



August 5, 2019

Dear Brockman Families,

We are counting down the days until you come back! We can't wait! This year, in conjunction with PTO, our theme is "*Many Hands, Many Hearts.*" We chose this theme because it takes the dedicated service and passion of our entire school community to create a Montessori environment that is beautiful, engaging and entices children to learn. In *The Absorbent Mind*, Maria Montessori said,

Whenever we touch the child, we touch love. It is a difficult love to define; we all feel it, but no one can describe its roots, or evaluate the immense consequences which flow from it, or gather up its potency for union between men. Despite our differences of race, religion, and of social position, we have felt, during our discussions of the child, a fraternal union growing up between us... Love, like that which we feel for the child, must exist potentially between man and man, because human unity does exist and there is no unity without love.

We invite you to join us with your hands and your heart this year. We have great plans to accomplish in the service of children! For starters, let us tell you what has been happening at school in your absence. Here is an update to tell you about our preparation for your return.

Back to School Rally on August 15th!

Everyone is invited to a Back to School Rally on August 15th from 5:00-6:30 p.m. at our school. This is an annual event that helps families get ready for the school year and provides an opportunity for fellowship. The event is co-sponsored by the PTO and the school staff. This year new families and their buddies are invited to come to the school library at 4:30 p.m. for a welcome and a head start on the rally! The PTO will also have light refreshments and a photo booth this year! When families enter, they will be given a bingo card with all of the places to visit throughout the building. At each location, families will meet with PTO members or school staff and receive a sticker for the bingo square. ♥ Each family that fills the bingo card and returns it to the office will be entered into a raffle drawing for a Brockman Back to School Basket!

Buddy Program Begins to Welcome New Families!

We began a new “buddy program” for families new to the Brockman School community in the spring. Each new family was assigned a buddy family that is already a part of our school community. The purpose of the buddy program is to welcome and support new families as they learn about our school. If you volunteered to be a buddy family and did not get an assignment of a new family, give us a call. We can still use your help! Both the new family and buddy family received contact information in the spring and hopefully, they have already made contact. We are inviting both new families and buddy families to join us in the school library at 4:30 p.m. on August 15th prior to the Back to School Rally.

Brockman Elementary Staff Grows and Changes!

Our physical education teacher, **Mrs. Curtis has been promoted** to the PE Department Chair in our District. Even though we hate to see her go, she will have a great impact on the programs throughout our district. She participated in the interview process and we have recommended a great candidate that we hope to have approved at the August 13th board meeting and ready to teach on the first day of school!

Ms. Dail was the instructional assistant in the lower elementary classroom with Mrs. Wentzky. She has resigned to continue her Theology Studies full-time. This has been her long-term goal and we wish her well. She plans to come back as a substitute when her school schedule allows, and we will surely take advantage of that offer! We have recommended a candidate to the district that recently completed his Primary Montessori training. While he is certified with an early childhood teaching certificate, he is also eager to learn from our teachers. Mrs. Wentzky had the opportunity to meet him and they are going to make a great team!

Mrs. Oliver has been approved as the new instructional assistant in the classroom with Mrs. Moore. She will replace Ms. Brandon, who left to take her first role as a Montessori teacher in Charleston! Mrs. Oliver is the mom of Jackie and Allison. She is excited to begin!

Mrs. Phillips is the new lower elementary teacher who will replace Mrs. Blalock. Mrs. Phillips is an experienced teacher and previously worked as a Montessori teacher at Caughman Road Elementary. Her children came to Brockman and she is eager to join our school family again.

Mrs. Blalock successfully completed her Master’s Program and earned a credential as a Media Specialist. She has replaced Mrs. Roach in our library. Mrs. Roach is a retiree, who works when a certified media specialist is not available. She is still helping our district and is now filling in this position at J.P. Thomas Elementary.

Mrs. Sawyer has also joined our team as a primary teacher in Dr. Parkmond’s position. Last year Dr. Parkmond was selected for the role of Curriculum Resource Teacher (CRT) in our school. The CRT supports teachers with instructional materials and works on the school

leadership team to build capacity in the service of student learning. Mrs. Greene worked as a long term substitute as we searched for a replacement. Fortunately, we found Mrs. Sawyer who has been a Primary Montessori teacher at Logan Elementary for 14 years.

Ms. Aitkin has been accepted into the Alternative Pathways for Educator Certification (APEC) program. This is a program offered by South Carolina, in which our district has a partnership. Ms. Aitkin will be assigned to a special education classroom in the district and work under the supervision of a certified teacher as she completes the educational components of the program, leading to teacher certification. As the assistant in our Peace Builder's Center, Ms. Aitkin has been an important member of our school family and has had a calming presence, helping children to reflect, regulate their emotions and return to the classroom. We wish her well in her professional journey. We were able to find a candidate who has a background in behavior therapy and a Masters in Counselling. We have recommended her to the board and hope that she will also be approved on August 13th to join our school family!

This year the district agreed to provide us with a part time reading intervention teacher. We are appreciative and have spent a great deal of time finding the right person for this important role. We are now in the final stages of discernment and will be recommending a candidate this week.

Classroom Changes!

In addition to changes on our staff, we also have a number of classrooms that are moving. We will give you a map at the Back to School Rally on August 15th, but here is a rundown of the changes:

- Mrs. Blalock's class (now Mrs. Phillip's class) will be in room C-4
- Mrs. Johnson's class will be in room C-1
- Dr. Parkmond's class (now Mrs. Sawyer's class) will be in room B-5
- Mrs. Ferrell's class will be in room A-8
- Mrs. Fortner's class will be in room A-1



BROCKMAN SCHOOL GETS A FACELIFT!

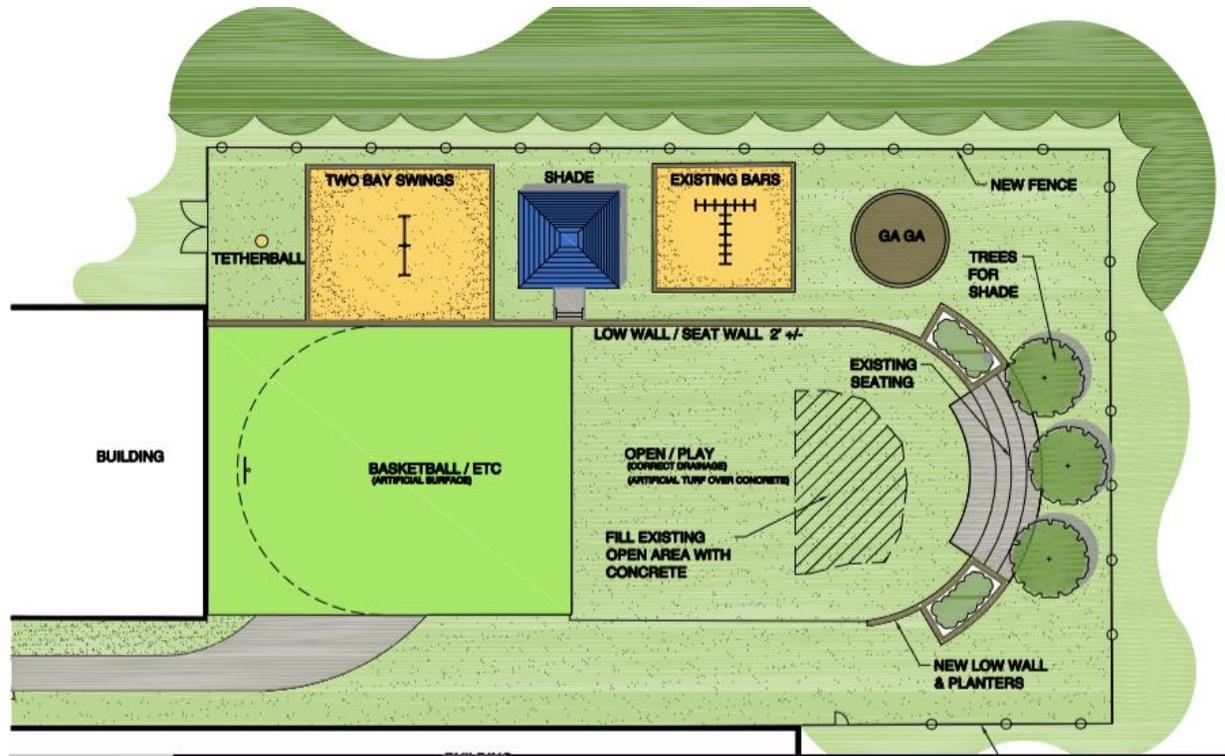
Our custodial team of Mr. Peterson, Mr. Summons and Ms. Goodwin have been hard at work cleaning *every* surface. They have moved everything out of classrooms, cleaned, buffed and shined the floors. Our school looks beautiful!

PAINTING PROJECT

Our school was selected for a major painting project this summer. Every classroom was painted, including the shelving and the cupboards. This necessitated that each teacher box and move most of the materials, so they have a great deal of work to do to prepare the environment and are anxious to return and begin. Each hallway was also painted and the baseboard was replaced. It looks outstanding!

PLAYGROUND PROJECT

This is the concept drawing of the Upper Elementary playground project that is currently ongoing. It is funded jointly by our PTO and Richland One. The project includes swings, a shade structure, gaga pit, new court surface with drainage, planters, landscaping and a new fence enclosing the area.



Upper Elementary Playground Under Construction

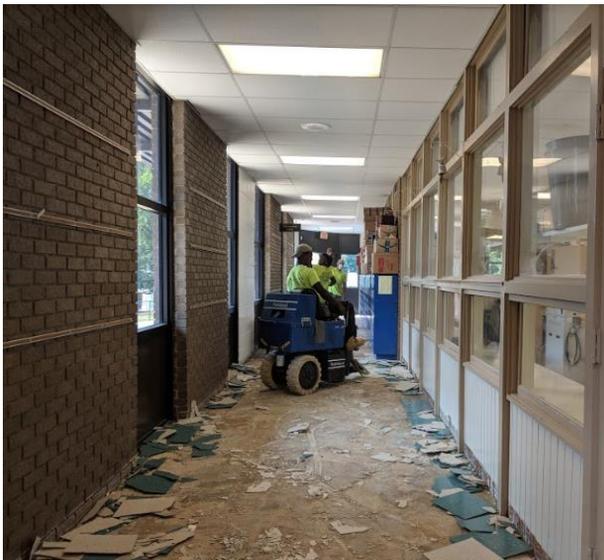


This picture shows the new planters that are on both sides of the amphitheater.

This picture shows the concrete that will be covered with Versacourt surfacing. You can also notice the cement pad behind the basketball hoop that will be the base of the shade structure.

LOWER ELEMENTARY HALL AND CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENTS

You may remember that last year we had major plumbing reconstruction in our lower elementary classrooms. This year the lower elementary classrooms received new tiling and the hallway floors were replaced. This was much needed as the tiles were buckling and posed a tripping hazard.



Technology Changes!

Richland One School District is committed to empowering each learner and each teacher through universal access to meaningful digital resources. The goals are outlined in a five year technology plan that you can find on the District website under the Departments tab or by accessing [this link](#). In support of these goals, each classroom in our building has an interactive whiteboard and three to five computer stations. Additionally, each child in grades three, four and five was previously issued a laptop device for use at school and at home. This year our district has decided that all laptops will remain at school. Instead of issuing a device to each child, they will be used as class sets and sent home only for short-term, special projects. Parents will not be asked to pay for insurance. This change is outlined on the District website [at this link](#).

The classroom set of laptops works well in our Upper Elementary classrooms. However, our Lower Elementary classrooms have only as many computers as the number of third grade children (approximately eight), so this does not create a class set. In order to address this shortfall, we have purchased a mobile cart of 25 Dell Laptops for use in our lower elementary classrooms or as students participate in Computer Lab as a related arts class. The purchase of these laptops was possible from profit from the Bears Aftercare program.

Another change in technology is our new plan for the Computer Lab class. We are going to incorporate Digital Citizenship lessons using a free online curriculum available through [Common Sense Media](#). This is a great site for both educators and parents. In addition to the free resources for educators, they also have tools available for parents as well. They rate books, video games and movies to help parents decide if they are developmentally appropriate for children.

We have also purchased Spheros SPRK+ robots for use during Computer Lab. These small robots are equipped with Bluetooth SMART technology, programmable sensors such as motor encoders, LED lights, accelerometer, and a gyroscope. This equipment will allow us to provide a coding experience for every child in a fun and engaging way! For more information, visit [Spheros SPRK+ robots](#).



Sphero SPRK+ App Enabled ...

As you can see, we have been busy preparing for an exciting new school year. Hopefully, our excitement is infectious! We can't wait to get started with these great plans! We have updated our calendar with school and PTO events for the year. You can find it on the school website by clicking the [Parent Resources tab](#) or by scrolling to the bottom of the quick links on the left side of the main page.

We look forward to seeing you at the Back to School Rally on August 15th at 5:00 p.m.!

Sincerely,
Heidi Stark, Ed.D.
Principal