



## Bucketful of News...



Francis T. Bresnahan School  
333 High Street Newburyport, MA 01950

## Important Dates:

### January 13

**Early Release - Please note this is a Friday**

Dismissal Times:

Preschool: 11:15 AM

K-Grade 3: 11:40 AM

No PM Preschool

### January 16

No School, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance

### January 17

Coffee with the Principals, 3:15 - 4:15  
Please join us to learn more about STEM education at the Bresnahan School!

### January 18

Bring Your Parent to Lunch Day, Grade 1:  
Mrs. Ahern, Mrs. Boucher, and Mrs. Platt  
PTO Meeting, 7 PM/STEM Room 235

### January 23-27

Priority Preschool Registration for Returning Students and Siblings

### January 25

PK/K Progress Reports

## Principally Speaking...



With Kindergarten and Preschool Registration approaching later this month, parents are often concerned about age requirements and readiness factors as they prepare their young children for their first school experience. To begin in our preschool program, students must be 3 by September 1, 2017 and to begin in our kindergarten program, students must be 5 by September 1, 2017. A common question we often receive is whether or not to delay a child's entrance to kindergarten even if he/she is "age-eligible" to begin. This practice is commonly referred to as "red-shirting" or waiting to send a child to kindergarten until they are older, bigger, and/or more developmentally ready to begin. While there may be a widely held belief that there is an advantage to doing so - particularly for children with summer birthdays- the actual research has shown that there is little to no advantage to doing so beyond the primary years. The following excerpt from an article printed in U.S. News- "To Redshirt or Not to Redshirt" authored by Michael Hanson provides a more in depth look into the practice:

*It's worth taking a moment to first talk about the prevalence of redshirting and who is doing it. Depending on the data, [estimates of redshirting rates](#) in the U.S. range between 3.5-5.5 percent of children eligible to enroll in kindergarten based on their age. Over 70 percent of redshirted children were born in the summer months, and it is twice as common among boys as among girls. It is also significantly more common among white students - roughly 6 percent of white students are redshirted, compared to less than 3 percent of Asian students and 2 percent or less of black and Hispanic children. Redshirting also appears to be a bit of a luxury item: Redshirting is nearly twice as prevalent in schools serving affluent student bodies as it is among those whose mean household income was close to the poverty line. This finding is not too surprising, given that the choice to redshirt may mean sending your child to preschool or daycare one additional year before kindergarten, which could be financially prohibitive among some low-income families.*

*As to whether redshirting pays off, there's a popular notion that it does. After all, widely cited research has shown a [modest but significant correlation](#) between age at school entry and long-term student performance across many developed countries. The relationship between relative age and student outcomes was popularized in [media accounts](#) and, notably, in Malcolm Gladwell's bestselling book "Outliers."*

*What the popular notion misses, however, is all of the [follow-up research studies](#) that have continued to probe this question in the years since that first study was published. According to these studies, there are two hypothesized effects that are confounded in the well-known correlation between age and student outcomes. The first is the age-at-test*

2017-2018 Preschool and Kindergarten Information Night  
Bresnahan Gym  
Preschool @ 6 PM  
Kindergarten @ 7 PM  
Snowdate is January 26th

**January 27-**

**February 17**

Preschool and Kindergarten Registration

**February 1**

Bring Your Parent to Lunch Day, Grade 1:  
Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Doyle, Mrs. Harrington, Mrs. Mailloux

**February 2**

Early Release  
Dismissal Times:  
Preschool: 11:15 AM  
K-Grade 3: 11:40 AM  
No PM Preschool

**February 13**

School Council, 3:15 - 4:30

**February 15**

Bring Your Parent to Lunch Day,  
Kindergarten: Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Doyle, Mrs. Gershuny, and Mrs. Leahy

**February 20-24**

No School,  
February Winter Break

**March 1**

Preschool Lottery Drawn

*effect, which says when two kids are taking the same test at the same time the older kid has an advantage purely based on the mechanical relationship between age, maturity and cognitive development. The second is the relative-age effect, which is the additional advantage a child receives by being the oldest, and therefore among the higher performing, in the classroom (e.g., more challenging assignments or assignment to the honors class).*

*Popular belief, as well as Gladwell's take in "Outliers," is that this second, relative-age effect is really driving the differences that we see across kids in so many different countries. But these follow-up studies used novel data sets to carefully separate out the relative-age effect from the age-at-test effect and come to a very different conclusion. Together, these studies suggest that the primary driver of observed differences is the age-at-test effect. Interestingly, the age-at-test effect may be stronger among males than females; thus parents are likely seeing big differences in cognitive ability among redshirted boys (which could be driving the differences in redshirting prevalence by gender). However, these differences are due to the boys simply being older, and not due to greater advantages from schools or teachers because the child is relatively high achieving.*

*The relative-age effect for students appears to be negligible and **could possibly even be negative**, meaning that being the oldest, highest-achieving in your class may potentially serve as a disadvantage. In fact, higher relative age has **been linked to slightly lower levels of educational attainment**, primarily due to a higher likelihood of dropping out of high school among males.*

*Many parents worry about increasing academic pressure for kindergarteners, questioning whether their child will thrive in an environment where **kindergarten is the new first grade** and whether redshirting might help provide a leg up. In short, there's no reason to believe that redshirting your child will instill some long-term educational advantage. While a child's age at the time of testing does make a difference in early elementary grades, and redshirting will enable him to score closer to the top of the class rather than the bottom, being the oldest in the class does not appear to convey any advantage on its own. Moreover, the testing advantage for being the oldest **tends to diminish with time**; thus when it comes time to apply to colleges, the child's age-at-SAT is a minor factor in the grand scheme of things.*

At the Bresnahan School we encourage students to enter kindergarten during the year they are eligible to do so. The kindergarten teachers are adept at handling the various developmental levels in their classrooms and know how to differentiate instruction to meet their students' needs. We understand that families ultimately make this decision but we invite you to collaborate with us for guidance if this is something you may be grappling with. Please contact Amy Sullivan, Principal of Early Childhood at [asullivan@newburyport.k12.ma.us](mailto:asullivan@newburyport.k12.ma.us) should you wish to schedule a time to meet.

Warmly,  
*Amy B. Sullivan*  
Principal of PK/K

*Kristina Davis*  
Principal of 1-3

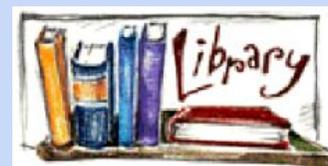
*Karina Mascia*  
Assistant Principal

## Spotlight On...

*Message from Media Specialist, Ms. Catherine Page*

Literary Greetings and Salutations for 2017!

We can't believe that the school year is half over already. Time is flying as fast as books from our library shelves, and don't we just love to see that! The only thing better than books being checked out, are books being checked back in, so they can be enjoyed again



and again. Toward that goal, our circulation process is designed to make things as easy as possible for our patrons. Here's a quick recap:

PreK-K students can browse, select, and check out one book during weekly Library class. That book is due back by the following week, on the day of their next class.

Grades 1-3 are allowed to have 2 books checked out at any one time, during scheduled or unscheduled trips to the Library.

At any time, students may return and check out books. Lost books have a \$7 replacement fee (increasing to \$10 next year), but be sure to check the public library first. You may find that your lost book has inadvertently landed up over there.

So, we hope that you have a safe, wonderful, and story-filled rest of the school year -- and keep on reading!

### Often Asked Questions and Answers From Parents:

**Q:** "What should I do when my child will be absent or tardy and why do I receive a call from the school when my child is out?"

**A:** As part of our **Safety Alert Program**, we are required to contact parents/guardians, etc. when a student is absent and our office hasn't received any information. This program ensures that if a child leaves for school that they arrive safely. While sending an email to your child's teacher is helpful it does not ensure the office will receive the information (for example...a teacher may be out and there is a substitute in the classroom). Therefore, you should call the office anytime your child is going to be Tardy or Absent!

Absences: If your student will be absent from school for any reason you must notify the appropriate office. When calling please state your name, your child's name, reason for the absence and expected date of return. Please note our school nurses track illnesses; please add symptoms (cold, fever, etc.) when your child is absent due to illness.

**If you are calling your child in absent or tardy, please call the absentee/tardy line as follows:**

PreK-K: 978-465-4435 - dial 2, then 1

Grades 1-3: 978-465-4431 - dial 3, then 1

Please do not leave an absence call on the health office line. The health office line is strictly for speaking with the nurse or leaving health related messages. This is very important as the main offices may not receive the absent calls in a timely manner. Your attention to this matter, as always, is very much appreciated.

**Q:** "What time does my child need to be at school to avoid being tardy:

**A:** Students arriving late to school must report to the office with a parent and be signed in. A child is considered late for grades K-3 if arriving after 8:20 and for PreK arriving after 8:30. To assist parents in determining whether a student is tardy, signs are placed outside the school doors across from the parking lot indicating the time is after 8:20. PreK teachers meet their students at the door each day. If no PreK teacher is present then the student is tardy.

If you have a planned tardiness (appointment, etc.) please call the school and leave a message on the absentee line.



# PTO Highlights

1. Save the date! On Wednesday 1/25, Metzy's will contribute a portion of the proceeds from all orders to the PTO. Good for lunch and dinner, eat in, take out, or delivery!
2. Interested in helping with the Spring 5K? Email [amanda.bugli@gmail.com](mailto:amanda.bugli@gmail.com) to find out more!
3. Looking for a way to help out with the PTO? We are looking for an Assistant Treasurer as well as someone to take on the After School Enrichment Program next year, Let us know if you are interested in helping out with either of these important positions!
4. The Grades 1-3 Dance originally scheduled for 1/20 has been moved to 2/10. Stay tuned for details!
5. Mark Your Calendars! 2017 Molin STEM Showcase is Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
See link for information: [2017 Molin STEM Showcase](#)  
Projects can be registered from Feb 3rd-10th at: <http://newburyportpto.com/stem>
6. Pick up of Spirit Wear at the Bresnahan School will be this coming Thursday, Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Please enter through Door #2 from main Parking lot off N. Atkinson Street.
7. The next PTO General Meeting will be held 1/18 at 7 p.m. at the Bresnahan in the STEM Room. Come see our amazing new classroom!