

Dear Families,



Over the past two school years, our staff at New Providence has heavily studied and implemented brain-based instructional strategies with the goal of improving student learning to lay the foundation for college and career ready graduates. Brain-based learning is motivated by the belief that learning can be accelerated and improved if educators base how and what they teach on the science of learning, rather than past educational practices, established conventions or assumptions. In the last two decades, neuroscientists have made powerful discoveries related to how the brain functions. This research has important implications for improving teaching practices and has created the new field of Educational Neuroscience, or put simply, Brain-Based Learning. Educational neuroscientists, such as Eric Jensen, David Sousa and Renate and Geoffrey Caine, all agree that there are core principles directing brain-based education to promote optimal student learning. We have worked hard to create an **innovative and comprehensive model** at New Providence Elementary founded in the latest neuroscience research and its implications for student learning.

Our model is threefold:

- A **physical classroom environment** aligned to the principals of how the brain learns;
- A **climate that orchestrates states for learning** in students through community and explicitly taught social skills (our Lifeskills and Lifelong Guidelines);
- Brain and body compatible **learning strategies including developing metacognition**;

We believe the students at New Providence Elementary School will grow as independent, self-directed learners when brain-based teaching strategies are incorporated into all we do. We have studied the works of Dr. Eric Jensen, one of the world's leading trainers of educators and others in the field of brain-based learning, sent school leaders to his training, and implemented learned techniques in our classrooms. We educated parents on brain-based learning and partnered with our PTA to purchase materials and equipment in our classrooms that support what we have learned. This year, we want to continue our goal of becoming a brain-friendly school by purchasing classroom equipment and resources that give students freedom of movement, promote collaboration and link body and brain in the learning process. In his book *Spark*, Dr. John J. Ratey states, "It turns out that moving our muscles produces proteins that travel through the bloodstream and into the brain, where they play pivotal roles in the mechanisms of our highest thought processes" (p. 5). Our hope is to increase these resources within the classroom and extend our use of movement equipment to promote optimal learning. Dr. Eric Jensen, in his book *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, explains, "Amazingly, the part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that processes learning" (p. 61).

We are focusing much of our efforts on promoting a physical environment aligned to the principals of how the brain learns through flexible seating options, increased opportunities for movement, and intentionally tying movement to learning. With the funds raised for Boosterthon this year, we will be able to purchase resources that will support our teachers in creating a more brain-friendly learning environment for all students. Our goal is to create a learning environment that allows students to reach their full potential. When we understand both the possibilities and the available processes, then we can access the vast potential of the human brain and, truly, improve teacher and student learning at New Providence Elementary School. Thank you for your support of New Providence Elementary School and this year's Boosterthon Fun Run Fundraiser.

Below are a list of helpful resources if you are interested in finding out more about brain-based instruction and movement:

- Brain-Based Learning: <http://www.brainbasedlearning.net/>

- Eric Jensen's Blog: <http://www.jensenlearning.com/news/>
- Brain-Based Learning Resources: <http://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/102-brain-based-learning-resources-well-brain-based-teaching/>
- Movement in the classroom: <http://www.gettingsmart.com/2015/09/how-movement-impacts-learning-and-why-students-need-it-more-than-ever/>
- Movement in the classroom: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/move-body-grow-brain-donna-wilson>
- Chapter on movement from Eric Jensen's book *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/104013/chapters/Movement-and-Learning.aspx>
- Building Babies Brains: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/thinking-skills-learning-styles/20-ways-to-boost-your-babys-brain-power>

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