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# Briarlake Elementary PTA Newsletter

12th Week of School

2011-2012



Happy Wednesday, Beavers!

There are some very important dates coming up in the next few weeks, so please mark your calendars. Our annual **Thanksgiving Luncheon** where families can enjoy a traditional holiday meal at school with their students is coming up next month, but you must pre-register by **this Friday**. Don't miss out on this wonderful treat.

Also, several initiatives at the DeKalb County School System level are happening now and parent participation is critical. Our new Superintendent Cheryl Atkinson has outlined her 90-Day plan, key priorities (see memo below) and is inviting parents to local **roundtable discussions** to gather your feedback. This is a key opportunity to shape the future of our children's education, please plan to attend one of the sessions. And finally, on November 8th, **SPLOST IV** will be on the ballot for a vote. More details are below, so please read this important information and remember to vote.

Also, a big **thank you** to volunteers from Briarlake Baptist Church who came out last week to paint the art patio wall, rake leaves, clear walking paths, reinforce our running track, and beautify our campus. We are so grateful for your support of our school.

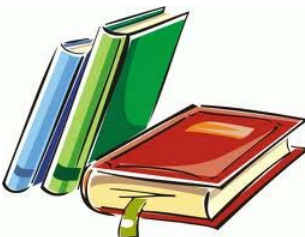
\*\*And last, but not least, there is a menu change for **tomorrow** (Thursday 10/27). In lieu of Fried Chicken, first choice will be Buffalo Chicken. Please plan accordingly!

## School News & Events

### Thanksgiving Luncheon - reservations required

Don't forget to make your reservations for our annual Thanksgiving luncheon. You must make reservations in advance and pre-pay-you will not be served otherwise. Reservations are **due this Friday**, as we have to order the necessary food from the county well in advance. Please send in a check, made out to the Briarlake PTA, with the bottom portion of the [reservation form](#).

Please know that parents/family members are, as always, more than welcome to join their students without purchasing a meal, but no outside food (other than for students who are bringing their lunches that day) will be allowed. There will not be an opportunity to purchase a lunch the day of the luncheon.



### Book Buddies

It's not too late to be a Book Buddy. 30 minutes each week makes a lifetime of difference.

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## Important Dates

### October

Fri., Oct 28  
Thanksgiving Luncheon  
Reservations Due

Oct 24-30  
Red Ribbon Week

Mon., Oct 24-Nov 3  
Iowa Test of Basic Skills  
(Gr. 1, 3, 5)

### November

Nov. 8 SPLOST  
Referendum Vote

## Quick Links

[2011 - 2012 Family Handbook](#)

[Briarlake PTA Website](#)

[Briarlake Elementary Website](#)



School Council's Book Buddies are calling for eager Beaver parent readers to spend 30 minutes a week to mentor a student. Email [Loretta Vanni](mailto:Loretta.Vanni) if you're in!

[Briarlake School Calendar](#)

[DeKalb County Schools Website](#)

### Briarlake Foundation Update

Now that Halloween and the Holidays are around the corner, remember to log onto [www.briarlakefoundation.org](http://www.briarlakefoundation.org) when ordering from Amazon. You can directly connect to Amazon from our site and 5% of all sales go to the Foundation.



### Important Carpool Safety Reminder

Please remember to SLOW DOWN as you drive through carpool lines. There have been a number of cars observed driving WAY too fast as they approach the school. Remember that there are small children who might be in unexpected areas and not seen until it is too late. Please be mindful of your speed not only at morning drop off and afternoon dismissal but at ALL times as students may be outside during the day. Also, we are asking again to please observe the No Left Turn from Briarlake Road - we are still seeing several cars making that illegal and unsafe turn. Thank you for your cooperation.

### Public Safety Alert

There was a recent report of a carjacking in nearby Briarcliff Village. While nobody was injured, please be reminded of the need to be aware of your surroundings, particularly as we head into the holiday season when crime rates tend to increase.

### Green Team Tip of the Week - Electronics Recycling

Got dead electronics piling up? Good! You're ready to keep those toxic materials out of our air and landfills by dropping them off at Decatur High School this Saturday, Oct. 29, for the City of Decatur's Fall Electronics Recycling Day. Just drive through the DHS parking lot from 9am-1pm, and volunteers will pluck that wired and wireless junk from your car trunk. Bring cell phones, cameras, computer parts, batteries, and almost anything with a cord for responsible recycling. Visit the City of Decatur [website](#) for a complete list and details.

### Cell Tower Info



What can you do to help? [Click here](#) for a contact list to make your voices heard on this issue.

Please continue to check out the website [www.noBriarlakeTower.org](http://www.noBriarlakeTower.org) for ongoing information and details on the developing story of the contract between T-mobile and our Board of Education. If you would like to receive updates via e-mail, send an e-mail to [Stephanie Byrne](mailto:Stephanie.Byrne) to be added to the distribution. Your help and time in this matter are greatly appreciated.

### Please Donate your Drink Pouches!

In 2009 the Briarlake Green Team, led by Susan Mancusi-Ungaro, started recycling Capri-Sun drink pouches. In 2009 and 2010 we collected 2651 pouches. Over the past year Julia Roberts and Sally Elliott have collected and sent in 4147 pouches and another box was just sent in! The Briarlake after-school program also assists with this effort. The company now accepts all drink pouches, so please remember to collect your pouches at home and send them in. The collection box is in the cafeteria. Help us keep the pouches out of the landfills. Want to know more about this program...go to [terracycle.net](http://terracycle.net).

### Healthy Habits Highlight

Today is Granny Smith Apple Day! Children have the opportunity to enjoy fresh, Georgia-grown Granny Smith apples with their lunches as part of Dekalb's Farm-to-School initiative. Support this very important



initiative to connect kids to healthy food choices by asking your child about his or her lunchroom experience today. You can talk about where various foods come from and why locally grown food often tastes better and helps farmers and the environment by reducing fossil fuels and other waste required by packing, preserving, and transporting produce from hundreds of miles away. Keeping kids talking about healthy choices helps turn the tide of childhood obesity and helps build healthy habits for life.



**ITBS Testing**

The ITBS testing schedule for this year has just been made available by the County.

[1st Grade](#)  
[Grades 3 & 5](#)

## Community News & Events

### ELPC Meeting Summary - Important SPLOST IV Information - Vote is Nov. 8

This past Wednesday's Emory LaVista Parent Council (ELPC) meeting included information on the Georgia DOE's waiver request to exempt Georgia from the No Child Left Behind regulations. Several Department of Education representatives, along with DCSS employees, explained how they hope to improve failing schools.

DCSS employees also gave an overview of the proposed SPLOST IV (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) projects. We will vote on SPLOST IV on November 8. If passed, the current penny sales tax which funds DeKalb County school system construction projects and vehicles will be extended for 5 more years beginning in July 2012. **Henderson Middle School is a top priority on the list, and would receive \$16 million dollars.**

The ELPC speakers clarified these points:

- 1) If SPLOST IV does not pass this November is it unlikely that it will be placed on the ballot in 2012, due to the transportation SPLOST vote already scheduled for 2012.
- 2) If SPLOST IV does not pass this November, the school board reform legislation (which dictates that DeKalb's Board of Education will be reduced from 9 members to 7 members) will not go into effect.
- 3) DeKalb's current BOE is setting up a committee of community members and construction experts to ensure proper oversight of SPLOST IV dollars. On November 8th, DeKalb County residents will vote on a SPLOST referendum (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax).

For more information about how the school system plans to use the sales tax funds, visit this [website](#). To read the exact wording of the SPLOST referendum, visit this [website](#).

### DCSS Parent Roundtable Meetings

In accordance with the new Superintendent's 90-Day Entry Plan, you are invited to participate in one of the following Parent Roundtable discussions that will be held throughout the school district. They will be held on the following days:

Tuesday, October 25	Columbia High School	7:00 P.M.
Thursday, October 27	Dunwoody High School	7:00 P.M.
Tuesday, November 1	Miller Grove High School	7:00 P.M.
Thursday, November 3	Stephenson High School	7:00 P.M.

[Click here](#) to read the official invitation from DCSS. You may also visit the

Briarlake Elementary School  
3590 LaVista Road  
Decatur, GA 30033  
Office: 678-874-2502  
Clinic: 678-874-2507

Send email to :  
[Briarlake PTA](#)

**PTA Officers:**  
*Co-Presidents -*  
Vanessa Erens & Sarah Cook  
*VP Programs -*  
Elesha Mavrommatis & Melissa Forster-Green  
*VP Fundraising -*  
Amy Kirsch & Lisa Spivack  
*Treasurer -*  
Heather Leahy  
*Secretary -*  
Trish McElfresh

[DCSS website](#) for more information!

## **DCSD Citizens SPLOST Oversight Committee Memo from the Superintendent - Oct 18, 2011**

Greetings ~

The DeKalb County School System today announced a series of initiatives to ensure transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the operations and finances of all departments of the School System.

Today's actions are a key component of Superintendent Dr. Cheryl L.H. Atkinson's 90-Day Entry Plan, which pledged to identify and correct critical issues facing DeKalb Schools.

The accountability initiatives include establishing a Citizens SPLOST Oversight Committee, a 12-member body of community representatives formed to provide oversight of SPLOST-funded construction projects and to report to DeKalb County residents on how SPLOST funds are being spent.

The SPLOST, or special purpose local option sales tax, is an opportunity for voters to continue a one-cent sales tax that funds new school construction and ongoing facilities improvements. An extension of the SPLOST, known as SPLOST IV, will be decided by voters on Nov. 8.

In addition to the Citizens SPLOST Oversight Committee, the School System also has recently implemented a number of internal operational and financial checks and balances, including:

**Independent Auditor.** The auditor, who works in conjunction with the Office of Internal Affairs, conducts ongoing review of the School System's finances and makes monthly public reports to the Board of Education

**EthicsLine.** Available on the DeKalb Schools website, the EthicsLine allows employees, parents, citizens and others to alert School District officials and the internal auditor of irregularities in finances or operations. Citizens can access the [EthicsLine](#) or by calling 888-475-0482.

**Purchasing Oversight.** New purchasing reporting policies have been implemented in all departments to establish improved transparency and oversight of School System expenditures

"One of the central missions of our administration is to assure parents, citizens and taxpayers that we are committed to accountability at all levels," Dr. Atkinson said. "We will continue to enact policies to ensure oversight, transparency and efficiency. Our schools, parents and, most importantly, our children deserve nothing less."

For more information about SPLOST IV and the DeKalb County School System accountability measures, please visit [www.dekalb.k12.ga.us](http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us).

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Sincerely,

*Vanessa & Sarah*

Vanessa Erens & Sarah Cook , PTA Co-Presidents  
Briarlake Elementary PTA

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