

Principally Speaking



June 20, 2016

Dear parents,

I hope that you are enjoying a rejuvenating summer, filled with the promise of bright days and future victories through God's grace.

I am always proud and humbled to see children achieve yet another milestone in their development. Every talent refined has the potential to shape, not only our children's futures, but that of the world. Who knows which of our children will contribute by finding an elusive cure for a disease, brokering peace and justice among warring factions, becoming a champion preacher of salvation and righteousness, or filling some other great need? We can never know for certain how God will use our children and their talents for His glory, but we do know He *will* do it, and our purpose is to prepare them for their unique service.

Abraham Lincoln is credited with the insight, "The best way to predict your future is to create it." We, the administration of BCJA, are already making plans for the 2016-2017 school year. We are very deliberate in our goals and excited at the prospect that your child's educational and overall experience will be even better as we continue to move forward. We have heard your voices regarding the enhancements you have appreciated via this year's new administration, as well as the further improvements for which you would be thankful. We have not just heard; **we are acting on them!**

Over the summer break, it is not uncommon for a progressive school to design new systems to effect greater efficiency and communication, to acquire new cutting edge resources in keeping with discoveries in the science of education, or possibly to employ new faculty that may bring fresh talents to the forefront. Accordingly, here at BCJA, **we are seeking to make the educational process one of excitement and innovation for our youth.** As these changes take place, know that they are part of a **well-thought-out vision for student learning that is unabashedly child-focused and Christ-centered.** We do not take lightly the trust you have afforded us, and we have your child's best interest at heart with every decision we make.

Even as we do our part, there are activities you can do that would be of tremendous value for our children. The summer break can be a blessing, not only because the family can spend quality time together, but the weeks can be maximized to further prepare your children for the next level, even beyond the preparation they have already had this year. Below are recommendations that, if faithfully implemented, will give our young scholars a head start for the new experiences they are yet to encounter.

1. Academic Focus

- a) Read various books (also books on CD) and complete **BCJA Summer Book Reports.** Copies of BCJA book report formats have been sent to you. Students will receive credit for these completed reports at the beginning of the school year.

- b) Practice academic skills; seek camps and experiences with a strong academic component. If you would like to purchase a *Spectrum Test-Taking* practice book for the summer, please send an email to indicate this, and we will send you one. The cost is \$12.00. These books will review the concepts for the next grade and prepare the student for the upcoming standardized tests in October.
- c) If your child is struggling in reading, writing, or math, enroll her/him in a tutoring program such as *Atlanta Reading Tutor*, *Sylvan Learning Center*, *University Tutor*, etc., so that s/he will be better prepared for the next grade level.

2. Organization skills

An important part of learning is the mind's ability to arrange and categorize information in a systematic way. Organizational skills are important because the way people treat their physical environment often reveal the extent to which they think in a disciplined manner. Further, organizing one's environment works to shape the capacity of the person to think in an organized way. Therefore, model organization to your children and give them plenty of opportunities to practice this skill. Activities may include the following:

- a) Provide age-appropriate daily chores like washing the dishes, or taking out the garbage. *Visit the link labeled "1" for more ideas.*¹
- b) Insist on non-negotiable routines such as making the beds when they awake each morning. Keep chores on a regular schedule. Have a place for everything and teach your children to put everything in its place.
- c) Insist on follow-through. Let your children know that finishing what they started is a habit of excellence. *For other great habits they may form, visit the link labeled "2" below.*²
- d) Insist on quality. First, show your children what the task looks like when done well. Next, examine what your children were able to accomplish and affirm the value and excellence of their effort. Then, gently point out needed improvements. If a task was not done satisfactorily, and your children were highly capable of doing it well, have them redo the task.

3. Attitudinal Discussions

Engage your children in regular conversations with real-life and real-time examples of cultivating a positive attitude, persevering through difficult problems, having a willingness to forgive, maintaining self-control, respectfully relating to adults, and other matters of

¹ **Age Appropriate Chores:** <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/parenting-challenges/motivating-kids-to-clean-up/age-appropriate-chores>

² **Habits of Mind:** <http://www.pikespeakgifted.org/what-parents-should-know-about-16-habits-of-mind/>

good comportment. Affirm their strengths and encourage them in areas where they need to grow.

4. **Spiritual Preparation**

Engage your children in regular reading of the Bible, discussing God's love and plan for our lives. Demonstrate how to pray and trust God. Let them see God as a friend who wants to teach them how to make healthy life choices.

5. **Physical Activities**

Engage your children in outdoor recreation. This includes sports, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and more. Not only will these activities benefit the body and mind, but nature offers many opportunities for object lessons.

6. **Creative Activities**

Engage your children in arts and crafts, musical ensembles, drama, and any opportunity of interest that will challenge them to think creatively. Who knows what hidden talents your children may have!

These recommendations have one goal—to build your child holistically. The well-rounded development of our children is the foundation of everything we do at Berean Christian Junior Academy. Your choice to stay with our school family means a lot to us. You may recall some of our high points for the last year, such as:

- Google Expeditions
- Bio-Bus Science Experiments
- Winter Wonderland Christmas Program
- Black History Program
- 100th Day of School Exhibition
- End of Year Music Recital
- Kindergarten graduation
- 8th grade Graduation program at Berean Church
- Addition of French class
- Scuba classes and certification
- Installation of a Student Leadership House System
- House Activity Days
- Growth of our music program ("Baby Bells," recorder group, 2 interpretive movement groups, step team, orchestra and band instruments, 3-part-harmony choir)
- Wider variety of After School Activities (painting, chess, robotics, etc.)
- Addition of spring soccer team
- Spelling Bee Champions, Division 2 (Middle School)
- Varsity Basketball Repeat Champions

We remain committed to creating learning and growth experiences for our children in every area of their development. Next year, some of the enhancements that we are working on include:

- More **curricular** offerings (such as new Honors Classes, logic training, health, French, Spanish, computer science, keyboarding, special needs coordinator, etc.)
- More **extra-curricular** offerings (such as engineering, swimming, soccer, spelling bee club, animation, etc.)

- Continued emphasis on the **arts** (choir, movement, art, drama, etc.)
- Transition to **FACTS** school finance system (similar to the one used by GAAA)
- A simplified **uniform** (blue pants, black shoes, 1 style of tie -- less expensive)
- A school run **extended care** program
- Strategic, school-wide **parent-teacher communication** system.
- A vibrant **Home and School Association**

As you know, we are in the process of creating and implementing a long term, strategic improvement plan for our school—one that fosters a life-long love of learning in an environment where all abilities and talents are honored and valued; one that focuses on an inclusive, dynamic, strategic plan of education that will support and challenge each of our students. **This upcoming year, we are not only renewing our commitment to create an ever-evolving educational platform that will meet the demands of the 21st century learner, but also integrating spiritual values into each area of life, focusing on character building, health, leadership, critical-thinking, mission and outreach.**

Your administrative team: Karohn Young (principal); Elvis Agard (Vice-Principal), Pat Craig (Registrar), and Ysaak Wisdom (Treasurer) remain committed to listening, evaluating, researching, and acting on your behalf. We are all shareholders in this process—we all have a stake in our children's education, and more importantly, their salvation. You are an integral part of this process, and that is why we have reached out to you, to hear your voices, and to implement strategies that will continue to foster an environment of excellence for our children. Let us all accept the challenge to...

*crawl out of our comfort zones and
step into something spectacular
dare something difficult and
pray something powerful
create something colorful and
build something beautiful
work for something wondrous and
mold something marvelous*

*Be vocal about our vision
Be driven about our destiny
Be motivated about our mission
Be passionate about our purpose
Be a champion for our children*

Be the Dream...

For our children,
Karohn Young, Principal