



# DIAMOND MINE

Diamond Elementary School

August 5, 2024

Dear Diamond Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the entire staff at Diamond Elementary School, we hope everyone is safe and enjoying their summer! I am excited to welcome all of you to the 2024-2025 school year. We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new Diamond students and their families to the school community. ***The first day of school is Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup>!***

As we prepare for the opening of the new school year, we need to make sure students have all of the necessary materials. Here is the link for student materials that each student will need to have available with them for home and school use: **Student Supply List:** [DES Student Supply List 2024-2025](#). More information on the start of the new school year can be found on page 4. Parents and students are encouraged to bring these school materials to school on the Sneak Peek event on Friday, August 23rd.

This summer was quiet at Diamond ES with no summer school and no summer camp in the building. The school building experienced a roof replacement which took most of the summer to complete. The building service team was able to thoroughly clean and prepare all equipment and classrooms as we anticipate 650 students enrolled for the first day of school. All of the back-to-school information is linked in this Summer Parent Newsletter. Please be sure to read all of the information included in the attachments as some information may require your response. Pay close attention to the transportation schedule, as this will help you identify the bus routes and drop off and pick up locations. You will also see school supply lists (link above) for each grade level. Included in the attachments is a letter from me to your child. I am asking the Diamond students to write a letter to me with a description and illustration/picture of their favorite summer experiences. I will collect the letters from the students when they return to school and then I will display them on a bulletin board in the main hallway. Please feel free to make copies of the letter template if you have multiple children attending Diamond ES. We will send out further information about our school plans/schedules in the next week.

We always appreciate the wonderful support of our school community and of course the Diamond Elementary PTA. I would like to welcome our new PTA President, Dan Gopman, and our wonderful PTA parent executive board and volunteers. Our PTA is a wonderful resource for our school program due to the wonderful support of our incredible school family community. Please visit the revised PTA website for more information: <https://www.despta.org/home>



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Our school start and end times include students can begin lining up outside on school grounds at 9:05 am, and school doors open at 9:10 am. Late bell rings at 9:25 am where students arriving to school after this time will be considered tardy. Dismissal will begin at 3:50 pm. For early release days, dismissal will begin at 1:20 pm.

In the [June 2023 Diamond Mine Newsletter](#), we said farewell to staff members who were moving onto new endeavors. In July we were informed that a few other staff members were moving on to new endeavors. Mr. Bothwell, second grade teacher, accepted another teaching position in Florida. With such changes, brings new opportunities. We are delighted to welcome talented educators to the Diamond community. We will send an update on new additional staff before school starts. We are delighted to welcome talented educators to the Diamond community. Please join me in welcoming the following new staffing additions to the Diamond community:

- *Ms. Mary Garner*, our new special education teacher.
- *Ms. Antoinette Hellen*, our new part-time speech-language pathologist.
- *Ms. Carol Davis*, our new part-time music teacher.

Diamond Elementary School will be getting a new program starting in the fall of the 2024-2025 school year. The program is called **Preschool Education Program (PEP)**. The PEP program offers pre-K classes and services for children with disabilities ages 3–5 years old. PEP serves children with delays in multiple developmental domains that impact the child’s ability to learn. The continuum of services includes an itinerant model for children in community-based child care settings and preschools, an inclusive model in selected MCPS general education pre-K classes, and self-contained classes. Classes are provided for children who need a comprehensive approach to their learning. We will have a total of 2 classes of the PEP program: the first class will have an AM session and then a PM session. The 2nd second class will be a full-day program. We are excited to welcome new staff members, students and families to the Diamond community.

We would like to welcome our new PEP team:

- *Ms. Sydni Cohen*, PEP Parent Educator
- *Ms. Tiffany Marazzi*, PEP INC Teacher
- *Ms. Bethany Pitts*, PEP Full-Day Teacher
- *Ms. Meron Debru*, PEP Special Education Paraeducator
- *Ms. Izumi Howe*, PEP Special Education Paraeducator

We have several internal staffing changes and we are excited to announce new staff assignments for the upcoming school year.

- Mrs. Jessica Taugher, previously a fifth-grade teacher, will be joining the fourth-grade



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team.

- Mrs. Paul-Felix, special education paraeducator will be supporting our new PEP classes.
- Mrs. Franco-Cruz, special education paraeducator will be supporting our new PEP classes.
- Mrs. Davis, special education paraeducator will be supporting our Home-School Model program and our Autism Connections Program.

Your child will receive a postcard from their new classroom teacher between August 20th-21st. If you are out of town and/or do not receive a postcard, please call the main office on Wednesday, August 21st after 1:30 p.m. and we will notify you of your child's teacher assignment. **On Friday, August 23rd, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., students and their parents are invited to the school for our "Sneak Peek Open House."** For our 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade students who were identified as Safety Patrol Students in the spring 2024, there will be a Safety Patrol Meeting from 1:15-2:00 p.m. in the gym on Friday, August 23rd. Our "Sneak Peek Open House" gives students and parents an opportunity to meet their new teacher and find their classroom. Building maps will be available to help you find your child's classroom. We hope you will be able to join us as we look forward to seeing all of our Diamond families. It will be great to see the children and hear their voices echoing throughout the building after a quiet summer in the office area.

**Back-To-School Night for grades 3-5 Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. and for grades K-2 it is scheduled for Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.** We will send out additional information of child-care options and other school presentation opportunities.

Once again, we look forward to seeing you at the **"Sneak Peek" on August 23rd**, and on the **first day of school, Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup>**! I am looking forward to an exciting school year with the wonderful students, parents, and teachers of Diamond ES! Please be sure to read all of the information included in the summer information packet. We encourage you to visit our website <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/>, regularly for all school related information. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office at (240) 740-2120. Enjoy the remaining days of your summer!

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder  
Principal



### **Beginning of the 2024-2025 school year documents:**

- **Bus Transportation letter (English/Spanish):** [Bus Transportation Letter 2024](#)
- **What You Should Know About Riding the Bus (English/Spanish):** [What You Should Know About Riding the Bus](#)
- **Diamond ES Bus morning:** [Arrival Bus Routes Report- 2024-2025](#)
- **Diamond ES Bus afternoon:** [Departure Bus Routes Report- 2024-2025](#)
- **Student Supply List:** [DES Student Supply List](#)
- **Student Summer Letter:** [Summer Student Letter](#)
- **MCPS 2024-2025 School Year Calendar:** [2024-2025 School Year Calendar](#)
- [Welcome Back to School Newsletter 2025](#)

**SCHOOL VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROCESS:** If you are interested in volunteering at school in the classroom, in the media center, during recess time, or during field trips, ALL volunteers must complete the required volunteer training. If you want to get a head start and complete the training now, click on [School Volunteer Training Process](#). Teachers and staff will share more information about volunteer opportunities once school starts in August/September.

### **ELEMENTARY FEES AND SUPPLIES:**

Students will not be asked to pay for or provide textbooks, supplementary readers (such as anthologies, atlases, or workbooks), most materials of instruction, audiovisual aids, stationery items not commonly found in the home and required for the student to demonstrate mastery of course objectives, or building or office materials needed to operate schools.

Students may be asked to pay for materials of instruction that primarily fit into three Categories as follows:

- Items eaten by the student as a part of the course (example: bread baking ingredients).
- Component *parts* of a product that will become student property (example: sculpting clay).
- Materials of instruction or items of personal use that become the property of the student (example: recorder).



We suggest that students bring individual organizational tools and personal supplies from home. In addition, there are student fees which are not course-related but local school decisions made by the principal in collaboration with the school and parent leadership. These may include fees for class snacks, special grade-level assemblies, etc. There also may be fees related to field trips, but these will be shared each time there is a trip and not in advance as a school fee.

We are committed to providing all students, regardless of their economic circumstances, with full access to the instructional program. If you need assistance for any requested expense, or with providing the organizational tools and personal supplies, please contact your child's teacher, our counselors, or school administration.

Parent donations of items that enhance the classroom experience are still welcomed, either as donations from individual parents or organized by class parents or by the PTA. A list of these items is included on the Student Supply Item Request. They are not required donations and no student will be expected to provide these items, but if you care to contribute, it will be appreciated. Teachers will communicate donation wish lists at the beginning of the school year.

**STUDENT AGENDA BOOKS:** Students in grades 3-5 will be provided student agenda books for the 2024-2025 school year. The student agenda books will be distributed to students during the first week of school in their classrooms.

**SCHOOL CAFETERIA NEWS:** MCPS will resume regular meal services during the 2024–2025 school year. Meal prices: Breakfast—\$1.30; Lunch—\$2.55 (Elementary), \$2.80 (Middle and High) and reduced prices at all levels is no cost. Our MCPS cafeterias utilize a computerized Point of Sale (POS) system. Students utilize either an ID Card with a specialized barcode or their student ID number to access the account at mealtime. A student's Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) status is always confidential, to learn more and apply for FARMs [click here](#). Beginning school year 2024-2025, students who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged that cost - meaning that **reduced-price students will eat for free!** Deposits into the account can be made by any student and can be made ahead of time on our online payment system, My School Bucks (see in link below). We encourage every family to setup a lunch account just in case. Even if your child brings lunch every day, you might want them to purchase ala carte items such as milk, fruit or vegetables.



- **HOW TO SET UP A SCHOOL LUNCH ACCOUNT TO PURCHASE SCHOOL MEALS:** click on this link for more information and directions on setting up a school lunch account: [MCPS Meal Account Payment Information](#) or the MCPS link: [Food Services website](#)
- You can also visit the school cafeteria during Sneak Peek, Friday, August 23, 2024, from 2:00-3:00 PM to provide a check for your student's account.
- **FREE AND REDUCED MEALS APPLICATION PROCESS: MUST BE RENEWED EACH YEAR:** FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEAL APPLICATIONS students in Maryland who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged for breakfast or lunch meals! Apply Online NOW so that benefits will be in place when school starts! Families who meet certain federal income standards are eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits. All children use their MCPS ID number at the register so confidentiality is maintained and no child is overtly identified as receiving free or reduced-price meals. Only one application is needed for all students in a household. A new application must be completed for any family requesting assistance this school year. The online application is now open for families to submit applications. [www.MySchoolApps.com](http://www.MySchoolApps.com). For more information and How-To videos visit the [Food Services website](#).  
APPLY HERE! [www.Myschoolapps.com](http://www.Myschoolapps.com)

A hard copy is available at the school. Households that complete an online application DO NOT need to submit a paper application. Paper applications will only be distributed to parents/guardians who request a paper application. Translations of the form are available in other languages through the online application.

### **Annual Notification of Family Education Rights and Privacy Act:**

Each year, MCPS is required by law to inform parents/guardians of the Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA), which requires MCPS to give parents/guardians the opportunity to request that directory information be withheld. MCPS Form 281-13, Annual Notice for Directory Information and Student Privacy, contains the appropriate information and is available online in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Portuguese.

Parents /guardians may direct the school administration not to release any or a specific part of the directory information if they return the completed form by Thursday, September 12, 2024. If parents/guardians choose to change their decision at a later date, they must contact the school directly. The form remains in effect until the end of the school year on June 30, 2025.

Your school will assume you agree to the release of the directory information, unless this form is returned by Thursday, September 12, 2024. If you need to change your decision at a later date, just contact your school directly. If you enroll after September 12, 2024, you



can complete this form at the time of enrollment. [Annual Notification Form To Be Completed by September 12<sup>th</sup>](#): This Form is available in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Portuguese. This form must be completed every year by each family.

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### SUMMER HEALTH REMINDERS

- **School immunizations**—The Maryland Department of Health released updated school vaccine requirements for the 2024-2025 school year: [2024-2025 school vaccine requirements](#). Families of incoming kindergarten students, new students, and 7th and 8th graders may need additional vaccines to start the school year. For students whose required vaccines are incomplete, updated vaccine records must be submitted by the first day of school; proof of exemption or a vaccination visit must be submitted within 20 days. School staff are reviewing records and contacting families of students with incomplete vaccination records. Not sure if your student is up to date? Contact your child’s health care provider or access their immunization records [online](#). Students 18 years old and younger eligible for the Vaccines for Children program may obtain free vaccines through the county’s [Immunization Program](#).
- **School Health Forms**—Returning students may need certain forms if they have a health condition that requires medication, other health support or accommodations, or an emergency health plan at school (for example, asthma, food allergies or a seizure disorder). Common forms include:
  - Form 525-13 (for medications to be given or available at school): [Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication](#) / [Autorización para Suministro de Medicamento Recetado](#)
  - Form 525-14 (emergency plan for severe allergic reactions): [Emergency Care for the Management of a Student with a Diagnosis of Anaphylaxis](#) / [Atención de Emergencia para Estudiantes con Diagnóstico de Anafilaxia](#)
  - Form 240-23 (for food services to be aware of special diets due to an allergy or another health condition): [Special Dietary Needs Form](#) / [Formulario de Necesidades Alimentarias Especiales](#)
- Other health forms or forms in other languages are on our [website](#)
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services: [Back To School Immunizations](#)



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### Diamond Elementary School Student Supply List 2024-2025

Kindergarten	1 <sup>st</sup> grade
Crayons, large box (2) Glue sticks, non-toxic, purple (2) Headphones, for individual computer use Highlighters, yellow Pencils, #2 box Stickers, various	Crayons, large box Glue sticks, non-toxic, clear (4) Headphones, for individual computer use 2- Highlighters, yellow Pencil box Pencils, #2 (box) Scissors, blue tip
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
Crayons, regular box (no boxes with sharpeners) Glue sticks, non-toxic, clear (2) Headphones, for individual computer use Markers, dry erase, various colors, box Pencil box Pencils, #2 (2 boxes) Scissors, blue tip	Composition book, hard cover Crayons, regular (box, no boxes with sharpeners) Headphones, for individual computer use Highlighters, various colors Markers, dry erase, various colors, box Pencils, #2 (2 boxes) Ruler 12", millimeters/inches Scissors, blue tip
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Composition book, hard cover Glue sticks, non-toxic, clear (2) Highlighters, various colors Headphones, for individual computer use Pencils, #2 (2 boxes) Pouch, zippered for binder use Sticky Notes, 1.5"x2" (pack) Sticky Notes, 3"x5" (pack)	Composition book, hard cover Crayons, regular (box, no boxes with sharpeners) Erasers, large, latex free & Eraser Caps Folders, pocket, 3-hole punched Glue sticks, non-toxic, clear (3) Headphones, for individual computer use Highlighters, various colors including yellow (5) Markers, non-toxic, various colors, regular box Markers, dry erase, various colors, box Pencil box Pencils, #2 (3 boxes) Pencils, colored (box) Scissors, pointed Sticky Notes, 3"x5" (pack)

- We recommend, but do not require, that students bring the following individual organizational tools and personal supplies to school on the first day of class. Students may need to replenish as needed throughout the school year.
- Grade levels have also included requests for donations. These items are not required but would be greatly appreciated. This list has been revised under guidelines regarding MCPS Course-Related Fees.

#### Items to consider for donation at all grade levels

These items are not required, but would be greatly appreciated: liquid soap, hand sanitizers, disinfectant wipes, paper towels, facial tissue, gallon and quart-sized plastic zip-lock bags, tennis balls.





### *Message from Diamond ES PTA*

Dear Diamond Elementary Parents and Caregivers,

My name is Dan Gopman and I am President of the Diamond Elementary School Parent Teacher Association. It is my pleasure to join Principal Walder as we welcome you and your families to the 2024-2025 school year. If your family is anything like mine, you have already heard several times from your child(ren) some back-to-school jitters. But I want to assure you that we have got you (and your kids) covered! We have so many great activities scheduled throughout the year to complement the top-notch education at Diamond. The Diamond ES PTA is behind some of the most fun events of the school year, including:

- Teaming with DES Teachers for events like the Dol-fin Dash and Game Night
- Afterschool extracurriculars ranging from Karate and Soccer to Guitar, Chess and Chemistry
- In-school auditorium spectacles from some of the area's most inspiring dancers, poets and scientists, to name a few; and
- Capstone events like International Night and Lunar New Year that embrace the diverse cultural heritage of DES families

Working closely with Principal Walder and the DES Staff, we work hard to provide activities all throughout the year to help bring students and families closer together.

The DES PTA is led and maintained by parents and guardians (and teachers!) like yourselves, volunteering time and sharing your expertise. We need you! - whether you're an accountant serving as Treasurer, or just a big foodie with a knack for finding Restaurant Night fundraiser sites.

We cannot succeed without help from our Diamond families. We hope that you will join the PTA. The once-a-year, renewable membership comes with a small fee (\$30) and gives you a voice (1 vote) on how the PTA develops its programming for each year. Please sign-up for the upcoming year here (<https://forms.gle/gvwoDfoTsAHiNRHHA>). Your small commitment is key to our excellent programming:

- 11 cultural arts assemblies – that's 2 full school assemblies, 2 half school assemblies, 6 grade level assemblies, and the 5th grade legacy project!
- An unforgettable graduation send-off our 5<sup>th</sup> graders and celebrate their special time at Diamond
- Community-building events like International Night or Lunar New Year
- And so much more!

I'll let you in on a little secret. PTA membership has been sagging. I understand – the pandemic set us all back in so many ways and took away some of our sense in shared purpose and community service. As DESPTA President, I hope to encourage many more of you to come join those families



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who have been staffing the fundraiser concessions tables, nudging your teenage sons and daughters to come help out and get SSL credits, to send in a few more coins during the Coin Drive. We can do so much more together in 2024. I can't wait to see you all and get started soon. Enjoy the rest of summer, and we'll be seeing you during the Back-to-School events, and hopefully at the first PTA Meeting of the year, Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the Media Room.

All The Best,

Dan

Dan Gopman  
DESPTA President

[Translated Documents](#)