



Deanna Brewer
Principal

Jennifer Cervantes
Assistant Principal

Welcome to the 25/26 School Year



We are excited to start the 2025-26 school year! We want to welcome back all of our returning students and families, as well as those who may be new to our school. Each month we will send out a newsletter with school announcements, our lunch menu, and our upcoming school calendar through email. If you have not already registered to receive this information, please visit <http://bit.ly/BCSEmail2526> to sign up.

Parent Portal

We encourage parents to be involved in their child's academic progress at Berkley. One way to do so is through the Parent Portal. This site gives parents of students K-5 access to view their child's assignments, grades, attendance records, and scores from recent benchmark tests. The Parent Portal website is: <https://polkk12.focusschoolsoftware.com>. In order to login for the first time, you will need your child's student ID number and 4 digit security pin. The security pin can be obtained by calling the school at 863.968.5024.



School Lunches

Full-priced student meals are \$1.25 for breakfast and \$2.60 for lunch. Funds can be added to student meal accounts by:



- Cash or check can be sent in an envelope or baggie with the student's name, teacher, and ID number written on the outside and turned in to the office, cafe, or homeroom teacher.
- [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com) - Parents can set up an account on MySchoolBucks and deposit money electronically. When registering as a new user, choose Berkley Charter School as the district and again as the school name. You will also need your child's student ID number to register.

Families who may need assistance in providing meals for their children are encouraged to fill out an application for Free & Reduced Price plans, which can be found on our website at: <https://berkleyknights.net/cafe/>.

Thank You Custodians

We want to thank our hard working custodians who spent the summer cleaning, maintaining and preparing the campus for the new year. Our campus and classrooms look wonderful! We truly appreciate all of the hard work they do!

School Hours
7:50 - 3:00

Morning Drop-off
7:30am

5240 Berkley Rd
Auburndale, FL 33823

Office Hours
7:30 - 3:30

Early Dismissal
12:30

(863) 968-5024
www.berkleyknights.net



Dismissal & Arrival Reminders

As with any new school year, our arrival and dismissal may take longer than normal until everyone becomes familiar with the flow of traffic and transportation procedures. Here are a few reminders to help keep our students safe and traffic flowing:



Arrival:

- Drop-off begins at 7:30am. Students may not be on campus before 7:30am.
- There are 2 locations to drop off: at the rear & at the front of the school.
- Pull all the way forward before letting students out.
- Only PreK parents with a visible ID badge may enter campus.

Dismissal:

- Display your child's car rider number for our staff when entering the campus (1st-5th grade).
- Kindergarten parents wait in the regular car rider line. Then pull forward to the kindergarten pickup area when you arrive at the kindergarten wing/building.
- The front gates are closed until 3:15pm. Enter from the rear of the school off Old Berkley Rd.
- Drivers should not drive the wrong way down the lane or double park, blocking the flow of traffic.
- Do not drive over sidewalks or drive/park on the private property outside the school gate.
- Car riders are dismissed to the front of the school.
- Walkers are dismissed at 3pm. Students may not loiter on campus or at the back of the school.
- Walkers should have a plan in place for rainy days PRIOR to inclement weather.
- Bus delays can be found on our school's website: Parents > Bus Delays & Information.

Open House



Our annual Open House is scheduled for August 21st from 1:30 to 3:00pm. This is our first Early Release Day and we've reserved this time to give parents the opportunity to casually drop in to their child(ren)'s classroom(s) for an overview of the 25/26 school year.

Next Board Meeting
August 22, 2025
7am

Connect with us!



www.berkleyknights.net



www.facebook.com/berkleycharterschool



<http://focusk12.polk-fl.net>



berkleyvolunteergroup@gmail.com

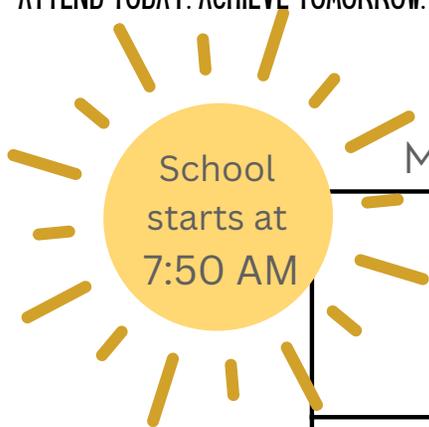


<https://getfortifyfl.com/>

Berkley's
Parent Involvement
Liaison is
Mayme Plumlee.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS!
ATTEND TODAY. ACHIEVE TOMORROW.

August 2025



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5 Orientation 8-11 AM	6	7 1st Day of School Block Day 1	8 Block Day 2
11 Block Day 3	12 Block Day 4	13 Block Day 5	14 Block Day 6	15 BOD Meeting 7AM Block Day 1
18 K-2 FAST Testing Reading & Math *through 8/22 Block Day 2	19 Block Day 3	20 Block Day 4	21 Early Release 12:30 PM Open House 1:30 - 3pm Block Day 5	22 Block Day 6
25 Block Day 1	26 3-5 FAST Testing Reading Block Day 2	27 Block Day 3	28 3-5 FAST Testing Math Block Day 4	29 Early Release 12:30 PM Block Day 5



What's Ahead:

- Sept. 1 - No School
- Sept. 10 - Fall Pictures
- Sept. 11 - Interims
- Sept. 18 - Family Night





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MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

MY SCHOOL BUCKS **PAY FOR MEALS ONLINE**
[MySchoolBucks.com](https://www.myschoolbucks.com)



Shepherd's pie w/ Roll Peas & Carrots
 Steamed Broccoli
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

07

Mini Pepperoni Calzones
 Corn
 Carrots w/ dip
 Juice or Fruit
 Milk

08

Chicken Patty Sandwich
 Romain, Tom & Pickle
 Sweet Potato fries
 Juice
 Milk

11

Spaghetti w/ Breadstick
 Green Peas
 Popeye Salad
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

12

BBQ Chicken on bun
 French fries
 Green Beans
 Chilled fruit
 Milk

13

Beef Taco
 Black beans
 Rice
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

14

Pizza
 Corn
 Carrots w/ dip
 Juice or fruit
 Milk

15

Beefaroni w/breadstick
 Sliced carrots
 Popeye salad
 Juice
 Milk

18

Chicken and Rice w/ Biscuit
 Cole Slaw
 Broccoli
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

19

Meatball Sub with cheese
 French fries
 Baked beans
 Chilled fruit
 Milk

20

Corn Dogs
 Seasoned Noodles
 Green Beans
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

21

Mini Pepperoni Calzones
 Corn
 Carrots w/ dip
 Juice or Fruit
 Milk

22

Beef Nachos w/cheese
 Rice
 Black beans
 Juice
 Milk

25

Cheeseburger on bun
 Romain, Tom & Pickle
 Baked Fries
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

26

Chicken Nuggets w/ biscuit
 Mashed Potatoes
 Steamed Broccoli
 Chilled fruit
 Milk

27

Chicken Alfredo Pasta w/breadstick
 Garden Salad
 Green Peas
 Fresh fruit
 Milk

28

Pizza
 Corn
 Carrots w/ dip
 Juice or fruit
 Milk

29



Mon-Thur.-salad chef or Caesar Fri-yogurt & muffin. Mon-Fri sandwich or wrap-ham or turkey.
 Lunch: Pre-k -5th = \$2.60 Staff = \$5.00.
 Breakfast = \$1.25 Staff = al-a-carte

AUGUST 2025

BREAKFAST

CYCLE 25-26

BERKLEY CHARTER

“The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, of if all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)”

Monday

Cereal bowl OR Cereal bar
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Tuesday

Chef’s Choice Hot
Or Cereal bowl
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Wednesday

Cereal bowl OR Cereal bar
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Thursday

Chef’s Choice Hot
Or Cereal bowl
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Friday

Cereal bowl OR Cereal bar
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Cereal bowl OR Cereal bar
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Chef’s Choice Hot
Or Cereal bowl
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Cereal bowl OR Cereal bar
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Chef’s Choice Hot
Or Cereal bowl
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

Cereal bowl OR Cereal bar
Graham Crackers
Juice or Fruit
Milk

School Information:

Breakfast Price= \$1.25

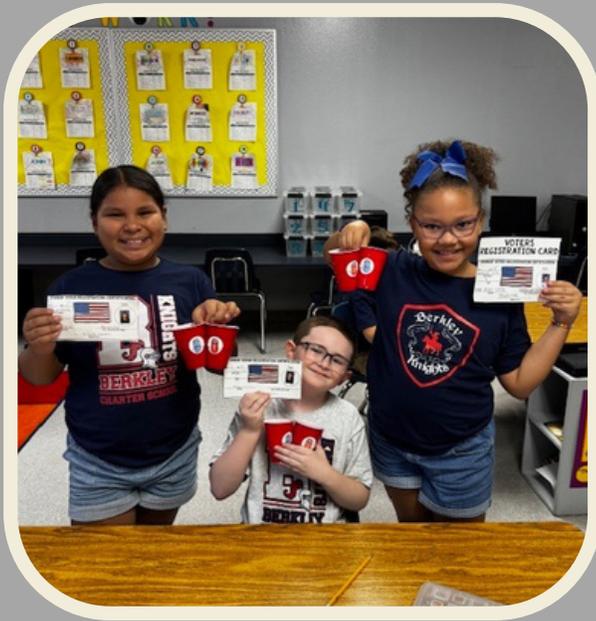
Staff = a la carte

ALL MENUS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE
WITHOUT NOTICE

**Whole Grains ARE HERE TO STAY.
FUEL UP FOR YOUR DAY.
3 IS GOOD... 4 IS BEST.**

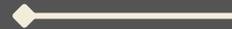
Berkley Charter School

Report Card

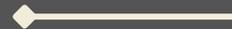


Points of Interest

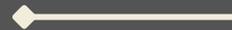
High Performing Charter School



School of Excellence



Kagan Cooperative Learning Model School



Polk Education Foundation Grant Recipient

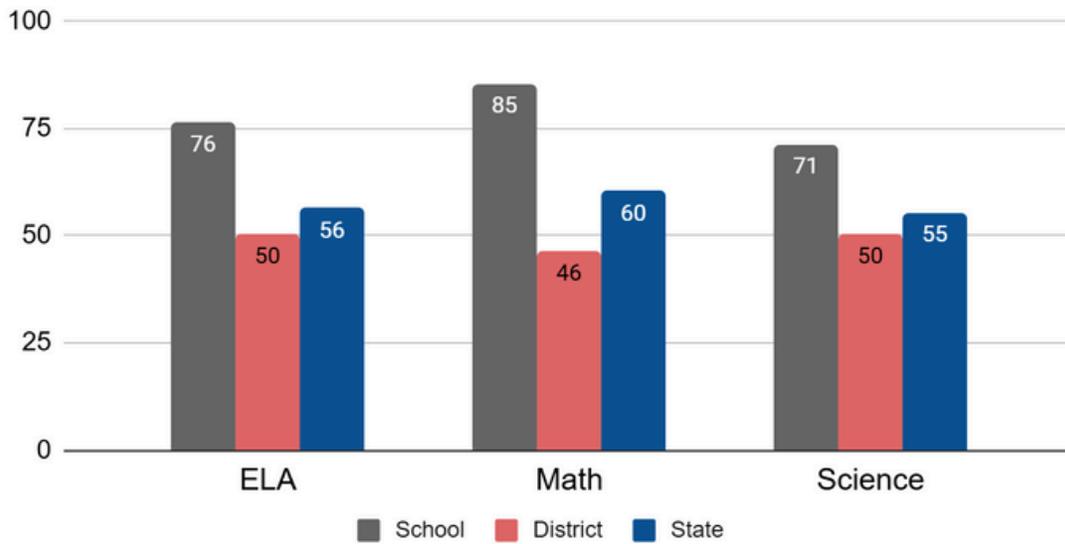


Mission & Vision

Berkley Charter School is committed to Learning For All, Whatever It Takes! Our vision is for all students to perform at or above grade level in all academic areas. We provide an optimal learning environment that emphasizes research based practices, time on task, and an integrated relevant curriculum. Learning for all includes ensuring all students and teachers have the necessary resources needed for optimal learning, as well as, providing a well trained, caring staff that utilizes data to drive instructional practices.

High Performing Charter School

Percentage of Students Meeting High Standards on 2025 State Assessments



	ELA	Math	Science
School	76	85	71
District	50	46	50
State	56	60	55



School Grade:

- 2024-2025 A
- 2023-2024 A
- 2022-2023 A
- 2021-2022 A
- 2020-2021 NG
- 2019-2020 A

Learning For All, Whatever It Takes!

Our vision is for all students to perform at or above grade level in all academic areas.

BERKLEY ASSURANCES

Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think and reason • Work collaboratively • Use effective social skills • Participate actively • Fully engaged in learning 	Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined • Relevant • Standards based • Supported by best practices
Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture children • Act as professionals • Learners themselves • Monitor student achievement • Instruct using best practices • Incorporate stimulating learning environments 	Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied and aligned with standards • Used to monitor student achievement • Used to monitor quality of education • Use data to make educational decisions
Administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster learning as a priority • Learners themselves • Engage in visionary leadership • Listen and respond to concerns • Facilitate and advocate for learning • Nurture, support, and empower students and staff 	Learning Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and orderly • Attractive and inviting • Support technology • Flexible enough to support varied learning needs
Support Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture children • Learners themselves • Flexible and adaptable • Act courteous and professional • Positive role models 	Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is organized to foster learning • Accommodations for various learning rates • Enables staff to learn and collaborate • Safeguards time-on-task for academic achievement
Parents and Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed • Partners in learning • Provide financial and human resources for support of student learning 	Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled in a fiscally responsible manner • Budgeted to reflect the mission and vision of the school



Kagan Cooperative Learning

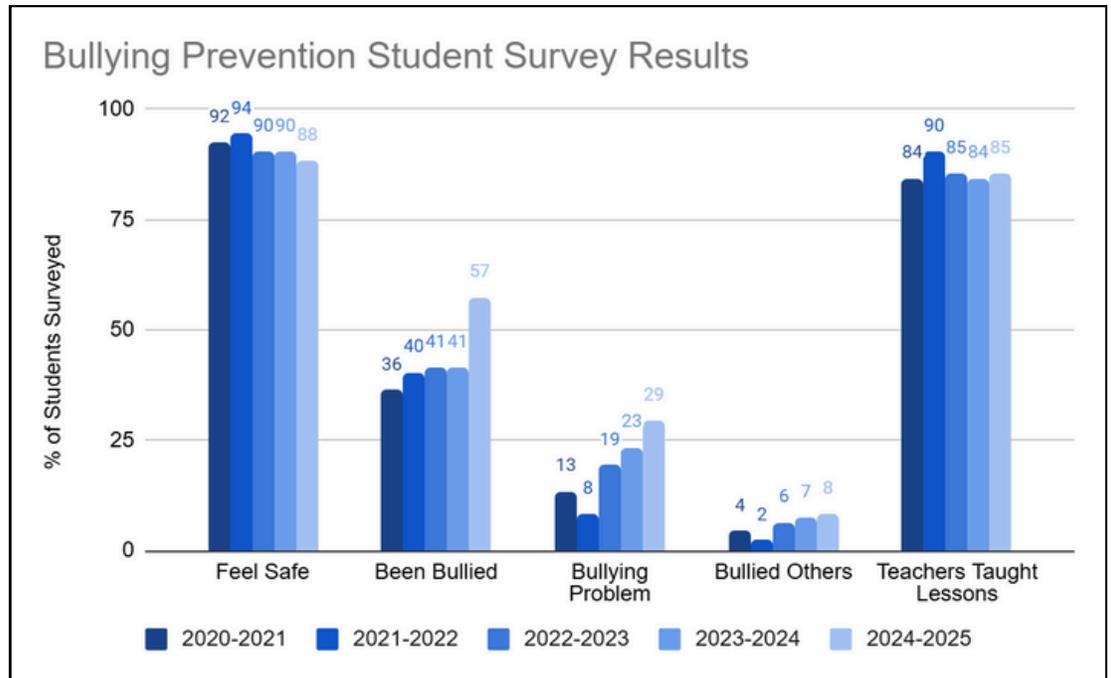
Berkley Charter School is proud to be one of a very select number of Kagan Model Schools in the world! Our staff receives intensive and ongoing training on the use of Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures. Cooperative Learning is when students work together towards learning a goal. They may work with a partner, team, or the whole class. Kagan structures are a set of cooperative learning activities that have specific steps to ensure students work with positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction to ensure all students are actively engaged in learning. There are many well documented and researched academic, psychological, and social benefits of using Kagan Cooperative Learning. Using the structures regularly drastically reduces negative behaviors. Students are taught how to positively interact with one another through cooperation. Students are taught to offer encouragement, praise, and coaching to their classmates.

It's all about engagement!



2025 Berkley Bullying Prevention Plan

- Create Classroom Communities
- Incorporate “Family” Meetings
- Teach Bullying Lessons
- Implement Character Education Activities
- Adhere to Anti-Bullying Policies
- Utilize Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures
- Provide Parent Tips in Newsletter & Student Agenda
- Focus on Reteaching Expectations



	Feel Safe	Been Bullied	Bullying Problem	Bullied Others	Teachers Taught Lessons
2020-2021	92	36	13	4	84
2021-2022	94	40	8	2	90
2022-2023	90	41	19	6	85
2023-2024	90	41	23	7	84
2024-2025	88	57	29	8	85

Bullying is defined as unwanted written, physical, or verbal aggression that is generally repeated. There is an imbalance of power. The behavior usually involves public humiliation.

There are many ways to prevent bullying: Improve the school climate; Create rituals within the classroom; Avoid conflict at the beginning, middle, and end of the day; Create a classroom family; All students should have a feeling of belonging to the group.

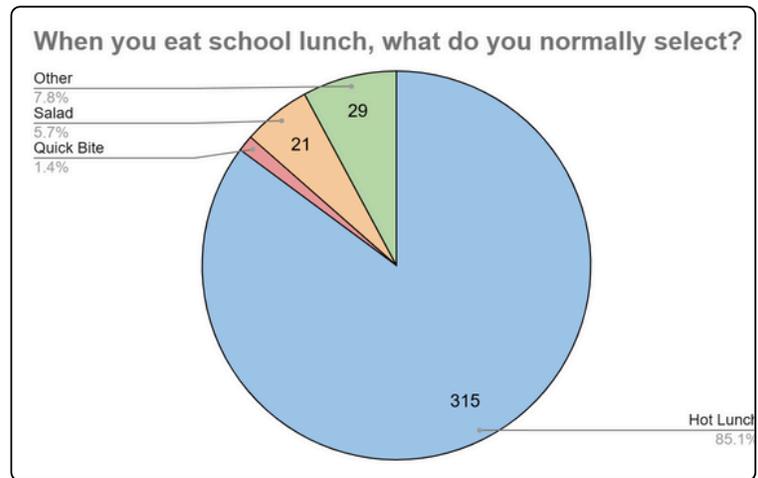
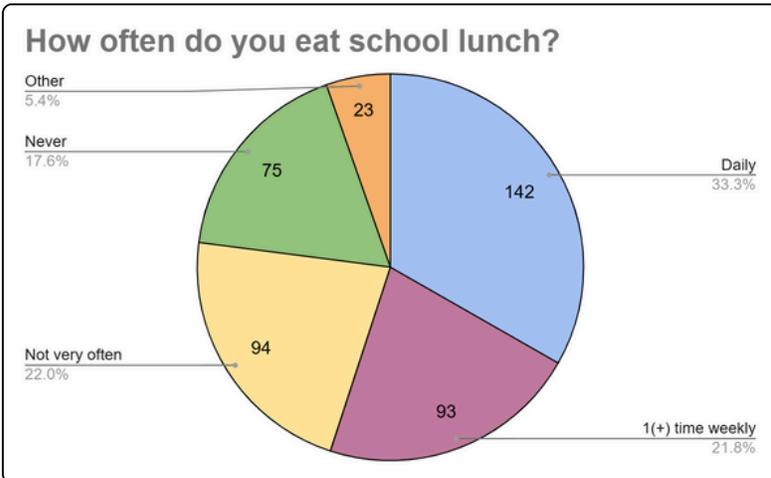


Advice for kids!

- Avoid the bully.
- Use the buddy system.
- Don't respond to the bully.
- Walk away.
- Tell an adult.
- Talk with someone you trust.
- Don't be part of the audience.
- If you feel safe, stand up and speak out against the bully.

2025 Berkley Student Lunch Survey Results

Berkley participates and complies with the policies of the National School Lunch Program. It is our goal to run a food service program that is self-sustaining, while also providing our students with nutritious, well-balanced meal choices. In a recent survey, a total of 427 students from grades 2-5 responded to various questions related to our foodservice program. Overall, 33% of students reported eating school lunch on a daily basis. Students were also asked their lunch preference when eating school lunch. 85% said they typically choose the hot lunch option when eating school lunch. Additionally, 77% of the students who participated in the survey indicated that our food service staff are friendly and approximately 40% of the students indicated the appearance of the café was clean and pleasant during their visits. These results are similar to past years.



As part of our ongoing commitment to health & wellness across our campus, our wellness committee meets annually to monitor and set goals for the development and implementation of our local School Wellness Policy. The current wellness policy may be found on our school website www.berkeleyknights.net under the café tab. Parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers, school health professionals, board members, and the general public can participate in the development, implementation and annual review of the local school wellness policy. Please contact Jennifer Cervantes at jennifer.cervantes@berkeleyknights.net if you are interested in participating on our wellness committee.

2025-2026

Berkley Schoolwide Email List



Join now and stay connected
all year!



Scan the QR Code or use the URL/link below
to get started.

<https://bit.ly/BCSemail2526>





Berkley Charter School

Dear K – 2nd Grade Parents/Guardians,

The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) is a progress monitoring system that is administered three times per year to track our students' progress in learning the Benchmarks of Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards throughout this school year. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that our students will take the K-2 Renaissance Star assessments the week of August 18th. Student results from PM1 are for informational purposes, and parents will be provided with information about how to access the results after testing is completed.

FAST assessments are computer-adaptive tests taken on a computer or tablet. The questions get easier or more difficult depending on how the student responds, and each student will see different questions. These assessments typically take 15 minutes to 30 minutes to complete. If you or your student would like to review sample items at home, sample test items are available at <https://flfast.org/families.html>.

If you have any questions related to this test administration, you may contact Jennifer Cervantes at jennifer.cervantes@berkleyknights.net. For more information about the Florida Statewide Assessments program, please visit the portal at FLFAST.org.

Thank you for supporting your student and encouraging him or her to do his or her best during this test administration.

Sincerely,
Deanna Brewer
Principal
Berkley Charter School



Berkley Charter School

Dear 3rd - 5th Grade Parent/Guardian,

The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) is a progress monitoring system that is administered three times per year to track your student's progress in learning the Benchmarks of Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards throughout this school year. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your student will participate in the first administration (PM1) of Grades 3-5 Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) ELA Reading and Math assessments the week of August 25th. Your student's results from PM1 are for informational purposes, and you will be provided with information about how to access the results after testing is completed.

FAST assessments are computer-adaptive tests taken on a computer or tablet. The questions get easier or more difficult depending on how the student responds, and each student will see different questions from a common item bank. Each test attempt (PM1, PM2, and PM3) will present 35–40 items that will cover the entire test “blueprint,” meaning students will encounter items representative of the standards within the subject or grade level. For more information on the test design, please visit <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/best/>. If you or your student would like to interact with the online testing platform or review FAST ELA Reading and Mathematics sample items at home, sample test materials are available at <https://flfast.org/families.html>.

Please review the following policies with your student before testing:

- **Electronic Devices**—Students are not permitted to access any electronic devices, including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, and smartwatches, at any time during testing **or** during breaks (e.g., restroom). If your student is found with an electronic device or is found using Bluetooth/wireless headphones/earbuds during testing, his or her test may be invalidated.
- **Testing Rules Acknowledgment**—All tests include a Testing Rules Acknowledgment that reads: “I understand the testing rules that were just read to me. If I do not follow these rules, my test score may be invalidated.” Prior to testing, test administrators read the rules to students, and students acknowledge that they understand the testing rules by clicking the box in the secure browser indicating they understand the testing rules.
- **Discussing Test Content after Testing**—The last portion of the testing rules read to students before they click the box to accept the Testing Rules Acknowledgment states that because the content of all statewide assessments is secure, students may not discuss or reveal details about the test content (including test items and passages) after the test. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as texting, emailing, or posting to social media sites.

“Learning For All, Whatever It Takes”

Please make sure your student understands this policy prior to testing and remind them that “discussing” test content includes any kind of electronic communication, such as texting, emailing, posting to social media, or sharing online. **While students may not share information about secure test content after testing, this policy is not intended to prevent students from discussing their testing experiences with their parents/families.**

- **Working Independently**—Students are responsible for doing their own work during the test and for protecting their answers from being seen by others. If students are caught cheating during testing, their tests will be invalidated.
- **Testing Accommodations**—If your student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Plan, or is an English Language Learner (ELL) or a recently exited ELL, please contact the school to discuss any testing accommodations that will be provided for your student.

If you have any questions related to this test administration, you may contact Jennifer Cervantes at jennifer.cervantes@berkeleyknights.net. For more information about the FAST program, please visit the portal at FLFAST.org.

Thank you for supporting your student and encouraging him or her to do his or her best during this test administration.

Sincerely,
Deanna Brewer
Principal
Berkley Charter School

Student Conduct:

School staff, parents, and students are all responsible for creating a culture of positive behavior. Discuss with your child the student conduct information below.

Parents and students must follow the school district's Student Code of Conduct. A frequent form of misconduct is bullying.

What is bullying?

Unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture by an adult or student that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation.

Where Does Most Bullying Occur?

As with most harmful behavior among children, in general bullying occurs wherever there is the least structure and adult supervision. Most incidents tend to occur on the playground, in bathrooms, in locker rooms, in cafeterias, in cyberspace, at bus stops, and in the school bus.

What Can Parents and Students Do?

Tips for Parents:

- ✓ Encourage your child to talk to you. Praise your child for positive communication and behavior.
- ✓ Provide/ensure adequate supervision.
- ✓ Teach your child to be assertive rather than aggressive or violent when confronted by a bully.
- ✓ Verify that consistent messages about rules and safety are practiced in your child's school and staff is trained in bullying prevention.
- ✓ Build a relationship with your child's teachers and administrators.

Tips for Students:

- Stay away from bullies.
- Tell an adult.
- Avoid bad situations.
- Make friends.
- If bullied, tell the bully to stop; then walk away.

Did you know that research shows that at least half of all bullying can be prevented?



Did you know that according to the National Mental Health and Education Center, direct, physical bullying increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school?



Protecting Children from Sexual Offenders and Predators – Tips for Parents and Students:

Florida has the strongest laws in the country to protect its youthful citizens from being abducted. However, parents and children themselves are the first line of defense. Talk to your children about following these rules:

- Stay away from any unfamiliar person who is trying to trick you or force you to go with him or her.
- Let your parents and other trusted adults know about any suspicious persons or situations.
- Learn to describe people and vehicles.
- Know where to run and how to forcibly resist capture.
- Scream to be seen and to scare a stranger away.
- Stay with a buddy, a group, or parents at the bus stop.
- Report anyone hanging around or passing by regularly.
- Accept a ride only from someone approved by the school.
- Walk or bike only along a route that your parents or the school has determined is safe.
- Lock the door and never tell callers you are home alone.



For More Information:

If you want more information on staying safe between home and school, check out these websites:

Florida Department of Education School Transportation Office
<http://www.fldoe.org/transportation>

Safe Schools Office
<http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools>

Florida Department of Transportation Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Program
http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/ped_bike/ped_bike.shtm

Safe Routes to School Florida
http://www.dot.state.fl.us/Safety/SRTS_files/SRTS.shtm

Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTSTs)
<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/CTST/ctst.shtm>

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FDHSMV; licensing and teen drivers)
www.hsmv.state.fl.us

Safe Kids USA
<http://www.usa.safekids.org/>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.missingkids.com
1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678)

Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse
<http://www.missingchildrenalert.com/>
1-888-FL-MISSING (356-4774)

Bullying Prevention
www.stopbullyingnow.com

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

Florida Association for Pupil Transportation
<http://www.fapftflorida.org/>

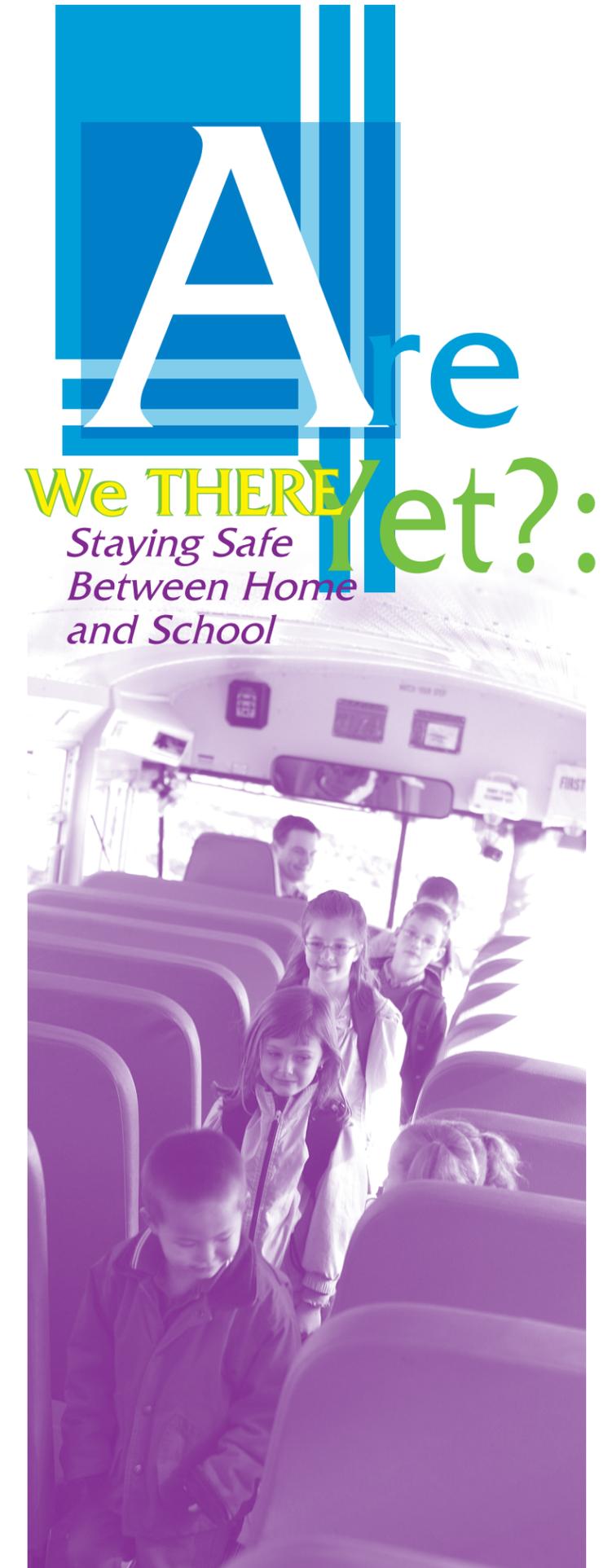
Florida School Bus Safety
<http://www.floridaschoolbussafety.gov/>

The Florida Department of Education and Florida's school districts are committed to the safety of Florida's students and schools. Students often walk, bike, or ride to and from school or the bus stop on their own or with parents, guardians, or others. This brochure offers important tips to parents, guardians, and students on how to stay safe, especially when the students are not with school officials who can help protect them. Please discuss these important tips with your children.



Florida Department of Education
School Transportation Management Office
Safe Schools Office
Revised July 2010

¹This information is designed to assist school districts in complying with requirements to provide safety information to parents, guardians, and students (Rule 6A-3.0121, Florida Administrative Code).



Tips for School Bus Riders:

School officials, bus operators, parents, and students themselves are all responsible for ensuring that school bus riders follow these safety tips:

At the bus stop:

- Students and parents are responsible for safety and proper behavior going to and from the stop and while waiting for the bus.
- Students must stand off the roadway while waiting.
- Students must respect other people's property.
- Students must not push, shove, or engage in horseplay.
- Parents should supervise children at the stop if possible.
- Students must arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time.
- Students must wait for and get off the bus only at approved stop locations.

During loading and unloading:

- Always stay away from the 10 foot "danger zone" around the bus, except when you are directed by the driver to get on or off the bus.
- NEVER pick up an object that you drop under or near the bus. Ask the driver for help.
- Always be sure the driver can see you.
- Make sure clothing and backpacks have no loose drawstrings or long straps that could catch in the handrail or bus door.
- When you see the bus coming, stand at the stop and wait for the bus to come to a complete stop.
- Always wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross the road and/or load into the bus.
- When crossing a traffic lane, always look left, right, then left again; cross only if approaching traffic has stopped.
- Never walk behind the bus or along the side of the bus.



During the bus ride:

- Always follow the driver's directions.
- Never distract the driver from driving unless there is immediate danger to you or others.
- Remain seated and keep the aisles clear.
- Eating, drinking, and chewing gum are prohibited.
- Never bring unsafe or unauthorized items into the bus.
- Always wear your seat belt if you have one.
- Always keep your arms, legs, and head inside the bus.
- Always show respect for your fellow students.
- Keep conversation at a reasonable level and remain quiet at railroad crossings. The Student Code of Conduct applies in the bus as well as in the classroom.

Did you know that the familiar yellow school bus is the safest way to and from school? Each year approximately 500 school-age children are killed in the United States during school transportation hours while using other modes of transportation. Only about two percent of the total deaths occur in or around school buses.

Tips for Riders in Cars, SUVs, and Trucks:

- ✓ Drivers and passengers in cars, SUVs, and trucks must always use appropriate safety restraints. Anyone transporting children needs a child safety seat, booster seat, or safety belt, depending on children's sizes and ages.
- ✓ Preschool age children should always be restrained properly in a secured child safety restraint system, such as a rear-facing infant seat, rear-facing convertible seat, forward-facing convertible seat, or forward-facing-only seat appropriate to their age and weight range.
- ✓ All children who have outgrown child safety seats should be properly restrained in booster seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are at least 4' 9" tall.
- ✓ The back seat is the safest place in a crash. Children age 12 and under should ride properly restrained in back. Infants riding in rear-facing seats must NEVER be placed in front of an air bag.

Tips for Parent Drivers and Teen Drivers:

To reduce energy usage, pollution, and traffic congestion in neighborhoods, consider walking or bicycling with your children or having them take the school bus. If you need to drive, follow these safety tips:

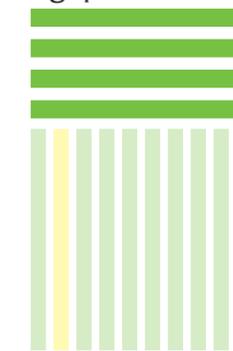
- ✓ When picking up children in the afternoon don't arrive too early and hinder the movement of traffic in the neighborhood around the school.
- ✓ Wait in a single line and leave enough room so an emergency response vehicle would be able to get through.
- ✓ Don't block driveways, sidewalks, mailboxes, disabled parking spaces, or fire hydrants, and don't park on lawns.
- ✓ Don't block access to or the view from side streets.
- ✓ Don't back out onto any street from the school parking lot or from a side street.
- ✓ Try to arrange your drop off/pickup time after the peak rush hour and use designated loading and unloading areas.
- ✓ Always heed signs and the directions of school and law enforcement officials.
- ✓ Always obey posted speed limits and other traffic laws.
- ✓ Act as you would want people to act if it were your neighborhood.
- ✓ Be patient and understand that walkers, bicyclists, and school buses are trying to exit the school, too.
- ✓ Always ensure that you and your passengers buckle up.
- ✓ Never talk on a cell phone, text, or engage in other distractions while driving.

Did you know that young drivers, ages 15- to 20-years old, are especially vulnerable to death and injury on our roadways? Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in America. Mile for mile, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. Most of the fatalities involving young drivers are the young drivers themselves and their passengers.



Tips for Walking and Biking Safely:

Walking and biking to and from school can be a great way to get exercise, interact with your children, and teach them lifelong traffic safety skills. Know your child's abilities and remember your child's limitations. Children under 10 years of age are developmentally limited when it comes to judging speed and distance.



Walking

Teach, practice, and remind children to:

- ✓ Walk with an adult or responsible older child at all times.
- ✓ Children under 10 years old should cross the street only with an adult.
- ✓ Walk on the sidewalk if there is one.
- ✓ Walk facing the traffic, as far from the road/traffic as possible, if no sidewalk is available.
- ✓ Use traffic signals and marked crosswalks if available.
- ✓ Stop at the curb or edge of the road and look left, right and left for traffic before crossing the street.
- ✓ Walk; don't run.
- ✓ Give drivers time to see you before crossing the street.
- ✓ Keep looking for cars while you are crossing.
- ✓ Wear white clothing or reflectors when walking in the dark or in low light.

Biking

Bicycles are vehicles and riders must follow Florida Traffic Laws.

Teach, practice, and remind children to:

- ✓ Always wear a helmet that is properly fitted.
- ✓ Whenever possible, ride with an adult or responsible older student.
- ✓ Always obey all traffic signs and signals.
- ✓ Ride on the right side of the road or trail in a single file (one bicycle behind another).
- ✓ Ride in the same direction as other vehicles.
- ✓ Go straight across railroad tracks.
- ✓ Always use proper hand signals when turning and stopping.
- ✓ Yield to pedestrians and alert them with a bicycle bell or your voice when passing.



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July 14, 2025

Dear Florida Parents,

As Florida's Commissioner of Education, and as a father myself to four beautiful daughters, I am deeply committed to creating safe, high-achieving schools where every child can succeed. I believe that the most powerful influence in a child's life is the role of the parent. That's why Governor Ron DeSantis has prioritized parental rights and signed House Bill 241 (2021) into law. Moreover, the Heritage Foundation ranked Florida #1 for Education Freedom for the third year in a row, and the Center for Education Reform ranked Florida #1 on the Parent Power Index for the fourth year in a row. Additionally, Florida ranked #1 on the EdChoice Friedman Index and ranked #2 for Education overall by U.S. News & World Report. As Commissioner, I will always continue to fight for and safeguard parental rights. You know your child best, and when parents are informed and included in the educational process, students succeed.

As we begin the 2025-2026 school year, I want to share how proud we are of Florida's students, teachers and families. Because of your support and involvement, Florida continues to advance achievement and academic growth. These results aren't just numbers; they represent real opportunities for our children.

At the heart of this success is you – the parent. You are your child's first teacher, and your voice matters. Whether helping with homework, attending school events or making decisions about your child's education, your participation is essential.

That's why I want to take a moment to remind you of some of the rights you have as the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a Florida public school. These rights aren't just written into law – they're rooted in the shared belief that families must be central to every meaningful decision in a child's learning and development. When families and educators work together, there is no limit to what our students can achieve.

You have the right to expect instruction that:

- Encourages individual responsibility, effort and merit.
- Does not assign guilt or blame based on a student's background or the way God created them.
- Is objective and factual.
- Aligns with Florida's state academic standards and protects students from being made to feel inferior or uncomfortable because of their race, sex or religion.
- Builds resiliency.

As your child progresses through his or her school day, below are some important areas we would like you to be aware of and request that any concerns you experience be reported to the Florida Department of Education.

- Pursuant to Florida law, every Florida school must begin the day with a one-to-two-minute moment of silence. Students may use this time quietly and thoughtfully, and we encourage you to talk with your child about how they might use that time in a meaningful way.
- You can also expect transparency in the instructional materials and training used in your child's classroom. By focusing on core academic subjects and rejecting indoctrination in the classroom, Florida has become a standard-bearer for educational excellence.
- Florida law requires schools to ensure that restrooms and changing areas are designated for exclusive use by boys or girls. Schools may also provide single-user or unisex options. These protections help maintain privacy, dignity and safety for all students.

Parents have a number of additional rights, as summarized below:

- The right to direct your child's education, upbringing, moral and religious training.
- The right to choose the educational setting that is best for your child – public, private, religious or home education.
- The right to review your child's school records at any time.
- The right to make medical decisions for your child and access their medical records.
- The right to give written consent before:
 - Your child's biometric data (like fingerprints) is collected or stored.
 - Any DNA or blood samples are taken, unless required by law or court order.
 - Audio or video recordings of your child are made, with exceptions for school safety, instruction, activities or identification cards.
- The right to be promptly notified if any government or school employee suspects a crime involving your child.
- The right to be told if there is any change in your child's physical, emotional or mental health support at school.
- The right to receive notice of any health services offered and choose whether or not your child participates.
- The right to transparency in instructional and library materials:
 - Elementary schools must post, in a searchable format on their websites, a list of all materials in school libraries and reading lists.
 - The Florida Department of Education must publish and regularly update a list of all materials removed or discontinued due to objections.
 - Each school board must have a process that allows parents and residents to object to specific instructional materials and ensures those objections are addressed and resolved.
- The right to ensure classroom instruction and school practices align with state law:
 - Classroom instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in grades prekindergarten through grade 8. If such instruction is provided in grades 9 through 12, it must be age appropriate or developmentally appropriate and consistent with state standards.
 - Public kindergarten through grade 12 employees and contractors must not be required to use preferred pronouns or titles that do not align with a person's biological sex.
 - Students may not be asked to share their preferred pronouns or penalized for choosing not to.
- The right to report a concern to your school principal and, if not resolved, escalate it to your district.

- If still unresolved, request a neutral Special Magistrate to review the issue and recommend a resolution.
 - These apply to:
 - Student welfare concerns related to health, safety or well-being.
 - Instructional or library materials you believe are inappropriate.

Parent Resources:

We would like to share with you some resources that are available to you as parents on our Parental Rights page located at <https://www.fldoe.org/ParentalRights/>.

- The [Attorney General's Office of Parental Rights](#), where a parent may file a complaint related to violations of the Parent's Bill of Rights.
- To file a complaint of educator misconduct, please contact the Office of Professional Practices Services at the Florida Department of Education by emailing ParentalRights@fldoe.org.
- Florida law requires the implementation of a [Special Magistrate](#) process to support families by protecting parent's rights and giving them additional assistance with certain disputes that are not timely or satisfactorily resolved by a Florida school district. The link above provides information for parents seeking appointment of a Special Magistrate to resolve certain disputes.

As we begin this school year together, know that we are here for you and respect your role as the parent in the educational process. We are cheering for your child, supporting your family, and committed to ensuring every classroom in Florida is a place where every student is challenged and inspired to achieve his or her full potential.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. Let's make the 2025-2026 school year our best yet.

God bless,



Anastasios Kamoutsas
Commissioner of Education