

WEST TOWSON ELEMENTARY



Jason Barnett, Principal
Christopher Carter, Assistant Principal

School Office: 443-809-3869
Health Suite: 443-809-8037

WTES Website: <http://westtowsones@bcps.org>

Go West Newsletter
December 2023



DECEMBER

- 14 4th and 5th Grade Winter Concert 2:05 PM
- 14 4th and 5th Grade Winter Concert 6:30 PM
- 15 WTES Spirit Day - Wear You Blue and Gold
- 18- Jan 19 Table Tennis - During Gym Class
- 18 SGA - 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM - Mrs. Pfeffer's Room
- 20 Pajama Day
- 22 **BCPS CALENDAR CHANGE: Half Day Asynchronous Learning - Students WILL NOT report to the school buildings.** Christmas Holiday/Winter Break - Begins at the End of the School Day and Offices Close 3 hours Early

A LOOK AHEAD TO JANUARY

- 2 School Reopens
- 10 Disney Day - Dress as Your Favorite Disney Character
- 11 Go West Newsletter Distributed
- 15 School and Offices Closed - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 16 SGA - 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM - Room 217
- 17-22 Vision and Hearing Screening
- 19 Second Marking Period Ends - Schools Close 3 Hours Early for Students - Grade Reporting and Data Analysis
- 22 5th Grade Students - Articulation - Dumbarton Middle School - 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 26 School Spirit Day - Show Your Westy Pride
- 29 Report Cards Distributed

A REMINDER FROM BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Schools and offices are scheduled to close three hours early on Dec. 22, 2023, and May 17, 2024. These two early release days will be asynchronous (virtual, at home) learning days for students and planning/professional development days for staff. Students will not report to school buildings on these two early release days. Learn more at www.bcps.org.

A word cloud with a blue border. The words are arranged in a circular pattern. The words include: "celebration", "happy holiday", "love", "family", "goodwill", "festivity", "giving", "friends", "joyous", "kindness", "gratitude", "peace", "sharing", "grace", "hope", "faith", "joy", "laughter", "unity", "togetherness", "warmth", "generosity", "compassion", "forgiveness", "patience", "humility", "modesty", "simplicity", "contentment", "satisfaction", "well-being", "happiness", "peace of mind", "inner harmony", "spiritual growth", "enlightenment", "wisdom", "knowledge", "understanding", "acceptance", "tolerance", "open-mindedness", "curiosity", "creativity", "imagination", "dreams", "aspirations", "ambitions", "goals", "dreams", "aspirations", "ambitions", "goals".

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRINCIPAL

JASON BARNETT

Season's Greetings and Happy Holidays! May the spirit of the season bring peace and happiness to all our West Towson families! We are so fortunate to be a part of a community that celebrates and values many different cultures and customs. The spirit of giving continues at West Towson during the holiday seasons.

West Towson's American Education Week turnout was remarkable! This year we had nearly 500 family members and friends visiting classrooms and watching the students learn. Your children enjoyed seeing their family members in school. Comments from our visitors indicated that they were impressed with the quality of the instructional program provided at West Towson. This interest documents the strong commitment to helping our students achieve in school. A special thank you is extended to our PTA and Mrs. Ford for coordinating the hospitality table.

Now that conferences have been held and report cards distributed, this is a great time to set goals and focus efforts for this second marking period.

The weather has turned colder, so it is important to remind all families to listen to the news each morning to learn whether school is opening on time. Most television news programs run information along the bottom of the television screen throughout the broadcast. BCPS TV (Comcast Channel 73, Verizon FiOS Channel 34) will also share current delay and cancellation information. You may call 443-809-5555 for information or check the BCPS website (www.bcps.org). It is important that we keep the school phone lines open for communication, so please do not call school. This is also a good time to review procedures with your child in case schools close early.

This is a very busy time of year, please remember to take time to relax and enjoy the spirit of the season. Mr. Carter and I wish you all a holiday season filled with peace and joy. Have a wonderful winter break and a Happy New Year.

WEST TOWSON ELEMENTARY IS RATED THE TOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has released new accountability information for each public school system in the state, including the Star ratings for individual schools. These new Star Ratings are calculated using 2022-2023 school year accountability data.



Since 2017-2018, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has reported on accountability components outlined in the Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan, which evaluates school systems and individual schools on a set of criteria.

Coming in as the number one elementary school in the state of Maryland, and as the number three school in the state, out of 1,400 elementary, middle, and high schools (two specialty high schools tied as number one) is, drum roll please, West Towson Elementary School. Our Westy pride is beaming!

WESTY WALK NEWS

The 2023 Westy Walk was a huge success! Thanks to all the sponsors, donors, parents, students, and staff for making it such a great event! We can't wait to see everyone on May 4, 2024. The event is not possible without the generosity of local businesses. During this holiday season, please consider patronizing these businesses and thanking them for their generosity.



If you are interested in being involved in this event or have a business that would be interested in being a sponsor, please contact Mr. Rabin at brabin@bcps.org or Ms. Ford at dford3@bcps.org

*The Westy Walk is not a PTA sponsored event. It is organized by a dedicated group of parent volunteers and staff. Funds from the program directly impact the school. This year, we purchased new classroom document cameras and are working on upgrades to the school sound system. Funds go into the West Towson Elementary account at the Education Foundation for Baltimore County.

Corporate Sponsors	Silent Auction Donors
Raesyn Performance Walking	Aberdeen Ironbirds
Corlis Construction	About Faces
Site Link	Baltimore Coffee and Tea
Uber Bagels	Baltimore Ravens
Mickey's Auto Repair	Beckett Hitch
Charm City Run	Bowie Baysox
Roland Park Orthodontics	Coppermine
Seasons Pizza, Towson	Dick's Sporting Goods
Rita's Italian Ice, Towson	Eagles Nest Country Club
Wolf Insurance Agency	Jessica Leigh Photography
The Graf Family	Lauren Daue Photography
Smith, Gildea, and Schmidt LLC	McDonogh Summer Camps
Immaculate Detailing	ProMD Health
Casa Figlia	Roland Park Orthodontics
Daft McCune Walker, Inc	Science North Salon and Blow Dry Bar
Armagh Village	The Mine
	Tiny Easel
	Towsontowne Rec Council

HOW DO I VIEW AND ORDER GENERATIONS DAY PICTURES?

If you would like to view and purchase pictures that were taken on Generations Day, please follow the directions below. The directions are also listed on the flyer that was provided to adults on Generations Day.

<https://events.lifetouch.ca/tempHomepage.aspx?EventID=183493>

Pictures will be available 2-3 weeks after picture day!
They can be viewed and ordered at the link above.

Please contact mjarea@lifetouch.com with any questions

Lifetouch.

NEWS FROM MRS. VANDERWAL- HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Baltimore County Department of Hearing and Vision will screen our students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1st and 4th on January 17 - 22. Any students new to Baltimore County Public Schools will also be screened. If you have a student in these grades, be sure that they bring their glasses to school for the screening exam. Teachers and parents may refer students from other grades for screening by contacting Ms. van der Wal. If you do not want your child screened, please notify the school prior to the screening dates.



Parents of students who fail the hearing and vision screening will be notified by letter. This letter should be taken to the doctor who provides the follow-up exam and then sent back to school with the results of the exam. If you are notified that your child failed the screening please make every effort to have your doctor or eye doctor examine your child promptly. Please contact Ms. van der Wal at 410-887-8037 or lvanderwal@bcps.org if you need help finding affordable eye or hearing exams for your child.

WEATHER INFORMATION PHONE LINE

With the arrival of cooler weather and the potential for inclement weather, parents may find the weather information phone line helpful. This important resource is provided through Baltimore County Public Schools. To hear the latest information about weather related closing, call 443-809-5555. Please do not call the school office with questions related to weather or school closings. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for weather related closing information.



BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUMMER LEARNING 2024

As we enter the second marking period, Baltimore County Public Schools have already started planning for summer learning in 2024. As we work to increase achievement for all students by providing a variety of pathways to prepare students for college and careers, students who require additional learning at the end of the 2023-2024 school year will need to attend a summer program to help them be successful in the next grade level. Additional information about summer program offerings will be shared with students and families throughout the school year.

Below is a list of resources and supports that you and your student should consider accessing throughout the next three marking periods in order to maximize academic success in the 2023-2024 school year.



- Set up daily or weekly “Parent Digest” notifications from Schoology to monitor your student’s activity in each class. Directions for setting up notifications can be found [here](#).
- All students and families can access Amira practice for additional opportunities to practice foundational skills. Families/students can access the Amira Reading practice through the HMH Into Reading app on the My Apps portal.
- Bridges Family Support- The Math Learning Center offers additional activities and games by grade level to support student skill building and fluency. Families can access the website on our BCPS Office of Mathematics website.
- Family Resources by Unit- The purpose of these resources is to provide unit overviews with models (videos and samples) to support homework and suggestions for families to engage in real-world application of the mathematics skills and strategies with their students. Families can access these resources through the BCPS Office of Mathematics website or through their child’s math course in Schoology.
- Math Homework Helpers- Math Homework Helpers is a resource provided on BCPS TV those models strategies for problem solving aligned with elementary math standards. All episodes of Math Homework Helpers are archived and available through YouTube and are also linked in the Family Resource Unit Overviews available on the BCPS Office of Mathematics website.
- Special Education- Progress reports are completed at the end of each quarter for each student receiving special education services. If a student is not making progress, the IEP team must meet. Families can work with the IEP team/SST to review accommodations and modifications if additional support is needed.
- ESOL- Office of ESOL support for students and families includes SEL support. Trauma-informed professional learning has been offered in the summer of 2023 and will be offered again throughout the school year. Families/students can request additional support from Administrators, counselors and the BCPS ESOL Office and ESOL Welcome Center upon enrollment.
- ESOL (3-12)- Intercabulary- Online platform using semantic reasoning with visual support to develop academic vocabulary. Students can access this program through Schoology or the BCPS Apps Portal

NEW/GENTLY USED SOCCER EQUIPMENT DRIVE: NEWS FROM CHUCK YANNEY



We are hosting a sports equipment drive for soccer equipment. This drive will take place from November 27th to December 20th. The drive has been created by former Westies, now in 8th grade at Dumbarton Middle, and are earning their Silver Award on Girl Scouts, the second biggest achievement a Scout can earn. They're working with an organization called Leveling the Playing Field who is helping kids get all the resources they need to play sports. We are working with a couple schools in Baltimore city that are

trying to start a soccer program for their students. Your donations will go to these schools to help them start their programs and give these kids the opportunity to play and learn soccer. We are collecting soccer balls, soccer cleats, shin guards, goalie gloves, pinnies, drill cones, ball bags, and water bottles. We will accept used or unused equipment if it is in good condition. There are large containers in the rotunda where donations will be collected. With the Holidays coming up this is a great way to give back to our community.

PRIVATE SCHOOL REQUEST FOR RECORDS

Occasionally, West Towson Elementary School receives requests from parents to send their child's records to private educational institutions for consideration of placement. As per Board Rule 5230, Student Records, this request must be received in writing along with a signed copy of the BCPS Consent for Release of Records form to release any information to another school or educational institution. Transcript requests are processed on a first come, first served basis. All requests will be processed within 15 business days after receipt of the completed form and payment in the amount of \$5.00.



Please do not send these requests to your child's homeroom teacher. Instead, please send all requests to the main office to be processed.

THANK YOU, DR. DINA SANCHEZ FROM ROLAND PARK ORTHODONTICS

Thank you, Dr. Sanchez, for the wonderful healthy lunch for our staff. You and your staff went out of your way to make staff members feel valued and appreciated. Staff also loved the swag table full of free teacher supplies. We appreciate you!



Terrific
Lunch!



Teacher Swag and
Classroom Supplies



ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS

During the 2023 - 2024 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 be volunteer trained.

Each year parents are asked to complete volunteer training. Please be proactive and complete these forms as soon as possible. Volunteer training can be accessed online at www.bcps.org under the



'Community' tab and is titled 'Volunteers'. All volunteers must complete the volunteer application **AND** participate in an orientation/training session annually. You will be provided with a certificate once you successfully complete the training. **Please submit the volunteer application and the valid training certificate to West Towson's Front Office Secretary, Athena Sidou.** These may be submitted by hard copy or electronically to asidou@bcps.org. Thank you for your willingness to help

FREE COVID TESTS
WWW.COVID.GOV

Get Four Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests This Fall

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order an additional 4 free at-home tests beginning November 20. If you did not order tests this fall, you may place two orders for a total of 8 tests.

Your order of COVID tests is completely free – you won't even pay for shipping.

Order Free At-Home Tests


Need help placing an order for your at-home tests?

Call [1-800-232-0233](tel:1-800-232-0233) (TTY [1-888-720-7489](tel:1-888-720-7489)).

The U.S. government will continue to make COVID-19 tests available to uninsured individuals and underserved communities through existing outreach programs. Please contact a [HRSA-funded health center](#) or [Increasing Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\) location](#) near you to learn how to access low- or no-cost COVID-19 tests provided by the federal government.


FIND COVID-19 VACCINE LOCATIONS NEAR YOU









Vaccines.gov helps you find clinics, pharmacies, and other locations that offer COVID-19 vaccines in the United States. www.vaccines.gov



HERE IS A GUIDE TO HELP YOU DECIDE
WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...



I have a Fever	I am Vomiting	I have Diarrhea	I have a Rash	I have Head Lice	I have an Eye Infection	I have been in the Hospital	I have COVID – like symptoms OR I'm waiting for a COVID test result.
							
Temperature of 100 or higher.	Two or more episodes within the past 24 hours.	Within the past 24 hours.	Body rash with itching or fever.	Itchy head, live head lice.	Redness, itchy, &/or crusty drainage from eye.	Hospital stay or ER visit.	Sore throat, congestion, cough, runny nose. New loss of taste / smell. Muscle pain, chills or extreme tiredness. New or severe headache.

I am ready to go back to school when I am:

Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin).	Free from vomiting or until cleared by medical provider.	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours or until cleared by medical provider.	Free from a rash, itching, fever. Or until my provider determined that the illness is not an infectious disease.	Treated with a pediculocide at home and information is provided to the school nurse.	Evaluated by my medical provider and have a note to return to school.	Released by my medical provider to return to school.	Negative COVID test and has other diagnosis from the doctor & no more symptoms.... OR free of COVID symptoms for 10 days.
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Absence Policy: A student absent from school shall present a note immediately upon return to school. The note, signed by the parent/guardian, shall include the name of the student, the date of, and the reason for the absence no later than five days after the student's return to school. If a student is absent for an extended period of time due to illness (*greater than 3 consecutive days*), a written statement of explanation from the physician is required no later than five days after the student's return to class.



BALTIMORE COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY



December 2023 Calendar of Events — Children

Story Times

Infant Story Time: Babies and Books

Infant (birth to 12 months)
with adult
Tuesdays
10:30 a.m.
Designed for newborns
and crawlers; siblings and
all abilities welcome.

Family Story Time:

Birth to 5 years old
with adult
Thursdays
10:30 a.m.
Designed for children who
are newly mobile and
active, to learning and
able to sit and listen for
short periods; siblings and
all abilities welcome.

Library Closed

Christmas Eve
Sunday, Dec. 24th

Christmas Day
Monday, Dec 25th

New Year's Day
Monday, Jan. 1st



Baby Craft Time

Monday
December 11th
10:30 a.m.

Towson Branch
Birth to 4

Join us for open ended art
projects as your little one
explores different art
materials in a variety of
shapes, colors, and sizes.

Dress for a mess!

Snapology Presents: Mining and Building

Wednesday, Dec. 27th
2:00 - 3:00p.m.

Ages: 5 to 12

Travel to the Nether with
Snapology, but watch out
for those creepers. We
bring Minecraft to life
using LEGO bricks.

Create your own world,
including animals,
creepers and your very
own Minecraft character.

Saturday Fun

Saturday, Dec. 2nd
Story Time
10:30

Saturday, Dec. 9th
Lego Fun
10:30

Saturday, Dec. 16th
Towson High School
Chamber Music Club
Concert
10:00-11:00

Saturday, Dec. 23rd
Paws to Read
10:30-11:30

Saturday, Dec. 30th
Noon Year's Eve
11am-12pm



Noon Year's Eve

Saturday, Dec. 30th
11:00 am- 12:00 pm
Ages 4 to 11

Celebrate the beginning of
a new year by counting
down to noon and
participating in fun New
Year's Eve-themed
activities and crafts.

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



December 2023 Calendar of Events — Adults & Teens

Teen Programs

Teen Time: Introduction to 3D Printing

Monday, Dec. 4th

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Ages 13 -17

Learn the basics of 3D printing.

Teen Time

Monday, Dec. 18th

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Ages 13 -17

Join us for games, crafts, movies, snacks, and more.



Holiday Concert with Camerata Musica

Saturday, Dec 2nd

1:00 -2:00 p.m.

All Ages

Camerata Musica, an energetic group of singers who specialize in madrigal pieces with rich harmonies, performs a seasonal set for the winter holidays.

Give a Gift: Mason Jar Crafts

Saturday, Dec 9th

1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Adults

Need a thoughtful, homemade gift?

Decorate a mason jar and fill it with ingredients to make a delicious batch of cookies.

Materials provided.

**Supplies are limited;
first come, first served.**



Crochet and Cookies

Monday, Dec 11th

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Adults

Do you crochet or want to learn how? Relax with other fans of the fiber arts at this drop-in event for all skill levels, from total beginner to expert. We have hooks and yarn, but feel free to bring your own.

Light snacks provided.



DIY Dried Orange Slice Ornaments

Saturday, Dec 16th

1:00p.m. -3:00 p.m.

All Ages

Make a festive, naturally fragrant decoration for your home using dried orange slices and seasonal spices.

**Supplies limited. First
come, first served.**

The Hang Out

Tuesday, Dec. 19th

5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Towson Meeting

Room

Adults

Meet new people while exploring fun activities, games and crafts at this social hour for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Support staff and caregivers welcome.