

# LBSS Middle School Student Services Fall Newsletter

Dear Parents/Guardians,

*The 2018-2019 school year is off to a great start with a successful Bruin Blast, New Student Orientation, and First Day of School! We have really enjoyed getting to know our new families and students, and are looking forward to working with you to make sure all of our Lake Braddock Bruins have a successful school year.*

*This newsletter contains lots of great information on upcoming programs in which your students will be participating. Please take a minute to read through this information and mark your calendars. Don't forget to review the Summer Newsletter posted on the Lake Braddock website!*

*We look forward to seeing you at our Back to School Night on September 6th and New Parent Coffee on Friday, September 14th!*

MS Student Services Team

## THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: INFORMATION SESSION

For those who are interested in learning about Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, commonly referred to as "TJ," mark your calendars because we will be holding an information session for students and parents. Students who are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade will learn about how to apply to TJ this school year and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students may attend if they want to become familiar with what will be expected of them next year.

**When** - Tuesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:15 p.m. The school buses will leave Lake Braddock around 3:00 pm, so for your convenience and ease of parking, please try to arrive after 3:00 pm. It is estimated that the presentation will last an hour. Students whose parents cannot attend will need to arrange for a ride afterwards because late buses will not be running yet.

**Where** – Little Theatre, Lake Braddock Secondary School (Door 14)

**What** - TJHSST is a Fairfax County Public Schools regional governor's high school (grades 9-12) for students interested in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Come learn about TJHSST, the programs, classes offered, and student life. Get details about the TJHSST admissions process, what students can expect, and tips/advice from admissions staff. Students must be in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and enrolled in Algebra 1 or higher to apply.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Ian Brodie. He can be reached at [ibrodie@fcps.edu](mailto:ibrodie@fcps.edu) or 703-426-1049.



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- \* Making the Most of Your ParentVue Account
- \* Bruins Stay After Kick Off

### UPCOMING EVENTS FOR PARENTS:

- \* TJHSST Info Session: 9/4
- \* MS Back to School Night: 9/6
- \* New Parent Coffee: 9/14
- \* Rachel Bailey Parent Program: 10/16



## UPCOMING COUNSELOR LESSONS FOR STUDENTS

- \* Grade 7 Counselor Intro Lesson: 8/30-31
- \* Grade 8 Counselor Intro Lesson: 9/4-5
- \* One on One Student Conferences: 9/6-28
- \* Grade 8 Bullying & Harassment Prevention Lesson: 10/1-5
- \* Grade 7 Bullying & Harassment Prevention: 10/9-12
- \* Grade 8 ACT Lesson and Wellness Screening: 10/22-26

## COMPASSION IN ACTION

Compassion is one of Lake Braddock's core values and a cornerstone of our Bullying and Harassment Prevention Program. In 2015, we began a Pyramid-wide initiative focused on teaching students how to create a compassionate climate at school—or putting “compassion in action.” The goal of this initiative was to create common language across all grade levels within the Lake Braddock Pyramid, and encourage and foster compassion within our students.

### BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT PREVENTION LESSONS

The first Compassion in Action lesson will be administered by school counselors in all middle school social studies classes over the next few weeks. Seventh grade students are going to learn how to identify different roles individual students take in bullying situations, how to respond to someone who is bullying, and how to report incidents of bullying through a confidential, online referral form. Eighth grade students are going to learn about the seriousness of discrimination and sexual harassment, its consequences, and how to report it if it happens. Counselors will also have discussions with students about how the world of social media is impacted by cyber bullying and harassment and how to react online.

Additional quarterly lessons will be administered by Bruin Block teachers. These lessons will focus on taking time to empathize, the solutions to bullying, and diversity. Each of these lessons ties in to different aspects of Portrait of a Graduate.

### BULLY REPORT BUTTON

In each lesson we will be highlighting to students that they can help take a stand against bullying by reporting incidents they have seen. Often times middle school students struggle to report for fear of being called a “snitch” or a tattletale, when in reality, helping someone in need is the compassionate response. All students have access to the REPORT BULLYING Button located on the LBSS homepage or the Student Services Google Site. This reporting tool is available and monitored each school day.

### B.R.A.V.E

**B**ruins **R**espect **A**nd **V**alue **E**veryone! Compassion is for everyone and we believe that this can be achieved through cultural responsiveness. BRAVE is an initiative which encourages everyone in the school community to learn about each others' cultural backgrounds and accept everyone for who they are. This is an ongoing program which may include activities which center around the BRAVE theme but which is also built into existing lessons, programs, and presentations. Culture is integral to our identity, so is integrated into all aspects of our school.

## RACHEL BAILEY PARENT PROGRAM

Rachel Bailey is a parenting specialist with a degree in Clinical Psychology who helps parents become confident in their ability to raise kids, especially with the biggest challenges they will face. She spoke twice this past spring about how to help kids make healthy choices and about improving kids' self-esteem. She is very genuine, teaching that perfect parenting isn't necessary to do what's best for children and she provided parents with immediate ideas to take home and use right away. Last year was the second year she provided workshops to parents in the Lake Braddock pyramid K-12, and once again, she received high praise from those who attended. We are planning to have her back for two more workshops this year, so you will have more opportunities to hear her speak (**October 16th at 6:30 pm** and **March 13th at 6:30 pm**). For more about Rachel Bailey, visit:



Website: <http://rachel-bailey.com/>

Youtube: <https://youtube.com/channel/UCepwOhLepG-oEhus5SnLJJA/featured>

## A.C.T. PROGRAM AND WELLNESS LESSON

The adolescent years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions, which can be difficult for youths, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression – which is treatable – is a leading risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth.

According to the 2016-2017 Fairfax County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 20.6 % of 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported depressive symptoms in the past year, which included 14.2% males and 26.7 % females. The rate of considering suicide among 8<sup>th</sup> graders rose from 11.3% in 2016 to 13% in 2017.

To proactively address these issues, Lake Braddock Middle School is offering a depression awareness and suicide prevention lesson through the Signs of Suicide Program (SOS). This program has been used by thousands of schools nationwide since 2000. It has proven to be successful at increasing help-seeking behaviors by students concerned about themselves or a friend, and is the only school-based suicide prevention program to show a reduction in suicide attempts in a randomized, controlled study (*American Journal of Public Health*, March, 2004).

Our goals in participating in this program are straightforward:

To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness.

To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression.

To provide students training in how to identify potential depression or suicidality in themselves or a friend.

To impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns; they can A.C.T., Acknowledge – Care – Tell.

To help students know whom in school they can turn to for help if they need it.

As a component of the lesson, students will watch a video and complete a personal survey. Lessons will be conducted in Health and PE classes during the week of October 22, 2018. Parents are invited to contact Ms. Mynar, School Social Worker, if you would like to review the materials. If through this lesson a student is found to be at possible risk for depression or suicidality, per the Suicide Prevention Guidelines in the Code of Virginia the student will be assessed by a school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker and the student's parent will be notified following the assessment. A letter with opt-out information will be going home one month prior to the lesson.



## CORE CONNECTIONS TUTORING PROGRAM

The middle school Student Services Department will offer a tutoring program called Core Connections this school year. The goal of the program is to develop more thoughtful, self-directed and resilient learners by providing a comfortable learning environment, strengthening inquiry skills and reading strategies, and encouraging student belief in a growth mindset. Core Connections will match middle school students and high school tutors, while providing a collaborative support system that includes counselors and teachers.

Core components of the program include:

- ◆ Students identified through self-referral or teacher/counselor/parent recommendation
- ◆ Tutors identified through self-nomination or teacher/counselor recommendation
- ◆ Student (requires teacher observations form) and tutor (requires subject teacher recommendation) applications
- ◆ Tutoring will take place during student directed Bruin Block, with the possibility that some orientation sessions will be after school (i.e., teacher and tutor information sharing)
- ◆ Orientations, information sessions and mini-lessons
- ◆ Informational and evaluative surveys
- ◆ Brief mindfulness activities led by a student to help reduce and/or manage stress

For additional information or an application please contact Melissa Staab in Middle School Student Services at [mkstaab@fcps.edu](mailto:mkstaab@fcps.edu).

## SECONDARY COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Kristin Girardin who has been named Fairfax County Public Schools Secondary School Counselor of the Year! Mrs. Girardin has been a school counselor at Lake Braddock Middle School since 2011 and serves as the counselor for the Blue Dolphins and Blue Sharks teams.



## FIRST QUARTER GRADING CALENDAR

Weekly Emailed Progress Reports Begin.....9/10

Detailed Progress Report Emailed.....9/28

First Quarter Ends.....11/2

Detailed Progress Report Emailed.....11/7

Report Cards Mailed Home.....11/12

## BRUINS CONNECT

Bruins Connect is LBSS's mentoring program between students and staff members. Research shows that student achievement increases when students feel connected to at least one adult in the school building. This program hopes to match up students and staff members to help create those connections that will be a meaningful part of students' school lives.

While the program is available to all students, the focus will be placed on those students who demonstrate the greatest need for school engagement. These needs can be seen in poor attendance, low grades, and involvement in risk-taking behavior.

Students will be screened and interviewed to help make the best match with staff member mentors. A mentor/mentee get

together is being planned to facilitate the staff members meeting their student. Expectations will be that the pair meet weekly at a mutually convenient time. We are excited to offer this opportunity to students that need it and to make a difference in their lives that will be long lasting.



## COUNSELING GROUPS

This year the counseling and clinical staff will be running a series of counseling groups during Bruin Block. Each group will consist of 8-12 students and will meet 6-8 times. A description of some of these groups are detailed below. If you would like to recommend your child for one of these group, or notice a need for a group not listed, please contact your child's counselor.

**Pressure Cooker:** The focus of The Pressure Cooker group is to help students obtain coping skills related to the various stressors middle school students commonly feel because of school, expectations, family issues, peer groups, and more.

**Military:** When a parent is deployed, family life changes for military children. Coping with changing family roles and responsibilities as well as holidays and celebrations without your loved one can make it difficult for students to focus on school work. Students may also experience a range of feelings from proud and patriotic to fearful and frustrated. The focus of this group allows students to share experiences, strengthen coping skills and support each other as they explore the challenges of military family life with a deployed parent.

**Grief/Loss:** This group's focus will be guided by the needs of the group members but may include: information and activities regarding the grief process, coping strategies, self-esteem/self-care exercises and mindfulness activities.

**Divorce:** This group will address the impact of changing and/or blending families on student's personal and academic lives and the range of emotions associated with these events.

**Anger & Frustration:** This group is geared towards managing feelings of anger and frustration. We will try to find the cause of frustration or anger and will begin to develop strategies that will aide students in calming themselves down and understanding their anger or frustration.

**LGBTQ:** This group will focus on the challenges that face students who identify as being gay, bisexual, transgender, or are questioning their sexuality and/or gender identity. Focus will be on helping students connect with others who are navigating similar journeys. Students will also learn strategies to help them effectively mitigate fitting into the general peer group.

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS! EVERYDAY COUNTS

At Lake Braddock we work to support every student to be successful. One of the biggest indicators of student success is their attendance. When students miss a couple of days of school each month they miss important instructional time that is hard to replace. Missing two days a month does not seem like a lot, but it adds up to 20 or more days a year.

### Absences Add Up

When a student misses a couple of days of school each month, it adds up to a much larger impact on their success



Missing more than 10% of the school year is the leading warning sign that a student will face academic challenges. For most students, who attend the same school for the entire school year, this would mean missing 18 days for any reason, to include family trips, illness, suspension, or truancy.

All students will likely be sick at some time during the year, and it is important to keep your child home at these times, but to have children attend at all other times. How can you help? Avoid vacations that require your child to miss school, set a regular bedtime, establish a morning routine, and set limits on screen time before bedtime. Be a model of these habits in your family. The benefits of a good night's sleep and regular attendance are gifts that will help your child throughout their lifetime.



Our biggest priority is supporting our students and we have numerous resources and supports for students and families who need help with attendance. Please feel free to reach out to our Systems of Support Advisor, Scott Darwin, for all attendance questions or support.



# SAVE *the* DATE

2ND ANNUAL #BRUINSSTAYAFTER

KICKOFF PARTY

09.27.18

2:45PM-4:30PM

LATE BUSES AVAILABLE!!

WHERE: BLACKTOP  
(9-HOLE MINI GOLF, HUMAN BILLIARDS, CORN HOLE, PING PONG AND MORE!!!)

\*\*\*FOOD AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE!

WHY: COME LEARN ABOUT ALL OF THE HAPPENINGS AFTER SCHOOL. CLUB SPONSORS AND PAST CLUB MEMBERS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR PARENTVUE ACCOUNT

Your ParentVue account provides you with the opportunity to stay current with your student's progress in each class, daily attendance, and course requests. Each student has their own StudentVue account, which provides identical information. These accounts are accessible at any time and are designed to supplement the emailed progress reports you receive throughout the school year. Parenting a middle school student, you are constantly striking a balance between providing support and creating opportunities for self-reliance. As a result, you may question how often it is appropriate to "check-up" on your student's progress. Here are some guidelines that may assist you in that decision-making process.

**Know your child as a student.** Students who struggle with organization or motivation may benefit from weekly check-ins. If so, ask your child to log-in to their StudentVue account each week with you, so they begin to develop that habit. Progress reports will continue to be emailed to you at regular intervals during the school year.

**Support self-advocacy in your child.** Ungraded items in the gradebook will typically have comments indicating "missing," "late," or "turned in but not graded." Review any comments noted and develop a plan/timeline for your child to inquire further with the teacher as needed. Note the email function for each teacher in the gradebook. Allow your student to manage to the best of their ability, even when uncertain, before you intervene.

**Encourage effort over outcomes.** Academically successful students put their best effort into all their work. Support your student in developing a routine for work completion. Reinforcement of proper agenda use, work completion and timely work submission benefits all students.

**Take a deep breath.** Daily gradebook check-ins can cause unnecessary stress for you and your child. Remember it takes time to both grade work and then enter those grades. You can always email a teacher to confirm receipt of an item when needed.

**Encourage daily attendance.** You will continue to receive calls for unreported absences. The attendance tab provides information on full day absences as well as individual class period activity. With block scheduling a missed class is equal to 90 minutes of missed instruction/work completion per subject. Prompt, daily attendance is fundamental to academic success.

If you have not activated your ParentVue account, you may contact Angela Santizo or Pat Fausser in the Middle School Student Services Offices at (703) 426-1030. An activation key will be generated and emailed to your email address on file.

Another option to obtain an activation key is to fill out a Parent Support Request (found through the FCPS SIS website). This is the link: <https://itweb.fcps.edu/ParentView/index.cfm>

An overview of the SIS program and its uses can be found at: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/technology/student-information-system-sis-fcps/sis-parent-account-overview>

## NEW PARENT COFFEE

The Lake Braddock Middle School Student Services Department invites you to attend this informal meeting to discuss:

- ⇒ How has your child's transition to LB been?
- ⇒ What questions do parents and/or students still have?
- ⇒ General information including communicating with school staff, grading policy, and attendance procedures
- ⇒ Middle School After School Program – Bruin Cubs

**Friday, September 14**

**8:30-9:30 am**

**LBSS Lecture Hall**

We look forward to seeing you there!

### **A Note About Parking:**

Remember, Parking can be difficult in the morning so give yourself plenty of time. Visitor spots have been identified in the front of the school. In addition, there may be staff spots available (these spots do not have a number). Parking spaces with numbers have been assigned to students. The blacktop will also be available during large events for additional parking.

## WE BELIEVE...

Excellence in education will lead students to be positive influences in the community and to attain fulfilling careers.

Students thrive when their individual needs are identified and met.

Students learn about their personal value and potential to contribute to society through a variety of programs and opportunities at school.

Students of varying abilities and strengths can mutually benefit in a diverse classroom environment.

Learning is relevant to students when they apply their experiences in school to a variety of other settings.

Educators have a crucial role to hold all students to high expectations which will provide a foundation for future success.

The achievement gap is an academic disparity between groups of students that can be completely eliminated through equitable access to academic instruction.

All students shall have access to a school counselor who advocates for their academic, career, and personal/social needs.

Lake Braddock Secondary School  
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## MS STUDENT SERVICES VISION AND MISSION

### Vision Statement

All students at Lake Braddock Middle School are empowered to use their unique personalities, abilities, and values to achieve their fullest academic potential as they navigate toward a fulfilling and productive future. Students are supported by a comprehensive school counseling program that inspires and encourages continued growth and progress for each child, regardless of his or her background. School counselors help students access learning by identifying and removing barriers to their success, which promotes a school environment that is nurturing, safe, and equitable for all. A collaborative partnership between families, the school, and the community fosters a high quality education that offers students a broad range of opportunities and is free of achievement gaps. As a result, students leave Lake Braddock as self-sufficient, goal-oriented individuals who are prepared to make a positive impact on society.



### Mission Statement

The mission of Lake Braddock Middle School Counseling is to empower students to achieve high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and to be responsible and innovative members of a diverse global society. As part of a comprehensive school counseling program, counselors analyze data and work collaboratively and effectively with the school community to meet the unique academic, career, and personal-social needs of all students, by name and by need. Achievement gaps are identified and reduced so every student has access to and experiences success in high quality instructional programs. Lake Braddock's diverse student body is presented with a variety of counseling methods that help them discover talents, increase competence, develop imagination, and expand their academic and personal horizons.

## Middle School Student Services Contact Information

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