most important piece of the morning for incoming students is making sure they learn how to open their locker!

Team Building – We understand that it takes time to build relationships and create an environment of trust, caring, and respect. The team itself and the advisor groups within it create smaller communities for our students within the whole school. During the first week of school, teams spend time participating in a number of activities in the spirit of team building. The purpose is to foster a positive classroom environment that emphasizes the Code of Ethics (e.g., name games, “get to know you” activities, and group challenges).

Peer Partners Program- This program is designed to help facilitate the transition for sixth graders to BJHS. All sixth grade students will be assigned an eighth grade Peer Partner who has demonstrated positive leadership and communication skills. The goal is to help sixth graders feel safe, comfortable, and develop a sense of belonging. Eighth grade Peer Partners will meet with their sixth graders regularly throughout the year during morning advisor. The groups will discuss upcoming events at school, answer questions, and plan activities.

Health Forms – Forms will be available at the main office or by connecting with our school nurse.

What can parents do to help their child make a smooth transition?

- Be positive.
- Learn about adolescent development. The next three years are a unique and interesting time in your child’s life.
- Schedule a physical so all the forms are ready before school starts.
- Make sure your child has the necessary school supplies.
- Make sure your child can open a combination lock; practice at home.
- Have your child do some summer reading.
- Avoid the “summer slide” - practice math facts over the summer to keep the skills fresh!

For more information about BJHS please visit our school website: www.brunswick.k12.me.us/bjh

Brunswick Junior High School 6th Grade Information

► House System

A house system can be described as a vertical team. Sixth graders at Brunswick Junior High School will be placed on a balanced team of approximately 95 students. The students will stay together for their 7th and 8th grade years with a new set of core teachers at each of those grades. Opportunities to interact with the “other house” will happen during diversified studies, lunch, clubs, and sports. Getting to know our students and helping them feel connected is the hallmark of a house system.

► Team Structures

There are eight sixth grade teachers arranged into two teams. The students will encounter a variety of students within their team throughout the day. The eight sixth grade classrooms are located in the 300 wing.

► Advisors

Once placed on a team, students are assigned to an advisor. The advisor will be the primary contact person at BJHS for concerns and parent conferences. The advisor program has a small teacher-student ratio so that they really get to know each other. Ideally, the advisor is your child’s “go to” person, whose role is to advocate for and guide your child through BJHS. Students begin and end their day with their advisor.

► Counseling Department

Our counselors work with students, teachers, and parents to support the transition to the junior high school and to meet the unique needs of the early adolescent. Supporting personal and social growth to promote school success, the school counseling program emphasizes connections between learning and practical applications in life and work. Our staff currently consists of two school counselors (one for each house), a school social worker, and a Sweetser school-based clinician. Program services include individual and group counseling, classroom guidance lessons, parent and teacher consultation, and referrals to community agencies. The working relationship between home and school is an essential part of these efforts.

► Lunch

Purchasing lunch is similar to the elementary school procedure. We use the “envelope system” or the “online payment system” for putting money on their account. The online

payment system website is available at www.myschoolbucks.com. Balances from HBS will transfer to BJHS. Our lunch periods are about 20 minutes long.

► Assignment Notebook (ANB)

Students are given an ANB (daily planner) on the first day of school. We spend a considerable amount of time in the first few weeks explaining its use and making it a routine procedure. The ANB is the primary form of communication between school and home. The ANB contains the school handbook and some pages to assist students with class work. The ANB is graded on a Pass/Needs Improvement/Fail basis. Replacement notebooks can be purchased in the guidance office for a small fee.

► Cell Phones

Students are expected to keep cell phones in their lockers during the day. A cell phone policy will be given to students during the first week of school. Please review it with your child if applicable.

► Laptops

Sixth grade teams have several carts with laptops. The one-to-one laptop program begins in grade seven.

► Homework

- Average amount is 45-60 minutes per day.
- Expect math and reading/writing regularly.
- Weekly geography assignments in social studies.
- Long-term assignments are broken into smaller parts.
- Homework is assigned for skill reinforcement, lesson follow up, or to prep for the next day.
- Teachers discuss homework at team meetings and try to prevent overwhelming homework situations.
- Common philosophy: If one assignment takes 30+ minutes, stop! Something's wrong and we'll help the next day. Families should not be distraught over homework.

► Curriculum

Each class meets every day for approximately 50 minutes.

Language Arts This includes a multi-text approach in the elements of reading, literacy, composition, grammar, and oral communication with emphasis on skill development.

Math Students are homogeneously grouped into different levels. Emphasis is on whole numbers, fractions, decimals, geometry, and problem solving.

Science The sixth grade science program is general in nature. Students are exposed to a variety of content areas including life, physical, and earth sciences.

Social Studies This is a multimedia approach in independent study, group work, class presentations and other social studies activities. Curriculum emphasis is studying geography, history, economics, and culture.

→ Diversified Studies

Art (One semester) Art classes at BJHS use a multi-media approach to provide students with experience in a wide range of 2D and 3D projects. Various aspects of the creative process are explored through group and individual projects. Creativity and self-expression are emphasized while students learn and practice new concepts and skills.

Foreign Language (One semester) Students are introduced to the French and Spanish languages and cultures.

Music (All year) The general music curriculum includes instruction in World Drumming, Music Composition, and Music History from the Civil War to 1980.

Physical Education (All year) A variety of topics is covered, many of which are co-educational. The emphasis is on developing sequential skills, modified or lead-up activities, and the understanding of basic fitness concepts. A physical fitness test is administered in the fall and spring. Students are expected to change clothes for class.

► **Band, Chorus, French, Spanish**

These classes are all electives. We strongly encourage participation. Students participating in concert band need at least one year of instruction on their instrument. Students with no previous experience can elect Beginning Band. Chorus as no prerequisites. Students can choose to participate in French or Spanish in 7th and 8th grade (all 6th graders participate in foreign language for one semester).

► **Academic Support**

BJHS has a math and reading support program that provides instruction and interventions to students. Our Response to Intervention (RtI) program is offered to those who are recommended and qualify.

► **Late Bus**

One of the most important aspects of your child's education is the completion of schoolwork. We realize that many of our students could use extended time to receive assistance from their teachers. Should your child be identified as someone who would benefit from additional support, transportation home may be an issue. To help solve this problem, we offer a late bus on Tuesday and Thursday at 4pm. Our teachers will provide them with passes on the days they stay after school.

► **Common Assessment**

In September and again in May all students will be administered the STAR 360 assessment in both reading and math. Since this is done at every grade level, teachers, parents and students may view progress over time. During the spring, students will also participate in the MEA Math and Literacy assessments. This test is designed to measure progress toward the Common Core State Standards.

► **School Safety**

Brunswick Jr. High School has a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO). The school practices safety drills with students and has a crisis management plan in place. Specific questions related to this topic should be addressed to the SRO or principal.

► **Automated Attendance Phone Calls**

If a student is marked absent in advisor class or another class period a call will automatically be made to the primary phone number listed in the PowerSchool database unless you have notified the office of their absence. You will be informed which period(s) that the student has been reported absent. Students must bring written notes for ALL absences regardless of phone communication.

► **Communication**

Parents and teachers communicate often through email. Each team sends a bi-weekly newsletter that includes curriculum updates and upcoming events. The school publishes a monthly school newsletter called the *Husky Herald*. This is available online and archived on the school website- <http://www.brunswick.k12.me.us/bjh/>

► **Parent Involvement**

One of our goals is to involve the parents and caregivers of our students in the life of the school. Due to the nature of middle school students, parent involvement may take a different form from that of elementary school. A group of parent volunteers meets weekly to help with teacher prep (copy, cut, laminate, etc.). Teachers may request assistance for editing, workshops, field trips, and special events.

► **PowerSchool**

The PowerSchool Portal is a helpful way for parents to check on their child’s academic progress. Parents will be able to view their child’s attendance, current marks, grade history, and messages. This is a useful communication tool and can be accessed from any computer using the internet. This information is secure and confidential. BJHS will send you a letter in the fall with login directions.

► **Grading**

Report cards are issued every eight weeks. Progress reports, issued at mid-quarter are done through the Power School system. Progress can be checked online. Paper progress reports can be run by teachers at a parent’s request.

Grading Scale

A+ 98-100

A 93-97

A- 90-92

And so on.....

F 59 or below

I- Incomplete, W- Withdrawn, P- Pass

Effort and Behavior Scale

4- Exemplary 3 – Good 2 – Satisfactory

1 – Needs Improvement

Husky Time Grading Scale

E- Exceeds, M- Meets, DNM- Does not meet

► **Recognition Award and Honor Roll**

For a student to be on the Honor Roll they must have all As and Bs for that quarter and Husky Time needs to be Exceeds or Meets to qualify. For a student to receive a Year 1 Recognition Award they must have all As and Bs in their final grades for three of four quarters for the year; this must include quarter 4. To receive a Year 2 Recognition Award they must have all As and Bs in their final grades for three of four quarters for two years; this must include quarter 4 in year two. Finally to receive a Year 3 Recognition Award they must have all As and Bs in their final grades for three of four quarters for three years; this must include quarter 4 in year three.

► Husky Time

Four days per week students are provided with additional literacy time at the end of each day for approximately 30 minutes. Students are expected to have a personal reading book that is at their independent reading level. This allows students to increase fluency and interest in reading. Specific student schedules that include electives or specialized instruction may not have Husky Time during these four days. On Wednesday, students return to their advisor classroom and are given time to meet with teachers, complete homework, or read quietly.

► Activities

Below is a sample of previously offered activities. These activities occur before or after school.

Student Council

Math Team

Music: Auditioned instrumental and vocal groups

Drama Club

Civil Rights Team

Art Club

Homework Club (teacher recommendation)

Robotics Club

Creative Writing Club

Yearbook Committee

Chess Club

Book Club

Science Club

BJHS INTRAMURALS

FALL: Flag Football

SPRING: Floor Hockey

BJHS INTERSCHOLASTICS

FALL: Boys' and Girls Soccer 7th & 8th grade only

Girls' Field Hockey

Cross Country

WINTER: Boys' and Girls Basketball 7th & 8th grade only

Cheerleading 7th & 8th grade only

SPRING: Boys' Baseball 7th & 8th grade only

Girls' Softball 7th & 8th grade only

Track and Field

Boys' Lacrosse –7th and 8th graders only

Girls' Lacrosse –7th and 8th graders only