



CATONSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

(September) 2008

From the Principal

Dear Catonsville Middle School Families,

We are off to a fantastic start following a very smooth beginning to the new school year! By now you have probably heard that our students did extremely well on the 2008 MSA in reading and math. Our scores placed us comfortably within the top 5 highest-achieving middle schools in Baltimore County. Our 2008 HSA scores were also outstanding. 98% of our Algebra I students passed the Algebra HSA last spring. Our students and staff are clearly leaders within Baltimore County and the state.

I am excited to tell you about some positive changes that are underway for the 2008-2009 academic year.

- We have re-defined our school's vision. Since Catonsville Middle School produces so many student and faculty leaders, we have decided to align our vision with the research findings of Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*. Our new vision statement will be: Catonsville Middle School—Where Good Leaders Become

Great Leaders.

- We will continue to focus on academic excellence by reinforcing reading and math skills in all content areas. All students will receive instruction in an MSA reading and math skill-of-the-week, and all students will learn vocabulary words that will improve their literacy through participation in our school-wide literacy initiative, which we have dubbed "The Vocabulary Smack down." Students will earn prizes as they learn new vocabulary words, and there are opportunities for entire classrooms to win a pizza party as students earn tickets for defining their vocabulary words for administrators.
- Students who are enrolled in Algebraic Foundations, Algebraic Thinking, and/or Language classes will receive a free subscription to Study Island, an online service that provides students with extra instruction in reading and math. Study Island is aligned with the indicators and objectives in Maryland's Voluntary State Curriculum. Through the use of online lessons, games, and test simulations, Study Island teaches and reinforces the skills

that students will need to be successful in reading, math, and English classes while also preparing them for success on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). Once the students receive their passwords in October, they will be able to log onto the site at school, at home, or from any computer with Internet access. If your child is not enrolled in one of these classes, you may want to purchase a subscription for your child on your own. You can find more information by visiting www.studyisland.com.

- We are becoming more environmentally friendly.
 - All BCPS schools will participate in single-stream recycling beginning this year.
 - We will conserve paper by reducing the number of newsletters that are mailed home. We will communicate much of our news to families via an electronic newsletter. Please sign up for our eSchoolNewsletter by logging on to www.eschoolnewsletter.com.
 - We will have an environmental club this year that will focus on making our campus a "greener" place to learn.

STAFF

Michael Thorne
Principal

Tina Morroni
Assistant Principal

Michelle Feeney
Assistant Principal

Norma Cunniff
Administrative Secretary

Kim Palacios
Front Desk Secretary

Sue Mike
Counseling Secretary

Christine Fultz
Counseling Chairperson

Deborah Margulies
School Counselor

Kristi Lowman
School Nurse
410-887-1087

Office: 410-887-0803
Fax: 410-887-1036
Guidance: 410-887-0807
Parent Conferences:
410-887-0864

The next PTSA Board Meeting is Wednesday, (October 8) at 7PM

in the library.

All are welcome!

- Our efforts will culminate in the application for Maryland Green School status.
- Since some of our teachers were recruited for leadership positions at other places within the school system and others found teaching assignments closer to home, we have some new staff members this year. Please join me in welcoming them to the Catonsville Middle School Community. They are:
 - Stacey Beall (English 6)
 - Al Billmyer (Social Studies 8/ Grade 8 Co-Manager)
 - Christine Erlichman (Physical Education)
 - Michelle Feeney (Assistant Principal)
 - Meredith Heyl (Spanish I)
 - Elizabeth Hypes (Language/ Grade 8 Inclusion Teacher)
 - Wilbert Jones (Technology Education)
 - Kristi Lowman (School Nurse)
 - Deborah Margulies (Guidance Counselor)
 - Stephanie Marshall (Science 8)
 - Ryan Nazelrod (Physical Education)
 - Janice Saville-Schwartz (Special Education Instructional Assistant)
 - Ashley Weber (Physical Education)

As the school year progresses, I am looking forward to getting to know the students, families, and new staff members better. I am truly proud to be the middle school principal in your community, and I hope you feel as blessed to be a part of this school and community as I do.

Since we will only send one newsletter per quarter this year, we want to make sure you are aware of the following upcoming events listed on the right.

Sincerely,

*Michael Thorne
Principal*

September

- 15 Picture Day "A Day "during Physical Education
Scholastic Book Fair in Library
- 16 Scholastic Book Fair in Library
- 17 Scholastic Book Fair in Library
Back to School Night & PTSA General Meeting in CMS gym
Doors open at 6:30, Meeting starts at 7:00 pm
Market Day Paper Orders Due
- 18 Picture Day "B Day" during Physical Education
- 19 Market Day Internet Orders Due by noon
- 22 Interims 1st Quarter
- 25 Market Day Pick Up in CMS Café—7:00-8:00pm
- 29 Professional Development Day for All Schools-Schools Closed
- 30 Rosh Hashanah-Schools and Offices Closed

October

- 1 Parent—Teacher Conferences 5:30-7:00pm
- 8 PTSA Meeting in Library at 7:00pm
- 9 Yom Kippur—Schools and Offices Closed
- 14 School Improvement Team Meeting (SIT) 3:00 pm in Faculty Room
- 15 Market Day Sale Order Forms Due
- 17 Professional Development—MSTA Convention—Schools Closed
Market Day Sale Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 23 Market Day Pick up in CMS Café—7:00-8:00pm
- 31 1st Quarter Marking Period Ends

November

- 3 Assessment Day for All Schools and/or Professional Development Day
For All Schools—Schools Closed for all Students
- 4 General Election Day—Schools and Offices Closed
- 5 Interims Distributed
- 6 Catonsville High School 8th Grade Open House—7:00pm
- 12 Market Day Paper Orders Due
PTSA Board Meeting 7:00 pm in CMS Library
- 14 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
CMS Newsletter information deadline
- 17 Report Cards Distributed
- 18 American Education Visitation—6th Grade
- 19 American Education Visitation—7th Grade
- 20 American Education Visitation—8th Grade
Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café—7:00-8:00pm
- 21 American Education Visitation—Grandparents' Day
- 25 Turkey Trot Mile Run
- 27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday—Schools and Offices Closed

PTSA President

There are many new and exciting things happening at CMS this year and I hope you'll get involved in whatever way you can. I'd like to welcome all students new to CMS, our new teachers and staff members, and our new PTSA committee members. Our first general PTSA meeting will be held on October 8th in the school library. I hope you'll join us.

The **PTSA** is busy with the membership drive, preparing for all the activities that we sponsor throughout the year. If you haven't already done so, please join the **PTSA** by sending in the completed envelope and \$6.00 membership fee. Please contact Nancy Nicaise at (nancynicaise@verizon.net) if you did not receive an envelope or you can go to front office to get one. Thank you for your support. The membership covers our state and national dues, and funds many of the programs the PTSA sponsors.

Throughout the year the PTSA conducts five major fundraisers:

- Yankee Candle in September
- Mulch Sale in April
- Market Day monthly
- Sales of the ever-popular Catonsville Blankets that you can purchase anytime
- School Rewards program that includes Giant Bonus Bucks, Safety Script and Boxtops for Education

Our fall Yankee Candle fundraiser kicked off on September 12th and runs through September 24th. This is a very important fundraiser and will set the tone for our spending this year. The first Market Day sale will occur on September 25th. The order deadline for the October sales is 10/17. Please try something from Market Day this year—you won't be disappointed! Their products are great and are 100% guaranteed. If you prefer not to participate in any of the fundraising programs we offer, you can make a donation directly to the PTSA anytime.

The PTSA uses its funds for various things throughout the school year. They purchase all the student agendas each year, hold organizational meetings for students, pay the twice weekly activity bus, purchase books for the school library and much more. Any support you can provide the PTSA is very much appreciated.

CMS and PTSA use the eSchoolnewsletter system communicate with parents and guardians about what's happening at CMS on a regular basis. To register go to www.eschoolnewsletter.com and click on 'Sign Up'. Even if you're already registered for this service, please confirm your profile contains CMS as one of your designated schools. They restructured their system over the summer and some profiles were deleted. It's worth a few minutes online to check the status of your account.

Finally, I encourage everyone to visit the school's website (<http://catonsvillems.bcps.org>) often. The site is updated weekly and it's where you'll find countless information about what's happening at CMS.

I know I speak for all of the PTSA board members when I say we're looking forward to a very challenging and successful school year at CMS.

Dianne Eff
PTSA President

Health Suite Reminders/News

It is that time of year again...time for Vision & Hearing Screening. This is a free service offered to all 8th grade, special education, and 6th and 7th grade students new to BCPS. The technicians will be at CMS on Oct. 1, 2 and 3rd. If you have any questions or if you DO NOT want your child to participate in the screening please contact me via email or phone (klowman@bcps.org or 410-887-1087) no later than Monday September 29th.

This is a just a reminder that if you would like your child to receive Discretionary Medications (like Tylenol, Motrin, TUMS) while at school please remember that a new form needs to be completed and signed by the parent, each year, in order for me to dispense from the Health Suite. Also if your child requires prescription medication that must be administered at school, please have your doctor complete the required forms and the medication **MUST** be brought to school by an adult. BCOS policy does not allow students to carry medication of any kind with them to school.

Kristi Lowman
School Nurse

Music News

Music News :

- All the bands and orchestras are now playing in class. We are doing something new this year. Students are using binders instead of folders to store their music and method books. Binders are \$3.00 and are available from the music department. Also a number of students still need to take home their school loaner instruments. Please make arrangements to pick up the instruments as soon as possible.
- Students must take home their instruments and music every night. We have 276 musicians in our bands and orchestras and just don't have the space to store instruments and music overnight.
- The Celtic Ensemble is a group of musicians who meet once a week to play Irish & Scottish music. This group is open to all ages and community members are more than welcome to join. The Celtic Ensemble will begin practice September 16. Forms are available from Mrs. McFadden.
- Percussion ensemble will be starting in October. Forms will be available from Mrs. Stevenson in the coming weeks.

- The All-County Honor ensembles will have auditions on November 1st. All 7th & 8th grade Band, Orchestra and Chorus students are eligible to audition. See your director for more information. The deadline to sing up is on October 3rd. There is a \$10.00 fee to audition.
- While it may seem like a long time until our winter concerts, they will be here in no time. Please remember the concert dress for all performing ensembles is a white shirt, black pants or long black skirt, and black shoes (no white socks) gentlemen need to wear a tie. Returning students need to make sure their concert dress from last year still fits.
- This year the music department is in charge of the musical. We are doing Willy Wonka Jr. and have already had auditions and begun rehearsals. The performance is December 5, 6 & 7. We are looking for parent help with set construction, sewing etc...If you are available to help please contact Mrs. McFadden, Mrs. Stevenson or Mr. Roy.
- The music department will be doing our annual pizza fundraiser in October. This year we will be selling Gianni pizza, cookie dough and cheesecakes. Our goal is to buy the department a nice electronic keyboard and computer projector. Please be on the look out for information. If you are available to help with the delivery please let a music teacher know as soon as possible.

CMS Café

Parents and families please make sure to always have money on your child's lunch account. And if for some reason we do lend your child money, it must be paid back the next day. We take cash and checks made payable to Catonsville Middle Café. When repay-

ing, please have your child bring the money into the café at breakfast or lunch time.

For those students on the free and reduced program all benefits do carry over from last year and you have until October 10 to receive these benefits, but **you must reapply** as soon as possible so that the benefits will not be cut off in October. If you wait until the last minute, your benefits could expire and you will have to pay full price until it goes through again. The paperwork can take up to two weeks to be processed at the Free and Reduced office. Application forms are available in the school office, and there is a phone number for the Free and Reduced office on the application. Please have your child stop by the office to pick up a form.

And remember...Friday is always PURPLE FRIDAY in the Catonsville Middle School Café.

LATE Notes

If your child is late arriving to school they must report to the office to sign in and have their Agenda signed by office staff. Teachers will not allow students to enter their classrooms after 8:10 without their Agenda signed by one of the front office secretaries. The student **MUST HAVE A LATE NOTE** explaining the reason why they are late.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Thank you for helping us keep our records accurate and in compliance with Maryland State policy.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO BRING A NOTE EXPLAINING WHY THE STUDENT WAS LATE.

Office Telephone

Use of the office telephone should only be used by students for emergencies. If your child has forgotten his/her lunch then we will allow the phone to

be used for that purpose. However, if homework has been left at home or incomplete, gym uniform, musical instrument or a permission slip has been forgotten, we will not allow the phone to be used for those purposes. We are also trying to limit the number of calls parents make to their child during school hours; these calls are disruptive to both the student and the class and should be for emergencies only. Please make all arrangements for how your child will get home from school **BEFORE** he/she comes to school. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

NSF Checks—Financial Procedures

Unfortunately, there has been an increase in Baltimore County Public Schools of NSF checks. The new policy for handling these checks is as follows:

Issuers of dishonored checks presented to any Baltimore County School will be given 10 days to submit full payment of the amount of the check plus actual bank charges incurred by BCPS by means of a money order, cashier's check or cash. If this payment is not received by the end of 10 days, the issuer will need to submit full payment of the amount of the check plus \$35.00. If payment is not received at the end 20-day period, BCPS will turn over the dishonored check, and all other available information related to this check, to the State's Attorney for criminal prosecution. If the dishonored check is turned over to the State's Attorney for collection, the school will not accept restitution from the check issuer. The funds will be remitted to the school by the State's Attorney's office.