JANUARY
7-31 ELL Testing Window
11 Spirit Day - Wear Your Westy Wear or your Blue and Gold
21 School Closed - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday
25 End of Second Marking Period - School Dismisses 3 Hours Early
WTES to Dismiss at 12:40 PM

A LOOK AHEAD TO FEBRUARY
1-8 ELL Testing Window
6 School Author Visit
6-28 WAGS Supporting Program
7 Report Cards Distributed
8 Spirit Day - Wear Your Blue and Gold
9 School Author Visit
12 PTA Meeting - Library - 6:30 PM
Lincoln’s Birthday
14 Go West Newsletter Distributed
Volunteer Training Opportunity - 1:00 PM
11 P&D Study Packets Distributed
18 President’s Day - Schools and Offices Closed
19 Patriot & Defender Recitations Begin
27 Parent Information Meeting - 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
“Prepare your Child for the Path, Not the Path for Your child”
The flyer for this meeting is attached at the end of the newsletter.
Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and winter break, enjoying the opportunity to spend time with family and friends. Many thanks to our school community for the many acts of kindness provided to the teachers and staff before the Christmas break. These good wishes were appreciated.

As you face the next several months of cold weather and the possibility of winter storms, please talk with your children about your plans for them in the event of an early school closing. West Towson will follow the dismissal plans that you provided on the Emergency Closing form when schools need to close early for weather-related issues. The children should know how they are getting home and who will be there to receive them. When schools close early, Play Centers, our after-school program, closes as well. Students participating in Play Centers should also be clear about their alternate dismissal plans.

The midpoint of the 2018-2019 school year is quickly approaching, as January 25 marks the end of the second marking period. All students will receive their report cards on Thursday, February 7. The months between winter break and spring break provide the longest uninterrupted time for instruction during the school year. Please continue to monitor your children's attendance, check their homework, review their classroom performance, assist them to study for tests, and reinforce their positive behavior. BCPS One is available 24/7 for parents to monitor their children’s progress in school. The faculty, staff, and administration are working together to ensure that your children reach their greatest potential.

The new carpool drops off and pick up location is working well. Thank you to the drivers for making an adjustment to the procedures in the middle of the school year. Drivers are reminded to drive in a slow, careful manner on the school campus. Each morning and afternoon, students walking to and from the Ridge Ruxton community need to safely cross the car pool loop beside Ridge Ruxton School. They use the two cross walks as they travel between West Towson and the walk way to the community. Drivers need to stop and give walkers the right of way. Also, careful driving on the campus will help to ensure the safety of these children.

Every year, families are asked to take the BCPS Stakeholder Survey. Last year, BCPS used your responses to shape our budget, staffing, and programs. West Towson used your responses to identify specific areas of need and draft key actions for our School Progress Plan. Once again, we need your voice. The survey only takes about five minutes or less, is anonymous, and is available in 16 languages for students, parents, and community members. The survey is available at www.bcps.org from January 18 through February 24 via phone, tablet, or computer. Your voice matters!

SPECIAL AREA UPDATE

NEWS FROM LIBRARY LANE
There was a lot of learning going on throughout the end of December prior to break and will continue through the month of January. Check out what your child/ children’s grade level is learning about:
**Kindergarten** - We are wrapping up our “Let Me Tell You About My Friends” unit. Students will examine friendships and explore what it means to be a good friend. Our next unit, “Fantastic Fiction” will teach and reinforce the habits of good readers: identifying the beginning, middle and end of a story, sequencing story events, making predictions based upon text and illustrations, making inferences using text, illustrations and prior knowledge and forming personal connections to a story. This unit utilizes stories of varying cultural viewpoints and backgrounds.

**1st Grade** - In the “Visualization” unit, first grade students will be introduced to the visualization strategy with the purpose of understanding that good readers create mental images in their minds when reading to help them better understand a story. Readers should create images in their minds when reading to help reflect, clarify, and represent ideas from the text.

**2nd Grade** - The “Discover Your Destiny” unit will reinforce the student’s ability of finding a book that is right for them. Students will conduct a topic search and keyword search, as well as refine results to meet their needs using filters. Students will also use Destiny to locate and checkout eBooks and Interactive Books and create a Destiny Collection.

**3rd Grade** - In the “Healthy Habits” unit, students will be researching healthy habits and creating and creating a public service announcement. Throughout the unit students will develop divergent questions in order to select open-ended questions and subsidiary questions, to research a specific health related topic. Students will search the databases and other digital resources in order to select two resources they will use to answer their questions.

**4th Grade** - Our next library unit will support the monthly genre challenge. In this unit, students will discover the elements of several genres, including: historical fiction, narrative non-fiction, expository non-fiction, science fiction, and fantasy. They will have a working knowledge of the elements of each and be able to classify examples into these categories and explain their reasoning.

**5th Grade** - The “We Shall Overcome!” unit explores various types of biological and situational adversities. Students will read different stories (fiction and nonfiction) about adversity. They will explore the different ways that people or characters have overcome adversity. Sometimes, overcoming adversity means that significant people have assisted or inspired a person. Other times, people overcame adversity through perseverance and other positive character traits. Students will learn how some people can use their personal struggles to inspire others.

Learning does not only happen in the library as students have access to many resources and books at home! Students can access ebooks through West Towson’s Destiny account under the Follett Shelf tab. The students use their username and password to sign into Destiny to access the ebooks. Students can also access Baltimore County Digital Content, such as the Databases by logging in to their BCPSOne accounts and clicking on the Digital Content Section. The Databases are a great tool for research and extending learning through books, videos, and digital resources.

**Black Eyed Susan Books:** The Black-Eyed Susan Book Award is given to authors, and/or illustrators of outstanding books chosen by Maryland students. According to the Maryland Association of School Librarians, “This award seeks to promote literacy and lifelong reading habits by encouraging chapter books for students in grades 4-6 , as well as graphic novels for students in grades 4-6. A list of these books that are located in the library and can be sent home upon request. Students in grades 2-5, are encouraged to read at least 8 of the books in order to be entered for a chance to win an incentive at the end of the school year. To keep track of the 8 books, students complete a reading log, which is located in the library, for each Black-Eyed Susan Book that they read. In the spring, the Battle of the Books will be held at the Towson Branch of the Baltimore
County Public Library. This is a competition based on the 10 books nominated for this year’s Black-Eyed Susan Book Award, in the Grade 4-6 Chapter Book category for students in grades 4 & 5. More information will be given at a later date.

The library is looking for volunteers! If you have time during the day and would like to volunteer in the library, please email me at egleitsmann@bcps.org. You can also sign up by using SignUp Genius and searching for my email address under “Find a Sign Up.”

Don’t forget to follow us on Twitter @WTESLibrary or Instagram @wteslibrary to see all the wonderful things that are happening in the library!

Ms. Gleitsmann teaches over 500 students weekly in the library. Check out the Library’s Amazon Wishlist for Makerspace items (Duct Tape, origami paper, etc.) and other library items (Clorox wipes, bookmarks, pencils, etc.). New this year is a wish list for Birthday Books, which parents can donate in honor of their child’s birthday. A nameplate will be placed inside the book and your child will be the first to check out the book. (Please notify Ms. Gleitsmann of the purchase.)

Check out the Library’s Amazon Wishlist here:
- Makerspace: http://a.co/7emySip
- Library Materials/Rewards: http://a.co/6goYURm
- Birthday Books: http://a.co/3Nkw5g

**WINTER WEATHER and RECESS**
At West Towson, the administration and teachers believe that it is important that children have time to play outside whenever possible, even when the weather turns cold. Please dress your children for the weather, sending them to school with coats, hats, gloves, and scarves during the cold, winter months. At the end of this newsletter, you will find the Baltimore County Public Schools Cold Weather Guidelines.

**WEATHER RELATED INFORMATION**
As the weather turns cold, we face the possibility of early closings or delayed school openings due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Families may not realize that West Towson’s administration does not have the authority to delay the school’s opening or to close the school early. These decisions are made by Baltimore County Public School officials. In fact, the school may not hear the official decision to close schools early until after the message has been announced through the media.

To ensure that you and your children are well prepared for the possibility of early closings, it is important that you plan carefully and keep the school informed of any changes in contact information. Discuss your emergency plans with your children so they clearly understand where they will go and how they will get there when schools close early. This year, we hope to use email to communicate early closing information with parents. As a result, it is important that you ensure that the school office has a current email address.

West Towson has only two phone lines to use during emergency closings which limit the number of families we are able to reach by school phones. Please avoid calling the school while we are preparing for an early dismissal, unless you are facing an emergency. Information regarding early closures and delayed openings can be found on the Baltimore County Public Schools website, www.bcps.org, or by calling 443-809-5555. In addition, parents may register at www.wbal.com to
receive an email or a text message when schools close early. Just a reminder that when school closes early, all after school activities are cancelled. This includes special activities and Parks and Recreation programs. In addition, Play Centers does not accept students when school closes early. Please be sure that your emergency plans do not include having your children report to Play Centers. Below are West Towson adjusted opening and closing times.

1 Hour Late - WTES Opens at 10:05 A.M.
2 Hours Late - WTES Opens at 11:05 A.M.
1 Hour Early - WTES Closes at 2:50 P.M.

WATER BOTTLES
Students are encouraged to bring refillable water bottles to school each day. Water is available throughout the school, so students may easily refill their bottles. Water has many health benefits and staying hydrated is good for the brain and learning. Cone cups are available at the water coolers, but students lose instructional time when they leave the classroom for drinks. Our school is a Maryland Green School and using refillable water bottles produces less waste than using paper cups.

ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS
During the 2018 - 2019 school year, would you like to... chaperone a field trip, attend a class party, be a mystery reader, serve as a room parent, or a classroom/school volunteer? In order to interact with West Towson students during the school day (in any capacity) you MUST do the following...

☐ Complete the online volunteer training found at www.bcps.org under the “Parents” tab and then http://bcpsvolunteers.md.safeschools.com/login

☐ Print the volunteer training certificate AND the BCPS application

☐ Attach BOTH documents (volunteer training certificate and application) together and deliver BOTH documents (volunteer training certificate and application) to the front office (**48 hours prior to in-school volunteering and 30 days prior to chaperoning field trips)

West Towson Elementary School also offers volunteers the choice of coming to the school to be volunteer trained. If you wish to attend a volunteer training session, the 2018-2019 training dates are listed below. Each session will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes. To ensure that everyone attending has a working computer, please email Mrs. Ruocco, Volunteer Coordinator, at eruocco@bcps.org to reserve your spot. Mrs. Ruocco is also available to answer any questions that you may have concerning the volunteer process.

February 14, at 1:00 PM March 15, at 9:30 AM
April 8, at 1:00 PM

Thank you for your support and cooperation in keeping our Westies safe!

Please note that this process must be updated every year in order to be volunteer trained.
**FLU SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER**

Flu season will soon be upon us and it is important that we work together to keep our children healthy. Viruses spread easily among children in schools and families with school-age children have more infections than others, with an average of one-third of these family members infected each year. By keeping our children flu-free, we benefit the community as a whole. You can help prevent the spread of flu or help your child get better if he/she does get sick by following a few simple steps:

- If possible, you and your child should get a flu shot.
- Remind your child to cover his/her nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing and dispose of the tissue immediately.
- Have your child wash his/her hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces and shared items at least once a day.
- Ensure that bathrooms are stocked with soap, hand towels, and tissues.
- Teach your child not to touch his/her mouth, nose, and eyes.
- If your child is sick and has a fever, keep him/her at home to prevent the spread of illness to others.
- **Before students return to school, they must be fever free for at least 24 hours.**

If you are concerned about your child’s flu symptoms, call your doctor early. Call your doctor immediately if your child has a chronic disease. Common symptoms of flu include high fever, severe headache, muscle and body aches, exhaustion, and dry cough. Additionally, children often exhibit other flu symptoms that are rare in adults, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Some children might benefit from an antiviral medication, which can be prescribed by a physician and can help lessen duration of the virus and reduce the risk of complications, such as pneumonia. To be effective, antiviral medication should be taken within 12-48 hours after flu symptoms begin.
Please Post this flyer on your refrigerator during the winter months.

West Towson Elementary School
Late Openings/Early Closings
Inclement Weather Procedures

Information about school operations is announced publicly as soon as possible on local radio and television stations and other media including the internet. If schools are delayed or closed, the announcement is usually made by 5:30 a.m. If schools are closing one or two hours early, the announcement is usually made by 10:30 a.m. If schools close 3 hours early, the announcement is usually made by 10:00 a.m. Please refer to the following for your most current weather-related information:

❖ BCPS web page http://www.bcps.org
❖ The Education Channel, Comcast Cable Channel 73
❖ BCPS Telephone Information 443-887-5555
❖ Local radio and television stations

School opens 1 hour late:
  o School begins at 10:20 a.m.
  o Doors open at 10:05 a.m.

School opens 2 hour late:
  o School begins at 11:20 a.m.
  o Doors open at 11:05 a.m.

School closes 1 hour early:
  o School will be dismissed at 2:50 p.m.

School closes 2 hours early:
  o School will be dismissed at 1:50 p.m.

School closes 3 hours early:
  o School will be dismissed at 12:50 p.m.

If ONLY West Towson closes early due to an unexpected emergency, or the School Superintendent rules that the system-wide closing is unexpected, the school is required to make direct contact by speaking with or contacting by email a parent or emergency contact before sending the child home. It is important to stay close to the phone or your computer in the event of such an emergency to receive the call from the school or to respond to the email. If the school representative does not speak directly with a parent or emergency contact, or receive a return email, the child will remain at school.
*SAVE THE DATE*

"Prepare your child for the path not the path for your child."

**Break out Sessions:**

"Raising a Resilient Child"
-facilitated by Liz Askine

"Letting Our Children Fail"
-facilitated by Jodie Destantis-Porter, Lori Lickstein, & Tiffany Garner

**Keynote Speaker:**
Sarah Crawley
-Anxiety & Stress Disorder Institute

February 27th
6pm-7:30pm
West Towson Elementary School

additional information to follow!
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The votes are in and pandas won the competition. Please help us raise money to symbolically adopt a panda from The Smithsonian's National Zoo.

According to the zoo's website, "The Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute has been at the forefront of giant panda conservation, working with Chinese partners to protect the panda's natural habitat."

We will be selling Pura Vida bracelets that will be special ordered in WTES colors. The bracelets will sell for $5 and all proceeds will be donated to The Smithsonian's National Zoo.

https://www.puravidabracelets.com/products/customize-your-bracelet

____________________________________________________________________________________

Please return this pre-order form to your child's homeroom teacher by January 18th.

Child's Name: ________________________________________________

Homeroom Teacher: ____________________________________________

Parent's Name: ______________________________________________

Email Address: ________________________________________________

Number of bracelets: _____ @ $5 each    Total amount enclosed: $___________

Please send in exact change or checks made payable to West Towson Elementary.
January 2019 Calendar of Events

**Teens**

**Drop Spindle**  
**Teen, adult**  
For those with a basic knowledge of spinning or for adventurous beginners, make your own drop spindle and learn how to spin wool. Advanced attendees learn to ply multiple strands to make stronger yarn. Supplies provided.  
Jan 15  Tue  6:30 PM

**LGBTQ+ Teen Meetup**  
**Teen**  
Create your own blackout poetry with fellow middle school- and high school-age members of the LGBTQ+ community. Snacks and supplies provided. Sponsored by the Friends of the Towson Library.  
Jan 22  Tue  7:00 PM

**Adults**

**Trivia Night**  
**Adult**  
Have fun and compete to win prizes with other trivia aficionados. Sponsored by the Friends of the Towson Library.  
Jan 2  Wed  7:00 PM

**Yoga and Meditation for Beginners**  
**Adult**  
Simple yoga and meditation for your well-being. Bring a yoga mat or towel. Registration required (online, by phone, or in branch).  
Jan 6  Sun  2:00 PM

**Ready, Set, Go! Nuts and Bolts of Starting a Business**  
**Adult**  
The Maryland Small Business Development Center teaches you how to write a business plan and other aspects of starting a business. Registration required. Contact 240-342-9410 or visit marylandsbdc.org to register.  
Jan 8  Tue  6:00 PM

**Zentangle®**  
**Adult**  
Learn a new way to relax by creating works of art using the Zentangle® Method. Zentangle® uses structured doodling called “tangling.” This can calm and reduce stress, improve focus and build self-confidence. Becky Boynton, a certified Zentangle® teacher, demonstrates step-by-step how to use simple patterns and shapes like lines and circles to create your own work. No art experience necessary. All supplies provided. Sponsored by the Friends of the Towson Library. Registration required (online, by phone or in branch).  
Jan 10  Thu  7:00 PM  
Jan 15  Tue  2:00 PM

**Decorative Altered Cigar Boxes**  
**Adult**  
Use mixed-media art to create your very own decorative altered cigar box. Your final creation can be used as a personal gift or gift container, as a home decoration or for storage of small items. Sponsored by the Friends of the Towson Library. All supplies provided. Registration required (online, by phone or in branch).  
Jan 12  Sat  2:00 PM

**Computers for Beginners**  
**Adult**  
Interested in learning computer basics and want to improve your typing? Join us for an introductory computer course. Registration required (online, by phone or in branch).  
Jan 14  Mon  7:00 PM

**Drop Spindle**  
**Teen, adult**  
For those with a basic knowledge of spinning or for adventurous beginners, make your own drop spindle and learn how to spin wool. Advanced attendees learn to ply multiple strands to make stronger yarn. Supplies provided.  
Jan 15  Tue  6:30 PM

**History Book Club**  
**Adult**  
Join us as we discuss The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt’s Darkest Journey by CandaceMillard.  
Jan 16  Wed  7:00 PM

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**Soo other side for more events!**

All branches will be closed on January 1 for New Year’s Day and on January 21 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Towson Branch  •  320 York Road  •  410-887-6166
January 2019 Calendar of Events

Children & Families

Baby Story Time
Birth to 23 months with adult
Connect with your baby through stories, bounces and songs, followed by a play time. Registration required (online, by phone, or in branch).

- Tue: 9:30 AM
- Thu: 9:30 AM & 10:30 AM
- Jan 12 & 20
- Sat: 10:30 AM

Paws to Read
School age
Register your shy or reluctant reader to read to a lovable pet from Pets on Wheels. They are friendly, nonjudgmental and good listeners. Children under 6 must be accompanied by an adult. Register at the service desk.

- Jan 5
- Sat: 2:00 PM

Bilingual Story Time/Hora do Cuentos en Bilingüe
2 to 5 years old with adult
Interact with your preschooler by enjoying stories and songs together in Spanish and English. Relacionense con su preescolar al disfrutar juntos historias y canciones en español y inglés.

- Tue: 10:30 AM

Toddler Story Time
2 to 3 years old with adult
Engage your toddler through stories, rhymes, songs and movement activities, followed by a play time. Registration required (online, by phone, or in branch).

- Fri: 9:30 AM

Preschool Story Time
2 to 5 years old with adult
Interact with your preschooler by enjoying stories and songs together.

- Fri: 10:30 AM
- Jan 5
- Sat: 10:30 AM

Story Time with Mr. Bob
2 to 5 years old with adult
Mr. Bob tells stories, sings songs and does various activities based on a special theme. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.

- Jan 9
- Wed: 10:30 AM

Saturday Crafternoon
All ages
Make a seasonal craft every Saturday. All materials provided.

- Jan 5: Augmented Reality Activities, Including Coloring Sheets
- Jan 12: Winter-Themed Bookmarks
- Jan 19: Doves of Peace
- Jan 26: Paper Snowflakes

- Sat: 11:00 AM

Pajama Story Time
2 to 5 years old with adult
Put on your PJs and bring your bedtime pal for stories and songs.

- Jan 16 - Wed: 6:30 PM

Towson Branch • 320 York Road • 410-887-6166

The Magic of a Book
All ages
Mike Rose presents an entertaining and motivational magic show that promotes reading and library use. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.

- Jan 20
- Sat: 2:00 PM

Tutor Meet and Greet
All ages
Meet local tutors, learn about library tutoring resources and hear from BCPS Parent University. Tutors cover grades K to 12 in subjects including math, reading, sciences, languages, college prep and more. Tutors must register by January 24 at the Towson Branch, or email towson@bcpl.net. No registration required for all other attendees. Baltimore County Public Library does not endorse or recommend specific tutors. Snow date, if necessary, to be determined.

- Jan 31
- Thurs: 6:30 PM

All branches will be closed on January 1 for New Year’s Day and on January 21 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
COLD WEATHER ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

In Maryland, it is unusual for air temperatures to be so cold that outside activities are absolutely unsafe. Temperatures less than 40°F can result in hypothermia and/or frostbite; temperatures above 40°F can cause hypothermia if the person's clothing has become saturated with water. Consequently, cold is an important factor to consider when planning outside activities. The following factors should be considered when planning outdoor activities in cold weather:

- **Wind** – Wind increases the rate of heat loss from the body. Wind chill values assist to calculate the level of danger from freezing temperatures and wind. For the current table of wind chill values, see [http://www.weather.gov/om/windchill/](http://www.weather.gov/om/windchill/).

- **Clothing** – Layered clothing, appropriate for the temperature, can mitigate or eliminate the effects of cold. Multiple layers of tightly woven clothing are recommended for cold, windy weather. Clothing that is wet is significantly less effective at protecting the individual from the effects of cold. Minimizing the amount of skin that is exposed to the cold air by wearing hats and gloves will reduce the chance that a child suffers from symptoms of cold exposure. Students with inadequate clothing for the temperature/conditions should not be permitted to participate in outdoor activities.

- **Acclimatization** – Sudden changes in temperature or temperatures that are markedly abnormal for the region are more likely to result in cold symptoms.

- **Health Status** – Some health conditions, like asthma, can be exacerbated by exposure to cold air. Students with heart conditions may be told to avoid intense exercise in cold temperatures since cold increases the strain on the heart.

- **Length of time to be outside** – The length of exposure to the cold air is directly correlated with the risk of cold exposure. Outdoor activities should be brief (30 minutes or less) in cold weather.

- **Inclement weather** – In general, outdoor activities should be avoided when it is raining or snowing because students' clothing may become wet and less effective at protecting them from cold.

The first sign that a student is too cold is shivering; any student with persistent (more than momentary) shivering should be sent inside to warm up. Any student with signs of hypothermia (prolonged shivering, exhaustion, confusion, clumsiness, memory loss, slurred speech or drowsiness) should be sent immediately to the school nurse.

Frostbite is an injury to skin from exposure to cold. Appropriately dressed students should never encounter risk of frostbite from outside activities; nonetheless, teachers should be alert to symptoms of frostbite, which include white or gray skin and stinging sensation or numbness in the affected area. Frostbite is most likely to occur on the face, hands, and feet. Students with suspected symptoms of frostbite should be immediately sent inside to the school nurse.