



SOUTHWEST BALTIMORE

CHARTER SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Apr. 2** School resumes. (Note that this is a change in the calendar.)
- Apr. 4** Lacrosse Game at Carroll Park, 4:30 PM
- Apr. 10** Lacrosse Game at Carroll Park, 3:30 PM
- Apr. 13** Middle Grades Skating Trip
- Apr. 17** Lacrosse Game at Carroll Park, 3:30 PM
- Apr. 18** PTO Chik-Fil-A Night
- Apr. 19** Student-Led Conferences
- Apr. 20** Student-Led Conferences
- Apr. 24** Lacrosse Game at Carroll Park, 4:30 PM
- Apr. 25** Lacrosse Game at Carroll Park, 3:30 PM

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear SBCS Families,

The winter months are rapidly coming to an end. We have been extremely fortunate as we have endured a relatively mild winter thus far and I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming spring and shortly thereafter summer. As we enter into the month of April, it is the time of year for children to go outside and enjoy the warmer weather. Please ensure that your scholars spend time outside basking in the lovely weather and having fun. I know it is also the time of year when we all transition into wearing summer clothing. Please be mindful that uniforms are required at SBCS and when scholars come to school without a uniform, they will be required to 'borrow' uniforms from the school for the day or have their uniforms dropped off by a parent or guardian.

As part of our school's culture we love to enjoy nature. Our young Trailblazers will go for walks, play on the playground, and take part in activities around the building as part of their educational day. Please remember to have your child wear sneakers or any closed toe shoes to school so she/he has a safe experience outside.

A special thank you to our PTO and all the parents who supported our PTO's Skate Night Fundraiser. Also thank you to all the parents who volunteered their Friday to support our Middle Grades crew leaders in making our first Crew Friday of the 2017-2018 school year a great one. We are very appreciative of your continued support.
Happy spring.

Yours in education,
Mrs. Iffeisha Gordon-Toppin
Principal

FROM THE ACADEMIC DIRECTOR

Show What You Know! PARCC Testing Season is here!

Beginning April 23rd, every **3rd-8th grade student will be taking the PARCC assessment in Math and English Language Arts**. This assessment is designed to measure students' progress toward the rigorous Common Core Standards. These assessments serve as an educational GPS system, identifying where students are excelling and where they may need extra help to get where they need to be.

Here are some key facts about PARCC assessments for you to keep in mind:

- PARCC assessments test students in grades 3-8 in Math and English Language Arts. Each test section takes from 60-90 minutes. There are 6-7 sections: 3 in English Language Arts and 3 or 4 in Math, so this is a big undertaking for students!
- These tests are used to evaluate school and teacher effectiveness, and to determine student eligibility for the best high schools in the city, for gifted and advanced learner programs, and other specialized activities.
- PARCC assessments are more engaging AND challenging than traditional standardized tests. The math section

contains multi-step problems that ask students to reason through real-world situations. The language arts section asks students to read passages from real texts – fiction and non-fiction – and sometimes watch video or listen to audio. All of the skills assessed on the test are based on age-appropriate standards.

How Can you Support Your Child?

- Be sure that your child reads a lot – ideally a combination of fiction and non-fiction.
- Discuss and “do” real life math with your child – measuring, calculating, doing puzzles, and playing logic games. Help him/her know basic math facts.
- Discuss the tests with your child. Make sure s/he is not scared or anxious going into the new tests, but will take them seriously and do their best.
- Explain to your child that the tests are more challenging than classwork. They should not be afraid to try to figure out a question that seems confusing at first.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home and make sure your child gets a good night’s sleep and nutritious breakfast before a test (or any school day!).
- Attend Student-Led Conferences and talk with teachers about your child’s strengths and areas for improvement.
- Talk with your child’s teacher to determine which skills to reinforce at home.
- Above all, be positive and encouraging about the tests!

Take the Test! PARCC has a test online that parents and students can try. <https://parcc-assessment.org/practice-tests/>

Ms. Romey

SCHOOL SURVEY

We need ALL parents to complete the yearly school survey! If you would prefer to fill it out online, here is the link:

www.k12insight.com/SchoolSurveyParent/SY1718

Please do so before April 6th. We want 100% participation!

FREE SUMMER PROGRAM AT THE AQUARIUM!

Looking for an amazing, free summer program for you student in grades 4-12? Check this program out at the National Aquarium. Deadline to apply is April 15th! <https://www.aqua.org/learn/student-programs/henry-hall-program>

SUMMER CAMP AT SBCS!

One fieldtrip each week! • Swimming once each week! • Math! • Literacy! • Science! • Sports! Library! • Cooking! • Arts and Crafts! • Dance and Music!

Camp will run from June 18th to August 24th from 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM.

\$150 per week, from 7AM until 6PM. (\$125 per week for each additional child in a family)

OR

\$120 per week, 7AM until 3PM. (\$100 per week for each additional child in a family)

See Mrs. Fore for more information.

STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Student-Led Conferences will be held April 19th and 20th. All students will be dismissed at 1:00 on Thursday, April 19th. Students should only be at school during their conference time after 1:00 on April 19th or between 7:30 AM and 1:00 PM on April 20th.

AFTERSCHOOL SPORTS

SBCS has partnered with Soccer Shots to provide our Kindergarten through second graders with an introduction to soccer. Students are playing once a week for six weeks. Soccer is a great way to introduce physical activity to our students while learning to collaborate with peers and develop skills.

The SBCS Trailblazer lacrosse team kicks off year three primed to defend their undefeated title run from last year. The team started the preseason with a skills clinic hosted by the Park School of Baltimore. The season began Wednesday, March 21st.

March, 2018

PTO UPDATE

The PTO would like to thank all the families that came out to our skate party. Please continue to show your support and join us for our last spirit night of the year at Chick-fil-A on Washington Blvd on April 18, 2018 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Please continue to bring in your Boxtops for Education.

CULTURAL ARTS UPDATES

Middle Grades Fitness and Adventure: Fitness and Adventure is kicking off the third trimester with an introduction to lacrosse. Lacrosse is a great sport to introduce the SBCS Habits of Scholarship while developing skills and exposing our students to a new sport. It also helps the Trailblazer lacrosse team hone their skills for the upcoming season.

--Mr. Jeremy

Elementary Grades Music: Hello SBCS families. My name is DeLaura Padovan and I am excited to be joining your school for the rest of the year as the elementary grades music teacher. I will be happy to share songs, stories, and dances I know from many countries around the world. Together we will create a safe, kind, and productive music classroom.

When I am not staying in Baltimore, I live on a farm in Virginia with my husband and daughter, and chickens and goats. I love to play the ukulele.

Elementary Grades Fitness and Adventure: To help your student maximize their learning in Elementary Fitness & Adventure please check-in with them about what they are working on in class. It can be really fun to hear them explain "Banana Tag" or "Captain on Deck". When engaging in these conversations, please push them to think beyond just - how to play the game - to - how do you do high quality work in the game. For example: "Banana tag sounds like a lot of fun, can you tell me what methods you used to get away from the tagger?" Asking students to verbalize how they perform high quality work in the gym helps youth increase their understanding of new learning.

--Coach Hunter

Elementary Grades Art: Art in April!

In art, PAL is learning problem solving skills with material manipulation in order to build a sculpture. They are also exploring observational drawing!

2nd grade is coming back to art this trimester! And we are celebrating their expedition with pollinators by designing our own garden using the technique of perspective drawing!

3rd grade is coming back to art this trimester and is starting off with a project that asks them to explore all kinds of new art making techniques and materials!!! We started with ink blowing and then moved to character design! Every day is a new technique and material! Shh! It's a surprise!

4th grade is continuing to explore all we can about the six simple machines! We are finishing our wheel and axle unit with design thinking and material manipulation in order to build our own cars! --Ms. Jess

Middle Grades Dance: This trimester we are exploring different ways to tell a story with movement. We will be having an informal showing of the students work at a date to be announced.

--Ms. Kutia

KINDERGARTEN UPDATE

1ST GRADE UPDATE

First graders have wrapped up their studies on the sun, moon, and stars, and are beginning our final expedition of this year: All About Birds! We'll first be focusing on how a bird's body helps it to survive. In math, we are working with place value and using tens and ones with other strategies to solve addition and subtraction problems. In literacy, we're working on vowel spelling patterns and using capitals, punctuation and ear spelling in our writing. We continue to practice our strategies for decoding difficult words and think deeply about what we have read.

2ND GRADE UPDATE

The second grade would like to thank all the families that attended math night! If you were unable to attend but want to know what was talked about, please reach out to your child's crew leader.

March, 2018

This month second grade will be wrapping up with fossils in expedition and moving on to pollination! Scholars will begin to learn about plants and the importance of pollination.

In math we will be learning about measurement and data collection! Students will learn how to correctly use a ruler to measure. They will also learn about measuring in centimeters, inches, yards, and meters. If you have any questions please feel free to ask your child's teacher.

In literacy we will continue to work on reading comprehension and fluency. Make sure your scholar is reading at home daily to help strengthen these skills. Thank you for all your support! We are excited to finish out the year strong!

3RD GRADE UPDATE

In the third grade, students are thrilled to have started a new Expedition on "Water Health and the Chesapeake Bay." In April, we will be building our background knowledge on the water cycle, watersheds, and food chains and webs so that we have the schema we need to move forward. Then, we will use the anchor text *One Well* to guide our study of water. We will look at where water is on earth, how people use water, and global problems with access and demand for water. This will involve a lot of heavy research, reading, and note-taking skills! In math, we are going to study fractions. We will start by understanding the parts of a fraction and representing fractions in many ways. We will be measuring to the nearest 1/4 and 1/2 inch and centimeter, and will make line plots with our data. Then, we will move into a study of many strategies for comparing and ordering fractions. In literacy, we are beginning another brand new unit called "Wolves in Fact and Fiction." We will spend most of April reading folktales and fables about wolves. We will be focusing on character traits, motivations, dialogue, and actions, and will discuss and write about how those things contribute to the sequence of events and plot. Also, we will be reviewing how to find the moral, or lesson, of these stories from around the world.

4TH GRADE UPDATE

Fourth grade has been hard at work! In Math, we are learning about adding and subtracting fractions and mixed numbers. In Language Arts, we wrapped up a unit in which the students did

experiments on simple machines and learned to write lab reports. Now, they are starting to learn about Susan B. Anthony and the suffrage movement. In Expedition, they completed a project in which they wrote stories of people who came to Baltimore, and made a brochure to let people who come to Baltimore know about SBCS.

5TH GRADE UPDATE

In Expedition, students are actively engaged in learning about planet earth. They have researched the geological time scale, the layers of the earth, and are finishing up our mini unit on continental drift. After spring break, students will be learning about fossil formation, natural disasters, climate change, and global warming. During this time, it would great to show students videos and news about what is going on with our planet. We look forward to sharing our learning later in the school year at Culminating Event.

In Literacy, we are still learning about how inventions have challenged humanity. Our current unit focuses specifically on television and how it has transformed the way we learn and interact with one another. If you want to gain more insight into what we are learning, ask your scholar to tell you about Philo Farnsworth.

7TH/8TH GRADE UPDATE

In Social Studies Third Trimester we will celebrate the 200th birthday and astonishing legacy of former slave, Abolitionist, and Baltimorean Frederick Douglass. We will read parts of his complex and challenging *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and analyze his purpose for composing the text, and the techniques he used to persuade his audience. Our Habits of Scholarship focus will be Integrity and Responsibility as we learn about a man who exhibited both. In French we will learn the words for animals and colors. We will continue practicing writing simple descriptive sentences using nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives. After Spring Break, French will happen only one day a week as we turn our full focus to Frederick Douglass and Culminating Event products. French Fridays will allow us the time needed to read Douglass's text and write about it in a meaningful way the rest of the week.

March, 2018

During Third Trimester, all 7th and 8th grade students will be taking Health during their Science period. All Baltimore City Public School middle grades students must take a Health class: this course is based on the Maryland Health Standards. Two weeks ago a letter was sent home outlining the topics we will cover. As part of our curriculum students will be engaging in community-based research: they will develop their own health surveys for teens in Baltimore. They will distribute, count, and analyze this data which will culminate in the development of a database of resources for themselves and other teen students in the city. This trimester we will focus on Responsibility for meeting deadlines and Empathy as our teens work together and serve others in the community. Parents, please feel free to reach out to Ms. Jessica with question about our Health course.

SUPPORT SBCS

If you purchase items from Amazon, please start your search at our website, www.sbcsschool.org. On the right side of the homepage, click on the Amazon link. We will then receive funds equal to 0.5% of your purchase price!

If you shop at Giant Food, please register for A+ School Rewards so that SBCS can earn cash through the Rewards Program. All you have to do is log on to www.giantfood.com/aplus to register online using your Giant Card. Our school ID is 05598. Thanks!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Connect with us on Facebook at Southwest Baltimore Charter School and follow us on Instagram at Sbcsschool and keep up to date on SBCS news through our website at www.sbcsschool.org.

REGULAR DISMISSAL

Elementary grade students who are picked up late will be taken to Trailblazer After School Program (TASP). You will be charged \$1/minute, up to \$30, until you arrive.

EARLY DIMISSAL

If you need to pick your child up for early dismissal, please send a written request with your

child. Elementary Grades children will not be released between 2:30 and 3:00, and Middle Grades children will not be released between 3:00 and 3:30, unless they bring in a written request that morning. Teachers will not release your child to you if they do not have an Early Release Pass from the Main Office.

COUNSELING SERVICES

We have a variety of counseling services at the school. If you feel that your child needs social-emotional support, please contact the school at 443-984-3385.

SBCS INC. BOARD MEETINGS

SBCS, Inc. board meetings are held six times yearly, usually on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM. They are open to the public. Please check the calendar in this newsletter or at sbcsschool.org for applicable dates.