According to the Ending Hunger in Oklahoma report by Hunger Free Oklahoma, "Children facing food insecurity also likely face poorer health and lower academic achievement. Food-insecure adolescents experience more problems with mental health, and food-insecure adults face the prospect of poorer physical health and higher rates of being overweight and diabetic."

Learn more about food insecurity and hunger facing families in our community by exploring the activities in the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma's Food Bank U. "This program is designed to engage, educate and empower kids - grade PreK through 8 - about hunger and encourage them to seek creative solutions."

High school-aged students can learn more by participating in the Junior Ambassadors program offered through the Food Bank as well.

Broken Arrow Public Schools works to address food insecurity through the Food for Kids backpack program. This program is the result of a partnership with community and faith-based resources in conjunction with the Food Bank to provide bags of shelf-stable snacks to students in need. If you're interested in learning more or have questions about the possibility of your child participating, please contact your school counselor.

Happy Thanksgiving! Broken Arrow Public Schools is grateful for each and every student, family, and staff member. Together, you have responded to many adjustments and remain flexible to ensure a safe learning environment in which all students can thrive is possible.

While the Thanksgiving holiday may look a little different this year, the focus of family, food, and home remains the same. For some families, this means thinking creatively while carrying out traditions in a socially safe way. However, for other families, this holiday may come with more stressors than years past. In this newsletter, you'll find information on how your family can make mealtimes a meaningful and fun time of learning and connection. In addition, you'll read about resources that shed light on the themes of hunger and housing, including the McKinney-Vento Act.

Thank you for taking time to read and learn more!

Connecting and Learning through Family Activities

November is Family Literacy Month. Oftentimes when one thinks of literacy, they think of reading books. While reading books definitely builds literacy skills and is very important, there are many other fun ways families can learn together while building connections with one another.

30 Days of Families Learning Together created by National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) "NCFL’s guide to 30 Days of Families Learning Together provides a month's worth of family literacy activities and practices designed to inspire family memories rooted in imagining, playing, and learning together." To download the 30-day interactive calendar of ideas, click HERE.

The Family Dinner Project

"The Family Dinner Project, a nonprofit initiative started in 2010, champions family dinner as an opportunity for family members to connect with each other through food, fun and conversation about things that matter." Check out this website for hundreds of recipes, conversation starters, and other activities.

Farmers to Families Food Box Program

Catholic Charities is partnering with RK Group to distribute FREE food boxes to those in need. The boxes will include fresh produce and dairy products and are available while supplies last. Please stay in your car and our volunteers will load the food for you.

The following dates, times and locations are confirmed with GoFresh, while supplies last. Please stay in your car and our volunteers will load the food for you.

Wednesdays
November 25th through December 30th
10am until supplies run out
Indian Springs Sports Complex
13600 S. 145th East Ave.
Broken Arrow, OK 74011
Families and Housing Instability

Housing instability, sometimes called homelessness, is a reality that some families face especially in the midst of a pandemic when resources are having to be stretched thinner than ever before. Oftentimes when one hears the word “homelessness” they may think of people sleeping on the street. While that is the current situation for some people, not all families who face housing instability find themselves on the street. According to public school data reported to the U.S. Department of Education during the 2017-18 school year, “an estimated 25,623 Oklahoma public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year. Of that total, 1,237 students were unsheltered, 2,064 were in shelters, 657 were in hotels/motels, and 21,665 were doubled up.”

Broadly speaking, the National Center for Homeless Education considers homeless children and youth as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes those who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason," otherwise referred to as “doubled-up”. In addition, families in unstable housing situations may find themselves in a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative, adequate accommodation; in a car, park, or abandoned building; or in a shelter.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that provides for the immediate enrollment of and the educational stability for homeless children and youth, by providing federal funding to states and school districts for the purpose of supporting homeless children and youth. To learn more about the McKinney-Vento program in Broken Arrow Public Schools, read the column to the right.

McKinney-Vento in BAPS

Students enrolled in the McKinney-Vento program, as defined in the federal act, are eligible for a variety of resources and supports which are coordinated by the district's liaison.

The following are some of the services that could be provided:
- Enrollment assistance
- School supplies/backpacks
- Free breakfast/lunch
- Hygiene items
- ACT/SAT fees
- Community referrals

If you would like more information about eligibility for this program, please contact the district's McKinney-Vento Liaison.

Meet the McKinney-Vento Liaison!

Valeri Radford
Student Support Specialist
vradford@baschools.org
918-259-7497

Valeri has worked for 20 years helping students and families at BAPS. In her role, she helps families who are temporarily in transition in regards to their living situation. She assists these families navigate the enrollment process quickly as to provide uninterrupted learning for students. She is a resource for families who may need community assistance such as food, clothing, or other necessities.

Community Resources

**Restore Hope Ministries**
Have you lost income due to COVID? Are you behind on your rent? If you are in a financial crisis, you may be eligible for assistance at Restore Hope. For more information about available resources and eligibility click on the Restore Hope logo.

**Broken Arrow Neighbors**
"Crises and unplanned financial emergencies can jeopardize a family’s ability to provide basic needs such as food, utilities and shelter." Broken Arrow Neighbors may be able to help with some limited financial assistance. Click on the logo for more information.