

# BRETON DOWNS Elementary School



~ Mrs. Caroline Breault-Cannon ~ Principal ~ ccannon@egrps.org ~

September 9, 2010

Welcome Back Breton Bulldogs!

What a wonderful start to our school year. It was very exciting to see all the smiling faces enter the building this week. A sincere thank you to the many people who worked hard this summer to get the building and the classrooms ready: Mr. Mike and Mr. Dan worked many hours to give Breton a special shine; the PTA supported a much needed make-over to our courtyard and kindergarten playground; and our teachers have been spending some of their summer attending professional development conferences and working in their classrooms.

As we come to the end of our first week I would like to address questions and concerns I have received regarding the letter I sent about our new Trouble Free Playground initiative. Last school year under the guidance of Mrs. Wendy VanZegeren, former Breton Principal, and our School Climate and Culture Committee, this new initiative was researched and developed as a result of on-going playground concerns. The committee analyzed behavior data collected throughout the year and identified significant issues that were occurring on our playground. Teachers attended workshops developed by Dr. Curt Hinson and worked on playground changes for implementation this fall. In the spring some students were introduced to different playground games and teachers had classroom discussions about the new approach. The School Climate and Culture Committee has scheduled Dr. Curt Hinson to present to staff, students, and parents. With support from Breton's PTA, Dr. Hinson will be presenting his philosophy for parents on Thursday evening, October 7. We will also have him available to work with our students on Friday, October 8.

We appreciate that the new playground initiative will be a change for some of our students, but I would like to assure you that they will be given the opportunity to play football, basketball, and soccer. This new initiative does not prohibit students from participating in the above mentioned sports on our playground. The new games and activities will be in addition to the sports our students have always enjoyed playing during recess. We just ask that students and parents wait until we introduce new ways of playing these familiar games before making a judgment on how it will affect recess play. Mr. Mathew Putnam, our physical education teacher, has already started introducing new games and new ways of playing old familiar games in his classes this week. Mr. Putnam will also be working with our students during recesses to facilitate this transition. Many staff members are also introducing games to their students. Our hope is that these new games will enable our students to play in different ways that encourages more student participation and less behavioral problems. As with any new initiative, we will monitor and make adjustments as we move forward in this process. As a staff we are excited about this playground initiative and we continue to believe and support the importance of recess for our students' development. We appreciate your patience as we all learn together.

Next week our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be traveling to Camp Miniwanca for three days and two nights of team building and leadership opportunities. Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade teaching team has been working hard to plan activities for our 100+ 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. It will be a wonderful experience for them and we are hoping for good weather.

This is a very exciting time at Breton Downs as we begin the school year. September is full of wonderful activities and events to welcome our students back to school. With your help and support, every day at Breton will be a good day.

Sincerely,

*Caroline Cannon*

Caroline Cannon  
Principal

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