

# THE SOARING SEAGULL



December 2023

Lynne Palmer, Principal  
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## Important Dates to Remember

December	4-8	PTA Holiday Shop
	7	School Picture Retakes
	12	6:00 p.m. PTA Meeting
		PTA Mustang Pizza Night
	14	6:00 p.m. Music Concert
	22	School Closed – Asynchronous Learning Day
	23 – Jan. 1	Winter Holiday
January	2	Welcome Back!

### Message from Mrs. Palmer

We were so happy to see so many parents and other family members during American Education Week and on conference day. Your participation in your children's education is critical to their high achievement. Also, we want to thank our PTA for providing the hospitality table for our guests.

We have completed the first quarter of school and report cards have been distributed. Learning never stops at Oliver Beach. Students are more motivated to learn when they feel capable, connected and in control. Having your child teach you things nurtures these feelings. When your child tries to teach you about what they are doing, it can help them understand assignments better, reinforce what they know and reveal gaps in their own comprehension.

Try these strategies:

1. Show an interest in what your child is learning in school. Have them show you an assignment, explain a concept or have them read aloud.

2. Let your child quiz you. See if you can name the state capitals or the first five presidents or spell a certain word. Try to define vocabulary words and recall math or science facts.
3. Ask your child to help you solve a problem or create something. What do they think you should do first, second, next...?
4. Ask your child to teach you how to play one of their favorite games.
5. Ask your child's opinion and consider it before solidifying your own.

As you know, Oliver Beach Elementary is a special place because of our wonderful families, students, and staff. As the holiday season approaches, we are reminded each day of how fortunate we truly are. On behalf of the faculty and staff at Oliver Beach, I would like to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and a most prosperous and safe new year.

### **News from Pre-Ks**

Pre-K has been focusing on all the attributes of shapes-- how many sides, how many corners. We're continuing to learn new letters and their sounds. We're looking forward to learning all about how to recycle and reuse objects for new purposes, environments all around us, and diving in and exploring the ocean!

### **Kindergarten News**

In Kindergarten, we are working on becoming independent with daily activities such as tying shoes, putting jackets on, zipping/buttoning/snapping, and opening food containers and packages. We are working hard to build the stamina necessary to complete tasks with follow-through!

In phonics, we are matching letters to letter sounds. We are also adding to the sight words that we automatically recognize. It has been a joy to witness the students use what they know about rhyming words to read new words. For example, "What's /at/, with a /c/ at the beginning? /m/? /s/?...etc". We are using our phonics skills to write about a time we learned to do something new.

In math, we are working on representing quantities in multiple ways. We have also worked hard to use numbers and symbols (+, -, =, <, >) to write equations and compare quantities.

I am proud of our progress. The kindergarteners are excited to start our holiday break countdown.

We have so much to look forward to in the new year! Have a safe and restful holiday.

### **News From Grade 1**

1st grade continues to work in Module 3 of Into Reading (Amazing Animals). We are learning, in both reading and science, about the various characteristics of animals that allow them to grow and survive. We will read about the different kinds of structures animals build for homes and protection. Students will be reading various genres in this module including animal fantasy, mysteries and many informational texts. We will be identifying key ideas and details, author's



purpose, text features, text organization and point of view, as we read. Students will work through the writing process to create an informational text using their research, art, and text features.

We continue to work in Unit 3 of Bridges which encourages student mastery of key number facts and fact strategies for single-digit addition and subtraction. This unit focuses on developing place-value understanding and solving addition combinations to 20. November Number Corner is winding down. Students have worked with time to the hour, fractions ( $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$ ), and writing multiple equations to represent a number.

### **Grade 2 News**

Second graders are busy at work this month in ELA focusing on What lessons can we learn from the characters in stories learning text organization, story structure, and making inferences. Students will be creating their own imaginative story at the end of this unit. In Math students are learning the importance of place value as well as adding and subtracting on the number line with two digit numbers.

### **News From Grade 3**

Our third graders are gearing up for an essential Health Education unit focusing on fostering healthy relationships. In this module, we will delve into topics such as peer pressure, effective communication, and conflict resolution. These skills are crucial for building positive connections and navigating the social landscape. We are excited to empower our students with the tools they need to form strong, supportive relationships.

In the world of mathematics, our third graders are tackling three-digit addition and subtraction strategies with enthusiasm and determination. This unit will strengthen their foundational skills and prepare them for more complex mathematical concepts in the future. We encourage parents to support their child's mathematical journey by practicing these strategies at home.

A new reading module has begun, and this time, we're diving into the captivating world of plays. Our third graders will explore the unique elements of this literary form, from dialogue and stage directions to character development. This module promises to be an exciting journey that will enhance both their reading comprehension and appreciation for the performing arts.

### **News From Grade 4**

Students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade have been reading about characters who face challenges and "rise to the occasion" to solve their problems. They are focusing on the character traits of demonstrating bravery, hard work, and persistence. They will be writing argumentative essays, persuading their audience which trait is most helpful in overcoming challenges. Students are also learning and utilizing a RACE strategy to help respond to questions in all subject areas, by citing evidence and explaining their thinking. Along with their HMH reading lessons, students are also reading novels, analyzing, and discussing novels which have characters facing challenging situations. We are excited to begin our mini Geography unit this month as well as starting Social Studies lessons focusing on Early Americans. As always, we encourage students to practice and learn their basic math facts as we move forward with fractions, decimals, multiplication and division this month. Looking forward to seeing everyone at our Winter Concert!

## **Grade 5 News**

Mrs. Swecker's 5th grade class is working on math strategies for comparing decimals. Students are looking at decimals as if they are money equivalencies for ordering them on a number line. Our class is studying natural disasters in reading and finding evidence in the text that supports ways to stay safe during these events and determining if students would rebuild or move away. We have started our unit for colonization in Social Studies and determining why geography was so crucial. There will be a Google Meet on Wednesday, December 6th 6:00PM for parents and guardians to view the Changes In Me curriculum. Use the code OBESGrade5 at 6:00PM to view the videos in this unit. It is best to use your child's computer for the Google Meet. There is also a Puberty permission slip for you to opt out of some lessons. I will be sending the permission slip home soon. Please plan to join me for the virtual session on puberty. Thank you for all your support.

## **Counselor's Corner**

As part of our School Counseling Program, your child's class will be participating in a counseling core curriculum lesson during the month of December on personal safety and decision-making. The lessons are based on Baltimore County Public Schools' Personal Safety Program preK-5: Making Healthy Decisions curriculum. This program includes age-appropriate information on body safety and neglect and abuse prevention strategies and highlights the importance of telling a trusted adult about uncomfortable situations. Our goal is to help children be better able to handle the issues of personal safety should they arise. Keeping your child safe is a priority to all of us at Oliver Beach Elementary School. It is our hope that these lessons will help to reinforce the information and strategies that you have already given your children.

If you have any items that you think the students at OBES might like to choose as a reward for their perfect attendance, please send the items in to school. I am always collecting for our monthly SOAR "store". Thank you in advance!

Thank you to everyone who has completed both the volunteer application, volunteer training, and submitted their application and certificate of completion. If you have not done so already, please visit [https://www.bcps.org/cos/communications/FACE/b\\_c\\_p\\_s\\_volunteers](https://www.bcps.org/cos/communications/FACE/b_c_p_s_volunteers) and send your documentation to [ssewart5@bcps.org](mailto:ssewart5@bcps.org). Thanks again!

## **News from Oliver Beach Elementary School Library**

In the library, pre-k students learned about book elements (parts of a book, purpose of author and illustrator, fiction vs. nonfiction, and express their opinion about books).

Kindergarten students reviewed book elements and are starting to study awesome authors. They read several of Eric Carle's books and examined his style of writing and illustrations. Kindergarten sequenced ideas in the stories read and started writing algorithms to help sequence the stories they read.

First grade students are working on making connections to the stories they are reading. As students read at home, they are encouraged to think about how the stories they read might relate to people



they know, themselves, the world, or other stories they have read. In CSI, students are beginning to understand and write basic algorithms using symbols, words, and/or pictures. They also are learning about the hardware and software within a computer and basic troubleshooting techniques for the Chromebooks.

Second graders are finishing up their Digital Citizenship unit. They took a deep dive into several of the BCPS digital databases and are beginning to use the databases for their own research. In Computer Science & Innovation, students identified internal and external components of computer systems and examined their basic functions. Students are also identifying and summarizing basic troubleshooting techniques to solve basic hardware and software problems. Second grade students are beginning to learn block coding, while using programs such as Scratch Jr and code.org.

Third grade students are wrapping up their Digital Citizenship Unit. The topics we have discussed are cyberbullying, plagiarism, digital footprint, BCPS Computer Use Policies, media balance. Students have been introduced to Scratch, a visual programming language that allows students to create their own interactive stories, animations, or games. Students used scratch to create their own scenarios about the topics learned within the Digital Citizenship Unit. Students also examined accessibility tools within their Chromebooks and examined how the hardware and software work together in various computer systems.

Fourth grade students are wrapping up their Digital Citizenship Unit. This unit prepares students to be responsible digital citizens as they use technology in their classroom instruction and outside of school. Students are learning how to apply characteristics of a strong password, keep online games fun and friendly, use information responsibly, respect intellectual property and make healthy media choices.

Fifth grade students are learning how different parts of computing systems work together and how to protect computer systems safely. Students are also examining how information is transmitted through networks.

### **From the Art Studio**

Brrr... it is getting cold in the art studio, which means winter art units have arrived! Soon the hallway displays will be full of winter artworks. Pre-K artists completed their line artworks by drawing and painting different lines. They loved their first painting lesson in the art room! Next, they will begin evergreen tree and winter wreath torn paper collages. Kindergarten artists practiced the art of printmaking to create poinsettia prints for Poinsettia Day, which is December 12. Kindergarten artists also drew polar bears and practiced wax resist painting to show snowy skies in the background. First grade artists are creating winter-inspired self-portraits. They have had a fun time observing the lines, shapes, and colors of their faces within a mirror to create an accurate self-portrait, while also adding winter accessories to keep their self-portraits warm! Second grade artists created their own Styrofoam printing plate to create winter-themed "snowy" prints using white paint. Some students made up to 20 prints! Third grade artists are completing their kirigami kimonos and are getting ready to begin a delicious hot cocoa mug pop-up artwork. Fourth grade artists are creating stunning winter landscape paintings using watercolor paint and liquid tempera. Fifth grade artists began their clay unit and are creating winter evergreen tree luminaries! We cannot wait to see them all lit up in the art room!

## **Music Notes**

December is one of my favorite months for teaching music! This month all classes will be listening to music from the famous Nutcracker ballet. Students will listen to instrumental pieces written by composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky to identify patterns and repeated sections used in his composition. Students will also move to show the patterns in the music for the piece(s) they learn about. Please make sure students wear comfortable clothing and tennis shoes on the days they have music this month so they can move comfortably and safely. In addition to the music, we will read "The Nutcracker" to learn about the fairytale that inspired the ballet and music that accompanies it. There are many different versions of the original story. At home you could continue their learning by checking out a version of the book from your local library, listen to the music from the ballet at home while eating together or decorating for the holidays, view one of the Nutcracker movies, or even see a live performance as many local venues present the ballet story during the winter season.

**All 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will perform in our annual winter concert on Thursday, December 14th.** Doors will open at 5:45p.m. and performances will begin at 6:00p.m. The students have worked diligently to learn harmony to several songs. To make sure the concert is successful, it is important for all students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade to attend so the chorus is balanced. If you know your child cannot attend, let Mrs. Michael know as soon as you are able so that adjustments can be made to the students' order on stage.

## **Nurse Notes**

For our PK to 1<sup>st</sup> grade students: parents, please send in a change of clothing in a gallon Ziploc bag to keep in your child's locker. Having well-fitting clothing on hand when needed helps greatly to keep students in class and engaged with learning. Older students are welcome to keep a change of clothing in their lockers as well!