



Bridges PCS October Newsletter

Principal's News By: Kristine Rigley

Hello Friends and Family of Bridges PCS -

It is a great pleasure to welcome everyone back to school in our brand new building. I and the Bridges staff look forward to a wonderful school year with the Bridges' families and students. As the principal of the school, I will be welcoming you and your children to school each morning at the front of the building between 8:20-8:40am. All classrooms start with a Morning Meeting so please make sure to get your child to school on time so they do not miss this fun-filled community gathering. Instruction ends promptly at 3:30pm with an Afternoon Meeting. This is a time for our students to reflect on their day and receive praise for their accomplishments. Thank you for your patience when waiting until 3:30pm for dismissal. At Bridges, we see both the Morning and Afternoon Meetings as methods to build strong relationships within our school and classroom communities.

In regards to building strong family relationships, our staff dedicates a great deal of time to setting up Home Visits with 100% of the families within their classrooms. Every single student is offered

a home visit or time spent at an alternative location outside of the school setting. I hope you have enjoyed this opportunity to get to know your child's teaching team. If you have not had a chance to have a home visit at this time, please reach out to your classroom teacher.

In the month of October, we will be holding our quarterly Academic Parent Teacher Training meetings (APTT) and Parent Teacher Conferences (PTC). The APTTs are designed to provide families with information on the key academic skills for your child's grade level. PTCs will also be available for parents who would like 20 minutes of time dedicated to their own child's progress regarding the key academic skills to be mastered within his/her grade level. This quarter, all APTT meetings will be held on Friday, October 4th, with a morning and an afternoon session per grade level. All PTCs will be held the week of November 7th. I am looking forward to seeing you in attendance at either your child's APTT October 4th or PTC the first week of November.

Have a wonderful month of October!

Kristine Rigley
Principal

October 2016

Copies of the School Newsletter & School Menus are available under the Information section

Contents

Principal's News	1
Director's News	1
Special Education	2
PTO NEWS	2
Special Needs Parents Group	2

Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 4-6— Construction of the school playground
- October 10— Columbus Day— NO SCHOOL
- Picture Day—Oct. 12 for PK-K, Oct. 13 1st—4th.
- October 13 at 8:45 AM—PTO Meeting
- October 14 at 8:00 AM PTO Coffee
- October 19th at 9:00 AM— Special Needs Parent Group Meeting

Director's News By: Olivia Smith

Dear Bridges Families,

I would like to start off by thanking you for choosing to be a part of the Bridges community and this special first year in our new school building. Going from three locations to one building that can and will house our entire school program from grade Pre-K 3 to 5th grade is quite a milestone.

Bridges Public Charter School opened 11 years ago in 2005 with five classrooms, 16 staff people and served 72 preschool students in that first year. We served preschool age students exclusively for 7 years until 2012-2013 when our expansion to being an elementary school began. Today we have 22 classrooms and serve more than 330 students in grades Pre-K 3 to 4th grade.

Bridges will add 5th grade next year and will reach capacity in 2018-2019, ultimately serving more than 425 students in Pre-K 3 to 5th grade. Thank you again for being part of this special year and I look forward to our school and our community working together in the implementation of Bridges' mission which is to provide an exemplary education for students with and without special needs.

Bridges, the name of our school, symbolizes an inclusive learning community that builds bridges of understanding, awareness and support by connecting children and families with a variety of different needs, cultures and backgrounds. At Bridges we believe that inclusive education is beneficial to all of the students who have the opportunity to participate. Inclusion builds compassionate relationships among students, develops self-esteem in individuals, and develops the awareness that everyone has strengths and challenges.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or would like to meet please reach out to me directly, Olivia Smith, Founder / Head of School at osmith@bridgespcs.org.

Special Education Corner

The new school year is well underway and the Special Education Department is working hard to make sure that all students are receiving the best services possible based on their needs and in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan. We've been very pleased with the new systems and programs put in place to ensure our students receive the highest quality education that is most appropriate for their individual academic and social/emotional needs.

This year we introduced our new Bridges Program by implementing Bridges 1 to 4 classrooms and structural supports, in addition to doubling many of our current social/emotional support staff. We sent letters out to new families and have been having in person meetings to discuss the implications of expanding and codifying our special education program. The new classrooms are looking great and teachers are able to more effectively tailor and specialize their instruction based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning and effective research-based instructional practices.

We are also working hard to complete the 30-Day IEP Review Process for all new students. If you are the parent of a child with special needs who is new to Bridges, you will be hearing from a member of our new Student Support Leadership Team. Mr. Kenneth, our new Special Education Coordinator, will be primarily working with our early childhood education program (in addition to some students in K-4th grade) and Ms. Jenn, our new Assistant Director of Student Support Services, will be working with many of our elementary school families. If you have any questions about this process, please reach out to one (or both) of them directly for more information. If you're not sure who to contact, please reach out to Ms. Christel, the Director of Student Support Services so that she can guide you in the right direction.

Kenneth Brown (Special Education Coordinator)
kbrown@bridgespcs.org

Christel Guillen (Director of Student Support Services)
cguillen@bridgespcs.org

Jenn Fox-Thomas (Assistant Director of Student Support Services)
jfox-thomas@bridgespcs.org

PTO News

The Bridges PCS PTO has started the school year in our brand new building with gusto, thanks to our many active and dedicated members. Already this year we have raised money to build our new playground (so many thanks to all our donors!), begun collecting information for our online directory, started our Room Parent program, and are gearing up for the playground build (coming up October 4-6) and Picture Days (October 12 for PreK-K, October 13 for 1st-4th grades). There are so many ways to get involved in the PTO, even if you can't make it to our monthly meetings. You can stay informed or sign up for a committee through our GoogleGroup (go to googlegroups.com, search for "Bridges PCS Families", and Subscribe). PTO membership is open and available to all Bridges PCS families, and Spanish translation for our meetings is available upon request. Our next meeting will take place on Thursday, October 13 at 8:45 a.m. in room 304 and we'll have a Friday morning coffee hour in the lobby of the school on Friday, October 14 at 8 a.m. Join us for either or both! If you have any questions about the PTO, please reach out to us at bridgespcsppto@gmail.com.

Special Needs Parent Group

Welcome Back Parents! The Special Needs Parent Group (SNPG) will have its first meeting of the 2016-2017 school year on October 19, 2016 at 9:00 am, room 304. The SNPG was formed last year to provide a place for parents to share experiences, resources and receive valuable information regarding various areas of interest.

For this first meeting, we will have introductions, briefly get to know each other, talk about past activities and potential activities for this school year. Refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the SNPG Chair, Tracy Clarke at tracyedge@aol.com or 202-236-0445 (cell).