

Poolesville Students, Staff, and Families,

"Even though the future seems far away, it is actually beginning right now." — Mattie Stepanek

Table of Contents

1. This Week's Schedule
2. Falcon Congratulations!
3. Second Semester Reminders and Expectations
4. Senior Parent Information Night
5. Athletic Booster Club Update
6. Weekly Classroom Assessment Schedule - REMINDER
7. Student Parking - Seniors Only!
8. Class of 2025 - Graduation Orders
9. Semester 2 Schedules - REMINDER
10. MCPS Immigration and Hate-Bias Resources
11. Athletics Updates
12. College and Career Center Updates
13. SSL Updates
14. Construction Updates
15. Minority Scholars Program (MSP) Youth Anti-Racist Film Festival
16. MCPS Updates
17. Save-the-Dates

I want to begin this message with a bit of personal news that will have an impact on school operations. For the last few months, my father-in-law has been in declining health, and, unfortunately, the end is near. I will be on leave for approximately two weeks to be with my wife, son, and our extended family during this difficult time. Ms. Wilder will be the lead administrator in my absence. Ms. Wilder and the entire administrative team will be directly supported by our Director from the Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI), and I will be in frequent contact with the entire team. If the leave extends beyond two weeks, we will provide any necessary updates. I want to thank you for your understanding, partnership, and overall support of Poolesville High School.

This week, we welcome the end of the first semester *and* the beginning of the second semester. Falcons, I am so proud of the work you have done throughout the first semester, not to mention all that you do to make PHS a wonderful place for all students. As the first semester ends, I hope you take a moment to reflect on your accomplishments and challenges and take advantage of the new opportunities present in the new beginning of the second semester. There is no school for students on Wednesday, January 29, and we will be running an Advisory Schedule on Thursday to recommit to the expectations that make PHS a special place for teaching and learning. We are

always here to support you. Please see our [2024-25 Student Support Contacts](#) link if you need support.

This Week's Schedule

- **Monday**, January 27 - Standard Bell Schedule
- **Tuesday**, January 28 - Standard Bell Schedule - Final day of the second marking period.
- **Wednesday**, January 29 - Professional Day for Teachers - No school for students.
- **Thursday**, January 30 - Advisory Schedule - First day of the third quarter and second semester!
- **Friday**, January 31 - Standard Bell Schedule

You can find a complete schedule for the week in the [Parent Weekly Calendar](#). You can find the period-by-period schedule at [this link](#).

Falcon Congratulations!

Congratulations to Agneya Tharun for being named a Coca-Cola Scholar Regional Finalist. By being one of the 250 students in the nation (from a pool of 105,000+ applications) to be named a Regional Finalist, Agneya moves to the next round of the selection process to become a Coca-Cola Scholar and receive a \$20,000 college scholarship. You can read more about this accomplishment at [this link](#).

Congratulations to the Falcons on the Science Olympiad team for their success at their competition last weekend. We had a large number of students place in the Top Three in several categories:

- 1st place in Ecology - Sayan Chandaroy and Diya Kamalabharathy
- 3rd place in Geological Mapping - Mohammad Taariq Ashkar Ali and Justin Li
- 3rd place in Tower - Conrad Kim and Richard Bai
- 3rd place in Forensics - Jeff Hou and Daniel Martins Rocha
- 3rd place in Helicopter - Darren Booth and Richard Bai
- 3rd place in Entomology - Eunia Zhong and Gloria Badibanga

PHS utilizes a Within Our Walls (W.O.W.) celebration form to recognize those who make Poolsville a special place. If you would like to share a note of congratulations, admiration, or encouragement with a student or staff member, please take a moment to complete the [W.O.W. form](#). The following Falcon received shout-outs this past week:

- Ms. Adams
- Ms. Alves
- Jasmin Baltazar
- Aryana Basu-Mallik
- Adele Benkstein
- Mr. Carothers

- Claire Cheung
- Omar Elkoshairi
- Ms. Fisher
- Amelie Garrison
- Ms. Gomer
- Lila Hasty
- Ms. Heaton
- Saya Howell
- Tyler Izzo
- Will Jauch
- Soumya Kalapati
- Mr. Kanach
- Sammy Lu
- Kayla McCloskey
- Owen McIntyre
- Joelle Mitchell
- Pedro Nufio
- Ms. Pallik
- Hunter Quinn
- Ananya Ramesh
- Mr. Riggs
- Ben Ross
- Sai Senthil
- Olivia Schrider
- Grace Seo
- Meher Sharma
- Mr. Snow
- Megan Stallard
- Sanjana Thalvayapati
- Sawyer Thompson
- Genevie Trinh
- Adeline Vederman

Second Semester Reminders and Expectations

Falcons, as referenced in the introduction to this message, the second semester is a fresh start and a new beginning for all of us. As such, I want to remind you of our overall school community of our expectations and celebrations. First, we began the year discussing the importance of attendance during Falcon Time and Advisory. If there were not significant improvements, Falcon Time would be eliminated. I am so proud of how much the attendance has improved, and it serves as a reminder of our success when we commit to improvement. While attendance in

Falcon Time and Advisory will continue to be monitored, I ask that students and parents commit to being in first period when it begins at 7:45 and returning to fifth period on time after lunch. Consistent tardiness to first period will result in parent contact and a disciplinary referral, and repeated tardiness to fifth period can result in losing the privilege of the freedoms that open lunch provides. Just like with Advisory/Falcon Time, I know we can improve in these areas!

As an extension, our Falcons have been amazing at having their IDs out and ready when they arrive to school in the morning. I want to remind you that these IDs should be visible at all times, and, at the very least, they should be carried with you consistently. Students are expected to show their IDs when they return to school from lunch and at any time they are asked or when students return to the school. Thank you for your continued attention to this.

Finally, we have seen great improvements in appropriate use of cell phones during instructional times. Last week, we asked teachers to recommit to enforcing our [Personal Mobile Device Policy](#), which includes cell phones. Falcons, keep up the great work of not allowing the outside distractions that cell phones can bring distract from your engagement and academic success.

Senior Parent Information Night

This Tuesday, January 28, Senior parents are invited to a graduation informational zoom webinar at 7:00 pm. We will go through graduation and other important senior activities. There will be an opportunity to ask questions, as well. Our graduation coordinator, Ms. Grubb, and senior administrator, Ms. Williams will be on hand to support. Please join us using [this link](#), Webinar ID 851 0989 9424, and Passcode 192840.

Athletic Booster Club Update

This winter, Poolesville High School's gymnasium is under construction, limiting the opportunity to raise funds to support the athletic program. To help offset this lost revenue, the PHS Athletic Booster Club will be conducting a winter gift raffle. Each ticket you purchase will directly contribute to the Booster Club's efforts in making a meaningful impact for our student athletes. The final raffle will be held on Saturday, March 15, at 5:00 p.m. at Cugini's Restaurant and Bar. You can find more information about this and other Booster Club fundraisers on the [fundraising page](#) of their website.

Weekly Classroom Assessment Schedule - REMINDER

Beginning the first day of the second semester (January 30), PHS will implement a consistent classroom assessment schedule to limit the number of high stakes assessments students are asked to complete in a single day. This schedule was developed and proposed by the students who serve on the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) as a result of student feedback on the academic, mental, and emotional impact of having too many significant assessments during one school day. These students worked closely with our departmental resource teachers to develop a schedule

and guidelines that can reasonably be implemented by staff and positively impact student performance and well-being. You can find the schedule at [this link](#). Please contact your child's administrator with any questions or concerns.

Student Parking - Seniors Only

Reminder for our Seniors: Parking Passes are available now. Please see the information below.

Please note: Enforcement for second semester parking will begin on the first day of the second semester on Thursday, January 30. Seniors, student interns, and students taking approved courses off-site will be given priority for student parking spaces and will be approved for parking spaces on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please bring your applications to the front office. If parking spaces are still available after all priority students have purchased parking permits, grade 11 students will be eligible to purchase parking permits on a first-come, first-serve basis. Spring semester parking permits should be paid on School Cash Online (SCO) and cost \$39.00. The SCO link can be found on the PHS website.

All obligations must be cleared before parking permits are approved; obligation information can be seen on students' SCO accounts. Please find the Spring 2024-2025 parking application at [this link](#). All applicants must also complete the Parent Request for [Student Use of Private Vehicle form](#). If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Hillard, school business administrator, at 240-740-2400 or at Elizabeth.L.Hillard@mcpsmd.org. To be considered for a parking pass, students must have these two documents completed, as well as a copy of the student's driver's license and a copy of the payment receipt through SCO.

Class of 2025 - Graduation Orders

The 2025 Graduation is approaching. We look forward to supporting our seniors through the remainder of the school year and celebrating their achievements and positive impact on PHS at graduation! Please be sure to order your graduation package which includes a cap, gown, tassel, and stole using the Jostens [PHS Graduation link](#). Every senior must have these items to participate in graduation. ***Note: the price goes up \$5 after February 1.*** If you are using a sibling's gown, please make sure it fits correctly. You will just need to order the other individual items. You may purchase other items like announcements, name cards, thank you notes, and more. These items are optional. Place your order today! ***The final deadline to order is February 28.***

Semester 2 Schedules - REMINDER

MCPS courses are semester-based, which means the order of classes and teachers may change from semester 1 to semester 2. The schedule in Synergy StudentVue on the first day of semester 2 is the schedule the student will follow. Counselors are still finalizing semester 2 schedules and balancing classes. ***School counselors cannot make changes based on teacher preference and/or the order of classes.***

MCPS Immigration and Hate-Bias Resources

In December, Dr. Taylor [reaffirmed](#) that our schools are safe spaces for every student, *regardless of immigration status*. Students and families are encouraged to review this linked [document](#) and the MCPS Immigration [website](#) for information about rights, resources, and processes. In addition, students and families are encouraged to complete the [Hate-Bias Incident Reporting Form](#) to report any incidents of Hate-Bias based on personal characteristics that include race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.

Athletics Updates

Registration for Spring Sports opens on Monday, January 27, at noon through ParentVUE on Synergy. All students must be registered with an updated physical and approved prior to the season starting on March 1. Please see the linked letter for complete information ([English/Spanish](#)).

We have a busy upcoming week. We look forward to our students and community coming out to support all of the Falcon teams in a positive way. MCPS and PHS is committed to promoting a safe and welcoming environment for student-athletes, coaches, spectators, officials, and our communities. Make sure you follow us on our social media accounts for athletic updates and check the [schedule](#) so you can come support our Falcons. All students must have their ID to get into the events. Please follow the link for complete [Athletics Updates](#) for the week. You can contact Ms. Grubb (Regina_R_Grubb@mcpsmd.org) with any questions.

College and Career Center Updates

The annual MCPS & NAACP [HBCU Fair](#) will be held on Friday, February 14, from 6:00-8:30 p.m. at The Universities at Shady Grove. This event provides students in Grades 8-12 an opportunity to meet representatives from more than 50 HBCUs. The event will also feature a college preparation workshop for middle school students and parents, a discussion on college life, FAFSA completion assistance, scholarship information, and more. You can learn more through the linked flyers ([HBCU Flyer FAFSA](#) and [HBCU Flyer HS](#)). The HBCU Fair registration will open on Friday, December 13.

This week's visits include the Germantown Indoor Swim Center and Montgomery Village Aquatics to promote employment opportunities for students. Please follow the link for directions, a complete schedule, scholarship opportunities, and any additional updated [College and Career Center Updates](#). You can contact Ms. DeOto (Rosalie_A_DeOto@mcpsmd.org) with any questions.

SSL Updates

Please see [SSL Opportunities](#) for additional information. Please contact Ms. Martin (Barbara_J_Martin@mcpsmd.org) with any questions.

Construction Updates

The construction work for the upcoming week includes continuing the following:

Sitework:

- Continue piping install at main entrance of South Parking lot (Weather Dependent).

Auditorium Area:

- Continue painting in Auditorium Wing.
- Continue installation of lighting, speakers & trim out electrical devices in Auditorium.
- Complete all flooring & handrail installation in lobby & hallway.

Media Center Area:

- Complete & inspect under-slab roughins in Area-C.
- Pour concrete at Areas-C (Weather Dependent).
- MEP Rough-in & Install Hangers
- Continue swinging steel in Area-C.

Main Gym Area:

- MEP Rough-in & Install Hangers
- Deliver & start installing lockers in locker rooms.
- Run CMU walls in Gym Area.
- Framing at exterior canopy at health room.

Any updated, current test results can be found on the [project website](#) under the files tab.

Students can report any safety concerns using the [reporting form](#) that was developed by PHS administration.

Minority Scholars Program (MSP) Youth Anti-Racist Film Festival

The Minority Scholars Program (MSP) is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Youth Anti-Racist Film Festival in conjunction with Documentary Film Experts, Listen Tell Media. Cash Prize Awards up to \$300 will be given to the top three films, as judged by a panel of professional Filmmakers. Any student, group of students, or extra-curricular club from any k-12 school is eligible to send in a film submission. The Film Festival is set to take place February 22, 2025. ***Submissions will be due on February 5th, 2025.*** Please see the [linked flyer](#) for more details.

MCPS Updates

Please see [this link](#) concerning the extension of the school year due to recent weather closures.

Please see the Thursday Things to Know for [January 23](#) and the Board of Education (BOE) [update](#) on January 24 for updates from MCPS. You can find a complete [Summary of Changes](#) of BOE policies for the 2024-2025 school year.

Save-the-Dates

As the year progresses, I will keep you informed of upcoming dates and school wide events. Please make sure you have saved the following dates in your calendars; more details will follow as we get closer to the events.

- Temporary [Traffic Pattern](#) - November 18-TBD
- Senior Parent [Webinar](#) - Tuesday, January 28
- Second Semester Begins - Thursday, January 30
- Final Day to order Senior [Yearbook Ads](#) - Friday, January 31, 2025
- Junior/Senior Prom - Friday, May 16 - *City of Stars* at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda
- Class of 2025 Commencement Ceremony - Thursday, June 5 at 10:00 a.m.

Please see the [MCPS calendar](#) for all holidays, professional days, and early release days. In addition, please find previous weekly messages at [this link](#). You can find our communicated policies at [this link](#).

Falcons Fly High!

Sincerely,

Mark A. Carothers

Principal

240-740-2400

Mark_A_Carothers@mcpsmd.org

[Instagram](#)