

Poolesville Students, Staff, and Families,

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." — Nelson Mandela

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I hope all our Falcons and entire Falcon Family had a wonderful start to the second semester. As we are now into February, I want to highlight the activities for Black History Month. Our Black Student Union (BSU) will be hosting special speakers and conversations every Monday in February; please see the full information below. I want to thank the BSU for their leadership and organization to host these important and informational events. All students and staff are welcome to attend. Black History *is* American History, and I appreciate and celebrate the efforts of our students to offer learning opportunities for students and staff.

In addition to Black History Month beginning on February 1, this week is *also* National School Counseling Week. I want to extend an enthusiastic and sincere expression of gratitude to all staff in our Counseling Services department. As I shout from the rooftops at every opportunity, our counseling services department is the best I have seen, and they all have such a profound impact on our students, staff, families, and overall school culture. Whether it is Feel Good Fridays, dance parties to send students into the weekend on a high note, wellness activities, or just individual care and love for our kids, these incredible human beings go above and beyond to ensure our Falcons have the most meaningful, positive, and impactful high school experience possible. This does not even mention all they do to set students up for success after graduation and the lifelong relationships they reinforce. Counseling Services is truly the heart of PHS, and our students, staff, and families benefit from their expertise and dedication. If you would like to send a message of gratitude to anyone in our Counseling Office, please consider using the Within-Our-Walls (W.O.W.) [Shout-Out form](#).

This week, there is one slight adjustment to the schedule. We will be holding Advisory on Thursday instead of Wednesday for report card distribution to students. As an update from last week, I will be returning from leave from a family emergency at some point this week. I appreciate the support and understanding during my time away for my father-in-law's illness, death, and services. Please see our [2024-25 Student Support Contacts](#) link if you need support.

### **This Week's Schedule**

- **Monday**, February 3 - Standard Bell Schedule
- **Tuesday**, February 4 - Standard Bell Schedule
- **Wednesday**, February 5 - Standard Bell Schedule
- **Thursday**, February 6 - Advisory Schedule - Report Card Distribution
- **Friday**, February 7 - 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 Jiaxin Jiang and Eugene Kim for being highlighted in the [MCPS Press Release](#) and two of the three Falcons who earned a full-tuition scholarship from QuestBridge. PHS had three of the 13 MCPS students who were awarded this incredible opportunity out of more than 25,500 who applied nationally.

Congratulations to Sandrienne Wiggins for being awarded a full-tuition, four-year college scholarship from the Posse Foundation. Sandrienne was one of fifteen MCPS students selected and was honored at a ceremony at the Lincoln Theatre on January 8. You can find more information in the official [MCPS Press Release](#).

PHS utilizes a Within Our Walls (W.O.W.) celebration form to recognize those who make Poolersville 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:

- Adele Benkstein
- Kate Borman
- Ms. Costello
- Leela Desai
- Ms. Fisher
- Mr. Gordon
- Ms. Herbert
- Tessa Hoffner
- Sahithya Kalisetti

- Ms. Ragunath
- Mr. Rai
- Leela Ramanathan
- Ananya Ramesh
- Alyssa Robertson
- Olivia Schrider
- Evan Shang
- Ishita Singh
- Jack Stokes
- Valerie Tsang
- Ashley Wan
- Mr. Yu

### **Black History Month Presentations**

The Poolesville High School Black Student Union (BSU) is honored to present 2025 Black History Month Presentations. Each Monday in February during lunch, there will be a special presentation. All events will take place in RM 1717 at lunch. Snacks will be available. Please see the complete schedule below:

- ***Monday, February 3*** -- Bruce Gardner- Musician, Producer, and Owner Gardner Sound will be speaking on the music industry and attending school in Montgomery County
- ***Monday, February 10*** -- Jason Beckwith- Vice President of HR for the Washington Nationals and graduate of HBCU (Bowie State). Will talk about his experience attending HBCU and work afterwards.
- ***Monday, February 17*** -- Holiday
- ***Monday, February 24*** -- BSU Member Presentations- Members will be presenting their take on different aspects of Black culture.

### **MoCo CAP - Worlds of Work Event**

MoCo CAP is gearing up to host a Worlds of Work (WoW) event March 17, 18 and 20, 2025 at the MC Rockville campus. This innovative career exploration experience will welcome approximately 2,000 MCPS middle school students, providing them with hands-on exposure to diverse career paths and industries as part of the innovative MoCo CAP initiative. By establishing a presence at WoW, you can showcase your industry, network with other employers, get your name in front of over 200,000 Montgomery County parents and connect with potential future employees early on in their career journeys. If you are interested in participating, please email Ms. Michaela Clement [michaela\\_m\\_clement@mcpsmd.org](mailto:michaela_m_clement@mcpsmd.org).

### **Senior Parent Information Night**

This past Tuesday, January 28, Senior parents participated in an informational webinar about graduation and other related senior activities. If you are a senior parent who was unable to

attend, a recording will be shared in next week's message. You can review the slide deck at [this link](#). Please contact Ms. Williams, senior administrator, or Ms. Grubb, graduation coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

### **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](#)).

Last week was an exciting week for our student-athletes and PHS Athletics. Congratulations to Alexavier Saunders for reaching the 1,000 point milestone for varsity boys basketball. Congratulations to the PHS Swim & Dive Team on a terrific performance at the MCPS Division 2 Championship (Boys Team Division Champions, Girls Team 4th Place). Congratulations to the PHS Bocce Team for finishing in the MCPS Division 4 Championship, and good luck in the County Championship on Saturday. Finally, congratulations to the PHS Pom Team for their outstanding performance and fifth place finish at the MCPS Division 1 Competition.

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](mailto: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 recruiters from the Gaithersburg Water Park and the U.S. Army. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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:***

- Complete painting in Auditorium Wing.
- Complete installation of lighting, speakers & trim out electrical devices in Auditorium.
- Complete all flooring & handrail installation in lobby & hallway.
- Install a tunnel outside the stage area for Emergency Egress.
- Perform final cleaning in the Auditorium Wing.

### ***Media Center Area:***

- Continue swinging steel in Area-C.
- Continue building walls at dumpster building.

### ***Main Gym Area:***

- MEP Rough-in & Install Hangers
- Start roof blocking at coping in Athletic Storage wing.
- Start applying weather barrier on CMU Walls.
- Continue installing ceiling grid in locker rooms.
- 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 - Last Chance!**

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 the Thursday Things to Know for [January 30](#) 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
- No School for Students and Staff - Monday, February 17
- 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

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[Instagram](#)