



# Bonnie Brae Star

February 24, 2009

## From the Prez

Hopefully by now you have received your REACH read-a-thon information and your students have completed a large number of letters to your friends and relatives. As I wrote before, the PTO cut several fundraisers this year, reduced cost on several other events, and we are relying on participation in REACH to make up the difference. Despite the difficult fiscal times, I hope you will decide to participate.

I also hope to see many of you at the annual Bonnie Brae Science Fair. This is always a great event, a wonderful chance for students to learn and for many of them to show us their growing academic prowess.

While I usually focus on PTO business in this letter, I want to take a chance to share appreciation for all the room parents who are so incredibly active in supporting our teachers and our school. I hear regularly from teachers about how much they all contribute in time and energy. If they call or email you, I hope you'll continue to support their efforts any way your schedule permits.

Please note for your calendars that School Board member Tessie Wilson will be visiting our March 11 PTO meeting. Between school start times and the budget, upcoming School Board actions will have a great impact on our school and community, so I hope many of you will join us to hear from Tessie and for the chance to ask your questions.

PTO continues to accept new members, and we're always looking for new volunteers! I hope you and your families are having a great school year, and I look forward to seeing you at our many upcoming events.

*Andrew Flagel, PTO President*

### 2008-2009 PTO Officers

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## School Start Times and Bussing Schedules

For those of you who may not already be aware, there is a large and loud debate underway on school start times in Fairfax County that may have a large impact on Bonnie Brae Elementary. The discussion centers on two issues:

- 1) Changing start times and bussing offers the potential to save millions of dollars for FCPS (interesting factoid – we now have more busses than Greyhound!)
- 2) There is a body of research that suggests that somewhat later start times may have a positive effect on academic performance, particularly for adolescents.

## News to Note

February 26—**RISING 7th GRADE INFORMATION NIGHT**—Robinson SS

February 27—**R.E.A.C.H. READING CARDS GO HOME**

February 28—March 6—**R.E.A.C.H. READING WEEK**

April 3—**STUDENT HOLIDAY**

April 6-10—**SPRING BREAK**

April 21—**RISING 7th GRADE PARENT WORKSHOP**

## Coming Attractions

February 24—Science Fair

March 10—Original Works art packets going home

March 13—Pep Rally for BBES/Laurel Ridge BB Game

March 13—BBES Staff vs. Laurel Ridge Staff Basketball Game (at Robinson)

March 25—**DINING OUT**—Brions Grille

April 27 - **DINING OUT**—Silver Diner

May 29—Spring Fun Fair

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## School Start Times and Bussing Schedules (con't.)

I have spent some time speaking with the advocates on various sides of the school start time debate. Some of the plans that have been suggested would move BBES start times to after 9 am, others to before 8 am. It does not appear that any of the research suggests that these changes would be academically advantageous to our children, and it may even be possible that some would have negative academic impacts. There appear to be some plans that would save FCPS no money AND disadvantage our BBES students, primarily in an effort to achieve the goal of changing start times in a way that could create academic improvement among high school students.

I have heard many mixed responses. It seems clear that some families would appreciate earlier start times, and others later, and some would prefer no change at all. Given the budgetary situation, some change seems inevitable. I strongly encourage all of you to remain aware of the process and to send your comments in to members of the School Board. The BBES PTO as yet has no official stance on the changes, but we will continue to monitor the situation and to review the research that is available, and I encourage all members of the BBES community to do the same. Please be aware that there is a town hall meeting tonight, Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup>, at Oak View. I will miss that one in order to attend the BBES Science Fair (and I encourage you all to do the same). Listed below is a complete list of the Town Hall Meetings and there is PLENTY of additional data available on the FCPS website (or you can get there from the PTO website link). Please feel free to send me your comments and questions.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

#### **Tuesday, February 24, 7 to 9 PM**

Annandale High School, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale  
 Longview Middle School, 2000 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church  
 Oak View Elementary School, 5004 Sideburn Road, Fairfax

#### **Wednesday, February 25, 7 to 9 PM**

Herndon High School, 700 Bennett Street, Herndon

## Public Hearings (con't.)

Rocky Run Middle School, 4400 Stringfellow Road,  
Chantilly

**Thursday, February 26, 7 to 9 PM**

Providence Elementary School, 3616 Germantown  
Road, Fairfax

Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexan-  
dria

A makeup session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3  
from 7 to 9 PM at Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gal-  
lows Road in Falls Church in the case of inclement  
weather.

Fairfax County Public Schools Website: [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)  
Proposed school start time information : [http://  
www.fcps.edu/news/start.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/news/start.htm)

## Fun Fair 2009 and Silent Auction

Mark your calendar for May 29. You'll be at the Bonnie Brae  
Fun Fair! Test your skills with Hoop Shot, Ring Toss, and  
other games. Try to ring the bell on the hi-striker  
game. Be creative with spin art. Enjoy Baja Fresh, a sno  
cone, or some cotton candy. We will have fun for all  
ages! We will have many games and activities, a moon  
bounce, and an obstacle course. We will also have a silent  
auction, with many great baskets and donated items from  
businesses. We hope to see you there!

We are collecting items for our silent auction, to be held  
during the Fun Fair on May 29. If you have a service or item  
that you can provide for the auction, please let us  
know. Each classroom will also have auction bas-  
kets. Watch for more information in Tuesday packets in  
the upcoming weeks. Any questions? Contact Amy Riddick  
at [amy.riddick@cox.net](mailto:amy.riddick@cox.net) or 703-250-8016. Thanks for your  
support!

## Check It Out!

Have you ever wondered how to get the perfect  
"Thank You" gift for your child's teacher? The end of  
the school year is just around the corner and before  
you know it Teacher Appreciation Week will be upon  
us. Located in the front office is a brand new tool to  
help you: **LOOK BOOK FOR BBES TEACHERS &  
STAFF**. This book contains valuable information  
about our teachers and staff including their favorite  
color, foods, restaurants, places to shop and so much  
more. The book is sectioned off into different cate-  
gories and then alphabetized. If you can't find the  
person you are looking for they may not have turned  
in their profile page...encourage them to complete it  
and turn it in! Enjoy learning more about our teach-  
ers and staff!

## BBES PTO—Dining Out

Thank you to everyone who came out for our Din-  
ing Out night at Hard Times Café. Even though it  
was a cold night, we had a great turn out! Thanks  
for your support.

We have two more nights on the calendar, and we  
hope you will join us:

Wednesday, March 25, Brion's Grille  
Monday, April 27, Silver Diner

See you there!