



The Brier Bulletin

Brier Elementary School—Home of the Bobcats

A Message from the Principal:

Greetings Brier Families

We are all gearing up for spring weather, spring fun, and spring learning here at Brier! Many of us welcomed spring with open arms. Sunny days, fresh air, and opportunities in the outdoors await many, and it's an exciting time of year! We know that as April rolls in, the WASL come right along with it (this year at least), and we are prepared and ready for testing season!

During the weeks of April 13th through May 1st testing and make up testing will be taking place here at school for all students in grades 3 through 6. You will find our WASL testing schedule as an insert to this bulletin.

The WASL is one part of a much more complex assessment system that includes classroom based assessments, standardized tests, student work, and district-developed assessments. The purpose of the elementary WASL tests are to inform students and parents about a child's progress toward passing the high-school level WASL required for high school graduation, as well as informing teacher instruction and school/district program evaluation.

During the testing window, students will have some days when they are testing, other days without testing. Please refer to our testing schedule in order to monitor the days of testing. The WASL is an un-timed test, meaning students have as much time within an entire school day to take the required test for that particular day. This allows for students who work at different paces to have equal opportunities to show what they know.

Because some days of testing can be very long and every day of testing can call for a lot of endurance and energy, we suggest that parents help students perform their best on the test by supporting their child in the following ways:

- Stick to a regular schedule, that includes sufficient sleep and time to get to school in the morning without rushing
- Snacks to bring to school so students can refuel as necessary
- A quality breakfast every morning (the most important meal of the day). Protein in the morning helps the brain to get off to a fresh start
- A big hug and encouragement, since testing can be demanding. Nothing starts the day off better than knowing someone is thinking of you and wishing you a super day! Students should know that the test is a measure of what they have been taught in school. They should know that we expect them to do their personal best and that is all we would ever ask!

You may have read about the replacement of the WASL in 2010. This change to a new state test **does not** affect testing during this spring (2009). The WASL will be replaced in 2010 by a new test: the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) in grades 3-8. This test is currently in development and will be unveiled in spring 2010.

During state testing this year, most elementary students will take the WASL. This assessment provides us with an important measure of our students' progress and proficiency in relationship to the state's grade level expectations.

We appreciate all your hard work in helping to prepare your student(s) to be successful in school every day. We also thank you in advance for encouraging your child to do their best on the WASL this spring. Thank you for continuing to work with us to support your child's academic success. We do all we can to ensure that each of our students leave us with a solid foundation of skills and a future full of opportunities.

Enjoy the spring spirit Brier Families, remember April showers bring May flowers!

April Smiles,

Tori Thomas



Firm, Fair & Consistent[®]

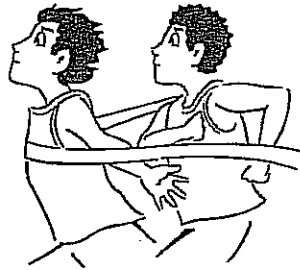
Brier Elementary

Guiding Students for School Success

Lessons about competition and fairness go hand in hand

Kids often point out that life "isn't fair." Sometimes they take this personally and get quite competitive. To help your child understand fairness:

- *Review your family's values* and how they relate to fairness. Being "fair" isn't always the same as being "equal." And teach your child that cheating is never okay.
- *Focus on personal success.* If your child runs his fastest in a race, but loses, it might *feel* unfair. If his goal was to do his best, though, he's a winner.
- *Avoid buying things to "measure up"* or make things "even." The best purchases are truly needed or wanted. Encourage your child to help save for special items.
- *Look for examples of fairness and unfairness.* They're easy to find in sports—and there's even a referee to help.
- *Be a fairness role model.* Promote fairness, but don't make pointless comparisons. ("Our neighbor's car is nicer than ours.") Replace jealousy with gratefulness.
- *Relax about competitiveness at school.* It's wonderful to celebrate high grades, but it's more important to emphasize hard work.



Source: Cynthia Hanson, "Why Kids Are So Competitive—and How Parents Can Teach Fairness," Parents.com, www.parents.com/teens-tweens/social-skills/tween-teen-social-skills/why-kids-are-competitive/?page=5.

Homework should not be a hassle

The words "homework" and "headache" needn't go hand in hand! The next time your child gets flustered while doing an assignment, try saying:

- "I appreciate how hard you're working." A bit of praise may inspire her to forge ahead.
- "How about a little breather?" A short break might recharge her.
- "I can't wait to see it when you're finished." Show her that you're interested in her work.



Source: Paul Coleman, Psy.D., "How to Say It: Homework Hassles," FamilyEducation.com, <http://school.familyeducation.com/homework/discipline/37615.html>.

How can you tell if misbehavior is serious?

It's not always easy to tell whether your child's acting out is just a "rough patch" or a sign of a larger behavioral problem. But consider seeking help for your child if you notice big changes in his:

- *Eating* or sleeping habits.
- *Mood.*
- *Schoolwork.*
- *Activity level.*
- *Relationships* with friends or family.

Have you noticed a big change in your child? Talk to his guidance counselor or pediatrician.

Source: "Finding Help for Your Child," Anxiety Disorders Association of America, www.adaa.org/GettingHelp/FocusOn/children&Adolescents/FHFC.asp.

Hearing "no" is difficult for many kids. But it's easy to prevent disagreements. Try saying "no" in some new and creative ways.



For example:

- *Child:* "Mom, can I buy that CD?"
- *Mom:* "Yes. Just one more week of saving allowance, and it's yours!"

Source: Barbara Aria, "Just Say No," SheKnows, www.sheknows.com/articles/804952.htm.

Curb the caffeine habit

Is your child feeling especially irritable? Check her caffeine intake. Too many sodas can make your child feel (and behave) less than her best.



And don't assume she's not getting any caffeine if she doesn't drink soda. Caffeine can also show up in:

- *Energy mints or drinks.*
- *Smoothies.*
- *Certain over-the-counter medications.*

Source: "Caffeine: Less Is Best," Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/fh/archives/2008/summer/caffeine.htm.



News Flash



Thank you to our wonderful PTA for sponsoring our Science Fair last month! A huge thank you to Mr. Overleese, Mrs. Bollen, Mr. Cuplin, Mr. Allemann and Mrs. Saneto for organizing this event. Thank you also to all of the parent volunteers and staff for making this event possible.

Thank you to Mrs. McBride for taking us on a Brier Safari! The music concerts were wonderful. Thank you also to Jill Brocksmith and Debbie Dunne for all of your hard work and long hours working with the clay projects in the classrooms. The giraffe's, masks and bowls turned out so cute.

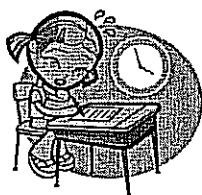
We appreciate you!



Brier Pride Pledge...

**At Brier, we are Responsible,
Kind, Respectful and Safe.**

**I am ready to learn and
will encourage others
to be successful because
learning comes first!**



WASL Testing begins on April 13th. See the attached insert for the schedule. Please post this on your refrigerator. Give your kids lots of hugs and encouragement; have them get plenty of rest; eat a quality breakfast and send a snack to school for them to refuel.



Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 19-25.

We appreciate all of your hard work from volunteering in classrooms, helping cut things out at home, helping in the library, volunteering at school events, helping with clay projects, assembling our Tuesday packets, going on field trips, working one-on-one with students and so much more! We appreciate you and thank you for helping our school run more smoothly. Please stop by the Office during this week and enjoy some treats in your honor.



Are you returning to Brier Elementary next year?

Included in this packet you will find the Student Information Form. This form needs to be filled out for each child. These are due back at school by Friday, April 17th.

Music Notes

Congratulations to the Brier students who performed in "A Brier Safari". I appreciate your hard work and joyful music making! Thank you PTA for our props. The students truly appreciated them!

Congratulations to our Honor Band, Orchestra and Choir students who performed at the Honor Festival March 24th. That's a lot of dedication to rehearsals and the performance. Mr. Allison, Mrs. Thielen and I are very proud of all of you! **Choir:** Liya Ewing, Jensen Beaumont, Leslie Yarbrough, Chloe Sorenson, Jenay Sprague & Catherine Allemann. **Band:** Nikki Bouche, Brett Ralston, Joe Walrath, Ben Bogle, Adam Knudsvig & Toby Castillo. **Orchestra:** Nicole Hairell, McKenna Hunt, Connor Worman, Josh Wyant and Ali Hitchcock.

Reminders:

Please remember to fill out an absence request form in advance if you know that your child will be absent for two or more days. Blank forms are available in the Office.

Important Dates



- WASL Testing April 13-May 1
- Student Information Forms due April 17
- Volunteer Appreciation Week April 19-25
- Administrative Professionals Week April 19-25

Snow Make-up Days: Please update your calendars! The blast of winter weather in mid-December resulted in three non-school days. The last day of school is currently Friday, June 19th (early release at 12:20pm) unless additional snow make-up days are needed. June 16th will now be a full day. Wednesday June, 17 and Thursday, June 18th are full days. If additional make-up days are needed the next day scheduled is Friday, May 22nd.

Future Dates -

- May 1: Jungle Book Assembly 2:50pm
- May 3-9: Teacher Appreciation Week
- May 3-10: National Music Week
- May 4: Southeast Quadrant Orchestra Concert: MTHS 7:00
- May 5: Southeast Quadrant Band Concert: MTHS 7:00
- May 6: Southeast Quadrant Choir Concert: MTHS 7:00
- May 8, 22 & 25: No school
- May 17-23: National Educational Bosses Week



APRIL



Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
			1 No School	2 No School	3 No School	4
5	6 Back to school	7	8	9 Student Council Meeting 8:15	10	11
12 Easter	13 WASL Testing Begins	14 WASL TESTING	15 WASL TESTING	16 Site Advisory Council Meeting 8:10 WASL TESTING <small>FT-Gonzalez/Norenberg Seattle Children's Thea- tre 9:20-2:00pm</small>	17 WASL Make-ups Student Informa- tion Forms Due by today	18
19 Administrative Professionals Week (19-25) Mrs. Croston & Mrs. Whittles Volunteer Appreciation Week (19-25)	20 WASL Make-ups	21 WASL TESTING	22 WASL TESTING	23 Student Council Meeting 8:15 WASL Make-ups	24 WASL Make-ups	25
26	27 WASL Make-ups	28 WASL Make-ups	29 WASL Make-ups	30 WASL Make-ups		

WASL Testing April 13th—May 1st

