



STONEGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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August 2025

Dear Stonegate Families and Caregivers,

I am excited to begin my twelfth year as the proud principal of Stonegate Elementary School. We are thrilled to welcome you to the 2025-2026 school year. We look forward to greeting our kindergarten and newly enrolled families. Our school's leadership team has worked hard this summer to help put plans, processes, and procedures in place that will lead us toward continued excellence. Our focus continues to center on providing all students and their families with a high-quality instructional program that prepares them to be career and college-ready. We are committed to ensuring that learning is fun and engaging for all students. We have been charged with a mission to engage our students, make learning fun, ensure that all students are making academic progress, and keep students safe. Our vision at Stonegate is simple, *"One Team, Students First"*.

We welcome Mrs. Joi Hollis to our Stonegate Elementary School family as our new Principal Intern! Mrs. Hollis comes to us from Takoma Park Elementary School, where she served as Assistant Principal for the past four years. Her journey in education began with Teach for America, and her leadership path was shaped by her work with New Leaders for New Schools. In addition to her time in Montgomery County, Mrs. Hollis has also made an impact in District of Columbia Public Schools and Prince George's County Public Schools—serving as both teacher and school leader over a combined 19 years. As part of Mrs. Hollis' internship, will be acting principal of Stonegate from December 1st - January 30th.

A new school year is weeks away. As with every year, we see the possibilities for growth, new plans, and ways to implement new ideas. Our students' success is built upon strong instruction, strong relationships, collaborative support from our families, and our strong PTA. Welcome Mrs. Priscilla Baptista as our new PTA President. We look forward to her leadership. She is focused on providing our school with wonderful experiences, events, and opportunities for all students to have an amazing school year. My door is always open and our goal is to serve and support the academic and emotional well-being of all our students.

Student Transition Day/Open Houses

This year Kindergarten will enjoy “Student Transition Day” on Monday, August 25th. This will be their first day of school. Open House for Kindergarten families will be that afternoon at 2:20 pm.

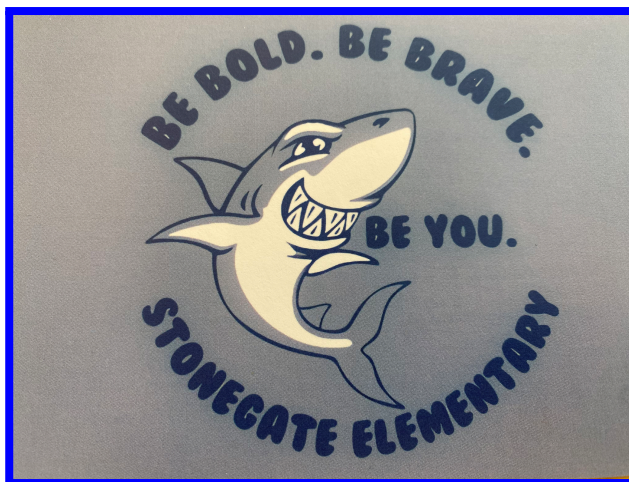
Grade 1-5 students who are new to MCPS will also participate in Student Transition Day on August 25th starting at 12:45 pm. with Open House at 1:30 pm.

For all other families, Open House times on Monday, August 25th are as follows:

- 1:30-2:05 pm for student's last name A-K
- 2:20-2:55 pm for student's last name L-Z

Tuesday, August 26th is the first day of school for students in Grades 1-5 and students in LFI.

PreKindergarten and PEP will start the second week of school - your teacher will contact you.



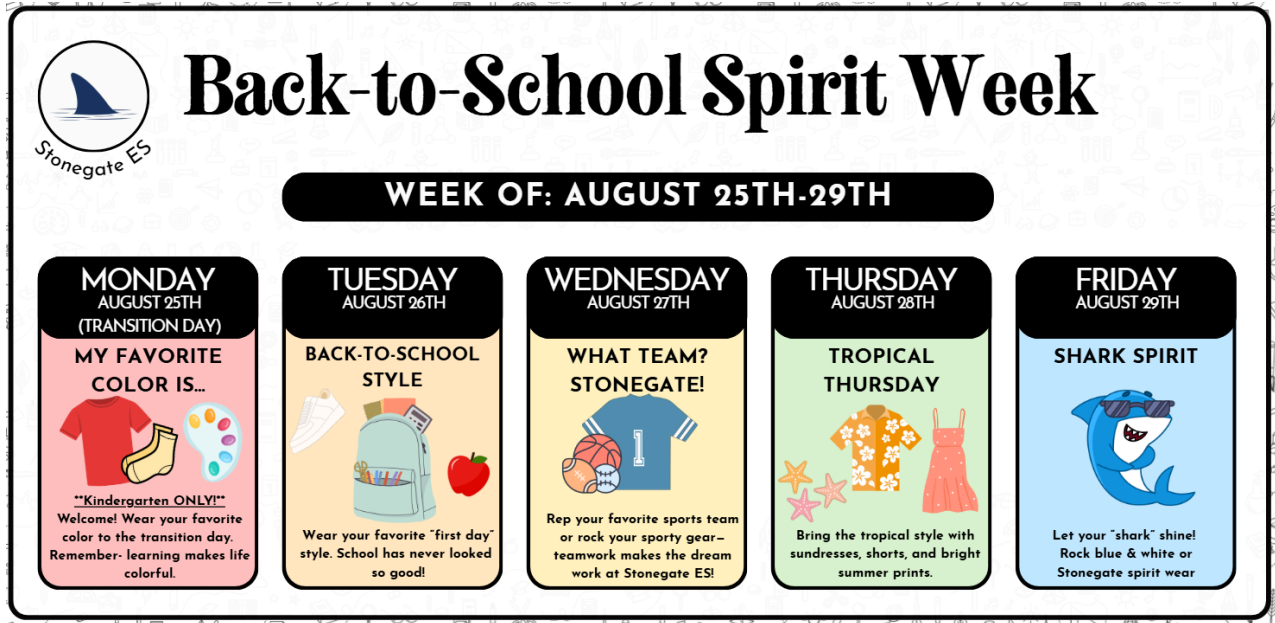
First Day of School Procedures

On the first day of school, Grade 1-5 students will go directly to their classrooms, and Kindergarten students will go to the Multipurpose Room (MPR). Teachers will greet them and walk them to class. Our staff will be on duty to help children locate their classrooms and answer questions.

We want to ensure that students, parents, caregivers, and all well-wishers get off to a terrific start. So please give them hugs and kisses before they get on the bus and in the car. **Parents and caregivers will not be allowed to walk students to their classes.**

Back-to-School Spirit Week

We will also kick off the school year with a Back-to-School Spirit Week!



Monday – My Favorite Color Is... ** Transition Day/ K and New to Stonegate

Welcome! Wear your favorite color on transition day. Learning makes life colorful!

Tuesday – Back-to-School Tuesday

Wear your favorite "first day" style. School has never looked so good!

Wednesday – What Team? Stonegate!

Wear your favorite sports team's gear or sporty clothes—because at Stonegate we are a team!

Thursday – Tropical Thursday

Bring the tropical style with sundresses, shorts, and bright summer patterns.

Friday – Shark Spirit

Let your "shark" shine! Wear blue & white or Stonegate spirit wear.

The following Back to School Information can be found on the Stonegate Elementary School website:

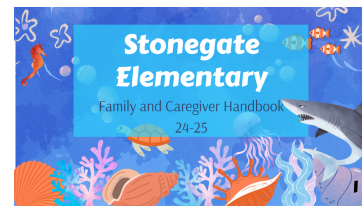
- Bus lists - Not available yet
 - [School Supply Lists](#)
 - [Free Lunch Application](#) (you must apply this year)
- ...and more can be found on our [school website](#) in the Resource Bank.

In this newsletter, you will find information about:

- [Stonegate Teacher List](#)
- [Kindergarten Switcheroo](#)
- [Open House](#)
- [Back To School Night & Caregiver Fair](#)
- [Instrumental Music: Parent Information Meetings](#)
- [Stonegate PTA](#)

Our [Caregiver Handbook](#) has all the important information that families need to know!

- [Arrival](#)
- [Dismissal](#)
- [ParentVue](#)
- [Applying for Free Lunch](#)
- [Online School Payments](#)
- [Breakfast, Lunch, and Cafeteria Accounts](#)
- [BirthdaysCaregiver Handbook 2025-2026](#)
- [Childcare Options](#)
- [Communication -- ParentSquare](#)
- [Immunization Records](#)
- [Clothing To Cash Recycling Program](#)



School Curricula

- [Restorative Approaches](#)
- [Eureka Math](#)
- [Structured Literacy](#)
- [CKLA- Core Knowledge](#)

Stonegate Elementary Welcomes our Magical Teachers

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Kindergarten Teacher | Amy Nguyen | 4th Grade Teacher | Tarnicka Congress |
| Kindergarten Teacher | Abigail Fabre | 4th Grade Teacher | Robbie Micheli |
| Kindergarten Teacher | Devica Porter | 4th Grade Teacher | Devoria Radway |
| 1st Grade Teacher | Tara Mitchell | 4th Grade Teacher | Maha Jawad |
| 1st Grade Teacher | Katie Flanders | 5th Grade Teacher | Blanca Moon |
| 1st Grade Teacher | Zaqwondra Mayers | 5th Grade Teacher | Joslyn Guidot |
| 1st Grade Teacher | Nayeli Martinez | 5th Grade Teacher | Jacqueline Thomas |
| 2nd Grade Teacher | Cindy Dantzler | 5th Grade Teacher | Karl Rosenberg |
| 2nd Grade Teacher | Amanda Haas | PEP Teacher | Naja Mcadams |
| 2nd Grade Teacher | Alejandra Morales | PEP Teacher | Stephanie Wilson |
| 3rd Grade Teacher | Milan Wolfe | Pre-K Teacher | Juduan Miles |
| 3rd Grade Teacher | Rem Nepomuceno | LFI K-1 Teacher | Courtney Clutts |
| 3rd Grade Teacher | Chloe Grammer | LFI 2-4 Teacher | Dayon Hairston |
| Math Focus | Sarah Marsh | LFI 4-5 Teacher | Alphonso Blakeney |
| Staff Development | Crystal Semitekolos | Reading Specialist | Michelle Bozel |
| Home School Model | Josh Allen | Speech | Maeve Dewey |
| Home School Model | April Henderson | Instrumental Music | Nick Proszkow |
| Home School Model | Alex Huff-Reynolds | Music | Sydney Fennington |
| Home School Model | Stephanie Ahishakiye | Art | Maria Del Cid |
| Home School Model | Hayat Pacquette | Media | Tammy Dietmeier |
| ELD | Nadia Silva | P.E. | Christopher Jones |
| ELD/Reading Initiative | Alana Crum | Part-Time Music | Eren Brooks |

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ELD | Jennifer Willis | Part-Time Art | Meghan Camarao |
| Speech | Dina Durham | Part-Time P.E. | Joyce Toledo-Bayle |
| Speech | Ugochi Nwaneri | | |

Our school shines because of these additional staff members!

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Administrative Secretary | Anita Knuth | Counselor | Kedon George |
| Attendance Secretary | Blanca Gallardo | Media Assistant | Mary Ellen Peterson |
| Health Room Nurse | Juliette Marumahoko | School Psychologist | Sehrish Gulfaraz |
| Pre-K Nurse | Nomvuyo Qubeka | PEP Parent Educator | Becky Corey |
| Health Room Technician | Ama Mensah | Occupational Therapist PEP | Katie Kafka |
| Occupational Therapist | Christine Kim | Physical Therapist | Shawn Uzzell |
| Paraeducators | Brenda Reyes Rachel Gates Mason Knuth Erika Arias Cristina Marshall Betsy Chan Latoya Prather Josh Oxley Diana Padilla | Building Services Team and Maintenance Technician | Mario Rivera Ana Lara Salvador Montes de Oca Sonya Orellana Lourdes Rodriguez Ana Romero Elvis Gerardo Cristobal Albert Beverly |
| Paraeducators in LFI | Kamiri Harris Pam Harris Pamela Lopez Guevarra Sonia Rivas Harol Cordero RoRo Caceras Gisselle Ventura | Paraeducators in PEP | Alicia Bautista Pineda Juana Leyva Constance Nguoko Adela Embry |
| Pre-Kindergarten Paraeducators | Leslie Rodriguez Dylan Monday Sadia Abbas | Cafeteria Team | Stanley (Hak) Suen Sau Lan Cheung Suen |

This summer, we also bid farewell to the following Stonegate Sharks:

- **Franny Wooler**, Assistant Principal: will be teaching PEP at Bel Pre Elementary School
- **Annie West**, Grade 5 Teacher: Resigned from MCPS and will be a hybrid teacher. We welcome Brian Morgan as our new Grade 5 teacher.
- **Pamela Rodriguez**, Home School Model Teacher: will be teaching first grade at Jones Lane Elementary School
- **Daniella Krohn**, instrumental music teacher: will be teaching at Chevy Chase, North Chevy Chase, and Rock Creek Valley. We welcome Nick Proszkow as our new instrumental teacher.
- **Javier Hernandez**, Paraeducator: will be going back to school full time at Bowie State University in the fall
- **Tyler Merritt**, PEP teacher: Resigned from MCPS. Ms. Stephanie Wilson will be our new PEP teacher.
- **Alexis Grbac**, Speech Teacher: will be teaching at Cannon Road full time

Have fun at these back-to-school events!

We encourage all our families to attend these events as school reopens this month:

Open House - Monday, August 25th



- Open House for Kindergarten families will be at 2:20 pm.
- Grade 1-5 students who are new to MCPS will also participate in Student Transition Day on August 25th starting at 12:45 pm with the Open House at 1:30 pm.
- For all other families, Open House times on Monday, August 25th are as follows:
 - 1:30-2:05 pm for student's last name A-K
 - 2:20-2:55 pm for student's last name L-Z

- See your classroom, meet your teacher
- We encourage families to walk if possible. If you drive and park in the neighborhood, please do not block anyone's driveway. Please park in the staff parking lot.
- Staff will greet you and let you know where to go and share who your child's teacher is if you don't know.
- Post Cards were mailed and students can scratch off at home to reveal who their teacher is.
- We will NOT be posting class lists.



Back To School Night and Caregiver Fair

- **Thursday, September 11th, at Stonegate Elementary, 6:00-8:00 p.m. for all grades.**
- **This event is for parents/caregivers only.**
- During Back to School Night, families will have an opportunity to meet teachers and hear about the many experiences that they will have throughout the school year. There will be a schoolwide video from the Principal, the PTA President, etc. and then teachers will share expectations, the curriculum, and how to partner with your child's teacher. Teachers will present one time. Recordings will be made available for any parents who miss the presentation or have multiple students. This is for all families: Grades K-5, LFI, PreK and PEP.
- We will offer two Schoolwide informative sessions for parents starting at 6:00 for families. We encourage parents to join us so you are informed about:
 - Community Building and Restorative Approaches at Stonegate
 - Student and Family Wellbeing for Stonegate
- After the schoolwide sessions, families will be invited to join their child's teacher for their classroom/grade-level presentation.
- The following tables will be available for families to visit and receive information:
 - Support with Free Lunch Applications

- Support with activating your ParentVUE account
- Talk to our School Nurse and Health Room Tech
- Learn more about Cafeteria Services
- Special Education at Stonegate
- Stonegate Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Global Childcare Before/After School
- Other community groups

Instrumental Music: Parent Information Meetings

Welcome to Nick Proszkow - our new instrumental music teacher.

Parents and Guardians of current 4th and 5th-grade students may attend any of the two scheduled meeting dates regardless of the school their child attends, as these same topics will be discussed at each meeting: Instrument suitability, rental cost, scheduling, performances, expectations, and parent questions.

Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, September 3 at 12:00 p.m. on Zoom (link below)

Thursday, September 4 at 6:00 p.m. at Stonegate Elementary School (Media Center)

Zoom information:

Join Zoom Meeting (student log-in not required)

<https://mcpsmd.zoom.us/j/81742726164?pwd=HZQNTiRy6GVzeA7QDYmYLghomTgHRB.1>

Meeting ID: 817 4272 6164

Passcode: 8675309

Your attendance is not mandatory for your child to participate in the program. I look forward to meeting you and to a successful school year. For more information about the program or to register, please visit the website:

<https://sites.google.com/mcpsmd.net/proszkow-im/home>

**The exact schedule will be posted at school and to the website on September 25.
Lessons begin the week of September 30.**

Kindergarten Switcheroo

The Stonegate Kindergarten team will be participating in a commonly practiced method used to establish balanced classrooms called “The Kindergarten Switcheroo.” As students transition from grade to grade, a team of dedicated educators comes together to review each child’s academic, social, and emotional progress from the previous year. The team uses this information to create well-balanced classrooms for the following grade level. Unfortunately, this information is not available for rising Kindergarten students which is where “The Switcheroo” comes in! By participating in the Kindergarten Switcheroo, Stonegate will be able to select a classroom placement that best fits the individualized needs of our rising Kindergarten students. We are excited to embark on this new adventure that will allow us to select the best learning environment for your child. All Kindergarten families should have received my Kindergarten welcome letter with more detailed information regarding this process.



Arrival

STUDENTS SHOULD NOT ARRIVE AT SCHOOL BEFORE 8:40 a.m. unless they attend Global Children’s Center. Some fifth graders may also come before 8:40 for their assigned patrol duty.

All students enter the school through the main doors located at the front of the building. Upon entering, students may go to the multipurpose room/cafeteria if they are eating school breakfast or they should go directly to their classroom.

Cars will use the Car Loop. Only Buses may use the Bus Loop during arrival and dismissal.

Students should never be dropped off on the street and then you pull off. Please come through the car circle or park your car and let the students out.

Dismissal

Safety is our number one priority; therefore, we need every parent to exercise patience and respect, follow staff directions, and adhere to the traffic flow pattern and drop-off/pick-up procedures. Please make sure your child knows their dismissal plan (bus rider, car rider, walker, aftercare) and bus route number/sea animal. If the dismissal plans change, please inform your child and the main office immediately. Please remember that classroom teachers may not see your email during the school day. Please call the main office with any same-day dismissal changes.

Students at Stonegate are dismissed as **Car Riders, Walkers, Bus Riders, and After Care**. If you park nearby and walk up to the school to meet your children, your children are considered walkers, not Car Riders. This means that you walk up and get them. **Please do not wave/flag your children to come to the street to enter the car.**

Dismissal by Car

At Stonegate, we have a dedicated car loop. Enter by making a RIGHT turn into the first parking lot. Please:

- Pull as far up as you can and follow staff directions.
- Plan for your children to enter & exit on the passenger side.
- Do not pass cars that are ahead of your vehicle.
- Drive slowly and carefully.
- Display your children's full names on a paper for staff to see.
- Do not make a left turn to enter the parking lot.
- Do not block neighborhood driveways, Notley Road, or stop on Notley to allow students to exit and cross the road.
- Only use the parking lane closest to the school building. It is unsafe to drop kids off or pick students up using the other lanes.

Remember to use the dedicated car loop, not the bus loop directly in front of the school.

Dismissal by Bus

See this link for our Bus Routes: TBD
Fifth graders will continue to serve as safety patrols for the bus.

We will also continue to tag student backpacks according to the student's bus route.

We will use the following Sea Animal Names for our bus routes. At this time, we are



still awaiting bus route information.

Please be at the bus stop 10 minutes in advance, as bus times may vary, especially during the first weeks of school.

At the elementary level, parents are responsible for student safety at bus stops. School safety patrols assist.

Students who wish to go home with a classmate after school either by car or riding a different bus must bring a signed note to the office in the morning for verification. The bus drivers will not allow students on buses without written parent/school permission. Main office staff must sign the parent permission note before a child is to go home on a different bus.

Dismissal for Students Walking

Many families in our neighborhood walk to the school to meet their students, and some students (grade 2 and above) walk home on their own.

Here are some guidelines for walkers:

- Students may walk home using the crosswalks on either side of the school on Notley Road. Students must walk directly home.
- A crossing guard is located at the intersection of Fieldstone Road and Notley Road to ensure the safety of pedestrians during the school's arrival and dismissal process. **It is state law to obey the commands of all official county crossing guards.**
- Keep the front of the school clear! Caregivers may not congregate at the front of the school at arrival or dismissal.

Early Pickup

If you need to pick up your child before dismissal at any time, you must come to the office to pick your students up before 3:00 p.m. **We cannot accommodate parent pickups after 3:00 p.m.** Please do not come to the office after 3:00 to pick up your student. Plan accordingly.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate shark birthdays at Stonegate by announcing your child's name in the morning announcements and presenting each student with a special



birthday pencil. Families may choose to send in cupcakes or other allergy-free treats such as Oreos. Some students have allergies to certain dyes and corn syrup in popsicles, so certain brands such as Outshine are recommended. Please work with your child's teacher.

Communication

Continued and consistent communication will occur through the Principal's weekly message called the Stonegate Greetings which comes through ParentSquare. This is sent out every Sunday evening. Please make sure you update your student emergency information, as that includes the phone and email we use for our communication systems. The Stonegate Greetings is always packed with important information that you need to know.



ParentSquare

ParentSquare

We are excited to share that MCPS is transitioning to using ParentSquare to engage the district, school administrators and now even teachers with ongoing school-to-home communication. Using ParentSquare you'll be able to receive and send messages in any translated language preferred, set your preference to receive them as a text, email or app notification, set a preference for when you want to receive messages, instantly or as a daily digest, send RSVPs to school events and sign up to volunteer and/or donate items at events as well. During this transition we will cease our use of the Remind application for school-to-home communication.

ParentSquare accounts have been created for all teachers, school administrators and staff and caregivers. Your preferred language to receive and send communication may already be set in ParentSquare. If it's not, you can select your preferred language while logged into your ParentSquare account using the website or app.

We encourage you to watch the ParentSquare Overview Video ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) and review the quick guide below to learn how to begin using ParentSquare.

Translated ParentSquare Quick Guides

[English](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Chinese](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Portuguese](#), [Amharic](#), [Korean](#)

The Stonegate Elementary School's website always has updated information. Our webmaster is stellar. Remember, we put great and important information on our website. Please make sure that you visit us.

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/stonegatees/>

I also encourage you to join our PTA. Attending PTA meetings is an important part of learning about our school. PTA messages are included in my weekly communication.

ParentVue

ParentVue is a central online location for students and their parents, guardians, or other authorized adults to access MCPS student information. Parents/caregivers who do not have an account created will receive a letter from MCPS with instructions and access codes for activation.

Here is a ParentVue [quick guide](#) and [directions](#) for activating your account. If you need an activation letter or assistance, please contact the office.

Translated ParentVue Activation Letter Guides: [Spanish](#) / [Korean](#) / [French](#) / [Amharic](#) / [Vietnamese](#) / [Chinese](#) / [Portuguese](#)

Applying for Free Lunch this school year

Every year, students must apply and be approved to receive FREE breakfast and/or lunch.

The Division of Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) is excited to provide regular meal services during the 2024-2025 school year. Students in Maryland who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged for meals! Breakfast: Regular Price: \$1.30; Reduced Price: No Cost, Lunch: Regular Price: \$2.55, Reduced Price: No Cost

Apply before school starts. One application covers the entire HOUSEHOLD. Translations in other languages are available through the online application.

Apply now at www.MySchoolApps.com



Here is a video about how to apply:

English Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJUapGLarBo>

Video en Español: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsdCrtCIFJc&t=4s>

Online School Payments

MCPS uses an online payment system called SchoolCash Online as its preferred method of payment. SchoolCash Online is an easy-to-use and safe way to pay for your children's school fees. Now, with a few clicks, you can pay for your child's field trips, class activities, and so much more from your own home. All you have to do is register an account, attach your children, and in no time you will be able to make payments online. We accept many different payment forms. Please note that the SCO payment system is NOT related to school cafeteria accounts.

Parents/guardians can register now at -
<https://mcpsmd.schoolcashionline.com/>

Breakfast, Lunch, and Cafeteria Accounts

Beginning the first day of school, breakfast and lunch will be served in the cafeteria. Breakfast hours will be from 8:40 a.m. - 8:55 a.m. We will make concessions for those students who arrive late due to bus issues. The cost of school breakfast is \$1.30.



Menus are sent home monthly and can be found on the MCPS's website:

[Elementary Menu](#)

Hot lunches are served daily with alternate choices. Lunch is \$2.55 including milk. Milk may be purchased separately for 60 cents. Parents are highly encouraged to start a Myschoolbucks account for their child. This will eliminate lost or forgotten lunch money. The price of lunch or breakfast will be subtracted from the account. Checks should be made payable to Stonegate School Cafeteria.

Your child may be eligible to receive **free or reduced-price meals**. Apply online at MySchoolApps.com or complete a Household Application for Free and Reduced-price Meals, available from your child's school. **Those approved for free/reduced lunch during the prior school year must reapply every year.**

MySchoolBucks.com is an optional service for parents/guardians to make prepayments to a student's cafeteria account for breakfast, lunch, and à-la-carte meals online with a credit or debit card. This service is offered as a convenience for interested families. By creating a secure online account, parents can monitor and

manage their child's account. There is a \$2.49 (new) convenience fee for each payment transaction. There is no cost to set up an account, check your child's spending history, and receive low-balance notifications.

Payments to student cafeteria accounts can be made either through My School Bucks (optional, not a requirement), or cash or checks payable to Stonegate Cafeteria and submitted to the cafeteria manager.

Free Access to Immunization Records

Maryland residents can gain access to their own immunization records in ImmuNet and print out the Maryland 896 form without having to go to their healthcare provider or local health department. Maryland MyIR (My Immunization Record) is a free website service that allows consumers to view and print copies of their official vaccination records directly from ImmuNet. Simply go to: <https://myirmobile.com>

Clothing To Cash Recycling Program

Clothing to Cash® is a program that collects New and Used Clothing, Shoes, Sheets, and Towels, (all Textiles) and pays the school 11 cents for every pound collected. The program is operated entirely OUTSIDE and will be located in the school parking lot, where students, parents, staff, and the community can drop off items throughout the year. They have state-of-the-art photo quantity sensors installed in each bin that report 3 times daily to prevent overflow and allow the company to schedule service as needed (no other companies use this technology). They empty the collection bin, weigh the contents to determine our school earnings, and pay our school monthly. The average school (500 - 1000 students) will earn \$1000- \$2000 yearly if each student would donate just one 13-gallon kitchen-size trash bag! Add in parents, siblings, relatives, neighbors, and staff, and Stonegate's earnings could really increase.

Childcare Options

We are pleased to have Global Children's Center returning to Stonegate and are honored to serve the children, families, and staff of Stonegate Elementary. Global Children's Center is our onsite before- and after-school program. It begins at 6:30 a.m. until the start of school and then after school until 6:30 p.m. Please visit their website to register at <http://www.globalchildrenscenter.com/>.

Other childcare centers in the area offer before- and after-school care, with transportation provided to and from the school. Below is a list of some programs that

Stonegate families use. Neither Stonegate Elementary nor the PTA endorses nor operates any of these programs.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Kids MCS 14015 New Hampshire Ave. https://www.kidsmcs.com/ 240-644-9295 | Kreative Kidz Academy 14500 Layhill Road https://www.kreativekidzacademy.com/ 301-598-5432 | Global Children's Center 14811 Notley Road http://www.globalchildrenscenter.com (301) 972-5982 |
| Dee Dee's Place 12605 New Hampshire Ave www.deedeesplace.org 301-622-1080 | MUSA Martial Arts 15440 New Hampshire Ave. www.musamd.com 240-560-7260 | Shine After Care 16819 New Hampshire Ave. https://campsonshine.org/programs/shine-before-after-school/ 301-476-8283 |

Restorative Approaches

Principles of our Restorative Approach

We work together to foster the physical, social, psychological, and academic well-being of students, staff, and families through:



Community Building: Building caring communities and healthy relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and responsibility



Self Care: Learning to recognize and regulate our emotions, so we don't cause harm to ourselves or others



Conflict Resolution: Recognizing when our words or actions have harmed others and taking steps to repair that harm

What does this look like at Stonegate?

- Daily Classroom Community Circles
- Celebrating our successes and building a sense of community
- Schoolwide Town Hall Meetings
- Honest, open, structured conversations after a peer conflict
- Student and staff acknowledgements

More Information:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-services/mental-health/restorative-justice-project/>

All schools in MCPS implement community-building and restorative approaches. At Stonegate, we are intentional with relationship building and responding to behaviors

so we know this is the right direction for us. To support this shift, we have an RA specialist from the central office, Ms. Bethlehem Beru, who will be supporting our transition. Ms. Alex Huff Reynolds, Home School Model Teacher, and Ms. Stephanie Wilson PEP Teacher, will lead our work around Restorative Approaches. They will work closely with the central office specialist, receive professional learning and, along with our school committee, will engage staff in professional learning to deepen our mindset and practice.

School Agreements

- As a school, we have three school agreements:
 - **Care for Self**
 - **Care for Others, and**
 - **Care for Environment (the school environment)**
- Staff and students will co-create what each of these agreements looks like in different parts of our school building. Students will give their voice and input. This, combined with staff input, will help us define what these agreements mean in our school.
- Staff will engage in continued ongoing professional development and continue to refine our implementation.
- We will utilize the [Cultivating Restorative Spaces](#) approach to respond to students who break the school agreements.
- Student value and agency have always been important at Stonegate and we will make sure they are aware of the shift and why it is important! We will share with students that there will be times when students break some of the agreements. This is because we are humans with emotions, challenges, and frustrations and sometimes we express those by breaking agreements. What we want to work towards is encouraging & celebrating when we keep the agreements because they help our school community be a great place to learn and to have relationships. And when we don't keep our agreements, we have ways to respond that will support them in returning to sticking to the agreements and repairing any harm that might have happened.

Classroom

- Each classroom will co-create its class agreements, based on the same categories of Care for Self, Care for Others, and Care for Environment (their classroom environment).

- Staff will utilize the Cultivating Restorative Spaces approach to respond to students who break the agreements.
- Together, classes will fill a Shark Tank with “shark bait” to acknowledge and celebrate how students are honoring the school agreements. As we fill the tank together, the class, as a community, builds towards celebrations for their collective success. This is in line with the community-focused aspect of RA. It is inclusive and celebrates the community. It removes the transactional system of behaving in order to receive a ticket to buy prizes and emphasizes sticking with our agreements because it is what is good for the class and the school.

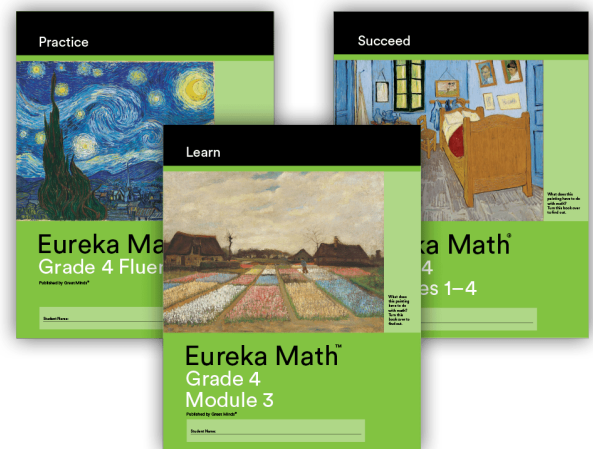


Stonegate Family Community

- As we progress in this journey, parents and caregivers will have opportunities to learn more about Restorative Approaches. Look out for opportunities to continue to learn more about restorative approaches.

Eureka Math & Equip

We are excited to continue the use of our math curriculum, *Eureka Math*®. As you may know, *Eureka* was created by Great Minds, a nonprofit that brought together teachers and experts to craft a program based on the world’s most successful math programs. The most important principle that frames the *Eureka* curriculum is that students need to know the **why** when problem-solving to really reach a deep, conceptual mathematical understanding. Now that we’ve been teaching *Eureka* for a few years, we are able to hone the lessons in a way to



encourage a fun and engaging learning environment as well as utilize tools to meet our students' learning needs.

This upcoming school year we will be continuing with *Eureka Math Equip™* to support our students' needs just in time. *Eureka Math®* teacher–writers created *Eureka Math Equip™*, an adaptive digital diagnostic tool designed to identify learning gaps and address them through direct instructional videos and fluency practice.

The Shift to Structured Literacy

In response to gaps in elementary literacy skills, MCPS is committed to the Structured Literacy approach to building readers. This shift began two years ago and the work continues. Structured literacy focuses on the systematic and cumulative teaching of the five components of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as well as writing. This shift is



supported by research on improving how MCPS teaches reading and writing. In Kindergarten through Grade 2, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment, continues to be the high-quality screening tool with early literacy skills. This measure allows for specific, targeted instruction.

When students' foundational reading skills are firmly in place they benefit from better word-level reading, improved reading accuracy, and an increased reading rate. For students of all ages, strong foundations result in better comprehension, an ability to tackle complex content area reading and academic success.

Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)

This school year, MCPS has adopted a new curriculum, Core Knowledge Language Arts or CKLA. CKLA is a comprehensive language arts program that incorporates the four domains of literacy; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The



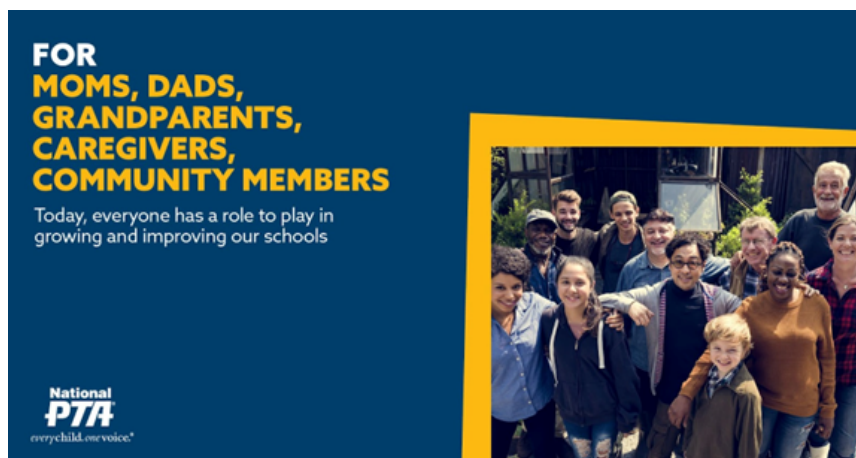
curriculum is distinguished by its deep knowledge building, systematic foundational skills and fluency, and access to challenging texts. Some topics include science, history, literature and arts. Students will engage with complex texts and daily read-alouds where they will dig deeply. Daily writing is tightly connected to the texts and topics students explore.

Welcome from our Stonegate PTA

From our PTA President, Priscilla Figueroa-Batista: A warm welcome to both our new families and returning families to a brand-new school year at Stonegate Elementary! My name is Priscilla Figueroa-Batista and I am honored to serve as your [Stonegate Parent Teacher Association](#) (PTA)'s president for the upcoming 2025-26 academic year. As both a parent and an active member of our fantastic, diverse community, I am very excited to work with you to make this year wonderful and successful for our students and teachers.

The PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Our mission is realized via our partnership with the school administration. Together we support our students, teachers and staff through programming, events and resources that enrich learning and bring our community together. The PTA always celebrates our diversity and empowers students to reach their full potential. We are your megaphone that ensures your voice is heard in our school and community as a whole.

The PTA is a parent-run, volunteer organization, and, thus, we need members like you to make 2025-26 the best year for our students.



[Membership](#) is crucial to support the PTA, and it is the most convenient way to engage with the PTA. Your contribution helps us fund and provide a variety of community events and educational enrichment resources for our students.

The Back-To-School picnic, Spring Carnival, cultural assemblies, Stonegate Snack Pantry, Teacher Appreciation, and Spring Literary Festival are just a few examples of the activities that the PTA sponsors.

Each of these events is only possible with the help of our incredible volunteers. Whether you can donate an hour a month or take on a bigger role, your participation makes a difference in your child's education.

Let's kick-off the school year by [joining the PTA today](#)! There are several membership categories available, and you can donate a teacher/staff membership and individual membership to pay it forward for someone else to be a part of the PTA.

The first PTA meeting will be on **Tuesday, September 2nd at 8pm.**

And the first of many exciting PTA events will be the Back-to-School picnic on **Friday, September 5th at 5:30pm.**

We will send you more information regarding these activities shortly. In the meantime, we would love to hear your innovative ideas at stonegateptapres@gmail.com for new activities and ways in which to support our students.

Stay in the loop by following us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) and visiting our [website](#). And I welcome you to reach me any time at stonegateptapres@gmail.com.

Together, we can make this year a safe, joyous and enriching experience for all of our students.

Kindly,
Priscilla Figueroa-Batista
PTA President, Stonegate Elementary

In Closing

As we wrap up summer and look ahead to a brand-new school year, I am excited to share our theme: Be Bold. Be Brave. Be You. – One School, One Heart.

At Stonegate, we believe every student, staff member, and family has a special spark to share with our community. Being bold means stepping forward with confidence, trying new things, and speaking up for what's right. Being brave means facing challenges with courage, even when the path is uncertain. And being you means embracing your unique gifts, talents, and story because our community is stronger when we celebrate who we truly are.

One School, One Heart reminds us that we are all connected. Every voice matters, every effort counts, and together we create a place where kindness, respect, and belonging are at the center of everything we do. This is why we say, and believe with all our hearts, that Stonegate is where the heart is.

This year, let's commit to lifting one another up, cheering each other on, and making bold moves toward our dreams. Let's be brave enough to learn from mistakes and strong enough to try again. And most importantly let's be our authentic selves.

Here's to a year of heart, courage, and community!

Be Bold, Be Brave, Be You,

Linda M. Jones, Proud Principal