



The Comet Connection

A newsletter for the families of W. C. Britt Elementary

Volume I, Issue II

October, 2009

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Principal's Corner

Greetings to the W. C. Britt Elementary Community!

I am happy to report to you that teaching and learning is taking place at Britt Elementary each school day. Students are engaged and challenged to reach their learning potential. Britt Elementary students are excited about learning. What a joy to greet Britt Elementary students each day as they come to school excited about new learning opportunities! Teachers are working diligently to plan instruction engaging students in challenging learning. Support your child at home by discussing learning that has taken place at school. Join your child in accessing the grade level appropriate learning links found on our school web site to reinforce learning. It is important that your child know that you value their education which will result in even greater future learning opportunities.

Each day from 3:00 until 3:20 PM, all students participate in BRITT Time, **Britt Reading In Total Togetherness**. Our literacy coach, Mrs. Betsy Gresh, facilitates mini lessons during BRITT Time teaching skills vital for effective reading. It is important that all students have a book ready to read each day during BRITT Time. What an opportunity for you to discuss your child's book with them asking questions that will check for comprehension and understanding! This will reinforce that love for reading which will serve your child well for future learning.

I want to express my appreciation to PTA for their support of our school program. The PTA Dad's Club has groomed the outdoor classroom for use by teachers and students. The PTA has funded the murals for another hallway improving our learning environment. Computer programs have been funded by PTA again this year making learning more fun for all students at Britt Elementary. The PTA funded Britt Elementary School's Celebration of 40 Years of Teaching and Learning. PTA has provided funding of new door mats for the entrance of our school as well as beautiful student agenda books for students in grades two, three, four, and five. I hope you are a member of the Britt Elementary School PTA. Please contact one of the PTA officers today to see how you can support PTA at Britt Elementary.

With the opening of the new Snell Elementary School for the 2010-2011 school year, Britt Elementary attendance boundaries will change due to redistricting in the South Gwinnett and Shiloh Clusters. A redistricting map is posted in the foyer of Britt Elementary. Input forms and a redistricting timeline are available for you as well. Redistricting for Britt Elementary will be discussed at the parent meeting on October 6 at 7:00 PM in the school cafeteria, and a meeting to discuss redistricting for Britt Elementary will take place on October 27 at 7:30 PM in the school cafeteria. We welcome and encourage your input during this redistricting process.

Thank you for choosing Britt Elementary School. The Britt Elementary School students and parents are the best! The faculty and staff of Britt Elementary love children, and we are dedicated to educating students to achieve excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. Thank you for joining us in this effort.

With kindest regards,

Doris Jones
Principal

Looking Ahead

in October:

- PTA Fundraiser Kick-Off Oct. 2
- Fire Prevention Week Oct. 4-10
- Benchmark Testing Gr. 1-5, Oct. 5-7
- **Redistricting Meeting** and Parent Workshop Oct. 6 at 7 pm
- Student Holiday Oct. 9 and 12
- 2nd Nine Weeks Begins Oct. 9
- Steak 'N Shake Night Oct. 15
- Report Cards Issued Friday, Oct. 16
- Last Day for PTA Fundraiser, Oct. 16
- Super Science Saturday, Oct. 17 10 am—12:30 pm
*Must RSVP for this
- ITBS Gr. 3 & 5 Oct. 19-28
- PTA Mtg at 6:30 pm & **Redistricting Meeting** Oct. 27 at 7:30 pm
- Family Night 5:30 pm—8:00 pm Nov. 2

When Is the Next Parent Workshop?

2nd 9 wks. Ideas

Tuesday, October 6th at 7 pm

Would you like to know which AKS your child will be learning during the second nine weeks of school?

If so, don't miss the next parent workshop. Teachers on each grade level will share activities you can use at home to help your child master the AKS skills that will be taught during the next nine week period. This workshop will begin in the cafeteria, followed by break-out sessions for each grade level. Free childcare is available for those children who are potty trained and older.

To reserve your spot, visit Britt's webpage at www.wcbritt.org and click on "Parent Workshops" under the Title I tab, or call Kathy Jackson at 678-639-3884.

Counselor's Corner-Marlene Taylor-Crawford & Brenda Straus

Understanding the Importance of Daily Attendance

School attendance is important because it underscores the significance of learning and the importance of obtaining an education. It also helps students develop good work habits that will carry over in life. There is a strong relationship between good attendance and improved grades and health. The responsibility of fostering good attendance starts with parents.

Attendance Definitions

Truant- Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has five days or more of unexcused absences.

Tardy- Students are considered tardy to school or class if the student arrives at a designated location after a school bell, chime, or buzzer has sounded.

Excused Absences-

- Personal illness, serious illness, or death in the student's immediate family
- Observing religious holidays
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Serving as pages for the Georgia General Assembly
- Court order or an order by a governing agency
- Visiting with a parent prior to or during leave from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting
- Older students who are registering to vote or voting

Please refer to the Gwinnett County Public Schools Student/Parent Handbook and the W.C. Britt Parent/Student Handbook for additional information. For more information, please visit the Britt website. Click on the "Staff" tab and select "Counselor's Corner" to find additional resources. Also, read "Today's Tip for Parents" and "School Success for Parents." Both are provided by *The Parent Institute*. Parents may also search for additional articles by using the Parent Institute's search feature. These articles are also available in Spanish.

Kindergarten AKS

LA-Compare & contrast different versions of fairy tales; listen to a variety of texts; use new vocabulary; discriminate between real & imaginary; write first & last name, words, & letters.

MATH-Write numerals from 1-20; identify coins by name & value; recognize & name a sphere & cube; identify, create, & extend patterns.

SCIENCE-Explore the forces that cause a change in motion; sort objects according to their motion (straight, zigzag, fast, slow, etc).

SOCIAL STUDIES- Identify the purpose of Columbus Day; use words & phrases related to chronology and time to explain how things changed in relation to Columbus Day; describe customs and family celebrations related to Columbus Day.

First Grade AKS

LA: Reading-Follow three part directions; identify the purpose of the exclamation mark & apostrophe; identify antonyms and verbs.

Writing-Write a clear beginning, middle, and end for a story; focus on narrative and informational writing.

MATH-Place value; addition and subtraction facts; telling time to the hour and half-hour; recognize shapes such as cone, sphere, cube, etc.

SCIENCE-Discuss natural resources: conservation/pollution, characteristics and needs of living things.

SOCIAL STUDIES-Describe how Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Sacagawea displayed positive character traits, commitment, and respect for others.

Second Grade AKS

LA-Write & recognize regular, irregular plurals & possessive, silent letters, & linking verbs (is, are, was, were). Distinguish between exclamatory & imperative sentences. Identify homophones. Write friendly letters.

MATH-Create & interpret bar and picture graphs, and Venn diagrams. Tell time (to 5 min) & temperature. Compare fractions: thirds, sixths, eights, and tenths.

SCIENCE-Identify states of matter (solids, liquids, & gases). Recognize & compare physical properties of matter. Identify chemical changes in matter (burning paper, toasting bread).

SOCIAL STUDIES-Describe the lives of the GA Creek & Cherokee culture. Define concept of government & need for rules & laws. Explain how money is used to obtain goods & services.

Third Grade AKS

LA: Reading-Identify explicit and implicit information; summarize important ideas in informational text; locate information within the title, table of contents, & chapter headings; distinguish between synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs. **Writing-Write** an informational piece using facts, supporting details and examples.

MATH-Recognize & explain models of division; explain meaning of remainders; demonstrate equivalent relationships; classify triangles; identify polygons, compare angles, identify center, diameter, and radius.

SCIENCE -Compare & contrast rocks & minerals; determine their attributes (shape, color, texture); classify rocks (igneous, sedimentary, metamorphic); describe how wind and rain change rocks and soil over time.

SOCIAL STUDIES-Discuss Paul Revere & his efforts to expand people's rights and freedoms; describe the four types of productive resources; explain that government provides good and services in a market economy.

Fourth Grade AKS

LA: Reading-identify and use different types of nouns, pronouns (personal pronouns, antecedents), verbs (subject-verb agreement), adjectives, & adverbs; identify & analyze elements of plot, setting, theme, & character within texts, between texts, & in relation to self.

Writing-write a summary to demonstrate understanding of literary works to include main idea and significant details.

MATH-locate, name, & graph ordered pairs in the first quadrant of the coordinate system; determine & justify the range, mode, & median of a set of data; compare different graphical representations for a given set of data.

SCIENCE-analyze weather charts/maps & collect weather data to predict weather events & infer patterns and seasonal changes.

SOCIAL STUDIES-describe European exploration in North America; compare & contrast examples of cooperation & conflict between Europeans & Native Americans; describe colonial life in America as experienced by various people, including landowners, slaves, indentured servants & Native Americans.

Fifth Grade AKS

LA-distinguish between first & third person narratives, analyze elements of setting, characterization, and conflict in plot, analyze the author's purpose and point of view, use sensory details in writing .

MATH-explain the process of multiplication and division of whole numbers and decimals; multiply and divide with decimals; review use of multiples, factors, & divisibility rules.

SCIENCE-classify organisms to simplify the study of living things; explain why scientists use classification in the study of living things; demonstrate how animals are sorted into groups (invertebrates and vertebrates) and how vertebrates are further sorted into groups (fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals).

SOCIAL STUDIES-analyze the effects of Reconstruction on American life; explain how our rights are protected under the Constitution; explain the process of how amendments are made.

Congratulations!

Rebecca Womack, Technology Teacher of the Month for using technology to effectively instruct students and for sharing technology strategies with colleagues.



Pat Brison, Instructor of the Month for providing rigorous, engaging, and effective instruction to our students.



Are you doing your part by cutting box tops?

Comet Café Information

October 13 – 16 is National School Lunch Week. This week we will have special menu items and drawings for prizes for those who participate eating school lunch. Come be part of the FUN!

Breakfast

Served as soon as buses arrive
\$1 full pay - .30 reduced - free/free

Lunch

\$1.75 full pay - .40 reduced – free/free

Sample

Pancakes/French toast/Cinnamon Roll
Chicken or Sausage Biscuit or a Bagelfull
Juice and or Milk

How to pay:

Cash or check at school
www.mealpayplus.com
Debit Card
Credit Card
Check

Check out our menu at:

<http://www.wcbritt.org/home.html>

Call us with questions: 770-736-4428



Why Can't I Drive Up To the Front of the School to Drop My Child Off?

During arrival and dismissal, the front entrance of the school is for buses only. Student drop off and parent areas are located in the car rider area near the gym. For the safety of everyone, please follow these rules.

Britt Is BANANAS For Box Tops!!!

If you are throwing Box Tops in the trashcan,
You are throwing away CASH!!!



Clip Box Tops from groceries that may already be in your pantry. Help our students reach their goal of \$1,300 to purchase the school's BrainPOP computer subscription. Please visit www.brainpop.com for more details.

If you collect 20 or more, *you WIN!!!*

Prizes will be awarded after the October 23 collection deadline!

Ask grandparents, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to collect on your student's behalf! Don't forget to register at the Box Tops website (www.btfe.com).

Coaches Corner: Betsy Gresh, Literacy Coordinator and Coach K-5**Lighting the Way for Literacy**

Jake, our Britt star puppet sings, “Come together right now...Read with Me!” every afternoon to signal a 15 minute daily “Drop Everything, and Read” program called “**BRITT TIME**”- the acronym which stands for “**Britt Reads In Total Togetherness**”. From 3:00 until bus call, students participate in a short mini lesson via the school’s video system, and they are given the opportunity to read what they want to read. Students share what they’ve read and reflect through writing the next day sharing their reactions to the texts with others in our learning community. Kindergarten participates in this program after their lunch due to their end of the day specials.

One of our goals this year is to use this forum as a springboard to create a school-wide community of readers and writers who grow to love reading and writing. My personal belief is that every child will learn to love the written word if allowed to tap into their own reading explorations and reflections. Self selection is the key in the beginning of this process. Children grow to love reading if allowed to select what interests them. They will develop the skills of thinking about their reading which will develop comprehension, vocabulary, and the mechanics of literacy.

As we all know, writing and reading go hand in hand. We become better readers by writing, and we become better writers by reading. In this month’s column, I would like to explore how families can take advantage of writing experiences to move their children to higher levels of literacy.

- List writing is common in many families. Parents are always making shopping lists, invitation lists, and to-do lists. Written lists serve an important purpose in life – they help us remember things and get things done. Share your lists with your child and encourage them to make their own lists. Every day, ask your child to make a list of their activities for the day. Later in the evening, the list can be used for reflection. Determine if the list was realistic, and then write about what was accomplished in a personal journal.
- All of us are notorious note writers. Encourage your child to take notes as well. They can write short notes to family members or make observations of the things they encounter in their lives. A great place to take notes is in a small spiral notebook that can fit into a back pocket. Children can jot down their thoughts and observations – the taste of a chocolate chip cookies, feelings about saying good bye to a grandparent, the thrill of going to Six Flags, and so on. These notes can serve as inspirations and the source for more in-depth writing.
- Dialogue journals are written conversations between a parent and a child using a journal or notebook to carry on the conversation. The parent writes an entry into the journal – to ask a question, provide an answer, or give or take advice. Deliver the journal to your child’s room where he or she makes an entry the following day and returns the journal to the parent for the next entry. These journals are great ways for parents to develop a deeper relationship with their children. Encouragements, apologies, questions, and words of affection are perfect to share. Children will learn to share more of themselves with their parents.

Writing is important to the development of a fully literate person. It must be an authentic and a regular family routine in which the essential element is to communicate one’s thoughts and ideas. At Britt Elementary, we encourage our families to make writing an integral part of their family life. You will be glad you did!!

**Book Fair News**

Thanks to all for your support of the Book Fair. We had lots of great books for sale. Thank you also to our wonderful parent volunteers who helped at the book fair. Parents who would like to volunteer to help in the media center at the circulation desk checking in and out books or assisting at our next book fair are asked to contact Mrs.

Chapman at 770-736-4433 or email Carol_Ann_Chapman@gwinnett.k12.ga.us.

Parent Center Hours

Mon & Tues
8 am—4 pm

Wed & Fri
10am—4 pm

Thursdays
12 noon—7 pm

Free instructional materials are available for check-out to all Britt families.

Technology News & Tips

Have you checked the Britt Online Calendar?

View our online calendar to stay up-to-date on all of Britt's events. To access the calendar, go to <http://www.calendarwiz.com/wcbritt>

New Learning Links that have been added:

<http://storynory.com/>

"Storynory is an online treasure trove of audio stories. Here you will find a mixture of new stories, fairy tales, and specially adapted myths and histories."

<http://www.schooltimegames.com/index.html>

"SchoolTimeGames.com provides learning activities for students of all ages. We've selected a variety of engaging games and puzzles that are connected to all the major subject areas in today's school curriculum."

Britt Elementary School does not maintain the websites linked from our pages. We cannot be responsible for content on pages outside our school website. Sites are selected carefully for elementary student use, but cannot be guaranteed. Please keep in mind that adult supervision is encouraged when students are exploring the Internet.

Gwinnett County Public Schools Instructional Materials Public Review October 1-30, 2009

Attention Parents:

You are invited to participate in the reviewing proposed curriculum materials for new and updated high school courses in these curriculum areas:

- Mathematics
- Science
- Health
- Technical Education



Location and Times:

Instructional Support Center (ISC)
Building 200
437 Old Peachtree Road in Suwanee
678-301-6831

Weekday hours:

8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday-Friday
October 1-30

Evening hours:

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Thursday
October 8 and 22

Saturday hours:

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday
October 3 and 17

Update: Super Saturday-Be There Fair

The Super Saturday Be There Fair was a spectacular event. Over 50 educational vendors provided our families with valuable information regarding the services and resources they offer to our community. Parents also learned more about the many benefits of the Title I Program while children enjoyed a day filled with moon jumps, cotton candy, face painting, carnival games, performances by GCPS step and chorus teams, and more! Police estimated crowds at 1,000 people or more! Special thanks to Vivian Gaither, Director at The Centerville Community Center, for all of her hard work and support. All over the county, Title I Super Saturday Be There events took place on Sept. 26th. Thank you, Britt Parents, for Being There and showing your support for our Title I Program!



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The Comet Connection Newsletter

The Comet Connection
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W. C. Britt
Elementary School for
Britt families.

Please e-mail questions
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Reflections

2009-2010 Reflections Programs

Theme: “BEAUTY IS.....” sponsored by PTA

Go to www.georgiapta.org for more details

Entry due date Tuesday, October 6th

Fall Fundraiser

Kick off – Friday, October 2nd

Lots of prizes and surprises

Spirit Wear

T-shirts - \$8.00 (pink, blue and white shirts available in all sizes)

Hoodies - \$15 (gray hoodies in all sizes)

Look for order forms in Friday folders!!

What is Super SCIENCE Saturday?

Come join us for fun and learning on Saturday, **Oct. 17th from 10 am-12:30 pm** as science teachers guide parents and students through exciting science experiments while sharing great non-fiction books that relate to these experiments. Parent and children will conduct experiments together. You must RSVP to participate.

Each family will be asked to select three experiments from the six experiments listed below. Each experiment is limited to 15 families. Each experiment will last 40 minutes. These sessions will fill up quickly so contact Kathy Jackson at 678-639-3884 with the 3 experiments you and your child would like to conduct. You may RSVP online by visiting: www.wcbritt.org and clicking on the Title I Tab, then select “Parent Workshops”.

Choose three experiments from the six below:

1. **Make Your Own Compost** (Habitats, Conservation, and Environment-Effects of Pollution)
2. **Alka Seltzer Rockets** (Force & Motion, Propulsion, Properties of Matter, and Effects of Heat)
3. **Tie-Dye T-Shirt** (Chromatography, Chemical Changes, Solubility, and Color Mixing)
4. **Dissecting An Owl Pellet** (Food Chain and Webs, Animal Needs, Survival, & Relationship Among Organisms)
5. **Creating Bubbles** (Water, Changes, Water Cycle, and Evaporation)
6. **Fossil Dig: Shark’s Teeth** (Fossils, Living Things, Food Chain, and Invertebrates)