

June 1, 2009

Dear BAM Families,

Welcome to BAM's First Annual **Summer Book Jam**, a celebration of reading to encourage our kids to read over the summer and to raise desperately needed funds for our school. Enclosed you will find all the materials you and your children need to make this celebration a huge success! Please take a moment to go over the cool things in this folder with your children—and give them a chance to share the exciting events at BAM to kickoff the Book Jam.

Why are We Having a Book Jam?

Reading is a critical way for kids to become informed about their world, expand their imaginations, and enhance school achievement. Over the summer, reading is especially important so that students will keep up their good reading habits and be ready to learn when school starts in September. The Book Jam can help our students to read over the summer, give families information and ideas about encouraging reading, and give family members, neighbors, and community members an opportunity to acknowledge this important effort through sponsorships and contributions to BAM.

How Does the Fundraiser Work?

In September, we will be asking grownups to ask family members, neighbors, co-workers, local businesses, and community members to support BAM students' accomplishments by contributing to BAM's school-wide literacy efforts. People can make financial contributions (e.g., a certain amount per book/hour read by your child or by all BAM students, or a flat donation) and/or in-kind (e.g., refreshments for the school-wide celebration in September, books for classrooms or the library, etc.).

How Can I Support My Child's Participation in the Book Jam?

Parent and family support and encouragement are the key to reading success, especially during the summer months when many kids don't choose to read. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Set reading goals with your child and help them keep track of their reading! With your child, decide on a number of minutes per day of shared and/or independent reading and/or number of books or hours per week or month. Use

the enclosed reading list for ideas about summer reading. Help your child record his or her reading on the enclosed book log.

- Support Literacy Activities! Provide time and quiet space for reading each day. Talk about books your child reads or that you read aloud. Encourage your child to write a book review or a story based on a favorite book.
- Start a Book Club! This could be a parent/child, grade-level reading group, a non-English language book group, fairy or science fiction book group...the possibilities are endless! Coordinate with other BAM families through BAMnet or in your child's class.
- Use the Berkeley Public Library! The Library has a great summer reading game--kids get prizes for participating (flyer enclosed).
- Tell Family, Friends, Neighbors, and Community Members! Kids will be so proud of their reading when people praise them for their progress. Outside encouragement is a really important way to support our kids' efforts.

How Will Kids Get "Credit" for Reading?

In order that ALL kids can participate and feel good about reading, children should keep track of the books/minutes they read on the enclosed book log. (Additional copies can be downloaded from www.bampta.org, or just keep track on your own paper). Kids who participate in the Library and/or the BEARS summer program can count that reading towards the Book Jam. In September, all participating BAM students will be acknowledged on the bulletin board outside the office. (It would be great if kids come back to school with the names, drawings, or copies of the cover of their favorite summer books to include on the bulletin board). The Book Jam will go until late September to give kids a chance to "catch up" and to include incoming kindergarteners. At the end of the Book Jam we will have a school-wide event to celebrate the great work of BAM's students!

What are the Kickoff and September Celebration Events?

During the week of June 1, all classes will have visits with local authors, and the librarian from the Berkeley Public Library will visit K-3 classes. (See enclosed author information). In September, we have lots of ideas for a school-wide

celebration. Contact Elissa Gershon at elissagershon@yahoo.com with questions or to help with the September event planning.