

## Transitioning to Basalt Middle School 2016-17\*

### INTRODUCTION

We look forward to welcoming your student to Basalt Middle School in the fall. Fifth-graders always bring a great level of excitement to our building. They absolutely love the freedoms afforded by a middle school setting with passing periods and lockers. With these freedoms comes more responsibility as we train students to take on more ownership of their learning. We understand that transitioning to a new school can cause some anxiety for both parents and students. To ease the passage, we've provided some basic information to introduce you to our school. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Principal Jennifer Ellsperman at (970) 384-5901 or Assistant Principal Ty Hayden at (970) 384-5902. We look forward to setting up the smoothest transition possible for your child and welcome your feedback.

### IN THE FRONT OFFICE

**At the Front Desk:** Have a question and don't know who to contact? Need to reach your child? Karen Hillebrand and Laurie Taylor are the two lovely faces you'll see in the BMS front office who can direct you to the right place or person. They can be reached at 384-5900. Other numbers to file away include the Attendance Line: 384-5919 and the Snow Day Line: 384-6075. At BMS, please call the attendance line if your child is sick. Do not report it only to a teacher, or you will receive an automated phone call home.

**Principal and Assistant Principal:** Principal Ellsperman typically schedules core academic subjects for students each year. Assistant Principal Hayden schedules the specials rotations and can answer questions about band, art, physical education and sports, technology, or computer class. Both handle behavioral and safety issues. Feel free to call either for assistance in trouble-shooting a challenge or handling unsafe or difficult situations.

**English/Spanish Family Liaison:** Conchita Ramirez serves as the liaison for our Latino families. You can reach her at 384-5909 or [cramirez@rfsd.k12.co.us](mailto:cramirez@rfsd.k12.co.us)

**Our Teachers:** We encourage parents to reach out directly to teachers with academic concerns. CREW teachers are a great contact for social/emotional needs as well. For a complete list of all teachers and staff contact information, please visit the BMS website at <http://bms.rfsd.k12.co.us/>

**BMS Communications Liaison:** Allison Johnson handles all website, Facebook, enews, and general communications posts. Feel free to send her pictures to post of an activity or event that hasn't been covered. [ajohnson@rfschools.com](mailto:ajohnson@rfschools.com) or 309-5485.

### WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FALL: Q & A

**Q: When will classroom assignments be released?**

**A:** Homeroom class assignments will be posted in the foyer one week before school begins. Complete schedules will be issued to students on the first day of school. Students may also pick schedules up at the 5th grade orientation night on August 18, 2016 at 6 p.m. Please save this date and be sure to attend!

**Q: When should families expect to hear from the school in August?**

**A:** Families will receive a welcome back letter roughly two weeks before the beginning of school. Fifth grade parents are invited to a 5<sup>th</sup> grade orientation on August 18, 2016 at 6 p.m. Check the BMS website and Facebook pages for updates and information as well.

**Q: Do parents need to fill anything out to register a child?**

**A:** If your child attended Basalt Elementary School, he/she is automatically enrolled at Basalt Middle School. At the beginning of school, students will come home with a range of documents for parents to fill out, including free and reduced lunch forms, health forms, and general information to update our communication systems. **Please ensure your most current email address and phone number are correct and on file** with the front office, as we use them to communicate with families via text “shoutpoints,” weekly newsletters, and robocalls.

**Q: My student is anxious about beginning middle school. What can I do to help?**

**A:** One of the biggest anxieties students overcome is the fear of the locker. To help prepare your student for this new responsibility, you might let them practice over the summer with a combination lock. Also, feel free to visit the school and help your child get acquainted with the building.

**Q: Is there a student supply list?**

**A:** Yes. Each grade has a supply list that we will post on the BMS website as soon as available. Students should come to school on the first day with their supplies.

**Q: What else will my student need?**

**A:** Every student at BMS uses a planner to record homework and important information. These are issued at the beginning of the year. The cost of the planner is covered in a student fee collected with the beginning-of-year documents noted above. A replacement planner costs \$7. Please help your student learn to use the planner by checking it every night. Students are expected to record homework and important information in the planner daily and bring the planner home. More information on how to use a planner effectively will be provided in the fall.

## ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Students are encouraged to attend the 5th Grade Orientation (Aug. 18 at 6pm) before school starts so that they know exactly where to go. The first day of school is full of excitement. Parents are welcome to join their students in the foyer, the cafeteria, or the cafeteria courtyard that morning. Doors to classrooms open at 8:05 a.m. every morning with class beginning promptly at 8:10 a.m. Students will be assigned a locker on the first day, as well as a planner. When the bell rings, students should head to their homeroom class, which will be posted on a bulletin board in the foyer.

## STUDENT AND CLASS SCHEDULES

**Homeroom Teacher and Crew.** In 5th grade, students' first core class teacher will be the homeroom teacher, who takes roll call and hands out information such as field trip forms. All students also have a Crew advisory time scheduled four days a week where for a half hour students will work on areas ranging from Habits of a Scholar to academic skills to community-building. See the website for information on Crew.

**Academic Subjects:** In 5th grade, students have one integrated literacy/social studies teacher for a two-hour instructional block. Class placement is based on a variety of factors including teacher recommendation, cluster grouping, classroom performance, and assessment data. In math, students are flexibly grouped based on pre-testing of unit knowledge, so students may have different teachers over the course of the year. Additionally, each child will have a science teacher for the entire year. Science classes are heterogenous groupings of students.

**Specials and Purple/Silver Days:** At BMS, specials classes are scheduled on a rotating every-other-day schedule. Each quarter students have two specials classes. They will attend one class on Purple Days and the other class on Silver Days. Purple/Silver Days are noted on the BMS website calendar. All students will rotate through art, technology, and physical education. Band is a year-long commitment and considered one of the two specials every quarter. Students are highly encouraged to join band in 5th grade. Financial assistance with instruments is available. If you have questions about band, contact band director Nick Lenio at [nlenio@rfsd.k12.co.us](mailto:nlenio@rfsd.k12.co.us) or 384-5866.

## CLASSROOM ORIENTATION

Basalt Middle School is arranged in a series of wings. Fifth and sixth grades each have their own "pod" area which creates some separation from the rest of the school. With the exception of specials classes and lunch, the students remain in these pods for the majority of their day. Fifth and sixth grade students eat lunch together as well. The pods, library and main hallways beyond the Foyer are considered the "Academic Zone" of the school.

## STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

At Basalt Middle School, our behavioral and academic expectations for students are as high as the professional standards that staff hold themselves accountable to. In addition to incorporating the tenets of the district's Habits of a Scholar program into our instructional model, we follow the principles of building a "growth mindset" in students and teaching students to take ownership of their academic success and behavior. **Visit the BMS website Resources page for information on how you can help your student thrive in these areas.**

**Two cornerstones of learning at BMS include:**

**Growth Mindset:** In a growth mindset, students believe that their abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Demonstrating understanding and growth and persevering to find the most effective strategies for learning is a focus for staff & students alike.

**Ownership:** In middle school, we expect students to take a greater role in the process of their own learning and behavior. To this end, goal setting and having students track their academic progress is a foundational practice in our educational model that creates a climate for students to "own" their learning. Behaviorally, making mistakes is a hallmark of pre-adolescence. However, we expect students to learn from mistakes by being honest, reflecting on mistakes, and improving because of them. This is one of

the big shifts for incoming fifth graders as we train them to advocate for themselves and develop their voice and problem-solving abilities.

**Honor Roll/Longhorn Pride:** A student may qualify for honor roll based on their academic performance and their behavioral performance on Habits of a Scholar. Students meeting the expectations are honored every quarter. Please familiarize yourself with these requirements so that you can help your student track progress and strive for this goal.

**Longhorn Pride:** Student receives all 3s or 4s on Habits of a Scholar character skills and no 1s on the academic scores.

**Honor Roll:** Student's grades are all Proficient (3) or Advanced (4) and they receive all 3s and 4s on Habits of a Scholar character skills.

**Academic All-Stars and the Missed Learning List:** In order to help keep parents informed of their student's progress, we send out a weekly robocall to families informing them of whether the student is on the Academic All Star List (all homework and assignments have been turned in on time) or on the Missed Learning List. If your child is on the latter, please contact your child's teachers to find out what is due. Students chronically on the Missed Learning List will be required to attend Homework Help. Students receiving a grade of 2 or lower may be contacted by teachers at the midpoint of a quarter to give families a heads up as well. Parents are always welcome to contact teachers.

## BMS SCHOOL CULTURE & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Expanded Freedoms:** The day-to-day culture of a middle school is different than at the elementary school. Students have routine passing periods where they travel independently as opposed to in lines and stop at their lockers as needed. Students are free to move about in the cafeteria or go to the computer lab, library, Makerspace, outside to the sports field, or the gym when open at lunch. This additional freedom carries additional responsibility. Students are expected to behave accordingly.

**Special Events:** Special events occur throughout the year. Information on events is communicated to families primarily through Facebook and the weekly e-newsletters. The website also has a calendar.

**Homework:** Students will consistently have homework every night in math, frequently in literacy, and sporadically in science. Students in band should also regularly practice their instrument. We'll be utilizing our robocall system weekly to let parents know students are caught up on their work and meeting deadlines. All students are expected to be filling out their planner every day and getting it signed by parents weekly until the habit is established. Fifth grade teachers will communicate this with families at the beginning of the year.

**Homework Help After School:** Homework help classes are offered Monday through Thursday after-school. This program is open to all students; it is mandatory if students struggle with work completion. More information will be available when students return in August.

**After-School Programming:** In addition to Homework Help, Access After School offers after-school classes in a spring and a fall semester-long schedule in subjects ranging from art and Makerspace to cooking and sports. Enrichment Wednesday programming is offered on Wednesdays from 1:45-3:15 pm in quarterly classes. It is important for students to be accounted for after school. Students are not permitted in the building after 1:45 pm on Wednesdays or after 3:15 pm other days without adult supervision. If you are

unable to supervise your child at home during this time, we encourage you to take advantage of these affordable activities and community resources. More information is available on the BMS website.

**Rules for the Foyer, Before School, At Recess:** Students are allowed to be in the foyer and cafeteria before school. They must have permission from the duty teacher to be anywhere else in the building before school. Food must remain in the cafeteria and is not allowed in the foyer at any time. At lunch time, students are allowed to be in the cafeteria, Makerspace, or outside in the courtyard. Duty teachers arrive to supervise ten minutes into the lunch period, at which time students may go into the gym for indoor recess when it is their grade level's turn or they may go out onto the football field. During this time, we encourage students to be physically active after they have eaten a healthy lunch. On occasion, students will be allowed in the band room, library, or classroom before school or during lunch if they have a pass from the teacher.

**Sports:** All youth sports in 5th and 6th grade are offered through the town of Basalt's recreation program. In 7th and 8th grade, the sports offered at BMS include football, girls' volleyball, basketball, wrestling and track. For information on sports and how to reach coaches, contact Assistant Principal Ty Hayden.

**Activities:** BMS offers a variety of activities and clubs for students. Visit our website for details: <http://bms.rfsd.k12.co.us/students/clubs.html>

**Bullying or online harassment is not tolerated** at BMS. Please feel free to call Assistant Principal Hayden (384-5902) or Principal Ellsperman (384-5901) to discuss any issues your child may be experiencing.

## TECHNOLOGY AT BMS

**Electronic Devices:** Cell phones are not allowed in our Academic Zone, (our main hallways, pods, and classrooms), and they must be turned off and put away between 8:05 am and 3:15 pm. If possible, encourage your child to leave electronics at home. Devices are frequently lost, damaged, and occasionally stolen at school. Students are responsible for their devices at all times. If phones are seen in the Academic Zone, they will be stored in the office until the end of the school day.

**Computer Use:** In 2016, BMS will have a 1-to-1 ratio for computer-to-student access, meaning each student will have access and responsibility for a Chromebook while he or she is at school. Students will check a computer out in the morning and return it at the end of the day. Computers must remain at school. Computer use is a privilege which may be revoked if misused-- please talk to your child about safe online behavior and monitor their online usage. Students should understand that teachers and administration have the ability to access all online conversations, emails, and documents on Chromebooks. We recommend checking out [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org) for information on adolescents and online media. Students receive education about online behavior and risks in all four grades at BMS as well.

**Email Addresses:** Fifth grade students are provided with a gmail email address at the beginning of the year, which also allows them a Google Drive where they can store class assignments and homework online. This email is to be used for schoolwork only and not for personal use.

**Online Homework:** Students may require access to a computer after school to complete homework. If a computer is not available at home, students can use computers at the Basalt Public Library, attend Homework Help, or come in early to use computers in the library when pre-arranged with a teacher.

**Schoology:** Schoology is a learning management system designed to make it easy for K-12 teachers to post updates, files, links, resources, due dates, quizzes and assignments for students. There is a wide range of use of this system in classrooms at BMS. Some teachers are using Schoology to post due dates and assignments, others are using it to share links and documents with students, and some teachers aren't using it at this time. Schoology is accessible to parents by their child's email address and password.

**Parent Portal / Online Gradebook:** See below.

## COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AT BMS

Basalt Middle School strives to provide transparent, timely, and helpful information to families in a variety of ways to help them navigate our middle school and see what their students are doing. It is a parent's responsibility to familiarize him/herself with these outlets.

**Online Gradebook/Parent Portal.** BMS uses the same Infinite Campus parent portal online system as the elementary school. Parents do not need a new password to log in. Teachers update the online gradebook at least once at mid quarter but often more frequently. If you have never used the online parent portal, you will need to contact the front office at 384-5900 to receive your GUID#. Instructions are also available under the Parents link on the BMS website.

**Basalt Middle School Website:** The BMS website is a resource for everything from athletic schedules to a school calendar to learning resources for parents. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with this important resource. <http://bms.rfsd.k12.co.us/>

**Basalt Middle School Facebook Page:** For the most current information on events, activities, resources, and updates on the great learning taking place at BMS, please "Follow" us on Facebook. For those who would prefer not to use Facebook, a Facebook newsfeed is available to view the posts on the BMS website. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Basalt-Middle-School/278113132258261>

**Enewsletter:** BMS sends out a weekly newsletter with important information on news, events and activities for the upcoming week. In the fall, please make sure your phone number and email address are correct with the front office.

**Shoutpoints and Robocalls:** We occasionally will send text "Shoutpoints" to families regarding important upcoming events or urgent news. We will also send weekly Robocalls to inform families if the student has missing work or is considered an "Academic All Star." This system allows parents to help students stay current on their work. If you receive the missing work call, have your child check in with teachers to see what's overdue.

## GET INVOLVED AT BMS

At Basalt Middle School, parent volunteers are a critical part of the education process. Volunteer opportunities are regularly published in the weekly newsletter and on Facebook. Some general ways to get involved include:

**BMS Parent Accountability Meetings:** All parents are encouraged to attend the monthly BMS Parent Accountability Meeting on the first Tuesday of the month at 8:15 am in the front office conference room. We will confirm these dates again in the fall. We also hold monthly Latino Parent Night meetings with Spanish translation where we cover much of the same information, and parents are welcome to attend either meeting.

**The Basalt Band Program:** Over 50% of the BMS student body participates in the band program, and the program wouldn't function without the vital parent-run Band Boosters. Email Nick Lenio ([nlenio@rfsd.k12.co.us](mailto:nlenio@rfsd.k12.co.us)) for more information. Volunteer opportunities run a wide gamut of responsibilities.

**In the Library:** Parent volunteers are critical to library efforts such as cataloguing books, helping with the book fair or reading with a child to improve fluency in the Reading Buddies program. Contact librarian Jane Douglass at: 384-5907 or [jdouglass@rfsd.k12.co.us](mailto:jdouglass@rfsd.k12.co.us) for details.

## SUPPORT BMS EVERY DAY WITH YOUR DOLLARS & DONATIONS

Start making a difference today in raising money for BMS or donating goods:

**Magazine Subscriptions:** Renew your magazine through [www.aphearst.com](http://www.aphearst.com), using the code name HELPBASALT. The fall magazine fundraiser is BMS' largest, but you can renew magazines year-round.

**City Market:** Switch your City Market Card over to BMS (#10032) either online at [www.citymarketcommunityrewards.com](http://www.citymarketcommunityrewards.com) or by phone at 1-866-221-4141. **Annual renewal is necessary.**

**Box Tops:** Save your Box Tops this summer! We collect them at the front office. Visit the Box Tops website to earn money for BMS when you shop online: <http://www.boxtops4education.com/homepageinterstitial>

**Target Red Card:** Make sure to tie it to BMS at <https://www-secure.target.com/redcard/tcoe/home>

**Office Depot:** When you shop at Office Depot, either online or in person, give them the BMS code 70017034 and BMS gets up to 5% back of purchases.  
<http://www.officedepot.com/a/promo/backtoschool/5percent/>

**The BMS Makerspace** is always seeking donates of LEGOS, science toys and games, electronics to dismantle, tools, and more. Check out the list of needs on the BMS website or keep an eye out in the newsletters for supply requests.

(These website links are also available under the Parent tab on the BMS website)

**\* Please note: Some of the policies listed in these pages are under review. Refer to the Student Handbook posted online in the fall for updates or clarifications.**