



New Year Brings New Challenges

By: Christopher McGuire

Now that we're well underway, I'd like to take this opportunity to officially welcome everyone to the 2011-2012 school year. On October 4th, we had a terrific turnout at our 6th Annual BVS Meet and Greet. It was wonderful to see over 200 students and parents at our annex campus. Many thanks to everyone who made the time to come out and meet our teachers and staff. The energy that evening was overwhelmingly positive and it helped make the evening a huge success.

I want to sincerely thank each of our students, parents and teachers for their patience as we transition into the new Blackboard learning management system. Without your patience and cooperation, we would never see the light at the end of the tunnel. Change is difficult and we are all experiencing the challenges of change in a technology based learning environment. Florida Virtual School decided to migrate into the Blackboard system due to the staggering increase in the amount of students who have chosen to take online courses across the state of Florida. As a ten-year partner of Florida Virtual School, BVS was obligated to migrate into Blackboard as well. Our former learning management system, *Educator*, proved to be an efficient and productive teaching and learning tool for over seven years.

BVS Trailblazers persevere despite any challenging circumstances, so I know we will be in great shape after Florida Virtual School works out all the kinks in Blackboard. I'm eternally grateful to our students and teachers who work daily in the new system. You are paving the way for the future of online learning in Florida. Blackboard is considered the industry standard in online learning. Our students will undoubtedly use Blackboard in any college or university they choose to attend after high school graduation. I'm pleased to know they'll be prepared for what lies ahead in their educational endeavors.

In addition to the Blackboard challenge, the state of Florida is in tough economic times. Funding to public education took a drastic cut this year. Consequently, Broward County was forced to furlough all staff members for the week of Thanksgiving as a cost cutting measure. This means that all schools and District offices will be closed from November 21 through November 25. BVS students will be permitted to submit coursework, however teachers and other staff members will not be available by telephone or e-mail for the entire week. On the bright side, I encourage all students to take a well-deserved break and enjoy Thanksgiving week with family and friends.

To conclude on a positive note, I am thrilled to announce that BVS has recognized Ms. Melanie McCutcheon as Teacher of the Year and Ms. Zefi Granek as Employee of the Year. Both Ms. McCutcheon and Ms. Granek are exemplary BVS team members who undoubtedly deserve this recognition. I'd also like to thank the entire BVS team for their hard work getting the new school year off to a great start. Together, we efficiently processed over 700 new student applications and welcomed over 100 new families to BVS for the first semester. This is simply outstanding. Go BVS!

Teacher of the Year 2013: Melanie McCutcheon



As math is my passion and instructional focus, kids and learning are my job! When it was announced by my peers that I had been selected for "Teacher of the Year", I felt a bit empty in thought as to why me....but then I thought well why not me? I strive to be a pillar in education, I want everyone I come in contact with to love kids, to look to teaching them, to invest in their future. I hope that this opportunity will lend itself to a

platform of attention that will remind our community that the little things are still important - our children!

Employee of the Year 2012

Zefi Granek was selected by her peers as Employee of the Year for 2012. Ms. Granek works in the office at Broward Virtual. "She's an asset to our Team," stated Mr. McGuire. Congratulations!



New Helpful Website



www.brainstorm1101.com

At www.brainstorm1101.com, one of our own, Dawn Cardenas, has dedicated several years to creating online educational videos for her English and Reading students. This year, Mrs. Cardenas decided to create a website that allows universal access to anyone with an internet connection.

At brainstorm1101.com, students, teachers and parents will find lessons, support and inspiration available all day, every day. Her goal is to deliver smart, precise, fun teaching. If you need guidance in writing and reading comprehension skills, this is the site for you.

National Honor Society

By: Sophia Parrish

If you have ever attended a traditional brick and mortar school, then you know that the National Honor Society is the cornerstone of many schools' clubs and societies, and you may also know what an accomplishment it is to be a part of this society. Now, thanks to the efforts of Broward Virtual's own Dr. Wilson and our guidance department, BVS has received the charters for our very own chapters of both the National Honor Society, as well as the National Junior Honor Society.

Since its founding in 1921, NHS has provided an outlet through which students may develop leadership skills, help out in their community, improve their overall academic performance, and prepare for higher education. Each year, students may run for an officer's position in NHS, and therefore help plan

out the year's activities. Members are required to partake in at least one service project each year, and this requirement benefits both the community and the student. In addition, Honor Society members are provided with the opportunity to apply for scholarships exclusive to society members, and membership in NHS is incredibly appealing to other scholarship programs, as well as universities.

Students in grades 10-12 with a grade point average of no less than 3.0 are eligible to be considered for Honor Society membership, and the same goes for students in grades 6-9 for Junior Honor Society membership. Students

will be notified if they are eligible to be considered for membership. If you would like more information on National Honor Society, visit <http://www.nhs.us/>, or contact Dr. Wilson in the guidance department at dierdre.wilson@browardschools.com



BVS FACTOR TALENT SHOW



Student/Teacher Talent Show Auditions Begin

The second annual **BVS Factor Student/Teacher Talent Show** is now holding auditions for our December show. Students from all grade levels are encouraged to audition. Rules for auditions:

1. Students must be on Pace in all classes and have a grade of C or higher.
2. Student must send a 2 minute video to Mr. Grimes, at charles.grimes@browardschools.com
3. Auditions must be appropriate for all audiences.
4. Make sure that the audition video has good sound and picture quality.
5. Auditions must be received by November 21, 2011 at 5pm.

Three judges not affiliated with BVS will decide the acts that will make the cut to the final show. Acts for this year's show will be announced on November 28, 2011 by email. Last year's Glee-ful Student/Teacher Talent Show was a great success. The show will be December 15, 2011 at Nova High School. All proceeds from the talent show will go to the Senior/Junior Prom and Graduation for the Class of 2012.

New Organizations for Students @ BVS

By Dr. Dierdre Wilson

Operation SMILE Club



Thanks to Student Volunteers, Sara Syed-President, Leon Rice-2nd Vice President, Brittany Maragh-Treasurer, and Carla Sanchez, Acting Secretary, after the 1st meeting. These BVS students are to be commended for their leadership skills by becoming an officer in the BVS Operation SMILE Club. Their volunteer hours began when they all agreed to donate to Feeding the Homeless Harvest Drive by November 10th; Donate to Hats Off to Cancer Drive by October 28th; Create Home-Made Holiday Cards and/or Donate to the Toy Drive by December 1st, so that we may deliver to the designated hospitals across Broward County. More

details will be shared Monday, November 14, 4:30 to 5:30PM @ BVS BECON CENTER.

BVS Key Club

Thanks to the following Student Volunteer Leaders, Natalie Martinez, Victoria Bufarale, Brittany Maragh, Sara Syed, and Sage McBride, who participated in the Key Club's 1st program activity as we emailed our first newsletter to parents and students as BVS recognized a UN Day of International Peace, on Wednesday, September 21st, and shared our yearly agenda of service projects that any BVS students can join by attending the very next volunteer meeting, on Monday, October 17th, from 4:00-5:00PM.



Future Educators of America



Thanks to Student Volunteer Leaders, Gloria Rincon-President, Sara Syed-Vice President, Brittany Maragh, Sage McBride, Leon Rice, at the High School Level for supporting "Hats off to Cancer" Drive, the FEA School Supplies Drive and Middle School Program Representative -Nathaniel Petrin and E Mail Call in School Advisory Council Middle School Representative,

Ethan Barnes for his e-tutorial idea. Congratulations to these students who have become volunteers and leaders, who have documented their leadership and service. Note: Next meeting will be scheduled for Monday, October 24th, from 4-5PM @ BVS-BECON Center.

Benchmark Testing

Broward County Public Schools is conducting the District Benchmark Assessment Test and requires that grades 3rd through 10th and students enrolled in Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology, be present to take this test and complete all sessions. It is designed to mirror the Sunshine State Standards appropriate to each grade level. Results will be used to measure student progress and to determine participation in targeted BVS FCAT/EOC preparation activities.

All students must have picture identification to be tested (school ID, driver license or permit, current passport, or Florida ID). *Please also bring a sweater.*

Testing Address:
 Broward Virtual School Annex
 5400 SW 90 Avenue
 Cooper City, FL 33328

Please take note of the varying completion times. They include time for reading instructions, passing out tests, taking the test, bathroom breaks and test collection.

BVS School policy requires participation in all district testing as a condition for continued enrollment.

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
9:15 AM to Noon	Testing Time: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Testing Time: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
<p style="text-align: center;">November 29</p> <p>Grades 3 & 4 - Reading Session 1 & 2</p> <p>Grade 5 - Mathematics Session 1 & 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">November 29 <i>6th, 7th, and 8th grade</i></p> <p>Reading Session 1: 70 Minutes</p> <p>Reading Session 2: 70 Minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">November 29 <i>All 9th and 10th grade</i></p> <p>Reading Session 1: 70 minutes</p> <p>Reading Session 2: 70 minutes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">November 30</p> <p>Grades 3 & 4 - Mathematics Session 1 & 2</p> <p>Grade 5 - Reading Session 1 & 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">November 30 <i>6th, 7th, and 8th grade</i></p> <p>Math Session 1: 70 Minutes</p> <p>Math Session 2 : 70 Minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">November 30 <i>Algebra 1 and Geometry Students Only</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Testing Time: 8:30 AM – 12:30 AM</p> <p>Algebra/Geometry EOC Session 1: 80 minutes</p> <p>Algebra/Geometry EOC Session 2: 80 minutes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">December 1</p> <p>Grade 5 - Science Session 1 & 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">December 1 <i>8th grade only</i></p> <p>Testing Time: 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM</p> <p>Science Session 1: 60 Minutes</p> <p>Science Session 2: 60 Minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">December 1 <i>Biology Students Only</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Testing Time: 8:30 am – 11:00 am</p> <p>Biology EOC Session 100 minutes</p>

Interested in Supporting the Senior Class?

Ask about placing an ad in the Trailblazer Times. Call 954-772-8123 for information about pricing or purchasing a banner for your business at the BVS Annex.

FCAT Explorer

There's good news for all students taking the FCAT this year: you can get free reading and math practice on the FCAT Explorer. That's right: free practice for the FCAT at www.fcatexplorer.com.

The FCAT Explorer is an online practice program made for Florida's public school students by the Florida Department of Education.

Both programs offer practice for the skills tested on the FCAT and feature lots of stuff to help you get the most out of your study time. You'll receive helpful feedback to the answers you choose and a second chance to answer questions to apply what you've learned. The FCAT Explorer also features helpful online tools like a calculator, a formula reference sheet, and a glossary that defines and pronounces the glossary words. Best of all, the FCAT Explorer is online, which means you can use the FCAT Explorer on any computer connected to the Internet. To get your free FCAT Explorer sign-in name and password, contact your guidance counselor using the information below:

High School students email ruth.eloi@browardschools.com

Middle School students email tanya.mistretta@browardschools.com



Please be sure to include your name and grade in the email.



Box Tops for Education

Broward Virtual has started collecting Box Tops!

You can make a difference for Broward Virtual school every time your shop for groceries! Just clip the Box Tops coupons from hundreds of your favorite products and send bring them to Broward Virtual School.

Visit <http://www.boxtops4education.com> for more information!

Math Club Makes Its Debut

By: Megan Yanes

The BVS Math Club has had our first two meetings and we're off to a Mathtastic start. We have 11 team members ranging from 6th Grade Math to Calculus. Some of our members are participating in math competitions for the first time while others are seasoned competition veterans with proven track records. We will be competing in several math competitions at the middle and high school levels. Mathcounts, American Math Competition, American Math League, BCCTM, and Mathletes to name a few. There is also an interesting video creation competition through the Mathcounts organization in which several of our team members may decide to enter.

Our first meeting took place at the Annex campus a few hours before the Meet and Greet. We got to meet each other and work on some problem solving together face to face. We just had our second meeting online this week. We met using Elluminate and phone conference technology. It was a great meeting of the math minds! We are off to an awesome start and look forward to watching our Broward Virtual Math Club shine. We will

keep you up to date on all of our mathletic accomplishments!



Character Education Mantra

I choose to live by choice, not by chance; to make changes, not excuses; to be motivated, not manipulated; to be useful, not used; to excel; not to compete. I choose self-esteem, not self pity. I choose to listen to my inner voice, not the random opinion of others.



Sophia Parrish
CEO Class of
2012

Senior Board of Directors 2012

Set goal of raising \$12,000 for prom and graduation

CEO Sophia Parrish, COO Loraine Maxwell, CFO Katy Graves, and CPRO Tori-Anne Jacobs have been working diligently throughout the summer and the year planning amazing events for the Class of 2012. They have set up a Facebook page for the Class of 2012, worked on fundraising ideas, and have been planning a spectacular Senior/Junior Prom. Also they're already planning the graduation ceremony for this year. Sophia stated, "We need our entire class to become involved for this year to be the "one" we've all dreamed about."



Loraine Maxwell
COO Class of 2012

Senior T-Shirts will be for sale soon. Watch for announcements on Facebook and *The Trailblazer Times*. Shirts will cost \$12.00 each.



You're only a senior once, until you turn 55 years old. Support your senior class and be proud you are a part of
BVS 2012