

The Banner

FCPS

Principals' Corner

Hello Washington Mill Families,

We are off to a great start this year. There are new faces on our staff and I am so proud of the way they have become family so quickly. I ask that you be gentle as they learn their craft and always remember you can contact me if you have suggestions for them.

I know you are all familiar with how very well we did last year and the tremendous amount of work done by students and teachers to attain those fabulous scores. What you may not be aware of is since we did so well, the federal government withdrew some services we still need

desperately to continue meeting the needs of our children. Primarily, we lost all funding for our Saturday school for SOL support. Last year over 250 children came on Saturdays as a way of preparing for their exams. This was a significant aid for us. We are trying to do our own Saturday school on a smaller scale, 3rd through 6th grade, for those children that just need that extra boost to pass their tests.



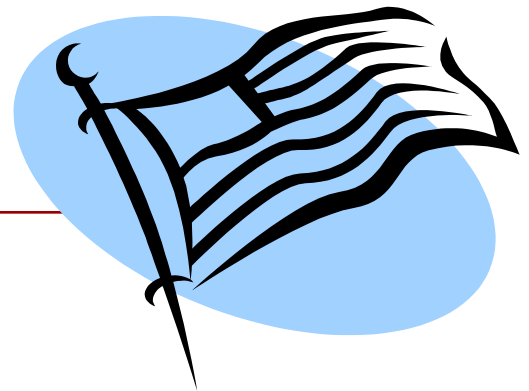
Washington Mill ES Contact Information

9100 Cherry Tree Drive
Alexandria VA 22309

Office Phone #: 703-619-2500

See us on the web at:
[www.fcps.edu/
WashingtonMILLES/](http://www.fcps.edu/WashingtonMILLES/)

**Please call the main office
to report an absence**
703-619-2525



Issue 1

October 20, 2011

to school bond and unity.

As the holidays approach, yes they are coming, I share with you a thankfulness for allowing me to be part of such a warm, caring community.

Yours always, Dr Howard

Administration

• Dr. Tish Howard

Principal

Tish.Howard@fcps.edu

Cell phone 703-314-8423

• Mr. Brad Bennink

Assistant Principal

blbennink@fcps.edu

Office 703-619-2500

Un saludo a la familia de Washington Mill,

Ya pasamos el principio del año escolar. Hay caras nuevas en el personal de la escuela y, estoy muy orgullosa de la forma en que ellos se han familiarizado tan rápidamente. Yo les pido que sean considerados mientras ellos aprenden la rutina de cada día y recuerden en contactarse conmigo si tienen alguna sugerencia para ellos.

Yo se que Uds. ya están enterados cuán bien nos fue el año pasado y el tremendo trabajo hecho por nuestros estudiantes y profesores para obtener las fabulosas calificaciones en los exámenes de fin de año. De lo que si Uds. no deben estar enterados es de que siendo que rendimos tan bien el año pasado, El gobierno Federal cortará algunas de los servicios que teníamos y que los necesitamos desesperadamente para cubrir las necesidades de nuestros niños.

Primeramente, hemos perdido los fondos para las clases los sábados, un programa en el que los niños se preparaban para los exámenes de fin de año. El año pasado cerca de 250 estudiantes estaban preparándose para los exámenes en los días sábados. Este era un significativo apoyo para nosotros. Estamos tratando de tener nuestras propias clases de los sábados, en una escala menor, 3ro. y 6to. grado y, para los niños que necesitan un pequeño empujón para rendir bien en sus exámenes.

Necesito su ayuda para este plan. Si su niño lleva a casa una hoja de permiso para, Clases en los Sábados, POR FAVOR, firmelo y devuelva al profesor(a) de su niño(a). Hasta ahora, devolvieron 20 niños de 75 que recibieron este formulario, como pueden ver, no es un buen resultado. A todos nos gusta el sentirnos exitosos, así como pasó el año pasado pero, esto solo viene después de haber trabajado fuertemente. Por favor ayúdenos a ayudar a sus niños.

Ya nos estamos alistando para los días de conferencias entre Padres y Profesores. Es vital que Ud. esté en contacto con el profesor(a) de su niño(a), para ver en que necesita ayuda su niño(a) eso, nos ayuda a conocer mejor las necesidades de su niño(a) y así formar un lazo mas fuerte entre el colegio y la casa.

Ya nos aproximamos los feriados de fin de año, si ya están cerca, quiero compartir con Uds. mi gratitud por permitirme ser parte de esta comunidad interesada y que cuida por los demás.

Como siempre a sus órdenes,

Dr Howard

----- **Dr. Howard's Volunteer Form** -----

Nombre de la Familia _____ Teléfono _____

Yo puedo donar un tiempo Me gustaría ayudar:

En la clase En la cafetería En los recreos En algún programa después de clases

En el fin de semana Algún evento de la comunidad saliendo con los niños/familias

En el Centro de Padres de Familia En los conciertos Subraye la, o las actividades en las que puede

October 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3 <i>Back To School</i>	4	5	6	7	8
9 <i>Family Zoo Trip</i>	10 <i>Columbus Day Holiday</i>	11	12	13 <i>Heritage Harvest</i>	14 <i>Picture Day</i>	15
16	17	18 <i>PTA Meeting</i>	19	20 <small><i>Kennedy Ctr - am 4th Grade Return by noon for lunch</i></small>	21	22
23	24	25	26 <small><i>Distribution of Innisbrook Items by PTA</i></small>	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 <i>End of Q1</i>	5
6	7 <i>Student Holiday</i>	8 <i>Student Holiday</i>	9	10	11 <i>Adv. Academic Meeting</i>	12
13	14	15 <i>PTA Meeting</i>	16	17 <i>WMES Thanksgiving Luncheon</i>	18	19
20	21	22	23 <i>2 hour early release</i>	24 <i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	25 <i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	26
27	28	29	30			

-----Dr. Howard's Volunteer Form-----

Family Name _____ Phone _____

I can donate time. I would like to help:

In the classroom In the cafeteria On the playground At an afterschool program

At a community even At a concert In the Parent Center

On a weekend outing with children/families

Reading Rocks...



Dawn Page, WMES Reading Specialist

Parents - Hello! Welcome back! My name is Dawn Page and I am taking over for Suzanne Bielmeier who is now retired. She will be missed.

I have been getting to know your children and I am impressed not only with their reading abilities, but with how polite they are and by how excited they are about learning. It is so true that a parent is a child's first teacher. You have all done well as their teachers, but there is always more

you can do to help.

Reading to your child is one of the best ways to teach them to read. When you read to them they hear the way reading is supposed to sound and it gives them a model to go by. Reading to your child also has other benefits :

- By listening to you read, they have access to books that they cannot really read and understand on their own.
- You are showing them that reading is important to you, and should be important to them.
- You are spending time with your child.

Even if your child is able to read an entire book by his or herself, reading additional books *with* them can bring you together in a world far away from everyday life. Continuing to read to them is a gift you can only give them for a short while – take advantage of it.

Thank you for being your child's first teacher and for being our partners in literacy.

Dawn Page

SCA News

Thank you to all who joined us at the SCA Induction Ceremony prior to Back to School Night. We look forward to your continued support and to making the 2011-2012 school year the best one yet!

SCA Officers 2011-2012

President-Makenna McClure
Vice President-Brooke Evason
Secretary-Jenna Pearson
Treasurer-Cassandra Parks
Historian-Santiago Echeverria

"Tickle Me Pink" will be this year's first SCA Spirit Day. It will be held Friday, October 21st in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Students and staff please wear something pink or

just a touch of pink to show your support!

A reminder will be sent home in the Thursday folder the day before.

"Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars and to change the world."

-Harriet Tubman



Counselor's Corner...

It is hard to believe that we have already finished a month of school! First we would like to introduce Ms. Emily Morse who has joined Washington Mill this year as our new full-time counselor. She is extremely excited to be part of the WMES community and looks forward to working with both you and your children this year. Ms. Morse previously taught at a charter school in Washington, DC and also spent time working in the DC courthouse. As counselors our goal is always to help make your child's school experience a successful and positive one. Having spent time in Costa Rica and Spain, Ms. Morse is also bilingual!

Mrs. Reynolds continues to be the other school counselor on a part-time basis on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. As always, we have an

open door policy and welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss any issues or concerns that you might have.

The holidays are quickly approaching! Please know that Washington Mill DOES NOT provide holiday assistance for families as we do not have the means to do so. However, one organization that has helped families in the past, Our Daily Bread, is organizing the assistance for the Thanksgiving and December holidays. **In the Thursday folder last week, a letter was sent home for those families in need of support for the Thanksgiving holiday, to be filled out and returned no later than October 19th. For the December holidays we will be asking parents to fill out an additional form at parent-teacher conferences ONLY**

(November 7th and 8th). No requests will be accepted after these dates. Although it is our hope that everyone in need can receive assistance through this program, there are NO guarantees that all requests will be granted. The decision is out of our hands and left to Our Daily Bread to determine which to fulfill. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about the holiday assistance or anything regarding your child please do not hesitate to contact either of us! You can reach either of us by telephone at 703-619-2500 or by email at efmorse@fcps.edu or jbrey-nolds1@fcps.edu.



Washington Mill
Elementary School
*Advanced Academics
Parent Information*

Meeting

Friday, November 11

9:30-10:30AM

Research Room

Mrs. Potter, Advanced Academics Resource Teacher will provide an overview of the FCPS Advanced Academics Program, and explain how we are implementing the program at our school.

All Washington Mill Elementary School parents are invited to attend.

Refreshments will be served.

What's happening in the cafeteria?

The Banner

Improvements in the WMES Cafeteria

In September, we asked our students to describe their “hopes and dreams” for their lunchtime at Washington Mill. Naturally, they said they wanted their cafeteria to be a clean, welcoming place where they could eat their lunch and talk with their friends. We then asked them what they could do to help make this a reality. Their answers included cleaning up after themselves, eating a bit more than they talk, chatting in “medium sized” voices, staying seated at their tables, and moving through the line quickly and quietly.

To support this improved cafeteria environment, the school improvement plan committee decided to do a few other things: bring parent volunteers to serve as friendly role models during lunch, hang student artwork on the cafeteria walls, and play calming music periodically to give students a chance to eat quietly and re-center so that they can have a productive afternoon back in their classrooms.

In the past few months, we have seen fewer discipline incidents coming from the cafeteria and have generally sensed a more pleasant atmosphere there. We encourage parents to come visit—whether to eat lunch with their child or to join our volunteer force. Please email Sean McCarthy, PTA Vice President, at mclucid@verizon.net to learn more about volunteering.



Washington Mill Elementary Home/School Compact

Teacher/Staff

We understand the importance of the school experience to every student and our role as educators in helping every child achieve. Therefore, we agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of our ability:

- Teach necessary concepts to your child.
- Identify the needs of your child.
- Communicate with parents on your child's progress.
- Establish clear rules and classroom behavior.
- Receive and implement Responsive Classroom strategies for community building.
- Intervene and provide support for struggling learners.
- Extend and enrich learning experiences for all children.
- Participate in all Professional Learning Community meetings to discuss the educational needs of children.

Parent

I understand that my participation in my child's education will help his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I will continue to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Go over my child's assignments with him or her.
- Give my child a quiet place to study.
- Make sure my child gets enough sleep every night.
- Make sure my child is at school on time.
- Spend at least 20 minutes each day reading with my child.
- Attend parent conferences and school meetings.
- Try to make fun visits to the local library.
- Participate in curriculum nights at school.

Student

I realize that my education is important. I know I am responsible for my own success. Therefore, I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Do my classwork on time.
- Return corrected work to my parent or caregiver.
- Be at school on time unless I am sick.
- Be responsible for my own behavior.
- Refrain from disturbing other students.
- Pay attention in school.
- Be respectful to school personnel, other students, and school property.
- Seek adult assistance when needing support.

Title One Family Involvement Policy for Washington Mill Elementary School

Fairfax County Public School's Title One program is established to improve student achievement and support all students in meeting the objectives of Fairfax County Program of Studies and the Virginia Standards of Learning.

In order for students to achieve their highest academic potential, it is essential that a full partnership be established with parents and significant others in every student's life. In order to achieve this partnership of academic reciprocity, the administration and staff of Washington Mill have put in place the following initiatives:

Information will be provided at Back to School Night that clearly outlines the Title One Program at Washington Mill, the expectations of No Child Left Behind and the present academic standing of Washington Mill Elementary School in regards to meetings all academic requirements.

A monthly school newsletter, the Banner, will go home to all parents with current updates and reminders of testing dates and academic news.

Parent Academic Nights are scheduled for February and March with a focus on Math, and Literacy in order to empower parents as they attempt to support the academics of their children at home. Parents will be given take home packets of materials they can use to enrich students academic understanding.

Parents will receive a Curriculum Highlight phone call every two weeks that clearly outlines their child's academic concentration for that period of time and strategies they can employ at home to foster deeper understanding of the curriculum. This phone call will be grade level specific and sent in English and Spanish.

All parents of Washington Mill stu-

dents are expected to attend a Parent/Teacher Conference in November or December. Any parent not seen by December first will receive a letter from the Administration offering Saturday or evening hours in order to insure that all parents are informed and all parents' voices are heard.

Every parent will receive two classroom newsletters monthly outlining the class events, curriculum foci and news from their child's classroom.

Every parent will receive a personal call from their child's educator once a month to share both good news and discuss concerns before matters become serious.

Washington Mill will continue a hiring practice of seeking qualified bilingual speakers in order to insure smooth communications for parents who do not have command of the English language.

Provide an up-to-date web site and training sessions so that parents can be familiar with the navigation and understanding of this home to school link.

Programs involving children performance will be scheduled in such a manner as to give access to parents who work varying schedules. Every attempt will be made to schedule performances in the evening and afternoon to accommodate.

PTA representatives and WMES administration and staff will continue to seek neighborhood venues in which to participate in order to become more visible and approachable to parents. It is hoped this outreach will encourage more parents to bridge the span between home and school.

Every effort will be made to provide transportation to school events for parents without access.

Washington Mill will continue to offer a myriad of after school programs that foster success in academics, community responsibility and life skills. Parents are encouraged to bring a craft, skill or hobby to the after school program. It is hoped this attempt will provide an avenue for parents to become involved in an area where they have skill and comfort.

Washington Mill will continue to diligently photograph all school activities and produce TV coverage in the form of power points in the lobby for parents to see the variety of student life and activity offered at Washington Mill.

Access to administration will continue to be a 24/7 model with phone numbers and emails regularly published.

The WMES counselor and administration will work closely with all outside agencies to insure swift attention is given to the needs of WMES students and families in areas of food, shelter, school supplies etc.

WMES will continue to stress and put forth the concept of home and school alliance so that parents are in full understanding of the need for their input, consultation and physical involvement. It is hoped through direct conversations, parents will have a clear understanding of the value of their participation in their children's academic career and know their efforts are essential to academic success.

All of the above initiatives are now in place and will continue to be part of the Washington Mill profile. As new avenues for parent involvement are developed this document will be updated,

WMES Eco-Team

HELP NEEDED!!

The Eco-Schools Project is in need of volunteers to dig beds in several areas of the school grounds. The beds need to be dug by the end of the first quarter. Landscaping experience is helpful but not necessary. If you are able to help with this project, please contact Debbie Hein at DTHein@fcps.edu as soon as possible.

The beds will be used to lay bricks that the children have painted with the help of Mr. Nawrot. They will be laid early in the 2nd quarter by a group of students (to

be determined).

Through the Eco-Schools Project, students at WMES were able to install rain barrels by the modular to water the Kindergarten garden. The Kindergarten garden was planted by Eagle Scout and former WMES student, Max Rayman. This year, the 1st grade will continue the gar-



den. Ms. LaMain's class planted bulbs and Ms. Hein's class planted annuals and perennials in front of the school. In conjunction with the PTA, this school year, the Eco-Schools project plans to landscape around the WMES school sign and finish with the beautification of the grounds.

WMES PTA...every child. one voice.

Dear WMES Families:

Heritage Harvest

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Heritage Harvest a success. We appreciate all of the parents, guardians, and teachers that volunteered their time. It would not have been possible without you. Also, thank you to all those who brought the delicious side dishes and the yummy cakes/cupcakes for the Cake Walk. We hope everyone enjoyed the fun evening!

WMES PTA Student/Family Directory

The PTA is putting together a new WMES PTA Student/Family Directory for 2011-2012. This is a priceless handbook. Families typically use this free directory for everything from homework help, carpool coordinating, play dates and more. In order for your family to be included in the directory please make



sure you completed and turned in the directory form (that was sent home in your child's Thursday folder). The deadline was Wednesday, October 19.

Classic Cookie Fundraiser

Be sure to watch for information about the PTA's next fundraiser - Classic Cookie. It will come home in

your child's Thursday folder. Our goal: If each family can purchase at least one order of cookie mix, the PTA will be able to continue to offer exciting FREE after-school programs like Overtime Athletics and Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre.

Next PTA Meeting

Mark your calendar for our next PTA meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, starting at 6:30 p.m. We will have a guest speaker talking about 529 plans for your children. 529 plans are tax-advantaged savings plans designed to encourage saving for future college cost.

Sincerely,
WMES PTA

**Thank You to our Business Partners for Supporting
WMES**



**Benevolent and Protective
Order of Elks**