



CALENDAR

October

2nd - Universal Breakfast Starts

2nd-6th - Walk to School Week

3rd - African American Unity 5:45 - 7 p.m., Library.

9th - No School Staff Development Day

17th - PTA Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Cafetorium and Library. Childcare and dinner provided.

31st - Halloween Watch for parade details.

November

3rd - No School Parent-Teacher Conference Day

6th - 9th Shortened Days Parent-Teacher Conferences

7th - Election Day Don't forget to vote!

10th - No School Veterans' Day Holiday

14th - PTA Meeting

23rd-24th - No School Thanksgiving Holiday

Measure A: Why It Matters

Imagine Washington School with one third of the teachers gone, and up to 40 kids in each class. No Coach Don and no P.E. No music or MOCHA Art. No Suzy Mead and no library. No movement classes or Sports4Kids. That is what would happen if Berkeley's Measure A does not pass on November 7th.

If it does pass by 67% of voters, Measure A will renew Berkeley's existing taxes that support our schools, BSEP and Measure B, for 10 years. Measure A would combine those two property tax measures into one, continuing the existing taxes on residential and commercial properties with an exemption for very low income senior homeowners. For a 1,600 square foot house, Measure A costs \$365/year—a dollar a day.

In addition to the programs mentioned above, Measure A will continue funding for the professional development of our teachers, including teachers' instructional strategies, content knowledge, and opportunities for collaboration. Measure A also will pay for programs that encourage parents to become active in their children's education - a proven way to improve student achievement.

Many safeguards are built into

Measure A to ensure that the money is effectively spent. At Washington, our School Governance Council (made up of parents and staff) decides how to spend this money.

Don't wake up on November 8th and wish you'd done more. The fact that a 2/3 vote is required to pass the measure means that its passage cannot be assumed. (Two years ago in a presidential election year with higher voter turnout, the measure passed by just a 3% margin.) Reaching all voters will require two city-wide mailings of 45,000 pieces, literature for precinct walking, lawn and window signs, and more.

You can help in many ways: calling voters, get a lawn or window sign, walk precincts, or make a donation (using PayPal if you like). To do so, contact info@berkeleymeasureA.org, visit <http://berkeleymeasureA.org>, call or stop by the campaign headquarters at 1929 MLK (at University)/750-8214, or write a check and mail it to: Yes on Berkeley Measure A, 792 Cragmont Ave., Berkeley 94708 (include your occupation).

Please join us at the next PTA meeting to share your views.

Thanks to Charlotte Worsley for contributing to this article.



This year's PTA officers share a laugh after a well-attended September PTA meeting. From left to right: Margaret Norman (treasurer), Kathy Stafford (vice chair), Sahoko Tamagawa (secretary), and Abigail Surasky (chair). Tracy Whyte (co-vice chair) not pictured. Photo by Eli Cochran.

Library News

Thank you! to the anonymous donor who provided credit worth 55 books from Moe's. This, plus a \$100 gift from the PTA and BSEP funds, started the library off with 400 new books this year!

Do you have a half-hour to spare each week? Librarian Suzy Mead could use your help shelving books. This gives her time to help teachers select books.

Parent Group Info

Latino Parent Group -- Contact Linda Navidad-Franco 558-0550, navidadfranco@aol.com.

Washington Siblings Playgroup - Meet Tuesdays 9 - 11 a.m. at Totland Park, Virginia & McGee. Contact: Sharon Rupe 834-4071, sharon_f@pacbell.net.

African American Unity Group - Contact Theresa Butler, Ruth Davis-Kay, or Ann Callegari at 644-6939.

Big Brothers - Contact Tom Fairchild, Rm. 112, or Tom_Fairchild@berkeley.k12.ca.us. Also see p. 3.

Contacting Your Teacher By Voicemail

All school voicemail boxes have the same phone number, 644-4500. Each teacher's extension begins with the number 21 followed by the number of their classroom. For example, Mr. Fairchild, in room 112, would be 21112.

The Results Are In

Washington's 2006 Test Scores

Individual student scores from spring 2006 testing went home with each student in September in the form of a "STAR Student Report." (Contact your teacher if you did not receive one.) These test results are used for calculating each school's Academic Performance Index (API) and are a major component of California's accountability system for schools and districts. The results are also used for determining if elementary and middle schools are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in helping all students become proficient on the state's content standards as required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

The good news is that Washington School's overall test score results continue to rise and we met the overall school-wide growth target (see table). But, because targets were not met for major student subgroups (Socio-economically Disadvantaged and African American), Washington has been deemed not to have met federal AYP goals and thus the state Department of Education has identified the school as "in need of improvement, Year 4" for 2006-2007. The consequences of this designation include continuing to provide school transfer options, supplemental services, and corrective actions. In addition, the district must prepare a plan to restructure the school (possibly including change of principal) which must be implemented in the event of a Year 6 designation. (More information on these requirements can be found at the "great schools" website listed at the end of this story.)

This all sounds pretty dire – and puzzling for a school whose principal and teachers generally get high marks from parents. More importantly (since it is the school district that decides whether and how to invoke penalties), Berkeley Unified holds the school in high regard. Interviewed for this article, Principal Kimball said she is not worried by the state's designation because, she says, "the state won't take over a school whose innovative programs are being adopted by higher-scoring schools in the district." She points out that our Learning Center and Coordination of Services Team initiatives have both been replicated in other Berkeley schools. Because these and other programs are already in place to address the "achievement gap", because our overall school scores are rising, and because of Washington's strong teaching staff, punitive action against the school is unlikely.

Principal Kimball also explains some of the reasons why the scores are an imperfect measure of progress. Washington is a relatively small school, with 300 students, so the number of students in the major subcategories is relatively small. This means that even a few scores, or year-to-year variances in subgroup size, can affect whether or not the target scores (which are just a few points away from last year's average scores) are met. There are no clear guidelines for selecting the "multiple ethnicity" category, for example, which can change the numbers in the other categories from year to year. (This

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Washington School State Testing Results for Whole School

Year	Whole School API Score*	Target Increase in API Points	Actual Increase in API Score
2000	689	6	15
2001	693	6	3
2002	715	5	21
2003	729	4	14
2004	721**	4	(-5)
2005	752 **	4	37
2006	761	2	9

*Statewide performance target is 800

** Figures reported on the Web differ; these are confirmed figures that reflect some changes in the final scores.

Washington goes to Cal

Big Brother Bears

By Tom Fairchild, Kindergarten Teacher

Thanks to a grant from In Dulci Jubilo, Washington School received \$500 to pay for two Family Season Tickets to Cal Football games. Together with my own Family Season Ticket, we have tickets for five adults and 10 children for all the games this year. The "Big Brother Bears" program includes adult male staff from Washington, as well as students' fathers and other adult male family members and friends who join boys from Washington for a fun day at the game.

To make sure our walk into a 60,000 person "party" is safe and fun, each boy has a buddy and each adult is responsible for two boys for the day. We meet two hours before kickoff at Washington playground, play ball ourselves for 30 minutes, and then take the 30-minute walk up the hill to Memorial Stadium. So far, we have watched Cal win all three games. Go Bears!

A huge thank you to In Dulci Jubilo and all the "Big Brothers" who have joined us: from Washington - Jeremy Armes, Don Burl, Eric Roe, and Joel Scholefield. From Washington families - Ray Roberts, Dwayne Beamon and his friend James, Kelly Jacobs, Josh Cephas (whom I taught 14 years ago in Kindergarten!) and his friends Kahlid and Derius. So far, 19 kids have participated.

There are still some spaces available (both for boys and Big Brothers) for the games listed below. Please see me for a sign-up form if you are interested.

Date	Playing Cal	Game Time	Washington Meet/Return Time
Oct. 7	Oregon	5 p.m.	3 p.m./9 p.m.
Oct. 21	Washington	12:30 p.m.	10:30 a.m./4:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	UCLA	5:00 p.m.	3 p.m./9 p.m.

Washington's Test Scores ...

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subgroup is not recognized for purposes of meeting testing targets, but can affect the size of recognized subgroups. Last year, 15% of Washington students were classified as "multiple ethnicity".)

Because test score averages can change significantly from year to year, it is important to view these scores in terms of trends over time. Large changes in a single year, especially in small groups, should not necessarily be viewed with alarm. The bigger picture is this: Washington has progressively closed the achievement gap between white students, African American, Latino, and Socio-economically Disadvantaged students while the scores of white students have continued to rise. The achievement gap for Washington's subgroups has closed over the past five years by about 100 points. And, overall, our API score has steadily increased from 689 to 761 in seven years. Washington's progress under Principal Kimball is clear: improved and more consistent student achievement for all Washington students.

Finally and more broadly, the philosophy at Washington has been to avoid focusing solely on areas covered by the tests and testing skills. Rather, we strive to meet standardized test goals while providing an enriched academic environment that recognizes many forms of learning.

Additional Information On Testing

www.greatschools.net compares schools nation wide and has a very helpful article explaining API scores.

<http://www.greatschools.net/modperl/achievement/ca/38> contains information on Washington School's scores, and explains the consequences of the missing NCLB criteria.

www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/ is the California Department of Education's website that addresses API scores and includes reports for all California schools.

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml> is the No Child Left Behind website.

<http://journalism.berkeley.edu/ngno/stories/026931.html> for an interesting feature article.

PTA & Kidz Club After-School Classes Enrolling Now!

Brochures describing after-school enrichment classes went home the first week of October, and what a variety! With Capoeira, drama, art, music, soccer and much more, there's something for every child.

Classes start October 9th so please enroll as soon as you can. Enrollment forms are available on the PTA website (<http://washington.berkeleypta.org>) & on the table across from the office. For PTA questions or to request scholarships, contact Tracy Whyte at 848-5936 or tracywhyte@gmail.com. For Kidz Club, contact Ann Callegari at 644-6939.

Please Sign up for Escrip!

Raise money for our school in the most painless way: Escrip! Escrip costs you nothing except the 5 minutes it will take to register your ATM and credit cards. After that, retailers contribute money to Washington with every electronic purchase through a secure electronic system.

To sign up, go to www.escrip.com, enter the Washington Elementary PTA group number - 137657765, click on "my account", and enter your name.

Escrip does not automatically update your card information! Please update this information when you change or add cards and when your existing cards get a new expiration date.

PTA Officers

Please contact any one of the officers if you have ideas, questions or concerns.

Abigail Surasky - Chair.
Phone: 649-9413, email:
acubabe_2000@yahoo.com

Kathy Stafford - Vice-Chair.
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We're on the Web! [http://
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Photos from the Washington BBQ



At least 250 people attended the Washington Fall Barbeque. Many thanks to parent Stuart Fox for organizing the event! And thanks to everyone who helped out, from shopping, setting up, cleaning up, and entertaining the kids - not to mention the fantastic array of tasty potluck dishes. Special thanks to Cory Worley for tending the BBQ for hours!



Simone's Parent Reading Tips

1. Read to your child every day.
2. Reading at the same time every day (e.g., before bed) is a nice ritual and makes reading a habit for you and your child.
3. Model fluent and expressive reading (i.e., avoid monotone, express emotions)
4. Have your child read passages to you.
5. Talk with your child about the book before, during and after reading.
6. Ask your child questions about important ideas in the book.
7. Make connections between the book and your child's life.
8. Don't hesitate to read the same books over and over -- kids love to read books that are familiar.
9. If you enjoy reading, your child will too!

For more ideas, contact Simone Miller at 644-6310, simone_miller@berkeley.k12.ca.us, or in the Resource Room on the 2nd floor.