

Blue Cluster Welcome Newsletter

August, 2011

2011-2012 School Year

"The Sky's No Limit!"

Welcome to the Blue 2011-2013 loop!



We hope you had an excellent summer, and are ready for a new school year to begin! We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Blue Cluster, where "*The Sky's No Limit!*" We have a very exciting academic year planned, and we hope that everyone is looking forward to the start of the first year of our two-year loop! We would like

to take this opportunity to let you know about some of our Blue Cluster communication tools, upcoming cluster events, and some other key pieces of information. We feel that the two-way communication between school and home is critical for your son/daughter to experience the highest level of achievement and success.

Open House date announced

Mark your calendars! The 2011 Open House at the Middle School will be held on Thursday, Sept. 22nd from 6:30 to 9:00.

Blue Cluster checkbooks

Students will be keeping a Blue Cluster Checkbook. Money earned will be redeemable for prizes at the "Cluster Auction" in June.

Blue students to create time capsule

One of the first Blue Cluster activities will be creating the *Blue Cluster Time Capsule* – a collection of artifacts that represent who we are now as we begin 7th grade. The *Blue Cluster Time Capsule* will be opened in June of our 8th grade year. This September, each student will be creating a self-portrait envelope that will "describe" himself/herself. In preparation for this activity each student should be collecting items that can be glued to his/her self-portrait envelope. These can include photos, drawings, magazine clippings, poems, tickets to a special event, etc. The items should reflect things that are important or of interest to the student – for instance: pictures of family, friends, favorite sports, music, books, words that represent the student's personality, etc. Also, please start watching current events for important events that are happening locally, nationally, and worldwide. One of the first cluster assignments will be a geo-news capsule. To prepare for this assignment students should start saving current newspapers and news magazines. We will need these materials the second week of school.

Parent/guardian letters wanted

We would like to ask you to **write a letter to your son or daughter** that will be sealed with the time capsule **to be read by your child in two years**. The possibilities for the letter are endless and up to you. You might try identifying things that you are proud of, goals, your child's strengths and talents, advice for high school, "Remember when . . .", or a personal message. **HAVE FUN!!!** Please seal the letter in an envelope with your child's first and last name and return it to his or her homeroom teacher by Monday, September 19th. The time capsule and the contents will be available for viewing the night of Open House.

ONLINE INFO!

Visit Blue Cluster Online to view important information, daily assignments and activities, homework, and attached handouts on subject-specific links. Also, remember to use the X2 Parent page. This is an excellent way to monitor your child's effort and progress at school. You may access these pages by visiting www.barringtonmiddle.org and clicking on the X2 and Blue Cluster links.

Blue Cluster Teachers

Language Arts-Bonnie Olchowski

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Math- Nancy Lloyd

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To reach all Blue teachers:

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(underscores between "BMS," "blue" & "cluster")

Natalie Stein, Guidance Counselor

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Blue Cluster students will learn to COPE

Blue Cluster's first field trip is to the Yawgoog Boy Scout Camp to participate in a program called Project COPE. It is scheduled for Thursday, September 22nd. Permission and donation forms will be distributed during the second week of school. Please return the permission slip and volunteer donation for this trip by Friday, September 16th.

According to information provided by the program, "**Project COPE** is composed of group initiative games, trust events, low-course events, and high-course events... COPE emphasizes building self-esteem, developing leadership, and working as a team to accomplish tasks. It provides opportunities for every participant to succeed as an individual as well as a member of a group. The Project COPE program emphasizes these goals: **Teamwork, Communication, Trust, Leadership, Decision Making, Problem Solving, and Self-Esteem**"

Assignment Planner

Each student should have an assignment planner to record assignments. The school will be selling assignment planners for those who are interested in purchasing a BMS planner.

BLUE CLUSTER-- "The Sky's No Limit!"