Message from Dr. Baier

Dear Fort Garrison Families,

Thank you to everyone who was able to visit the Fort during American Education Week. It was an exciting and productive week with parents reading to children and conferencing with teachers. The strong involvement of parents at Fort Garrison is one important reason our students are so successful.

Speaking of success, our annual Read-a-Thon coordinated by Mrs. Siegel was an event that raised over $14,000.00! This money will be used directly to support reading instruction in our building. Thank you so much for your support!

At our recent PTA meeting on Wednesday, November 20th we included representatives from the Office of Transportation, Office of Grounds and Baltimore County Police Department to address questions and concerns regarding bus arrival and parking. In summary, the Office of Transportation has been able to adjust the White Rockfish route in order to ensure an earlier arrival time. Also, we addressed the recent change in the parking signs in front of the school. The Office of Grounds has modified the traffic signs to ensure that they are consistent in front of the school building and appropriate to the school zone. The signs now read, “No Stopping or Standing”. Parents are urged to obey the traffic and school signs and not park in faculty parking lot and in the No Stopping areas. I appreciated the open discussion and your feedback regarding these matters. Please contact me with additional questions.
Message from Dr. Baier - continued

We look forward to seeing you at our Winter Concert taking place on Wednesday, December 18th. On December 19th our students will have an assembly spotlighting different holidays and customs that occur during the holiday season.

However your family celebrates this wonderful time of year, I hope you’re able to spend time together. I look forward to partnering with you for a terrific second half of the school year.

Happy Holidays,

Dr. Hope Baier
Happy Holidays to you and your family! Thank you so very much for supporting our Read-A-Thon! We were able to raise over $14,000! I cannot wait to show you where all the money is going to!! We have already ordered theme books for our younger students and materials for Mrs. Grapes’ Leadership group!

Please SAVE THE DATE!! **Monday, April 20th is our Annual Reading/Innovation/STEM night with a family Food Truck Picnic!**

As a parent, I know how hard it is to sometimes get your children to read, especially at night. Here is an article from Scholastic which suggests fun ways to read things besides books: https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/raise-a-reader-blog/15-reading-materials-arent-books.html

When we think of reading, most of us immediately think of stories, especially books. But there are many other types of reading materials that children can use to practice their developing reading skills. How many of these forms of print have you read with your children?

1. **Magazines** – There are lots of great magazines for kids, both at the newsstand and available for digital downloads.

2. **Comics** – Don’t discount the power of comics to hook kids on reading. They are a great way to teach your children about the back and forth of dialog.

3. **Manuals** – For kids who want to know how things work, manuals for things like cars, lawnmowers, and appliances can be great options – and they build vocabulary, too.

4. **Newspapers** – If you are worried about exposing your child to news articles about crime or traumatic events, choose a local community newspaper or give your child a specific section to read that you’ve already vetted.

5. **Poetry** – Grab a collection of poems or sit down and write some with your children. Rhyming is an important skill for reading, and having your children write poems on their own is a great way to build that skill.

6. **Travel Brochures** – They can plan fantasy vacations and learn a bit of geography too.

7. **Encyclopedias** – Did you read encyclopedias as a kid? Your child might have to read them online, but that’s okay. Start with a subject and see where it takes the both of you.

*Continued – Page 4*
8. **Sports Programs** – Hold on to the programs that you are given at sporting events and let your kids read and reread about their favorite athletes and teams.

9. **Catalogs** – Many catalogs now are so much more than just products and quick descriptions. Have your child make wish lists and fit in a little writing too.

10. **Recipes** – Cook with your kids and take turns reading the ingredients and instructions. This is a great example of real-life reading for kids of any age.

11. **Dictionaries** – You might be hard-pressed to convince your children to read a dictionary from cover-to-cover but give them a challenge like: "Find a new word that starts with 'r'" or "Find a word with 13 letters" and they will end up doing a lot of reading with a plain old dictionary.

12. **Play Scripts** – Explore what it might be like to be on screen or stage by reading a few scripts together. You can even put on a play after reading them.

13. **Atlases** – Atlases are packed with a wealth of reference information. Not only can your child map out a great adventure, but she can also read about land formations, population, and more.

14. **Road Signs** – Kids start recognizing familiar signs at an early age. Keep that knowledge of environmental print going by playing sign games on road trips.

15. **Books They Write!** – Nothing is as powerful as reading their own writing. Encourage your child to write, and his reading will get a boost too.

*Stacy Siegel*
*Reading Specialist*
*ssiegel@bcps.org*
Fort Garrison’s Student Council and Green Team are partnering up to collect books for the Maryland Book Bank.

Please see information regarding books for the Maryland Book Bank at the end of this newsletter. Thanks so much!

Fort Garrison is a proud Maryland Green School!

Music Department

A BUNCH of important “notes” from the Music Teacher!

1. **Parents of Fourth and Fifth Grade students**: Don’t forget: Our first concert of the year is WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18th at 7:00 p.m. All students should arrive at 6:45 p.m. They should report to their classrooms. Please hold their coats for them and do not send personal belongings with them.
   - There is no specific concert attire. Dress your “best”!

2. **Parents of Third Grade students**: Please keep in mind the following:
   - A study tool has been sent home to assist students in preparing for the final treble clef notation assessment being given the second week in December.
   - Please log onto OSP at [http://osp.osmsinc.com/BaltimoreCountyMD](http://osp.osmsinc.com/BaltimoreCountyMD) and purchase a recorder for your student by **Friday, December 6th**. You may also send in a check or exact change in cash, labeled with your child’s name. An order will be placed by the school, and students that bought a recorder will receive it with a neck strap the first week of January. Students who are bringing their own from home **MUST** have had it examined by Mrs. Case, and should bring it to Vocal Music Class following the New Year.

3. **Parents of First and Second Grade students**: Our Winter musical will be Wednesday, February 5th at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. An email was recently sent regarding help with costumes, scenery and props. Please let Mrs. Case know if you missed the chance to volunteer and still wish to do so. Thanks!

4. **Recorder Ensemble**: Students in Fourth and Fifth Grade can find applications outside of the Vocal Music room. Mrs. Case will contact students/families being invited to participate in this group in late December.

Mrs. Case
Vocal & Exploratory Music
I can’t believe we are already into December and winter is just around the corner! More time indoors = more time for reading! Encourage your child to self-select books that they are interested in for independent reading. We have plenty of awesome choices in our school library. Here are some reminders for successful book check outs!

**Book Check Out:** Students in grades 1-5 can check out up to 4 books at a time from any section of the library. Kindergarteners check out one book at a time from our Everybody section. Our library catalog, called Destiny, is a great tool for helping families choose and keep track of checked out books.

To access Destiny, log into BCPSOne and click on Digital Content. Click on Destiny and choose Fort Garrison from the list of schools.

From here, students can:

- **See what books they have checked out!** Click on the three-line menu button on the top left and click on “My Stuff” to see what books are currently checked out.
- **Search for books!** Students can use the catalog features to search for books and write down the call numbers, so they are ready to find them the next time they have library.
- **Read eBooks and Interactive Books!** Our collection features many eBooks and Interactive Books that can be checked out and read from home using a computer.

Happy Reading! And don’t forget to visit our public library branch as well!

**BCPL Partnership:** BCPS and Baltimore County Public Libraries have teamed up to allow BCPS students access to materials at their local branch of the public library. Students can use their One Cards (or look up their BCPSOne student identification number with the help of library staff) to check out up to 5 items at a time from the public library with no late fees! Students can also access the public library’s online resources through BCPSOne Digital Content.

Mrs. O’Donnell
Librarian
lodonnell3@bcps.org
Dear Parents and Guardians,

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 K-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 Fort Garrison Elementary. It is our hope that these lessons will help to reinforce the information and strategies that you have already given your children, and that your family can discuss together the important information presented in these lessons. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about the program. I can be reached via phone at 410-887-1203 or via email at clepley@bcps.org.

Sincerely,

Kate Lepley
School Counselor

---

**Fox Branch – Student Banking**

First Financial Federal Credit Union comes to our school one Friday a month and we have two fifth grade student tellers that help collect the deposits from the students from 9:05 – 9:20. At that time they receive a receipt for their deposit and may select a gift to take with them. We only allow deposits at our location, but you can withdraw the money at any of the various First Financial Federal Credit Union locations. Each month depositors are entered in a drawing for some type of gift card. If you are interested in signing your child up for this worthwhile program, please contact Mrs. Grapes at bgrapes@bcps.org and I will send the application information home with your child as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Here are the upcoming banking dates:

- Dec. 13th
- Jan. 10th
- Feb. 14th

**Physical Education**

It is extremely important for students to come prepared for PE class by wearing comfortable clothing that they can move appropriately in and more importantly, sneakers. These sneakers should also be closed-toe shoes in order to help decrease the chances of injury and being stung by insects when we are outside. These guidelines are put in place to help keep your student safe. I highly encourage you to have your student wear sneakers everyday so they are prepared for class all the time plus this would also keep them safe during recess since they will have that every day for sure and students should not be climbing on the playground equipment without having sneakers on. If wearing sneakers every day all day does not work for you, then simply have them keep a spare pair of sneakers in their locker so they can change when necessary.

continued – Page 8
Physical Education News - continued

If you have any old sneakers that are still in good shape, please consider donating them so I have shoes available when students forget them. Also, if you have any old, but usable exercise equipment, please consider donating it to our program to help grow our program. If you are considering donating some type of equipment, please contact me at bgrapes@bcps.org.

Our FUTP60 student leadership team is busy organizing flag football as an option at recess once a week to start, in grades 3 - 5. This will help fulfill one of the tasks needed for our school to become a touchdown school for the 2nd year in a row.

We will also be working on spreading the word about good nutrition to the entire student body in a variety of ways this year. We have some great students taking on more responsibilities and becoming amazing leaders in our school.

Beth Grapes
Physical Ed Teacher

Health Suite News

Thanks Fort parents for your vigilance in balancing your children’s need to be in the classroom with their need to be kept home when they are sick, and your timeliness in picking up your child when he/she is sick. These measures help to keep sickness in the building to a minimum, while keeping the academics moving forward.

Preventing Illnesses

Keep in mind that students should always be kept home until free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours.

Medications

Any medications to be given at school require a doctor’s order form and a supply of the medication; this includes over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or Motrin as well. Discretionary medications are just for the occasional health issue, not for reoccurring issues. Also, medication must be transported adult-to-adult, and not packed in the student’s backpack, for the safety of all the students.

Other Illnesses

In addition to the normal illnesses, we have had some other contagious issues off and on, such as conjunctivitis (pink-eye) and skin lesions such as ringworm or impetigo.

Pink-eye can be viral, bacterial, or allergic. In general, if you see pink in the white of the eye, with itchiness or crustiness, please have your doctor check the eye before sending your child to school.

continued – Page 9
Even if it is allergy related, rather than a contagious infection, your doctor can prescribe medication to alleviate the symptoms for your child and allow better concentration in school. Students diagnosed with contagious pink-eye should be told to avoid touching the eye, and to wash their hands, as they can spread the infection to their other eye and other family members.

Ringworm is a fungal infection characterized by a circular red, itching lesion. Students frequently scratch one lesion, touch other parts of their body, or other people, and create new lesions. It requires treatment at least twice a day, consistently, with an antifungal cream in order to resolve the infection.

Impetigo is a bacterial infection often seen around the nose and mouth where clusters of open or crusty lesions multiply and persist.

Pink-eye, ringworm, and impetigo are spread by touch, and require antibiotics or anti-fungals to treat them. **Treatment for 24 hours, and a doctor’s note**, permit children back in school without danger of transmission to other students. In a community where hundreds of children are gathered closely together, we need everyone’s watchful eyes and responsiveness to minimize contagious health issues. Thank you again for your respectfulness in this regard.

**Food Allergies**

Last, I would like to mention that we have students with life-threatening food allergies at every grade level this year. Some of these students have allergies to multiple food ingredients. Because of this, you must plan celebrations for school that are non-food ways of celebrating, as that is the most inclusive, and most safe. Consider a special song played for your child, a cartoon feature, a guest or a speaker special to the student, party bags with novelty pencils, erasers, stickers (rather than candy), or a short game. Use your creativity as you discuss it with your child’s teacher!

Please also encourage your students to keep their food away from others, and to clean their hands after eating so our food allergic students are not placed at risk. Parents of students with food allergies, be sure that your student has alternative snacks of their own, stored with their teacher, for situations where they can’t partake of what is being offered, and be sure to discuss and monitor food choices with your students.

No student is to have food on the bus, as the bus drivers need to concentrate on the road, not potential problems related to food.

Catherine Caulk, RN BDN
School Nurse
A MESSAGE FROM THE PTA

Hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving! We appreciate all you are doing to support the PTA in any way that you can.

If you have not been receiving emails from the PTA about school events and would like to, please fill out your email release and send it back to school or email us at fortgarrisonpta@gmail.com and ask us to add you!

URGENT: A volunteer for PTA treasurer is needed! Our current treasurer has decided he is no longer able to continue in this role so we have a vacancy on our board that must be filled at our January meeting. He has offered to help transition the new treasurer into the role. We will be voting on a new treasurer at that time. If you are interested, please contact us at fortgarrisonpta@gmail.com We would like to thank Jeff Zoller for all the work he has done for us over the past two and half years. He has certainly done a lot to keep us going. We will miss you!

Upcoming:

- **Our next PTA meeting is Thursday, January 16th at 6:30 p.m.** We will again show parents how they can check their child's grades online. A HotSpots representative will be speaking at this meeting to share more information about what they offer! They will also be providing free childcare during the time of the meeting.

- **Restaurant night will be held at Kooper’s North – Timonium on Wednesday, January 15th!** Mention FGES and a percentage of the sales will be donated to the PTA to support our students!

- **Holiday Shop Volunteers are needed!** Holiday shop is December 12th and 13th! Here is the sign up genius link for parent volunteers https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?u=https%3a%2f%2fwww.signupgenius.com%2fgo%2f0b4bada92fa5fe3-fort&c=E,1,H-IuGavYY7d-xvWUw20uJerWvyah8FYpOhULK17Fiv-4VBQRhbpMn8d15Mk-YijJ6bgVhziZTfj380tXrpNzQxPcNu3x14wvTHAHq2FyPSzhHVCr4d0A,,&typo=1

Reminders:

- **Volunteers are still needed!** We need people that are willing to co-chair and help with Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week (Spring), Plant Sale (May), and Kindergarten Meetups (Summer).
• Parents please don’t forget to complete the volunteer training so you can help at school or chaperone a field trip. We hope to have parents help in the cafeteria again this year starting in January! Applications and training can be done online at:  https://www.bcps.org/community/volunteer_info/.

• Please continue to collect and submit Box Tops and download the new Box Top App. We are still collecting the traditional box tops clips but, please sign up for and use the new Box Tops app to scan your receipt within 14 days of purchase. The app will find participating products purchased at any store and instantly add cash to our school’s earnings online. A list of all participating products can be found at:  https://www.boxtops4education.com/Participating-Products-Page.

• PTA membership and Spirit Wear orders are accepted all year! Membership forms are available in the office and online at:  https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/eac34a_60623fec5c4f4de8bb310d197415ddd3.pdf.

• Spirit Wear orders can be placed at:  https://shop.wgmprinting.com/fortgarrisonelementaryschool/shop/home.

Thank you!

Debby Katzen, PTA President and Carly Greenberg, PTA Vice President

fortgarrisonpta@gmail.com
Fort Garrison’s Student Council and Green Team are partnering up to collect books for the Maryland Book Bank.

The Maryland Book Bank needs and accepts books for children and adults.

They DO NOT accept CDs, DVDs, encyclopedia sets, magazines, textbooks older than 5 years or books that are damaged or moldy.

The Maryland Book Bank depends on donations to provide over 250,000 books a year to children, educators, librarians, caregivers and families in under-resourced neighborhoods.

Boxes will be located in the front lobby from December 16th – January 3rd.