

BCS

Birmingham
Covington
School

A Birmingham Public School

2016-2017

Overview



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- Parent/Guardian Involvement
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- Interdisciplinary Themes

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BCS inspires students to lead in a global community through a passion for learning, innovating, and inquiry and design.

BCS Overview

Birmingham Covington School (BCS) is a 3-8 districtwide school of choice for families residing in the Birmingham Public School District. It is designed to offer a clear choice in educational structure and philosophy to parents/guardians and children seeking a rigorous academic challenge. Research and experience have validated the effectiveness of interdisciplinary learning and teaching for elementary children and young adolescents. BCS emphasizes the connections among academic subject areas and fosters inquiry and collaboration for students who enroll. Within this context, students experience not only the basic skills in key academic disciplines but also focus their efforts on the integration and application of knowledge. For example, students explore themes of significance such as global interdependence from a variety of perspectives--literature, history, science, mathematics, and the arts--and blend these new understandings in the development of projects that integrate the disciplines.

BCS has a special emphasis on comprehensive science and technology instruction based on the Association for the Advancement of Science report, *Project 2061*, and *enGauge: 21st Century Skills*. Instructional strategies and student activities include discovering practical solutions to scientific problems and student-generated questions. Students are taught how to find solutions and to answer questions by applying 21st century skills: Digital-Age Literacy, Inventive Thinking, Effective Communication, and High Productivity. As students practice the principles of scientific inquiry, design, and application, they develop an increasingly complex understanding of the relationship among science, technology, history, communications, and the human experience.

Student groupings offer flexibility that matches developmental needs and promotes collaboration with supportive teams of teachers responsible for organizing, coordinating, and delivering appropriate instruction. As teachers plan a program that integrates knowledge and supports student engagement with subject matter, these teams of teachers encourage hands-on learning, student participation in defining and solving problems, and mentoring opportunities inside and beyond the school environment. Teachers emphasize the link between the classroom and the global community, encouraging students to use their expanding knowledge of global issues, literature, the arts, and world languages to reflect upon their connections with others. Our BCS philosophy thus embodies a rigorous academic curriculum that challenges children to learn in an interactive atmosphere of cooperation, curiosity, excellence and empathy for others.

Organization

BCS organizes students into multi-grade structures that permit flexible configurations for instruction. Students are assigned to a specific grade level as in other Birmingham schools. Teachers organize instruction into two-year academic cycles (grades 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8), and students remain with the same team of teachers for the duration of each two-year cycle. Separate grade level instruction occurs in mathematics using the Math Expressions (grades 3-5) and Big Ideas (grades 6-8) and the district adopted, high school Algebra I and Honors Geometry courses for students accelerated in grades seven and eight. Students work closely with teams of teachers who are responsible for structuring appropriate learning experiences that foster integration of knowledge across disciplines, conceptual understanding, and higher order thinking.

Teacher Teams

Teachers at BCS plan and deliver instruction as teams for each two-year academic cycle. Each cycle relies on teachers who work together for consistency in lesson-planning and delivery. Working with students over a period of two years provides continuity of instruction and familiarity with individual learning styles and needs. The teacher teams plan and coordinate instruction that supports both disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking. A primary objective of the teaching staff is to design meaningful learning experiences for students that support depth of understanding and application of new knowledge.

Evaluation

Continuous individual student assessment is a critical component of the BCS experience. Teachers' assessments, state-required M-Step tests, and district standardized achievement tests document student progress. Multiple classroom assessment practices include portfolios, performance-based assessments, and self-evaluations. Assessment methods are aligned with the district instructional framework, district goals, and state standards. In addition, the BCS program is evaluated annually through the school improvement process, external reviews, surveys, and assessment results.

Behavioral Expectations

BCS relies on a responsible decision-making model. When students have made poor choices about their schoolwork or their interactions with others, we assist them in reviewing the nature of their decisions, identifying more responsible alternatives, and reflecting on how they have grown in the process. This approach is less "efficient" than more punitive models of discipline, but it produces long-term growth in maturity and attitudes toward others, particularly themselves. Students learn that there are consequences for their choices, and they become more responsible decision-makers.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

BCS recognizes that parent/guardian involvement in the education of their children is an essential element in student achievement. Our parent/guardian structure relies on a variety of committees that tap special areas of parent/guardian expertise and interest and include activities in resource development, technology, community connections, volunteer coordination, and school improvement. The school enjoys a significant level of parent/guardian participation that has been reflected in school experiences such as a Proud Dads' Sports, Coney Bingo Night, Ice Cream Social, after school enrichment, Choice Hour and the annual BLAST.

Learning Environment

The BCS community is committed to providing a global education that helps bring our vision to life. We encourage our students to learn by doing and do by learning. The BCS staff continuously evaluates how we are delivering a quality education that is relevant in today's world and reflects the skills needed for the future. BCS is committed to fostering a true learning environment where our focus is on the following:

Innovative Teaching and Learning

- People learn best in an atmosphere of curiosity, high expectations, collaboration, and diversity.
- Innovation and application enhance the process of learning.
- People need to be significantly challenged beyond their current levels of performance.
- Thoughtful and responsible risk-taking is expected.

Technology Integration with a Purpose

- Technological innovations and applications change the process of learning.
- People leverage technology to inquire, design, create and make global connections.

Global Competencies

- Learning should connect with global improvement.
- Opportunities for community leadership and service are an integral part of learning.
- People learn most effectively when they pose questions, integrate knowledge and apply what they have learned to the world around them.

Global Citizens of Character

- Each person has intrinsic dignity and worth and deserves to be treated with respect.
- Each person deserves to learn and work within a safe and accepting environment.
- Each of us has responsibilities and rights as a member of a global society.
- All people can become self-directed and responsible learners.
- Mistakes are an integral part of the learning process.

Collaboration & Teamwork

- Family support and involvement are essential to academic success.
- Fostering positive relationships is essential.

By incorporating these areas in our everyday teaching, BCS has become a premier learning community.

Vision, Mission, Values and Beliefs

Vision Statement

BCS inspires students to lead in the global community through a passion for learning, innovating, and inquiry & design.

We commit to:

- educate the whole child, supporting the needs of all learners.
- foster and nurture a learning community of character valuing integrity, diversity and acceptance.
- prepare students, through original and authentic learning experiences, to create solutions meeting the challenges of tomorrow on a global scale.
- adapt purposefully by efficiently utilizing the resources around us to ensure academic excellence in our evolving world.

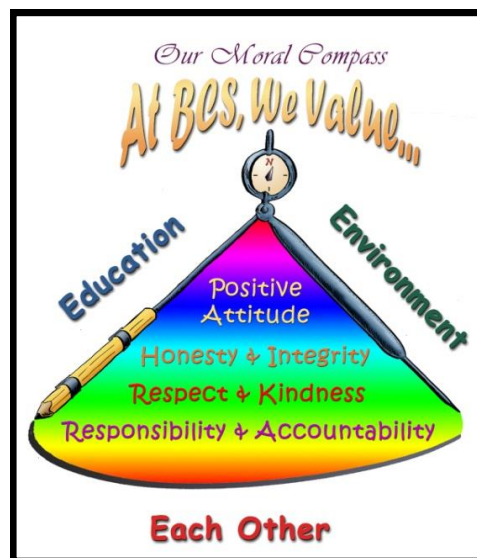
Mission/Purpose Statement

BCS is a dynamic and collaborative learning community. We cultivate an engaging environment that embraces all students and empowers them to pose questions, integrate resources, synthesize, evaluate and apply their knowledge to positively influence our diverse and ever-changing world.

Value & Belief Statements

In our Community of Learners, we value and believe....

- people learn best in an atmosphere of curiosity, high expectations, collaboration and diversity.
- innovation and application enhance the process of learning.
- people need to be significantly challenged beyond their current academic levels of performance.
- opportunities for community leadership and service are an integral part of learning.
- people learn most effectively when they pose questions, integrate knowledge, and apply what they have learned to the world around them.
- each person has intrinsic dignity and worth and deserves to be treated with respect.
- family support and involvement are essential to academic success.
- each person deserves to learn and work within a safe and accepting environment.
- thoughtful and responsible risk-taking is expected.
- each of us has responsibilities and rights as a member of a global society.
- all people can become self-directed and responsible learners.
- mistakes are an integral part of the learning process.
- fostering positive relationships among each of us is essential.



BCS Interdisciplinary Themes – Cycle 1

Integrated learning is a critical element in all classrooms at BCS. The ability to understand big themes common to human experience, past and present, provides students with the framework for thinking about themselves and their world. The themes and essential questions for this year have been carefully chosen by the staff to connect and to link all curriculum areas.

3-4 SYSTEMS

- What is a system?
 - What systems are you a part of and what systems are a part of you?
 - What makes a system break down?
- Challenge: How can systems change and adapt?*

BCS Interdisciplinary Themes and Essential Questions Cycle 1

SYSTEMS

What is a system?
 What systems are you a part of and what systems are a part of you?
 What makes a system break down?
 Challenge: How can systems change and adapt?

POSITIVE ATTITUDE	RESPECT/ KINDNESS	HONESTY/ INTEGRITY	RESPONSIBILITY/ ACCOUNTABILITY
• Cooperation	• Caring	• Justice	• Service
• Peacefulness	• Courtesy	• Reliability	• Citizenship
• Perseverance	• Loyalty	• Trustworthiness	• Leadership
			• Patriotism

5-6 INDEPENDENCE

BCS Interdisciplinary Themes and Essential Questions Cycle 1

INDEPENDENCE

What forces in society, and the world, encourage independence? What forces operate against it, undermine it?
 Is anything ever truly independent? What would happen if living things were completely independent?
 How is the concept and understanding of independence used to improve our world? Has it been used to harm the earth?

POSITIVE ATTITUDE	RESPECT/ KINDNESS	HONESTY/ INTEGRITY	RESPONSIBILITY/ ACCOUNTABILITY
• Adaptability	• Caring	• Trustworthiness	• Personal Best
• Open-minded	• Loyalty	• Justice	• Integrity
• Courage		• Truthfulness	• Self-control
			• Perseverance

- What forces in society, and the world, encourage independence?
- What forces operate against it, undermine it?
- Is anything ever truly independent?
- How is the concept and understanding of independence used to improve our world? Has it been used to harm the earth?

7-8 INDIVIDUALITY

- What does an individual mean in one's own life? How does one express individuality and also participate with groups and in activities?
- How much does one have the right to be an individual and express one's individuality? How much does one have the responsibility to accept societal rules and norms?
- How have past cultures valued the individual? How do we value the individual in today's multicultural society?

BCS Interdisciplinary Themes and Essential Questions Cycle 1

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 How have past cultures valued the individual? How do we value the individual in our multicultural society today?

POSITIVE ATTITUDE	RESPECT/ KINDNESS	HONESTY/ INTEGRITY	RESPONSIBILITY/ ACCOUNTABILITY
• Perseverance	• Courtesy	• Sincerity	• Citizenship
• Cooperation	• Forgiveness	• Fairness	• Judgment
• Patience	• Tolerance	• Reliability	• Punctuality
• Change			• Service

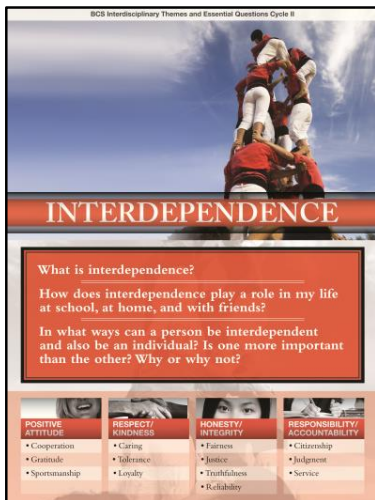
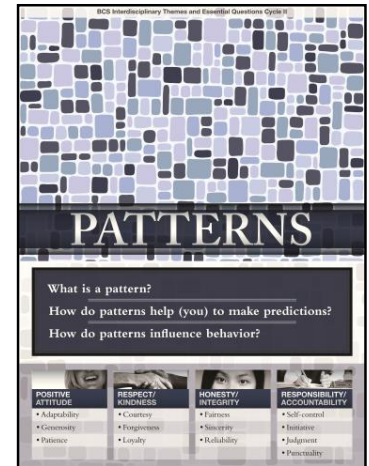
BCS Interdisciplinary Themes – Cycle 2

Integrated learning is a critical element in all classrooms at BCS. The ability to understand big themes common to human experience, past and present, provides students with the framework for thinking about themselves and their world. The themes and essential questions for this year have been carefully chosen by the staff to connect and to link all curriculum areas.

3-4 PATTERNS

- What is a pattern?
- How do patterns help (you) to make predictions?
- How do patterns influence behavior?

Challenge: How can patterns change and adapt?



5-6 INTERDEPENDENCE

- What is interdependence?
- How does interdependence play a role in my life at school, at home and with friends?
- In what ways can a person be interdependent and also be an individual? Is one more important than the other? Why or why not?

7-8 DIVERSITY: A Matter of Perspective

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

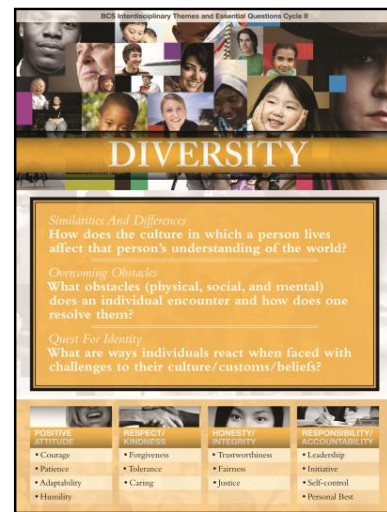
- How does a culture in which a person lives affect that person's understanding of the world?

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

- What obstacles (physical, social and mental) does an individual encounter and how does one resolve them?

QUEST FOR IDENTITY

- What are ways individuals react when faced with challenges to their culture/customs/beliefs?





NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a learning/working environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination and harassment. There will be no tolerance for discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, genetic information, disability or age. The District prohibits harassment and other forms of discrimination whether occurring at school, on District property, in a District vehicle, or at any District related activity or event. The Superintendent will designate compliance officers and develop and implement regulations for the reporting, investigation and resolution of complaints of discrimination or harassment. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Students - Inquiries related to discrimination on the basis of disability should be directed to: Executive Director of Special Education, 31301 Evergreen Road, Beverly Hills, MI 48025, 248.203.3000. Direct all other inquiries related to discrimination to: Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 31301 Evergreen Road, Beverly Hills, MI 48025, 248.203.3000.