

# BCMS News You Can Use

November 2019





## Ballenger Creek Middle School

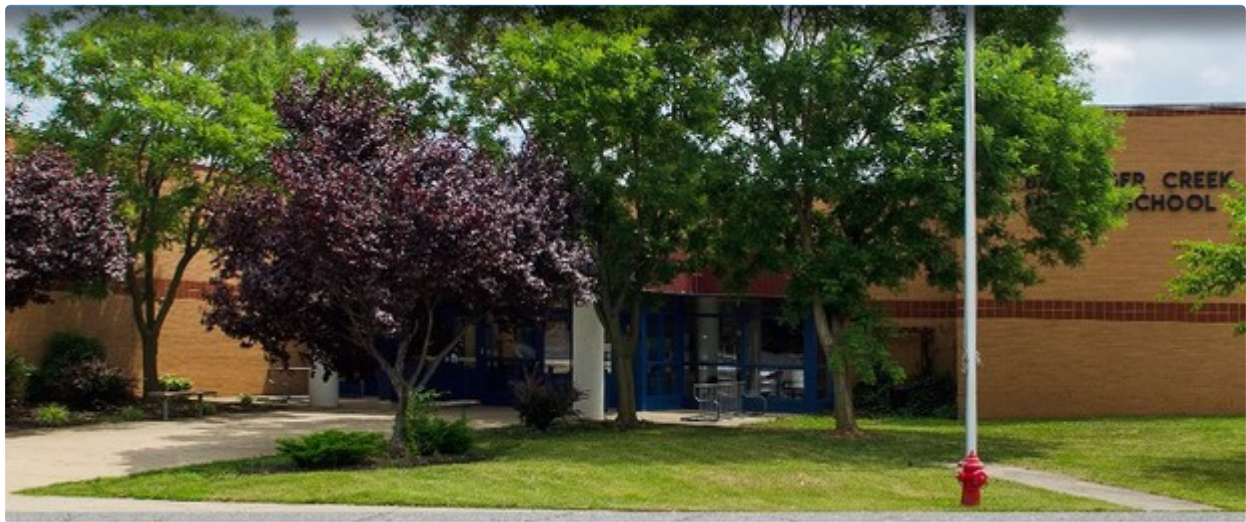
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 5525 Ballenger Creek Pike, Fre...

 240-236-5700

 [education.fcps.org/bcms/home](http://education.fcps.org/bcms/home)



## Message from the Administrative Team

Dear Parents and Guardians,

How have your students settled into their respective middle school years as we approach the end of term one? Our sixth graders now know their way around the building well, have established connections with staff, and have (hopefully) gotten into a productive academic routine. Our seventh graders have realized that more is expected of them than last year and (ideally) are taking increased ownership of their learning by advocating more for themselves. Our eighth graders are becoming more comfortable with the idea that they are the leaders of our student body--if not with their words, at least through their actions. They are also starting to understand that it won't be as long as they think before high school is here and it's time to really show us what they know.

How are you? Are you able to access your student's grades on Schoology? Do you have the communication you want with your student's teachers? Would you and/or your student benefit from a conversation with your grade-level counselor or administrator? Please feel free to reach out to us-- we're here to help and want your student to succeed as much as you do. Not sure who to contact? Call or email and we'll help connect you with the person who will be able to assist you the best.

Take care,  
Jay Schill, Principal

## Calendar Reminders

Mon. Nov.4 to  
Thu. Nov.7-----Book Fair 8 am -3 pm  
Wed. Nov. 6 -----Bookfair is also open 5:30pm - 8:30pm  
Wed. Nov.6 -----Veteran's Day Concert 6:30 pm  
Thu. Nov.7----- End of Term 1  
Fri. Nov.8-----Schools Closed for Students  
Mon. Nov.11-----Term 2 Begins  
Tues. Nov.12----- Diversity Night 6 to 7:30 pm  
Wed. Nov.20----- Picture Retakes  
Fri. Nov. 22-----Student Dance 3:00 to 5:00 pm  
Wed. Nov.27 to  
Fri. Nov.29----- Thanksgiving Break  
Fri. Dec.20-----Mid-Term  
Families needing a sign language interpreter should contact Mrs. Gee at 240-236-5710 at least 10 days prior to the event.



## Mr. Schill Guest Blogger for National Principal's Month

For National Principals Month, our own Principal, Mr. Schill, was guest blogger for Superintendent Dr. Alban's blog. Click the link below to read his reflections about his work.

<https://superintendent.fcps.org/node/125>

## Book Fair

**The Scholastic Book Fair is coming to Ballenger Creek Middle!**

**November 4, 5, 7 8:00am-3:00pm**

**November 6 8:00am-3:00pm and 5:30pm-8:30pm**

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bookfairs/cptoolkit/homepage.do?method=homepage&url=ballengercreekmiddleschool>

[Published Homepage](#)

[bookfairs.scholastic.com](https://bookfairs.scholastic.com)

The Chairperson's Guide to Book Fairs provides information on running, decorating, publicizing and building revenue. Featured books for preschool, elementary and middle school. Time Savers section for reproducible letters, signs, clip art, video clips, and forms.



## Welcome to the BCMS Counseling Office

8th grade counselor – Rebecca Reese

[rebecca.reese@fcps.org](mailto:rebecca.reese@fcps.org)

240-236-5712

7th grade counselor – Johnny Webber

[johnny.webber@fcps.org](mailto:johnny.webber@fcps.org)

240-236-5713

6th grade counselor – David Ledyard

[david.ledyard@fcps.org](mailto:david.ledyard@fcps.org)

240-236-5711

Registrar – Lotoya Gee

[lotoya.gee@fcps.org](mailto:lotoya.gee@fcps.org)

240-236-5710

Please reach out to your grade level counselor with any questions or concerns regarding your student.

### **Life After Middle School**

Are you a parent of an 8th grade student? Don't miss the "Life After Middle School" parent night on Tuesday, November 12, from 7-9 PM at the Jack B. Kussmaul Theater at Frederick Community College. Come learn about many opportunities that will be available to your child both in high school and beyond. Our goal is that all students leave high school college and career ready. Hear representatives speak about FCPS high school programs and graduation requirements, Career & Technology Center opportunities, community college and four-year college options, military opportunities, and college savings programs. Interested in investing an evening to gather information which will allow you to better support your child in the many decisions that lie ahead? Call 301-624-2716 to RSVP today.

## **Fidgets**

At BCMS we love seeing students' problem solve and come up with solutions for problems in and out of the classroom! One great solution that we have seen many students take advantage of is a **fidget**. An appropriate fidget, like a stress ball, can help a student increase their focus on a task at hand. However, we are seeing many inappropriate fidgets being brought into classrooms, and appropriate fidgets being used inappropriately. To help students, parents, and guardians navigate what is an appropriate fidget, we encourage you to check in with your students grade level counselor and to read over this short article (<https://www.understood.org/en/community-events/blogs/teacher-tips/2016/12/20/teacher-tip-the-dos-and-donts-of-fidgets-for-kids>).

### **Appropriate Fidgets**

Stress balls

Fidget spinner

Fidget cubes

A rubber band

### **Inappropriate Fidgets**

Kinetic sand

Rubik's cubes

Magnetic beads

Play dough

## **Late Bus? Use the link below**

Late Bus?



Did you know that FCPS has a transportation delay board. They can communicate with the public and schools when a bus is running 10 minutes or more late. The information may be accessed on the FCPS website at this link: <https://apps.fcps.org/transdelay/>



## Attendance

**Good attendance leads to success and boosts graduation. Our school goal is 96%.**

Please remember to alert the front office ([BallengerCreek.MS@fcps.org](mailto:BallengerCreek.MS@fcps.org)) if your child is sick and to send a letter when the child returns. **Our goal is to have all students in school and on time.**

**Attendance Totals for Sept. 30 to Oct. 31**

**Grade 6--- 96.75%**

**Grade 7--- 96.54%**

**Grade 8--- 96.47%**

## Grades- Schoology and HAC

### Schoology/HAC

Ballenger Creek Middle encourages parents to please check daily grades only on Schoology. The Home Access Center (HAC) updates overnight, so in the afternoon there may be different grades on each system. Please utilize HAC for midterm and term grades only.

Below you will find instructions on how to create, log into, and use your Schoology account. Please note that each child has a unique parent access code provided on your Parent Access Letter (PAL) letter.

Sign Up as a Parent- <http://bit.ly/signupparent>

REGISTRASE COMO PADRES- <http://bit.ly/registrasepadres>

**Don't forget to download the Schoology App on your mobile device.**

Please also note that the Schoology Parent Access Code is also located on the registration tab within the Home Access Center (HAC).

**Still having difficulty accessing HAC? Please contact our counseling office at 240-236-5710 for additional help.**

## Model United Nations Club

Mr. Schaller and Mrs. Montgomery would like to continue to welcome all students who are interested in global politics and real-world issues. In Model UN club, students will be practicing public speaking and debate, while looking at the cultures of many different countries. Any interested students can stop by Mr. Schaller's and Mrs. Montgomery's room (Room 111 and 112) for a permission slip, as the club meets after-school on Tuesdays.

## Community Liaison Corner

Hello Families!

Plan to join us for our **Diversity Night, November 12th from 6-7:30pm!** Enjoy a fun evening exploring the world without leaving Frederick! Travel with us as we visit countries such as Japan, El Salvador, Peru, Bolivia and many more. Sample local foods, view cultural items and even try your hand at using

chopsticks. Be sure to stop by for "A Taste of Mexico" sponsored by the Mariachi Restaurant! See the flyer in this newsletter for more details. Don't miss the opportunity to learn about the different cultures that make us special. See you there!

Did you know, one of the easiest ways you can help BCMS is to join the PTSA? For membership, please use the link provided, complete the form and submit the \$10 fee. That easily, you have helped!

<https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/Frederick/GetFile.aspx?DocId=11658contact> Please contact

Tracy McElroy at [tamcelroy@comcast.net](mailto:tamcelroy@comcast.net) with any questions or for more information on the PTSA.

Ms. Moss

Community Liaison

240-236-5773

[dottie.moss@fcps.org](mailto:dottie.moss@fcps.org)

## Volunteers & Visitors

### Welcome Volunteers!

To simplify volunteering in schools, FCPS has created a standardized Volunteer Regulation of important information for all county schools. Yearly, anyone wanting to volunteer must review this regulation and sign a confidentiality form. For your convenience, this regulation is on our BCMS website. Please view this regulation prior to volunteering & sign the confidentiality form when you arrive to volunteer the first time. Additionally, we will register all volunteers as such in our Raptor security system, enabling us to maintain accurate volunteer hours. To save you time when you arrive to volunteer the first time, we will be creating a means to pre-enroll you as a volunteer in this system. More information will be coming soon on this pre-enrollment process. As always, thank you for volunteering. Your help is always appreciated.

### Lunch

If you would like to have lunch with your student, please contact us 24 hours in advance so that we can accommodate your request. You may not share food with children who are not your own.

## Food Delivery

We have had an increase in students having food delivered from fast food restaurants and families bringing students food from these places during the school day. We will no longer permit this. The office is an incredibly busy place during the school day and can no longer coordinate delivery of these orders on a daily basis. In the event a student forgets a lunch at home, it must be brought to school in a student lunchbox or brown bag.

In addition, students may not carry around food to share with friends on special occasions, such as a box of donuts on one's birthday. FCPS Regulation No. 400-82 states that for health and safety reasons, parents/visitors are only permitted to bring in food that is intended for consumption by their individual student. Students are only permitted to bring in food for their own personal consumption.

## Diversity Night

Join us for Diversity Night

November 12, 2019

6:00pm to 7:30pm



Join us as we travel around the world to visit countries including El Salvador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Korea, Peru, Poland, Japan and several more. See cultural items from these countries and sample the local food! Enjoy a Venezuelan dance performed by THS students too! Stop by for "A Taste of Mexico" sponsored by Mariachi Restaurant and "A Taste of China" sponsored by China Sea Restaurant. Visit the Spanish Community of Maryland, the Asian American Center and our Model UN Club display!

*A fun evening exploring the world, without leaving Frederick!*

## Grade Level News and Updates

### 6th Grade News

We would greatly appreciate donations of tissues boxes, especially as we enter the cold and flu season. Tissue boxes can be dropped off to the front office and will be shared among the 6th grade classrooms.

### 7th Grade Updates

The 7th Grade team would like to remind students to make sure they are coming prepared to class with the materials they need, such as pencils and charged Chromebooks. Also, with the end of the first quarter in sight, the 7th Grade team would like to encourage students to constantly be monitoring their Schoology accounts to make sure they finish the quarter strong grade wise.

### 8th Grade Updates

#### Positive trends:

#### Mrs. Nuckolls (Spanish teacher)

"Do Positive" is a slogan that I use to try and encourage students to not only find the positive in any situation but also try to be the positive for someone else by "doing" something positive for someone else, specifically not a friend or even grade level classmate.

Some students have really grabbed hold of this mission. I have loved seeing the high fives, hearing compliments, and my favorite was when people walking through the hall were saying things like, "Wow, what is going on? Why is everyone so positive?"

As I told my students, one person "can make a difference but all of us can make a HUGE difference!"

So why don't you try it? Compliment someone, give high fives, say hi to someone, pick trash up off the floor in the hallway or classroom, or smile at people as you pass them. Or come up with even more.

Whatever you decide to do, go "Do Positive!" You never know how much that might affect someone.

#### Mrs. Grimm Shares:

Another positive trend is students helping each other in classes. This is wonderful to see because peers have strategies to help one another.

#### 8th grade spotlights Mr. Cochran and Ms. Dickson our two math teachers:

My name is **Ms. Dickson** and I am an 8th grade math teacher at BCMS. I graduated from The Ohio State University last spring, making this my very first year in my own classroom. I have wanted to be a teacher since I was 5 years old and have always had a love for numbers. I enjoy working with middle school students because they have a lot of creativity and still have a desire to learn. I enjoy watching all kinds of sports and being an amateur crafter. I enjoy interacting with your students every day and I hope this year is my first of many as a teacher.

My name is **John Cochran** and I am an 8th grade math teacher at Ballenger Creek Middle School. I Have lived in Frederick County for the duration of my life. More specifically, I am from Thurmont, MD and I went to Catocin High School. I then attended Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania where I majored in Mathematics Education. I have always looked at FCPS as being an exemplar school



district when it comes to education and community, and I always knew that was where I wanted to work. I am proud to be a teacher for FCPS.

#### **Hints for students:**

- Charge chrome books every night
- Check schoology for grades and missing work
- Come to classes prepared with supplies and materials
- Come to school on time
- Eat breakfast

#### **Hints for Parents**

- Connect to your child's teachers
- Check with your child their grades and missing assignments on schoology
- Limit time on devices prior to bedtime
- Help prepare the night before for their next day at school

## **News from Electives**

### **The World is a Stage**

**General Elective Information:** The electives team would like remind students to bring their Chromebook to elective classes. Please make sure your Chromebooks are charged as we are not allowing students to charge in our classes before lunch. Use of video games, streaming music and or videos, and listening to music in class is prohibited. The proper disciplinary steps will be taken if violated.

#### **Music**

Our first concert is coming to the BCMS stage very soon. In fact, mark you calendars for November 6th at 6:30 pm for our Veteran's Day concert. We would like show thanks to the veteran's and their families through music and a special presentation. If you would like to send in a picture for the presentation, please send name, years of service, last rank and branch with the picture to Mrs. Schmidt at [windy.schmidt@fcps.org](mailto:windy.schmidt@fcps.org).

The 8th grade students from Crestwood Middle and Ballenger Creek Middle School had a blast on Monday, October 21st. As guest to the Tuscarora Titans Marching Band, we are able to see the ins and out of Marching Bands in our county at the County Showcase. Thank You Titans! You have taught us a lot and we are proud of you. Good Luck this weekend at Championships.

## **Language Arts News**

#### **7th grade:**

Recently, in ELA, students have been working on both creative writing as well as argumentative writing that focuses on developing and using a strong claim, evidence, and reasoning. The 7th Grade ELA department would also like to make students and parents aware of an upcoming benchmark in early-mid November

#### **8th grade:**

Grade-level- argumentative writing (finding strong evidence, reading articles, writing personal argument)

Honors- argumentative writing (writing personal argument, going back and revising after being taught argumentative structure)

BOTH: preparing for Benchmark for 11/18.

#### **Reading/Writing Workshop**

Students have been hard at work in Reading/Writing Workshop. Students recently completed the fall Global Scholars and Reading Inventory assessments, and their teachers are proud to see such amazing growth. As always, we encourage our students to read outside of the classroom as often as possible.

## Math News

### Meet Some of BCMS's new Math Department Members:

My name is **Kelly Phelps** and I am proud to be a bulldog! I grew up in Rockville, Maryland, earned my Bachelor's degree from Frostburg State University and attended grad school at McDaniel University. While this is my (gulp) fifteenth year teaching, this is my first middle school teaching position. I am excited for this new chapter, and looking forward to the learning opportunities ahead! When I'm not in the classroom, you can probably find me relaxing at home or playing outdoors somewhere with my nearly six year old son, Harrison. Bulldogs L.E.A.D.

My name is **Nicholas Katz**. I graduated from Shepherd University with a Bachelor's degree and earned my Masters of Arts in teaching at Frostburg University. This is my 6th year teaching and my first 5 years were spent in Anne Arundel County at George Fox Middle School teaching 7th grade math. I grew up in Myersville and went through the Middletown school system. I have lived in Frederick my entire life and am happy to finally be teaching close to home having more time to spend with my wife and my 5 month old son who keeps us very busy.

### 7th Grade Math News!

**7th Common Core students** continue to work with proportional reasoning in Unit 2. Students will be finishing this unit in the next couple of weeks. Unit 3 continues to work with proportional reasoning with involving percent markups & markdown and percent of change.

**7th Accelerated students** are finishing up with Unit 2 this week and will start Unit 3 learning about the laws of exponents in order to more efficiently solve expressions involving exponents and solving application problems involving numbers written in scientific notation.

## Science Department News

Science students in all grades have taken their first benchmark assessments. Teachers are introducing or reintroducing a scientific writing process used at all grade levels, referred to as *C (claim) – E (evidence) – R (reasoning)*.

### Grade 6

Students are applying their understanding of thermal energy to design, build and test structures that will minimize the loss of thermal energy. This project is introduced as a real-world scenario focused on saving the penguins. For a full description of this standard, please visit the associated [NGSS page](#).

### Grade 7

Students are building background knowledge of endothermic and exothermic reactions in preparation for an engineering design project known as the incubator lab. This project will focus on the development of portable reptile incubators that will keep reptile eggs warm so that they can be safely transported to reptile conservation centers.

### Grade 8

Students are utilizing hands-on investigations, simulations, scientific readings, and archived data to construct explanations that describe how genetic variations of traits in a population increase some individuals' probability of surviving and reproducing in a specific environment. There is an excellent article in Nature magazine that goes into more depth on this standard and can be enjoyed by the



## Social Studies News

**6th Grade** Ancient World History classes are beginning their second unit of study, Ancient Egypt! This unit is self-paced and culminates in an Egypt Museum project. Staff, parents and guardians are invited to attend the museums on December 5 and 6th! Be on the lookout for information posted on schoology and sent through email about project details and museum times!

**7th Grade** Medieval World history has been examining the Medieval Middle East, with this week's focus being on the religion of Islam and the impact it had on the Arabian Peninsula. Students will be writing a multiple paragraph essay next week, looking at how that religion spread throughout the world.

**8th Grade** will be starting Unit 2: Confederation to Constitution. This unit will include our early form of government, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention, and the Ratification of the Constitution. Since this unit is all about our government, we will have the students complete a Current Event Project. The Current Event Project will help students find the "real life" connections to the Constitution. Detailed directions about the project will be coming later.

## Enrichment News & Resources

- It is time to start thinking about the FCPS Science and Engineering Fair. This year's fair will be held at Tuscarora High School on March 17 & 18. For general information, please visit the [Science Fair website](#) or talk to your science teacher.
- [Moving beyond, "How was your day?"](#)
- [Helping your gifted child succeed](#)
- Parent involvement is as important during the middle school years as it was in elementary school. The most important way to be involved is to emphasize the importance of education and take an active interest in what your child is doing in school. To succeed in school, your child needs your support.

### *Tips for Success:*

- Encourage your child to challenge him or herself by working up to his or her ability in all classes.
- Recognize study habits as an important part of academic achievement. Your child will need to learn to organize his/ her materials, and write down and complete homework assignments independently
- Encourage your child to take advantage of opportunities to explore interests. Well-rounded students are the happiest students.

Borrowed from the [2019-2020 FCPS Middle School Course Guide](#)

## Chromebook Reminder

### **Chromebook – All grade levels**

Please remind your student to charge their Chromebook at night! BYOD students should consistently bring their charger to school in case they need to charge. If your student is noticing any charging or other issues with their school-issued Chromebook, they should visit the media center (with teacher permission and a hall pass) to complete a tech services request.



# Keeping You Informed

Inclement Weather?

Here is how to Check School Status:

English: <https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/Frederick/GetFile.aspx?DocId=5581>

Spanish:

<https://fcps.ezcommunicator.net/edu/Frederick/GetFile.aspx?DocId=7817>

