

The Briones Banner



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Only One more
week until the
Juana run!

February 26th



Calendar

Feb 21	President's Day - NO SCHOOL
Feb 22	Staff Development Day - NO SCHOOL
Feb 26	Juana Run
Mar 1	Briones Night at Fresh Choice

Principal's message

Remember when being a good math student in elementary school hinged on whether you could complete rows and rows of computation flawlessly—and quickly?

Times have changed. Math is a more challenging subject because elementary students are expected to develop a more sophisticated understanding of mathematical concepts, one that requires them to express their thinking with numbers, pictures, and words. Assessing student progress in math in such a context is a challenge. It's a process that isn't easily rendered to a question on a standardized test or a bubble on an answer sheet. It takes something more.

Palo Alto Unified School District is one of many public school districts in the Bay Area that are participating in a Performance Assessment Program through the Northern California Mathematics Assessment Collaborative (MAC). Several years ago, the MAC met to develop core mathematical ideas that cover a range of math topics or "strands," including number and operations, geometry, measurement, patterns and functions, data analysis, probability, and algebraic symbols and properties. The members of MAC

wanted each of these core ideas to be linked to mathematical reasoning and problem solving—well beyond traditional computation and story problems. MAC sent their ideas to MARS, the *Mathematics Resource Assessment Service*, where mathematical tasks were developed to assess student understanding of the strands by grade level by using mathematical reasoning and problem solving in a real world context.

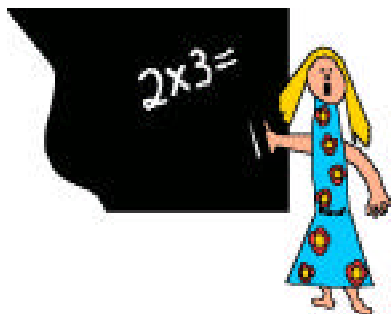
Since its inception six years ago, students in third, fifth, and seventh grades throughout Palo Alto have taken "the MARS." This year, we're piloting second and fourth grade MARS assessments, too. We'll administer the MARS to our second to fifth grade students the week of March 7th.

Having the right answer—and a final number—just isn't enough on the MARS. Students must explain their thinking and how they solved problems by using numbers, pictures, and words. They receive credit for logical thinking even if they make a computational error leading to an

incorrect final answer. It's about the thinking, the logic, and the communication of ideas.

How do schools prepare for the MARS?

At Briones, we provide balanced instruction in math that frequently mirrors what students are asked to do on the MARS. Yes, you do see our students involved in drill and



practice around numerical operations at times, but teachers also challenge students with ample opportunities to think mathematically in authentic situations where they must also explain their thinking during discussions, in writing, or with pictures or diagrams. Instead of teaching or honoring only one way to arrive at an answer, we honor the process of thinking mathematically itself and the many ways individuals might achieve a correct answer. Many teachers require students to use math journals to record their thinking as much as they use writing journals for creative writing or responses to literature.

A critical piece of our balanced math program is the use of what we call "manipulatives," objects such as counters, pattern and base-10 blocks, and linker cubes. Manipulatives help students build a solid foundation at a hands-on or concrete level before they move to more representational and abstract levels of work. The use of manipulatives is not the exclusive domain of primary students. Even intermediate-grade and middle-school students—and many adults—profit from hands-on experiences before moving to more abstract levels.

We believe that our math program and its performance-based context leads to more confident and flexible mathematical thinkers who are positioned to handle the challenges of advanced math placements in middle and high school.

—Gary Dalton

PTA President's Message

Soup Night and PTA Meeting

The Soup Night and PTA Meeting on February 7th had a great turnout. **Thanks to Carolyn Cooper and Carolyn McAusland** for making the delicious soups! We accomplished a



lot of important PTA business. The budget was amended to include a line item "School improvement/equipment". We handed out a survey to see how PTA members want to spend our PTA funds from this new line item. The top 4 choices were: updating the teacher's lounge, filling teacher's wish lists, funding more AV equipment and computers, and funding the completion of the garden. It was great to have all of your input on these important school matters.

We also discussed having a "classified ad" page in the Banner where we could list items the school needs, such as Apple computers, desks, and so on. Look for this section

24 Hour Fever-Free Policy:

Please remember that Briones has a 24 hour fever-free policy. **Do not send your child to school with a fever!** A fever is 100 degrees orally, 101 degrees rectally or 99 degrees under the arm. Your child must be fever free for 24 hours, without the benefit of medication, before they can return to school.

in the next Banner to see what items you may have lying around your house that could be put to good use at school.

This was our first parent education night, with Tracy Kuo PhD from the Stanford Sleep Institute as our guest speaker. Thanks to Dena McLerran for arranging this. Dr. Kuo talked about how we feel and how we perform our daily tasks during our waking hours is greatly influenced by duration and quality of nighttime sleep. Sleep affects, and in turn is affected by, almost every physiological and psychological process. Our school-age children (6 to 12 years old) require between 9 and 11 hours of sleep each night, and adults really do need 8 hours of sleep each night.

Winter Lodge Ice Skating Party

155 skaters turned out to our annual Briones Winter Lodge Party! This is a school record. **A big thank you to Lori Krolik and Heidi Axtell** for organizing this great event. They started planning for this event back in September when they had to wait in line at the Winter Lodge at 3:30 am to reserve our spot. Now that takes real dedication!



The Nominating Committee

Time is ticking until the new ballot of PTA positions must be filled for the next school year. This is your chance to step up and take on a leadership role here at Briones. Think about what you'd like to take on next year. Contact Sandy Passell, nominating chairperson at 852-0388 or spassell@yahoo.com. The nominating committee must post the list of officers by March 11th to be voted in at the April 11th PTA meeting.

Assemblies

On February 8th, Gary Lapow came out to sing about conflict resolution, and Kid Power came out to work with the fourth and fifth graders to teach them ways to empower themselves in challenging situations. These were both funded by the PTA.

Janice Brethauer led the 100th day of school assembly on February 10th for kinder through second graders. The students counted to 100 in various and fun ways, they sang songs including our favorite "Bobcat" cheer, and children with perfect attendance records were recognized. It is nice to see that the Thursday assemblies are back!

On March 21st, our next school-wide assembly will be put on by the West Bay Opera, including some of our children singing in the chorus. This always has been a remarkable assembly.

Kinder Orientation

Thank you to Ilona Sockol who hosted the kinder coffee at her house on Sunday, February 13th. This was a nice chance to have incoming kinder parents gather in a casual setting to ask questions and meet some of the Briones parents and Gary Dalton. Thanks to Cindy Chun, Suzanne McKenna, Sandy Passell, Shoulamit Reich, Ilona Sockol, and Marc Sobil for supporting this event.

Juana Run

Only one more week until the Juana Run, on Saturday, February 26th. We have the 8K Race, the 1-Mile Race, and the Kids' Races, which are always fun to watch. I look



forward to seeing you there!

—Jill Bibo, Co-PTA President

493-5245, jillbibo@aol.com

FYI

At Briones

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Winter Lodge Volunteers



We would like to extend a big thank you to all the volunteers that helped make the Winter Lodge Ice Skating Party a huge success. It was a beautiful evening, and we had 155 skaters attend the event. We'd like to thank our volunteers Susan Voll, Kevin Chin, Carol Kibler, Andrea Aslan, Gary Dinneen, Sawako Tajima, Robin Boselli-Kao, Sandy Passell, Lynn Kidder, Jill Bibo, Suzanne McKenna, Peter Kidder, Matt Passell, Dean Axtell, and Phil Bibo. Everyone worked selling tickets or food, or did ice duty to make sure everyone was skating safely. Thank you also to the bakers who contributed baked goods and to Carol for generously donating juice boxes. We apologize to anyone we may have missed.

Thank you from your coordinators Heidi Axtell and Lori Krolik!

This Month's Great Gatherings events:

Mar 5

Newlywed Game (Adults)

Mar 11

Cosmos and Karaoke (Ladies)

Mar 12

Santa Cruz Mountain Wine Dinner (Adults)

Mar 19

"Poetic Justice" Murder Mystery (Adults)

Juana Help with the Juana Run?

Thanks to those of you who have stepped up to help with this big event. We still need more volunteers. This year's Juana Run, on Saturday, February 26th, is going to be bigger and better than ever! We have the 8K, 1 Mile, and Kids' Races, as well as a pancake breakfast, hamburgers, and lots of other food.

We need course monitors for the races, volunteers for the water and food tables, a couple more pancake or hamburger flippers, and a person to help with awards. If you can assist with any of these jobs, please contact Lettie Weinmann at lweinmann@pausd.org or 949-2234, or Sawako Tajima at sawako@tajima.us. Thank you!

Around the District

Middle Schoolers Explore the Heart

It's a classic farce of forbidden passions, fast-talking charmers, secret lovers, and desperate wannabe's! Come see *The Matchmaker, A Farce in Four Acts* by Thornton Wilder, as told by the experts at the

Terman Middle School Drama Department.

There will be three shows of *The Matchmaker*: Thursday and Friday, March 3rd and 4th, at 7:00 pm, and Saturday, March 5th, at 2:00 pm. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children under 16, available at the door a half hour before curtain time. Advance tickets can be ordered at the Terman school office, 655 Arastradero Road, starting on February 21st. For more information, contact Sue Luttnar at 424-0824 or suelu@ix.netcom.com.

In the Community

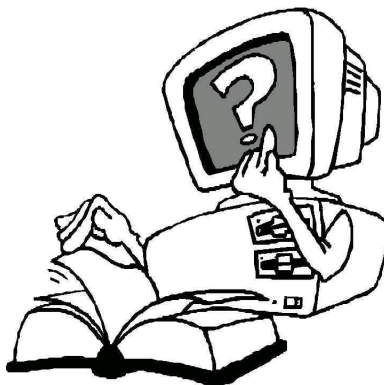
Bringing Up Bicyclists

This important two-hour class teaches you how to help your children up to age 10 be responsible, legal, and predictable bicyclists. The class will be given at Cubberley from 6:00 to 8:00 pm on Wednesday March 2nd and again on Thursday March 10th. The cost is \$17 for Palo Alto residents and \$20 for non-residents.

The class is sponsored by the Palo Alto Recreation Department and Palo Alto PTA Council. You can enroll through the Palo Alto Enjoy catalog at www.paenjoy.org or for more information see www.stanford.edu/~rlswent/BikeEd/Classes.htm.

New Website on Kids' Health Issues

The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health invites you to visit www.kidsdata.org, a new website that offers fast access to data and resources related to the health and well-being of children in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.



Kidsdata provides continuously updated information on dozens of topics, including summaries of data on the 44 cities and 66 school districts in the two counties. Users can compare data and trends across cities, school districts, and counties, and even get related state-wide figures. The site also lists key agencies that provide services to children and their families, links to news and research articles, and listings of volunteer opportunities.

Palo Alto Soccer Youth Development Program (YDP)

The Palo Alto Soccer Club Spring YDP is a great opportunity for kids 5 to 8 years old to deepen their soccer skills.



The program complements other local soccer programs such as AYSO and provides a transition to the more competitive and structured environments of CYSA and US Club Soccer. The focus is on developing skills and having fun!

The Spring YDP runs from March 6th through May 25th, and meets at Ventura Park (off East Meadow and Second Street) on Wednesday and Sundays from 2:30 to 4:00 pm. The cost is \$150 for returning players with uniforms and \$165 for new players. The fee includes instructional programs, uniforms, and insurance.

Registration is due by February 28th. For more information, go to www.pasoccerclub.org or contact Juliane or Neill Dorward at ydp@pasoccerclub.org or 424-9830.

Items included in the Briones Banner are presented as a community service. The Briones PTA and PAUSD do not necessarily endorse any of the programs mentioned here. For more information about any item, please check to see if complete flyers are available in the school office or are posted on the bulletin board just outside the school office