

# Terms and Traditions

## *A Guide to the World of Breck, From A to Z*

**Abbreviations.** LS (Lower School), MS (Middle School), US (Upper School).

**Academic Triathlon (MS).** After-school program that features interscholastic competitions and focuses on creative problem solving.

**Activity Bus (Grades 4-12).** Streamlined PM bus route leaving at 5:30 sharp.

**Administrative Office.** Located up the stairs from Door A, the US entrance. Location of the main switchboard (763-381-8100). Office hours are 7:30 – 4:30.

**Admissions Office.** Managers of the enrollment process. Located in the Administrative Office area.

**Advisor (MS and US).** Faculty member assigned to a student as a formal advocate.

**Advisory (MS and US).** A group of students and the faculty member assigned to them.

**Alumni Office.** Encourages alumni involvement in the school. Located with Communication and Development offices, across the hall from the Administrative Office.

**Ambassadors.** Parent volunteers trained to give tours and information about Breck to prospective parents during the admissions process.

**Anderson Arena.** Breck School Anderson Arena is the home for the school's hockey and skating programs. Located close to campus at Highway 55 and Dahlberg Drive.

**Anderson Gym.** Breck's varsity and junior varsity basketball gym and the place for Homecoming coronation and other celebrations. Located near the US science classrooms.

**Annual Fund.** Every year, Breck asks all families past and present, alumni, faculty and staff members and friends of Breck to make a tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund. This money is applied directly to the school's operating budget.

**Annual Report.** Publication with details of Breck finances and lists of donors. Produced by Communications and usually mailed in December.

**Applause.** Fund raising event and festive community celebration whose proceeds allow the school to invest in something important, such as academic technology enhancements.

**Ars Nova (US).** Student art and literature magazine.

**Arts Center.** Complex of visual arts studio and classroom space, located up the stairs from kindergarten classrooms.

**Athletic Transportation Waiver** (also called Contest Drive Release Form) (MS and US). Form signed by parents and given to the athletics office. Absolutely required for any athlete competing in a meet who is not riding the bus to and/or from the meet.

**Awareness Day (MS).** Day of field trips to promote urban awareness, ecological awareness, etc.

**Baccalaureate.** Religious ceremony for seniors held in the Chapel on the Sunday night prior to Commencement. Interfaith service based on the Episcopal tradition of Evening Prayer. All are welcome.

**Back-to-School Night.** Opportunity for parents to meet their students' teachers and learn about the year's curriculum. Program begins in the Chapel. See the calendar for dates.

**Banner (MS).** Student newspaper.

**Bidding** (LS). From an Old English term meaning serving, eating with and helping to clean up after a meal. Fourth graders take turns bidding for preschool and kindergartners at lunch.

**Bio-buddies.** Middle School biology students and kindergartners studying the human body, paired for monthly science activities.

**Birthday Books** (LS). Books donated to the Lower School library/media center in honor of a student's birthday.

**Blessing of the Animals.** Service of songs and blessings for pets and their owners on a Saturday in early October. All are welcome to bring caterpillars, dogs, cats, snakes, goats, horses and stuffed animals. See the calendar.

**Board of Trustees.** Group responsible for establishing Breck's goals, hiring the head of school and assuring that the school continues to thrive. Members include parents, alumni and community leaders.

**Board Room.** Large meeting room used by the Board of Trustees, Parents' Association and other groups, located on the upper level of the Lower School Media Center. Use must be scheduled by the Business Office.

**Bookstore.** Located near the Lower School dining room, directly ahead of Middle School Commons. Place where school supplies and books can be purchased. All purchases are billed on the monthly statement. MS and US students and parents sign for purchases; LS students may purchase supplies with a note from parents.

**Breckparents.org.** Web community for Breck parents, containing news, resources and photo galleries.

**Business Office.** Responsible for the finances of the school, including monthly bills. Located across the hall from the Administrative Office.

**Camps** (MS and US). Overnight, grade-oriented camps at the beginning of the school year, located at various places in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Opportunity for bonding, environmental study and special topics.

**C.A.R.E.** (Character Always, Respect Everyday). A Lower School program designed to teach and reinforce character traits. Monthly themes are introduced in Community Meeting and integrated into classroom lessons and activities.

**Car Line.** Pickup point for students not riding the bus. Teachers supervise LS students until 3:30 PM. LS student bus riders must give their teacher a note to be dismissed in Car Line.

**Chapel.** Regular services in the Chapel include singing, prayers, talks about the spiritual and ethical sides of our lives and student performances. Parents are always welcome to these interfaith services and can usually find room at the back after children are seated. Schedules: All School (grades 1-12), first Tuesday of each month at 8:35 AM; LS grades 1-4 Tuesdays at 8:35 AM; LS grades 1/2, 3/4, alternating Fridays at 8:35 AM; MS Fridays at 2:45 PM; MS Grade-level Tuesdays at 2:45 PM; US Tuesdays at 10:10 and Thursdays at 9:45 AM.

**Chapel Buddies.** Seniors and first graders paired for All-School chapels and activities throughout the year.

**Class Coordinator.** Parent volunteer for each classroom in LS and each grade level in MS and US. Responsibilities include coordinating parent volunteers for field trips and enhancing communication. For more information, see the Breck directory.

**Closing Exercises** (LS and MS) End-of-year program in the Chapel featuring performances and a reception. Parents are encouraged to attend. LS ceremony has musical performances by each grade and presentation of the fourth-grade class. MS ceremony includes songs, awards, eighth-grade speeches and eighth-grade graduation.

**Clubs/Committees** (MS and US). Examples of these extracurricular activities include Math League, Quiz Bowl, International Club, Student Council, Service Executive Board, Upper School Disciplinary Action Committee, Chess Club, Multicultural Club, *Mustang* (yearbook), *Voice* (newspaper) and *Ars Nova* (literary magazine).

**College Counseling Office.** Directs college testing, plans college information sessions and helps in the college selection process. Handles needs for school transcripts. Located near the US office.

**College Nights** (US). Sessions for students and parents. Usually one session for seniors, which includes a Financial Aid workshop, one for juniors, and a College Forum, which includes representatives from colleges and universities.

**College Testing** (US). Multiple testing days at various sites. Includes ACT (American College Testing) for juniors and seniors, PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) for sophomores and juniors, SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) for juniors and seniors and SAT II, a battery of selected achievement tests for juniors and seniors. See calendar.

**Colonial Fair** (MS). Sixth graders invite their families to this evening event, a culmination of their extended unit on Colonial America.

**Communications Department.** Responsible for public relations, printing, marketing, media relations, the school website and publications such as *Today at Breck* and *Monthly Mail*. Located across the hall from the Administrative Office.

**Communion Breakfasts.** The ancient sacrament of the Lord's Supper celebrated six times during the year. A family-style breakfast follows a 7:30 AM service, done by 8:25 AM. All are invited and welcome.

**Community Meeting.** LS: Gathering for students and teachers in grades 1-4 in the theatre, featuring announcements and C.A.R.E. themes; MS: Student/faculty meeting of announcements, speakers and the opportunity to express concerns and extend invitations Mondays at 10 AM.

**Community Outreach Committee.** Parents' Association committee that plans and carries out service activities designed for whole-family participation.

**Comprehensive Exams** (MS and US). Tests given at the end of each semester, covering all material studied, commonly known as finals. Seventh graders take exams in the spring; eighth graders and US students take exams both semesters.

**Conferences.** Individual meetings between parents and teachers or advisors to discuss students' progress, scheduled at least twice a year. Additional conferences may be arranged if requested.

**Convocation.** The special and first All-School Chapel of the year.

**Cum Laude Dinner** (US). Event honoring students (and their parents) in grades 11 & 12 who have achieved a GPA of 3.666 or higher and have been selected by the faculty as possessing exceptional qualities such as leadership.

**Dean of Students** (MS and US). MS: dean in charge of student schedules, academics and discipline (one each for grades 5/6 and 7/8). US: dean in charge of student social, extracurricular and disciplinary activities.

**Dean of Studies** (US). Handles all concerns related to academic life, scheduling, permanent student records and graduation requirements.

**Development Office.** Coordinates Breck's fund raising and alumni activities. Located across the hall from the Administrative Office.

**Division Head.** Administrator in charge of each division: Lower, Middle and Upper School.

**Drama/Musicals.** LS: programs throughout the year, including the Fourth Grade Performance. MS production in the theater each spring. US Fall drama(s) and spring musical. MS and US productions involve tryouts, after school rehearsals and advance ticket sales.

**Encore.** Parent organization that provides assistance and support to performing arts programs.

**ERB** (Educational Records Bureau). Aptitude/achievement tests given annually in grades 3-9 to measure student academic ability and achievement in specific subject areas.

**Extended Day** (Grades preschool-6). After-school supervised care provided by arrangement and for a fee.

**Faculty Chair.** Honorary recognition of excellence in teaching, endowed by generous donors and held by teachers for a three-year term.

**Faculty/Staff Appreciation Day.** A day to honor all the staff at Breck. The Parents' Association provides gifts, and parents are encouraged to write notes to express appreciation.

**Field Day** (Grades 1-4). A festive spring afternoon with a picnic, races and other games. Parents are invited.

**Fieldhouse.** Multi-purpose gym, running track, training room, locker rooms and gym store.

**Glass Balcony.** Meeting space upstairs from the US Dining Room.

**Graduation.** LS: Fourth graders are honored at a dinner and given ribbons to sign and wear to Closing Exercises. MS: Eighth graders are recognized at Closing Exercises and at a lunch and special graduation dance for grades 7 & 8. US: Commencement ceremony in the Chapel for all seniors who have completed graduation requirements. Parents may invite as many guests as they wish; no tickets are required, and all are welcome.

**Grandparents' Day.** A beloved annual tradition. On the day before Thanksgiving, grandparents and other special people are invited to attend school with students. Invitations are mailed. School is dismissed at noon.

**Guidance Committee.** Each division has an academic and social/emotional oversight group that meets weekly.

**Gym B.** The small gym located just off Anderson Gym.

**Gym C.** Located on the hallway just inside the MS entrance.

**Gym Store.** Place where students check out athletic uniforms, buy sweatshirts and gym uniforms and order letter jackets. Bills are charged to the student account. Located in the fieldhouse. An online gym store featuring Breck spiritwear is on the website, [www.breckschool.org](http://www.breckschool.org).

**Halloween.** Celebrated by coming to school dressed in costume. Specific policies vary by division.

**Handbooks.** Detailed documents containing rules, disciplinary procedures and information for each division. Sent to each family in the back-to-school mailing. Required reading for all MS and US students and LS parents.

**Head of School.** Leader who oversees all divisions and the overall operation of the school. Office located within the Administrative Office area.

**Health Center.** Where students go when sick, injured or scheduled to take medication (with written parental permission only). Where parents pick up students who are sick enough to go home. Located just inside Door D (Middle School Entrance).

**History Day (MS).** Display and judging of student projects related to the national History Day theme. Parents are invited.

**Homecoming** All-school community and alumni event with sports, food and activities sponsored by the Breck Alumni Association. Students from all grades and parents are welcome.

**Homecoming Dance (US).** Dressy dance following the Homecoming football game. Dates aren't necessary.

**Honors Papers (MS & US).** Collection of exemplary student work.

**Intramural Athletics (grades 4-6).** After-school sports program, two days a week for six weeks. Offerings vary.

**Jump-a-thon (grades 3 & 4).** American Heart Association-sponsored jump rope event to emphasize the heart and healthy bodies. Children may find sponsors, but fitness is the goal. Information is sent home with students.

**Junior Parking Lot (US).** Permit parking in the lot located by the American Legion building near Highway 100.

**Kindergarten 3/2 Entry Option.** Program allowing kindergartners currently in the half-day program to attend full days Tuesday-Thursday. Enrollment in September, November, January and April. See the calendar and teacher.

**Kindergarten Water Day.** Traditional event in which hoses and sprinklers turn the courtyard playground into a beach area for water activities. Sorry, parents, kindergartners only!

**Lifer.** Student who has been at Breck since kindergarten or preschool.

**Lower School.** Division including grades preschool-four.

**Lower School Office** Office hours are 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM, and the phone number is 763-381-8221. Located at the Lower School entrance.

**Main Dining Room.** Dining facility for US students, faculty and staff. Located inside the US entrance.

**Master Teacher.** Faculty member honored for exceptional leadership and professionalism.

**Masterpiece Art (LS).** Presentation and discussion of artworks by trained parent volunteers in K-4 classrooms. See the classroom teacher or parent representative to volunteer.

**Math League (US and MS by invitation).** Extracurricular group competing like an interscholastic sports team.

**May Program (US).** Concentrated time of specialized learning after final exams for the last two weeks of school. Grade 9 & 10 students take mini-courses on campus, some required and some elective. Grade 11 & 12 students may choose an off-campus service project (required before graduation), educational trip or business internship.

**Middle School.** Division including grades five-eight.

**Middle School Office.** Office hours are 7:30 AM– 4:00 PM, and the phone number is 763-381-8213. Located directly inside Door D.

**Mission.** Breck's mission is to prepare each student for a college whose culture is compatible with the individual's needs, interests and abilities; help develop each student's unique talents and potential to excel by nurturing independence and self-worth; and instill in each student a deep sense of social responsibility.

**Monthly Mail.** Packet of news from Breck the second Wednesday of each month. Includes the *Monthly Mail* newsletter and other information. Sent home with the youngest student in the family (mailed to families whose youngest student is in MS & US).

**Mustang.** School mascot and the name of the yearbook.

**Mustang Intramural Athletics (MIP)** (Grades 4-6). After-school sports and activities program.

**Mustang Lot.** Parking lot south of the school on Ottawa Avenue. Some spaces are reserved for faculty, staff and students; many are available for parents and visitors.

**New Parent Mentor.** Program that connects all parents new to Breck with current parents to provide information and guidance on school matters.

**New Student/New Parent Orientation**  
An afternoon to help new students and parents get acquainted with the school. Starts with an assembly in the Chapel and includes meeting teachers, locating classrooms, lockers, etc. Parents may ask questions of division heads, teachers and other parents.

**“Pack the Gym” Night.** Evening when students, parents and friends are encouraged to turn out and cheer the varsity basketball team. See calendar.

**Parent Bulletin Boards.** Weekly e-mail tips and reminders coordinated by the Parents’ Association and sent to all parents by the Communications office.

**Parent Coalition.** Parents’ Association committee working to reduce students’ use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

**Parent Education Committee.** Parents’ Association committee that plans parenting speakers and events.

**Parent Meetings.** Informal gatherings for parents at each grade level to promote socializing and sharing of information.

**Parent/Student Athletic Meetings** (US, some MS). Meetings held before each sports season (fall, winter, spring) for parents, athletes and coaches. Coaches and teams are introduced and parents get the scoop on practices, plans, etc.

**Parent Talk Time,** usually monthly, set aside for parents from each division to gather for conversation in a group facilitated by the division’s consulting psychologist. See the calendar.

**Parents’ Association.** Group consisting of all parents/ guardians of Breck students, focusing on activities that promote communication, volunteerism and parent education. General (all-school) meetings alternate with division-specific meetings; all meetings are open and all parents are welcome. See the calendar.

**Parking.** Numbered parking slots are assigned to faculty, staff and students. Parents are urged not to park in those spaces during the school day. Visitor spaces are marked.

**Performance Nights.** LS: Holiday program of music and dance. MS and US: Several evenings throughout the year to display student achievements in the arts. See the calendar.

**Performing Arts Wing.** Area that includes spaces for music, drama, dance, band and orchestra programs.

**Project Adventure.** (MS and US) Indoor and outdoor activities designed to help students define their comfort zone and challenge themselves to test their own boundaries.

**Prom** (Grades 11 & 12). Off-campus formal dance for junior and senior students and their dates. Limousines and extravagant dinners are strongly discouraged.

**Publishing** (LS). Program to “publish” students’ written work in book form. Parent volunteers provide word processing, binding and laminating of students’ books. For more information, contact the teacher or class representative.

**Quest** (Grades 11 & 12). The quest for knowledge and/or service, here it's the off-campus internship and service component of the May Program.

**Quiz Bowl** (US). Competition between schools set up like a game show with questions and buzzers. Varsity and junior varsity teams.

**SCRAM** (MS). Time in the school day used for Study hall, Chapel, Reading, Assembly and Meetings.

**SEB** (US) The Service Executive Board, which advises and supports the Wednesday Service program.

**Senior Courtyard**. Outdoor atrium designed and built by the Class of '98.

**Senior Lot**. Permit parking for seniors across from the tennis courts.

**Senior Lounge**. Room next to the college counseling office.

**Senior Party**. Parent-sponsored all-night, alcohol/drug-free affair for Breck seniors only, held immediately following graduation. Parents do all the work, keeping details secret.

**Senior Pinning**. Special traditional dinner ceremony for seniors and their parents, held in the late spring.

**Senior Privileges**. Allow seniors with parental permission to leave campus during free hours and lunch.

**Senior Speeches**. Required speeches by each senior on a topic of his/her choice during a US chapel. Parents are encouraged to attend.

**Senior Weekend**. Overnight camp, usually including a class service project.

**Service Learning**. LS and MS: grade-level projects involving community service both inside and outside the school. US: Known as the Wednesday program, a program for all US students and faculty that matches students with a service site every Wednesday during the school year.

**Service Requirement** (US). Each US student must complete 20 hours of in-school service. Examples include working at the Special Olympics or serving as a tour guide during admissions events.

**Snow Days** (US). Dressy winter dance where the girls usually invite the boys, though dates aren't necessary.

**Space Night** (MS). Fifth graders invite their families to this evening, an interdisciplinary celebration of space.

**Student Absence Agreement Form**. Form required prior to any non-vacation or non-illness absence. Must be completed by students, faculty and parents in order for students to have opportunities to make up work.

**Student Council**. Each division's student government with representatives from each grade.

**Summer Programs** (LS & MS). Offerings such as Summer Academy for academic support, adventure sports, culture/ language and arts camps, and Red Cross swim lessons.

**Testing and Guidance Office**. Administers and helps interpret the school's comprehensive testing program and coordinates the academic and social, emotional and personal support services throughout the school. These services include the community-based consulting psychologists, tutors, health instructors, resource teachers and mentors. Located in the US office.

**Today at Breck**. Quarterly newsletter for alumni, parents, grandparents and friends produced by the Communications office.

**Tour de Breck**. Annual runt bike race to raise student awareness of an participation in the Annual Fund.

**Transportation Department**. In charge of the Breck buses. Also assigns parking spots and permits. Located directly inside Door D (MS entrance).

**Trustee Day.** Opportunity for the school community to thank the trustees for their service and for the trustees to experience the school through the eyes of the students. Held each spring.

**Tutorial Period.** MS: Scheduled time for students to study or meet with faculty. US: Non-class time for students when teachers are all available and the media and computer centers are open. Teachers may require review sessions during this time. Students are expected to use this time to ask for help.

**UpDAC (US).** Upper School Disciplinary Advisory Committee. Student-led group addressing issues and/or infractions related to student behavior.

**Upper School.** Division that includes grades nine-twelve.

**Upper School Conference Room.** Meeting space next to Development Office, across the hall from Administrative Office.

**Upper School Office.** Office hours are 7:45 AM - 4:15 PM, and the phone number is 763-381-8210. Located along the US hallway.

**Used Book Sale (MS and US).** Families are given a 25% credit on the original textbook's cost if the book is in good condition. Books are collected in May and sold in the fall at 50% off the original price. The money supports student activities.

**Used Uniform Sale (LS and MS).** Parents' Association-sponsored sales of gently used uniforms before the start of school and on conference days. Proceeds support some of the "extras" for families on financial aid.

**The Voice (US).** Student newspaper.

**Washington, DC Trip (Grade 6).** Teacher-chaperoned trip to Washington, DC at the end of the school year. Includes reports done especially in preparation, and celebrates a yearlong study of United States history.

**Website.** Breck web addresses include [www.breckschool.org](http://www.breckschool.org) (primarily for admissions and other external audiences), [www.breckparents.org](http://www.breckparents.org) (news, resources and photo galleries for parents), [breckalumni.org](http://breckalumni.org) (news and information for alumni) and [intranet.breckschool.org](http://intranet.breckschool.org) (for students and faculty). The latter three sites require a password for access.

**Wigley Awards.** Annual recognition of excellence in teaching presented to a teacher in each division during Faculty/Staff Appreciation Day chapel. Named after the late Jean Wigley, a Breck grandmother.

**Yearbook.** Called the *Mustang*, it's produced by US students and covers the entire school. Each year, the students honor a faculty member by dedicating the yearbook to him/her.

**Zero Tolerance.** Breck School position on weapons possession. The school will not tolerate the possession of any weapon by any person and will make no exceptions enforcing this policy. See handbooks.

