

BMS/CMS 2020-2021

Newsletter #14
December 7th-11th



NEW ITEMS

CMS UPDATE

On December 9th, Don O'day, the Chair of Westport's Town Building Committee and former BOE Chair, officially handed-over the renovated CMS to the Board of Education. The CMS staff will be preparing the school and instructional spaces to welcome students in the new year. As previously noted, all students at both middle schools will receive new schedules after the separation. Student teaching team placements will be preserved for language arts, math, science, social studies. While students will have the same Encores/Specials courses in physical education, health, STEM, art, music, world language and theater, their Encores/Specials teachers will change as well as the students that make up each class roster.

- PowerSchool will be shut down after school on Dec. 23rd.
- Over the holiday break, PowerSchool will be offline to allow the administrators and tech department staff to rollover and schedule our students.
- There is no change to the marking period 2 dates.

Upcoming BOE Meeting

At the Dec. 21st BOE meeting, there will be a reopening of CMS presentation that will include information on the professional work time that will be allotted to teachers to prepare for the intake of students after the holiday break. Watch this meeting using this link: [Westport BOE Meeting Online Stream](#)

NEW OPPORTUNITY: Online Film Club!

Faculty Advisor: Anastasia Gussen, agussen@westportps.org (BMS grade 7 science teacher)

Eligible Students: 6-8th graders

Permission is required: All student members must complete the [Film Club Permission Form](#)

Schedule: This club intends to operate for the remainder of the school year. The schedule may vary depending on interest, availability and length of movie. However the goal is to watch one movie a month. Students can watch anytime it is convenient for them. After everyone watches the movie we will meet virtually to discuss it.

Description of Club & Activity:

- With Teacher guidance, students will watch various movies and discuss themes, patterns, cultural significance and artistic merit.
- Optional activities may include: writing screenplays or adaptations of books with the goal of writing, producing &/or animating original content.
- Students will have a month to watch the movie on their own. Then the club will meet via zoom to discuss it and select the next movie.
- Parents and guardians will always be informed of the movie being discussed

Any fees, special equipment or considerations? This club will operate within available streaming services through BMS and the Westport Library to make sure every movie is accessible to all members. Students may be asked to access their Hoopla account and Westport Library account.

Additional: This club can meet completely virtually on zoom and therefore can occur in any school attendance model. This club will have a google classroom to organize the content and zoom links.

Goal: The goal of this club is to expose students to a variety of films and contextualize them in a cultural and academic format.

Final Call: PTA Reflections entries for 2020

The deadline for this year's PTA Reflections Contest is rapidly approaching next week on Wednesday, 12/16/2020; this deadline will not be extended.

This year's theme is: "I Matter Because..." and as usual, students are invited to compete in any of the following categories:

- Visual Arts
- Photography
- Musical Composition
- Film Production
- Dance Choreography
- Literature

Special Artists: The Special Artists category is for students with disabilities who receive services under IDEA or ADA Section 504 to have the opportunity and accommodations they may need in order to participate fully in the program.

Due to Covid restrictions, all entries will be submitted digitally. Therefore, students who are interested in participating should contact the Reflections committee at PTAReflections21@gmail.com for specific category guidelines and an entry form. Good luck to all of our artists!

Switching Between the Hybrid and Full Distance Learning Cohorts

To switch your child's cohort placement into the Hybrid Cohort, or Distance Learning Cohort, parents must send an email with this request to the appropriate school staff for approval and confirmation. Switching placement between cohorts is not fluid; we request parents and guardians communicate with the school prior to enacting a change.

How do I switch my child from their Hybrid Cohort (Cohort A or B) to the Distance Learning Cohort (Cohort D)?

Please send an email with your request to the appropriate school staff. For your convenience, we've created active links below that will automatically include the appropriate personnel. Please include your requested start dates and approximate time frame of how long you plan to keep your child(ren) home participating in the Distance Learning Cohort

How do I switch my child from the Distance Learning Cohort (Cohort D) to their Hybrid Cohort (Cohort A or B)?

Before sending your child(ren) to school, parents must send an email with this request to the appropriate school staff for approval and confirmation. Switching placement between cohorts is not fluid; we request parents and guardians communicate with the school prior to enacting a change.

You may request a cohort placement switch at any time. To email the correct staff with your request, please use the link/s below that corresponds with your child's team. The link will populate an email with the appropriate personnel and you simply type your specific request for a cohort change (either hybrid to full distance or full distance to hybrid). Please note that you must send a separate email request for each child.

FOR CMS

[Grade 6 Orcas Team](#)

[Grade 6 Dolphins Team](#)

[Grade 7 Pioneers Team](#)

[Grade 7 Patriots Team](#)

[Grade 8 Tigers Team](#)

[Grade 8 Wolves Team](#)

FOR BMS

[Grade 6 Purple Team](#)

[Grade 6 Red Team](#)

[Grade 6 Green Team](#)

[Grade 7 Purple Team](#)

[Grade 7 Red Team](#)

[Grade 7 Green Team](#)

[Grade 8 Purple Team](#)

[Grade 8 Red Team](#)

[Grade 8 Green Team](#)

What if my child is just absent and does not need a cohort switch, and what if I need to request an attendance record correction?

If your child will be absent from ANY CLASS (whether intended to be in school or online) due to non-Covid illness, an appointment, etc., please contact the **attendance hotline to report the absence at 203-341-1599**.

If your child is in a hybrid cohort and is staying home on an in-school learning day due to sick/illness, however is well enough to attend their classes online, your child will be marked absent so the school knows which students were physically present in the school building versus learning remotely at home.

If you need to request an attendance record correction, please contact for BMS Mr. Taccone at staccone@westportps.org or for CMS Diane Clark at dclark@westportps.org. Please note, when warranted, attendance record correction requests are subject to review and final approval by the associated building administrator or principal.

Westport Schools COVID Reporting Hotline

Westport schools COVID19 reporting hotline: if you've tested positive or have been directly exposed to a positive case, please call: 203-341-1016

NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE: December 14th-18th		
Monday, 12/14	C Day	Cohort A
Tuesday, 12/15	D Day	Cohort B
Wednesday, 12/16	E DAY	Distance Learning for all students following the Wednesday time schedule; the school day ends for all students at 12:30 p.m
Thursday, 12/17	A DAY	Cohort A
Friday, 12/18	B DAY	Cohort B

ARCHIVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS (active)

WE NEED YOUR HELP: Please Keep the Chromebooks Covered!	6
WE NEED YOUR HELP: Please Bring Your Chromebook to School, Charged and Ready to Go!	6
VISUAL ARTS NEWS	6
BMS Library Media Center Curbside Service	7
UPDATE: HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS FOR 2020	7
URSUS STUDENT NEWSPAPER ONLINE	7
Coleytown Middle School Reopening: BOE Updates	7
For Heaven's Sake!	7
High School Choices (other than Staples)	8
Reflections Art Contest 2020-21: All submissions by Wednesday, December 16th	8
Keeping Our School Clean and Safe	8
SUCCESS: Virtual BMS/CMS Veterans Day!	9
ONLINE EVENT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS: "Coping with Anxiety: Parent strategies for middle and high school students"	10
UPDATE from the Social Studies Department	10

	5
Halloween Spirit Video 2020 (LINK)	10
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	10
NEW: Distance Learning Tech Helpdesk	11
Update from Social Studies Dept - teaching the election	12
Update from the Language Arts Dept - Racial Equity Language Review	12
Science Olympiad New Member Night!	12
Cold Weather is Here -- Please Be Prepared!	13
REMINDER: CELL PHONE POLICY FOR STUDENTS	13
REMINDER: When Students Feel Sick...	13
REPEAT Announcement: Outdoor Recess/PE in Fall/Winter	13
Update: Physical Education & Health Education Departments	14
Student Chromebook Important Chrome-OS Update	14
VETERANS DAY ANNOUNCEMENT & INVITATION	14
REMINDER: Protective Face Coverings Mandatory in School (i.e. face mask)	15
BMS/CMS Clubs and Activities Booklet 2020-2021 (link)	15
RULER Presentation	15
Schoology Service Interruptions	15
Physical Education Update	15
Westport Schools COVID-19 Dashboard (active link)	15
Reminder: School Bus Courtesy Riders are Not Permitted	16
BMS/CMS Daily Schedule Rotation	16
ANNOUNCEMENT: BMS/CMS BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT 2020-2021	16
Fire and Lockdown Drills	16
Attendance	16
Why are some students' webcams shut off?	16
No Bumping Cohort School Days	16
Mandatory Mask Break/Recess for All Students	16
Protective Face Masks	17
Sick Child (non Covid related)	17
School Bus Courtesy Riders	17

	6
No Visitors Inside BMS	17
Reaching Your Child's Teachers or Counselor	18
ALERT Student Pickup at Dismissal - PLEASE PULL FORWARD!	18
What About Substitute Teachers?	18
School-Issued Chromebook Issues?	19
Need More Tech Help?	19
More Zoom Help?	19
Special Note on Student Pickup	19
VISIT THE BMS LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER SITE	19
VISIT THE BMS NEWSPAPER URSUS.NEWS (LINKED)	19
PARENT TECH HELP	19
Safe School Climate Policy	20
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT	20
Prior Newsletters	21

WE NEED YOUR HELP: Please Keep the Chromebooks Covered!

We require all students to use their school-issued protective case on their school-issued Chromebook. We are reminding all students that this is not optional. The cases are zippered, lightweight, and do an effective job protecting our school's Chromebook from the elements. We are trying to do what we can to protect our instructional technology investments; we ask our students to join us in this important task.

WE NEED YOUR HELP: Please Bring Your Chromebook to School, Charged and Ready to Go!

When attending in-school, please help remind our students that they need to bring in their school-issued Chromebook, in its case, charged-up and ready to go!

VISUAL ARTS NEWS

We're excited to share what our BMS/CMS middle school artists have been creating this past fall. Students have been busy designing in their sketchbooks, which are the perfect portable space in which they plan, reflect, and produce works of Art. These "traveling portfolios" record students' growth over time. Since all Art needs an audience, we invite you to take a look at what they've been making and share in their successes.

Thank you for your support, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Beggs, Mr. DeRosa, Ms. Kangro, Ms. Karmen

[Please visit our Visual Arts Site \(LINK\)](#)



BMS Library Media Center Curbside Service

Brought to you by our dedicated team, Mrs. Zatorsky Library Media Specialist, Mr. Horrigan Library Media Specialist, and Mrs. Stepniwski Library Assistant. [BMS LMC Curbside Service \(LINK\)](#)

UPDATE: HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS FOR 2020

Thank you, BMS and CMS families for contributing to Saturday's food drive. The PTA volunteers collected 3,806.7 pounds of food to benefit Westport's Homes with Hope and the Gillespie Center. The BMS and CMS school communities helped make the 2020 holiday season a bit brighter for Westporters in need. The breakdown was, 6th Grade: 1,403.7 lbs, 7th Grade: 1,258 lbs and 8th Grade: 1,145 lbs which means 6th grade gets the coveted School-Spirit Pajama Day! We will schedule pajama day when we are able to once again safely attend in-school learning. Congratulations to everyone for this amazing gift.

So what's next? Let's rock the "COIN WARS!" Benefitting Westport Human Services, please [SIGN UP HERE](#) to contribute a gift card and brighten a neighbor's holiday season. This all-grades initiative has already brought in so many generous donations of gift cards: 6-Red is still in the lead, but all 3 Green pods are on their tail in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place, respectively. The Blue pods are moving up and we've ... wait for it! ...raised \$2,000 *since Monday* to bring the subtotal to just over \$6,000! Thanks to all of you who have donated so far! Please, keep them coming! *Gift cards must be delivered by Monday, 11/30/2020; [details are in the link](#).*

Thanksgiving Bread Baking: This program has been CANCELLED by Saugatuck Congregational. We apologize for getting you all jazzed up about resuming your sourdough expedition but in the spirit of health and managing covid, the church regrets having to cancel this year's program.

URSUS STUDENT NEWSPAPER ONLINE

Ursus wants to know what you're thankful for this year, fill out this short form to share. Don't forget to check out [Ursus online!](#)

Coleytown Middle School Reopening: BOE Updates

Did you miss Monday night's BOE meeting? Read on for CMS Co-Presidents Patra and Jill's [CMS Building Update](#)

For Heaven's Sake!

Get outside in the early evening this week for a rare view of the planets: Jupiter and Saturn are visible in the southwestern sky just after sunset (6:30 PM is a great time)! At the same time, you can see Mars in the southeastern sky. If you have a pair of binoculars or a telescope you might be able to see Neptune and Uranus

in the sky near Mars or even the rings of Saturn. Send photos of any of these planets to Dr. Cortright (dcortright@westportps.org). We will publish them on the BMS Schoology page.

High School Choices (other than Staples)

Westport students have access to regional magnet high schools that often feature specialized programming. Here is an account of a student's experience that appeared in Dan Woog's 06880 blog: [LINK](#)

Reflections Art Contest 2020-21: All submissions by Wednesday, December 16th

Hey, aspiring artists! We are thrilled to announce the launch of this year's PTA Reflections Contest and its theme: "I Matter Because..." The Reflections Program is the PTA's cornerstone arts program that offers students the opportunity to be recognized on the local, state and national level for their unique artistic interpretation of the time. As usual, artists are invited to compete in any of the following categories:

- Visual Arts
- Photography
- Musical Composition
- Film Production
- Dance Choreography
- Literature

Special Artists (applies to all arts) The Special Artists category is for students with disabilities who receive services under IDEA or ADA: Section 504 have the opportunity and accommodations they may need to participate fully in the program.

Due to Covid, there are a few important updates to this year's program. First, the deadline is Wednesday, December 16th (a bit earlier than in years past). Second, all entries will be submitted virtually. Therefore, students who are interested in participating should contact the Reflections committee at PTAReflections21@gmail.com for specific category guidelines and an entry form. We look forward to seeing your masterpiece!

Keeping Our School Clean and Safe

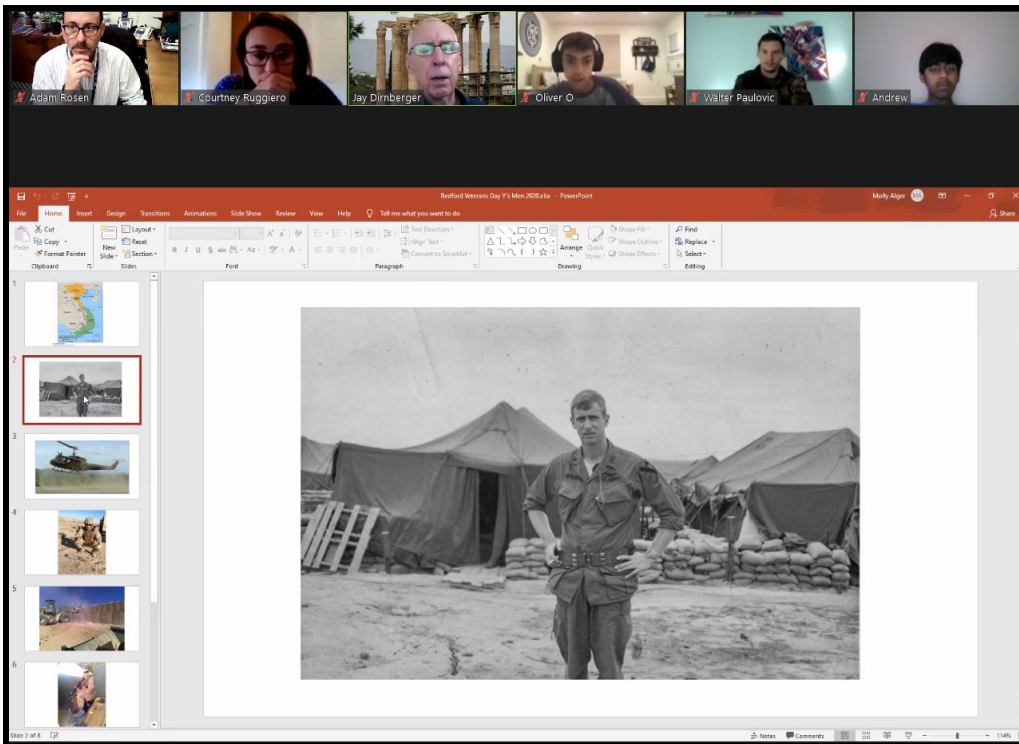
Our daily goal is to clean and disinfect the entire school; our custodians are working tirelessly to achieve this goal. While our middle schools remain combined, the hybrid/distance learning models work well with our cleaning protocols and help our custodians achieve their daily cleaning and disinfecting responsibilities.

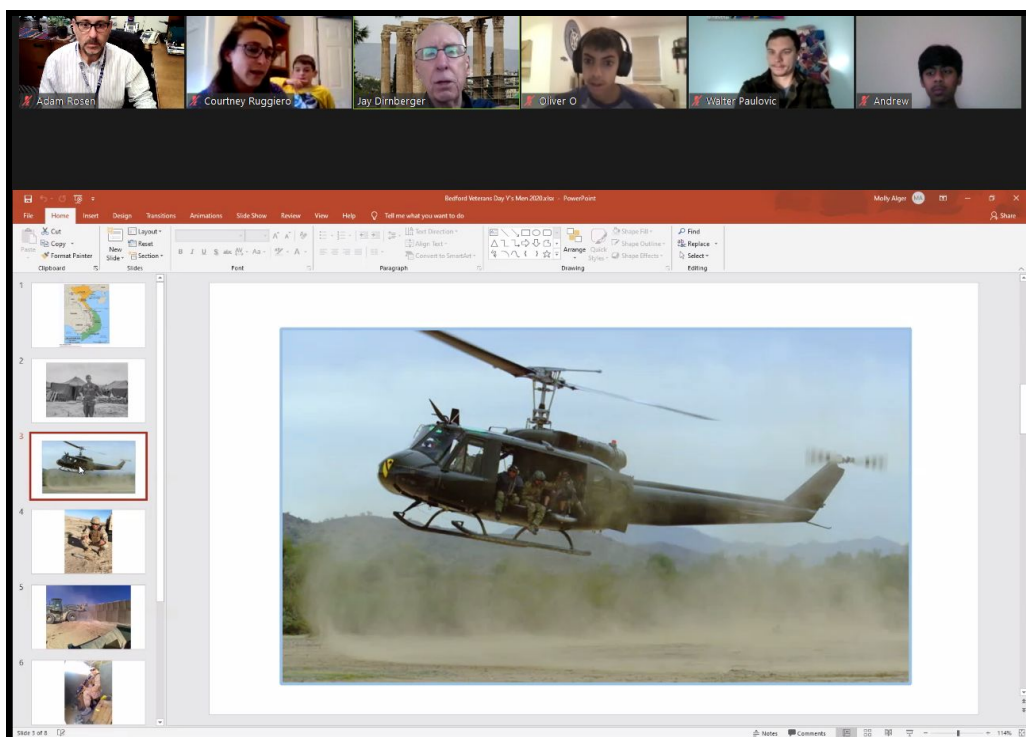
- Our custodial crew uses heavy-duty disinfectant atomizer guns daily after school hours; all touch points are wiped down multiple times daily; [all cleaning products are district approved according to our indoor air quality standards managed by the Tools for Schools protocol \(LINK\)](#).
- Surfaces, such as desks and countertops, are purposely kept clear of materials for high quality all-surface wipe downs. [We use green cleaning products.](#)
- Special note: Our health office receives ongoing cleaning and disinfecting throughout each school day; the isolation room in our health office receives thorough cleanings before/after each use.
- BMS's exhaust fan ventilation system, which reaches all parts of the building, runs 24/7;

- The hours of operation for BMS's general HVAC system (i.e. occupied mode) have been expanded to increase the overall daily air turnover throughout the facility.
- [FAQ on the district site has existing language on upgraded cleaning protocols, and steps to keep students and staff safe \(LINK\).](#)

SUCCESS: Virtual BMS/CMS Veterans Day!

The middle school hosted numerous veterans who met with our students through Zoom. In this picture, we see Walter Paulovic and Jay Dirnberger. When Walter was a grade 7 BMS student, he invited Jay to the BMS Veterans day as an honored guest and presenter. Walter was so impressed by Jay's presentation that he is now a veteran himself living in Texas and was, for the first time, invited as an honored guest and presenter for this year's BMS/CMS Veterans day program. Here is more coverage from [Dan Woog's "06880 Where Westport meets the world" blog \(link\)](#). In the pics below, Walter and Jay are speaking with a cadre of our 8th grade students and presenting some of their personal photographs from their time serving in our military.





ONLINE EVENT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS: “Coping with Anxiety: Parent strategies for middle and high school students”

Presentation with Melissa Rotante, Staples Teen Talk Counselor, is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17th at 9:30 a.m. The title is "Coping with Anxiety: Parent strategies for middle and high school students". Parents received an email with the details including the Zoom link. If you could include this info in emails to parents about upcoming events I would appreciate it. Here's the zoom link: [Register in advance for this meeting](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

UPDATE from the Social Studies Department

Last week evolved from an Election Day to an Election Week; our talented Social Studies teachers turned it into a week of civic engagement and learning about voting rights and systems. Election Week was Civics Week! News outlets explained how our election systems work in great detail, people watched the electoral college map as results came in, and grassroots mobilization efforts were visible as votes were counted in a year of record voter turnout. By Saturday, President-elect Joe Biden and Vice Presidents-elect Kamala Harris addressed the nation about the possibilities before us and the hard work of uniting a divided nation in the coming years. There is no doubt that the coming news cycles will bring more content to our classrooms; our Social Studies teachers will continue to teach through this moment.

[9 Ways To Teach about the Election: A Social Justice Approach](#)

[Halloween Spirit Video 2020 \(LINK\)](#)

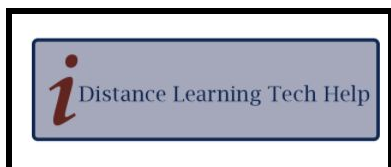
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

On Tuesday this week, our teachers attended a virtual conference focusing on diversity and equity. Here are some samples from teachers' reflections, submitted anonymously:

- “Looking at African cultures through the lens of art-making and the role that artists play in communicating history. Social Emotional well-being of LGBTQ Students: Strategies to create an inclusive classroom that honors diverse gender identity. RFK Human Rights Speak Truth to Power: Curricular resources that will educate and empower students.”
- “To help students know their truth, understand weaknesses and face fears. Listening to others with intentional empathy and talking about losses, successes and failures as important aspects of learning and growing. Being proactive and not reactive is the goal to raise awareness and to create a safe space to battle interpersonal issues and foster an inclusive climate.”
- “Black History in the United States has been wrongly taught. We need to focus more on Africa and African history and less on individuals such as Jackie Robinson and Barack Obama. These individuals are inspiring, but they ultimately represent the white America's final inclusion rather than black achievements. Additionally, the students at the end were GREAT! They allowed educators to understand the daily experiences of our students. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own practices and judge how I can be better for my students.”
- “I enjoyed that there were opportunities for me to learn more about topics that may make myself or others feel uncomfortable, but that being uncomfortable and learning with like-minded individuals made it easier to focus on growth.”

NEW: Distance Learning Tech Helpdesk

Westport Public Schools is proud to partner with Custom Computers to provide a Distance Learning Tech Helpdesk. The goal is to provide real-time support for families during any distance learning or at-home hybrid learning days. Parents, guardians, caregivers, and/or students can call, email, or chat with live support Monday-Friday from 7am-8pm. A "Distance Learning Tech Help" button has been placed on the bottom left-hand of the [BMS website](#) for easy access to important details about the program.



What does the helpdesk support?

- Troubleshooting logging in to school Chromebooks
- Troubleshooting connecting to school Zoom sessions
- Troubleshooting login and access to GSuite, Google Classroom (preK-5) and Schoology (6-12)
- Troubleshooting basic network connections between school devices and home Internet. If the issue is with the home wireless, families will have to contact their ISP directly.
- Troubleshooting basic hardware issues with school devices including audio/video issues. If a hardware swap is needed, the helpdesk will escalate the call to the Westport IT team.

How do I contact the helpdesk?

- Live support is available Monday-Friday from 7am-8pm
- Email DLhelp@customms.com
- Chat <https://westportps.customms.com/>
- Phone 1-833-752-0723
- System status updates/outages will be posted on <https://westportps.customms.com/>

Who can contact the helpdesk?

- Parents, guardians, caregivers
- Students, if they are able to articulate their issue and independently follow directions given by a technician.

Once I contact the helpdesk, what happens?

- You will be asked to provide information about the student you are calling about and to identify yourself.
- An electronic ticket will be created
- A technician will troubleshoot and work to resolve the issue
- If the technician is unable to resolve the issue quickly over the phone, they may request to remote into the user's device to further troubleshoot
- When the issue is resolved, an email notification with specific details of the solution will be sent

What if I need help with other tech issues?

- Contact your child's teacher for help with completing assignments within a program like Turn-it-in, Lexia, IXL, NewsELA
- Contact your school library media specialist for help with Sora (digital library checkout) or access and use of school databases.
- Contact the WPS Parent helpdesk for help resetting parent passwords or parent access to PowerSchool and Schoology at 203-341-1214 or parenthelpdesk@westportps.org.
- Email Dr. Anthony Buono, abuono@westportps.org, with any content filter requests. A committee will review all requests prior to changes being made.

Update from Social Studies Dept - teaching the election

Under the leadership of Lauren Francese, our 6-12 Coordinator of Social Studies, our Social Studies teachers attended a professional development session run by Deb Chad, ADL Education Director for Online Learning and Emily David, Co-founder and Head of Education at Bites Media. Together, they presented a webinar highlighting election resources and strategies for respectful class dialogue. This webinar included resources from ADL's "Strengthening Our Democracy: Civic Participation in the 21st Century" and Bites Media. Together, they provide vetted multi-media news articles and an anti-bias civic lens enabling students to better understand the current election system, and how our role as individual voters and voices can make a difference in a democratic republic. Many of the resources are high school focused, so the middle school teachers worked on adapting and supplementing with other resources that are already part of the election resources (i.e. iCivics) that are used to support middle schoolers' understanding of the election process and civic engagement overall.

Update from the Language Arts Dept - Racial Equity Language Review

Under the leadership of Holly Sulzycki, our 6-12 Coordinator of Language Arts, our Language Arts teachers met to review and discuss the [National Education Association's Racial Equity Language Review \(linked\)](#).

Science Olympiad New Member Night!

Date and time: Wednesday, November 11th at 7:00 p.m.

How to attend this online Zoom meeting: Please contact Mrs. Kathryn Nicholas (knicholas@westportps.org) and copy your home school's advisor. The BMS Science Olympiad advisor is Dr. Daniel Cortright (dcortright@westportps.org); the CMS Science Olympiad advisor is Mr. Keenen Grace (kgrace@westportps.org).

QUIZ

Science Olympiad is:

- A. An in-depth look at science
- B. A competition against teams from around the U.S.A.
- C. A way to learn something you are really interested in
- D. Fun!
- E. All of the above.

The correct answer is E!

The award-winning BMS and CMS Science Olympiad teams are preparing for the 2020-2021 season. This year will be exciting in new ways as all preparations and competitions will be done virtually. We do love a new challenge! The faculty advisors are eager to welcome new students, who are interested in the challenges and opportunities associated with the Science Olympiad. Events include Fossils, Heredity, Circuit Lab, Dynamic Planet, Disease Detectives, and many more. You do not need to have prior knowledge to participate; all you will need to succeed is a positive mindset, attitude, and genuine enthusiasm for learning and tinkering.

Cold Weather is Here -- Please Be Prepared!

Maybe you've heard the Scandinavian adage, "There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." Cold and wet weather is here and will continue throughout the New England winter. Our goal is to bring our students outside for their mandatory mask break and recess as long as the temperature is above freezing and it's not heavily precipitating.

BMS and CMS students need to be prepared to be outside, for limited time, in light rain/drizzle, cold temperatures and windy conditions. When conditions outside are too harsh, our library media center is prepared to accommodate our students at a moment's notice. We trust that our school community understands the importance of bringing our students outside for a mask break and will act accordingly so our students are well-prepared for winter weather.

REMINDER: CELL PHONE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

- Cell phones are not permitted to be used or visible during the school day between the hours of 8:00-2:45 p.m.
- Students may not use bluetooth earbuds/headphones in school without teacher authorization.
- If a parent/guardian needs to contact their child, please contact the BMS main office at 203-341-1500.

REMINDER: When Students Feel Sick...

- Students feeling sick are to report to the BMS Health Office;
- Students may not bypass the health office by texting their parent/guardian for pick-up from school.

REPEAT Announcement: Outdoor Recess/PE in Fall/Winter

We will continue bringing our students outside for their recess/mask break during our lunch waves and for PE instruction. All students and families are expected to monitor the local weather forecast and conditions from home, and then **arrive at school dressed appropriately for cold temperatures, mild inclement weather and windy conditions**, i.e. cold weather coats, warm hats, scarfs, etc.

In case of heavy rain or extreme cold, for recess, we have socially-distanced indoor space in the library media center (LMC), however this is not a mask break since this is indoors. Note, in addition to using the LMC, the larger lunch waves also use satellite classrooms to maintain social distancing during recess.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR INDOOR RECESS (in LMC and Classrooms):

- Students must choose a seat and stay seated;
- Students may not move chairs or furniture; the furniture has been carefully placed to maintain social distancing;
- Students must keep their protective masks on (primary mitigating strategy);
- Students may not use cell phones;
- Students may read, complete school work, use their school-assigned Chromebook and can log into the LMC's Destiny system to find books, ebooks, etc.

Update: Physical Education & Health Education Departments

Students continue to enjoy outdoor physical education. They are able to remove their face coverings during this time while they continue to social distance. Please keep in mind that students will be outdoors for PE as often as possible. Here are some helpful tips as the weather changes:

- A change of socks and shoes may be helpful as the grass is often wet, especially in the morning.
- Dress in layers and wear clothing that will be warm and comfortable.

The middle school health curriculum is focused on social and emotional learning (SEL). Students in 6th grade have been writing SMART goals after developing self awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses in their physical, social and mental health. In 7th grade students have been analyzing external influences and learning to pay more attention to their internal values and beliefs in order to help them make good decisions that can lead to improved self esteem and confidence. Our 8th graders have been studying stress management. They have been learning about the effects of stress and practicing mindfulness based stress reduction techniques that can be used anywhere.

Student Chromebook Important Chrome-OS Update

ATTENTION ALL CMS/BMS STUDENTS: To address some of the sound quality issues with Zoom, we are asking all students to update their school-assigned Chromebook operating system by following these easy steps: [Chromebook Operating System Update Instructions](#)

NOTE: In some cases students will be required to update and restart twice

VETERANS DAY ANNOUNCEMENT & INVITATION

We will continue with our proud tradition of honoring the veterans in our school community, however the program for our 8th graders will take place online this year; we are making arrangements for our students to meet with veterans live via Zoom for presentations and discussions.

At this time, we are reaching out to all veterans in our CMS/BMS school community (moms, dads, aunts/uncles, cousins, etc.): If you are a veteran, or have a veteran in your family, and have interest in participating in our online Veterans Day event (through Zoom), please RSVP to Courtney Ruggiero cruggiero@westportps.org so she can add your name to our list of guest veterans and answer questions you may have. [To participate, veterans will need to... \(LINK\)](#)

REMINDER: Protective Face Coverings Mandatory in School (i.e. face mask)

Face coverings, which can be cloth or paper, must cover the nose and mouth. Masks should be at least 2 layers and fit snugly and comfortably; it should not be too thick as to make it difficult to breathe.

NOTE: Masks with a “filter outlet” can spread respiratory droplets and are not be permitted in school.

[BMS/CMS Clubs and Activities Booklet 2020-2021 \(link\)](#)

Please note, while we are excited to offer an array of clubs and activities, we do have a number of clubs temporarily on hold; we will activate clubs on an ongoing basis and alert our students and families accordingly.

RULER Presentation

As you learned in last week’s note from Dr. Rosen and Ms. Szabo, Yale’s Center for Emotional Intelligence will host a webinar for members of the RULER communities on 10/20 @ 7pm. A recording will be sent to all who register after the session; space is limited to 1,000 attendees. [Register Here.](#)

Schoology Service Interruptions

This week on Wednesday morning we experienced a period of intermittent service interruptions with Schoology, which resulted in some students unable to join their morning classes. For up to the minute Schoology status updates, please use this link at any time: [SCHOOLY STATUS UPDATES](#)

Physical Education Update

Students have been enjoying physical education (PE) outside on our athletic fields, with the exception of rainy days. While participating in PE, students remove their face coverings during and continue to social distance. In September, students engaged in opportunities to get to know each other and engage in various ice-breaker and team building activities to help them gain comfort with each other and our setting. As October begins, students will be studying the Borg perceived exertion scale and its relationship to developing cardiovascular fitness.

Reminders:

- 1) Students will be outdoors as often as possible. As the weather gets colder, please be sure that your child brings extra layers and dress in clothing that will keep them warm and comfortable.
- 2) When a student’s PE class falls on a Wednesday, the class is held virtually via Zoom. Students are required to attend and will find their Zoom class by going to their PE teacher’s Schoology page.

[Westport Schools COVID-19 Dashboard \(active link\)](#)

As Westport schools plan to reopen, the guidance and considerations outlined on this [website](#) are grounded in the following guiding principles:

- Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
- Returning to in person schooling is a priority;
- Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
- Emphasizing equity, access, and support for all students, especially cohorts with specific educational and developmental needs;
- Reopen with instructional models and schedules that allow for a seamless transition to alternative approaches (e.g. hybrid, distance learning models) in the event the spread and prevalence of COVID19 reemerges;
- Fostering effective two-way communication with families, educators, and staff; and

- Ensuring plans conform with federal, state and local mandates.

Reminder: School Bus Courtesy Riders are Not Permitted

This is a reminder that BMS/CMS students are not permitted to courtesy ride on other buses or vans. Students are permitted to ride their district-assigned school bus or van; students may not ride on other buses/vans for visits to friends houses, etc.

BMS/CMS Daily Schedule Rotation

[CMS/BMS DAILY SCHEDULE ROTATION CALENDAR 2020-2021](#)

Also, as a reminder, Cohort A students attend in-school at BMS/CMS Mondays and Thursdays, Cohort B students attend in-school at BMS/CMS Tuesdays and Fridays, Wednesdays are distance learning for all students.

ANNOUNCEMENT: BMS/CMS BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT 2020-2021

[BMS/CMS BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT 2020-2021 WEBSITE](#)

On **Tuesday, Sept. 29th at 7:00 p.m.** all families will receive an email with a link to our virtual back to school night; unfortunately, we are unable to invite our parents and guardians to visit the middle school for a traditional back to school night. Our teachers created video presentations, which have been curated on one website for easy navigation. If needed, please be sure you're receiving emails from our school and district by reviewing your email settings in the PowerSchool parent portal. Please login to check your settings; contact the parent help desk for assistance at 203-341-1214.

Fire and Lockdown Drills

At this time, we've completed 2 fire drills, one with each cohort of students. On Thursday October 8th and Friday October 9th, students and staff will participate in lockdown drills that have been modified for our hybrid model; each student cohort will participate in one of these lockdown drills. For the lockdown drills, students will wear their protective face masks and will not move from their desks to maintain social distancing. Teachers will provide students with additional instructions that will apply in the case of an actual emergency.

Attendance

If your child is sick and unable to attend school, whether it be in-person or distance-online, please contact the Attendance HotLine at 203-341-1599.

Why are some students' webcams shut off?

As we work to improve the online live stream quality and experience for students, to help mitigate some of the issues causing freezing audio/video, some students have been asked to turn-off their webcams. The goal is for all students to have their webcams on all the time, however we are not quite there yet; thank you for your patience.

No Bumping Cohort School Days

In the BMS/CMS Hybrid Model 2020-2021, Cohort A students attend school Mondays and Thursdays, Cohort B students attend school Tuesdays and Fridays; Wednesdays are distance learning for all students. This arrangement is true for the remainder of the school year; this does not change when there is a holiday or cancellation of school (i.e. snow day). Important to note: This approach is in contrast to the model at Staples High School. At Staples High School, when there is a school holiday, the cohort is bumped to the next school day. Reasons for this difference are rooted in scheduling and child supervision.

Mandatory Mask Break/Recess for All Students

All students go outside every school day for a mandatory mask break/recess. Students are to dress appropriately for cooler weather associated with Fall and then Winter. We will be going outside in most weather

conditions except for thunderstorms and extremely cold temperatures; in these cases we will keep students indoors and socially distanced.

Protective Face Masks

When supplying your child with a protective face mask for attending school, please adhere to the updated [CDC guidelines \(linked\)](#):

DO choose masks that	DO NOT choose masks that	Special Situations: Children
 <p>Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric</p>	 <p>Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl</p>	 <p>If you are able, find a mask that is made for children</p>
 <p>Completely cover your nose and mouth</p>	 <p>Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape</p>	 <p>If you can't find a mask made for children, check to be sure the mask fits snugly over the nose and mouth and under the chin</p>
 <p>Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps</p>	 <p>Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks</p>	 <p>Do NOT put on children younger than 2 years old</p>

Caution: Gaiters & Face Shields	Special Situations: Glasses
 <p>Evaluation is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time</p>	 <p>If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire to limit fogging</p>
 <p>Evaluation is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time</p>	

Sick Child (non Covid related)

Question: If my child is sick (non Covid related) and can't come into school on their scheduled cohort day, can they login to their live streamed classrooms?

Answer: If your child cannot come into school on their scheduled day because they are sick/ill (non Covid related), they are permitted to login to their classroom live streams, however, please use caution and best judgement. While we do not want to push our students too much when they may require rest and recuperation, we also do not want to actively prevent access. Parents and siblings are not permitted to attend an online class in the place of their student; only our middle schoolers may attend online.

School Bus Courtesy Riders

This is a reminder that BMS/CMS students are not permitted to courtesy ride on other buses or vans. This means that students are only permitted to ride their district-assigned school bus or van; students may not ride on other buses/vans for playdates, visits, tutoring, etc.

No Visitors Inside BMS

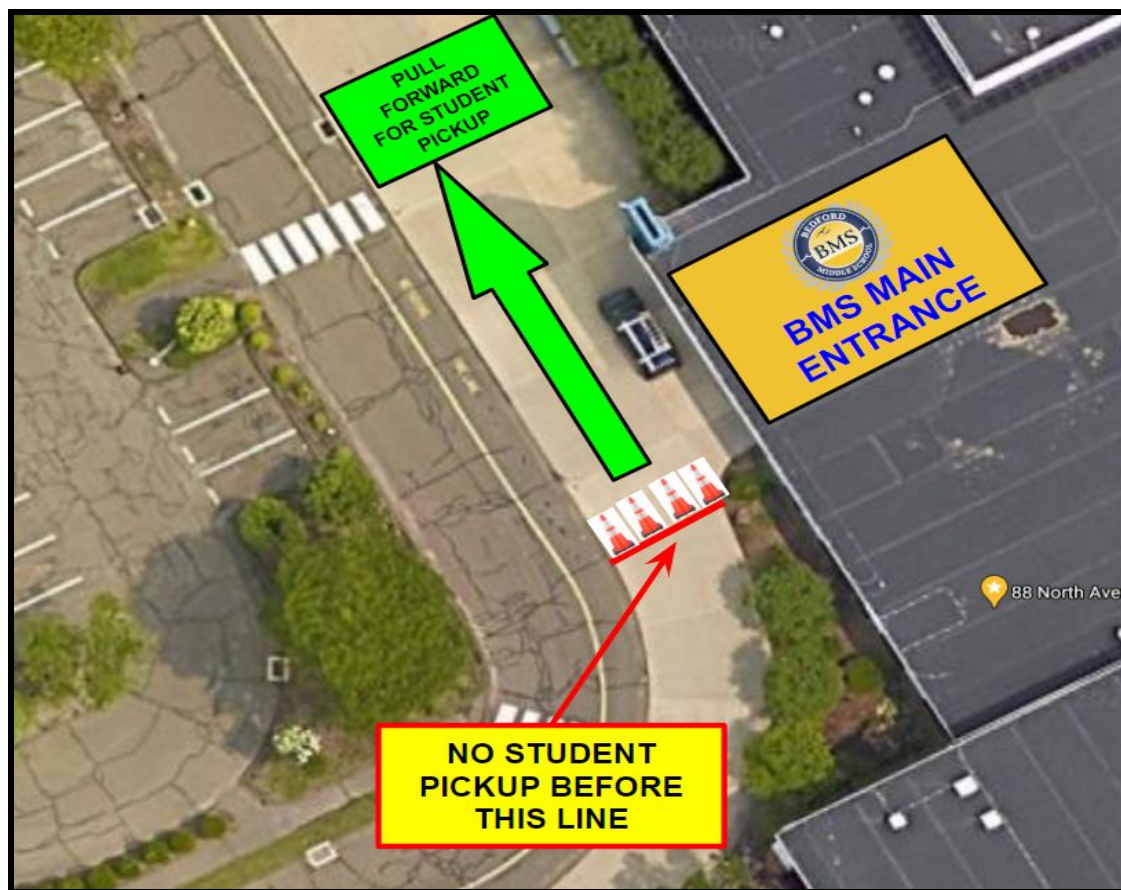
At this time, parents, guardians, and siblings are not permitted to enter BMS at any time before, during or after school. Parents, guardians and siblings may visit the main entrance and use the intercom to communicate with

the main office staff for pickup of items per arrangement, drop-off of required documents, etc. In all cases, items are left on the “Pick Up/Drop Off” cart located adjacent to the intercom at the main entrance.

Reaching Your Child’s Teachers or Counselor

The most efficient way to reach your child’s teachers or school counselor is through email. Some conversations are not appropriate for email exchange; in this case, please email the teacher or counselor with a request to set up a date and time for a brief phone call to occur (calls may be voice-only, or through Zoom/Google Meets; your child’s teacher or counselor will let you know what will work best).

ALERT Student Pickup at Dismissal - PLEASE PULL FORWARD!



What About Substitute Teachers?

At BMS/CMS, we have two “building substitute teachers” who report daily, and are deployed throughout all grades and areas of learning. We also have “daily substitute teachers” who report to our school intermittently as vacancies arise. While our substitute teachers are familiar with our students, staff, safety procedures and health protocols, they do not live stream instruction when covering a classroom. When teachers are absent from their classroom, the teacher will post the assignment, task and instructions to their Schoology page, which students will access using their Chromebooks in school and at home.

School-Issued Chromebook Issues?

If your child is experiencing substantial and prolonged audio/video issues when accessing the live streamed instruction while at home through Zoom, we're here to help. Please contact our Library Media Specialists for assistance; if they cannot help you directly, they are well-positioned to direct you to the folks who can.

CMS Library Media Specialist John Horrigan: jhorrigan@westportps.org

BMS Library Media Specialist Kelly Zatorsky: kzatorsky@westportps.org

Need More Tech Help?

If you're not receiving emails or notifications from BMS/CMS or Westport Schools, or you want to take a look at your child's course grades and just can't seem to figure out PowerSchool, please look for the helpful resources posted here: [DISTANCE LEARNING & HYBRID TECH HELP](#)

Parent Tech Help Desk Phone: 203-341-1214 Parent Tech Help Desk eMail: parenthelpdesk@westportps.org

More Zoom Help?

- [Zoom Livestream: How to login for students \(DOCUMENT W/LINKS\)](#)
- [Student Livestream: How to access your livestream class \(VIDEO\)](#)

Special Note on Student Pickup

1. For early pickup from school, please send your child into school with a signed note indicating the time of the early pickup and reason.
2. Students are to bring this note to the main office when they arrive in the morning; the main office will provide the student with a pass for early dismissal.
3. When you arrive at BMS to pick up your child, please use the main entrance intercom to alert the main office that you have arrived to pick up your child.
4. The main office staff will escort the student to the door; students should never exit the building without first notifying the main office.

VISIT THE BMS LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER SITE

So many amazing titles! Please visit the [BMS LMC website](#) for more details. We have the ebooks and audiobooks available in Sora.

VISIT THE BMS NEWSPAPER URSUS.NEWS (LINKED)

Comments on articles are encouraged, and if you have a letter to the editor or an op-ed, we'd be glad to consider publishing your thoughts.

PARENT TECH HELP

Please contact the parenthelpdesk@westportps.org or 203-341-1214 for technical issues with accessing district resources or district supplied Chromebooks.

Here are helpful directions for student Chromebooks: [Connecting at Home](#) and [Printing at Home](#)

- [SCHOOLGY FOR PARENTS \(video tutorial\): Basics on Using Schoology and PowerSchool](#)
- [PARENT & STUDENTS: DISTANCE LEARNING AND HYBRID TECH HELP](#)
- [VIDEO: STUDENT ACCESS TO LIVE STREAM INSTRUCTION](#)
- [How to Access Your Live stream Class from Home During Hybrid or Long Distance Learning](#)
- [CMS/BMS DAILY SCHEDULE ROTATION CALENDAR 2020-2021](#)
- [Westport: Reopening Our Schools Information and Resources for Families](#)

- [BMS Students Online Learning Resources Organized by Subject Area](#)
- [BMS Library Media Center Presents: READING FROM HOME \(for students and parents\)](#)
- [Schoolology: Calendar Tips \(for students\)](#)
- [Schoolology: How to View All of Your Courses \(for students\)](#)
- [BMS Homepage](#)
- [Schoolology](#)
- [PowerSchool](#)
- [CMS/BMS HYBRID & DISTANCE LEARNING MODELS FOR 2020-2021: ORIENTATIONS, GUIDANCE, INSTRUCTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND MEETINGS](#)
- [CMS/BMS HYBRID & DISTANCE LEARNING MODELS FOR 2020-2021: ORIENTATIONS, GUIDANCE, INSTRUCTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND MEETINGS](#)

Safe School Climate Policy

The Safe School Climate Policy states that each and every school community member should be treated with dignity, should have the opportunity to learn, work, interact, and socialize in physically, emotionally and intellectually safe respectful and positive school environments as well as the opportunity to experience high quality relationships. We work together with staff, students and community members to promote conditions designed to create, maintain, and nurture a positive school climate. The Bullying Intervention and Prevention Policy states that we are responsible for creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education.

We will be reviewing all of this information in school with all students attending CMS/BMS. Please review these policies and discuss them with your children.

LINKS:

- [Bullying Intervention and Prevention Policy](#)
- [Safe School Climate Plan](#)
- [Westport Guiding Principles](#)
- [Safe School Climate \(slides with voiceover\)](#)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

Many of our Bedford families have been seeking ways to reach out and help members of our community who experience food insecurity. Here are three ways you can help support our community and Homes with Hope Westport:

1. Drop off non-perishable food and/or toiletry donations as usual at the center, but with no contact. Families can leave the food/toiletries at the door. Link to needed items: [Food/Toiletry List](#)
2. Send food/toiletries via Amazon and have it delivered to the center. [Food/Toiletry List](#)
3. Donate funds via the "donate" link on their website. <https://www.hwhct.org/>

Acts of compassion and kindness may help reduce stress, boost immune systems, and help reduce negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, reaching out and helping others may also increase one's sense of self esteem and emotional wellbeing. Thank you for supporting our community!

Prior Newsletters

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #1 Week of Sept 8th-11th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #2 Week of Sept 14th-18th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #3 Week of Sept 21st-25th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #4 Week of Sept 29th-Oct 2nd](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #5 Week Oct 5th-9th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #6 Week of Oct 12th-16th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #7 Week of Oct 19th-23rd](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #8 Week of Oct 26th-30th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #9 Week of Nov 2nd-6th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #10 Week of Nov 9th-13th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #11 Week of Nov 16th-20th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #12 Week of Nov 23rd-25th](#)

[BMS/CMS Newsletter #13 Week of Nov 30th-Dec 4th](#)