



## About Brooks: Headlines and Happenings!



### ***Artifact Sticks***

- Students earn artifact sticks (decorated tongue depressors) when they demonstrate behavior(s) that clearly go over and beyond what is expected by the teacher or other Brooks staff member. If your child comes home and shares they have gotten an artifact stick, it is because they have been a “top-notch” student or friend. This is a great honor!

### ***Brooks’ Book Fair***

- Our school PTA sponsors the Book Fair twice during the school year (fall and spring). The purpose of the Book Fair is to support reading in our school. This opportunity gives students and families a way to connect to the books they want to read. The Book Fair is set up in the media center and runs from Monday through Thursday. Students get to preview the books and then come back at a later time and purchase books. Information is sent home in advance to parents so that they are able to help their child select books.

### ***Brooks’ Book Stop***

- The Brooks’ Book Stop is a recycling book room in which students can exchange “Brooks Book Bucks” for books from the Book Stop. Parents donate new or gently used books to the Book Stop. Teachers give out Book Bucks to students demonstrating appropriate school behaviors. These Book Bucks are used to purchase books from the Book Stop. Students can also earn Book Bucks by recycling the books back to the Book Stop after they have read their books. The Book Stop is located on the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade hallway and is open to all students at Brooks. The Books Stop is open on selected morning between 8:45 a.m. and 9:05 a.m. Please contact the school for information on which mornings the Book Stop will be open.

### ***Brooks’ Open House***

- Held in September, this is a time for parents to come to school and meet with their child’s teacher. On this night, staff will be introduced, and parents will visit in the classrooms. Teachers will share classroom procedures/policies and curriculum information to parents. Parents are encouraged not to bring children to this evening program as it is a share time for lots of information between the teacher and parent.

### ***Brooks’ School Store***

- The school store is open prior to the official start of the school day. The PTA operates the school store and sells items that students might need at school (pencils, pens, paper, composition books, etc.)

### ***Chick-Fil-A Night (PTA Sponsored)***

- During the year, the PTA will select a time for families to have dinner at the North Hills Chik-Fil-A. By mentioning you are from Brooks Elementary, a portion of the sales will go to our school PTA.

### ***Class Curator***

- A parent from each classroom that serves as the point person for the PTA and coordinates class volunteers, student directory info, and anything else that might be needed in the classroom. This person will serve throughout the school year.

### ***Class Docent***

- A student(s) selected from each classroom that serves as a greeter for any visitors that may come into the classroom. The class docent introduces themselves and explains to the visitors what is happening in the classroom. This docent changes throughout the year.

### ***Coached Projects***

- Coached projects are projects that occur in every grade that are the end product of a unit of study. All 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students carry out four (one each quarter) coached projects each year. Kindergarten students present three coached projects each year. These projects typically last from four to nine weeks. During this time, students are making, creating, researching, presenting, etc., information that demonstrates their understanding of the curriculum.

### ***CogAT Testing***

- In the Wake County Public School System, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is administered to all third grade students yearly. The CogAT measures general thinking and problem-solving skills and indicates how well the student uses these skills to solve verbal, quantitative and nonverbal problems.

### ***Data Notebooks***

- Students will put together a notebook of documentation that demonstrates their learning through the year. Goal setting, work samples, charts, graphs, etc. will be included in the data notebooks and shared with parents during student led conferences.

### ***EOG (End Of Grade) Testing***

- This is the state assessment that involves all 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students. At Brooks, all 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students will take the EOG in math and reading. Only 5<sup>th</sup> grade students take the EOG in science. EOG testing/retesting occurs during the last month of school. All 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students should be in attendance and on time during the last four weeks of school.

### ***Early Release***

- Wake County Public Schools designates certain days for schools to dismiss early in order for teachers to be able to be involved in school wide staff development. There are six days scheduled during the year. On these days, school will be dismissed at 1:15 p.m. Staff will be involved with staff development from 1:15-4:15 p.m.

### ***Exhibits/Exhibit Boards***

- Brooks' students have the wonderful opportunity to exhibit their work. Throughout our school, we have exhibit boards in which students share with our parents and visitors their work as it relates to their coached projects. There are also many free standing exhibits throughout our school that display student work.

### ***Fall Clean Up Day (PTA Sponsored)***

- A Saturday morning in which parents, staff, and students come together and clean up our school grounds. This includes mulching, planting, picking up trash, power washing, etc.

### ***Fall/Spring Picnic (PTA Sponsored)***

- During October and May, the PTA sponsors an evening in which families are invited to our lower playground to share a picnic with friends and family. Families can bring their own picnic or purchase a meal from vendors on our campus. A DJ provides music for kids, parents and staff to dance the night away!

### ***Field Day***

- The physical education teacher, along with numerous parents and volunteers, plan and carry out a day full of outdoor fitness activities for students. Held usually on the first Friday in June, it is a way for students to participate in skills they have developed throughout the year in physical education classes.

### ***Fifth Grade Celebration (PTA Sponsored)***

- During the last week of school, Brooks recognizes our fifth grade students as they move on to middle school. During this celebration, speakers, teachers, and administration participate in well wishes to our students. Held during the school day, families are invited to attend. The celebration is concluded with a reception in the cafeteria.

### ***First in Fitness***

- Our school system takes the view that youth fitness is a meaningful educational experience. First in Fitness is held annually and gives students the opportunity to compete and share their levels of fitness, while allowing the community to come out and support these activities.

### ***Holiday Concert/Spring Concert***

- The music teacher at Brooks provides an evening program in which the Brooks' Chorus performs for parents, staff and guests.

### ***ITBS Testing***

- The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) consists of a number of educational achievement subtests designed to measure growth in fundamental areas of school achievement, vocabulary, reading comprehension and mathematics. The purpose of measurement is to provide information that can be used to improve and learning. This test is administered to third (3<sup>rd</sup>) grade students at Brooks.

### ***Kindergarten Orientation***

- Parents have an opportunity to attend one evening in the spring to meet our kindergarten staff, visit the kindergarten classrooms and get an understanding of what a kindergarten day looks like. Parents are encouraged to bring their rising kindergarten student who will have the opportunity to work with kindergarten staff in the classrooms on a project while the parents listen to a kindergarten presentation in the gym.

### ***Kindergarten Picnic (PTA Sponsored)***

- Our school PTA plans a picnic for rising kindergarten families during an afternoon prior to school starting. Parents are encouraged to bring a blanket and picnic dinner to enjoy as they visit with other kindergarten families. Boys and girls have the opportunity to play on the playground with other children.

### ***Kindergarten Registration***

- Wake County sets one date (usually in early February) in which parents of rising kindergarten students have the opportunity to register their child for school. All students must register at their

base school. Contact our school (919-881-1350) for a list of documentation needed in order to register a student.

### ***Kindergarten Staggered Entry***

- The first few days of school, all kindergarten students are assigned a date to attend school. On this date, only a portion of the kindergarten students will be at school. Teachers will have the chance to assess the students individually on academic, physical, and emotional skills. Also, teachers are able to get to know the students in a smaller setting prior to making class lists.

### ***Kindergarten Tissue Tea (PTA Sponsored)***

- On the first official day of school for all kindergarteners, our PTA provides a time for parents who bring their kindergarteners to school to have refreshments and meet other parents after they take their child to their classroom. This helps with some of those “tears” that parents might shed!

### ***Magnet Fair***

- The WCPSS Magnet Office sets this Saturday date (usually in early November) as time for magnet schools to showcase their programs and provide information to parents. Families have the chance to meet with magnet school staff and ask questions they might have prior to applying for a magnet seat.

### ***Magnet Information Sessions***

- These are usually night sessions prior to the magnet application opening date. Representatives from magnet schools are available to answer questions that parents may have about their program.

### ***Magnet Open House***

- Dates set by WCPSS Magnet Office in order for prospective magnet families to visit and tour the school. The staff provides a brief overview of the school and the magnet theme. Parents have a chance to ask questions and meet some staff and PTA members.

### ***Magnet Tours***

- Our Magnet Coordinator sets tour dates throughout the year for parents to come and participate in a short tour of our school.

### ***“Meet the Teacher”***

- On the first teacher workday of the school year, teachers prepare and send home letters to students informing them of their new teacher and class assignment. Students are invited to come to school and “Meet the Teacher.” This happens on one of the later teacher workdays prior to school opening. Parents and students are able to come meet their teacher and see their classroom.

### ***MITs***

- At Brooks, our specialists (music, art, science, media and p.e.) are referred to as MITs (**M**useums **I**ntegration **T**eam).

### ***Moving Museum***

- Kids love the Moving Museums! Once a month, Brooks holds a school celebration honoring selected students or staff. Held at the end of the school day on the last Friday of each month (except December), students, staff and visitors stand outside their classrooms (while fun music is played over the intercom) and applaud as our honorees parade through the school.

### ***“A Night at Our Museum”***

- “Night at Our Museum” is an annual event in which students and staff share our magnet program with parents and visitors. Held in the evening, teachers share a completed coached project and allow parents and visitors to engage in some of the exciting work their students are able participate in each day.

### ***No Fuss Fundraiser (PTA Sponsored)***

- In an effort to eliminate families and friends of Brooks’ students having to purchase various items for fundraising, Brooks PTA established the “No Fuss Fundraiser.” This is an opportunity for parents to simply write a check or make a donation to the school without having to select families and friends to purchase items. This fundraiser lasts about two (2) weeks in the fall of the year. The PTA sets a goal and typically coordinates with the administration to do something very “non-traditional” (ex: shag at the October picnic) as a way to encourage the students and families to reach the goal.

### ***Paideia (From the Greek word “pais,” or “paidos” meaning “the upbringing of a child.”)***

- Brooks embraces the teaching approach of Paideia which was proposed by the philosopher Mortimer Adler. Adler believed that in order for students to be prepared for the future, they needed to spend part of their day in didactic instruction, in intellectual coaching, and seminar dialogue while educating not only the mind but also the heart. More information on Paideia can be found on line at [www.paideia.org](http://www.paideia.org).

### ***Paideia Seminars***

- Paideia seminars are a big part of our magnet program at Brooks. First through fifth grade students are involved in at least four (4) seminars a year, while kindergarten participates in three (3). These seminars are based on a text, picture, or artifact that relates to something the students are studying. During the seminar, the students sit in a circle with the teacher who serves as a facilitator by simply asking very open-ended questions. Students respond by having a conversation about what they think or feel about the seminar focus. Paideia seminars are used to build conversation, enhance thinking skills and improve discussions among students.

### ***Parent/Teacher Conferences***

- The Wake County Public Schools expect each teacher to have at least two (2) conferences with parents during the school year to review how their child is doing academically, socially and emotionally.

### ***Pieces of Gold***

- The Wake County Public Schools’ Arts Department sponsors “Pieces of Gold,” an annual arts celebration. Typically held at Memorial Auditorium downtown Raleigh, this evening showcases some of Wake Counties’ finest talent. Many schools audition, but only about 25 groups are selected to perform. The chorus at Brooks has been selected to participate in Pieces of Gold multiple times. Tickets can be purchased at the Memorial Auditorium box office.

### ***PLT (Professional Learning Team)***

- Wake County Public Schools believe that teachers need to be able to collaborate and plan with one another to meet the specific needs of all students. PLT allows that to happen. At Brooks, all K-5 teachers have two opportunities to have PLT. A literacy PLT is held during teachers weekly 90 minute planning period. Teachers meet by grade level to strategize and plan for improving and focusing literacy instruction. On Wednesday afternoons (from 3:15-4:15 p.m.), teachers again meet to discuss math and magnet instruction. During these times, teachers are researching,

planning lessons, developing pre and post assessments, analyzing data, etc. Teachers are focused on answering four (4) questions during this time:

1. What is it we want the students to know?
2. How will we know that they know it?
3. What will we do if they do not know it?
4. What will we do if they already know it?

### ***Principal's Chat***

- Throughout the year, the principal and PTA establish times that parents are able to come to school and simply have a “chat” with the principal about anything they might have questions about or want to share.

### ***Raleigh Fine Arts Choral Celebration***

- An evening performance that offers students in grades three through five in the Wake County Schools a chance to share their music as well as enjoy the successes of other elementary school choruses. This opportunity for some students is a once in a life time experience of singing in the state-of-the-art Meymandi concert hall. Performances are free and open to the public.

### ***RITs***

- At Brooks, our resource staff (ESL, literacy, ALP, AG, remedial) is referred to as RITs (**R**esource **I**ntegration **T**eam).

### ***School Directory***

- Our school PTA puts together a school directory for school families. The directory contains addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. Parents have to give their permission in order for this information to be placed in the directory. We highly encourage all families to join the School Directory. This is the only way that parents are able to get information on other students in order to set up play dates, birthday parties, etc.

### ***School Improvement Plan (SIP)***

- The State of North Carolina requires that every school create, submit and implement a School Improvement Plan (SIP). This plan is created by the School Improvement Team (SIT). The team develops a three (3) year plan of critical need goals based on data, surveys, and county required areas. The plan is shared with the entire school staff and voted on for adoption. Everything that happens within the school year must support the School Improvement Plan. This plan is a living document in which each year, the SIT reviews the plan and makes changes as necessary. SIT members are selected by their peers. Parent members of the SIT are voted on by the PTA.

### ***School Messenger***

- Brooks utilizes School Messenger as a means to contact a large group of people at one time. School Messenger is an automated telephone calling service. When a student enrolls at Brooks, the phone numbers are entered into a data base. Each time we have a message for parents, we use this to call parents and share that information with them. School Messenger is used for reminders of early release, PLT Wednesdays, PTA events, etc. It is very important that you keep us informed of your current phone number, otherwise you will not receive the information.

### ***Student Led Conferencing***

- Student led conferences are held twice each year and are a way for students to share with their parents, work samples, goals, and accomplishments they have made. We feel that student led

conferencing will offer our students a way for them to take ownership of their learning. Teachers will be available to talk with and answer any questions that parents may have.

### ***Skate Night (PTA Sponsored)***

- During the year, our PTA sponsors a Family Skate Night. Held at a skating rink in Raleigh, it is closed to the public on this night. Brooks students, parents and staff are able to enjoy a night of fun on the skating rink. A portion of the entrance fee comes back to the PTA.

### ***Spotlight on Student***

- “Spotlight on Student” is a way in which our school system highlights one student from each Wake County School. Once a year, Brooks is able to recognize a fifth (5) grade student that demonstrates the Wake County character traits. At each WCPSS Board Meeting, a group of these students are recognized, receive a plaque and have their picture made with the superintendent.

### ***Staggered Entry***

- Staggered Entry is Wake County’s plan to bring kindergarten students to school in small groups at the beginning of school so teachers can assess the students and familiarize them with school procedures. On the first few days of school, kindergarten students are assigned a day to come to school for these assessments. Then, on a specific day, all kindergarten students will begin kindergarten together.

### ***Variety Show (PTA Sponsored)***

- The PTA Variety Show was created to allow students (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade) the opportunity to share their gifts and talents on stage. Usually held one evening in the spring, families, friends and staff are able to come back to school and see the talents (singing, dancing, playing an instrument, etc.) of our students

### ***Volunteer Tea***

- Sponsored by Brooks staff, the Volunteer Tea is a way for our school to say “thank you” to the various volunteers who have supported and assisted us during the school year. Held toward the end of the school year, our staff provides a small reception for invited parents and volunteers.

### ***Winter Carnival (PTA Sponsored)...Silent Auction***

- Probably one of the most popular events at Brooks! The Winter Carnival is sponsored by the PTA and held in the winter. The entire school is transformed into a carnival, while families and friends are able to come and spend a great evening at school either having their face painted, playing games, having dinner, bidding silently on an item, etc.

