



Poudre School District  
Bennett Elementary



**The New Parent Guide for New Parents by Parents – The Little Things**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to Bennett Elementary, an IB World School! We hope that you will find this guide helpful. Please understand this guide has been written by parents in hopes that we may acquaint you with “the little things,” that can seem like big mysteries your first few years. Our intent is to provide information that will help your transition into our Bennett Community. Please use this as a guide book and not a policy or rule book. Here we go!

## **Bennett Elementary Mission Statement**

Bennett Elementary, an IB World School is a community of creative thinkers who are committed to being responsible world citizens.

## **IB World School Mission Statement**

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the IBO works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## **Bennett is an IB School**

An IB school strives towards developing an internationally minded person. In doing so, they enhance and develop the following attributes of the IB learner profile: Inquirer, knowledgeable, thinker, communicator, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-taker, balanced and reflective. You may learn more about this exciting program in the IB Parent Handbook.

## **Bennett Community Organization - BCO**

BCO is similar to what other schools may refer to as a parent/teacher organization. The BCO encourages all Bennett parents and any interested community members to participate. Our goal is to support the mission of the school while providing money and fundraising that does the most good for the greatest number of students. The organization meets once a month. Parents are encouraged to attend any/all meetings that fit their schedule. It is a prime source to help keep you updated on what is happening in the school, as well as district wide through the principal’s report. That’s right; our supportive, hard working principal also attends the meetings when his district responsibilities do not interfere. BCO offers many opportunities for a parent to volunteer during the planned community events that take place throughout the year. Perhaps most importantly, it is a time when parents can come together to hear and to be heard. It allows parents to network, and helps strengthen and improve your child’s

school community! BCO believes that parent involvement is critical to the success of our school as well as our children's experience at Bennett. The first BCO meeting of the year will be September 2<sup>nd</sup>. We hope to see you there! Please see the Bennett webpage, [www.psdschools.org/schools/bennett/](http://www.psdschools.org/schools/bennett/), under BCO for current meeting days and times.

### **Fundraising**

BCO funds many requests that enrich the student's learning. We fund curriculum parties, the winter assembly, AR tests, Book Trust, CSAP snacks, Wellness projects, Bigfoot Mileage Run Club, playground equipment, technology upgrades, scholarships for fieldtrips, and many other needs of the teachers and our school.

### **Grade Representatives**

Each grade has a parent who represents them throughout the year. The grade representatives are crucial in helping to find volunteers for BCO supported community events and fundraising activities. The grade rep also helps to keep the parents in their grade informed on upcoming activities. If you are interested in becoming one, please inform the BCO president. For contact information pertaining to your grade representative, please visit:

[www.psdschools.org/schools/bennett/](http://www.psdschools.org/schools/bennett/) and click on BCO in the top tool bar.

### **Mrs. Kietzmann and Mrs. Stewart**

Mrs.Kietzmann is known as the "Queen of all things!" She greets everyone with a smile and with sincerity. It is a comfort to know that she is there to help parents, watch over our precious children, and assist the principal to be all that he can be! Officially, she handles the finances, scheduling for the principal, school of choice registration and much, much, much, much more!

Mrs.Stewart is the first smiling, welcoming face of Bennett, and we are so fortunate to have her. She too helps to maintain a safe, secure and comforting environment for the families. Her official roles include Office Clerk and Health Technician. She keeps track of the immunizations, attendance line, bus passes and much, more! She is the loving person whom our children go to when they aren't feeling well.

### **Child drop off and pick up**

Welcome to the Bennett drop off/pick up line. It may seem overwhelming at first, and you will most likely find a lesser of all evils in this process. When you are in the drop off/pick up lane, you must pull up as far as possible to drop your child off. **Please, out of consideration for all of your child's school mates and their parents, NEVER park your car in the lane and leave it unattended.** You may also park in any available spot and walk your child to the drop off sidewalk, please be sure you accompany them, the parking lot can become very congested

at times. Just as important, during pick up, **please do not allow your child to walk or run to your car whether it is parked in the lot or you are driving past the pick up lane.** Regardless of your child's age, you **must** meet him or her at the sidewalk and walk through the parking lot with them. This can be a very dangerous situation. It is difficult for the cars in the pick up lane, to focus on the children standing next to them on the sidewalk, while attempting to pull into the driving lane, yet be sure that a student isn't going to run out in front of them.

If you and/or your child need a little extra time or TLC in the morning, it is permissible to walk your child to their classroom. As many schools, ours is concerned about the security and safety of our school. In order to keep traffic to a minimum, it is highly encouraged that you begin to fade this practice to walking them to the front door of the building. This will help staff keep a close eye on all who enter.

If you need to pick up your child early, please go to the office and not their classroom. They will call your child's classroom and request for them to come with their belongings. You can also send a note to school or e-mail your child's teacher stating that you are going to pick them up early. Your child will be called once you are in the office.

### **Bus Passes**

At sometime during the year, if your child requires a bus pass in order to ride with a friend, Mrs. Stewart is your contact! Please send a note to school with your child that lists the student they are going home with, and which bus they will be riding. A bus pass must also be issued to a student who may be riding their regular bus, but getting off at a different stop. Mrs. Stewart will take care of the rest. Please remember, the note must be written and signed by the parent of the child who requires a pass. You may also e-mail the information to: [jstewart@psdschools.org](mailto:jstewart@psdschools.org).

### **LUNCH**

#### **Hot Lunch Program**

Children may choose to bring their lunch from home (cold lunch) or to purchase hot lunch at school. The lunch menu is included in the Bennett newsletter each week, and is also available on the Poudre School District website. Lunches may be paid for in advance, by sending money to school and designating it as lunch money. Each child is provided an account number related to purchasing food in the cafeteria. Kindergarten children are given a card that they provide to the cafeteria employees when purchasing hot lunch, and older children learn their account numbers and provide cafeteria employees with this number when they make purchases in the cafeteria. Your child can also bring in money for lunch each day, which can be turned into the office in the morning or can be given to the cafeteria at lunch time.

If your child brings a lunch from home, they can purchase milk or fruit juice.

Bennett recognizes that children will occasionally forget their money, so they will be allowed to charge no more than three days in a row. You will receive a note indicating that your child owes money. If the charges are not paid for, your child may call home or a bowl of hot vegetables will be given to tide your child over.

If a balance remains in your child's account at the end of the school year, you can either carry it over to the next school year, or you may ask for a refund, IN WRITING.

#### Having lunch with your child

Family members may join their students for lunch. Please let the office know before 9:00 a.m. if you plan to eat at school, so they may order you a lunch. Families are able to purchase a hot lunch when they join their child or bring a cold lunch from home. Visitors sit with their child and a friend of your child's choice at a separate table in the cafeteria. When the weather is nice, families can also eat outside with their child and a friend; there are several tables on the grounds at Bennett. Families may also bring something from home or a restaurant to share with their child during the lunch visit.

#### The Accelerated Reading System –AR

This is one of many components of the reading system at Bennett. This tool is used by the teachers to more effectively track your child's reading level. Knowing your child's AR level assists both parents and students in finding appropriate books for them to read at home. Your child should always know their AR level and their current goal. It is helpful to become familiar with the colors and levels of the AR system. It is inevitable that your child will come home some day in a celebratory manner when he or she has mastered a "color" and has moved up to the next level. The list below will help you remember which color represents each level so that you can genuinely celebrate this moment with your child! You may also find it helpful to log onto [arbookfind.com](http://arbookfind.com), this site helps you locate books that are at your child's reading level.

Purple - .2 - .9

Yellow – 1.0 – 1.9

Red – 2.0 – 3.9

Blue – 4.0 – 5.9

Green – 6.0 – 7.9

Orange – 8.0 – 12+

Your child is expected to read at least 20 minutes each night. Please speak with your child's teacher for details of their reading requirements and expectations.

#### Thursday Folders

Your child will receive their Thursday folder once a week – you guessed it, on Thursday! The teachers use this opportunity to send completed, weekly work home with your child to share with you. It is a prime opportunity to sit down with your child, praise him or her on a job well done, and perhaps even alert you to any concerns. Many times, the teacher, school and others include important information in this folder. The envelope will need to be dated and signed by a parent and turned in by the students to their teacher the following day.

### **Specials**

We have 4 rotating specials, **Art, Music, Spanish, and Physical Education**. Your child will have each special, every week. In addition, your student will attend **Computer Lab** and **Library** on a set day once a week. All specials have a color that they correspond to, and the order of the upcoming week's color will be posted in the school newsletter. It is helpful to know this schedule, to ensure your children are dressed appropriately, and to remember their library books. There is no doubt that you will be thrilled with the progress and support your child receives in these classes. You will see that our specials' teachers are always willing to go above and beyond, not only in their classrooms, but to help with many other activities throughout the school year.

### **Party Invitations**

In an attempt to assist the school to remain focused on academics and social harmony, please do not issue party invitations at school. It is requested, that unless your child is inviting his/her entire class, please send party invitations through the mail.

### **Cell Phones**

If you feel your child's cell phone is sometimes disruptive at home – just imagine how the Bennett staff must feel when they have a classroom full of cell phone toting students. **Please** stress respect and proper etiquette to your child by reminding them to keep their cell phones turned off and in their backpacks the entire time they are at school.

### **Cold Weather Dress**

As we have all experienced, the weather can change in an instant in this beautiful state! Please send your child to school in layers to help them be prepared. Also be aware that our children will go out to recess unless the temperature reaches 10 degrees or colder.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Exhibition – a culminating last year event at Bennett**

In the final year of the PYP (Primary Years Program), students participate in a culminating project, the PYP exhibition. This requires that each student demonstrates engagement with the five essential elements of the program: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry conducted in the spirit of personal and shared responsibility, as well as a summative assessment activity that is a celebration as students move from the

PYP into the middle years of schooling. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to advise a group at least once while their child attends Bennett. This is a student driven research project. The students will pick a topic to explore. Parents would be considered mentors, but do not need to be experts in the subject. You will be there to advise the small group as needed and help direct the research. The commitment would be one hour per week for six weeks during the Spring Semester.

## **Volunteering**

**Parent participation and volunteering is vital to the overall success of Bennett programs and events that are offered.**

There are many volunteer opportunities at school, Bennett community events, and even work that parents may take home. For example, if you were to coach Odyssey of the mind, or attend a meeting to help organize an event, such as the Stampede, or even contribute a paragraph or ideas to the welcome to Bennett new parent guide book, you have volunteered! There is a BCO volunteer coordinator (see website/BCO) as well as a school-wide coordinator, Laurel Zitowitz ([lzitowit@psdschools.org](mailto:lzitowit@psdschools.org)); both she and BCO are a great source to help you become involved in our school. Don't forget to record your hours whenever you volunteer in the building or working from home. The book is located in the office workroom. When applying for grants, having a record of how many volunteer hours our school receives, helps considerably. The total volunteer hours are also submitted to the District at the end of the year.

There is an extensive paragraph in the Bennett student handbook about volunteering, but here are a few points worth repeating. You **MUST** complete the volunteer registration process. It involves little effort on your part, but is required by the district.

**Parents are not permitted to volunteer for anything without registering first; this requirement applies to any service or event.**

When you register, a background check at the District's expense will automatically occur. This is for our children's safety. If there is an issue, the background check must be clarified before the applicant may volunteer.

To register online:

Go to the District home page at [www.pdschools.org](http://www.pdschools.org)

1. Go to **Community** and scroll down to **Volunteers and Partnerships**
2. Click on **PSD Volunteer Agreement**, after reading
3. Click on **Volunteer Online Application** to register

Please keep a record of the User I.D. and password as the application must be updated each year. Make sure the **Finish button** is clicked at the completion of the application.

How to report your volunteer hours:

As stated earlier, you may write your hours down in the log book in the office near the copy machine. If you are interested in an online option, you may see Laurel Zitowitz or e-mail (lzitowit@psdschools.org) and she can walk you through the process.

**The Who, What, Where, When and More of Bennett School Events and clubs**

Many of the following clubs are offered based on leadership availability and student interest. If you notice that one of these are not offered, or would like to help create a new club, please let the school know.

Some of the following clubs have fees associated with them. If there is a family whose child would like to attend but may need assistance with the fees, please see Mrs. Kietzmann for more information. Please also keep in mind that the variety of clubs and the social events may change from year to year.

**Ice Cream Social – community/social event**

**What:** This is a school social event where you can bring your child to the classroom, meet teachers, and connect with other families/students. Parents and their children are encouraged to bring their student's school supplies and help their children put them away and begin to become acquainted with their classroom and the school

**Who:** Teachers, parents, and their students (siblings are welcome)

**Where:** Often meet in the individual classrooms and then head out to the playground for ice cream

**When:** Fall - Usually occurs the day (late afternoon/early evening) before school starts

**Volunteers:** This event is sponsored by BCO and volunteers are needed to assist with serving ice cream

**Cost:** None

**Big Foot Mileage Club**

**What:** A club that meets once a week to run/walk around the Bennett field. The participants receive a charm bracelet and can earn a charm/token for every 5 miles as well as a special monthly charm/token.

**Who:** Kindergarten–3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the parents are asked to be present and 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> they may be on their own but must have a signed permission slip. Parents and siblings are welcome

**Where:** Bennett field near the playground

**When:** Fall and Spring from 3:15-4:00

**Volunteers:** See Mr. Bray

**Cost:** None

During the winter months, the students can turn in a "Big Foot" sheet to earn a charm/token while continuing to run or be involved in other physical activities

### **Bike to school Wednesdays**

**What:** Bennett students and their families are encouraged to ride their bikes to school each Wednesday

**Who:** All students and family

**When:** Throughout the year, weather permitting

### **Homecoming Float**

**What:** Colorado State University celebrates Homecoming with an elaborate parade. Schools across the district are welcomed to participate if parents are interested in doing so

**Who:** This is an optional event and is dependent upon parent interest and initiative

**Where:** The parade is held in downtown Fort Collins. All work on the float and storage of materials, etc. must occur outside of classroom time and off campus

**When:** Early fall – Saturday morning

**Volunteers:** This event is completely parent-driven and would involve providing a safe vehicle and trailer, coordination of decorating, coordination of student involvement, and soliciting funds/resources from BCO and/or the local community

**Costs:** Dependent upon the materials required

### **Chili Supper – Community/social event**

**What:** This is a social event where you can meet other Bennett families. Most of the food is provided by local restaurants, Healthy Kids Club, and Bennett families. There is also a craft fair in conjunction with this event where local artisans and Bennett families and friends can rent a table for a small fee and then show/sell their crafts

**Who:** Bennett families, Bennett staff, and local artisans

**Where:** The meal is served in the cafeteria and sometimes overflows into the music room, the craft fair is held in the gym, and the bookfair is located in the library

**When:** Early fall – evening

**Volunteers:** Parents are needed to help set up, serve the meal, provide cookies and simple desserts, serve as hall monitors, assist with staffing the bookfair, and to clean up at the end of the evening

**Costs:** Small fee for the meal, crafts that are purchased, books that are purchased

### **Book Fairs**

**What:** This is an opportunity to view scholastic books before you buy them. You will also have the opportunity to purchase books that have been identified by your children's teachers that will then be used in their classrooms. All of the proceeds go to the library and are used to purchase additional library books for our children to learn from and enjoy!

**Who:** Parents, grandparents, family and friends are welcome to come browse the books that are displayed for approximately one week

**Where:** Bennett library

**When:** Fall (end of October/beginning of November) and Spring (May)

**Volunteers:** BCO enlists parent volunteers to serve as coordinators for this event (hopefully someone who can do it for several years). Parents are needed to set up, take down, and staff the book fair shifts – assisting with purchases and general questions

**Costs:** Cost of books

### **Eco Week**

**What:** This has been a tradition in the Poudre school district for 30 years or more. This activity is connected to the science standards. It is an overnight field trip for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders (2008/9) organized by Mr. Schooler and teachers in which students travel to Pingree Park (a mountain campus of Colorado State University) and stay two nights at the dormitories located there

**Who:** Students, Mr. Schooler, and teachers

**Where:** Pingree Park Campus (mountain campus of Colorado State University approximately 2 hours away)

**When:** Fall

**Costs:** Yes

### **Teacher Conferences**

**When:** Fall – a traditional conference with parent and teacher

Spring – a student led conference with parent and student

**Important:** The Bennett staff is **always** willing to schedule a conference as needed or desired by the parents

### **Lego Robotics**

**What:** Students in 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades join together to form teams that are then challenged to create a robot that can complete several different tasks

**Who:** Leader and participants

**Where:** At school

**When:** Fall – after school

**Costs:** Yes

### **School Pictures**

**What:** Parents may choose to send in money with order forms for both an individual photo and/or a class photo. Our school receives a percentage of this money from the photographer. The money goes to an account, controlled by the Principal, and is used for scholarships and reading incentives

**Who:** Currently we are contracting with Life Touch Studios for our photos

**Where:** Photos are taken at school during school hours

**When:** Individual photos are taken in the fall. Class pictures, a second option for individual photos, and yearbook options are offered in the spring

**Volunteers:** Parent assistance is needed on picture days for taking children to the photographers and escorting them back to class

**Costs:** Dependent upon the package you select, no purchase required

### **Sock Hop – community/ social event**

**What:** This is a social event for Bennett families where children and their parents are encouraged to get into the spirit of the sock hop and dress up in poodle skirts and/or jeans and white t-shirts, or just show up ready to have some fun. A DJ is hired for this event to play music and host games like the hula hoop contest or limbo. **Parents are required to stay at the school while their children are in attendance.** We also conduct a silent auction throughout the evening with gift baskets created via donations from Bennett families and local businesses

**Who:** Bennett families and Bennett staff

**Where:** The dance is held in the gymnasium and the silent auction is held in the cafeteria

**When:** Winter - this event is usually held in late January.

**Volunteers:** Parents are needed to serve as hall monitors, serve refreshments, set up and clean up at the close of the evening

**Costs:** There is an entrance fee. Refreshments (popcorn, chips, soda...) also involve a minimal fee, and the DJ often sells glow bracelets, necklaces, etc. (empty those piggy banks, quarters and dollar bills are great for this event). There are also silent auction items available for you to bid upon – cash and checks accepted

### **Odyssey of the Mind**

**What:** This is a creative problem-solving competition for students of all ages. Teams of students choose a problem, create a solution, and present the solution in a competition against other teams in the same problem and division. The students must do all of the work themselves. Adults and coaches are there solely for support

**Who:** K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students can form teams and will be judged, but will not compete against other schools. 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teams consist of 4-7 students and will compete at a district level

**Where:** After school, at school

**When:** Teams form in December and the District-wide competition is held in late March

**Volunteers:** This activity is entirely dependent upon the availability of parent coaches

**Costs:** None to be a part of the program. There is a cost limit for materials used to solve the problem. However, participants are encouraged to use household items as opposed to purchasing materials

### **Chess Club**

**What:** This is made up of students who are interested in learning the game of chess

**Who:** K-6<sup>th</sup> grade students; space is limited to 30 students. Participation is on a first come first serve basis (in order of permission slips received)

**Where:** At school

**When:** Winter after school

**Volunteers:** There is a designated coach/leader

**Costs:** No fees to be a member, only to enter a tournament or for a t-shirt

### **Yearbook**

**What:** Students are responsible for taking pictures of activities throughout the year. They also develop the overall design and organize the layout

**Who:** 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, must write a 1 page essay to apply

**Where:** At school

**When:** October, right after school

**Volunteers:** The yearbook coordinator (parent) may ask for some assistance

**Cost:** No

### **Stampede - fundraiser**

**What:** This is Bennett's **major fundraiser** for the year. Children are encouraged to seek donations from family and friends (donations are not a per lap pledge – just a flat fee) to support their walking or running laps around the Bennett school grounds. All students will receive t-shirts for participating, students who run the most laps will earn medals, the classroom with the most money raised will get a prize. 100% of the funds raised goes towards the school and prizes (see BCO section on fundraising)

**Who:** All students participate. Teachers and parents/families also participate by cheering on the students

**Where:** Bennett school grounds

**When:** Spring

**Volunteers:** Parents are needed to serve on the planning committee. Volunteers can also assist on the day of the event for things like, handing out water, marking laps, delivering snacks to classrooms and much more

**Cost:** None

### **Poudre School District Elementary Track Meet**

**What:** It begins with the Bennett, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students competing and qualifying in track and field events. Once a student has qualified, they move on to the district meet (maximum of 3 events). They may qualify and compete in the: 50 meter, 75 meter, 100 meter, 200 meter, 4 X 75 meter relay, Triple jump, Long jump, Softball Throw and Shot Put

**Who:** 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Where:** Qualifying events take place on Bennett grounds, and the district meet takes place at Rocky Mountain High School (J. Ray French Field)

**When:** Spring

**Cost:** None

### **Foreign Language**

French and Chinese have been offered in the past

### **Cub Scouts**

Please contact the council office: 970-407-1150 or

### **Brownies**

Please contact the council office: 970-493-1844 or

### **Soccer**

**What:** Through the Ft. Collins Soccer Club, your child can request to be put on a team from Bennett. [www.soccerfortcollins.org](http://www.soccerfortcollins.org)

### **Peer Mediators**

**What:** Students who help resolve conflicts between their fellow students

**Who:** 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders

### **Student Ambassadors**

**What:** These students are called upon to give visiting parents a tour of the school, as well as answer many of their questions about Bennett and IB

**Who:** 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders

As you can see, Bennett offers a variety of events and clubs. Be sure to watch for other unique opportunities in the school newsletter or feel free to lead your own!

### **Bennett Website** – [www.psdschools.org/schools/bennett/](http://www.psdschools.org/schools/bennett/)

This is a wonderful and useful resource to update you on what is happening at Bennett. You can find the weekly newsletter, staff information, calendar of events, lunch menu, and information related to IB, current BCO information, AR quiz links, educational links, newsworthy events happening at Bennett, grade and classroom specific information, projects, and much more! This link is a *must have* for your “favorites” file.

So there you have it, a guide book full of the little things! We hope that these details will help to make you feel at home in our school. We also hope that now that you have an idea about our upcoming events, that you may be willing to volunteer your time and talents. The quality of our school and the events depend on your willingness to be active. Please feel free to contact the BCO officers, grade representatives and the following names if you have any questions. Have a wonderful year and go Bennett Broncos!!

Jill Lowry – 669-1404; [thelowrys@hotmail.com](mailto:thelowrys@hotmail.com)

Sharyl Haas – 282 - 0305

Ann Randall – 223 - 8294  
Donna Boudreau – 377 - 0081