Dear Bell Families - January 24, 2020

I hope you have had a nice start to the new decade! As a school leader for the last eight years at two different schools, I can tell you firsthand that January has become busier and busier, which has occupied a lot of our time at Bell since coming back from Winter Break. Many important decisions and activities are coming-up in the next few months, and it will fly by.

**Bell MS by the Numbers**

- **Enrollment 2020-2021** – Bell’s official “October Count” in 2019-2020 is 927 students. It becomes “official” in December when it is certified. We anticipate the 2020-2021 enrollment to be about the same.

- **Budget 2020-2021** - For various reasons, including unclear funding from the State budget and increased negotiated pay for staff in order to be competitive with nearby districts, school operating budgets for 2020-2021 are less than they were in 2019-2020. 96% of Bell’s budget went into staffing and benefits this year. In order to maintain status quo staffing for 2020-2021, that percentage will be closer to 97.5% of our overall budget. Because schools are a people business and based on the survey data we collected from parents in November (210 respondents), we will strive to keep any needed cuts away from affecting classroom staffing and supports. The areas currently being considered for partial cuts include staff professional learning, supplies, and technology. More specific information will be presented at the BAT meeting on January 29.

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Message from the Principal, continued...

- **Bond Project 2020-2021 (construction)** – Well... here we go, again. Bell is in phase 1 of the Jeffco Bond Projects following the passage of the bond in 2019 (thank you, Jeffco voters!). Our Design Advisory Group, which had parent, student, and staff voice represented, met several times first semester. Based on this group’s recommendations, Bell’s project will include:
  - **Over $5 million in improvements**
  - **7,000 s/f of new space** - This will include four new science classrooms on the west side of the building.
  - **Renovated Interior Classrooms** - Current science classrooms will be renovated to be regular classrooms. Renovations to our upstairs computer labs will provide upgrades and more space to keep-up with the times. *Finally, renovations to the upper classrooms to provide more flexibility.
  - **Fire Sprinkler System** - A fire sprinkling system will be installed throughout the entire building.
  - **Upgrades to the auditorium** – Recommended: new carpet, sound, and lighting systems in the auditorium.

*These renovations are alternatives and are dependent upon funding availability.

The work will begin this coming summer and will continue through the summer of 2021.

Bell Citizenship

In addition to focusing on academics, middle school is one of the most formative times for focusing on raising independent, self-conscious, and community-minded citizens. We take this seriously at Bell.

- **Semester Class Meetings** – During the first week of school, we held grade-level meetings to review our ROAR expectations (Respectful, Optimistic, Accountable, Responsible) and to remind our students of the lessons with which we started our year: lessons of empathy and respect. We will continue to follow-up with this through classroom, hallway, and lunch/recess observations and follow-up grade-level meetings at the quarter. Since those meetings, I have visited 20 classrooms, and I am so proud of the learning the students were doing and their respectful behavior! Thank you for helping us by reminding your students of the ROAR expectations at home.

- **Community Earned Rewards** - This year, our year-end activities of the past will need to be earned, as a community; these include the 8th Grade Picnic and the All-School ROAR Party. Our Student Council, along with our staff Culture Club Committee, are developing the process for tracking this fairly. It will be rolled-out some time in February.

- **Restorative Practices** - We are a year into adopting Restorative Practices at Bell, and I couldn’t be more pleased with the results. The number of recurring conflicts, Safe-2-Tell calls, and major behavior infractions have significantly declined. We have had over 150 restorative conferences between students, and even between students and staff. Students are also engaging in Community Circles at least once per week in one of their classes, and most likely more than that. We are committed to this practice, as we continue to work on Bell Student Citizenship.
Message from the Principal, continued...

Up & Coming

- **Office Hours and Student Showcases.** - Our only Office Hours for second semester will be on Feb. 12. We encourage you to continue to stay updated on your student’s work by looking at grades on Family Portal and assignments in Google Classroom. Please communicate with teachers via email if you have any questions or concerns. Click here for Bell’s Communications Pathways flowchart. In the second half of the semester, all students will have a showcase related to at least one of their classes. Showcases provide parents and guardians the opportunity to see and participate in their students’ learning for the semester. Teachers will be communicating information about their showcases, later in the semester. We are planning to adjust our Office Hours process for 2020-2021: stay tuned.

- **Outdoor Lab** – Our 6th graders are about to embark on the rite of passage in Jeffco known as Outdoor Lab. We have three groups going over two weeks, starting Feb. 24-March 6. Have fun, campers, and soak it in. Outdoor Lab holds a lot of promise to be one of the most memorable experiences of your K-12 school career!

- **BAT & PTA – Jan. 29** – Please join us at the Bell Accountability Team and/or the PTA meeting on Jan. 29. We begin with BAT at 4:00, followed by PTA at 5:00. The BAT meeting will include updates about our progress toward our vision, joining New Tech Network, the 2019-2020 Budget, staffing, and some updates from the District level. PTA will go over grants that the Magazine Sales funded, as well as other PTA business items. We meet in the library, and all are welcome.

Enjoy your weekend and have a great February!

Sincerely,

Michele DeAndrea Austin, M.A.
Principal
Bell MS
Election Course Selection Form 2020-2021 Action Item:

Current 6th grade: students received their Elective Course Selection form this week. This is the form used to select next year's elective courses and pathway. On the Elective Course Selection form, 6th graders will indicate which pathway (Humanities or iSTEM) they wish to enroll in. Pathway preferences will be honored to the best of our ability and is based on staffing and space available. **Please help your student fill out this form and have them return it signed to their social studies teacher by the due date indicated on the form.** By turning in this form by the indicated due date, your student has the best chance of getting placed into the electives of their choice at Bell next year. If you have any questions, please contact your student's current grade-level counselor.

Current 7th grade: students will receive their Elective Course Selection form next week. This is the form used to select next year's elective courses. Please help your student fill out this form and have them return it signed to their social studies teacher by due date indicated on the form. By turning in this form by the indicated due date, your student has the best chance of getting placed into the electives of their choice at Bell next year. If you have any questions, please contact your student's current grade-level counselor.

Current 8th grade: Golden High School Counselors will be visiting Bell on January 27th and 28th. During this visit, Counselors will guide students through the Freshman course selection process and answer any questions students may have. Your student will bring home a course selection form which requires a parent signature. GHS counselors will be back at Bell on February 3rd and 4th to collect the form and input course selection.
January’s Tech Focus: Balance and Screen Time

Students in Jeffco are learning about and discussing media balance this month and how our access to technology changes how we might view the world. [Click here for the family letter about balance and screen time.](#)

Book Checkout and Overdues

Middle school students can check out four books at a time for two weeks at a time. Please visit the library before school, after school, during class with a pass, and during Bobcat time with a pass. Visit the [Bell Catalogue](#) through the Bell Website to look up available titles for checkout.

When books are overdue, parents will get reminders until the book is turned in. Fines will be assessed at the end of each semester.

Re-norming our 6th Grade Device Use

6th graders were re-normed for technology use upon returning to school. [Families were asked to review the expectations together.](#)

Please speak to your students, especially those in 6th grade and those carrying devices, about caring for their Chromebooks and laptops. First of all, students are to bring devices to school with a charge each day or they will have to complete the classwork on paper or as homework. Also, we have MANY lost, stolen and broken Chromebooks this year so far, and all these issues can easily be avoided. Chromebooks are to be charged every night, and left in lockers during lunch. Students are NOT to carry Chromebooks by their screens. Students are not to engage in horseplay with devices that belong to them or to another student.

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Damages incurred to district devices are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Touch Device</th>
<th>Non-Touch Device</th>
<th>Labor Charge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower case</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCD cover with antenna</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinge Set</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper case with keyboard</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherboard Replacement</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen Replacement</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Power sub-board</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCD Bezel</td>
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<td>$25.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battery Replacement</td>
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<td>$15.00</td>
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6th Grade Purchased Devices Offered Lenovo Damage Protection through 8/2020:

Students with district Chromebooks who would like to purchase an accidental damage protection can do so by following this link: [Additional Chromebook Damage Protection](#)
STOP THE SPREAD OF LICE

It is that time again! We DO NOT have a lice outbreak of any kind at Bell. We are just required by the district to share this information a few times during the school year. Again, this is FYI only.

Weekly Head Checks
We encourage you to check your child’s hair on a weekly basis now and throughout the school year. Control of head lice depends on prompt identification, effective treatment, perseverance and teamwork! Did you know that lice love a party? Lice transmission is more likely to occur through sleepovers, family members and friends that spend large amounts of time together. School is not a common place for the spread of head lice.

How to check for lice:

- Seat your child in a brightly lit room.
- Part the hair and look for crawling lice/nits one section at a time. The easiest place to find them is close to the scalp at the back of the neck or behind the ears.
- Live lice are hard to find. They avoid light and move quickly. Nits will look like small white/yellow/brown specks and be firmly attached to a hair strand near the scalp.
- Nits can be confused with many other things such as dandruff, dirt particles, or hair product residue. One way to tell the difference is that nits are firmly attached to hair, while dandruff, dirt, or other particles fall off easily.
- Notify your student’s school health room if lice are found or if you have any questions or concerns regarding lice and your student.

Lice Facts

- 6-12 million people worldwide get head lice every year
- Lice do not spread disease
- Poor hygiene does not cause lice – lice can affect anyone
- Treatment with an approved shampoo, following the directions on the label, along with daily combing with a nit comb is the best treatment
- Lice DO NOT jump or fly
- Lice can only go 24 hours without food (biting the scalp). They do not live in coats, couches, hats, or animals
- Lice are spread by direct head to head contact.

If you have additional questions or for information on how to treat identified lice, please read Jeffco Health Services Lice FAQ’s: Lice FAQ’s
Congratulations

Congratulations to all 21 Bell students who participated in the Bell Spelling Bee! After an exciting showdown, we had a tie for first place between 6th grader Anja Wisenbaker and 8th grader Leah Stephenson, and our second place runner up was Tucker Casillas. Anja and Leah will be representing Bell in the Golden Area Spelling Bee later this month--good luck ladies!

Summer Trip

In June of 2021 we will travel to Prague, Munich, Berlin, and the Swiss Alps. This safe and once in a lifetime student opportunity abroad will be packed with adventure and new friendships. Join me for an informational trip meeting that is now on Wednesday, January 29th, from 6-7pm in the library. We only have 30 spots available and do not want any interested families to miss out on the chance to learn more! Please use the following link to learn about free dinner, a special raffle, and either let us know whether your family will be in attendance or, if you cannot make it, how we can best follow up.

Please RSVP here, even if you cannot make it: rsvp.eftours.com/vytd6eu

When at least 55 families RSVP, pizza will be provided at the meeting, along with a special raffle for a $100 scholarship toward one traveler’s tour. Your family must be in attendance to be eligible.

Thank you! We look forward to sharing this unique opportunity for your child with your family.

Sincerely,
Jeanette Martinez
DONATIONS?

By any crazy chance, do any of our awesome Bell families have a portable clothes/garment rack you would be willing to donate? We are trying to brainstorm on a better way to keep our lost and found items so that students can look for items easier. Hanger donations or portable garment racks will help us organize lost and found items for easier access. If you have hangers or a garment rack that you would be willing to donate, please call the office at 303-982-4280 or email Stanci.Hagans@jeffco.k12.co.us.

Thank you in advance!