

Poolesville Students, Staff, and Families,

"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be." -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

I hope everyone is enjoying their Labor Day and had a wonderful weekend. We had a fantastic start to the school year! I am so proud of our students and staff for the incredible first week and their navigation of the special schedules that came with it. We were able to meet with all students and explain new processes during grade-level meetings, welcome our families at a successful Back-to-School Night, conduct required drills and learn about safety and security during our annual Safety Day, and celebrate the return to school with our first pep rally! Our staff and students also created positive learning environments, established and reinforced positive relationships, and began the amazing educational experience on display every single day at PHS.

Our season of new beginnings continues this week with the start of fall sports. Good luck to our Falcon student-athletes as they embark on their seasons. Girls Volleyball will host the first athletic contest in the newly opened Fred Swick Memorial Gymnasium. I hope our students pack the stands for this monumental moment for our school and community.

This is a four-day week at PHS with no special schedules. Students will begin the required Student Expectations Lessons in Advisory on Wednesday, September 3. Parents are encouraged to review the [2025-2026 Student Support Contacts](#) if they have questions or concerns.

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This Week's Schedule

- **Monday**, September 1 - Labor Day - No School for Staff and Students
- **Tuesday**, September 2 - Standard Bell Schedule
- **Wednesday**, September 3 - Advisory Schedule - Student Expectation [Lesson 1](#)
- **Thursday**, September 4 - Standard Bell Schedule
- **Friday**, September 5 - 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!

Poolesville High School was recently recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* [Best High Schools](#) for 2025. Congratulations to our students, staff, and families for being the reasons for our consistent recognition and success.

Congratulations to James Woo for being named as a finalist in the History Category of the John Locke Institute 2025 Global Essay Prize.

Congratulations to Swati Seshadri for her selection as a finalist for the 2026 High School Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall, which brings together talented young musicians to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City under the guidance of master conductors.

Congratulations to Jaylin Anderson for being interviewed and [featured in MyMCM](#) for the successful Mother-Daughter Summer Volleyball Clinic she started with her mother in Poolesville this past summer.

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](#). The following Falcon received shout-outs this past week:

- Jonathan Bailey
- Mr. Carothers
- Javi Castro Dugarte
- Lizzie Comasky-Marcil
- Andrew Corrales-Aguilar
- Zakaria Frias
- Ms. Heaton
- Crest Highfill
- Reyna Kapoor
- Isabelle Liu

- Mr. McKenna
- Joanes Mouko Leumelieu
- Mr. Orsini (Unleashing Potential Fire Ribbon Award)
- Daniel Ortiz Rodriguez
- Angelo Ritter
- Tania Rivera
- Jason Seppy
- Nadia Shields
- Mr. Short
- Delina Solomon
- Josie Springer
- Ms. Van Yuga
- Ms. Wilder
- JP Williams
- Stephen Yeung

MCPS Student Expectations Lessons - September 3 & 17

All MCPS high school students are ***required*** to complete two on-line learning modules designed to promote a positive school culture and ensure the physical, social, and emotional safety of all students. PHS students will have time during Advisory on ***September 3 & 17*** to work on their Student Expectations Lessons; all students must complete both modules by September 27. More information about the modules can be found using the links ([English/Spanish](#)).

Back-to-School Night Resources

If you were unable to join us during Back-to-School Night, you can find some of the shared resources below:

- Administrative Team [Introductions](#)
- Counseling Team [Introductions](#)
- Parent Information Night [Video](#) and [Slide Deck](#)
- Senior Parent Information Night - Slide Deck will be sent to senior parents by the Counseling Services department

Club Fair - Thursday, September 11

Poolesville High School will host the annual Club Fair on ***Thursday, September 11*** during lunch in all of the Hubs. Follow the link to look through the full list of [student-led clubs](#) at PHS. If your interest is not on the list, you can complete [this form](#) to apply to start your own club.

You can use [this map](#) and the list below to find the clubs that interest you most.

To find out more about the club(s) that interest you, please see the list below:

- Clubs starting with **A-G**: Global Hub

- Clubs starting with **H-O**: SMCS Hub
- Clubs starting with **P-Z**: Humanities Hub

Please contact Mr. Young at Terry_W_Young@mcpsmd.org with any questions.

Refrigerator Curriculum's First Quarter Documents Now Available

MCPS has introduced the Refrigerator Curriculum—a one-page overview of what students will learn each marking period. Designed to post on the fridge, these guides help families stay informed about key themes and texts, stay engaged in their student's education, and, if needed, request alternative assignments if a text conflicts with religious views. Please see [this link](#) for the documents for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

Athletic Updates

We are excited to begin our regular season contests this week. Let's show off our Falcon spirit and pack the stands for our teams. This Friday, September 5th we will host our first contest in our newly built gymnasium. Come see the new space and support our girls volleyball team, JV at 5:30 and Varsity at 6:30pm. Check out the [PHS Athletic Booster](#) site for the [schedule](#), and other important information regarding the athletic program.

Please read the [8/31/25 Athletic Update](#) for more announcements from Ms. Grubb and PHS Athletics. If you have any questions please email Ms. Grubb at Regina_R_Grubb@mcpsmd.org.

College and Career Center Updates

College and Career visits are beginning on September 9! Please read the [College and Career Center Updates](#) from Ms. DeOto for directions and schedule.

Students are encouraged to review the [MCPS Scholarships Database](#) for applicable opportunities. You can contact Ms. DeOto (Rosalie_A_DeOto@mcpsmd.org) with any questions.

SSL Updates

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.

Chromebook Responsibility

Each student is responsible for damage or loss to any Chromebook and charger that is checked out to a student. The device is loaned to the student to be used for instructional purposes only. (Regulation IGT-RA.) No cost is associated for a student to borrow, possess, or use a Chromebook. A family is only financially responsible when there is avoidable damage to the device. If the device is faulty, there is no charge to the family; however, if the damage is

considered avoidable or the device or charger is lost, the family will be charged according to the parts and replacement cost according to [this link](#). In addition, you can refer to the MCPS [FAQs](#) for more information.

PHS Parent Voices are Needed!

Your input and voices are needed right now! As MCPS conducts both *Boundary Study* and *High School Programs Analysis*, it creates the possibility that Poolesville's countywide magnet programs would be replaced by regional programs. SooAnn Roberts has agreed to serve as a Cluster Coordinator (CC) this year, but she needs your help to speak up on behalf of your community! This could mean serving as a CC alongside her or providing her support behind the scenes.

Every cluster is allowed representation by up to three (3) Cluster Coordinators (CCs) to address the community's top advocacy needs. These volunteers share Poolesville's points of view with MCPS leaders, city and county government, and MCCPTA, the umbrella organization that amplifies the voices of all Montgomery County PT(S)As and their schools. For more information, please contact Amy Ackerberg-Hastings, the MCCPTA's Area Vice-President for Poolesville cluster (and Churchill, RM, Rockville, and Wootton) at centralptas@mccpta.org or text [301-275-4019](tel:301-275-4019).

Integrated Pest Management Notice

Maryland Law requires that school-based staff and parents/guardians of high school students who wish to be notified prior to pesticide applications in the building or on the grounds must request that they be placed on the school's pesticide notification list. To do so, please fill out the [enrollment form](#) attached to this notice and return it to the main office.

Construction Updates

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

Sitework:

- Continue grading & prepping for sidewalk & curb install @ Locating Dock.
- Start milling of North Parking Lot.

Media Center/Cafeteria Area:

- Continue hanging & finishing drywall in Area-C.
- Continue installing storefront @ Area-C.
- Continue installing ceiling grid in Area-C.
- Start ceramic wall tiling in restroom.
- Continue applying intumescent paint @ vestibules.
- Continue priming/painting in Area-C.
- Continue installing knight wall system on Area-C façade.

Main Gym Area:

- Complete painting.
- Install glass shelving in display cases after they arrive. ETA – 9/4.
- Install shades @ windows on arrival. ETA – 9/4.
- Complete final coat of paint on Corridor wall 1490.
- Continue working on punchlist items.

Occupied Areas:

- Install shades @ windows in LG Testing. ETA – 9/4.
- Continue investigation of connector exterior façade.

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.

Reminders from Previous Messages

Back to School Block Party: Councilmember Balcombe will be hosting the second annual Back to School Block Party for middle and high school students on Friday, September 26th from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown! We encourage our students to attend! The event will include a resource fair geared towards students, free food, a soccer skills clinic, lawn games, arts activities, student performances, and an opportunity to earn 3 SSL hours. Please see the [linked flyer](#) for more information.

School Picture Schedules: Here are the dates for Senior Session B, Underclassmen, and Underclass Makeups:

- ***Seniors B:*** 10/31 & 11/4, 3:00-8:00 p.m. - PHS Auditorium - Please see [this link](#) for registration information.
- ***Underclass (Grades 9-11):*** September 29-30 through Social Studies classes - *Schedule will be shared prior to Picture Days*
- ***Makeups (Grades 9-11):*** November 13, 8:00am to 2:30pm - PHS Auditorium

School Lunch Menus and Dietary Needs: Menus and Special Dietary Needs Menus, including nutrition and allergen information, can be viewed on the [DFNS website](#) through [MealViewer](#). MCPS [Form 240-23](#), Special Dietary Needs Form, may be used to request meal accommodations for students eating school meals.

Arrival/Dismissal - Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up: The ***only safe and appropriate*** location for student drop-off and pick-up is in the South Lot on West Willard. Once you enter the lot, please follow the directions of our administrative and security teams. Dropping off your children on Wootton Avenue, the Baptist Church, or in the middle of West Willard causes an unsafe situation where children are at risk of being struck by other vehicles. Our school staff is unable to monitor these off-site locations. Please keep your children safe by following school expectations for arrival and dismissal. Please allow for additional time to ensure our students arrive to school

safely and on time. In addition, to allow for smoother arrivals, students ***are not permitted*** to back into their parking spaces. Finally, ***only seniors and staff members*** should be parking in PHS lots.

Donation Opportunities: As we begin the year, we want to inform you of donation opportunities for our four special programs at PHS: Global Ecology, Humanities, Independent Study, and Science, Math, & Computer Science (SMCS). Any donation will go directly toward supporting House-specific activities and needs (technology, field trip financial assistance, field study financial assistance, paying for substitutes for off-campus activities and professional development, etc.). Please see below for donation links through SCO:

- Global Ecology House [Donations](#)
- Humanities House [Donations](#)
- Independent Studies House [Donations](#)
- Science, Math, Computer Science (SMCS) House [Donations](#)

Any donation is appreciated and will go directly toward House needs and resources.

MCPS Student Code of Conduct: The consistent application of the *Student Code of Conduct* is important and equally important is consistency with the tools we will use to respond to support your child. The supports outlined in the revised Code -- behavior intervention plans, check-ins, restorative circles, mentoring, and counseling -- are not optional. Please review the MCPS [Student Code of Conduct](#) with your child. This [video](#) will also be shared with your child during the First Day of School.

Away All Day: Be Present for Instruction: As part of MCPS's updated Cell Phone and Personal Mobile Device Regulation (COG-RA), there are now clearer expectations and increased consistency for when and how devices may be used during the school day. At the high school level at Poolesville High School, ***phones must be off and away during instructional time (including in the hallways)*** but can be accessed during transitions to classes and during lunch. We will be implementing tools such as ***phone pouches to store phones*** or simply request they remain in your child's backpack during class to support compliance. Students are expected to follow the classroom expectations of each teacher in regard to phones and other personal mobile devices. ***Consequences will be implemented should a student not comply with this expectation***, such as referrals to the office, confiscation of the device, and required conferences with caregivers. These changes are intended to minimize distractions, increase instructional focus, strengthen the quality of in-person engagement among students, and promote positive digital citizenship. Please see the [Away All Day PMD Poster](#) for details.

Grading and Reporting Adjustments for the 2025-2026 School Year - The MCPS Grading and Reporting Policy was revised for this school year. You can find the complete regulation [here](#). You can review the [one-page resource](#) to identify the key changes. Overall, the adjustments

emphasize a quicker turnaround on student assessments, clearer due date and deadline guidance, and adjusted semester grade calculations; semester grades are now determined by calculating the average of the numeric grades from each marking period. Caregivers, please review these changes with your children; I know many of our students are concerned about the impact of the new changes on their transcripts.

Student Attendance Processes - Students are required to be in class when the bell rings to signal the start of class and remain in class the whole period. If your student is absent for any part of the day and wants to participate in a same day after school activity, sports practice, rehearsal, or competition, you must provide official documentation for the absence; a doctor note, court document, MVA documentation to the attendance office the same day. Students absent for 10 consecutive school days will be withdrawn from PHS. When your student is absent, please submit a note via the [Google form](#) on the PHS website, [email](#) our attendance office, or provide a written note to the attendance office within three (3) days of the absence. 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.***

Student Locker Request - Poolesville High School has a limited number of lockers. While most students choose not to use one, if you decide you need a locker, we're happy to assign it. Before requesting a locker, please note:

- **Size:** 12.5" wide × 17.25" high × 17.5" deep.
- Lockers are not large enough for most sports equipment.
- **Lower lockers** require bending or kneeling to access and unlock.
- See the [linked photo](#) for an example of four standard lockers.

Please complete the [Google Form](#) to request a locker. ***Note:*** Students ***must*** be logged into their MCPS Google account to complete the form. Please email [Ms. Hillard](#), school business administrator, with any questions.

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.

- No School for Staff and Students - Labor Day - Monday, September 1
- No School for Staff and Students - Non-Instructional Day - Tuesday, September 23
- Early Release Schedule - Friday, September 26
- Grades 9-11 School Pictures - September 29-30
- No School for Staff and Students - Non-Instructional Day - Thursday, October 2
- Homecoming Weekend, 2025: October 3 (Game) and October 4 (Dance)
- No School for Students - Staff Professional Day - Friday, October 17

- No School for Staff and Students - Non-Instructional Day - Monday, October 20
- Grades 9-11 Picture Make-Ups - November 13

Please see the [MCPS calendar](#) for all holidays, professional days, and early release days. In addition, a comprehensive PHS calendar will be distributed early in the school year as requested through our community voice survey feedback.

Falcons Fly High!

Sincerely,

Mark A. Carothers

Principal

240-740-2400

Mark_A_Carothers@mcpsmd.org

[Instagram](#)