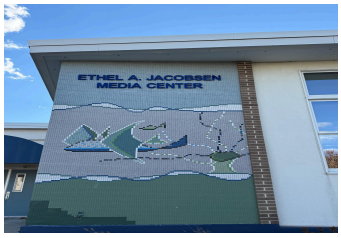
Long Beach Island Consolidated School District

"Riding the Waves of Excellence"

Superintendent and Principal's Report, January 2026





Dear Parents/Guardians,

It's hard to believe the third marking period starts on February 2nd! As we move through the midway point of the school year, it is important we take time to discuss the importance of reading at the elementary level. This is a collaborative effort between school and home to develop critical skills and foster a lifelong love of learning.

Parents play an essential role in nurturing this habit by creating a supportive environment at home. There are many ways we can support this by establishing a cozy reading space, and keeping a variety of age-appropriate books accessible. Make sure to set a consistent daily reading routine and read together!

Visit the local Ocean County Library, Long Beach Island Branch, bookstores, and online resources to keep reading and learning fun!

A special thanks to our staff, parents, and especially students for an upcoming presentation "Oh! Do You Know Sphero?" The Long Beach Island Elementary School S.T.E.A.M.Club will present during the New Jersey Association of School Administrators Conference, TECHSPO '26, held at Harrah's Resort Hotel & Casino on Friday, January 30th. The room will be filled with excitement as our students demonstrate their innovation, creativity, and passion for robotics.

On January 15th, Art and Science Communicator Jill Pelto, who joined virtually from Washington State met with our 5th and 6th students. Everyone was really excited to learn about, and create works of art that integrate authentic scientific data. Special thanks to our Long Beach Island Elementary School PTA for this unique experience.

If you haven't yet, kindly sign up to become a PTA member as they strive for 100% participation from all of our LBI Elementary School families. The next Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting is scheduled for February 19th at 4 p.m. in the Media Center. We look forward to working together to plan and organize activities for the upcoming months. Please make every effort to support our PTA by volunteering your time.

We wish you a Happy New Year, and we look forward to working together to promote the best possible educational experiences for the students.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Peter Kopack

Parent Teacher Association

We would like to thank our PTA for their continued support. Thank you to all of the parents and teachers for their time and effort!



Art and Science Communicator Jill Pelto worked virtually from Washington State with our 5th and 6th students.

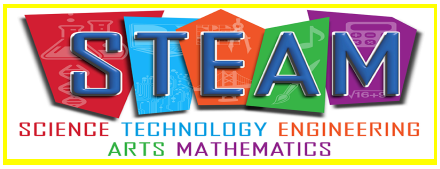
Science

Our sixth grade scientists have been exploring volcanoes in depth using various visible thinking routines for data analysis, reading and comprehending informational text, silent small group discussions, and whole class debates with a “Tug of War” by supporting claims with evidence, and creating 3D models. Students began the unit by reading informational text about volcanoes to identify and explain impacts, types of volcanoes, benefits and disadvantages of volcanoes, and why volcanoes are found in certain locations.

Students also read case studies of notable volcanoes and held a Tug of War debate about the pros and cons of volcanoes. In addition, students analyzed data about forecasting methods, applied their data analysis skills to a fictional volcano, and wrote news alerts about an impending volcanic eruption. Throughout this investigation, students utilized the Claim-Support-Question protocol which encourages reasoning through formulating an interpretation of volcanic eruption data, supporting the interpretation with evidence, and also asking further questions about their claims.

Our fifth grade scientists have been exploring the Earth’s Systems and their interactions with the Greenhouse Effect using simulations, brief NASA videos, informational text and 2D models. Students investigated the effects of increased and decreased heat trapping greenhouse gases on the Earth’s systems. In addition, students explored other Earth’s systems interactions such as acid rain and rain shadows. These students also planned

and conducted investigations to test the effect of acid rain on plant growth. Students identified dependent and independent variables to collect evidence for the impact of acidic water compared to distilled water on radish seed germination.
Our fourth grade scientists have been exploring natural resources by reading informational text and explaining impacts of the use of natural resources. In addition, students developed models of oil spills to observe impacts of these events on Earth's systems.
Our third grade scientists have been exploring magnetism and collecting evidence for concepts related to this phenomenon. Students also used the engineering design process for brainstorming and solving simple problems utilizing magnets.



This month, a 5th and 6th Grade art and science collaboration took place in which the students had a virtual presentation with climate artist Jill Pelto who integrates art, climate science and the environment. Students learned about her artwork processes and techniques. Before and after the virtual visit, students participated in authentic lessons analyzing data related to climate change and created artwork that incorporates real data to depict the causes and effects of climate change.

In early January, our first afterschool STEAM Club of the year was held with fourth and fifth grade students to learn about Sphero Robotics. This club will be offered schoolwide and will continue to be held throughout the months of January and February culminating in our annual STEAM Night event led by student volunteers.

Music with Mr. Cotov



The music department is entering an exciting time: many weeks of exploration and refinement. In our band, new scales and songs are being learned weekly, but old concepts such as breathing, posture and tone control are reinforced. The violin program has never been stronger. Under the direction of Mr. Cotov, the program continues to add new players. They are learning major and minor scales, new bowing techniques and many new songs. Mr. Cotov is so proud to add new chorus members as we explore classics, and pop and rock hits from all decades.
Our music classes are singing songs to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. We will also sing about our early Presidents, Punxsutawney Phil, and Valentine's Day.

ART

PreK, Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grade have been creating winter inspired artwork. Snowy landscapes and lanterns, penguins, and polar bears, it's a winter wonderland! Fourth Grade is finishing up their paper sculptures inspired by Damian Ortega. Fifth Grade just completed their Yayoi Kusama inspired pumpkins, and Sixth Grade is wrapping up their Bauhaus collages. Mrs. Messec and Ms. McBride are about to begin an art and science collaboration with Fifth and Sixth Grades. We studied Jill Pelto and her climate data artwork, culminating in watercolor paintings that incorporate climate data they have amassed. We visited with Jill Pelto virtually on January 14th and were so excited to meet her!







Health / Physical Education

Happy New Year!! In PE we just finished our Basketball and Floor Hockey Units. From Prek-6Th grade all the students did a tremendous job, not only with their teamwork and skills but most importantly with our safety rules. Especially with hockey resulting in 0 trips to the nurse's office! Kudos to the kids for playing safely. With the new year starting we are moving towards team games such as Handball, Pin Guard, Pirates and Sailors. These games will test our agility, teamwork, and sportsmanship skills. Keep up the great work students and remember those PE shoes and recess jackets!!

Health News

Upcoming presentation by Hackensack Meridian Health educator on January 21st for grade 4 and 5 "Rethink Your Drink"! The program will discuss the sugar content of popular drinks, as well as the potential health implications of their beverage choices (i.e. energy drinks).

PREK JANUARY 2026



This month, our classroom theme is Winter! We will be exploring winter animals, snowmen, winter sports, and igloos. During this season, many animals hibernate or migrate, and we will be learning all about these changes. We will read Scholastic's My Big World magazine, A Long Winter's Nap and Hey There, Little Polar Bear, which will help us learn even more

about winter animals and their habitats.

In our dramatic play area, we will transform the space into a ski resort! The children will explore snowboarding and skiing while learning about different types of mountains and trails. We will use our imaginations to pretend it is cold and snowy. Our sensory bin will be filled with fake snow, allowing the children to scoop, play, and even make "snowballs"! During literacy lessons, we will focus on writing letters using straight and curved lines. We will also be exploring rhyming words. Each day, we will practice a different set of rhymes and use familiar nursery rhymes to find even more rhyming words. In math, we will continue working on addition with numbers 1-5 and practice writing the numbers 6-10. We are also excited to welcome parents and other family members into our classroom as Mystery Readers throughout the month!

Kindergarten Crew

Welcome to 2026! In Kindergarten we are hitting the ground running as we come back from winter break. We started off discussing the new year. These Kinder Kids are going to shine bright in 2026! In Word Work we will continue to explore and learn letter sound relationships and work on word building to improve our writing. In Reading we will continue to build our vocabulary, think about essential questions, work on comprehension skills and strategies in order to interact with a variety of texts. We are looking forward to beginning small reading groups! In Math we are becoming addition experts and will start learning subtraction! We are continuing to practice and improve our number sense. In Science we will be exploring weather. In Social Studies we will discuss Martin Luther King and the importance of peace and unity. We will be creating crafts and projects centered around winter, seasons, and unity. It's sure going to be a busy and fun month of learning in Kindergarten!

First Grade

WOW! We are just about halfway through the 2025-26 school year! Can you believe it? I am not sure how it happened so quickly, but here we are! The children are really grasping onto the concept of printed language. We have tackled many skills and strategies in our phonics program. We have recently covered beginning and ending blends. We are now moving into more involved ending blends; such blends include "Kind Old Ghosts are Wild" (-old, -olt, -ild, -ind, and -ost) and-ng and -nk blends. These blends are quite tricky, so we will spend quite a bit of time on them. We will also continue to work on synonyms and antonyms, common and proper nouns, and singular and plural nouns (including subject/verb agreement). These little tykes are taking on so much knowledge, and are really working to apply these skills within

everyday language acquisition! It is really quite impressive! We are wrapping up Earth's Surface in Science! We have learned about how the earth is made up of a variety of layers and the three main types of rocks.The children have had an awesome time learning about this. Soon we will be diving into living and nonliving things and how to use properties to correctly identify something that is living. In math, we are taking a bit of a break from addition and subtraction while we move on to place value and understanding what "tens" and "ones " are. Our Social Studies unit is focusing on families, long ago and today. We will be focusing on the past, present and future. We will be introduced to what primary sources are: Using pictures, books and artifacts to learn about long ago. We will compare life long ago to life today and show how our families are alike and different. We will also learn that many cultural traditions get passed down from one generation to the next. We are looking forward to having classroom visits sometime in the near future! If you are interested in stopping by for a read aloud or something, please let us know.

Second Grade

Second graders have started off the new year ready to work! In Orton this month, second grade students have been working with words that have "Bossy R" sounds. In ELA, students began the New Year writing their resolutions for 2026. Check out their wonderful work on display outside the Main Office! In addition, second graders completed research on their favorite animal. Students wrote an informational paragraph with facts, supporting details and transitional phrases. Then, they typed their writing in a Google Doc, where they learned how to include a photograph and highlight text to make their paragraphs really pop! Students' published writing is on display outside the second grade classrooms. Currently, students are learning about fables and the lessons that we can learn from reading them. At the end of this month, students will be introduced to summary writing. They will use their own words to write a summary of a fairytale story. In Math, second graders have been working with numbers up to 1,000. Now they are learning strategies to add three digit numbers together. Students will move onto the strategy of vertical addition to add hundreds numbers together, learning how to regroup when needed. In Science, students just wrapped up a unit on matter. Now second graders are exploring how living things depend on each other for survival. In Social Studies, we have been learning about Martin Luther King Jr. and why he was a hero to our country. Students will continue with a unit on past, present and future, and will utilize various sources to learn about the past. In second grade both students and teachers are looking forward to a successful second half of the school year!

Third Grade

Our 3rd graders are jumping into lots of exciting learning for the new year! In ELA, students are thrilled to take a break from the Wonders curriculum and begin a novel study on *Dog Heroes*. Our puppy-loving third graders are especially excited, and this engaging book also connects beautifully to social studies topics. We love the cross-curricular learning! In Math, students continue to strengthen their multiplication and division skills and are enjoying the opportunity to write their own word problems. In Science, we are wrapping up our unit on magnets by exploring how they work and where we see them in the real world. It's been a busy and fun start to the new year!

Fourth Grade

Bring on 2026! Our focus in Math for the beginning of this year will be Factors, Multiples, Prime & Composites, and then learning all we can about Fractions. Our Science Tech State Projects are being worked on in class, and we will be presenting them soon. Learning about energy and motion in Science Lab has been a lot of fun. Our next topic will be Natural Resources, where we will learn a lot about our planet. Reading and Math skills are getting stronger with our use of the IXL program each week. We are continuing to learn all 50 US States and Capitals by challenging ourselves online, practicing together, and working with flashcards. We have much to be grateful for as we begin a new year, and a lot of fun learning in store for the months ahead!

Fifth Grade

The 5th Graders cannot believe how fast the school year is going. They want to wish everybody a happy new year! They have been working hard in all of their subjects. In ELA they are working on non fiction. They will be starting their Holocaust novel soon. They will be reading *Number of the Stars* by Lois Lowry. In Social Studies they are pretty sure one of us has solved the mystery of Roanoke. We will be visiting the 13 colonies soon. It has been a great year so far!

Sixth Grade

The 6th graders focused on identifying themes in ELA this month. They determined a theme topic and wrote a theme statement for our novel, Maniac Magee. Then they identified text evidence to support the theme and finished the month by submitting an essay analyzing a theme in Maniac Magee.
In math, the students are having fun creating a themed miniature golf course to practice equations and inequalities. Each student was responsible for creating their own 9 hole golf course. For every hole, students had to answer problem based math questions relating to solving equations, determining cost, and graphing patterns.