

# What's Buzzing at Independence Elementary STEM

## NEWS & FEATURES

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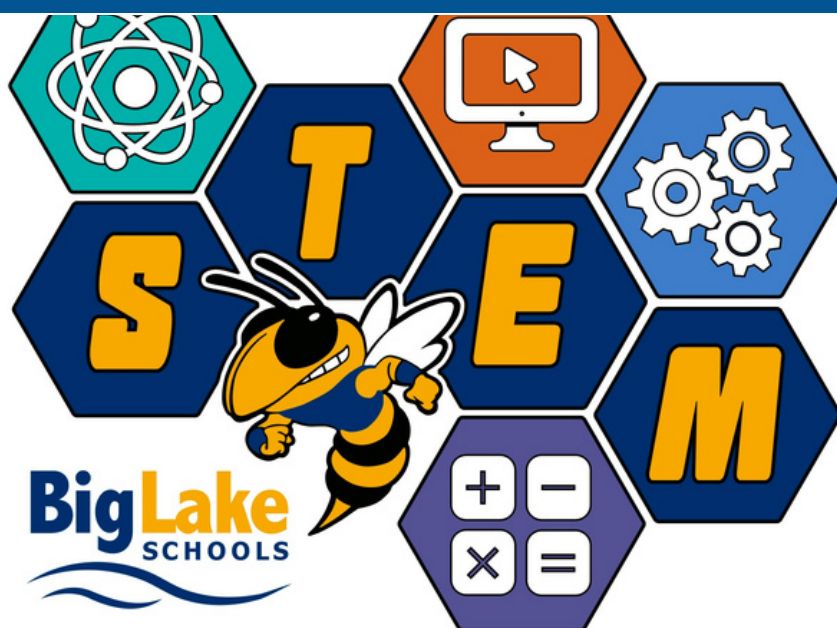
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## Welcome to a New Year!

We are so excited to welcome our students and families to the 2022-23 school year! We hope families have had a great summer! In addition to our Assessment Days that take place every school year, to help ensure the most successful transition to Indy, this year we are also offering a New Student and Family Orientation Night on Wednesday, August 31st. The next page includes more information about each of these events.

## ***New Student & Family Orientation: August 31st***

All incoming 3rd grade students and families, as well as 4th & 5th grade new to Indy students and families, are invited to join us on August 31st. This is an optional night where you will learn more about Independence Elementary STEM including:

- Being able to see Buzz!
- Being able to meet the Principal and Administrative Dean.
- Being able to meet our Social Worker and School Counselor.
- Learning about what students experience at a STEM school.
- Seeing what a typical day look like.
- Learning about interventions and supports.
- Learning about PBIS.
- Learning about the use of chrome books. Our 3rd grade students will pick these up on that night.
- Hearing our attendance policies and the supports available.
- Seeing what assessments will be given throughout the year.
- Learning about our drop-off and pick-up procedures.

This information will be presented in our Cafeteria. Families should attend their assigned session:

- 4 - 4:30pm Students with last names beginning with A - C, as well as families who also need to attend either the MS or HS Open House.
- 4:30 - 5pm Students with last names beginning with D - H.
- 5 - 5:30pm Students with last names beginning with I - M.
- 5:30 - 6pm Students with last names beginning with N - R.
- 6 - 6:30pm Students with last names beginning with S - Z.

In addition, students and families can visit our STEM lab, our Recess Area, as well as receive a tour of our building. Our doors will be open from 4 - 6:30pm, so please plan for these additional visits to happen outside of your assigned session, but within the hours of 4-6:30pm. Students will not be meeting their teacher this night, nor will they be able to see their classrooms, as these will take place during our Assessment Days.

## ***Assessment Days: September 6th & 7th***

Assessments Days are required and count toward student attendance. Families should sign up for a time with their classroom teacher via the Independence Elementary STEM website.

During this 30 minutes, you and your child will meet their teacher and see their classroom. In addition, teacher will begin to complete our reading assessments with your child. 4th and 5th grade students will receive their chrome books at that time. In addition, between the hours of 10am - 6pm on Tuesday, September 6th and 9am - 5pm on Wednesday, September 7th you should stop in the cafeteria to get your child's photo taken and purchase a recorder. If your child already has a recorder, please bring that along that day. Please see the included flyer on how to purchase pictures! Our STEM lab will also be open to explore!

**We can't wait to see you at these upcoming events!**

# Photo Ops



During both our New Student & Family Orientation, as well as our Assessment Days, feel free to stop at our STEM logo located in the 3rd grade hallway, our "Be the I in Kind" located in our 4th grade hallway; or during our Orientation Night, find Buzz, for some great pictures!

PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Our PBIS model ensures all our staff are trained in positively recognizing behaviors, implementing proactive and preventative procedures though consistent building-wide expectations, and developing consistent procedures for classroom-managed vs. office-managed behaviors. PBIS provides both a strong framework for teaching students how to follow our Hornet Way and be successful as an Indy student, while at the same time positively recognizing students who are showing their Hornet Pride. As school begins, you may hear students talking about:

- **Indy's Morning Presentations:** All teachers will start their day with the same presentation that allows us to teach consistent expectations for all our students. These morning presentations will be fun, promote a strong Indy community, and often include student participation.
- **Hornet Tickets:** All staff will be looking for students who are following the Hornet Way and exhibiting positive behavior. Students are able to use their Hornet Tickets on our Hornet Menu, our Stinger Store, and Weekly Drawings. One of last year's highlights was the drawings for free Timberwolves tickets!

This summer we again partnered with Vision Transportation to provide training to our bus drivers on PBIS. We also continue to work together to

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# PBIS

# PBIS Continued

develop procedures to increase our positive behaviors on our buses and ensure that our students are safe. If your child will be riding the bus, please review this [matrix](#) with your child that shows how misbehaviors will be handled. Students will be provided with an assigned seat and are expected to remain in that seat throughout the duration of their trip. We will be reviewing our bus expectations with students during the first couple weeks of school. If you or your child have information to report concerning an incident that happened on the bus, please use [this form](#) to do so. This form can be turned into the office at school or emailed to Dawnette Saylor at [d.saylor@biglakeschools.org](mailto:d.saylor@biglakeschools.org).

## Parent - Teacher Organization (PTO)

Welcome back families and faculty from the PTO! We are currently made up of four local moms who are trying our best to continue to bring students more enrichment opportunities into their school experience while also providing a way for families to celebrate school pride in community events. What is the PTO you ask? PTO is a Parent Teacher Organization. Basically, we have parents and teachers who meet once every other month and discuss different ideas and opportunities we would like to see happen for our students. There are some things that the school district is not able to fund and that is where the PTO steps in.

COME JOIN US! We are ALWAYS looking for more ideas and people to join us, whether you want to be on a board position (we have several open) or just as an involved parent.

FUN FACT: Our official and legal name is Big Lake Parent Teacher Student Organization. Bring your student, their ideas matter! Or use the free daycare we provide!

Our meetings begin at 6pm.

- 9/12 Indy Community Room
- 11/14 Liberty Media Center
- 1/9 Indy Community Room
- 3/14 (Tuesday) Liberty Media Center
- 5/8 Indy Community Room

We could use your help during our Assessment Days! If you are able to help sell Spirit Items during Assessment Days, please sign up for a day and time by clicking on [this link](#).

# Student Planners



Planners are required for every student at Independence. We ask that parents review planners with their child every night as this is one way parents can stay up-to-date with what students are learning every day. PTO is generously providing planners to every student, free of charge, this year! In addition, they will be providing STEM shirts to every Indy student and new staff! Thank you PTO for all that you do for us!

# Visitors

We welcome visitors to our school for Educational Purposes!

When volunteers are needed, teachers will reach out to families, and all volunteers must complete the required background check. Due to ensuring there are no disruptions to student learning and to ensure the highest level of safety, parents may not be in the school building during the regular school day unless it is for educational purposes. Therefore, please be sure you get all your photos done during our Orientation Night & Assessment Days, as there won't be opportunities to do so in the building on the first day of school. If at any point you would like to have lunch with your child, you may do so by checking your child out from our office at that time and taking them out for lunch, and then checking them back in when they return.

## Community Partners

We are very excited to resume working with our community partners, new and old. We are continuing to build our relationships with businesses and organizations in Big Lake and the surrounding area. Every teacher has a community partner and will work to bring enrichment activities to our students. It is an excellent opportunity for our students to develop a sense of community. Throughout the year, we will feature the work of our partnerships in our newsletter, but make sure to follow Principal Deavel on Twitter ([https://twitter.com/indy\\_stem](https://twitter.com/indy_stem)) for current photos and highlights.

## Buzz's Bookstore

vending machine as part of PBIS. Be sure and check it out during our Orientation Night and Assessment Days. Students who demonstrate the Hornet Way will earn tokens to purchase a book of their choice. In order to continue to supply Buzz's Bookstore, we would love parents to donate a book or two.

Please Shop Our Class Page at

<https://orders.scholastic.com/XYBFK> or by scanning the QR code.

We are incredibly excited to offer our students a book



## Parent Drop-Off & Pick Up Procedures

Please carefully review the attached information regarding our parent drop-off and pick-up.

We partnered with Big Lake Police Department to research, create, and evaluate the most efficient and safe processes. We ask for your cooperation and kindness in following these procedures.

Students should not be dropped off prior to 7:25am as our exterior doors remain locked and there is no supervision.

Again, please help us keep our students and community safe by following these procedures!

# Assessments

FastBridge is a universal screening tool that helps teachers identify students' academic and social-emotional behavior needs. Students will be assessed three times a year once in the fall, winter, and spring. During that time, students will be given the FASTtrack Reading, FASTtrack Math, and mySAEBRS (my Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener) assessments. FASTtrack Reading and FASTtrack Math help predict your student's future reading and math performance, as well as to provide information for what type of instruction is needed now. The mySAEBRS assessment informs teachers on social, academic, and emotional behavior that assist in the learning process and help contribute to developing healthy, well-rounded students. This assessment also assists teachers in knowing who may need additional social or emotional support, in collaboration with families, to reach their fullest potential. If you would like more information on what the mySAEBRS assessment looks like or if you would like to opt-out of the mySAEBRS portion, please reach out to your student's teacher. However, by combining social-emotional behavior assessments with academic screening, teachers will have a clearer insight into the "why" behind "what" skills your student may be struggling with or succeeding with. All of this data will be used to more effectively support your child's learning and help them reach their goals.

# Communication

Communication is very important to us and essential in keeping our strong partnership between school and home. Once our school year has begun, our main communication tool is Seesaw. This includes full school communication (such as these newsletters), full class communication from your child's teachers, as well as personal messages from your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will help you get connected on Seesaw. Be sure you access Seesaw daily so you do not miss any important messages!

Although you may find some pictures come your way through Seesaw, we also encourage you to also follow @Indy\_STEM on Twitter. Here you will see weekly, sometimes daily, updates and pictures on the great things that are happening at Indy!

If you have questions or concerns regarding our attendance policies, you can reach out to our Administrative Dean, Mr. Pierce, at [s.pierce@biglakeschools.org](mailto:s.pierce@biglakeschools.org). All other questions or concerns should be first directed to your child's teacher and then if they are unable to help you, they will point you in the right direction!

## Important Dates



- New Student & Family Orientation is August 31st!
- Assessment & Picture Days are September 6th & 7th. Don't forget to sign up for your 30-minute slot!
- First Day of School is Thursday, September 8th!
- No School on October 19th - 21st!