



Making a World  
of Difference

## Fernwood Family Newsletter #6, 10/1/24

---

### Table of Contents

[Schedule of Events](#)

[The Popcorn Sale Returns! Oct 4th](#)

[After-School Clubs](#)

[Meet Your Teachers](#)

[Paper Towel Rolls Needed](#)

[Thanks, PTO!](#)

[MPS Student Well-Being Survey](#)

[Conference Sign Ups](#)

[MPS Facilities Strategic Plan Open Houses](#)

[Fall Lower Elementary Kids Choir Returns!](#)

[Picture Retake Day Information-Oct 16th](#)

[District Parent/Guardian School Engagement Survey](#)

[Our School is Cool!](#)

---

### Schedule of Events

- Tuesday, October 1st, 2024, 6:00pm, **PTO Meeting**, Fernwood library and virtual  
<https://meet.google.com/xyc-wwnz-czu>
- ~Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024, 7:00am, **Bike Walk and Roll to School Day**,  
East Playground
- ~Thursday, October 10, 2024, 6:30pm, **Music Parents Meeting**, virtual  
<https://meet.google.com/fpf-rvca-uuk>

- ~Tuesday, October 15th, 2024, 6:30pm, **Fernwood Fund Meeting**, Fernwood library and virtual, email [brett.mytys@gmail.com](mailto:brett.mytys@gmail.com) for link
- ~Thursday, October 10th and Tuesday, October 15th, 2024, **Fall Conferences**, sign up links below
- ~Friday, October 16th, 2024, **Picture Retake Day**, Fernwood Auditorium
- ~Friday, October 25th, 2024, 5:30-7:00pm, **PTO Halloween Dance and Parade**, details to follow
- 

## **The Popcorn Sale Returns! Oct 4th**

Let's be honest, in this economy, you can't get anything for a dollar EXCEPT a bag of popcorn made by Fernwood Montessori adolescents! Friday after school popcorn sales will be starting on Oct 4th!

This year, the popcorn sale will be every other week with some adjustments due to school breaks.

The October dates are October 4<sup>th</sup> and October 25th.

Popcorn costs \$1 and is available by the Falling Heath doors. Proceeds go to the adolescent program which is doing the sale as part of a Montessori lesson about running a micro economy. Dr. Montessori believed that the act of producing something and exchanging it for something else was an intrinsic part of being human which we can see throughout human history...we should all know by now that Dr. M thought of EVERYTHING.

Here's a little ear worm as a reminder so you don't forget your dollar!

<https://youtu.be/nFZP8zQ5kzk?feature=shared>

---

## **After-School Clubs**

Fernwood offers many opportunities for students including sports and extracurricular activities. Earlier in the school year, we provided signups for

Spanish and Theater and fall soccer. Please continue to read the newsletter weekly for sports and other opportunities.

In past years, we had COVID relief funds to be able to pay staff to run clubs and have a staff member be the coordinator. While we no longer have these funds, we do have the ability to pay for some staffing using the school budget, and therefore would like to offer the following clubs for the remainder of the school year. Our clubs are free or require a small fee from families for materials and supplies. Please do not send cash/write a check until you have received confirmation that your child has been accepted into the club.

**Club enrollment extends from 10/1 when the newsletter is sent and closes 10/4 at 8am.** Names will be randomly selected. To allow everyone to access free/low-cost clubs, students may enroll in only 1 club. If you signed up for theater or Lower El Spanish after-school, you are eligible to sign up for one of these clubs. We will communicate with families if some clubs have space after the initial roll-out with the potential for children to join more than 1 club.

Families will be notified of club acceptance or waitlist status either in the afternoon of 10/4 or on 10/7.

Here is a list of our club offerings including sign-up links:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KL-WltMze45wdv7lpOwG42x1-LfShdEASmd47Xb1Wcc/edit?usp=sharing>. We may have a few more clubs to share in the coming weeks and in the spring.

Questions? Please reach out to Ms. Kristy or Ms. Meredith.

---

## Meet Your Teachers

Each year the Fernwood PTO gathers some information on the Fernwood staff to introduce them to our families! Please take a look at this document for information on your favorite Montessori teachers, paras, and support staff members! This crew is a varied bunch and there is always something new to learn! For instance, one staff member loves “The Golden Girls” (it’s Ms. Bianca

and I think she's a Sophia or a Dorothy), Ms. Andi's favorite movie is "Jaws", and Ms. Buzz is a cat person!

Fernwood Meet the Staff 2024-25

---

## Paper Towel Rolls Needed

If you happen to have any paper towel rolls at your house, please consider donating them to school. Mr. Saller is going to do a rain stick project with some of our young music students. He needs the longer paper towel cardboard rolls, not the ones from toilet paper. Please bring donations to the Main Office. Thank you!

---

## Thanks, PTO!

Each year, the PTO gives teachers funds to spend on classroom supplies. Here's some info on how Ms. Jamie spent her PTO money!

Thank you to the PTO for supporting my brand new comprehensive special education classroom! With the PTO's financial support, I was able to purchase learning materials, classroom supplies, and play items to support my students' unique functional, motor, academic, and social needs. We especially love the shape puzzles and stamping sets. These purchases have helped my students feel engaged and comfortable in their new classroom. HUGE thank you to the PTO for embracing our new community of learners!

---

## MPS Student Well-Being Survey

Student well-being is an important part of social-emotional health. Student education improves when we pay attention to well-being. Milwaukee Public Schools wants to improve student well-being. MPS listens to student feedback to enhance our students' learning experience.

The Student Well-Being Survey is new this year. Students in third through twelfth grade will give feedback using this survey. The survey asks students to rate their feelings and experiences at school.

This survey will be taken three times per year: October 7–18, 2024; January 6–17, 2025; and May 5–16, 2025. The survey will take about 15 minutes. The results will not identify your child. Your child's individual responses will not be viewed by school staff. Student responses will be grouped to help staff choose schoolwide supports and services.

If you do not want your child to share their feedback, please call your child's school to inform them of your request.

---

## Conference Sign Ups

Conference days are Thursday, October 10th and Tuesday, October 15th from 3-6:45pm. \*\*\*Please note that there are a few teachers and specialists that have limited or alternative schedules.\*\*\*

Please sign up for ONE conference time slot for your K3-6th grade student with your student's teacher using the links below. Conferences will be in person in the classroom.

If you have more than one child at Fernwood, please consider allowing some "travel time" between your conferences.

**This sign up genius will be available until October 1st.** If you need to schedule or reschedule a conference after this point, please contact your child's teacher.

If your child receives special education support, please also schedule a conference with your child's special education teacher.

Conferences are also available with our gym, music and art teachers. Additionally, conferences are available with our support staff. Please click on the links to pick a time to meet with these staff members.

Free childcare for school-aged children will be available in Room 9 (near the cafeteria) during conferences.

**Primary (K3-K5):**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51569830-fernwood>

**Lower Elementary (1st-3rd):**

Ms. Natasha has her own schedule. Please sign up below and take note of the special instructions on the Sign Up.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51652253-fernwood>

All other Lower EI teachers including Ms. Jamie.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51570627-fernwood>

**Upper Elementary (4th-6th):**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51572503-fernwood>

**Special Education Teachers:**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51575934-fernwood>

**Support Staff:**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51571555-fernwood>

**Art, Gym, Music:**

Mr. Zhang will be available in the auditorium on 10/10 only. He will be there from 3-6:45 and is taking walk-ins only.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51570958-fernwood>

### **Secondary (7th-8th):**

Secondary (7th/8th grade) conferences will be on a walk-in basis. Families will wait in line to see the teachers with whom they would like to meet. You will be able to meet with any of the five teachers your student works with for up to 5 minutes. The teachers and the content they teach are as follows: Mr. Jerabek, Science; Ms. Davis, Social Studies; Ms. Zimmers, STEM and Health; Mx. Botsford, Language Arts; Ms. Bussewitz, Math.

In an effort to control the lines that occur in the gym, we are asking families to sign up for a 30 min time slot. This is NOT an appointment with a teacher and it doesn't guarantee that you won't have to wait. We are hoping that if everyone has an assigned time, it will space out arrivals and control wait times. Please note: Ms. Bussewitz and Mr. Jerabek will not be at conferences on 10/10 because they are attending a required Montessori teacher training. Please email them directly if you would like a progress report for your child.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AAA82AA5FBC34-51575375-fernwood>

All secondary conferences on October 10 and 15 will be held in the gym.

---

## **MPS Facilities Strategic Plan Open Houses**

Milwaukee Public Schools is asking the public to help shape the school district's future by commenting at town hall meetings on the 10-year plan for district buildings.

MPS's consultant, Perkins Eastman, has been studying district buildings, analyzing data, and gathering public input since April to ensure that the district's learning spaces meet the needs of students and the community. The plan is known as the Long-Range Facilities Master Plan.

The public will be able to review Perkins Eastman's proposed options for buildings and comment on them to help shape the final plan. The plan will have a direct impact on the future of school buildings and student experiences across Milwaukee.

In-person town hall meetings will be held from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on the following dates:

**Monday, September 30**, at Rufus King International High School, 1801 W. Olive St.

**Tuesday, October 1**, Parkside School for the Arts, 2969 S. Howell Ave.

**Wednesday, October 2**, at Hamilton High School, 6215 W. Warnimont Ave.

**Thursday, October 3**, at James Madison High School, 8135 W. Florist Ave.

In addition, two virtual town hall meetings will be held via Zoom on Monday, October 7, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. To register, go to [mpsmke.com/mpsspsc](https://mpsmke.com/mpsspsc).

Here is a link to the facilities plan.

<https://www.mpsfacilitiesplan.com/home>

---

## Fall Lower Elementary Kids Choir Returns!

WHEN: Tuesdays (2:25-3:10pm) **October 29th - December 17th**

WHERE: Fernwood Auditorium (students will be dismissed from class to the auditorium)

WHO: Intended for 1st-3rd grade Lower Elementary Students

PRICE: \$40 per student (7 meeting sessions total)

Looking for committed children who enjoy singing and would value the benefits of being part of a choir. Each child will take home and sign an attendance and behavior contract.

Deadline for signup is Friday, October 11th, 2024.

To Register: Complete [this link](#) and pay \$40 (Venmo @molly-pufall, or check or cash brought to the main office with attn: Ms. Molly).

Two parent helpers are needed for dismissal and bathroom breaks, etc. Please contact me if you are available at [mpufall@gmail.com](mailto:mpufall@gmail.com).

Director: Molly Pufall-Brown, a Fernwood parent, holds two degrees in music, specializing in voice. She is insured and thrilled to be offering Kids Choir at Fernwood for the 6th year. Please contact Molly to sign up or ask questions: mpufall@gmail.com.

\*\*\*If a parent or guardian is in need of financial assistance to allow their child to participate, please email mpufall@gmail.com\*\*\*

---

## Picture Retake Day Information-Oct 16th

Picture packages will be sent home in the next few weeks. However, digital pictures are available online. If you would like to have your students picture retaken please do the following:

If you purchased a photo package and would like the picture retaken, the package with the pictures needs to be returned to school on retake day. (Oct 16)

If you did not order a photo package you may still have a retake.

If you would like your student's picture retaken, please email your teacher and Meredith Genrich Mertes (genricm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us) so we are aware.

Students who were absent will also have their picture taken on retake day. Parents can still order photos online at mylifetouch.com using the code EVTG8R8WP but will pay for shipping.

---

## District Parent/Guardian School Engagement Survey

Please take a few moments to provide some feedback to the district and our school! The District Parent/Guardian School Engagement Survey is your opportunity to provide the school with information on how you might like to get involved and barriers to involvement. The school is provided with the data and it helps us to plan for our year. The survey takes just a few minutes and is available in many languages. Survey and flyer are linked below.

[mpsmke.com/spcssurvey](https://mpsmke.com/spcssurvey)

## **Our School is Cool!**

There's always something COOL going on at Fernwood! In October, Mr. Matt "Best Ponytail in the Building" Ray, our Greenhouse Program Director, will be restarting our COOL greenhouse program in our freshly updated greenhouse. The program will bring all K5-8th grade students into the greenhouse to plant seeds, grow vegetables, and do maintenance on the facility. Students will discover plant biology, nutrition, and sustainability through their work with him. Past iterations of the greenhouse program have used aquaponics and trout to grow kale which was then sold to area restaurants (no lie). Mr. Ray also is responsible for the biosphere, the tiny greenhouse in the courtyard, and the water table model by the Falling Heath doors. He wears Carhartt and it's not just for show!

Mr. Ray was a Montessori classroom teacher for decades (he is technically retired but seems pretty busy all the time), he lived on a boat for many years (he is the closest thing we have at Fernwood to an actual PIRATE!), and he's a fan favorite around here (like Bobby Portis, Jr)! Give him a high five if you see him and ask him about the greenhouse!

This program and facility was highly subsidized by the Fernwood Fund and is truly unique to our school! Cool!