



STONEGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

14811 Notley Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905
240-740-7340 (PHONE)

August 2023

Dear Stonegate Families,

I am excited to begin my tenth year as the principal of Stonegate Elementary School. We are thrilled to welcome you to the 2023-2024 school year. We can't wait to greet 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"*.

A new school year is just a few 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, and strong support of our PTA. Mrs. Kimberly Smith will return as our PTA President. We are truly fortunate to work collaboratively with her. 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.



We are so proud to begin our school year back at our original location, 14811 Notley Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905.

Our first day of school is Monday, August 28th.

Our school hours will be 9:00 a.m.- 3:25 p.m. Our school doors open at 8:40 a.m.

This year, Stonegate Elementary welcomes two brand new programs to our school. We have one class of Pre-Kindergarten and two half-day PEP classes. In MCPS, PEP provides preschool special education services for children aged 3 to 5.

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

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

Event	Date	Time	Location/ Notes
<p>Teacher Reveal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A sneak peek to find out who your teacher will be! ● Support the Food Trucks! ● See your friends! ● No inside tours at this time. 	<p>Thursday 8.17.23</p>	<p>4:30-7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Front of Stonegate School: 14811 Notley Road, Silver Spring</p>

<p>Kindergarten Fin-Tastic</p> <p>Back To School Night for Kindergarten Parents</p>	<p>Thursday</p> <p>8.24.23</p>	<p>6:00-7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Stonegate School</p> <p>APR Parent Meeting and</p> <p><i>Global Childcare will provide care for kindergarten students during Parent Meeting</i></p> <p>Then visit K classrooms with students</p>
<p>Open House: The Great Shark Tour</p> <p>Tour the new school and visit with your classroom teachers, drop off supplies</p>	<p>Friday</p> <p>8.25.23</p>	<p>10-11 a.m.: Last names A-K</p> <p>1-2 p.m.: Last names L-Z</p>	<p>Tour main floor and visit classrooms</p>
<p>Back To School Night for Grades 1-5, LFI</p> <p>PTA Back To School Picnic</p>	<p>Thursday</p> <p>9.7.23</p>	<p>5:30-6:30 p.m.</p> <p>BTSN for Grades 1-5</p> <p>6:30-8:00 p.m. Picnic for all</p>	<p>Schoolwide at the Playground</p>

Teacher Reveal!

- Thursday, August 17th, from 4:30-7:30 p.m.
 - Front of Stonegate Elementary School
 - Students who attend can find out who their teacher will be for this school year
- There will be a Food Truck and Kona Ice

Kindergarten Parents Only: Back to School Night!

- Thursday, August 24th, from 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Stonegate Elementary All Purpose Room

- Tour the building, Meet the Kindergarten teachers, and hear about expectations, curriculum, and processes for your kindergartner.
- Global Childcare will provide care for students ages 5 and above.

Open House and the Great Shark Tour!

- Friday, August 25th
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. for families with last names A-K
 - 1:00-2:00 p.m. for families with last names L-Z
- Enter through the Stonegate Elementary All Purpose Room in the front of the building.
- Families will have an opportunity to tour our new and amazing building! After the tour, you will have time to visit your new classroom.
- We encourage families to walk if possible. Please do not block anyone's driveway if you park in the neighborhood.

Back To School Night and the Stonegate PTA Back To School Picnic

- Thursday, September 7th
- Who is this for:
 - Grades 1-5 and all grades for students in the LFI program
 - Students in PreK and PEP
- From 5:30-6:30 p.m. join your child's teacher for a presentation on grade-level plans, 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.
- From 6:30-8:30 p.m., **all families** are welcome to join the Stonegate PTA for our Back To School Picnic! We will have fun activities including food trucks, moonbounce, and more! Kindergarten Families are also invited to join the Back To School Picnic even though Kindergarten BTSN is in August.

First Day of School for Grades K-5 and LFI

- Monday, August 28th

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

- [Bus lists](#) for Arrival and Dismissal
- [School Supply Lists](#)
- [Free Lunch Application](#) (you must apply this year)

...and more can be found on our [school website](#)

In the summer letter below, you will find information about:

- Stonegate Teacher List
- Stonegate PTA
- Kindergarten Switcheroo
- Open House on August 26
- Back To School Night
- Instrumental Music: Parent Information Meetings
- Arrival
- Dismissal
- ParentVue
- Applying for Free Lunch this school year
- Online School Payments
- Breakfast Lunch and Cafeteria Accounts
- Birthdays
- Childcare Options
- Communication
- Immunization Records
- Clothing To Cash Recycling Program

and School Curriculum

- Restorative Justice
- Eureka Math
- Structured Literacy
- Benchmark

Stonegate Elementary Welcomes our Fantastic Teachers

Kindergarten Teacher	Amy Nguyen	4th Grade Teacher	Jillian Roberts
Kindergarten Teacher	Abigail Fabre	4th Grade Teacher	Tarnicka Congress
Kindergarten Teacher	Devica Porter	4th Grade Teacher	Robbie Micheli
1st Grade Teacher	Tara Mitchell	5th Grade Teacher	Blanca Moon
1st Grade Teacher	Katie Flanders	5th Grade Teacher	Max Byer
1st Grade Teacher	Zaqwondra Mcknight	5th Grade Teacher	Joslyn Guidot
2nd Grade Teacher	Cindy Dantzler	PEP Teacher	Tyler Merritt
2nd Grade Teacher	Juduan Miles	Pre-K Teacher	Joyce Williams
2nd Grade Teacher	Alejandra Morales	LFI K-1 Teacher	Courtney Clutts
2nd Grade Teacher	Milan Wolfe	LFI 2-4 Teacher	Dayon Hairston
3rd Grade Teacher	Keondrea Whitlock	LFI 4-5 Teacher	Pam Harris
3rd Grade Teacher	Chloe Grammer	Reading Initiative	Alana Crum
3rd Grade Teacher	Olivia Smith	Math Focus	Sarah Lacey

Before school ended, we shared with our families about our staff moving on to new adventures. Additionally, over the summer, we also bid farewell to the following Stonegate Sharks:

Angie Frailey: will be teaching at Hallie Wells Middle School

Alesha Ashe: will be teaching at Ridgeview Middle School

Meghan Hill: will be teaching at Blake High School

Betzabe Martinez: will be at Sherwood Elementary as the PEP Paraeducator

We wish them well in their new positions!

Website

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/>

Welcome from our Stonegate PTA

From our PTA President, Kimberly Smith:

The [Stonegate Parent Teacher Association](#) (PTA) is excited to meet new families and reconnect with returning families in our school community! This will be an amazing NEW school year full of NEW adventures in a brand NEW school facility!

The PTA is a parent-run, volunteer organization with the mission to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. We aim to partner with the school administration to advocate for our students and support our teachers and staff through programming and events that bring our community together, celebrate our diversity, and empower students to be the best that they can be.



YOU BELONG IN PTA

Our PTA Creates Connections.

Join our PTA to...

- Build powerful relationships
- Access important school resources
- Strengthen the village that helps raise your child

[Membership](#) is the first step in supporting the PTA. Your membership will help the PTA offer a variety of community engagement activities and various educational enrichment resources for our school community throughout the year. The Back-to-School picnic, Spring Carnival, cultural assemblies, and Spring Literary Festival are just a few examples of the activities that PTA sponsors.

You don't have to wait for school to start. You can [sign-up](#) now! Please contact the stonegateptapres@gmail.com if you have questions or ideas! We are excited and look forward to creating opportunities for each student to grow, thrive, and have fun!

--Kimberly Smith, 2023 - 2024 Stonegate PTA President

Kindergarten Switcheroo

This year 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.

The Great Shark Tour and Open House- Friday, August 25th

- 10:00-11:00 a.m. for families with last names A-K
- 1:00-2:00 p.m. for families with last names L-Z



Families will have an opportunity to tour our new and amazing building! After the tour, you will have time to visit your new classroom. Enter through the Stonegate Elementary All Purpose Room in at the front of the building. Please park in the staff parking lot. We encourage families to walk if possible. Please do not block anyone’s driveway if you park in the neighborhood. Staff will greet you and let you know who your child’s teacher is if you missed the Teacher Reveal. We will NOT be posting class lists.

Back To School Night

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.

Back-to-School Night for **Kindergarten** will be held in person on Thursday, August 24th from 6:00–7:30 p.m. at Stonegate Elementary.



Back-to-School Night for grades **1-5, and LFI families** on Thursday, September 7th at Stonegate Elementary.

- Starting at 5:30 p.m., join your child's teacher for a presentation from the principal 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.
- From 6:30- 8:30 p.m., join the Stonegate PTA for our Back To School Picnic! We will have fun activities including food trucks, moonbounce, and more!

Instrumental Music: Parent Information Meetings

From Ms. Dani Krohn, Instrumental Music Teacher:

Parents and Guardians of current 4th and 5th-grade students may attend one of 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.

There will be a Zoom session on Sept 6th at 12:00 p.m. and an in-person session the following week. More information including the Zoom link and the locations coming soon! 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. Parents and Guardians who wish to register for the program can fill out the form here:

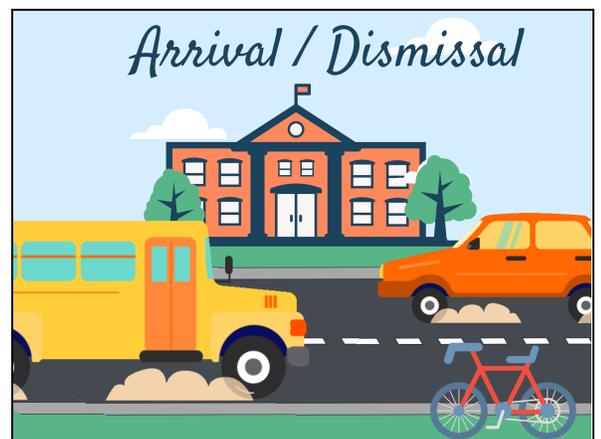
<https://forms.gle/7LSRc8HcegWxwfDp6>

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 cafeteria if they are eating school breakfast or they should go directly to their classroom.

Cars will use the car loop. Only busses may use the Bus Loop during arrival and dismissal.



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.

ACTION: [Submit your child's dismissal plan here.](#)

Students at Stonegate are dismissed as Car Riders, Walkers, and Bus Riders. If you park nearby and walk up to the school to meet your children, your children are considered walkers.

Dismissal by Car

At Stonegate, we have a dedicated loop for car riders.

Be sure to:

- Display your students' full names on a paper for staff to see
- Use the dedicated car loop. DO NOT enter the bus loop
- Do not try to load your children from the street
- Allow students to enter & exit on the passenger side
- Do not pass cars that are ahead of your vehicle
- Pull up to the barrier poles to allow your child to enter your vehicle
- Drive slowly and carefully

Please do not block any driveways or park illegally on Notley Road or in the neighborhood.

Dismissal by Bus

See this link for our Bus Routes: [Bus Route](#)

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:

- **Whale - 6235**
- **Octopus - 6210**
- **Starfish - 6211**
- **Seahorse - 6216**
- **Jellyfish - 6201**

Please be at the bus stop 10 minutes in advance as the times for buses 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. 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.
- An adult 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.

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 ParentView [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](#)

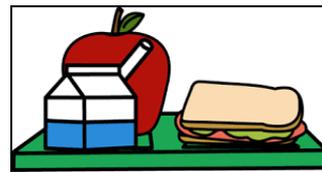
This year, students must apply and be approved to receive FREE breakfast and/or lunch.

The Division of Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) is excited to provide regular meal services during the 2023-2024 school year.

NEW this 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 has transitioned to a new 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 yearbook, 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 new 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 \$1.95 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.

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. **DUE TO ALLERGY CONCERNS** – we **no longer allow food items** to be brought in and shared with the class. However, classes will still celebrate with singing and a special trinket if you decide to bring something in for the class. Some examples could be stickers, pencils, or a class book that the birthday student donates to the class and the teacher will read. Celebrations will continue to happen at the end of the school day.



Childcare Options

We are pleased to have Global Children’s Center returning to Stonegate and they are honored to serve the children, families, and staff of Stonegate Elementary. Global Children’s Center is our onsite before and aftercare program. They begin 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 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 operate 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

Communication

Continued and consistent communication will occur through the Principal's weekly communication that comes 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, a weekly message, is always packed with important information.

The Stonegate website will be regularly used to highlight important events and information. I also encourage you to become a member of our PTA. Your attendance at PTA meetings is an important part of learning about our school. PTA messages are included in my weekly communication.

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 (<https://myirmobile.com>) that allows consumers to view and print copies of their official vaccination records directly from ImmuNet.

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 10 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.

Restorative Justice

Stonegate ES will continue using a Restorative Justice (RJ) approach of community building, relationship building, and responding to behaviors that interrupt or harm the school learning and social experience.

STUDENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Empowering the Student Voice to
Facilitate Student Success

Restorative justice is a proactive relational approach that creates a culture of connectivity where all members of a community thrive and feel valued. Restorative approaches find their roots in the traditions of indigenous and African communities. Restorative Justice has developed from these

approaches and within schools, emphasizes bringing students, staff and families together when harm or behaviors occur that interrupts the learning and social experience of the classroom or school community.

- from “The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice” by Fania E. Davis

MCPS has shared that all schools will be implementing Restorative Justice Practices. Additionally, RJ highly reflects Stonegate's mindset towards relationship building and responding to behaviors so we know this is the right direction for us. To support this shift, we have an RJ specialist from the central office, Ms. Bethlehem Beru, who will be supporting our transition. Ms. Jordan Bolinger, our school counselor, and Ms. Dayon Hairston, Third Grade Teacher, will lead our work around Restorative Practices. 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. As Stonegate continues to learn and grow, here is how we will immediately implement Restorative Justice approaches in our school, classrooms, and community.

School

- 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 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 RJ. 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, there will be opportunities for parents and caregivers to learn more about Restorative Justice and approaches. Look out for opportunities to continue to learn more about restorative justice.

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 last year 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.



Benchmark

We will also continue with Benchmark Universe for our reading curriculum this year. Benchmark is a comprehensive language arts program that incorporates the four domains of literacy; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All of Benchmark's content is organized around 10-content focused knowledge strands that build in complexity from grade level to grade level, developing background knowledge and deepening students' understanding of science, social studies, and English Language Arts (ELA). Students have many opportunities to engage with complex texts through interactive read-alouds, shared readings, and close readings of texts where students are able to dive deeper with each consecutive reading and work to answer text-dependent questions with textual evidence.

Our New Beautiful Home



We are so excited about this school year and hope that you are too. We already have so much to celebrate and be very thankful for. Our brand-new school building stands as a testament to the collective dedication and commitment of our entire community. We are truly thankful and immensely proud of this magnificent space that will be our hub of learning and growth for many years to come. As you and your children explore our new school building, you will notice the captivating ocean-inspired elements that grace our hallways and classrooms. These elements have been thoughtfully integrated to inspire curiosity, creativity, and a deep connection to the world around us. Indeed, we are fortunate to have a beautiful building that fosters an environment of inspiration and learning.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Warmly,

Linda M. Jones

Linda M. Jones
Principal