

# BRANCIFORTE MIDDLE SCHOOL BEELINE PARENT NEWSLETTER

*Opening Minds - Opening Hearts - Opening Doors*



## Principal's Message

Summer, 2019

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students -

There is so much to be excited about this upcoming school year and we look forward to meeting our new Bees and saying hello to those returning to the hive. We are also eager to introduce the Bee community to our newest and talented staff members and we welcome them to the beehive. The Branciforte team has been busy over the summer preparing for the arrival of our students on Wednesday, August 21st, as this year will be full of new opportunities for the entire community. Personally, I am beginning my second year at Branciforte Middle School and I couldn't be more thrilled about the year ahead.

Branciforte has a strong reputation for rigorous academics in a safe and fun learning environment. The staff and I are committed to refining our expertise in instruction through research-based teaching practices. In addition, and equally as important, we are highly dedicated to creating a safe learning environment through our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program along with targeted lessons in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). It is our goal to send students off to high school academically prepared and able to manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

When parents and guardians partner with the school community students show more overall success. We look forward to continuing that growth in the community through a wide variety of events and activities that are fun for students and families alike, so be sure to check the website to stay informed and we can't wait to see you out there this year! But first, here are a few ways you can support your student in making middle school a great time in their lives:

- **Start the year off ready-to-go** by completing the parent/guardian “paperwork” through the Illuminate Parent Portal process (see explanation and link below)
- Ensure your 6th or 7th grader attends the **orientation on August 20th**
- Be sure your student **has the school supplies** recommended below for the first day of school
- Check Illuminate regularly throughout the school year to **monitor your students' grades and assignments** - help them organize, plan and prioritize the assignments if they need that (many students do)
- **Set limits, monitor closely, and use parent controls for social media, video gaming, and electronic devices.** Research is clear these can interfere with sleep and relationships
- **Communicate with school staff** (teachers, counselors, administration) if your child needs additional academic or social emotional support - we are here for you and your child!
- Encourage your students to get involved in **extracurricular activities** such as the Arts Academy, athletics, or any of the school clubs available
- **Volunteer or attend school events** such as Back to School Night and the Tamalada, and become a regular member of our Home and School Club, Boosters Club, English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC), and/or School Site Council (SSC).

We look forward to a great school year here at the Beehive! Please continue reading for more news and important information to get you and your student off on the right foot for the 2019-20 school year; and, as always, updated information, current events, and event calendars are available on the [Branciforte Middle School website](#).

With Gratitude,



Casey O'Brien

Principal, Branciforte Middle School - a California Gold Ribbon School



## **Beginning of the Year Parent Portal Registration**

Complete all online “paperwork” on the Illuminate Portal. This process is required in order for your student to receive their schedule, locker assignment and combination during the student orientations on 8/20/19. This is a requirement for all parents that are either new to Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS) and for parents with currently enrolled SCCS students. Please go to the District website using this link -

<https://sccs.illuminatehc.com/preregister>

You will be required to have an email account in order to complete this process. If you need help acquiring a free email account or help with this registration process, please call the B40 main office at (831) 429-3883 on or after August 6th between 9:00am and 3:00pm. A bank of computers will also be available in the main office with available staff to help you after August 12th.

## **Important Dates - Fall Event Schedule**

Aug 6th	Main Office re-opens for fall. Hours 9:00am - 3:00pm.
Aug. 20th	- WEB ( <b>W</b> elcome <b>E</b> very <b>B</b> ody) 6th Grade Student Orientation 8:45am-noon (Lunch provided.) - 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Launch (Re-orientation for 7th Graders) – 10am-noon - 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Schedule Pick-up 1-3pm
Aug. 21st	First Day of School - minimum day, release at 1pm
Aug 26th	Fall Sports and AAA Begin
Sept. 2nd	Labor Day – No School
Sept. 3rd	Full Schedule Day (all six periods - no block periods)
Sept. 4th	Home School Club Mtg 6-7pm, room 17
Sept 10th	Arts Academy Kick Off at Lunchtime
Sept. 11th	Back to School Night
Sept. 25th	Arts Academy Begins
Sept. 27th	Tamalada! ELAC hosted Spirit Event - Food, entertainment and more!

## **School Supplies for Success\***

- B40 Student Planner (provided at school) Please send a \$10.00 donation to school with your child
- 3 Inch Binder
- 1 Spiral Notebook
- Pencil/Pen Pouch
- Pencil sharpener that can fit into student's pencil pouch
- Pens, pencils, erasers, and lead (if you have a mechanical pencil)
- 3 Hole Punched Pocket Folder
- 6 Dividers with Tabs.

\*if your student needs help with getting school supplies, call or email our Community Coordinator Fe Silva - [fsilva@sccs.net](mailto:fsilva@sccs.net) or at extension 3103.

### **Cell Phone and Backpack “Away for the day” Policy**

B40 instituted an “Away for the Day” policy for cell phones and backpacks last year and it was a great success. Students were more focused and had more human interaction with their peers than before the policy implementation. We require that students either leave cell phones at home (if they have one) or stow it and their backpacks in their lockers from the beginning of the school day to the end. They should carry their binders and they can access textbooks from lockers before and after school and at break and lunch when needed.

### **School Focus**

Every year at the beginning of the year, and then periodically throughout the year, Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS) and Branciforte faculty and staff review and renew our commitment to our district and school-wide goals and areas of focus. These keep us focused and steer our professional development and funding decisions. This ongoing process is monitored by the district and school leadership teams as well as by our own School Site Council. Below are our goals and areas of strategic focus:

**Goal #1:** All Santa Cruz City Schools’ students will be prepared to successfully access post-secondary college and career opportunities.

**Goal #2:** SCCS will create positive, engaging school environments that promote the development of cognitive skills and the social-emotional well-being of all students.

**Goal #3:** We will eliminate the achievement gaps that currently exist between demographic groups within the SCCS student community.

**Goal #4:** We will develop a highly collaborative, professional culture focused on supporting effective teaching.

**Goal #5:** SCCS will maintain a balanced budget and efficient and effective management.

**Goal #6:** SCCS will maintain strong communication and partnerships with its diverse community.

### **SCCS and Branciforte - Areas of Strategic Focus**

**Academic Literacy-** All students will engage in daily relevant complex reading, writing, speaking and listening across all content areas so they can build knowledge, engage in collaborative academic discussions, and support a position with evidence.

**Mathematics-** All students will develop conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency that they will apply to make sense of mathematical problems and persevere in solving them.

**English Learner Progress-** All Ever English Learners (IFEP, RFEP, ELs) will have

academic success and social-emotional well being in an asset based, needs responsive learning community and will participate fully in our schools and graduate ready for college and career.

**School Connectedness-** All students will be connected to school, empowered, challenged, and supported in their personal and academic growth.

### **School-wide Behavioral Expectations**

B40 Middle School has developed school-wide behavioral expectations in an effort to help students develop and learn social, emotional, and behavioral competence, supporting their academic engagement. The behavioral expectations, along with the time spent with students learning them, also helps our school staff develop a positive, predictable, and safe environment that promotes strong interpersonal relationships. We know that when students are taught to effectively use expected social skills, school climates are described as more positive, learning environments are designated as safer, and student-educator relationships are more trusting and respectful. B40 has a highly skilled group of faculty members who are our designated PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports) team and they work with the entire B40 staff to implement lessons and strategies that strengthen our school-wide PBIS structure. For more details and the specific expectations, click here: [http://b40.sccs.net/b40\\_news/p\\_b\\_i\\_s](http://b40.sccs.net/b40_news/p_b_i_s)

### **Free or Reduced Lunch Applications**

We encourage students to be sure to eat breakfast and lunch daily to stay healthy and keep energy levels high. Additionally, the state uses lunch applications to determine certain types of funding for schools so we encourage our families to fill-out an application. Enclosed you will find the application, please have your student turn it in to the front office at the beginning of the school year. Here is a link to the Federal eligibility requirements: [Free/reduced lunch eligibility requirements](#)

### **Sports News**

Fall sports are coming soon! If your student is interested in Cross Country, Cheer Team, Boys Soccer, or Girls Basketball they will be starting shortly after the first day of school. We are not using FamilyID as a registration platform anymore. You will be receiving a link to use our Illuminate Portal to complete your registration. You must have a doctor physical to participate in after school sports. Download the form from our website, pick it up in the office, or come to the sports physicals where it can be completed at B40 after school on Thursday, September 19th starting at 3:00pm (location will be either room 22 or 23) \$15 is cost - scholarships are available on request to Athletic Director Dusten. Cash or check made out to Dr. Shahab.

### **Clubs and Activities Opportunities**

Branciforte takes pride in offering many extra curricular opportunities for students. Beyond our incredible academic program we offer something for everybody including clubs, dances, movie nights, competitions, field trips, athletics, lunchtime spirit activities, music concerts and more. Students will hear about these activities and programs through our daily announcements, BTV, and parents can find information on our website for how to encourage your student to get involved. Research shows that students who are involved in extracurricular activities are happier to go to school and perform better academically, so get your student involved and consider volunteering as a parent/guardian. Some of the clubs and programs include:

Environmental Stewardship Club	Arts Academy with many variations of classes (Wed PM)	Remotely Operated (Underwater) Vehicles Club (ROV)
Bee An Artists Club	ASB/Leadership	Surf Club
Book Club	Flying Carrot Trivia Club	Ukulele Club
Bicycle Repair	Friday Night Live	Spanish Club
Project Literature Club	Word Lab	Beekeepers/8th Grade Mentors
Jigsaw Puzzle Club	Rainbow Alliance Club	Math & Science Night

### **Communication at B40**

**Parent to Staff Communication** - email and voice-mail are parents' best communication lines to teachers and staff. Teachers will provide your students with this contact information the first week of school to record in their student planners and/or in their syllabi. Of course, the contact information is on our website, too. All staff check both emails daily and voice mail regularly and they will generally return your communication within 24-48 hours on school days.

**School to Student Communication** – of course, outside of direct face-to-face communication and/or illuminate from staff to student, the morning announcements and BTV are the primary modes of *school-to-student* communication. The morning announcements are read over the loud-speaker up to four days per week during the first period of the day and BTV will be aired weekly on Tuesdays during Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) period.

**School-to-Parent Communication** - the most up-to-date way to receive communication from B40 is the school website, Beeline parent newsletter (and other email and voicemail messages from school), as well as the website calendar. Please visit it daily, or make it your default home page, but check it often! Parents and guardians will also receive occasional auto-dialer phone messages and/or emails from the principal or other school staff as appropriate to your student's grade level.

### **Guidance Counseling and Student Schedules**

**Schedules are subject to change-** Please note that *all students'* schedules are subject to change in the first days/weeks of school. Counselors will be busy finishing the process of registering students and making sure that each student has a class each period. Also, please note that a few classes are more impacted and some are over-enrolled. Counselors are therefore balancing classes by removing students from overloaded classes, and adding students to less impacted classes. We know this can be disruptive to a student's school year start, so we are doing all that we can to minimize changes after the first week of school.

**Requests for elective class schedule change-** If you wish to request a different elective, please submit a Request for Class Change form. They can be found in the main office and on-line on school website. Counselors will process SIGNED (parent & student) and DATED Request for Elective Change forms in the order in which they were submitted. If you have already submitted a change request, there is no need to resubmit. We are happy to receive any calls or emails, but please note that schedule change requests are only considered with a Request for Elective Change form with Parent signature. Changing electives may require other classes to be changed as well. Please be patient and note that our 1.4 counselors have more than 450 students at B40. They are working diligently to process all requests and then to balance classes that are often very full, with little or no room to add students.

### **New Staff at B40**

We are excited to welcome the following new staff members:

- Blake Battles, teacher - Resource Specialist
- Mary Wright, teacher - Newcomer English Language Development (ELD)
- Andy Castro - returning as temp 6th grade Core teacher (sem 1)
- Kristen Silva, teacher - mathematics
- Mikaela Alexander, teacher - SAIL Special Education program
- Peter Boscacci, teacher - Woodshop
- Maria Garcia, teacher - Core 7 and English Language Development
- Thira Icaza-Wallwork, (returning) teacher - TWI/Spanish Language Arts

- Joaquin Castillo, School Psychologist
- Sherry Kilkenny, teacher - 8th Grade Science
- Molly O'Neil, shifting from teacher of mathematics to Response to Intervention Specialist (Rtl).
- Ellen Semeniuk, teacher - Resource Specialist

### **Parent Involvement Opportunities**

**B40 Home and School Club (HSC)** is the fund-raising and involvement arm of Branciforte Middle School. The HSC will continue to fund many of the curricular and extracurricular programs at B40. Your generous donations to the Home and School Club's annual campaign will continue to supplement critical programs that are not funded in other ways. We welcome your donation and thank so many of you who continue to donate financially or with your valuable time year after year. The HSC meets on the first Wednesday evening of the month - our first meeting of the year will be on September 4th at 6pm (location TBA) - we have fun, get to know other parents and do great things for our kids! You can play a large role (we need club officers and people to spearhead some of our major fundraisers) or a small role depending on what skills you would like to offer. The only other thing required is a desire to help support our students and teachers in curricular and extracurricular programs. See you on September 4th!

**B40 School Site Council (SSC)** is a team of parents, students, staff and the administration. This group oversees the development of the School Plan and federal and state funds that are utilized through this plan. The school plan is aligned with district goals and areas of focus. The SSC meets approximately six times during the school year. Members must be voted in by their peers. Our parent and student members "graduated" last year, so we are seeking new members this year. Keep your eyes open on the news section of the website for SSC responsibilities and for the process of becoming a voting member for 2019-20. Interested parties should seek out a phone or in-person conversation with Principal Casey O'Brien.

**English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC)** is a dynamic team of parents and staff who advise the SSC for the School Plan to benefit English Learners and they also have learning opportunities for parents and host the annual Tamalada! It is an open meeting and is led mainly in Spanish (dates and times to be announced).

**B40 Boosters Club** is an arm of the HSC. They meet separately from HSC monthly and they host events and fundraisers such as the annual Pancake Breakfast and Musical Concert, athletic tournaments, and music program concerts. Their main goal is to support and raise funds for athletic and music programs. Meeting dates TBD.



### **Academic Achievement Academy (AAA)**

AAA is our after school support and enrichment program. It runs from 3:00 to 5:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and from 1:00 to 3:00 on Wednesdays. There are several personnel to provide homework and academic support and we are currently trying to hire enrichment providers for two days a week. If you know of someone who may be interested in working or volunteering a couple of hours a week to provide an enrichment class, please contact our AAA director, Aidee Valdez at [avaldezmartinez@sccs.net](mailto:avaldezmartinez@sccs.net). We will begin on August 26th, 2019 and applications are available in the main office and on the school website under the "Programs" banner.

### **Arts Academy**

Arts Academy is an enrichment program offered on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:00. There are a variety of excellent class options including: Arts and Crafts, Baile Folklórico, Cooking, Yearbook, Bike Club, Ukulele, and Parkour among others. There will be an Arts Academy kick-off during lunch in the first month of school where students will be able to check out the various offerings. Applications will be available in early September and our goal starting date is Sept 25th. The program runs through early December, then begins again in during second semester. Classes are filled on a first come - first served basis. There is a donation requested, but no student is ever turned away for lack of funds. This year we are looking for volunteers to run a new Rock Band program and a Drum Line program. If you or someone you know is interested please have them contact our program coordinator Aidee Valdez at [avaldezmartinez@sccs.net](mailto:avaldezmartinez@sccs.net).

### **Continued Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development on Wednesdays**

Teacher collaboration and professional development time will continue at B40 on Wednesdays. This important time cultivates a professional learning community (*PLC*) where teachers build new and exciting lessons and units with the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards as the foundation. They share their considerable expertise and learn new, researched-based strategies to maximize student achievement. We are proud of our highly professional faculty who are always striving to be the best they can be.

### **Bell Schedule Change**

We are making some minor alterations to our school bell schedule. Our start and end times will be the same with the exception of the final bell on Wednesdays being five minutes earlier (1:00pm as opposed to 1:05pm). The changes to the schedule during the school day were to maximize the use of academic and intervention minutes and to lengthen time available for our weekly TV news and information broadcast - BTV. The new bell schedule is printed below in this letter and is posted on the school website.

We will continue to offer a zero period PE class. *The main purpose for this PE class is to allow students who need intervention classes the opportunity to continue to take an elective.* As space allows, eighth graders will have an option to take an elective in addition to TWI, AVID, or Spanish.



**Branciforte Middle School  
2019-20 – B40 Bell Schedule**



<b>Monday &amp; Tuesday</b> Monday – odd classes Tuesday – even classes  <i>Lunes &amp; Martes</i> <i>Lunes - clases non</i> <i>Martes - clases par</i>		<b>Wednesday</b> Minimum Day - all classes  <i>Miércoles</i> <i>Día Corto – Todas las clases</i>		<b>Thursday &amp; Friday</b> Full day - all classes  <i>Jueves &amp; Viernes</i> <i>Día Completo – Todas las clases</i>	
0	7:45-8:31	0	7:45-8:31	0	7:45-8:31
1/2	8:35-10:17	1	8:35 – 9:13	1	8:35 – 9:25
Break	10:17 – 10:32	2	9:17 – 9:54	2	9:29 – 10:17
SSR/Tues - BTV	10:36-11:00	3	9:58 – 10:35	Break	10:17 – 10:31
3/4	11:00-12:40	Break/Lunch	10:35 – 10:57	3 - SSR	10:35 – 11:48
Lunch	12:40 – 1:15	4	11:01 – 11:38	4	11:52 – 12:40
5/6	1:19 – 3:00	5	11:42 – 12:19	Lunch	12:40 – 1:16
		6	12:23 – 1:00	5	1:20 – 2:08
				6	2:12 – 3:00

**Last but not Least - Resolving Problems or Complaints**

The parents' first contact in the event of a problem is always at the ground level - with the student's teacher or athletic coach. Teachers are available for phone calls before and after school. Teachers are most easily contacted initially by email but this can be a less-than desirable way to solve problems. If you have difficulty connecting with a teacher, please contact an administrator. Parent conferences may be set up at any time during the school year (please do not ask to conference with the teacher during class time). A request to include the student's counselor to support in resolving any challenging issue is acceptable and should always be done before including the school administration. The administration will enter into the problem-solving process only if the teacher (+ counselor), parent and student group cannot develop a mutually agreeable solution. The normal channel for complaints concerning school personnel shall be from complainant (student/parent/guardian) to employee (teacher/staff/ coach), to a site administrator (or athletic director), to the Assistant Superintendent, to the Superintendent, to the Governing Board. Every effort will be made to satisfy the complaint at the earliest possible stage. Complaints not resolved at the point of origin should be submitted in writing before further processing. More information and the district Uniform Complaint Procedures can be found on the B40 website under Parent Resources.