



MT. BETHEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER MAY 2017

ENRICH * EMPOWER * EXCEL

A Message from the Principal



Dear Parents,

Does your support of The Foundation enhance your child's education? YES. Without a doubt, the programs, experiences, materials, and professional learning that our Foundation ensures for every student at Mt. Bethel are instrumental in earning designation as a Blue Ribbon School and continued growth in all academic areas for our students. As Mt. Bethel's instructional leader, I feel that I can confidently say to any parent that their child's education is provided by a highly trained staff who have the skills to guarantee the best elementary school experience possible.

One of the top priorities for the Cobb County School District is to simplify the foundations of learning to prepare for innovation. Over the last several years, our Foundation has made this priority a reality for all Buccaneers.

Trainings Funded by Our Foundation:

- **Lucy Calkins Reader's Workshop Model:** All teachers and students have a common language and procedures for reading instruction. Standardized test scores across all areas continue to rise because of our teachers' focus on teaching reading; and Mt. Bethel was designated as a school that "beat the odds" by the State of Georgia because we continue to perform at high levels and have not plateaued!
- **Orton-Gillingham Multi-Sensory Instructional Methodology** to teach reading, spelling, phonics, and vocabulary: All teachers K-5 will be trained by September 2017 in this research-based methodology and we expect reading and spelling abilities to increase dramatically.
- **Gifted Endorsement Training:** Fifteen staff members completed graduate level coursework to earn Gifted Endorsement. Participants learned strategies allowing all students to engage in higher order thinking skills and to extend learning. An incredible added benefit of having a large number of gifted certified teachers is that we were able to group students in ways that earned additional teacher allotments for the 2017-18 school year. We will lower class sizes in TWO grade levels because of teacher allotments earned based on our large number of gifted endorsed teachers!
- **Lucy Calkins Writer's Workshop Training by Columbia University's Teacher's College** (Columbia TC is the largest graduate school in education in the United States that is perennially ranked among the nation's best). Our staff will dig into the complex process of teaching writing and will gain the knowledge and skills to effectively teach writing.

Our next step is to prepare for innovation! The 2017-18 school year will be filled with determining the best way for our students to apply their learning in meaningful, engaging ways and to communicate their learning effectively.

The Foundation will allow our students increased immersion in STEM. Next year, we will have two STEM instructors: Sammy Jo Hogan, who will be funded by the Foundation, and Kerry Griffie, who will instruct in our second STEM lab. This means that in the specials rotation, your child will have STEM all year long! Each of our STEM labs will have a different focus within Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. We will increase instruction in Computer Science and strive to have students problem solve and communicate solutions to real-world problems.

I am incredibly proud of all our Foundation has helped us accomplish in the past four years. This partnership is critical to help every Buccaneer ENRICH. EMPOWER. EXCEL. and to allow us to make our vision of EXCELLENCE IN ACTION a reality.

With gratitude,

Jessica Appleyard, Principal



YOUR Donations Make A Difference!

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Dear Mt. Bethel Families,

At Mt. Bethel, we believe **every child can reach his or her dreams** and it begins with a strong foundation in education. Here we don't just strive for that ideal, **we make it happen!**

The value our community places on education is truly reflected in our continued commitment and generosity to the Mt. Bethel Elementary School Foundation. Your financial gift is key to our ability to provide curriculum enrichment, instructors, technology, and staff training provided **beyond Cobb County School District funding.**

Your donations fund outstanding programs such as the Lucy Calkins Reading & Writing Project, Orton Gillingham and Gifted Endorsement. Since implementing these school-wide initiatives, Mt. Bethel has received recognition both in the state for high academic achievement and gains as well as nationally with the **Blue Ribbon School** designation. Our community is truly **supporting excellence** in one of **THE BEST SCHOOLS IN THE NATION!**

The Foundation is committed to ENRICH, EMPOWER and EXCEL every child's education and we can only meet our mission with your support. Thank you again and enjoy your summer!

Chana Wade & Emily Ratliff

Co-Presidents

Mt. Bethel Elementary School Foundation



"Great teachers help create great students. In fact, research shows that an inspiring and informed teacher is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement, so it is critical to pay close attention to how we train and support both new and experienced educators."

Edutopia – The George Lucas Educational Foundation

Wondering How Your Investment in the Foundation Impacts our Students?

Here are the Numbers:

Gifted Endorsement Training

Due to the Foundation funded **Gifted Endorsement training**, Mt. Bethel Elementary **earned additional teacher allotments** for the 2017/2018 school year. As Ms. Appleyard stated, we will **lower class sizes in TWO grade levels** because of teacher allotments earned based on our large number of gifted endorsed teachers!

Columbia University's Lucy Calkins Readers Workshop

The impact of the school wide implementation of Lucy Calkins Readers Workshop is best seen in our Iowa Assessments and Lexile Scores.

Mt. Bethel's Iowa Assessments Results

Grade	2015 Scores	2017 Scores	Growth
Current 5th Grade Class	88.4%	90.7%	2.3% increase

Mt. Bethel's Lexile Scores from State Assessment

Grade	2015 Scores	2016 Scores	Growth
Current 4th Grade Class	87.8%	92.7%	4.9% increase
Current 5th Grade Class	90.7%	94.6%	3.9% increase

The Iowa Tests are standardized tests designed to compare students to other students in the same grade and same age across the nation. The above scores demonstrate the percentage of our fifth grade students that scored at 50th percentile or above on the complete composite compared to the rest of the nation.

Students receive a Lexile reader measure score from a reading test that describes his or her reading ability. The Lexile reader measure is also used to monitor a reader's growth over time. The scores above are the percentage of students in our fourth and fifth grade class that scored at or above grade cutoff.



Patron Drive Results:

As of April 19, 2017

Family Donations: **\$127,160.00**

Corporate Matching:
\$20,880.00

Total = \$148,040.00



YOUR Donations Make A Difference!

Budgeted Foundation Expenditures

As of April 19, 2017

Instructors' Salary & Supplies

- Technology Lab Instructor & Supplies
- Technology Resource Coordinator
- STEAM Assistant Instructor
- FACT Program Monitor

School/Teacher Approved Grants

Professional Training & Development

- Orton Gillingham Training
- Gifted Endorsement Training
- Columbia University's Lucy Caulkins Writers Workshop & Leadership Training
- GSSLP Conference
- Library of Congress Training

STEM Support

- CEISMC @ Georgia Tech STEAM Leadership Conference
- STEM Lab Equipment

Student & Classroom Support

- Rising 6th Grade Organizational Class – Parents & Students
- Columbia University's Lucy Calkins Unit of Study & Reading Strategy Books
- Hot Air Balloon Launcher
- 5th Grade Organizational Skills Workshop
- STEM Day Supplies

Technology Support

- Software Subscriptions for all Grade Levels
- iPad Maintenance

Operating Expenses

- PayPal, Benevity, Double the Donation
- Patron Drive
- Science Fair

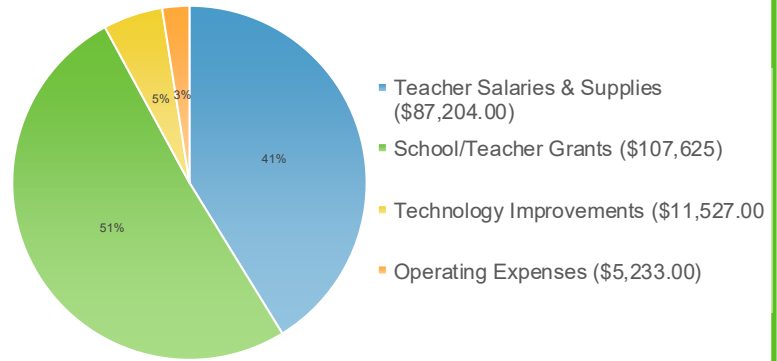
Total Educational Expenditures: \$206,356.00

Operational Cost: \$5,233.00

Total Expenditures: \$211,589.00



2017 Foundation Expenditures



All Students Benefit from Orton Gillingham

This year through the support of the Foundation, the entire Kindergarten and first grade teams had the opportunity to receive training in Orton Gillingham. Mount Bethel partnered with REAP- Reading Is Essential for All People to offer the 30-hour Classroom Educator training.

Orton Gillingham is a method of teaching reading and spelling. The teachers learned how to incorporate this method into daily classroom practice for all students. In addition to coursework delivered by an Orton Gillingham fellow, the teachers received practical guidance within their classrooms. Teachers watched whole class and small group lessons being modeled. In addition, teachers were observed as they planned and implemented Orton Gillingham lessons within their classrooms.

Teachers have reported improvements in their students reading and spelling. They have noted that the ability to differentiate the instruction for students, at various reading levels, has been extremely helpful and beneficial. The trained faculty agrees that using the Orton Gillingham method is truly a best practice in teaching reading and spelling for all students.

Second and third grade teachers are looking forward to receiving three days of training this spring in order to keep the momentum going with their students in the upcoming years. In addition, fourth and fifth grade teachers will receive two days of training on Morphology in the fall.

We are excited that Mount Bethel is setting an example within the county. We are showing that improving reading and spelling skills is of the utmost importance and that to do so our teachers need the training and tools to make it happen.

-Lisa Glickman, Learning Specialist / Educational Consultant

Transition to Middle School Class for Parents of Rising 6th Grade Students

Are you anxious about your child entering middle school? What does middle school look like from a parental perspective? What can you expect when your middle schooler walks in the door at 4:45 pm each school day? How can you help your child be more independent and advocate for themselves? How can you monitor your child's grades and teacher blogs? What is the best way to communicate with middle school teachers if needed? How can you set-up a more structured home life for your child with routines, expectations, and consequences? How involved should you be as a parent of a middle schooler?

Learn how to make the transition from elementary school to middle school as smooth as possible. Learning Specialist, Natalie Collins, M.Ed. will be speaking on **Monday, May 22nd at 10:30 am** at Mt. Bethel in the Learning Commons to discuss the transition to middle school.

Why is it important that my child participate in STEM?

By the year 2020, there will be approximately 1.4 million computer specialist jobs available, but unfortunately US universities are expected to only produce enough qualified graduates to fill 29% of these jobs. If we continue on this road the United States will continue to drop behind academically to more developed nations. **In 2015, the US ranked 38th out of 71 countries for math, and 24th out of 71 countries for science.** Children need to develop the skills to not only use state of the art technology, but also to understand how things work. Looking toward the future, we need to build and develop computational thinkers. These are the innovators of tomorrow that not only understand how a computer works, but are looking for new ways to utilize our technologies to solve problems like cancer, global warming, new and various energy sources. Before our children can solve the problems, they must first be able to ask the questions. STEM thinking enables students to decompose the big tasks into a logical series of smaller steps.

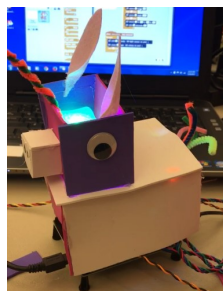
Where is Mount Bethel STEM going?

We have a goal to teach the best raw material on the planet to **be creators of technology**, instead of consumers of technology. In order to do so, it is important that we first break the stereotype of a computer programmer to show students that all types of problems can be solved through computational thinking. We want to encourage our students to think outside the box. They need to be not only brave enough to face the unknown, but courageous enough to tackle it. Through engineering challenges we can open our students' eyes to our real world problems and show them real life solutions through computer science techniques. **We are here to create the world's next innovators and to engage your children with powerful ideas.**

- Sammy Jo Hogan, STEM Teacher

Georgia Tech CEISMIC STEAM Leadership Conference

On March 16th, the Mt. Bethel Administrative team, Sammy Jo Hogan (STEM Teacher) and I ventured downtown to learn how to integrate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) into our curriculum. The full-day session was filled with panel discussions, interactive workshops, and interactive sessions. One of the most beneficial and informative sessions was the panel of experts who serve on the state STEM/STEAM certification team. My biggest take-away from the panel was to integrate STEM/STEAM concepts in meaningful ways. They also encouraged the audience to not miss natural connections that lend themselves to seamlessly integrate STEM/STEAM across many areas of the curriculum. Our interactive workshop featured Hummingbird Robotics Kits. We designed a simple robot (pictured right) and programmed it using MIT's Scratch free, online software. To construct and program our unicorn robot, we used science, technology, engineering, art and math. We also had to employ creative thinking and problem solving to get our robot to behave according to plan. The day at CEISMIC



proved invaluable to answering the questions **what next and how to effectively integrate STEM/STEAM across all grade levels and curricula.**

- Heather Kindschy, Media Specialist

Library of Congress Summer Teacher Institute

Each summer the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. offers week-long institutes to K-12 educators. Throughout the week, I will learn to search and access the millions of primary sources digitized by the Library. From the Library's Summer Institute website, **primary sources have the power "to engage students, build critical thinking skills, and construct knowledge."** In addition to learning and applying teaching strategies, I will also have opportunities to meet subject experts and may even be granted access to special reading rooms to develop detailed projects on specific topics.

Several of our big collaborative projects in the Learning Commons have a Social Studies foundation. **My hope is to enrich these existing projects with primary source documents as well as inspire exciting new ones.** I also look forward to collaborating with like-minded teachers for an entire week. This will prove invaluable for my toolkit of best teaching practices.

At the beginning of each school year, I have the opportunity to meet with each grade-level team; we look at their standards as well as past collaborative projects. This meeting will be a great chance to re-deliver what I have learned. **We can weave primary sources into existing classroom projects to increase their impact.** Ultimately, this workshop will enhance the learning of Mt. Bethel students by giving them early exposure to primary source documents that help them look at history and other disciplines from a different angle or perspective.

- Heather Kindschy, Media Specialist

Summer Technology Tidbits by Carolyn Cooper

Keep your brains sharp during the summer months!

Did you know that your student has access to the Mt. Bethel Elementary School technology programs over the summer months? Read below to find out what you can use to keep your child's brain sharp during the lazy days of summer.

Raz-Kids – Kindergarten through third grade students will still have access to reading with Raz-Kids during the summer break.

Cobb Digital Library – all students in kindergarten through fifth grades will still have access to the Cobb Digital Library that includes programs like BrainPop and Pebble Go.

First in Math – the school subscription to First in Math will continue through the summer so that students can practice their math skills over the break.

Online Math Textbook – students can continue to access the online math textbook during the summer to print worksheets, watch tutorials, and play math games.

Cobb County Public Library – If your family has a Cobb County Public Library card, your children can access the popular Scholastic Book Flix on your home computer.

All of the information you need (with the exception of usernames and passwords) to access these resources on your home computer or iPad can be found in the **Technology Tidbits Blog** – www.cobblearning.net/carolyncooper/

If you need the Cobb Digital Library login and password or have other questions, please contact the Foundation Technology Coordinator, Carolyn Cooper at carolyn.cooper@cobbk12.org by **noon on Friday, May 19th**. *Correspondence over the summer break will be limited.*



*Please follow our creations on Twitter @MtBethelSTEM.

Visit the Technology Tidbits blog in May for more ways to incorporate educational technology into your summer plans. You can find the Technology Tidbits blog at <http://www.cobblearning.net/carolyncooper/>.