

Ben Bronz

ACADEMY

Parent/Student Handbook **2022-2023**

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Welcome to another exciting year at Ben Bronz Academy.

If you are a returning student, we hope this will be a year of new discoveries for you.

If this is your first year with us, welcome to the business of learning, Ben Bronz style.

This Parent/Student Handbook contains guidelines to help us work together as a group.

PEOPLE

Mediators

Mediators help students see why skills or facts are important. They help students understand the strategies they are using to learn, so that they can use them themselves when they tackle new problems. They may become so independent in learning that they no longer need a mediator - they will be able to learn new things by themselves.

Administrators

The administrators are:

Executive Director

Education Director

Ass't Education Director

Gail Lanza, Ed.D

Christina Lamphere

Cynthia Fries

Advisors

Students are assigned a mediator who acts as their Advisor during the school year. Their Advisor coordinates their Individual Education Plan, Written Service Plan and Individual Transition Plan, contacts parents, and helps students make future plans.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Grades Two Through Five (Elementary School)

The day begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. Friday dismissal time is 2:00 PM.

Grades Six Through Eight (Middle School)

The day begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. Friday dismissal time is 2:00 PM.

Grades Nine Through Twelve (High School)

The day begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 3:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. Friday dismissal time is 2:00 PM.

HOMEWORK

Homework

Homework may be assigned each day. Mediators and students work together to make sure that a reasonable amount is assigned.

If students do not attempt an assignment, the mediator records an “N”, which is a negative point on the feedback point sheet (see page 12 for information on the Feedback Point System). Incomplete assignments will affect students’ grades. If homework completion becomes a problem, parents are notified.

The Homework Connection

Students are expected to do their fluencies at home and transfer their data to the Academy each day using their Pink Sheets in their Fluency Google Classrooms. They will also practice keyboarding daily, using Type to Learn. Their login information is located in their Fluency Google Classrooms. Through this data, mediators are able to tell when and how well students practice their fluencies. Mediators will regularly check this data and discuss it with students.

EXAMS

Tests

When students first enter the Academy, they may be given a few diagnostic and placement tests so that we can find out what they need to learn. Student progress is measured regularly throughout the academic year so that we can make adjustments as needed.

In January and June, students in grades 6 through 12 take semester exams in each subject. These exams are scheduled in advance.

Exam Procedures

There is an Academy-wide expectation of conduct during exams, as follows:

- There is no communication among students during exams.
- You must enter exam rooms with all materials, including a book to read if you finish early.
- You must remain in the exam room for the full two hours.
- Bathroom breaks are one at a time at the discretion of the mediator.

There are two primary functions of the exam period:

- to assess your learning
- to increase your abilities to take formal tests and cope with the studying that accompanies them

Classes are suspended during exam week. Except for writing, each exam is designed to be completed in two hours. There is a structured study hall for students to study between morning and afternoon exams.

Reports

Reports are issued quarterly. These consist of a report card, a report on each objective from the Written Service Plan/Individual Education Plan, and charts of progress and fluencies.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Drinking Water

Students must bring their own water bottles to school daily. There are water filling stations for students. Water bottles are available for purchase if needed.

Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker.

Lunch

Students will eat lunch in the designated cafeteria area.

In compliance with Federal School Lunch rules, students are not allowed to bring sodas to lunch.

Telephone

Students may use a school phone if they need to call home, arrange a ride, etc. They must ask their Advisor for permission to use the phone and they are requested to make their calls brief.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Books

Textbooks are provided by the Academy. If a student loses or damages a book, they will be charged for the replacement.

Cell Phones

Students must turn their cell phones off and they will be stored in the main office upon arrival. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day. Any cell phone that is being misused will be confiscated. Additional consequences may be assigned.

Field Trips

As part of the curriculum, students may go on field trips during the year. The trips are aligned with the core standards. Before any trip, students are given permission slips that a parent/guardian must sign.

First Aid

The First Aid station is in the nurse's office. If a student has a medical need, they may receive a pass from a mediator to go to the nurse's office.

Gum

Chewing gum is not allowed at the Academy.

Internet Use

All of the computer stations at BBA access the Internet through Google Chrome. Internet access is filtered to block many sites that are known to be inappropriate. However, even the best filters may not catch all inappropriate web pages. If a student accesses a page that has profanity or indecent pictures, they should notify a mediator immediately. They SHOULD NOT save that page. If there are inappropriate files stored on a student's personal computer, they will be asked about them, and subject to disciplinary action. All students are required to sign the Computer User Code of Conduct contract.

Lesson Plan Books

Every year, each student is issued a Plan Book (paper or digital) in which they write all of their assignments and due dates.

Organized Notebooks

Good study habits begin with good notebooks. To help students organize their notebooks, we teach a standard way to set up notes. We provide students with special pages and pockets. Old notes are kept in students' storage binders.

Smoking

Smoking by students, staff, or visitors is not allowed in school buildings or on school grounds. Students are not permitted to carry cigarettes, matches, lighters, etc.

Snacks

Snacks and water are typically \$.50 per item. If students bring their own snacks, be sure they are well wrapped and that they throw the wrappers in the trash. Do not leave snacks or lunches in lockers, as it will attract unwelcome pests. Snacks are not allowed in classes. Food and drink are never allowed near any computer.

ATTENDANCE

Progress is best guaranteed through regular attendance at all classes.

<p>It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent or guardian to maintain regular attendance.</p>
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Approved Absence

Students may be excused for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Death or illness in the family
- Approved religious holidays
- Emergency medical and dental treatment
- Other important reasons if approved by the Education Director

When a student is absent for an approved reason, appropriate provisions will be made by faculty to assist the student in making up missed assignments, homework and tests.

When a student is absent for an unapproved reason (for example, family vacation), mediators are not required to prepare work in advance, or to provide make-up work when the student has returned. Mediators will, however, provide opportunities for students to make up tests, quizzes, homework and other assignments missed during the absence.

Daily Monitoring for COVID-19

All students are responsible for performing an "Overall Health Status Check" prior to arriving at the school building.

Parents/Guardians:

Assess your child each morning using the "Overall Health Status Check" questions prior to sending your child to school.

If you cannot check ALL boxes, your child should NOT be sent to school.

In addition, follow school exclusions regarding illness, which can be found in the Nurse Packet.

Overall Health Status Check:

- Temperature is below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- No symptoms associated with COVID outlined by public health officials
- No sore throat, cough, diarrhea, severe headache, vomiting, or body aches
- Have not traveled to a high risk “red state”
- Have not been exposed to someone who is positive for COVID

All boxes must be checked in order to come to school.

If a student has had close contact to a COVID-19 case, stay home. Follow guidance on what to do when someone has known exposure.

Report absences as soon as possible following Attendance section guidelines.

If a student is going to be absent or late, a parent or guardian must inform the main office as soon as possible.

If the office is not open, a message can be left on our voice mail system. If a student is not here for the first class, and we have not been notified of the absence, we will call the parents/guardians. If we are not able to speak to a parent/guardian about the absence, or if the reason is unusual, we will ask the student to bring a note when they return to the Academy.

If a student is absent, approved or not, for ten or more days (including technical absences due to lateness), their grades may be affected. They may not be able to obtain credit for courses taken. If this happens, an administrator will discuss the problem with faculty, the student, and the student’s parents/guardians. The student may have to complete extra assignments or take extra tests to be sure that they have not missed important parts of their education.

When a student is absent, if possible the student should check Google Classroom for assignments.

Accountability

Once students are on campus, they are accountable to us. When they arrive, they must check in with the main office and then a mediator. They may not leave the building without permission.

Tardiness

If a student is late for school, they must check in with the main office for a late pass. An administrator will decide whether a student’s tardiness is excused. All tardies are documented.

Leaving Early

If a student needs to leave school early, parents/guardians must draft a note to the attention of the main office stating the reason, the dismissal and who will pick the student up.

The student must give the note to their Advisor, who will initial it and have it brought to the main office. If a student will miss any classes, they must be sure to get any assignments prior to leaving for the day.

The person picking the student up must sign them out with the student's name, the date and time, and their signature.

FEEDBACK POINT SYSTEM

The Feedback System is a quick, efficient communications system that helps students know when, in the mediator's opinion, they are helping or hindering their learning. It also helps the students and the mediator judge whether students are improving in their learning.

A tally system is used by all mediators in all classes as a method of increasing students' awareness of their own behaviors. Students earn a point for any act that is determined to enhance their learning. Behaviors that earn points include being on task, making relevant comments, volunteering, stating an opinion, making a clear statement, sharing an insight, and praising a peer.

Behaviors singled out for special marks or initials on the feedback chart include asking a question (**?**), being **d**issonant, repairing an **e**rror, **g**ating (stopping someone when s/he is flooding you with too much information,) completing **h**omework, doing something in a **m**indful way, making a **p**recise statement, **r**epeating a direction word for word to show that you heard it accurately, **t**ransferring a skill or technique from one class to another, and **b**ridging new information to prior knowledge.

If a student is doing something that interferes with learning that they seem to be unaware of, they may earn an **a**wareness point. If a student repeats that behavior, the mediator may have the student complete an **a**wareness paper, in which the student states their understanding of the behavior, and the steps the student will take to try to change it.

If a student persists in behavior that interferes with learning, or a student engages in behaviors that interfere with others' learning, the student earns a minus (-) tally. Students earn minus tallies for being off task, digressing, blurting an answer before being called upon, or being impulsive. Initials are used on the feedback charts to indicate **b**lurting or **B**locking, couch potato behaviors (**□**), not bothering to repair an **E**rror, sweeping **G**eneralizations, **L**a-la land, doing something in a **M**indless way, homework **N**ot done, im**P**recise statements, **S**arcasm toward a peer, **T**antrums, and **Y**eah-buts.

If a student's behavior becomes disruptive, they will earn an immediate consequence (see Disciplinary Code, Page 14). They may earn a **D** (Disruptive), and/or they may be told to write a **C**ritical **I**ncident Report.

Independence is a special category that is marked with a check (**✓**). There are thirty specific independent behaviors that earn the check, including the initialed positive behaviors.

Students or Advisors may wish to keep track of a specific behavior that is not on the feedback system. If so, students can count and chart it themselves, or ask the help of peers and mediators to remind them and help count it. We use the letter "x" to indicate these specific individual behaviors.

Students keep track of their behaviors by charting them daily. Students start out charting their total Positive, Negative, and Independence points, but they can change the behavior they choose to chart in consultation with their Advisor as soon as they know how to chart.

The sole purpose of the Feedback System is self-awareness.

DISCIPLINE

Expectations and Responsibilities

As a growing, learning individual, and as a partner in their education at the Academy, students have many expectations and privileges, including the following:

- The expectation to the best educational services the Academy staff can provide.
- The expectation to expect the Academy to abide by its published rules, regulations and procedures.
- The expectation of regular evaluations of student performance.
- The expectation to help us put together an Individual Education Plan/Written Service Plan.
- The expectation to see the grade from any test that we administer, with an explanation where necessary.
- The expectation to view progress reports.

As a student in the small community that is the Academy, we have certain expectations as to responsible behavior from students, including the following:

- Conformity to all Academy rules and regulations.
- Conformity to all directions issued by members of the faculty and administration in the regular course of their duties.
- Consideration for the rights and privileges of others.
- Respect for the personal property of others and the property of the Academy.
- High personal standards of appearance, courtesy, integrity, honesty, and diligence.
- Behavior that is consistent with the standards of good citizens in a democratic society, including the use of clean language.

Disciplinary Code

Students at the Academy strive to maintain its high standards because they know that is what the mediators and the Academy expect of them. Those expectations are reinforced by the feedback point system, grades from tests, and comments from mediators and fellow students, all of which help us to improve.

However, from time to time a student may engage in behavior that is disruptive to the learning process and to the Academy. Some of this behavior causes mild concern, other behavior causes serious concern. All such behavior is unacceptable. Unacceptable behavior is divided into two classifications, as follows:

Category I: Behavior causing mild concern. This involves **disruptive conduct** in class or elsewhere on the campus, which **interferes with the learning process** of the student and/or others, **insubordination**, or other conduct that violates Academy expectations as to responsible behavior, but does not constitute a violation of a major Academy rule.

Category II: Behavior causing serious concern. This involves a violation of a major Academy rule. The major rules are those that prohibit:

- Possession, use or sale of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or weapons, and/or trivializing the use of these substances.
- Lying or cheating, including plagiarism.

- Physical assault and/or harassment (bullying) of other persons. This includes verbal harassment of any type. Students are reminded that victims of harassment may also press criminal charges.
- Abuse/misuse/theft of Academy property, including abuse or misuse of computers.
- Disregarding the health and safety of another person within the community. This includes unauthorized wandering throughout the building, leaving an area without permission, not utilizing appropriate bathroom facilities, etc.
- Repeated disruptive conduct, including repeated insubordination, reflecting an inability or unwillingness to learn from previous mistakes.

There are consequences for engaging in negative behaviors, as follows:

Category I: In addition to the use of the Feedback Point System to encourage increased self-awareness on your part, mediators may impose other consequences for Category I offenses. The use of one or more of these consequences is discretionary with the mediator, who will use his or her best judgment to fit the consequence(s) to the offense(s). These consequences are the following:

1. **Critical Incident Report:** Students may be required to write a complete description of the incident in which they were involved, detailing the inappropriate behavior and the measures they will take to avoid it in the future. They must submit the completed Critical Incident Report to the mediator who assigned it. If the mediator determines that their Report is incomplete or incorrect, they will be required to correct or rewrite the report. An inadequate Report may subject the student to further consequences, such as detention.
2. **Detention:** If a student's conduct has cost a loss of valuable learning time, a detention may be assigned. Detentions are normally served within the week after assignment.
3. **Payment:** If a student loses an assignment or a book, or damages or destroys a piece of Academy equipment, they will be expected to pay for its repair or replacement. In such cases, the Academy will send a bill.

Category II: The consequences for a Category II offense include those listed above for a Category I offense, or, for a first or any subsequent offense, suspension or dismissal from the Academy, as described below. The recommendation for consequence(s) is made by a mediator, but the Education Director makes the final decision. The student and their Advisor may have an opportunity to meet with the Education Director or designee prior to the final decision.

1. **In-School Suspension:** The student is prohibited from attending some or all classes for a prescribed number of school days. They are assigned regular schoolwork and an isolated desk at which to work. They may not talk to other students unless given explicit permission to do so by a mediator. They are not allowed to associate with students during lunch or break times.
2. **Out-of-School Suspension:** A student is prohibited from attending the Academy for a prescribed number of school days. They must check Google Classroom for their homework assignments each day.

In all cases of suspension, the Education Director or designee will notify parents/guardians immediately upon imposing the suspension, and will send parents/guardians and the sponsoring School District a written report within five (5) school days.

Special Circumstances

If credible/terrorist threats, weapons or illegal substances are involved, the Academy will immediately contact the West Hartford Police.

Prior to returning to the Academy, a suspended student and his/her parents/guardians are required to consult with the Education Director regarding the behavioral changes the student expects to make upon return. The resulting agreement must be approved by the Education Director. The suspension may be extended by the Education Director until such time as the Academy is satisfied with the student's proposed course of conduct.

Expulsion: Expulsion may be imposed if the Education Director concludes, in her best judgment, that the student's conduct has been such that s/he should no longer be a part of the Academy community. A written report outlining the reasons for the expulsion will be provided to the student, the parents, and any other sponsor.

Special Contracts: A student returning to the Academy after a suspension, may be required by the Education Director to enter into a contract with the Academy. Such a contract, if required, must contain the following elements:

- The circumstances necessitating the contract.
- The positive behavior expected of the student.
- The consequences of further inappropriate conduct.
- A system to be used to measure changes in positive/negative behavior (optional).
- The circumstances under which the contract will be terminated.

A contract will require discussion with and signing by the student, the parents/guardians, the advising mediator, and the Education Director. When a student is sponsored by a Local Education Agency (LEA), a representative of that agency may be included in that process. In all cases, the parents/guardian (and the LEA, where involved) must be given:

- An explanation of the purpose of the contract and the benefits to be expected from it.
- An opportunity to question its use and explore alternative approaches.

Faculty use of Physical Force

No mediator may use physical force to punish students. However, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, mediators may employ non-violent physical management techniques to prevent injury to themselves or to others.

MEDICATION

If a student is required to take any kind of medication during the day, we can assist. We follow the guidelines of the State Department of Health.

No medication, either prescription or non-prescription, may be taken by a student during the school day without the written order of a physician or dentist and the written authorization of a parent or guardian.

Non-prescription medicines such as aspirin and cough syrup are included under this restriction. If a student's physician changes or stops any medication order, we must have a copy of the written change/stop order.

All medications must be delivered to the Academy by an adult, and remaining medications picked up by an adult. Any medication brought to the Academy must be in the original prescription bottle in which it was purchased, and in quantities of no more than 45 pills. When the adult brings in the medication, the school nurse or a mediator who has been trained to administer medication (when the nurse is unavailable) counts the number of pills or capsules with the adult, and the number is entered into the log. Medication is kept in a double locked cabinet in the Nurse's office. The cabinet is designed to handle small (1" diameter) bottles only.

The School Nurse or a designated mediator are the only ones allowed to dispense or handle medications. Students should report to the Nurse at the time that they are supposed to take the medication. We will also set up a system to remind students if they forget. When they take the medication, the students and the nurse, or a mediator who has been trained to administer medication, check the label on the bottle, and the nurse, or a mediator who has been trained to administer medication, records the details in the medication log.

If a student suffers from headaches and their physician recommends that they take a pain medication such as aspirin, Tylenol, or ibuprofen, parents may bring a small bottle of the medication to the office with a signed Physician's Permission Form. We will keep the bottle in the Medication Cabinet, and the student may ask for the medication when needed.

An appropriate adult must pick up any medication that is left over at the end of the year.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents' Meetings

Parents' meetings are held throughout the year, usually on the last Monday of the month. Some meetings explore the content and process of some classes at the Academy, and others have guest speakers discussing topics of interest.

There is an orientation meeting for parents early in the school year. At that time, parents learn about the special reading programs and fluency programs at the Academy, and parents learn how to do and read the charting that the students do each day. In this way, parents become better able to support their child's progress here at the Academy. We also traditionally have a potluck supper during the first week of school, an Open School evening in September, and a parent conference night after the midyear marking period. The school calendar includes the planned dates for these events.

Fund Drives

Students or parents may organize fund raising activities with the approval of the Executive Director. Fund raising activities may include such projects as entertainment (dances, plays, etc.), the sale of services (car washes, etc.), products, and advertising. The fund drive must be under the auspices of an activity or club within the Academy, and limited to student activities.

In asking for approval for fund drives, students must outline in writing their goals for their drive, schedule of fees, and plans for collection. All money collected will be turned in to the school's bookkeeper who will forward it to the Chief Operating Officer for distribution according to the approved plan.

Faculty - Parent Contacts

Parents and Advisors should try to be in contact at least once every two weeks to keep one another informed of progress. If an incident occurs, or we have another reason for concern, we will try to contact you on the same day.

OFFICIAL DRESS CODE

General Guidelines: Clothing must be clean, in good condition and be the correct size for the student. Clothing that is too big or too small is unacceptable.

Individual needs should be discussed with the Education Director before school so that any modifications can be communicated to the staff and gossip avoided (e.g., the medical need to wear a different type of shoes).

Consequences: A student who comes to school out of compliance will write out a CI, and then borrow a replacement for the item not in dress code from the “Experienced Shop.”

School Colors: Maroon and ivory

<u>Ben Bronz Academy Uniform</u>	
Tops:	BBA monogrammed polo shirt in maroon, navy or powder blue, either short- or long-sleeved (or solid colored polo shirt in BBA approved colors). Turtlenecks and mock turtleneck shirts in BBA approved colors (maroon, navy and powder blue) with or without chest logo may be worn instead of polos or under polos.
Bottoms:	Dress pants. Slacks may be chinos, any color, NOT cargo style. Pants must be wrinkle free and worn at the waist.
OR	
Skirt, with a hemline no higher than an inch above the knee. Dress shorts may be worn year-round. Solid color skorts are also acceptable.	
Over-clothing:	BBA sweaters, hoodies, or Lands’ End fleece lined vests and zipper front or pullover collared jackets in BBA colors (maroon, navy or black) with BBA logo may be worn over a dress shirt or polo shirt. No other over-clothing may be worn in halls or classrooms.
Shoes:	Dress shoes or sneakers and socks. Shoelaces must be tied. Open-toed shoes may not be worn.
Hats:	No hats may be worn while inside the Academy.

Dress Down Days: There will be opportunities for students to earn dress down days that allow casual dress. These will be announced to students and faculty several days ahead of time. Acceptable clothing for Dress Down days includes jeans, t-shirts, casual shorts and sneakers, but does not include open-toed shoes, or clothing with inappropriate pictures or words.

Gym Clothing: The required outfit for Physical Education is either a t-shirt and shorts or sweatpants and a pair of sneakers.

Where to Purchase BBA Clothing: The official BBA polo shirts, sweaters, vests and jackets are available only from:

Lands' End
1-800-469-2222
www.landsend.com
Preferred School Number - 9000-9745-2
Logo Number - 0450230K

When a student outgrows their uniform, you may trade items for ones that fit. You may also buy school uniforms if we have the appropriate size in stock. All items sell for \$10 each on an “as-is” basis. All proceeds go into the BBA Parents’ Fund.

If a student arrives at the Academy out of dress code or without gym clothing, they will be required to borrow the proper clothes to wear for the day. The student will sign a guarantee stating that the clothes will be returned (washed) within one week, or will pay \$10 for each item.

COURSES AND COURSE CREDITS

Students in Grades 9 through 12 earn course credits for each of the high school courses successfully taken at the Academy. In general, a course that is scheduled five days per week for a full year is a full credit course, while a half-year course is a half credit. Some of the remedial courses are not credit courses.

If you are entering the Academy at the high school level, your credits from other schools will be evaluated and added to your transcript. Similarly, if you plan to move on to another school after a few years at the Academy, credits earned here are usually accepted by your new school.

Most schools use course credits to determine whether you are called a Sophomore, Junior or Senior. The following are Connecticut requirements for promotion to each grade:

To Grade 10 (Sophomore)	Minimum of 6.25 credits
To Grade 11 (Junior)	Minimum of 12.50 credits
To Grade 12 (Senior)	Minimum of 19 credits

Credit Requirements for Diploma:

You may be enrolling at the Academy for just a year or two, or you may stay at the Academy until you graduate. To help you plan for graduation from the school of your choice, we use the same credit system as most other schools. Once you enter high school (Grade 9), you begin to aim for a diploma. To graduate from the Academy with a diploma, you usually have to earn the following credits through passing your courses (unless your requirements have been changed on your IEP):

Humanities	9.0
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	9.0
Physical Education & Wellness	1.0
Health & Safety Education	1.0
Fine Arts	1.0
Electives	<u>4.0</u>
	25.0

Research Weeks

We have two scheduled Research Weeks during each school year. During Research Week, regular classes are suspended and all students investigate a specific topic. Students will gather information on a topic from books, videos, and field trips. A culminating activity is required. In grades 9 through 12, students may earn up to .5 credits for completion of research skills activities.

Past Research Weeks have explored Oceanography, Space, Ecology, Archaeology, Government, Connecticut History, Revolutionary History, and the United Nations.

INSTRUCTION – GRADES TWO THROUGH FIVE

The school day for grades 2 through 5 is carefully planned to integrate skills, cognition and content through a Curriculum Based Language Intervention approach. This approach requires that all language areas, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling and thinking are not only to be taught as separate lessons, but are also embedded in Social Studies, Science, and other content areas.

The curriculum has three main thrusts that are interwoven: basic skills, cognition, and language. Language development is essential if these areas are to develop. It is necessary to use language to develop a student's ability to learn. For all elementary school age children, skill learning is primary and content learning is secondary. Specific content is the vehicle through which the skills are taught.

Curriculum units are presented through an experiential approach following the natural hierarchy of language development. We take advantage of the learning disabled student's strength in learning by first doing, and only later move to paper and pencil tasks once the student becomes familiar with the language. In such an approach, neither the content nor the calendar dictates what will be covered. The mediator measures student metacognitive and metalinguistic discovery, and is relatively free to spend a longer time in a unit when the experiences within it are rewarding in terms of student gains in awareness.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED AT THE ACADEMY

Some of the terms we use at Ben Bronz Academy have a particular meaning. The next few pages contain a short explanation of some of them.

Active Learning: You are actively learning if you are seeking ways to help you understand and remember new words or concepts, and explain them to others.

Audit Trail: We borrowed this term from Accounting. You create an audit trail when you write your name, the date, and the subject on each page of your work.

Behavior Charts: The Standard Daily Behavior Chart is a graph that allows students to chart their daily scores on timed tests so that they can see their progress. It is designed to cover 120 days (including weekends). Its vertical axis is logarithmic, allowing the student to chart scores from as low as 0 per day to 1000 per minute. The chart is used in Precision Teaching. It was invented by Dr. Ogden Lindsley in 1964, at the University of Kansas.

Block: This is a behavior that occurs when a learner stops processing information.

Book Share: Book Share is the name given to a free service in which books are read verbatim by volunteers, and recorded. Visually handicapped people may receive recordings of any book available in print. Learning Disabled students also qualify to receive Book Share.

Bridging: When you relate something you are learning to a prior experience, or you provide an example, you are bridging between new learning and prior knowledge.

Cognition: Thinking skills.

Cognitive Functions: A chart proposed by Dr. Reuven Feuerstein, in which the act of thinking is divided into three processes (Input, Elaboration, and Output), and several functions. It helps us to examine and describe how we think.

Cognitive Modifiability, Theory of: A theory proposed by Dr. Reuven Feuerstein, a developmental psychologist who refutes the notion that intelligence is stable for life. Dr. Feuerstein explains deficient learning as a result of a lack of mediated learning experiences earlier in life. He says that intelligence can be taught; we can change the way we think through having the right mediated learning experiences. Instrumental Enrichment was designed to provide those experiences.

For many of us, the mediated learning experience occurred every day of our young lives. If, as a child, I approached a hot stove, my caregiver would likely shout "no" and move me away to safety. If she added an explanation that the stove was hot, and hot things burn, and took time to show me other hot things, then she was providing the mediation that gave me the criteria to decide to avoid hot things.

Contextualizing: When you hear a new word, one way to ensure that you understand it (and to remember it) is to put it into a sentence in which its meaning is clear. This is called contextualizing the word.

Cornell Notes: Developed at the Cornell University Study Skills Lab, Cornell Notes are devised to organize notes while taking them in class or in any lecture situation. The note page has a wide left margin, reserved for key words and drawings that help you understand the concepts. Brief notes are taken to the right of the margin. The large bottom margin space is used for a summary statement, questions for early discovery, and insights. The use of Cornell Notes is taught in several classes.

Couch Potato: At BBA, this term is used to describe a student who knows a technique for learning actively, but doesn't use it at the opportune moment.

Daily Vocabulary Worksheets: You study vocabulary every day, using Split Page vocabulary sheets that allow you to cover the definitions so you can try to say each from memory. The word is written on the left side of a folded page, and the definition is written on the right side. To test yourself, you fold the page, read the word (or definition), and try to say the part that is on the unseen side.

Dissonance: When something is said to you that doesn't seem to fit what you already understand, you puzzle about it (and miss the rest of what is said). Dissonance is the best kind of learning, because the mind is actively engaged in trying to match up information.

Error Repair: When any assignment is returned with errors, you are expected to repair the errors independently and return the corrected assignment to the mediator. Independence points are earned for independent error repairing.

Feedback Awareness System: You earn points for showing actions that will increase your learning. You may also earn negative points for actions that are interfering with your learning.

Flatlines: On your Chart, if you are not making progress in a fluency, the dots for the number correct begin to show in a horizontal line. In medical terminology, heartbeat rates in a flatline show that the heart is not working. In learning, a flatline shows that you are not making progress.

Fluencies: Students must be fluent in some basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic facts, typing, vocabulary words, and spelling. To be fluent means to be able to do the task so fast that you do not have to stop to think about how to do it.

Students work on their fluencies every day. They take a one-minute test, after which the number correct or incorrect (learning opportunities) is recorded on the Standard Daily Behavior Chart. When a student reaches criterion s/he moves on to a more difficult level.

Some criteria for fluency at Ben Bronz Academy are:

- Reading silently 250 words per minute (150 wpm in Grades 2 to 7)
- Mathematics facts 70 facts per minute
- Keyboarding 50 words per minute (35 wpm in Grades 2 to 5)

Gating or Gate-Keeping: Sometimes new information comes so quickly that you cannot keep up with what is being said, so you “flood” over, and what you already learned also spills out of your brain. To stop flooding, you are encouraged to learn to “gate.” Gating is raising your hand as soon as you find yourself flooding, and asking the speaker to explain more slowly - stopping the speaker as many times as necessary to ensure that you understand the whole picture.

IEP (Individualized Education Plan): Federal law mandates that all students who have special educational needs must have an individual plan designed to educate them so that they can reach their educational potential. This plan is called an IEP. (Private schools may make a plan, but it is not called an IEP. We call ours a Written Service Plan [WSP].) It is the responsibility of the local school district to develop each student's plan, and present it to the parents for yearly approval at a Planning and Placement Team meeting (PPT.)

Whether the student’s goals and objectives are on an IEP or WSP, we will measure your progress on them regularly and provide written reports four times a year, along with your report cards.

Independence Points: As part of the feedback point system, you earn an independence point or check each time you are observed using a skill that will enhance your independence.

Individualized Transition Plan: During your first year at the Academy, you will be writing an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) for yourself. This is a plan in which you look far into the future, trying to decide a vocation or area of interest for yourself. You are helped in this by a series of activities, including completing a Vocational Interest questionnaire (Self-Directed Search), and completing an Independence Checklist. You modify your ITP each year.

Instrumental Enrichment (I.E.): A three or four year course in Thinking Skills which employs a series of exercises designed to help you increase your ability to solve problems. Instrumental Enrichment is based on Dr. Feuerstein's theory of structural cognitive modifiability. Each learner gains an awareness of his/her own cognitive functioning and how it hinders or helps learning and problem solving.

All of the mediators attend the Instrumental Enrichment Classes as learners, both to gain insights into the concepts and to discover ways to teach them. Each mediator then has you apply the same concepts where appropriate in the content courses and in extra-curricular activities. This opportunity to practice the skills everywhere helps you generalize them to all applications.

La-la Land: This is the students’ term for someone whose mind is elsewhere when a teacher is explaining an important concept in class.

Learning Opportunities: In a place where learning is happening, errors should not be considered something bad. Rather, they are opportunities to learn. (Gattegno, 1972)

Lindamood: Auditory Discrimination in Depth is a linguistic/phonemic approach developed by Charles and Phyllis Lindamood. It helps you remember the sounds by relating them to how you produce them in your mouth and throat. At the Academy you may learn this approach before starting your Let's Read classes, in a class called Intensive Instruction.

Local Education Agency (LEA): The local school district that would normally be educating the student. This abbreviation is often seen on Individual Education Plans.

Massaging: This term is employed to describe a series of exercises to help you to remember vocabulary words. The exercises include writing the word or its definition, putting it in place of its synonym in a sentence, comparing it to a contrast word or trick definition, and examining how you are using it as a part of speech.

Mastery: When a student is able to do something quickly without thinking about the process involved, he is said to have mastered that skill. For example, the mastery speed (sometimes called the criterion speed) for touch-typing is 70 words per minute. Similarly, the mastery speed for arithmetic facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) is 70 single digit problems per minute.

Mediated Learning: See Cognitive Modifiability.

MetaLearning Program (MLP): The Mediated Learning/Thinking Skills program in grades 2 through 6 that integrates Metacognition (awareness of how we think) and Metalinguistics (awareness of how we use language).

Mindful and Mindless: These two words describe your approach to learning. If you are trying to find meaning in your learning, or studying in ways that help you absorb new information, you earn a point for being mindful. If you are just doing something to get it done, you are being mindless.

Morphographs: Parts of words that have meanings. In SRA Morphographic Spelling, you are taught to break words into morphographs for ease of spelling. Fourteen spelling rules and a study of affixes cover most of the difficult spellings in English.

One Minute Timings: Students at the Academy work on becoming fluent in several skills, such as solving Arithmetic facts, typing, spelling, and vocabulary. You practice each of these skills in short intervals daily. To measure your progress, you do the specific exercise as fast as possible while being timed for one minute. You then count your correct answers and errors (learning opportunities), and chart these on the Standard Daily Behavior Chart to see if you are making daily progress.

Point System: See Feedback Awareness System.

PPT (Planning and Placement Team): This is a team composed of teachers, resource personnel, and parents that is brought together by the local public school (LEA) that the student has been attending. PPTs are empowered to recommend placement of a student in special services, and to change the student's IEP.

Precision Teaching: A method of measurement of the acquisition of skills, in which you keep track of your progress by measuring how many times you do something in a specified period of time. For example, you can measure your progress in adding math facts on a worksheet by taking a “one-minute sample” each day. By charting your correct answers and errors (learning opportunities) on a Standard Daily Behavior Chart, you can see your progress. Precision Teaching, the Standard Daily Behavior Chart, and the use of fluency measures were developed by Ogden Lindsley (Kansas) in 1964.

SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium): Connecticut law requires all LEA-placed students in Grades 3 through 8 to take the SBAC Tests, which are designed to measure student growth in academic subjects. This is always discussed at a PPT meeting.

Solidifying: Writing down, or describing, what you are thinking about, as a way of making it clearer to yourself.

Spiders, Pies, and Bones: These are names given to visual organizers that we use in all classes to help us analyze textbooks, organize and summarize the details.

Split Pages: See Daily Vocabulary Worksheets.

SRA Comprehension A, B and C: A corrective reading curriculum developed by Engelmann et. al. (1978) and published by McGraw-Hill. This series concentrates on discrete skills required by the comprehending reader, such as deduction, comparison, classification, evidence, relevant statements, vocabulary, general information, analogies, opposites, etc.

SRA Decoding A, B, and C: A corrective reading curriculum developed by Engelmann et. al. (1978) and published by McGraw-Hill. This curriculum focuses on word attack skills, stressing sound combinations and meanings of affixes. Students also study vocabulary, and analyze each paragraph for the main idea and details, then write a brief summary.

Student Planning Team: A team including the student, parents, mediators from the Academy, and any resource people that the parents would like at a meeting at the Academy, in which the Written Service Plan for the student is developed or modified. The Student Planning Team is not empowered to write or change an IEP. (See PPT- Planning and Placement Team)

Tantrum: Any small or large expression of anger or frustration that interferes with the student's learning. This includes whining, being impatient with others, and pouting. (See Feedback Awareness System).

Written Service Plan: Each unilaterally placed student at the Academy has a Written Service Plan. This is a comprehensive list of your Goals and Objectives, which were developed by you, your parents, and the faculty. You and your parents receive four progress reports each year, based on the Written Service Plan.

When parents arrange privately to enroll their child at the Academy, they have voluntarily withdrawn their student from a school district (LEA), and that LEA is no longer obliged to write the IEP. To maintain the accountability and goal sharing that are at the heart of the IEP system, the Academy holds a Student Planning Team Meeting at which a set of goals are developed for the student. Based on those goals, the Academy submits the Written Service Plan, which becomes the basis for progress reports to the student and parent.

Yeah-but: A label used when a student wishes to get his point across without listening to the other person's point of view. (See Feedback Awareness System)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is a suspension?

A. A suspension is a disciplinary consequence that is assigned for one of two reasons:

- (a) The student's behavior violated one of the major academy rules (Category II behaviors), and/or
- (b) The Education Director believes that the student's conduct was serious enough to justify interrupting his or her education program in order to concentrate on problem-solving the situation.

Prior to suspending any student, the Education Director and/or administrator(s) gather as much information about the incident as possible. They speak with all the students involved, usually individually with the student's Advisor present. To make sure they are getting all the facts, they often speak with students more than once. Because many BBA students have difficulty with communication, this process can take time. In most cases, suspensions are assigned only after some corroboration of the facts. Suspensions are assigned based on the student's behavior at Ben Bronz Academy, which includes field trips and school district transportation time.

Q. What is dress-down Friday?

A. Most (not all) Fridays are designated as Earned Dress-Down Fridays. Students who have a 90% homework average for the week (including home computer fluencies) are issued a pass that allows them, if they choose, to dress in jeans and other casual clothes on the Friday of that week. The homework average is computed on Thursday morning, based on the preceding five school days. Passes are issued on Thursday afternoon. The passes are dated, and are good only for that specific date.

Q. Whom do I talk to if I have questions about...?

my child's computer	Advisor
my child's behavior/progress	Advisor
specific classes or assignments	Mediator for that class
BBA policies or procedures	Christina Lamphere
billing or financial issues	Daryl Blinn
Absences/tardies/calendar/schedule	Araceli Lagunes-Bennett
scheduling PPT meetings	Elaine Potter
medication	School Nurse

Q. Who is responsible for transportation?

A. If your child is placed at BBA by a school district, the school district is responsible for transporting your child to and from BBA according to the school calendar. However, the transportation company will make its own decisions about inclement weather – BBA may be open but the weather in your area may require the bus to bring in your child later, pick him up earlier, or not bring him to school at all. If your child chooses to participate in any after-school activities, or for any reason departs from the published school calendar (for example, leaves earlier or later than our regular time), then it is the PARENT'S responsibility to arrange transportation. Sometimes the school district or transportation company is able to accommodate your needs. However, this is often not possible, as many drivers also transport other children from BBA or other schools in this area.

Q. Are field trips and "fun" days optional?

A. No. Mediators plan trips and activities to meet educational goals. Fluency "fun" events help students stay motivated to practice difficult skills.

Q. How important is the end-of-year Awards Ceremony?

A. It is one of the most important events of the school year. It is a time we acknowledge and celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of your child and all the BBA students and mediators. Attendance is mandatory, as a sign of support for your student's educational program.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Ben Bronz Academy

Phone (860) 236-5807
Fax (860) 233-9945
General E-mail info@benbronzacademy.org
Christina Lamphere E-mail clamphere@benbronzacademy.org

SpEdConnecticut (formerly Learning Disabilities Assn) (860) 560-1711

Connecticut Legal Services (800) 233-7619
Lands' End (800) 469-2222

Your Senator or Congressperson in Washington
Capitol Switchboard (202) 225-3121

Senator's Name: _____

Congressperson's Name: _____

Your school transportation Phone Number: _____

If you need help with:

Legal questions concerning schooling
Contact SpEdCT or Connecticut Legal Services.

Career Guidance

Contact State of Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services
<https://portal.ct.gov/AgingandDisability>