

# Comet Connection

## Inside This Issue...

Volume 3, Issue 1

September 2011

Next Parent Workshop	2
Looking Ahead in September and October	2
Parent Center Hours	2
PTA Reflections Gwinnett Great Days of Service Art Room News	3
Grading Expectations in Specials	4
What's My Child Learning in September?	5
News from the Media Center Hats off to Literacy Book Check Out	6
Cafeteria Corner Counselor's Corner	7
C hess Club, Ms. Shannon Davis Coaches Corner: Math Coach, Lisa Brown Free Math Online	8

Greetings to the Britt Elementary School Community,

The 2011-2012 school year is off to an exceptional start at Britt Elementary School! Students continue to be engaged in challenging and effective learning. Our teachers are using Quality-Plus Teaching Strategies to engage students in learning. We have celebrated the academic successes of last school year, and we are now looking forward to the best school year ever at Britt Elementary School. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to making the most of each instructional moment so we can assure that every child achieves to their greatest learning potential.

Attendance at school is vital to a student's academic success. It is also important that students arrive at school on time. Students are dismissed from the bus lanes and car rider lanes beginning at 8:20 AM each school day to go to their classrooms. They are then able to eat breakfast and prepare for the school day. Teachers have meaningful activities prepared so students can practice their academic skills prior to 8:50 AM. This school year, Britt morning announcements begin at 8:45 AM so instruction can begin promptly at 8:50 AM. Since the student clubs at Britt Elementary support our instructional program, students who are attending clubs are not required to return to their classrooms until 9:00 AM. These changes have been made because we believe it is important to maximize instructional time, especially during the morning hours when our students are rested and ready to learn. I want to thank you for your support in this effort to increase learning at Britt.

We continue to focus on increasing literacy skills and math skills at Britt Elementary School. I encourage parents to make the time to read with their child each day and discuss books their child is reading. The Hats Off to Literacy incentive program will continue this year to encourage, to reward, and to challenge students' reading skill development. In addition, please assist your child in sharpening their math skills so they can become more proficient problem solvers. Learning links are available on the Britt Elementary web page at [www.wcbritt.org](http://www.wcbritt.org). These links will help you help your child in practicing math facts and becoming a great problem solver. I appreciate the enormous support from Britt parents, guardians, and the entire Britt Elementary School Community for making sure our students achieve to their greatest potential. I firmly believe Britt Elementary Comets will be well prepared for future learning opportunities.

I want to once again thank you for choosing Britt Elementary for your child and for supporting our continued efforts to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. This is sure to be the very best year ever of teaching and learning at Britt Elementary.

With kindest regards,

Doris Jones  
Principal

**Technology Tip:**  
Have you visited Britt's website at [www.wcbritt.org](http://www.wcbritt.org)? Click on the student tab and select "Learning Links" from the drop down menu. There you'll find websites to support

**Looking Ahead  
in September**

September 5  
Labor Day Holiday

September 8  
Zaxby's Family Night  
5:00-8:00 PM

September 10  
Nature Trail Clean-up  
9:00am-12:00pm

September 12  
PTA Exec. Board  
Meeting  
6:30pm

September 13  
Title I  
Special Ed./ESOL  
8:30am

September 15  
PAC Meeting at South  
Gwinnett High School  
8:30am

September 16  
PTA Movie Night  
7:00pm

September 22  
Title I How to Monitor  
Your Child's Progress  
6:30pm

October 2  
Gwinnett Great Days of  
Service

October 3 & 4  
Early Release Parent  
Conferences  
School is out at 12:50pm

**When Is the Next Parent Workshop?**

**Special Education or ESOL Program.**

**September 13, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. in the Britt Parent Center.**

Come learn more about our English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) Program and the Special Education Program (Interrelated Resource, Self Contained, or Speech).

**How to Monitor Your Child's Progress to Improve Achievement: Testing, Promotional Requirements, and the Parent Portal.**

**September 22, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Britt Café.**

Just what do those tests scores from the CRCT and ITBS mean? Learn how to interpret your child's test results, understand what your child must pass in order to be promoted to the next grade level, and how to navigate the Parent Portal.

**Have you visited the Parent Center yet?**

It is an incredible room with tons of cool stuff for you to take home!  
Parent Center hours are:

**Monday & Tuesday & Wednesday  
9:00-3:20 PM**

**Thursday  
11:00 AM-7:00 PM**

**Friday  
11:00 AM-3:20 PM**

**Phone number is 678-639-3884 or email  
luann\_hammami@gwinnett.k12.ga.us**

Stop by to visit Dr. Hammami and check out learning games to support your child.

Visit [www.wcbritt.org](http://www.wcbritt.org) and click on the Title I Tab for upcoming Parent Workshops.

You can also visit the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC). Staffed by Julie Hollis, this state funded center can provide you with a wealth of strategies and ideas to help your child meet or exceed state standards. The PIRC is located at 600 West Peachtree St. Suite 1200 in Atlanta, GA, 30308. You can contact Julie by calling (800) 838-5784 or via email at [jhollis@cisgeorgia.org](mailto:jhollis@cisgeorgia.org).

## News from the PTA



*FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT  
FRIDAY, SEPT. 16, 2011  
6:30 PM  
FAMILY, FOOD AND FUN!  
NEED MORE INFO?  
BRITTPTA.COM*

## Reflections

In its more than 40-year history, the Reflections program has encouraged millions of students across the nation and in American schools overseas to explore their artistic talents. The program offers students the opportunity to create works of art for fun and recognition. Students in preschool through grade 12 are encouraged to submit works of art in six art areas:

- Dance choreography
- Film production
- Literature
- Musical composition
- Photography

Watch your child's Friday Folder for more information.

## Gwinnett Great Days of Service

W.C. Britt Elementary School has been selected as a site for a Gwinnett Great Days of Service Project. On October 2, 2011, volunteers from our community will refurbish our outdoor classroom by replacing the tops of the benches to make them safer and more comfortable for students. If you are interested in taking part in this project, please register at <http://www.gwinnettgreatdaysofservice.org/> and click on register to volunteer today hotspot on the right hand side of the screen. Click on the Click here button under the heading "Click to see all special opportunities". Scroll to find W.C. Britt Elementary and choose our project. We need at least **5** volunteers to get this project funded.

## Art Room News

### Art can be MESSY!

Please do not allow your child to wear their best clothes to art. If you want to send in an old shirt for them to wear over their outfit, I will store it in the art room for their personal use.

**WANTED: Your JUNK!** We love to make art from recycled materials. If you have empty paper towel or toilet paper cardboard tubes, they make great rocket boosters, kaleidoscopes, and clay armatures. I also accept buttons, keys, puzzle pieces, and leftover wallpaper. Thank you for collecting and sending in these items!

Join Britt's PTA  
Today! Just \$5.00  
gives your family  
membership in the  
PTA!

Support our school...  
Share your ideas and  
Time...

Strengthen your  
child's experience...



Don't forget to save  
your box tops. Your  
child's teacher will  
soon be sending home  
how we will be  
collecting them this  
school year. Your  
sending in box tops  
pays for programs like  
Brain Pop!

**Britt PTA  
website:  
[www.brittpta.com](http://www.brittpta.com)**

## Grading Expectations for Specials

Art, Music, and PE/Health are called Specials Classes. These classes are graded on a scale of E, S, N, and U. Below describes how students earn their grade in these classes.

### Art

**E** – The student exceeds in mastering the expectations as outlined by GCPS AKS guidelines. To demonstrate exceeding expectations, the student must complete two additional assignments outside of class time each nine weeks such as writing a song about a topic in art, an artist research project, entering an art contest, or other instructor approved project as well as meeting all other art expectations as outlined by GCPS's AKS. See Britt's website for additional project specifics.

**S** – Meets expectations as outlined by GCPS AKS guidelines. Student makes an effort to understand and demonstrate the presented information and AKS. Conduct/Effort: Student participates in class activities and follows directions. The highest Conduct and Effort grade issued in art is an S.

**N** – Meets most expectations as outlined by GCPS AKS guidelines but needs some improvement in understanding and demonstrating the presented information. Conduct/Effort: Student was sent to time out or removed from class more than once during the nine week period. Student does not use time wisely or follow directions. Student does not show adequate effort compared to his or her peers.

**U** – Does not meet expectations as outlined by GCPS AKS guidelines. Conduct/Effort: Student does not participate or show effort most of the time. Student was sent to time-out or removed from the room more than twice in the nine weeks.

### Music

**E**- Student exceeds in mastering the expectations set forth in the GCPS AKS. He or she must also complete one additional assignment outside of regular class time per nine weeks. Students in grades K-2 must create/compose their own song, sing/perform it for the class, and accompany themselves on a homemade instrument. Students in grades 3-5 must complete a research project on a famous composer, write a paper, and create a poster about the composer. Students interested in the additional assignment must ask Mr. Garner after music class for more details.

**S**- Student meets the expectations set forth in the GCPS AKS. Conduct/Effort: He or she must follow directions and participate in all class activities. Student was sent to time out no more than one time during the nine week grading period. An 'S' is the highest grade for Conduct in music.

**N**- Student meets some but not all of the expectations set forth in the GCPS AKS. Conduct/Effort: He or she does not participate consistently in class. Student was sent to time out or removed from class more than one time during the nine week grading period. Student does not follow directions or use time wisely.

**U**- Student does not meet the expectation set forth in the CGPS AKS. Conduct/Effort: He or she does not participate in class. Student was sent to time out or removed from the class more than two times during the nine week grading period. Student does not follow directions or use time wisely.

### PE/Health

Grades are based on a student's overall understanding of the academic knowledge and skills (AKS) outlined by the GCPS standards. The following descriptions detail how a student receives their grade in health and physical education at Britt Elementary.

**E**: Exceeds expectations as outlined in the GCPS AKS. Student demonstrates proficiency in all skills taught during the grading period.

**S**: Meets expectations as outline in the GCPS AKS. Student demonstrates acceptable performance on all skills taught during the grading period. Conduct/Effort: Students demonstrate meeting expectations by participating on a regular basis, being a team player, and following directions. An S is the highest grade for Conduct/Effort in PE/Health.

**N**: Needs improvement in expectations as outlined in the GCPS AKS. Needs improvement on skills taught during the grading period. Conduct/Effort: Participates on an irregular basis, and demonstrates difficulty working with others and following directions.

**U**: Does not meet expectations. The student demonstrates unacceptable performance on skills taught during the 9-week period. Conduct/Effort: Refused to participate or follow directions for 9 or more classes in a 9-week grading period.

**Kindergarten AKS**

**LA**– Listen/respond to questions and follow two-part directions. Recite short poems, songs, and stories with repeated pattern. Listen and speak to peers and adults. Repeat auditory sequences; tell stories with wordless picture books/sequence; discriminate real/imaginary; understand that print makes sense; relate written to spoken. Identify and match upper/lowercase letters; environmental print can entertain; directionality (left-to-right; top-to-bottom). Read high frequency words at the rate of 30 words correct per minute. Listen to a variety of texts/use new vocabulary.

**MATH**– Sort geo. figures, sphere/cubes. Find patterns.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**– American Holidays.  
Science–Day and Night Sky.

**First Grade AKS**

**LA**– Identify beginning/ending sounds, blends, & short/long vowels. Write about a personal experience-use complete sentences, capitalize “I” & use periods correctly.

**MATH**– Add/subtract to ten.

**SCIENCE**– Observe, measure and analyze weather data; determine patterns. Use weather instruments (rain gauge, thermometer, & wind vane) to identify weather patterns. Observe and record changes in water.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**– Describe how John Henry and Johnny Appleseed displayed positive characteristics traits; commitment, respect for others. Locate one’s city, state, nation, & continent on a map/globe. Locate (rivers, mountains) on a map.

**Second Grade AKS**

**LA**– Write words with root (base) words & suffixes (-ing, -ed, -s, & -es). Distinguish between declarative (telling) & interrogative (asking) sentences. Identify poetry & author’s purpose. Read words containing au, aw, oi, ou, oy, al, & all.

**MATH**– Use boxes for missing numbers –for example  $9 + \underline{\quad} = 12$ . Extend repeating patterns. Use representations for numbers, such as 14 is one rod and 4 units.

**SCIENCE**– Life cycle of plants and animals (cat, bird, frog, butterfly). Investigate how temperature, light, water, & nutrients affect life cycles.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**– Locate major topographical features of GA on a map.

**Third Grade AKS**

**LA**– Capture a reader’s interest by writing both personal and fantasy/imaginary stories, setting a purpose, & developing a point of view. Write using simple and compound sentences.

**MATH**– Explain the relationship between multiplication & addition; extend the pattern in the table ( ex. adds 4 each time). Identify multiplication properties of zero & one.

**SCIENCE** – Learn the differences between the habitats of Georgia in mountains, coast, piedmont, march/swamp, & Atlantic Ocean.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**– Use map & globe skills to locate places. Explain political roots of our modern democracy in the USA. Explain the importance of basic principles that provide the foundation of a republican form of government.

**Fourth Grade AKS**

**LA**– Clarify, illustrate, or expand on responses. Restate main ideas and details, questioning, inferring, summarizing, offering opinions, and drawing conclusions. Identify organizational patterns. Make and defend judgments and inferences about setting and events and support them with elaborating and convincing evidence.

**MATH**– Create line graphs. Determine range, mode, and median of data. Analyze and compare features of graphs including missing information and duplication in data.

**SCIENCE**– Weather and weather related AKS.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**– Describe how early Native American cultures developed in North America. Locate important physical and man-made features in the United States.

**Fifth Grade AKS**

**LA**– Identify simple/compound subjects, pronouns & predicates, & singular/plural/possessive nouns. Write a narrative by sequencing events, paying attention to character development, point of view, conflict, & closing sentence.

**MATH**– Order and compare decimals. Analyze the effect on the product with a multiple of 10 (ex.  $5 \times 10 = 50$ ,  $50 \times 10 = 500$ ,  $500 \times 10 = 5,000$ ).

**SCIENCE**– Compare & contrast the structure & function of single-celled (amoeba & bacteria) & multi-celled organisms (sponges & worms). Compare & contrast the characteristics of learned behaviors & inherited traits. Discuss the role genes play in the transfer of traits.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**– Explain causes, major events & consequences of Civil War.

## News from the Media Center

**Fall Book Fair October 31-November 4, 2011**  
**Book Fair Family Night November 1, 2011 4:00-6:00 pm**



### READ! READ! READ!

Don't forget to encourage reading at home. Every student in grades 2nd-5th has taken the STAR test and received a "Just Right" reading level. Your child can use this level to choose books both at school and at the local public library. If books don't have an AR level, a great method to determine if the book is "just right" is the five finger rule. Have your child read the first page, if there are five words that your child has difficulty reading or does not know, that book may be too difficult. The list of Accelerated Reader books can be found on the Britt home page [www.wcbritt.org](http://www.wcbritt.org) under Media/Tech.

### PARENT VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

A great way to be involved in your child's school and education is to volunteer in the Britt Media Center. We have different things you can help us with, and no experience is needed! We'd love for you to schedule a regular time; but if you just want to drop in occasionally, we'll be glad to see you. Here are the volunteer opportunities that parents can take advantage of:

- assisting with organizing and putting away books and other materials
- helping students find books or use the computers
- working at the book fairs by helping to set it up or running the cash register
- assisting with the annual inventory

If you are interested in helping in the media center, please call Mrs. Chapman at 770-736-4433.

## Hats Off to Literacy



Again this year we will be encouraging students to read through the Hats Off to Literacy program. Second, third, fourth, and fifth graders can earn a hat and pins by earning points through the Accelerated Reader program. If your child earned a hat last year, we are asking him/her to bring it back to school to use again.

Wednesdays will be hat days for Hats Off to Literacy. Parents can help their child by encouraging him/her to read some every day.

\*First Grade: When they complete their reading log for the month, they will get their hat/pin as they are turned in.

\* Kindergarten- If they bring their completed poetry folder/log 3 times in a month, they will get their hat/pin at the end of each month.

## Book Check Out Information

- Students in grades 2nd-5th may check out books from the Britt Elementary Media Center with the option to check out a third book for Accelerated Reader or research with teacher permission.
- Students in K-1st may check out one book at a time. Students are allowed a two week time period to keep their books and may renew them if they like.
- Students who keep their library books beyond the due date will receive an overdue notice via their parent's email. Students with no email address on file will receive a paper copy to take home. Any questions or concerns about library books should be directed to Mrs. Chapman at 770-736-4433 or Mr. Reed at 678-639-3883.

## Cafeteria Corner/Gwinnett School Nutrition Program

What a great start of the school year 2011-2012! For August we had watermelon every week as our Farm to School item! Yum! Yum! September's Farm to School item will be cucumbers. We will have a special cucumber side dish once a week for the month of September.

### Every Friday is Bring a Parent to Breakfast Day!

We will have a special breakfast for our adults for just \$1.50. This includes an entrée and two sides. Student's normal breakfast fee will apply. Breakfast will be served at 8 AM on Fridays. So come and join us and spend some special time with your student! Come in and sit in our sun room with your family!

### Comet Café Trivia

Each month we will have a trivia question on our big bulletin board. Each time a student eats breakfast or lunch with us, they will be given an entry form for their name and answer to the trivia question. At the end of each month, we will draw one winner from the basket. The winner for September gets two free movie tickets and a \$10.00 gift card.

### How does our food start?

- Most of the fruits and vegetable we eat start from seeds. Seeds can vary in size from tiny to quite large.
- The basic parts of a seed are the seed coat, the endosperm, and the embryo. The seed coat protects the inside of the seed from weather, bugs, and temperature changes. The endosperm can be found beneath the seed coat and provides food for the embryo part of the seed. The embryo is the part from which the new plant develops and it has three parts as well: the main root, the cotyledon, and the embryonic leaves.
- Three basic ways seeds can be dispersed include wind, water, and animals.
- Some seeds are eaten as seeds before they grow into plants. (ex. beans, grains, some nuts, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds).
- Seeds are often high in many nutrients, especially protein.
- Most cooking oils are made from seeds. Many spices are made from seeds as well. Even chocolate is made from seeds!

## Counselor's Corner- Marlene Taylor-Crawford

Welcome to another great year!

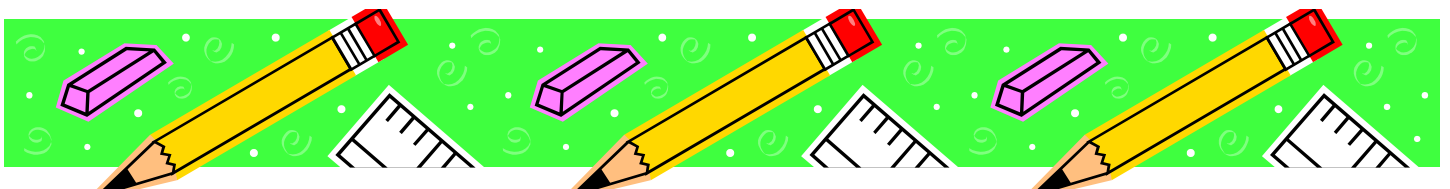
I am looking forward to working with our outstanding students, staff, parents, and community organizations throughout the 2011-2012 school year. At Britt, we genuinely care for our students, and we are passionate about providing every student with a good foundation for future learning opportunities. There are several resources available through the counseling program to help our families. Please contact me regarding various types of resources, referrals, and concerns you may have.

I am here to support teaching and learning!

My office number is 770-736-4430.

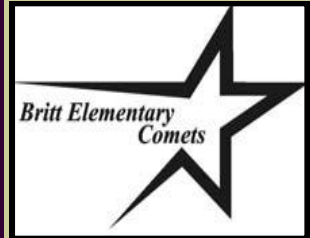
Respectfully,

Marlene Taylor-Crawford, Ed. S.  
School Counselor



## Chess Club

- All second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students are invited to join the Chess Club!
- You may join with and without experience. New players will learn basic game play, and more experienced players will be learning game playing strategies.
- Chess Club will take place starting September 12, 2011 and ending May 11, 2012.
- Chess Club meets after you get to school from 8:20-8:45. If you need a permission slip contact:  
Shannon\_C\_Davis@gwinnett.k12.ga.us



W. C. Britt Elementary  
2503 Skyland Drive  
Snellville, GA 30078

770-972-4500  
Fax: 770-736-4426  
www.wcbritt.org

**Coaches Corner: Math Coach, Lisa Brown**

### Math Facts are the Key to Being Successful Mathematicians

For your child to be successful in math, it is essential for them to know all math facts with fluency, with speed, and with 100% accuracy. It should be as automatic as counting to 10. Some ways you can help:

- Assess your child frequently to see if they are fluent with math facts.
- Help them understand the fact families and see how they relate to each other (i.e.  $5+2=7$ ,  $2+5=7$ ,  $7-5=2$ ,  $7-2=5$ ).
- Third, fourth, and fifth graders need to know addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts. They need to know facts through  $10 \times 10$ .
- Assess to see if your child is fluent by asking them different math facts.
- Most students struggle to learn the 6, 7, 8, and 9 multiplication facts. Practice skip counting by different numbers (i.e. 6, 12, 18, 24, 30...).

Helping your child learn their basic math facts is the best way for you to ensure success in mathematics. Steady practice is the key to success, but also try to make the practice as fun as possible so it will be a positive experience for your child.

### Free Math Online Tutorials

Great News! GCPS has just released FREE MATH ONLINE TUTORIALS for 4th and 5th grade! To access the tutorials please follow the directions below.

1. Go to the Gwinnett Online Campus Website:  
<http://gwinnettonlinecampus.com>
2. Click "LOGINS" in the upper right corner.
3. Username: brittesmath
4. Password: brittesmath (same as username)
5. Select desired grade level.
6. Click the "Content" tab in the upper left corner of the screen to begin the tutorial.\*\*
7. Choose from a list of math concepts.

\*\*Please note: There is a technology glitch on the 5th grade page. If you choose "click here", instead of going to content, a 3rd grade tutorial pulls up. Please follow step #6 closely.

If you have any difficulties accessing the tutorials, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Dr. Luann Hammami 678-639-3384.

### School Administration:

**Doris Jones**  
Principal

**Sandy Grizzard**  
Assistant Principal

**Melissa Madsen**  
Assistant Principal

### The Comet Connection Newsletter

The Comet  
Connection is a  
publication of W. C.  
Britt  
Elementary School  
for Britt families.  
Please e-mail  
questions or  
comments to the  
Editor,  
Dr. Luann  
Hammami at  
[luann\\_hammami@gwinnettonlinecampus.com](mailto:luann_hammami@gwinnettonlinecampus.com)