Poolesville Students, Staff, and Families,

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest form of appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John F. Kennedy

I want to begin this week's message with two specific celebrations. First, congratulations to the Midnight Players for their success this weekend with their production of *WhoDunit…and to Whom?*. The cast, the crew, and everyone involved did an amazing job!

Second, as we head to Thanksgiving Break, I want to reiterate how grateful I am to be your principal. I am thankful for our amazing students, who amaze me each and every day with their passion, advocacy, and knowledge. I am thankful for our dedicated and talented staff, who create a positive environment for our Falcons through their attention to detail, instruction, warmth, care, mentorship, and guidance. I am thankful for our supportive community, who partner with the school staff to ensure a positive, well-rounded high school experience for our students. Poolesville High School is truly a special place filled to the brim with special people. Great things happen within our walls each and every day, and I am so incredibly grateful that you are all a part of my life and I get to be a small part of yours.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday this week will have abbreviated schedules. Dismissal will be at 11:58 each day. There will be no 8th period or extended day bus routes. All students will be expected to take their 2:30 bus routes at the 11:58 dismissal time. Please see below for the specific schedules for each day.

Please continue to remind our students to also keep their student IDs visible and their cell phones invisible. If you need to contact a staff member, please see our 2026-2027 Student Support Contacts resources to identify the proper support.

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Falcon Congratulations!

Congratulations to the Falcons who earned Straight-A and/or Honor Roll Distinction for the first quarter. As a whole, we had 394 Falcons earn Straight As and 737 additional students earn Honor Roll. Keep up the great work, Falcons! We are proud of you.

Congratulations to the PHS History Bowl team at the Washington DC Fall History Bee and Bowl competition at Georgetown Day School. Our Falcons placed as quarterfinalists in the Varsity Division. In the JV Division, PHS teams finished as quarterfinalists and finalists. You can find the full Bee and Bowl results at ***this link***. Additional congratulations to the students who qualified for Nationals:

- Chandana Aradhya
- Vedant Arrola
- Ness Bentil
- Nolan Chen
- William Ding
- Izzy Gallardo
- Bryan Hu
- Prayush Khanal
- Sathvik Kunamaneni
- Eric Lewis
- Rakin Molla
- Kirabo Payne
- Hunter Quinn
- Marisa Shah
- Riti Thakkar

Congratulations to the PHS *It's Academic* Team: Diana Briggs, Tristan Reyes, and Liam Slattery. They were victorious, with an impressive score of ***640 pts***., for our first round of competition on the *It's Academic* television show by beating South County 390 pts., and Whitman 400 pts. This show will air on January 23rd at 10 A.M.

Congratulations to Annabel Gaughan and Greta Jauch. Annabel and Greta competed and won in two regattas at the beginning of the month. Their hard work, dedication and commitment paid off. The DC National Rowing Club Varsity 8 boat winning the Frostbite Regatta and the Bill Braxton Memorial regatta women's high school trophy.

PHS utilizes a ***Within Our Walls (W.O.W.) celebration form*** to recognize those who make Poolesville 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. Congratulations to the following members of our school community:

- Ms. Adah
- Ms. Adrienne Brooks
- Mr. Paul Dethlefsen - Unleashing Potential Award Winner
- Ralitsa Evegenieva
- Norah Jackson
- Christopher Rodriguez Martinez
- Mr. Savino
- Riya Tolani
- Marlowe Tsai

This Week's Schedule

- **Monday**, November 23 - Adjusted Early Dismissal Schedule - No 8th Period; Students will be expected to take their 2:30 routes home at 12:00 dismissal.
- **Tuesday**, November 24 - Early Dismissal Schedule - No 8th Period; Students will be expected to take their 2:30 routes home at 12:00 dismissal.
- **Wednesday**, November 25 -Adjusted Early Dismissal Schedule - No 8th Period; Students will be expected to take their 2:30 routes home at 12:00 dismissal.
- **Thursday**, November 26 - No School for Staff and Students
- **Friday**, November 27- No School for Staff and Students

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.

Last Chance!

Lost and Found - Find Your Stuff before Thanksgiving Break! - Poolesville Falcons — Is Your Stuff Living Its Best Life Without You? As we head into the Thanksgiving break, this is your friendly reminder to check the **Lost and Found** for any items you may be missing. The Lost and

Found is in the **auditorium hallway between the auditorium and the cafeteria**. Don't let your favorite hoodie start a new life with someone else. Stop by, take a look, and reunite with your belongings before summer begins! Thank you, Falcons!

Fall IXL Literacy Challenge - Students in grades 6–11 are invited to participate in the IXL Fall Literacy Challenge from November 16–30 (outside of school hours). Top participating students will earn exciting prizes! For full details and guidelines, please review the IXL Fall Challenge Overview.

Montgomery County Thanksgiving Parade Is Looking for Volunteers - Who doesn't love a parade? The annual Montgomery County Thanksgiving Parade will be held starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21. The parade features marching bands (including those from James Hubert Blake, Springbrook, Northwood, Clarksburg and John F. Kennedy high schools), lively dance troupes, floats and fun inflatables. The route starts at Ellsworth Drive and Fenton Street in downtown Silver Spring, heads south on Georgia Avenue and ends at Silver Spring Avenue. The parade will be held rain or shine. The parade is looking for volunteers, who will dress in costume, serve as unit leaders, and be inflatable and balloon handlers. Volunteers need to be available from 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Students 13 years old and older can receive Student Service Learning (SSL) hours for participating. Register as a parade volunteer.

MCPS Climate Survey for Families - We invite you to share your feedback by participating in the **Family Survey**. This short survey gives you the opportunity to share your experiences and opinions about our school and the broader school district. Your honest input will help us understand what's working well and where we can improve. Please look out for the upcoming climate survey in your email. It will be sent to the primary email address linked to your child's student profile. The deadline has been ***extended to November 29.*** The survey is easy to complete, takes only a few minutes, and your responses are completely confidential. The results will be used to guide our efforts in strengthening programs, services, and supports for students and families.

<u>This Week at PHS</u>

Bell Schedule for the Week **-** Please see below for the adjusted schedules for the three early release days.

Monday, November 23 (Parent-Teacher Conferences from 1:00-7:00 p.m.

- **Period 1** - 7:45-8:35
- **Period 2** - 8:40-9:30
- **Period 3** - 9:35-10:25
- **Period 4** - 10:30-11:20
- **Lunch** - 11:25-11:58 - Dismissal at 11:58

Tuesday, November 24 - Standard Early Release Schedule (Periods 1-7) - There will be inclement weather drills every period to test student and teacher Zoom capabilities.

Wednesday, November 25

- **Period 5** - 7:45-8:35
- **Period 6** - 8:40-9:30
- **Advisory** - 9:35-10:25
- **Period 7** - 10:30-11:20
- **Lunch** - 11:25-11:58 - Dismissal at 11:58

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Please mark your calendars. Teachers will be holding ***parent conferences on Monday, November 23*** from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. All conferences will be held ***via zoom***. Parents will be able to sign up for conference slots via ParentVue.

In preparation for conferences, please make sure your ParentVue account is active. You can find the directions for setting up your ParentVue account here.

Parents may begin signing up for conferences today, Sunday, November 15th. Directions for signing up for conferences via ParentVue can be found here. A video tutorial for conference sign-ups can be found here.

You can find a database of individual teacher zoom links for conferences ***at this link***. Please contact Stefanie Draisen, Stefanie_E_Draisen@mcpsmd.org, if you need assistance with ParentVue or signing up for a conference.

Attendance Updates

When using the ParentVUE note to submit an early departure for your student, you must include a time in the comments section. When a time is not included, a pass is not sent for your student. Additionally, if you choose to use the PHS Attendance Note google form, when you choose 'Early Departure' for the type of absence, you are required to input a time for the departure. If you choose 'Other' for the type of absence and it's an early departure, please remember to include a time in the comments section. You can find other attendance policies in the normal Attendance portion of the message below.

Personal Body Safety Lessons - December 2

Montgomery County Public Schools is taking an active role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect through early prevention and intervention education. Students will be presented with a

Personal Body Safety Lesson on December 2nd during Advisory. Click ***here*** for a detailed letter. Please contact your child's school counselor with any questions or concerns.

PHS Talent Show

We are excited to announce auditions for our annual PHS talent show coming on ***January 14, 2027***! If you have an act or talent you want to share with the world, don't be afraid to sign up to reserve your spot for an audition. Please sign up to audition by ***December 4***. To sign up, fill out the form at the bit.ly: https://bit.ly/4iySURL.

Online Digital Tool Consent

Review the Affirmative Parental Consent Guide and complete the required steps. The consent form is linked on the MCPS website on the Online Digital Tool Consent tab.

PHS Athletics Updates

All of the winter teams have been finalized except for our Bocce team. Registration is still open for ***Corollary Bocce***. Bocce will begin practices the week of December 1st. More information will be sent out by Coach Hand. Most winter teams will have practices over the holiday. The coaches will be or have communicated the schedule. We hope that all the falcon athletes and their families have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Sports Management Opportunity - Ms. Grubb is still looking for students who are interested in sports management to help with the home athletic events. The positions include running the game clock, announcing the players, running the music, working at the front gate, and more. The students will receive SSL hours for helping. Please email her at Regina_R_Grubb@mcpsmd.org if interested.

Check out the PHS Athletic Booster site for the schedule, and other important information regarding the athletic program. Please consider becoming a booster member for the 26-27 school year to support the PHS athletic program. There are individual options as well as a family option. ***Join Today!***

Please follow ***this link*** for further updates, processes, and expectations. If you haven't done so, already make sure you follow us on our social media accounts to get the latest updates on our athletic program.

- Twitter - @PHSFalcons18 and @PHSAthletics
- Instagram - @PoolesvilleAthletics
- Facebook - Poolesville Athletics

You can refer to the websites below to get information on PHS and MCPS Athletics and our wonderful Athletic Booster Club. Please consider joining to support all the sport teams.

- NEW Athletic Website: Poolesvilleathletics.com (still a work in progress)
- PHS Booster Website https://phsboosterclub.org/
- MCPS Athletics Website: https://www.mcpsathleticzone.com/

As always, we are here to support all students and give them a positive experience. Reach out to our Athletic Director, Ms. Grubb, at Regina_R_Grubb@mcpsmd.org with any questions. #FalconsFlyHigh

College and Career Center Updates

Here's your latest preview of PHS college visits, featured scholarships, events and free resources. These updates are emailed through ParentSquare *most* Fridays. Make sure to bookmark our PHS College & Career site– new resources and events are routinely added!

HBCU Fair

MCPS is hosting their annual HBCU Fair on ***Friday, February 12*** from ***6:00-8:30 p.m.*** at the Universities at Shady Grove. This is open to students and families of students in grades 8-12. Come join us and learn about HBCUs and Scholarship Opportunities! The scholarship opportunities will be open for current 12th grade students. There will also be workshops on financing college, the HBCU experience, panel discussions, college life, and more. Registration opens on December 11. Please use the links for more information: ***website***, ***agenda*****,** and ***flyer***.

For complete information from Ms. Older in our College and Career Center, see this week's edition of the ***Weekly Flight***. You'll find featured scholarships, opportunities, and college and financial aid events for the PHS community. Most events and deadlines listed below will occur within the next two weeks. Visit the PHS College & Career Website for more upcoming events and opportunities, and to explore free resources to help with college and post-secondary planning.

Center Hours at PHS: 7:30 am - 3:30 pm. Students can drop in before school, after school, or during lunch, or request a meeting with Mrs. Older HERE. Other questions? Please contact Mrs. Older.

MDCAPS is transitioning to MDSIS in January. Families are encouraged to wait until January 2027 to create an account. The ***linked flyer*** has the key points. The bottom line: families should focus NOW on completing FAFSA. Then, if they are looking at schools in Maryland, they should begin to explore State Aid programs so that they are ready to create an account/apply for Maryland state aid (like MSFAA) once the new system launches in January.

Get College Decisions on the Spot with Maryland Independent Colleges - On Friday, Nov. 20 and Friday, Dec. 4, MCPS will be hosting an on-the-spot, instant decision event with several

Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities. During this event, prospective students can meet with an admissions representative and receive an immediate decision, which may include a scholarship. Interviews will be held virtually on Zoom. Contact your child's College & Career Navigator (CCN) with questions. Sign up for a time slot: ***Dec. 4 — 8 a.m.-1 p.m.*** - Hood College, Frederick, Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Baltimore, Washington Adventist University, Takoma Park, & St. John's College, Annapolis *(Due to the application review process, SJC does not do "on the spot" admissions, however they are happy to conduct interviews, but cannot disclose decisions on this date.)*

Scholarship Opportunities

Ms. Older, college and career navigator, is an amazing resource for available scholarships and other opportunities. For a full list of active local and national scholarships, see the ***Scholarships link***.

PTSA Updates

Our next meeting will be IN PERSON December 15th at PHS in the Black and Gold ISP Hub. This meeting will be an opportunity for us to engage in a service project led by the PHS Hero Club.

If you were unable to attend our meeting last week we encourage you to check out the recording on our website. Dr. Blair gave us many good resources about students and tech resources.

We have kicked off our Post Prom planning! If you would like to join the Post Prom planning team please reach out - poolesvillepostprom@gmail.com . This is an opportunity for adults and students. Students can earn SSL hours for helping plan the theme, design the logo, developing the prize list and many other fun activities! We hope you can join us!

Mark your calendars for all of our meetings this year! Your PHS PTSA is here for all parents, staff and students, so please reach out if you have ideas for how we can serve the community more effectively. Our PTSA meetings are focused on providing our PHS community with valuable information and resources for a successful student life experience!

Have an idea that needs funds? Apply for a PTSA Mini-Grant!

The PTSA Mini-Grant Program offers up to $500 to bring creative projects to life at PHS, whether it's in a club, an enrichment program, community service projects, or classroom. **Any student, teacher, or staff member with a current PTSA membership can apply**. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and approved until funds run out, so don't wait! We do have a rubric for applicants to understand what we are looking for in an application. Look for our flyer throughout the school.

PTA Reflections Program - "What My Culture Means to Me"

It's time for Reflections: PHS PTSA will host the Reflections Art program. The 2026-2027 Reflections program theme is "What My Culture Means to Me." Entry categories include dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography, and visual arts. All of the information about this contest can be found on our PTSA website Reflections page. Students interested in participating should submit an interest form by 11/10. Staff, parents and other community members that are interested in acting as reviewers for this program please let us know ASAP! We'd love to have you join us in reviewing what we know will be some outstanding submissions by our PHS students!

Join the PTSA

Join us now! We'd love to have you join the PTSA! Joining the PTSA, doesn't require committing to any volunteer opportunities but your membership fees go to support all of that the PTSA does for our students and staff. You can join with a regular membership or you can make additional donations to specific events on our Givebacks page. Remember Students receive SSL hours for attending our meetings!

Just some of the benefits of becoming a PTSA member:

- **Every dollar stays here**. Every dollar of your PTSA membership goes directly into our school community.
- ***Coming Soon for Members only****:* the whole school student directory and a WhatsApp community communication portal.
- **Mini grants up to $500.** Membership allows students and staff to apply for mini grants to bring their ideas to life.
- **A vote and a voice.** As a member you have PTSA voting rights, giving you the opportunity to really impact our school environment
- **Be in the know.** Stay informed and connected with things that are happening at PHS, including policy changes that affect your family.
- **Supporting "One Poolesville".** Supporting the work and mission of your PHS PTSA means supporting the One Poolesville motto by providing resources and advocacy for the entire school community, every house, every student.

Individual - $25
Household (includes membership for 3 people) **- $50**
Student or Staff - $10

The list of our current board and committee leads can be found on our website's About Us page. If you are interested in volunteering on any committee please email us at ptsapoolesvillehs@gmail.com or fill out our interest form!

SSL Updates

New SSL Forms Are Here **-** MCPS students need 75 Student Service Learning (SSL) hours to graduate, and new SSL forms are now available.

- Use the new forms for service completed after Sept. 25.
- The old forms will still be accepted for service completed through Sept. 25.
- Students should use the Individual SSL Request Form before serving with an organization that is not already MCPS SSL-approved.

Learn more and find the new SSL forms on the MCPS SSL webpage.

Students who submit qualifying submissions will earn 10 student service learning hours. The top five videos will be awarded prizes and be voted on by secondary students for a Fan-Favorite Award and viewed on the MCPS and Choose Respect Montgomery webpage.

Learn more about the documentation and find in-person and virtual SSL opportunities ***here***. Translations are available ***here***. Find forms, guidelines and other resources at the ***MCPS SSL Hub for Students/Families***. Also, please use the link to find the ***SSL Hours Quick Guide***.

In-person and virtual opportunities, reminders and updates are available on the SSL Hub. Students are encouraged to regularly monitor the MCPS Student Service Learning (SSL) ***website*** for SSL opportunities. Please contact our registrar and SSL Coordinator, Ms. Lisa Fedders, at Lisa_L_Fedders@mcpsmd.org, with any questions.

Choose Respect Video Contest

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the Department of Student Leadership and Activities are working collaboratively with the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation, along with several local business partners, to host the Choose Respect Montgomery Public Service Announcement (PSA) video contest and student/community event.

MCPS works to educate youth about healthy relationships and dating violence. Students who research and create the PSAs and the students, families, and community members who observe the videos all benefit from the learning.

MCPS Student Opportunities

MoCo EmpowHer Service Day - From 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 9 at Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive in Rockville. Middle and high school students are invited to join MoCo EmpowHER and Kits to Heart to create thoughtful care kits for cancer patients, featuring handmade crafts, such as journals, origami, cards and rocks. Students can earn two SSL hours, while helping the community. RSVP.

Anti-Racist Film Festival - The Minority Scholars Program is sponsoring the 4th annual competition, open to any K–12 student, group of students or extracurricular club. The festival hopes to encourage and give voice to other students as a creative means to push for positive change in the school system. Prizes of up to $300 will be awarded to the top three films, as judged by a panel of professional filmmakers. The film submission portal will open in late November. **Deadline for submissions is Tuesday, Dec. 22**. Learn more.

ACT-SO Competition for Students - Each year, the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics Program (ACT-SO) celebrates the academic and artistic brilliance of our African American high school students. This NAACP-sponsored program encourages students to strive for excellence as they create exciting projects in STEM and the Arts, which they then present to judges in a final competition. Over the last decade, ACT-SO MoCo students have earned more than $150,000 in scholarship dollars and prizes! Beyond these awards, students also develop presentation, goal setting, communication, and leadership skills. Please find complete information on the ***linked letter*** to our Superintendent.

Vision Zero Youth Ambassador Program - The Montgomery County Department of Transportation is seeking high school students for this project-based learning program that teaches leadership skills, outreach and engagement techniques to address traffic safety needs in the community. It is free to participate, and students can earn up to 46 SSL hours. **Deadline: Monday, Nov. 30**.

Montgomery County Recreation - 2026-2027 winter registration for programs, classes and activities opens at 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 17. Residents are encouraged to register online at ActiveMONTGOMERY.org. If you don't have an account or need to update one, instructions and FAQs are here.

Local Author Showcase - Montgomery County Public Libraries is hosting a free book fair and meet-the-author event from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 22 at the Wheaton Library and Recreation Center, 11701 Georgia Avenue in Wheaton. Activities include meet-and-greets with 30 local authors, industry panels on marketing and publishing, a child-friendly "Read to a Superhero" activity and a teen zine workshop.

MCPS School Communications

MCPS Shares Update on School Closures and Consolidations Study - MCPS has shared an update on the Elementary and Middle Schools Closures and Consolidations Study, including feedback from the first round of community engagement, early considerations and opportunities to participate in the next round of meetings, Nov. 30–Dec. 10. No decisions have been made, and community input remains essential as the district plans for the future. Families are encouraged to

read the update, review community feedback and find an upcoming winter engagement session and to stay connected to this important project.

Your Voice Shapes Our Schools: Culture & Climate Survey Extended Through Nov. 29 - We want to hear from you! To give every family the opportunity to share their perspective, we have extended the deadline for the Districtwide Culture & Climate Survey through Sunday, Nov. 29. No need to dig through your inbox for an invitation; you can access the survey directly right at your fingertips using the link below: **Take the Survey Now: https://survey.sogolytics.com/r/27MCPSParentPublicAccess. Why Your Feedback Matters:** Every student deserves a welcoming, supportive and thriving school environment, and your perspective as a parent or caregiver is irreplaceable. Your input provides valuable insight into what is working well and where we can improve, helping guide our efforts to strengthen programs, services and supports across the district. **What to Expect:**

- **Quick:** Takes less than 10 minutes to complete.
- **Confidential:** Administered by Sogolytics, an independent research organization working on behalf of MCPS.
- **Official & Secure:** This public link is a verified, legitimate way for MCPS families to participate.

Thank you for partnering with us to create the best possible experience for every student. Please take a few minutes to make your voice heard before Nov. 29.

MCPS Seeking Public Comment on AI Regulation Through Dec. 18 - Proposed Regulation IGS-RA, *Artificial Intelligence in Teaching, Learning and Operations*, will be open for public comment until Friday, Dec. 18, 2026. The purpose of this regulation is to establish comprehensive procedures governing the ethical, responsible, equitable and secure use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within MCPS. Translations of this regulation will be available by Friday, Nov. 20. Public comments can be sent to regulation@mcpsmd.org. More information

Now You Know — Parent-Teacher Conferences - Schools are beginning to host parent-teacher conferences. Students do best when teachers and families work as partners. Conferences are a great opportunity to talk with your child's teacher about how your child is doing — academically and socially. It's also a time to share concerns or tell your teacher about your child's interests. MCPS has tip sheets available to help parents as they speak with teachers. Read more. **Now You Know**: English | Spanish | Amharic | Chinese | French | Korean | Portuguese | Vietnamese

IXL Challenge Now Underway Through Nov. 30 - The IXL Literacy Challenge is officially live for students in Grades 6–11! The competition is a fun way to keep students reading and building English Language Arts (ELA) skills over Thanksgiving break. The competition even includes handy test prep for the SAT. It's a good chance for students and families to get to know the IXL literacy program and the tools it offers for strengthening reading and writing. Students can log in

from any device and earn prizes! **IXL Flyers**: English | Spanish | Amharic | Chinese | French | Korean | Portuguese | Vietnamese

MCPS Invites Multilingual Families to Special Events - MCPS is bringing families together for a series of six Regional Family Engagement Events designed for Emerging Multilingual Learners (EMLs) and their families. These free events are an opportunity for families to connect with school staff, learn about MCPS programs and community resources, ask questions and meet other families. Whether your child is in elementary, middle or high school, there's something for everyone! All families of Emerging Multilingual Learners are welcome! Each event celebrates the languages, cultures and experiences that make our school communities special.
To make participation easier, materials will be available in eight languages: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Amharic, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean. Free childcare will also be provided at every event. **Upcoming Events:**

- Saturday, Nov. 21: Montgomery Blair High School, 9 a.m.–noon
- Wednesday, Dec. 2: Richard Montgomery High School, 5–8 p.m.

Families are welcome to attend one or more events, regardless of which school their children attend. Come connect, learn and celebrate with us! We look forward to welcoming you and helping every family feel connected, supported and empowered to help their children thrive.
View Event Flyers and Details

Get a Little Drama In Your Life! - Fall theatre productions are in full swing at middle and high schools. Find a great performance; there's something for everyone. Visit the MCPS calendar and filter by Fine Arts. You can then subscribe and download it to your iCal or Google calendar. See photos from some of the latest performances.

Winter Coat Drive Underway for Pre-K, Head Start Students - The Pre-kindergarten and Head Start Programs are requesting donations of new coats for students in need. Donations of boys' and girls' coats in sizes 4, 5, 6 and 7/8 are most needed. Suggested items may be found on the Head Start/Pre-K Amazon wish list. Items can be delivered to Rocking Horse Road Center, 4910 Macon Road, Room 141, Rockville, Md., 20852. For questions, contact Lisa Conlon at 240-550-2615.

Shorter Days, Extra Caution–Please: Keeping Students Safe - Now that we've turned our clocks back, the sun is setting earlier, making it more important than ever to watch out for students traveling to and from school. With less daylight during afternoon activities and commutes, we're reminding everyone to slow down, stay alert, and look out for one another.

- Drivers: Please slow down in school zones and neighborhoods, watch carefully for students at crosswalks and bus stops, avoid distractions, and always stop for school buses when required.

- Families: Remind students to use sidewalks and designated crosswalks, look both ways before crossing, put phones away while walking, and wear bright or reflective clothing when visibility is low.

A little extra attention will go a long way to making our travel safer for everyone.

Wear Your MCPS Pride—It's for a Good Cause! - Show your MCPS spirit with official gear for the whole family! From sweatshirts and pullovers to shirts and more, there's something for every MCPS fan. **Every purchase gives back—all proceeds help offset student meal debt.**
Shop the MCPS Gear Store today!

Mental Health Resources

Thank you, students and staff, for your attention to the mental health of our entire school community. ***Please remember:*** Asking for help is a strength. You do not need to wait for a crisis, and getting support can start with just five words: "I need someone to talk to." As an extension of our focus on student mental help, please review and save the resources below:

- ***PHS Mental Health Resources***
- ***Recording of PHS Mental Health Resources***
- ***Child Mind Institute Thriving Kids Series****:* Free video series and downloadable skill sheets organized by grade level (Pre-K through High School) covering emotional regulation, mindfulness, and coping strategies.
- ***SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)***: Educational materials, school support guides, and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.
- ***The Trevor Project***: Crisis intervention resources, educational guides, and support tailored for LGBTQ youth.
- ***NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Youth Resources***: Awareness campaigns, classroom presentations like Ending the Silence, and youth mental health guides.
- ***Our Minds Matter***: Student-led chapter programs and awareness activities focused on suicide prevention and reducing mental health stigma in middle and high schools.
- ***Family Quick Guide Pull-Out: Mental Health & Safety*** - **Small conversations can make a big difference.** This week's Quick Guide Pull-Out gives parents and caregivers simple **Do's and Don'ts** for supporting their child's mental health and well-being, from checking in and noticing changes to building healthy routines and knowing when to ask for help. The guide also includes **school-based supports and important crisis resources** so families know where to turn when they have a concern. **Take a look, save it and keep it handy.** Supporting student well-being is something we do together.
- ***Student Social Media Best Practices - MCPS Resource*** - MCPS has launched a new ***Student Social Media Best Practices webpage*** to help students and families navigate social media safely, responsibly, and confidently while promoting positive digital citizenship, safety, and respectful engagement.
- ***See Something, Say Something*** - Recently, MCPS recognized ***See Something, Say***

Something Day, a national recognition of the importance of creating safe school environments through shared accountability. Sometimes saying something means reporting a safety concern. It can also mean noticing that a friend does not seem like themselves and asking, "Are you okay?" And sometimes it means saying, "I need someone to talk to." Please see the ***linked video*** from MCPS superintendent, Dr. Thomas Taylor, to review the importance of speaking up.

Attendance Procedures

Parents may have recently received information regarding how to submit a note via ParentVUE. Currently, we do not want you to use that method. ***Please continue to submit absent, late arrival and early departure notes via the google form PHS Attendance Note*** found on our school website. Reasons must be specific (i.e. "family emergency" "personal reasons", etc. are not sufficient explanations). The absence remains unexcused if a note with a valid reason is not provided to the attendance office within 3 days. ***Note: Students may not receive credit for relevant assignments if the absence is unexcused.*** We will communicate when the ParentVUE notes are operational at PHS.

Early Dismissal Pass Procedure - This year, MCPS has begun a new digital hall pass system. This new process includes your student receiving their early departure pass through the digital hall pass system in StudentVUE. When students are leaving early, they should be prepared to receive their early departure pass digitally. There will no longer be a physical pass taken to their class.

Parents: Please inform your student to be prepared to receive their pass via StudentVUE. Also, inform them of the time they are being picked up so they are prepared. If your student knows they need to leave, but has not received their pass, they should speak with their teacher to check the pass system for their early departure pass. Please remember that you can view your student's current, past and future passes through ParentVUE by clicking on the 'Hall Pass' in the top right corner of your ParentVUE homepage.

PHS Policies for Quick Reference

Student IDs - Now that picture day has passed, all students should have a plastic ID card. If you lose your ID, there will now be a $5 charge for a replacement ID. Students that missed picture day will have the opportunity to take their picture on the picture make-up day on Tuesday, November 17th. Students that need to request a new ID should complete the ***lost ID form here*** or on their way into the building with the administrator that is checking IDs.

Chromebook Repair Fees - Falcons, All Chromebooks will be assessed for avoidable damage. When Chromebooks are returned, Chromebooks are cleaned and triaged. Chromebooks are checked for physical damage as well as any malfunctions. If a Chromebook is found to have

avoidable damage, an obligation will be submitted and an email will be sent out to parents and students with information on how to pay the obligation. See ***this memo*** for more information and replacement costs.

Student Parking - At this time, all students parking on school property during the school day must display a FALL PHS Parking hang tag. If you do not have a FALL PHS Parking hang tag displayed, you will receive a parking violation. After a 2nd violation, you will receive a sticker on your car as well as a meeting with security and/or administration. Further violations may result in your car being towed at your expense.

Grading & Reporting: One-Page Guidance - MCPS has updated its Grading & Reporting guidance to provide students and families with clearer, more timely information about assignments, grades and academic progress. The goal is simple: clear expectations, timely communication and strong academic support so students know what is expected and families have the information they need to help. See the One-Page Guidance here.

In Case You Missed It

Falcon Congress Committee - Interested in getting involved, making a difference, and helping shape our school community? Registration for the Falcon Congress Committee is officially open! Sign up for one of our four committees using this link here:

- ***Spirit*** Committee
- ***Student Wellbeing*** Committee
- ***Pep Rally*** Committee
- ***Public Relations*** Committee

Whether you want to plan school events, promote school spirit, advocate for student wellbeing, or help manage Falcon Congress communications, there's a place for you. Get involved and make your voice heard!

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Opportunity - Students interested in completing a Teen Class to be CERT-certified, please see this ***linked brochure***. Please feel free to reach out to us at registrar@montgomerycert.org if you have any additional questions or need further assistance.

Feed the Falcons - Donation Request - Our cafeteria is running a donation drive to "Feed the Falcons." Your donation will go toward outstanding PHS lunch debt and to provide additional free, grab-and-go food for our students. Please consider using ***this link*** to make a donation toward a school food pantry. Thank you for considering!

Federal Aid Impact Survey - Each year, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is eligible to apply for Federal Impact Aid, a federal grant program that provides funding to school districts serving federally connected students. Federally connected students are defined as:

- children who live on federal property or federally subsidized housing units;
- children with a parent/guardian who is an active-duty uniformed services member; and
- children with a parent/guardian who is employed on eligible federal properties in Maryland,
- which includes working on federal reservations and Non-Appropriated Fund employees.

If you believe your child(ren) qualify(ies) as federally connected, please complete one of the Federal Impact Aid Survey listed options. MCPS can qualify for this funding only if federally connected students are identified through this survey. Please see the ***Impact Aid Letter & Online Survey Instructions*** for complete information. You can also utilize the ***linked FAQs*** for any possible questions. Any additional questions and/or concerns can be directed to ***ImpactAid@mcpsmd.org*****.** This survey must be completed by ***Friday, December 11***.

High School Diplomats Cultural Exchange Program - The application for the High School Diplomats cultural exchange program is officially open to juniors and seniors. This opportunity offers full-scholarship room, board, and activities at the University of Virginia to engage in cultural exchange with Japanese peers, with a chance to travel to Japan the following summer. Make sure to review the ***information flyer*** (students will need to be logged into their MCPS account) below and submit your complete online application before the final deadline on January 19, 2027. Please contact Inquires@highschooldiplomats.com and/or utilize the ***contact page*** on their website.

Tutoring from the National Honor Society (NHS) - Any Falcons interested in receiving tutoring from members of our National Honor Society should complete ***this form*** to learn from students who have already taken the course. Once you complete the form, the NHS Tutoring Vice Present will connect you to the best match and arrange peer tutoring. Please see the ***linked flyer***, which should also be posted in all your classes.

Teacher Awards - It is Awards Season for MCPS. Any student, staff, or community member who wants to nominate a teacher, please see the information below:

- ***The Washington Post Teacher of the Year Award:*** This award recognizes preeminence in teaching; encourages creativity and quality in the classroom, and contributes in a substantial way to the improvement of education in the Washington, D.C. region. ***Deadline: 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 11***. *Nominate* using the linked form.
- ***The Shirley J. Lowrie Thank You for Teaching Award:*** This award honors extraordinary elementary school teachers who go the extra mile to ensure students receive the support they need to succeed. ***Deadline: 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 11.*** *Nominate* using the linked form.

PHS Clubs - We would like to share the new and improved Clubs website. On the PHS Homepage, select the Clubs tab, or use ***this link*** to go directly to the Clubs page. From there, you can review the 110+ clubs that are available at PHS for you to join (here's also an ***alphabetical list***). A description about the club, when and where it meets, and who the student and staff leaders are is listed for your reference. If you would like to start a new club, there's ***a link*** in the resources section, along with other useful items. Feel free to send feedback and suggestions about the website to Mr. Young at Terry_W_Young@mcpsmd.org.

Save-the-Dates

Please make sure you have saved the following dates in your calendars; more details will follow as we get closer to the events.

- Parent-Teacher Conferences - Monday, November 23, 1:00-7:00 p.m.
- Early Release for Students - November 23, 24, and 25
- No School for Students and Staff - November 26-27
- Early Release for Students - December 23
- No School for Staff and Students - December 24-January 1
- No School for Staff and Students - January 18
- No School for Students; Teacher Grading/Planning Day - January 25
- PSAT 8/9 (9th Grade) and PSAT (10th Grade) - March 10
- SAT (11th Grade) - March 23
- Graduation Rehearsal - May 25, 2027
- Commencement Ceremony - Class of 2027 - May 26, 2027, 1:30 p.m.

Second quarter dates will be included in future newsletters. Please see the MCPS calendar for all holidays, professional days, and early release days.

Falcons Fly High!

Sincerely,

Mark A. Carothers
Principal
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