



# Borton Magnet Messenger

Volume 3, Issue 3

March, 2017

**Tucson Unified School District**

## Borton Is an Award-Winning School!

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### Upcoming Events

- \* Mar. 28—AZMerit testing begins for 3—5 grades
- \* Mar. 29— 3rd grade AZMerit Parent Night 5:30—6:45 p.m.
- \* Apr. 7—Field Day
- \* Apr. 12 & May 10—Site Council Meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- \* Apr. 14 No School—Good Friday
- \* Apr. 19-21 Book Fair
- \* May 1—5 Teacher Appreciation Week
- \* May 5—Dia del Nino//Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, 5:30—8:00
- \* May 10—Volunteer Appreciation Event, 2:15—3:15
- \* May 25—Last Day of School

Magnet Schools of America, the national association for magnet and theme-based schools, has recognized Borton Magnet School as a 2017 School of Excellence! This award is granted to magnet schools that demonstrate the ability to raise student academic achievement, promote racial and socioeconomic diversity, provide integrated curricula and instruction, and create strong family and community partnerships that enhance the school's magnet theme.

Denice Contreras, our principal, will be recognized and receive a National Magnet School of Excellence Merit Award on behalf of the school during an awards ceremony held at Magnet Schools of America's 35<sup>th</sup> National Conference hosted by Los Angeles Unified School District in Los Angeles, California April 26-30, 2017.

All of the students, teachers, staff, and members of the Borton



Community are to be congratulated for their dedication and engagement in the life of our school. You are what made this award possible.

**WE ARE STILL COLLECTING!**



## AZMerit Testing

From March 28 through April 21st Borton students in grades 3 through 5 will take the state test, the AZMerit. This year, most of the test will be done on computers, so the testing schedule has been stretched out to accommodate the fact that approximately 200 students will need to be online at some time during the day. We've also set up the testing schedule so the students will take only one part of the test each day. The 4th grade science test and the first draft writing will be done with paper and pencil.

You have a role to play in your child's attitude toward the testing and overall success. First and foremost, daily attendance is important. Students who take the test with the rest of their class will feel more supported and won't be pulled out of class to make up portions they miss. Please be sure your child is getting adequate sleep each night and arriving at school refreshed, calm, and ready to do his or her personal best. Good nutrition helps, too. A breakfast full of protein and complex carbohydrates will maintain children

much longer than a bowl of sugary cereal. We'll have snacks during the day to keep kids going. Since our third graders will be taking the AZMerit test for the first time, their teachers are inviting parents to learn more about the test in a special parent night on March 29, from 5:30—6:45 p.m. You can also learn more online at the Arizona Department of Education website:

<http://www.azed.gov/assessment/azmerit/>

## Meeting an Illustrator of Children's Books

On March 13, students in nine Borton classrooms met children's book illustrator Chris Eliopoulos in sessions in the library. Chris was in town for the Tucson Festival of Books. He shared his work with the students, explaining his process and the source of his inspiration. He led the students in a drawing activity. The students also had an opportunity to purchase one of four books he illustrated and have them signed while Chris was at school.

The Borton library has eight books in a series by Brad Meltzer, that were illustrated by Chris—*Ordinary People Change the World*. We have the books about Lucille Ball, Amelia Earhart, Jackie Robinson, Albert Einstein, Jim Henson, Jane Goodall, Helen Keller, and Rosa Parks. Come and check them out—literally!



## More Shade for Borton's Playground

Our second graders responded to a letter from Ali Parent, President of the PTA, asking for help in considering how to provide more shade for the playground. The second graders are hard at work on this project. Their driving question is: Where on the playground can we use more shade and how can we provide it? The work began with the children drawing their mental models of shade structures. They collected data about existing shade by mapping where shade could



be found on the playground at three different times of the day. Empathy maps helped them consider who might need shade and why. The students

drew plans for shade structures and then built models from cardboard, straws, and scraps of shade cloth.

These models were presented to the classes accompanied by reasoned arguments about why a particular model would be best. Once each class selected a model, prototypes were built, with necessary revisions along the way. The students also wrote directions for how to assemble and disassemble the shade structures. Their work was presented to the community in a Celebration of Learning on March 16.

## Living River of Words

This year, four Borton classes, the Turtles, Discovery, Shooting Star and Rainforest rooms, participated in the Living River of Words Project. The project is run by the Pima County Wastewater Management department and designed to teach students about how Tucson uses its effluent water and the kinds of life that this special river supports. As part of the project, all the classes meet with Yajaira Gray, of Pima County, to learn about the source of the effluent and how to identify the kinds of lifeforms they might find in the river. Then, all the classes went on a field trip to the Santa Cruz River, near Cortaro Road and the Crossroads at Silver-



bell Park. At the river, the students searched for life forms in samples of river water, sketched and wrote poetry, and hiked above the river looking for evidence of wildlife. Back in class, the students were visited by a poet or an artist and continued to work on more refined poems and pictures inspired by their trip to the Santa Cruz. All of their work was entered into a contest and will be displayed at the Living River Celebration, Saturday, April 8, 2017, at the Wheeler Taft Abbott Sr. Branch Library, in the Crossroads at Silverbell Park, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. We are

delighted to announce that several Borton students were selected as finalists for their artwork: Mathilda, Ghazaul, and Willa from the Turtle Room, and Amira and Ximena from the Discovery Room. Our congratulations to them! All of the children who participated in the project represented Borton well!



## Borton's New Chicken Coop

This year, the Hummingbird preschool classes and the first grade Earth Room took on the challenge of redesigning and rebuilding the chicken coop. This project involved lots of study about chickens and their needs, leading the children to recognize the care of chickens as a system of interconnected elements. We constructed connection circles, first with yarn, and then on paper, to show how everything needs to work together. Even our pre-schoolers were able to identify which elements contributed to a stock of chicken care and what would cause the level of care to decline. The children drew plans for chicken coops, and after learning that chickens are very social, also designed chicken



toys. Models were built from scrap materials in the hopes that some would be incorporated into the final design. The actual construction of the coop involved the children to the extent practicable, mostly painting. Moses Thompson, from the UA School and Community Garden Project, provided expertise and physical labor, along with interns from the

program and our own Molly Reed. Of course, books on chickens were read, chicken art decorated the walls, and even chicken music filled dance sessions. On Wednesday, March 16, a grand reveal was held, inviting parents and everyone who participated in the project to a grand celebration. We now have a wonderful new coop for chickens.



## Tucson Unified School District

### Borton Magnet School

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We're on the web:

<http://edweb.tusd1.org/Borton/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Borton-Magnet-School/230220193657529>

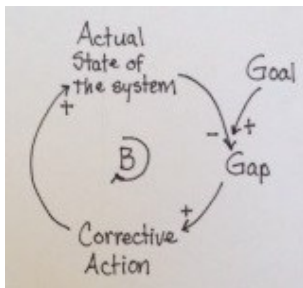
Borton has been a magnet school since 1979, when it was first recreated as a primary school under court-ordered desegregation. In 2009, we began expanding the school to cover grades kindergarten through fifth grade in order to assure our students a chance to more fully develop a disposition for forward-thinking problem solving and a capacity for systems thinking in a context that encourages students to have voice and choice in their learning.

We regard parents as their children's first and most important teachers and encourage them to become active members of our community. We welcome visitors at any time.

Using Project-Based Learning and Systems Thinking to educate children for a future yet unknown

## Goals, Gaps, and Systems

All of us set goals for ourselves and usually, for some period of time, we work toward those goals. Perhaps we even achieve them. But what happens next? Do we set new goals? Or let go of the behavior that got us to that goal, so that the gap between our current state and our goal increases again? It's the perfect description of yo-yo dieting. But it happens in the case of other goals too. Systems thinking provides a model for this kind of up-and-down cycle using feedback loops. Let's talk our way through this kind of model. At the start, there is a gap between our goal and



the current state. So in response, we make efforts to close that gap. As we do so, the actual state approaches the goal and the gap begins to disappear. But as the gap decreases, so do our efforts to close the gap, resulting in a decrease in the actual state, which once again increases the gap. It's a balancing system. James Clear writes about the difference between goals and systems. In the dieting example, our goal is to lose weight. But the system is what we do everyday to eat nutritious meals. If you're a biker, your goal is to complete the Tour de Tucson, but your systems is your daily training. Clear gives three reasons why we should focus on the systems instead of the goals: 1.) Goals reduce our current happiness. We think we're only good enough if we reach our goal, so we put off feelings of success until we get there. What a burden! If we focus on the process, we recognize the small

steps that get us to our goal and make it more likely we will sustain our efforts. 2.) Goals are at odds with long term progress. Sometimes we experience a setback and want to give up. But if we remind ourselves we are doing it for the rest of our lives (like bike riding), then we focus on long-term outcomes and not short-term results. 3.) Goals suggest that we can control things that we really can't. When we set goals, we plan how and when we're going to get there. But stuff happens. When we focus on long-term outcomes and check in periodically, we give ourselves feedback and opportunities to take corrective action when things go awry. We can keep track without feeling the pressure to predict what will happen next. So stepping on the scale once a week, might keep you from reaching for that doughnut.

<http://jamesclear.com/goals-systems>