

Calypso Elementary
1021 Calypso Ave.
Bethlehem, PA 18018
Phone: 610-691-0152

Welcome to the 2026–2027 School Year!



Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

Welcome to Calypso Elementary School! I am thrilled to welcome you to an exciting and successful 2026-2027 school year. This handbook has been designed to furnish you with essential information regarding Calypso's and Bethlehem Area School District's policies and procedures.

On behalf of our dedicated faculty and staff, I extend a warm invitation for you to actively participate in our school community. Whether by volunteering, attending school programs, or engaging with our Parent-Teacher Council (PTC), your involvement makes a vital difference.

At Calypso Elementary, we truly believe that strong partnerships between home and school are the foundation of student success. We are honored to guide, teach, and celebrate your child throughout this upcoming academic year. Please never hesitate to reach out to our secretary, teachers, or administration whenever you have questions, concerns, or ideas. Thank you for your continued trust, support, and dedication to making Calypso a wonderful place to learn and grow. Let's make the 2026-2027 school year extraordinary!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Cierech

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JC', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Principal, Calypso Elementary School



Staff Directory (2026–2027)

Name	Position
Jennifer Cierech	Principal
Lora Alvarez	Instructional Support Assistant
Kyle Craven	Digital Literacy Teacher
Katherine Cruz	Art Teacher
Kelly Danyi	Special Education Teacher
Danielle DosSantos	2 nd Grade Teacher
James Downing	Head Custodian
Alyssa Felix	Special Education Teacher
Lizzette Fernandez	2nd Shift Custodian
Jacquelynn Figueroa	Kindergarten Teacher
Erin Fraser	Vocal Music Teacher
Maureen Hart-Fritchman	School Nurse
Christine Grasser	Kindergarten Teacher
Kim Gutekunst	Instructional Support Assistant
Jessica Holzer	Daycare Supervisor
Nicole Huie	Instrumental Music Teacher
Jillian Krill	General Duty Aide
Diana Krupka	ELL Teacher
Michelle Lesinski	School Psychologist

Megan Markwich	Spanish Teacher
Marleen Mendez	Kindergarten Teacher
Alyssa Mengel	1 st Grade Teacher
Colleen McCyntire	Reading Specialist
Heather Miller	4 th Grade Teacher
Jesi Moser	Instructional Support Assistant
Amy Musella	Speech/Language Pathologist
Dina Ondria	General Duty Aide
Jodi Ortiz	Associate Nurse
Katia Rodriguez	5th Grade Teacher
Melissa Rosario	Secretary
Mike Sames	5 th Grade Teacher
Amanda Shuler	3 rd Grade Teacher
Miriam Siddiqui	School Counselor
Joe Snow	Physical Education Teacher
Katie Spengler	4 th Grade Teacher
Michele Stine	3 rd Grade Teacher
Sue Walker	2 nd Grade Teacher
Sue Windfelder	1 st Grade Teacher

*🤝 Creating the Optimum Learning Environment

Parental Responsibilities

To Your Child:

- Discuss school activities with interest and enthusiasm.
- Ask open-ended questions and listen attentively.
- Show interest in grades, but stress the process of learning.
- Encourage independence and responsibility.
- Require thorough and timely completion of assignments.

- Stress sensitivity to and respect for all people.
- Provide a quiet study area free of distractions.
- Send your child to school well-rested and well-fed.
- Provide enriching activities to stimulate your child's brain.

To Your Child's School:

- Maintain frequent contact with teachers.
- Ascertain both sides of a situation before forming an opinion.
- Be active in school activities and support PTC events.
- Support the *Leader in Me* program and school rules.
- Keep sick children home and submit an absence excuse upon return.
- Always enter through the main front door and sign in at the office.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Be well-prepared to teach each student.
- Be encouraging, patient, fair, and discreet.
- Be an active listener.
- Foster consistent, open communication between home and school.

Student Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Conduct yourself appropriately for learning.
- Respect fellow students, teachers, staff, and visitors.
- Be a leader and demonstrate self-discipline.



Daily Schedule & Arrival / Dismissal

Schedule

- **8:40 AM** – Breakfast in Cafeteria
- **8:55 AM** – Doors Open, Morning Routines & Classes Begin
- **9:05 AM** – Tardy Bell (***Late students must be signed in by an adult***)
- **3:35 PM** – Dismissal for Kinder and 1st
- **3:40 PM** - Student Dismissal

Drop-Off & Arrival Guidelines



Arrival Times & Supervision

- **Arrival Time:** Students should arrive at 8:55 a.m. dressed for the weather and report to their class line on the playground blacktop.
- **Supervision Warning:** Please try not to arrive much before 8:50 a.m. Adult supervision from the staff is not available until 8:55 a.m., and doors remain locked (except for breakfast, safety patrol, or before-school programs)
- Please line up on the blacktop where your designated class is located. When the bell rings at 8:55, proceed to your assigned entrance. We welcome adults to supervise their children during this time.

Lateness

- If your child is late to school, a parent must accompany that child to the

- office and provide a written excuse.
- Per district policy, any lateness of more than 5% of the school day will count towards an absence. **This means that minutes matter.**

Car Drop-Off Rules

Drop-off is encouraged and safest along the curb on Calypso Ave. (one-way heading east between 10th & 9th Aves.):

- Drop off on Calypso Avenue in front of the school; students head straight to the blacktop.
- North side drop-off (past the school): Students must walk to the corner (9th or 10th Ave.) and **use the crosswalk with guard/patrol supervision.**
-  **Strictly Prohibited: Do not drop children off in the middle of the street, especially on 9th and 10th Avenue!** If you pull over to let students out on 9th or 10th Avenue, students should get out of the car, **on the side of the sidewalk, walk on the sidewalk, and cross at the corner/crosswalk.** Please **do not allow students to cross in the middle of the street and not at a corner!**
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Parking & Walking

- If you walk your child to the building: Park on 9th or 10th Ave. or on Calypso Ave. *outside* the drop-off block. **Always cross at the corners using designated crosswalks.**

Building Entrance & Parent Access

- Staff will bring students into the building for the first week. Parents must remain outside during student entry and are not permitted to walk children to classrooms.
- Main Office Visits: Parents with office business may enter only **after** all students have safely entered the building. You must ring the bell and be let in by the secretary.
- Late Arrivals: Staff will remain at the main door until 9:00: a.m. to admit late-arriving students. Please ring the doorbell to be let in by the secretary.

Entrance Doors by Grade Level

- **Main Entrance:** Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2
- **10th Avenue Entrance:** Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5

General Policies & Guidelines

Attendance & Absence Notes

- **As a BASD community, we know how important in-person attendance is. When students are not in class, they are not able to learn to their fullest potential.**

- Written excuses or ParentSquare messages signed by a parent/guardian or doctor are required within **3 days** of an absence, or it will be marked unlawful.
- **Perpetual Tardiness:** Arriving after 9:00 AM results in missed instructional time and may lead to legal notices.
- Up to 10 cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification are permitted during a school year; all absences beyond the 10-day limit require a note by either the physician who treated the child or the physician supervising the treatment of the child or other legally verifiable absent (example: court appearance).
- **Educational Trips:** Request forms must be submitted to the office at least **10 days in advance**.
- **Elementary Level:** Permitted to take four (4) educational trips, up to a cumulative recommended maximum of fifteen (15) school days during their tenure in elementary school. Educational trips should not exceed five (5) days per a given school year (not to exceed the 15 stated).

Health & Sick Day Rules

Keep your child home if they exhibit any of the following:

- **Fever:** Must be fever-free (below 100°F) for **24 hours without fever-reducing medication** before returning.
- **Vomiting:** Must keep food down for at least 24 hours before returning.
- **Severe Symptoms:** Stay home if showing severe respiratory or illness symptoms.

Medication Policy & Guidelines

- **Minimize School Doses:** Please avoid sending medications to school whenever possible. For prescription medications that require 4 doses a day, consult your doctor about scheduling them before school, after school, at dinner, and at bedtime.
- **Chronic Conditions & Daily Meds:** If your child must take medication during school hours to manage a medical condition, contact the school nurse immediately. There is paperwork that needs to be filled out.
- **Required Documentation:** A formal BASD Medication Form must be completed by your physician and signed by a parent/guardian before *any* medication (prescription or over-the-counter) can be administered at school. Staff cannot handle or give unapproved medications.
- **Questions?** Contact our school nurse, Maureen Hart-Fritchman, or the main office for assistance with health plans and paperwork.

Cafeteria & Meals

- **Breakfast:** Free for all students (8:40 AM – 8:55 AM).
- **Lunch: Free for all students-** Calypso is lucky to be selected as a “free lunch pilot program” school.
- Parents/visitors are not permitted to eat lunch in the cafeteria with students

Cafeteria Expectations.

- Due to student allergies, food sharing is prohibited.

- Stay in line when getting trays and food
- Walk slowly and carefully
- Eat and talk quietly
- No exchanging of food
- Remain seated while eating
- Clean individual eating area and return own tray
- Leave in an orderly manner when dismissed – no running



Homework Standards

- **Grades 1–2:** Maximum 30 minutes daily.
- **Grades 3–5:** Maximum 60 minutes daily.
- *Homework Requests for Absent Students:* Call the office by 9:30 AM; pick up work between 3:15 PM and 3:45 PM.

Parents can help to make homework a worthwhile and satisfying experience for their children by:

- Expressing a positive interest in and support for the work and projects the child brings home.
- Serving as a consultant about problems, while having your child do the actual work.
- Encourage the child, stimulate his/her thinking, and help him/ her to understand more abstract concepts.
- Assist in drill and memorization of basic facts.
- Provide a quiet, well-lit study environment in the home.
- Select a set time for your child to do their homework each day.
- Cooperate with the child's teacher to make homework more effective.
- Inform your child's teacher about any difficulties he/she is experiencing.



Visitors & Safety

- Entry is strictly through the main front door via the buzzer system.
- All visitors/volunteers must sign in at the office with a **valid driver's license or state ID**.
- Volunteers must have updated, completed background clearances on file with the District. We also need to have them on file in our office.



Books, Devices & School Supplies

- **Responsibility:** Students are responsible for textbooks, library books, and Chromebooks.
- **Damaged/Lost Items:** Families must pay for any damaged or lost items.
- **Taking Items Home:** Books and supplies may be taken home only with teacher permission.

- **Cell phones and any other electronic device** (other than the district-issued Chromebook) **must be turned off and out of sight during the school day.**



Clothing, Dress Code & Lost and Found

- **Weather-Appropriate Wear:** Send children with proper outerwear (raincoats, winter coats, boots, hats).
- **Indoor Rules:** Hats and other headwear must be removed upon entering the building.
- **Daily Take-Home:** All outer clothing must go home daily.
- **Labeling & Lost and Found:** Label all personal items. Unclaimed items in the cafeteria's Lost and Found bin are displayed during conferences and donated at the end of the school year.



Teacher Communication

- **Best Contact Methods:** ParentSquare, email, or voicemail are the ways to reach teachers. Please allow sufficient time for a response, as our staff is working throughout the day and their contractual day ends at 3:55. As a friendly reminder, teachers are not obligated to respond immediately to a ParentSquare message and if immediate assistance is needed, please contact Mrs. Rosario, Mrs. Cierech or Mrs. Sid.
- **Classroom Boundaries:** To respect instructional time, teachers will not be unexpectedly pulled from class or delayed during arrival/dismissal for impromptu meetings.



Emergency Closings & Inclement Weather

- **Plan Ahead:** Ensure your child knows where to go if school closes early.
- **Notifications:** Closings are determined by the Superintendent and broadcast via ParentLink and local radio stations (**WAEB 790 AM, WFMZ 100.7 FM, WZZO 95.1 FM**). Please do not call the main office.



Before & After School Daycare

- **Contact:** On-site daycare is available. Contact Supervisor **Mrs. Holzer at 610-861-0511** for hours, fees, and details. jholzer@basdschools.org



Field Trips

- **Permissions:** An annual permission slip covers general trips, but specific event notices will also be sent home. Signed slips are required for participation.



Early Dismissal Requests

- **Procedure:** Send a note or ParentSquare message specifying the pick-up time. An adult must present a note and sign the student out in the main office.
- **Restrictions:** Unaccompanied dismissals or early departures for non-school extracurricular activities (e.g., private lessons) are not permitted.



Report Cards & Grading

- **Assessment:** Progress is evaluated using a **4, 3, 2, 1** rating scale on summative assessments. Overall course letter grades/averages are no longer reported for math and literacy.



Right to Know (ESSA)

- **Staff Qualifications:** As a Title I school, parents may request information on the professional credentials of teachers and paraprofessionals. Contact Supervisor Eric Fontanez (efontanez@basdschools.org | 610-861-0500) with questions.



Counseling & Leadership

- **School Counselor:** Miss Siddiqui is available for support; students must ask their teacher before visiting.
- **MTSS:** At times throughout your child's education, there may be a time when additional academic or social-emotional support is needed. The Multi-tiered support system, with 3 levels of support, is established to help determine the most appropriate steps for intervention.
- At times, outside services may be recommended, and Ms. Siddiqui will be available to help to coordinate and connect families with this level of support, if needed.
- **Student Leadership:** Students can apply for the **Student Lighthouse Team (SLHT)**, advised by Miss Siddiqui.



Media & Safety Regulations

- **Visitors:** Entry requires buzzing in at the front door, presenting a state ID/driver's license, and wearing a visitor's badge.
- **Volunteers:** Incident-free background clearances are mandatory prior to volunteering.
- **Photo/Video Consent:** Indicate your recording permissions on the annual Parent Permission Form.
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Parent-Teacher Council (PTC)

- **President:** Katrina Miller
- **Vice President:** Kelly Pierce
- **Secretary:** Britabella Melendez
- **Treasurer:** Ariel Vash
- **Members-at-Large:** Holly Mongi and Tim Porcelli

Contact / Volunteer: Email President@CalypsoPTC.org to participate in events like the Cougar Prowl, Book Fairs, Bingo Nights, and Read-a-Thons!



The Heart of Calypso: Why Our Parent-Teachers of Calypso Need You!

At Calypso Elementary, our **Parent-Teacher Council (PTC)** is the driving engine behind so many of the joyful moments, extra opportunities, and community traditions that make our school special.

From organizing memorable events like the Cougar Prowl, Family Bingo Nights, Paint Night, and dances, to funding educational field trips, classroom supplies, assemblies, and staff appreciation, **our PTC works tirelessly to enrich the elementary experience for every single student and staff member.**

We Can't Do It Without You—We Need Your Help!

A strong, active school community depends on the partnership of our families. Whether you can lend a hand for an hour at a book fair, share fresh ideas at a meeting, or take on a leadership role, **your time and voice matter.**

- **No Huge Time Commitment Required:** Volunteering looks different for everyone! Whether you can help out once a month, once a year, or assist behind the scenes from home, every bit counts.
- **Stay Connected:** Attending PTC meetings is the best way to stay in the loop about school events, hear directly from administration and teachers, and share your ideas for our school community.
- **Build Lasting Connections:** Joining the PTC is a wonderful way to meet other Calypso parents, build friendships, and show your child how much you value their education.

How to Get Involved

Please consider attending our monthly PTC meetings—offered at flexible morning, afternoon, and virtual evening times throughout the school year!

- **Reach Out:** Email us anytime at **President@CalypsoPTC.org** or **calypsoptc@gmail.com**.
- **Come to a Meeting:** Check ParentSquare and the Calypso website for upcoming PTC meeting dates.

Volunteers for classrooms:

- **Extra Help Appreciated:** We welcome parents and guardians who wish to share their time and help build a healthy, safe learning environment!
- **Clearance Requirements:** To ensure student safety, all volunteers must complete incident-free background checks before volunteering.
- **How to Get Started:** Obtain clearance information via the **BASD District Volunteer Packet** online or by calling the school office.
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2026–2027 Title I Parent & Family Engagement Plan

(Every Student Succeeds Act - ESSA, Section 1116)

In accordance with federal Title I guidelines (ESSA, Section 1116), Calypso Elementary School is committed to building strong, collaborative partnerships with our families. We ensure that all information regarding school programs, meetings, and activities is communicated clearly and provided in accessible formats and languages that families can understand.

Policy Development & Access

Our Parent and Family Engagement Policy is:

- Jointly Developed: Created and agreed upon in collaboration with Title I parents and family members.
- Accessible: Written in clear, understandable language and translated into families' native languages whenever feasible.
- Widely Distributed: Provided to all families and made available to our local school community.
- Annually Reviewed: Updated every year at a PTC/Parent Committee meeting to reflect the evolving needs of our students, families, and school.

Annual Title I Meeting & Family Involvement

- Annual Open House: All parents and family members are warmly invited and encouraged to attend our Annual Title I Meeting held during our Fall Open House. At this meeting, we explain our Title I participation, review program requirements, share curriculum and assessment details, and outline opportunities for family involvement.
- Ongoing Engagement & Review: Parents and family members are vital partners in reviewing and improving our Title I programs, Schoolwide Program Plan, and Parent-Student Compact throughout the school year.

Note: Additional workshop dates and event updates will be shared via ParentSquare, monthly newsletters, and our school website.

IMPORTANT DATES:

School Session Begins Monday, August 24, 2026

Early Dismissal/Half-Day In-service Friday, August 28, 2026

Schools Closed (Labor Day) Monday, September 7, 2026

Schools Closed (Yom Kippur) Monday, September 21, 2026

Early Dismissal/Half-Day In-service Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Early Dismissal/Half-Day (**MS & HS only**) Wednesday, October 28, 2026

Schools Closed (Teacher In-service Day) Tuesday, November 3, 2026
(Election Day)

Schools Closed (Thanksgiving) Wednesday, November 25, 2026 – Monday, November 30, 2026. Schools

Reopen Tuesday, December 1, 2026

Schools Closed (Christmas/Winter Break) Monday, December 21, 2026 – Friday, January 1, 2027

Schools Reopen Monday, January 4, 2027

Schools Closed (Martin Luther King) Monday, January 18, 2027

Early Dismissal/Half-Day (**MS only**) Thursday, January 21, 2027

First Semester Ends Thursday, January 21, 2027

Second Semester Starts Friday, January 22, 2027

Schools Closed (Teacher In-service Day) Friday, February 12, 2027

Schools Closed (Presidents' Day) Monday, February 15, 2027*

Schools Closed (Easter/Spring Break) Thursday, March 25, 2027* –
Monday, March 29, 2027*

Schools Reopen Tuesday, March 30, 2027

Early Dismissal/Half-Day (**MS & HS only**) Tuesday, April 6, 2027

Schools Closed **PRIMARY ELECTION DAY – DATE TBD**

Schools Closed (Memorial Day) Monday, May 31, 2027

Liberty Graduation Wednesday, June 2, 2027

Freedom Graduation Thursday, June 3, 2027

Last Day of Instruction for K-11 Monday, June 7, 2027