

# MCPs CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL

**A STYLE GUIDE TO WRITING FOR MCPs**  
covering how and when to communicate effectively  
with memoranda, letters, and e-mail.





# MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

**EDITORIAL, GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES**

January 2023

Enclosed is the *2023 Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Correspondence Manual*. Please discard all previous copies. All pages have been updated in this edition.

This manual has been compiled to *guide* you in preparing memoranda and letters on behalf of MCPS. It has been reviewed and vetted to ensure consistency in MCPS style for correspondence and other documents.

Highlights of the manual include the following:

- New samples of memoranda
- New samples of letters
- Updated index to help you find the information you need quickly
- Updated information on the Principals' Memoranda Library

This edition is also available online. Search "Editorial Help Desk" on the MCPS website, then scroll down the page and look for the MCPS Correspondence Manual button.

Your questions and suggestions are always welcome. Please contact Ms. Donna Marks Pleasant, communications specialist at [Donna\\_M\\_MarksPleasant@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Donna_M_MarksPleasant@mcpsmd.org).



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**CORRESPONDENCE**  
**MANUAL**

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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## **This manual serves as a guide for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff who prepare correspondence.**

- It presents standard formats to be used when preparing memoranda and letters for MCPS.
- It provides information on hierarchy of offices.
- It gives directions for obtaining document services such as graphic composition, printing, publishing, and duplicating.
- It offers guidance on email etiquette.
- It outlines basic writing tips.
- It ends with an index of topics addressed in the manual.

This manual is a work in progress and is updated regularly as our correspondence procedures evolve.

The manual was produced with the input of MCPS secretarial and administrative staff, who shared their professional experience and contributed valuable suggestions. Their contributions are incorporated in this manual.

Questions concerning grammar, style, and usage should be referred to Donna M. Marks Pleasant, communications specialist, Editorial, Graphics & Publishing Services. Also, users may consult the *MCPS Editorial Stylebook*, which is available online at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/documents/editorialstylebook.pdf](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/documents/editorialstylebook.pdf) or by contacting Donna M. Marks Pleasant on Outlook.

The following are authoritative grammar and style guides adopted by MCPS:

- *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*
- *The Gregg Reference Manual, 11th Edition*
- *The American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual, 6th Edition*
- *The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition*







# Introduction

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## Should You Write a Memorandum, Letter, or Email?

### A Memorandum

A memorandum (plural: memoranda) is intended for interoffice circulation. Business letters allow MCPS staff to communicate with individuals outside the school system, while memoranda usually contain information that affects those within the school system.

Memoranda frequently address a group of people, although some are addressed to one person. Your aim in writing a memorandum is the same as with other professional correspondence: You want to quickly and effectively communicate your purpose to your reader.

Usually, a memorandum is used to address issues that are directed to MCPS employees. It may provide a record or reminder or update of a directive or instruction already proposed, and often it contains advisory or informative content.

Most interoffice communication is done through memoranda. Most memoranda can be sent electronically. Please consult with your reporting office to confirm that office's protocol for electronic distribution of materials.

Other interoffice correspondence materials include meeting agendas, presentation plans, and talking points. You will find tips for writing these in the Memoranda section of this manual.

### A Letter

A letter is more direct, personal, and formal. It is used for sending messages to students, parents/guardians, and individual(s) or organization(s) outside of the school system.

Therefore, when sending a message to an individual or organization outside MCPS, you should address the recipient by writing a letter. This also applies to brief messages that have a conversational style.

The letter format itself lets the recipient know that he or she is being approached in a respectful manner, not as a matter of course. Likewise, always write a letter when you are addressing an individual within MCPS concerning a personnel or formal matter.

### An Email

Emails are official, formal correspondence. MCPS uses email to communicate with staff for general information purposes (such as informing all staff of changes in the system). Memoranda usually are sent to staff by email, attached as a PDF.

For tips on using email effectively, and on avoiding common problems peculiar to email usage, see Email Communication in this manual.

### Tips

1. If you want to convey the details of a project or program that could be used as a future reference, use a memorandum.
2. Use email if you want to convey a brief actionable message to your audience.



# Memoranda

This is the accepted medium for written communication within MCPS. A memorandum may be addressed to categories of staff members (e.g., principals, directors, supervisors) or to the members of the Board of Education. A memorandum prepared for the signature of the Board of Education members,

superintendent of schools, chief operating officer, or deputy superintendent is submitted for review to the appropriate office prior to final signature. All MCPS offices should take guidance from the following instructions.

<b>Whenever a memorandum is addressed to—</b>	<b>It is from—</b>
<b>Members of the Board of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of schools only</li> <li>• Deputy superintendent</li> <li>• Chief academic officer</li> <li>• Chief operating officer</li> <li>• Chief of district operations</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Executive Staff Members and/or Other Administrative and Supervisory (A&amp;S) Personnel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of schools</li> <li>• Chief operating officer</li> <li>• All other chiefs</li> <li>• Deputy superintendent</li> </ul>
<b>All MCPS Employees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of schools</li> <li>• Chief operating officer</li> <li>• Deputy superintendent</li> </ul>
<b>Principals or Selected Principals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent of schools</li> <li>• Chief operating officer</li> <li>• Deputy superintendent</li> <li>• Associate superintendent or directors</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION REQUIRED Annual, ACTION REQUIRED New, INFORMATION Annual, or INFORMATION New on page 1 of the memorandum.</b></p>

## General rule of thumb in constructing a memorandum:

1. Keep explanations brief and simple.
2. Use bullets. Most people will read a short, concise piece right away.
3. Discuss only what the reader needs to know; but include information or links for where to obtain additional information, if necessary.



## How to Prepare a Memorandum

The following list outlines the general components of an MCPS memorandum.

Most memoranda are distributed electronically. Exceptions: principals, executive staff, and Board members. For standard memoranda, one of the following approval statements must appear at the top of the first page:

- This email message has been approved for distribution by Mr. M. Brian Hull, chief operating officer; Ms. Ruschelle Reuben, chief of school support and Well-being; and Dr. Peggy Pugh, chief academic officer. No hard copy will be provided.
- This email message has been approved for distribution by Dr. Patrick Murphy, deputy superintendent. No hard copy will be provided.

**Format**—The standard formats for memoranda are shown starting on page 17.)

**Action Required**—When a memorandum requires the recipient to provide information or take appropriate action by a specific date, the **Action Required** (bold, initial caps) line is typed in the upper right-hand corner of the memorandum.

**Heading and Date**—All memoranda carry a three-line centered heading. The first line should indicate the name of the sending office, department, division, unit, or school. The second line should read, "MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS." The third line should include the city and state. There should be no street address or ZIP Code in the heading. The date is centered two returns from the end of the last typed line. If a memorandum is coming from more than one office, make sure all offices are included in the heading.

**Font**—Times New Roman, size 12. The size may be adjusted to no less than 11 point to save space and avoid having to use an extra page with only a few words. Arial, 11 point, is considered a good alternative.

**Margins**—The margin is 1 inch on all sides of the memorandum and block style (i.e., paragraphs not indented) is used in the body. The bottom margin may be adjusted by one or two lines to accommodate the length of the memorandum.

**Memorandum Notation**—MEMORANDUM is typed in all caps and underlined at the left margin two to four returns below the date. The number of spaces below the date may be increased if the memorandum is short, or decreased if it is long.

To prepare a confidential memorandum, type CONFIDENTIAL in all caps, one line over the word MEMORANDUM. (See sample, page 25.)

Make one copy only of a confidential memorandum and file it in a separate, special place. To mail this type

of memorandum, type CONFIDENTIAL in all caps, underlined, in the lower left area of the envelope or use a red stamp. Always seal the white envelope and place it inside a properly addressed Pony envelope.

To prepare a corrected memorandum, type **CORRECTION** in the upper right hand corner (in bold) and **CORRECTION** in all caps in the subject line.

**To Line**—The full name (including the titles Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.) and position of the person to whom the memorandum is addressed usually appear on one line. However, if the name, position, and, if included, department, division, unit, or school require two lines, the second line is indented three spaces. Block style is used (i.e., paragraphs not indented).

When several individuals are to receive the same memorandum, the name and position of each person are listed according to executive position, that is, members of the Board of Education, superintendent of schools, deputy superintendent, chief operating officer, chief academic officer, chief of staff, associate superintendents, and chief of school support and well-being. Below this level, alphabetize all names, including names of supervisors and directors of school support and well-being. When a memorandum is sent to all individuals with the same position or to a committee, the **To** line may show only the one position or the name of the committee.

**From Line**—The full name and position of the person sending the memorandum is used. **Note:** Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, and Ms. do not precede the name of the sender.

When a memorandum is from two or more individuals, the **From** line shows the name and position of each sender. See "Writing Tips, Copy to Hierarchy" (page 49).

Use the title of each responsible office.

List the information about each sender according to his or her position—that is, superintendent of schools, deputy superintendent, associate superintendent (alphabetize by last name, if more than one), and so on.

**Subject Line**—The subject of the memorandum is typed in initial caps and lowercase letters. If the **Subject** line extends to a second line, the second line should be flush with the first line. A student's name and identification number should not be included in the subject line.

**Body of Memorandum**—The body of the memorandum begins three returns below the **Subject** line. Typically, the material is typed single spaced, in block style, with two returns between paragraphs.

**Identifying Initials**—The initials of the signer (in caps) and the typist (in lowercase) are separated by a colon and placed at the left margin, two returns below the signer's position.

The initials are typed at the left margin two returns below the last sentence of the memorandum.

# Memoranda (CONTINUED)

When the memorandum is from more than one sender, the initials of the senders should be separated by a colon.

Initials of senders should appear in the same order as shown on the **From** line.

**Attachment**—If appropriate, an attachment is indicated two returns below the identifying initials at the left margin. If possible, include the title of the attachment in the body of the memorandum. If more than one document is attached, the word “Attachments” is used. (Note: “attachment” is used with memoranda and email; “enclosure” is used with letters.)

**Copy to Notation**—Names of individuals who are to receive copies of the memorandum are indicated after the notation *Copy to*, which is at the left margin two returns below the identifying initials or the Attachment line, if used.

- The name is indented three spaces under the *Copy to* notation.
- Whenever an individual is mentioned in the body of the memorandum, a copy is sent to that person.
- Include the titles (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.) with the surname.
- For two or more staff members with the same last name, include the person’s first initial.

When copies are sent to all individuals with the same position, the *Copy to* line should show only the position (for example, Associate Superintendents).

It is acceptable to group people as follows:

- Executive Staff
- Principals
- School Administrative Secretaries

When copies are sent to more than one person, list them according to—

1. Executive position (superintendent, chief operating officer, deputy superintendent, chiefs (in alphabetical order), and associate superintendent)
2. Alphabetical order for all other staff and non-staff recipients (see page 49, Writing Tips)
3. Long lists of staff may be listed in two columns, if necessary.

When the individual receiving a copy is outside MCPS, including representatives from employee associations such as SEIU Local 500, MCEA, MCAAP, and MCAAP/MCBOA, that person’s name is indented three spaces under the *Copy to* line—last on the list in alphabetical order.

**Approval Line**—When preparing a memorandum that would require approval from the deputy superintendent, and other chiefs. (See sample, page 17.)

**Second and Subsequent Pages**—The full name of the addressee is typed at the left margin 1 inch from the top of the paper, the page number is centered, and the date of the memorandum is typed at the right margin. Note: If the memorandum is addressed to more than one person, state the first three recipients’ names, one

on each line; page #, and date on the last line, and add the words, “et al.”

The body of the memorandum is continued three returns below the heading. When a memorandum prepared for reproduction requires more than one page, copies are printed back-to-back. (See page 26.)

**Stapling**—If a memorandum of more than one page is printed, it should be stapled in the upper left corner. An attachment is stapled or clipped to the memorandum.

## Guidelines for Preparing Board Materials

A Board document is a resolution, action item, discussion item or information item in memorandum form. The Board document should be concise and to the point.

### Format for Board Document

The first paragraphs should contain the information that needs to be updated, discussed, or acted on. When appropriate, the previously adopted Board resolution also should be in the first section of the document.

In the remaining paragraphs, describe three to five major points you want the Board to learn from the document. Also, identify issues and concerns you want to bring to the Board’s attention with the superintendent of schools’ recommendation, if appropriate.

The first paragraph of the memorandum should begin with an appropriate title in bold (for example, **Background**).

In the case of a combined Discussion/ Action item, the resolution for the action discussed should be the last paragraphs of the memorandum rather than a separate memorandum. When a memorandum contains a resolution, the first page of the memorandum is reproduced on green paper with the following pages on white paper.

### Presentation Plan (See sample, page 31.)

All major Board presentations must have a presentation plan and talking points for the superintendent of schools. The presentation plan should set the stage for the discussion to follow. As stated in the Board of Education Handbook, “Presentations by staff should not be repetitive of the document; rather, the highlights of the paper and recommendations shall be made in a manner that allows sufficient time for the Board to discuss the agenda item.”

It may be necessary to rehearse some presentations, especially those featuring PowerPoint or overhead transparencies, to ensure that the presentation flows smoothly and the information can be read by everyone.



The following is the basic format required for presentation papers for discussion and action items. (This does not apply to consent items and simple resolutions, unless otherwise requested.)

- The presentation plan begins with the title of the item, in 14-point boldface Times New Roman font, followed by the scheduled date and time.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font for the text.
- The plan must include topic or contribution and number of minutes.
- Those participants listed as present at the Board table should be listed in the order in which they speak.
- Those participants listed as present in the audience should be listed in alphabetical order.

### Superintendent's Talking Points

(See sample, page 33.)

The superintendent of schools prefers talking points that include problems and successes, data, and humor, when appropriate. The talking points should include introduction and summation of the item. Text should be full justified. The use of contractions is acceptable.

*Note:* This format also applies to talking points for the deputy superintendent, chief of school support and well-being, chief academic officer, chief operating officer, and chief of staff.

- Begin with the title of the item on the first line, "Talking Points for [name of superintendent]" on the second line, followed by "Board of Education Presentation:" on the third line with the date. On the next line, indicate the agenda item category and number. All of the above is to be presented in 16-point boldface Arial font.
- Talking points must be listed in order, using bullet format and concise sentences. Use regular 14-point Arial font uniformly, and double space between bullets.
- No talking points are needed for the Human Resources monthly report and Board of Education policies.

Using a structured agenda will facilitate a smooth flow of discussion in any meeting. Also, it will assist in keeping participants on task in the prescribed time frame. Assigning tasks to meeting participants—or requesting volunteers—such as a note taker or timekeeper, will ensure a more productive, efficient meeting. See page 15 for the recommended format for general meeting agendas.

## General Meeting Agendas

Process for Preparing MCPS Memoranda for the Board of Education			
This chart represents the process, depending on the required level of approval.			
Originating department/unit	To the approving office (submitting) i.e., the other chiefs	To the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Deputy Superintendent, for processing and approval	To the Office of the Superintendent of Schools



# Memoranda (CONTINUED)

## Why Prepare a Meeting Agenda?

A meeting agenda is considered an informational document. It is intended to outline the details of a meeting, so participants can schedule their time efficiently. Details include—

- date, time, and location of the meeting;
- desired outcomes;
- list of presenters, their purpose for addressing the meeting, and time allotted;
- review and action items for participants attending the meeting; and
- date for follow-up meeting, if necessary.

## Main Ingredients of an Agenda

## Agenda

Title of Meeting

Location                  Time

### Desired Outcomes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Presenters

**Name:** Saul Goode

**Topic:** Why we are doing this

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Name:** Page Turner

**Topic:** Marketing campaign outline

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Name:** Joe King

**Topic:** Results of staff survey

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Name:** Gem Stone

**Topic:** Discussion facilitator

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Name:** Faye Tally

**Topic:** Action items for next meeting

**Time:** 12 minutes

Proposed date(s) and time(s) for next meeting(s)

September 10, October 10, November 12



## Principals' Memoranda and Memoranda Process

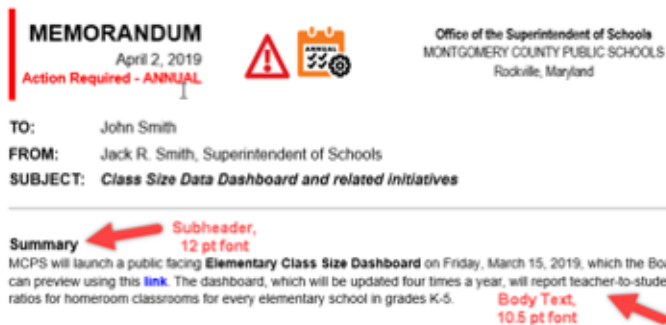
### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Why is the new principal memoranda template only one page?

- A one-page memorandum format helps writers communicate their main points clearly and succinctly, and helps readers grasp and act on information more quickly. We heard from principals that, with the increasing and competing demands on their time and attention, they wanted help in reducing the overall volume and complexity around memoranda. The aim of the one-page memorandum, and enhanced memoranda library, is to help principals free up more time to focus on actively serving students and their school communities.

#### The font size, font type, and margins look different on the memorandum. Why were they changed?

- We adopted a sans serif font (Arial) for a cleaner, contemporary look, and to improve readability. The smallest font size that can be used for body text is 10.5 pt. The subheader section titles are set at 12 pt., to set them apart from the body text, and make them easier to scan. (The smaller font size was a necessary tradeoff to achieve improved usability overall.)



#### If I have to create an “Action Required” memorandum on an annual process, where there has been only one small change, is that considered to be an “Action Required—NEW” memorandum?

- Yes. Even a small change flips a memorandum to **NEW** status. The “**Action Required - ANNUAL**” template should be used only to send out annual memoranda of existing processes or procedures that remain unchanged from the previous year.



#### What about other memorandum at MCPS—such as those issued by the Board of Education and those aimed at non-principals—will they follow the new memoranda format?

- At this time, the new memoranda formatting standards **apply to the principal memoranda only**. MCPS may consider enhancements to other memorandum types in the future, after further study and stakeholder feedback.

#### I need to create a memorandum to principals on a complex issue that cannot be reduced to a single page. How do I use the new template?

- Summarize the key points of your memorandum on a single page (summary, background, important dates, action required, links to additional information) and then attach that to an expanded version of your message, which can take the form of a traditional memorandum, policy/procedural document, or other document. Imagine that your intended audience has time to read only the first page of your memorandum. What is your key message?

#### I need to send out a staffing allocation memoranda that contains links to sensitive and confidential data. Will I be able to use the new template?

- Yes. Any links referenced in memoranda that lead to sensitive and confidential data will continue to require the necessary passwords and credentials to gain access.

#### Why does the new memorandum feature different colors and icons?

- The different colors (red for action required, and green for information) help administrators to triage quickly, prioritize, and act on information against the demands of their busy schedules. The icons are visual cues to help provide instant context to administrators.

#### Why is there no cc: (copy to) line on the new memorandum template? How do we make sure other parties get copied on the memorandum?

- The memoranda library is being expanded to all. There is no longer a need for MCPS staff to cc: or forward memos to colleagues, because everyone has the same level of access to the memoranda library as the original memoranda recipient listed in the “To” header line. Similar to the ePaystub that gets emailed to all staff to alert them that their biweekly paystub is available to access online, an automated email will go out to all staff once the memoranda library has been updated. It will be up to individual MCPS staff to check the memoranda library once they receive this alert, familiarize themselves with newly posted items, and determine which, if any, are relevant to their work or operations.





**Can central office services continue to send emails with memos, targeting individual or smaller groups of principals or schools, outside of this new memoranda process?**

- Any memoranda sent to smaller groups (e.g., curriculum, new schools) still can be emailed, but please include Ms. Kristen Wong Callisto and Ms. Melissa Sander on the email distribution so that they can monitor and track the counts of those not sent through the formal weekly principal memoranda.

**What about our unions (SEIU, MCAP, MCEA); will they have access automatically to the memos as part of this process?**

- Yes.

**Is there always an approval line at the bottom of the memo?**

- No. The signature/approval line should be there only if the memorandum is coming from a reporting office.

### **MEMORANDA LIBRARY PROCESS**

**What is the latest date/time we should upload into the library to ensure that it is approved before 11 a.m. on Thursday?**

- You must upload by 3 p.m. on the Wednesday before (eight days prior) the week of the principal transmittal. Please see page 12 for the complete principal memoranda distribution schedule for FY2022–FY2023.

**How do I handle attachments or links that need to go out with my memorandum?**

- You may still upload PDF attachments along with the memorandum; and users will have the option of including URL links, if they are online and accessible to the public (i.e., not located behind firewalls on password-restricted sites or pages.)

**Will I be able to send “Action Required By” dates directly to my personal Outlook calendar from the memoranda library interface?**

- Yes. When you are in the memoranda list view of the Memoranda Library, look for a calendar icon next to the memoranda title. Click on the icon to add that memorandum “Action Required By” date to your personal Outlook calendar.

**What is the criteria for uploading documents to the memoranda library?**

- Please see page 11, which lays out the specific criteria under which memoranda for memoranda to be approved, held, or rejected.

**Why do we have to undergo a double-approval process by the Office of the Chief of Staff for each memo?**

- The first approval is for **memoranda content only**. When it is time to upload the memorandum to the Memoranda Library, a second approval is required to check against principal memoranda criteria (page 9). All memoranda need to be initiated by the director or the chief and approved by the deputy superintendent/chief of staff.



**Attachment A: Criteria for Memoranda Library**

**MEMORANDA APPROVAL STATUS CRITERIA  
for Uploading to Memoranda Library**

CRITERIA	APPROVED	HOLD	
<b>Criterion 1: Authorization of Memoranda</b> —All memoranda must have the appropriate approval line and signature			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy/Chief’s signature is required for all office memoranda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signature present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signature missing. Resubmit by required due date or transmittal is delayed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval denied by deputy/chief.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superintendent’s signature is required for requests or exceptions that are outside of the regular transmittal process or due dates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signature present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signature missing. Resubmit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval denied by superintendent.</li> </ul>
<b>Criterion 2: Submission Date</b> —Principal Memoranda transmittal will occur weekly on Thursdays.			
<p>Memoranda are due by 3:00 p.m., one week in advance of the transmittal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted on time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted late. Originator will delete the uploaded memo. Resubmit with new date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other criteria were not met, which impacted the approval of the memorandum.</li> </ul>
<b>Criteria 3: Memorandum Format &amp; Content</b> —MCPS has created and approved a template for all memoranda. The page limit is one page			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required components of the memorandum:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Heading.</li> <li>» Summary.</li> <li>» Background.</li> <li>» Important Dates:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Due dates—minimum of two weeks.</li> <li>▪ Dates must not conflict with other MCPS due dates or priority work and calendar events.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Action Required with due date identified (only on action required memos).</li> <li>» Links with Additional Information.</li> <li>» Initials.</li> <li>» Approval Signature Line, as required.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All components included.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resubmit missing components identified.</li> <li>Due date is missing.</li> <li>Due dates do not meet the minimum two-week requirement. Resubmit with revised due dates.</li> <li>Due dates conflict with other MCPS due dates or priority work or calendar events. Change and resubmit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memorandum format was not followed. Resubmit.</li> <li>Information is duplicative—requested by another MCPS office or accessible through other means.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-page limit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met page requirement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exceeded page limit. Revise and resubmit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exceeded page limit and could not reduce it to the required minimum. Explore other ways of communicating information.</li> </ul>

**Attachment B: Principal Transmittal Dates 2022–2023**

<b>TRANSMITTAL DATE</b>	<b>UPLOADING DEADLINE</b>
July 7, 2022	June 29, 2022
July 14, 2022	July 6, 2022
July 21, 2022	July 13, 2022
July 28, 2022	Blackout
August 4, 2022	Blackout
August 11, 2022	Blackout
August 18, 2022	August 10, 2022
August 25, 2022	August 17, 2022
September 1, 2022	Blackout—First Week of School
September 8, 2022	August 31, 2022
September 15, 2022	September 7, 2022
September 22, 2022	September 14, 2022
September 29, 2022	September 21, 2022
October 6, 2022	September 28, 2022
October 13, 2022	October 5, 2022
October 20, 2022	October 12, 2022
October 27, 2022	October 19, 2022
November 3, 2022	October 26, 2022
November 10, 2022	November 2, 2022
November 17, 2022	November 9, 2022
November 24, 2022	No Transmittal— Thanksgiving
December 1, 2022	November 23, 2022
December 8, 2022	November 30, 2022
December 15, 2022	December 7, 2022
December 22, 2022	No Transmittal— Holiday
December 29, 2022	No Transmittal— Winter Break

<b>TRANSMITTAL DATE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
January 5, 2023	No Transmittal
January 12, 2023	January 4, 2023
January 19, 2023	January 11, 2023
January 26, 2023	January 18, 2023
February 2, 2023	January 25, 2023
February 9, 2023	February 1, 2023
February 16, 2023	February 8, 2023
February 23, 2023	February 15, 2023
March 2, 2023	February 22, 2023
March 9, 2023	March 1, 2023
March 16, 2023	March 8, 2023
March 23, 2023	March 15, 2023
March 30, 2023	March 22, 2023
April 6, 2023	No Transmittal
April 13, 2023	No Transmittal—Spring Break
April 20, 2023	April 12, 2023
April 27, 2023	April 19, 2023
May 4, 2023	April 26, 2023
May 11, 2023	May 3, 2023
May 18, 2023	May 10, 2023
May 25, 2023	May 17, 2023
June 1, 2023	May 24, 2023
June 8, 2023	May 31, 2023
June 15, 2023	June 7, 2023
June 22, 2023	June 14, 2023
June 29, 2023	June 21, 2023



**Office of District Operations**  
 District Operations Leadership Team Meeting (OLT)  
 Equity and Excellence in District Operations  
*"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work."*

**Monday, October 3, 2022**  
**1:00–2:30 p.m.**  
**Room 55, Back Conference Room**

<b>AGENDA</b>
<b>Margins:</b> Top–1"; Sides–1"; Bottom–1"
<b>Fonts:</b> Times New Roman, 12 pt.
<b>Header:</b> Center
<b>Returns:</b> 2 returns after each paragraph

**Desired Outcomes:**

By the end of our District Operations Leadership Team Meeting, we will

- Reviewed outcomes and agenda
- Discussed our roles with inclement weather to create a comprehensive office plan
- Heard administrivia
- Reflected on our time together.

**Agenda**

Time	Agenda Item	Who	Handouts
1:00–1:05 5 mins	Welcome Agenda Overview	Dana Leadership Team	
1:05–1:15 10 mins.	Going the Extra Mile	Leadership Team	
1:15–2:10 55 mins	Inclement Weather	Dana Leadership Team	
2:10–2:20 10 mins	Administrivia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Submission Timelines</i></li> <li>• <i>Response to Operational Need for the Athletic Safety Plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Absences from Office</i></li> </ul>	Dana Doug Bonnie	FY2023 Prin...
2:20-2:30 10 mins	Housekeeping & Evaluation	All	

**Evidence of Equity**

1. For whom does this practice/decision serve or neglect?
2. Whose voices are dominating/lacking from the conversation?
3. What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this decision?
4. What steps are in place for ongoing data collection and reflection of the outcomes?
5. How diverse are the stakeholders leading the implementation?

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.





# MEMORANDUM

October 20, 2022  
Action Required - ANNUAL



Office of Dis  
MONTGOMERY COU  
Rockvill

## MEMORANDUM: General

**Margins:** Top-1"; Sides-1";  
Bottom-1"

**Heading:** 2 returns from top  
Line 1—Department/School  
Name;  
Line 2— MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS;  
Line 3—City, State

**Date:** 2 to 4 returns after *Heading*,  
center

**MEMORANDUM:** 2 to 4 returns  
after *Date*; all caps, underline,  
align left

**To:** 2 returns after *MEMORANDUM*

**From:** 2 returns after *To*

**Subject:** 2 returns after *From*

**Body:** 3 returns after *Subject*

**Identifying Initials:** 2 returns  
after *Body*

**Attachment:** 2 returns after  
*Identifying Initials*

**Copy to Notation:** 2 returns after  
*Attachment*, indent 3 spaces on a  
new line for each entry.

**TO:** All Principals  
**FROM:** Dana E. Edwards Chief of District Operations  
**SUBJECT:** *Distribution of Letters for Piano Loaner Program*

### Summary

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has a business partnership with Schaeffer's Piano Company, Inc. where they provide 15 grand, upright, and digital loaner pianos to MCPS at no cost. MCPS informs our students, parents, and guardians of the partnership for the instruments and informs our students, parents, and guardians of the partnership.

### Background

Schaeffer's Piano Company, Inc., has a public sale of instruments twice a year—the November 12–20, 2022. During this time, the public can purchase pianos at reduced prices. Schaeffer's Piano Company, Inc., commits MCPS to provide the notice of this sale.

### Important Dates

Between Wednesday, October 26, 2022, through Wednesday, November 9, 2022, MCPS will send a Piano Sale Letter with your community.

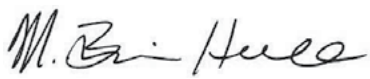
### Action Required

Please post the attached Piano Sale Letter on your school webpage, and share the letter with your school community by **Wednesday, November 9, 2022**.

### Additional Information

For questions, please contact Mrs. Rachel C. DuBois, director, Department of Materials Management, at 301-279-3348 or via e-mail at [Rachel\\_C\\_DuBois@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Rachel_C_DuBois@mcpsmd.org).

Attachment: Piano Sale Letter Nov 2022.pdf

Approved:   
M. Brian Hull, Chief Operating Officer

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.



# MEMORANDUM

July 21, 2022

Action Required - ANNUAL



Office of District Operations  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

**TO:** All Principals  
**FROM:** Dana E. Edwards, Chief of District Operations  
**SUBJECT:** *Food and Nutrition Services Program Updates for Fiscal Year*

**MEMORANDUM:  
Action Required**

**Margins:** Top-1"; Sides-1";  
Bottom-1"

**Approval Line:** 2 or 3 returns after  
body

## Summary

The following updates for Fiscal Year 2023 are provided by the Division of Food and Nutrition Services.

**Meal Prices:** DFNS will resume regular meal services during the 2022–2023 school year. Beginning in 2022, all students in Maryland who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged for breakfast or lunch meals.

- **Breakfast:** Regular Price: \$1.30; Reduced Price: No Cost
- **Lunch:** Regular Price: \$2.55 (Elementary), \$2.80 (Middle and High); Reduced Price All Levels: No Cost

**Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) Eligibility Data and Application Process:** The FARMS application has been updated. Interested families must reapply each school year. Online applications are the preferred application method and schools should strongly encourage families to apply online at [www.MySchoolApps.com](http://www.MySchoolApps.com). Please refer to Attachment A for application process details. **The online application is now open for families to submit applications.**

**Central FARMS Outreach:** DFNS has planned the following outreach to our students and community:

- Flyers and posters will be sent to each school to use during registration of new students, open houses, or other Summer events. These will also be used at Summer vaccination clinics and the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Back to School fair.
- Sample wording for school newsletters and websites is provided in Attachment B.
- The *2022–2023 Cafeteria News and Meal Information* flyer will be mailed to all students in mid-August.
- DFNS has developed a detailed outreach plan partnering with the MCPS Department of Communications. Outreach methods will include centralized ConnectEd messages to parents, updates and links on the MCPS and DFNS websites, quick response barcodes (QR code) on all printed media, and outreach to community partners.

**Food Services Supervisor Assignments:** DFNS has reassigned schools to our supervisory team by area. Please refer to Attachment C for your school supervisory team contacts.

## Important Dates

The *2022–2023 FARMS Parent Letter* and a small supply of paper FARMS applications will be delivered to all schools the **week of August 22, 2022.**

## Action Required

- Hang the FARMS posters in your main office or where parents can access the QR code when registering students over the summer. Use the flyers at back to school open houses and/or Summer community events.
- Include sample wording from Attachment B in your back to school newsletters and post on your school website.
- **Distribute *2022–2023 FARMS Parent Letter* to all students on August 29, 2022.**
- **Paper applications should only be distributed to parents who request a paper application.**

## Additional Information

Additional updates will be provided to principals in August. For questions, contact Ms. Barbara W. Harral, director, Division of Food and Nutrition Services, at 240-740-7400 or via email.

Attachment A—Guidance for the Free and Reduced-price Meal Application Process

Attachment B—Sample Wording for School Newsletters and Websites

Attachment C—Schools by Food Service Supervisor 2022–2023

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.



Office of Strategic Initiatives  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

December 12, 2022

CONFIDENTIAL  
MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. John Doe, Associate Superintendent,  
Office of School Support and Well-Being

From: Ms. Jane Doe, Medical Officer

Subject: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XX  
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SSS:alr

Attachment

Copy to:  
Dr. Marks  
Ms. Simmons  
Ms. Webb

**MEMORANDUM:**  
**Confidential**

**Margins:** Top-1"; Sides-1";  
Bottom-1"

**E-Mail Approval Statement:**  
Justified

**Heading:** 2 to 4 returns after Email  
Approval Statement;  
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Name;  
Line 2—MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS;  
Line 3—City, State

**Date:** 2 to 4 returns after *Heading*,  
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underline MEMORANDUM, align  
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MEMORANDUM

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**Body:** 3 returns after *Subject*; 2  
returns after each paragraph

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after *Body*

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*Identifying Initials*; Recipient(s),  
indent 3 spaces on a new line for  
each entry

**Approval Line:** 2 to 3 returns after  
*Copy to Notation*

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.



This email message has been approved for distribution by Mr. M. Brian Hull, chief operating officer. No hard copy will be provided.

**ACTION REQUIRED**

Office of Finance  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

September 15, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals  
Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators  
Montgomery County Education Association Unit Members  
Service Employees International Union Local 500 Unit Members

From: Robert Reilly, Associate Superintendent of Finance *RR*

Subject: ACTION—Mileage Reimbursement

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Montgomery County Public Schools guidelines for local mileage reimbursements for Montgomery County Public Schools Administrators and Principals and Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators (MCAAP/MCBOA), Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) Unit Members, Service Employees Union (SEIU) Local 500 Unit members. All MCPS employees must do so within the parameters of the negotiated agreements and MCPS guidelines. **Please read this memorandum carefully to understand clearly with respect to the process of requesting and approving mileage reimbursement.**

**Mileage Reimbursement Definitions**

- **Home** may be an employee’s residence or any location where an employee is traveling from or to for non-work purposes.
- **MCPS work locations** include all MCPS facilities, as well as any location used for an MCPS or school activity, meeting, or function. In no case will an employee’s home be designated as a MCPS work location, even when [teleworking](#).
- **Commuting** is defined as driving from home or a non-work location to a MCPS work location, and traveling from the last MCPS work location to home or a non-work location. **Commuting is not eligible for mileage reimbursement.**

**Mileage Reimbursement Guidelines**

Supervisors who review and approve mileage should be aware of all guidelines and approve only requests that meet the guidelines. Reimbursement requests are monitored each month, and staff

**MEMORANDUM:  
To Multiple Groups**

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Bottom—1"

**E-Mail Approval Statement:**  
Justified

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School Name;  
Line 2— MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS;  
Line 3—City, State

**Date:** 2 to 4 returns after *Heading*,  
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returns after each paragraph

**Note:** It is acceptable to adjust  
spacing to make memorandum  
fit on one page

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*Identifying Initials*

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.





Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

August 23, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Monifa B. McKnight, Superintendent of Schools  
Subject: Change Order Over \$100,000—Poolesville High School Major C

WHEREAS, On April 21, 2020, the Board of Education awarded a contract to Architects P.C., located in Charlottesville, Virginia, to provide professional architectural and engineering services for the Poolesville High School Major Capital Project (Resolution No. 188-20); and

WHEREAS, During the initial feasibility study phase, several design options were provided by the architect, and

WHEREAS, The study included concepts for building a replacement gymnasium that was determined to be outside the initial scope of work; and

WHEREAS, The community and staff have requested consideration for an option that replaces and expands the school gymnasium; and

WHEREAS, Due to significant inflationary impacts, the project was divided into two separate phases of work to allow for critical construction activities to continue as scheduled; and

WHEREAS, The Phase I work consists of the new academic wing to allow for students to transition from the existing building to the new space when complete; and

WHEREAS, The architect and its consultants have completed the initial design of the project and Phase I construction is underway; and

WHEREAS, The phasing approach of the project has extended the architect's construction administration duration from the initial proposal; and

**MEMORANDUM:  
Board Update**

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School Name;  
Line 2—MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS;  
Line 3—City, State

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This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.

District	Substitute Minimum Qualification
Anne Arundel County	48 Credits
Baltimore County	48 Credits
Carroll County	30 Credits or Passing Score on ParaPro
Charles County	Non Degreed (At Least 18)
Fairfax County, Virginia	60 Credits
Frederick County	AA—60 Credits
Howard County	AA—60 Credits
Montgomery County	Bachelor's Degree
Prince George's County	60 Credits

### Regulation Change

Through the examination of current MCPS practice, which we undertook as a part of our review of substitute teacher qualifications, we are planning revisions to Regulation GEF-RA. As a result of this analysis, MCPS will, in the future, require an Associate of Arts degree or 60 credits for all teacher substitutes beginning in the 2019–2020 school year. In thoughtfully considering this revision, feedback from key stakeholders was solicited. Feedback was collected from the following stakeholders: Montgomery College; the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Inc.; the Service Employees International Union Local 500 leadership, the Montgomery County Education Association leadership, the Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals leadership; secondary students; Grades K–12 teachers; principals; school administrative secretaries; and substitute teachers. Stakeholder feedback demonstrated overwhelming support to revise the regulation. Stakeholders identified the following benefits to the regulation revision:

- Increase the number of available substitutes;
- More diverse range of candidates;
- Encourage more individuals to become teachers;
- Opportunity to develop skills for future teachers;
- Opportunity for college students to work while going to school and/or during college breaks;
- Improve quality of first-year teachers; and
- Limit the need for in-school class coverage.

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.

**Next Steps**

Regulation GEF-RA is being revised to reflect this change in qualifications. In addition, MCPS will take the following actions in the future to align to this revision:

- Collaborate with the MCPS Public Information Office to develop a communication plan to raise awareness of the regulation revision. Strategies will include MCPS website updates, information transmitted in *The Bulletin*, direct e-mail outreach to the MCPS community, and a media press release.
- Outreach to local community colleges and universities to enhance awareness of this employment opportunity.
- Develop communication that will be shared by MCPS staffing coordinators with candidates during recruiting trips.
- E-mail outreach to current approved paraeducator substitutes to alert them to this employment opportunity.

**Conclusion**

Through the March 25 2019, adopted resolution, the Board recognized the importance of maintaining a sufficient pool of substitute teachers. The subsequent review of required substitute qualifications in MCPS and comparable districts, as well as feedback from key stakeholders, supports a revision to Regulation GEF-RA. The revision—requiring that a candidate have earned an Associate of Arts degree or 60 college credits—will expand the pool of available substitutes, thus decreasing the number of unfilled teacher vacancies without diminishing the capability of MCPS substitutes to meet the needs of the students, teachers, and schools.

JRS:AMZ:cbc

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.



ACTION

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

August 23, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Monifa B. McKnight, Superintendent of Schools  
Subject: Change Order Over \$100,000—Poolesville High School Major Ca

WHEREAS, On April 21, 2020, the Board of Education awarded VMDO Architects P.C., located in Charlottesville, Virginia, to provide professional architectural and engineering services for the Poolesville High School Major Capital Project 188-20); and

WHEREAS, During the initial feasibility study phase, several design options were presented to the architect, and

WHEREAS, The study included concepts for building a replacement gymnasium that was determined to be outside the initial scope of work; and

WHEREAS, The community and staff have requested consideration for an option that replaces the existing gymnasium and expands the school gymnasium; and

WHEREAS, Due to significant inflationary impacts, the project was split into two separate phases of work to allow for critical construction activities to continue as scheduled; and

WHEREAS, The phase I work consists of the new academic wing to allow for students to transition from the existing building to the new space when complete; and

WHEREAS, The architect and its consultants have completed the initial design of the project and Phase I construction is underway; and

WHEREAS, The phasing approach of the project has extended the architect's construction administration duration from the initial proposal; and

WHEREAS, Staff in the Department of Facilities Management has negotiated a fee for the necessary architectural and engineering services for the replacement gymnasium and extended the construction administration of the project; now therefore be it

**MEMORANDUM:  
Resolution**

**Margins:** Top-1"; Sides-1";  
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School Name;  
Line 2—MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS;  
Line 3—City, State

**Date:** 2 to 4 returns after *Heading*,  
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after *Date*; all caps, underline,  
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**To:** 2 returns after *MEMORANDUM*

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**Body:** 3 returns after *Subject*; 2  
returns after each paragraph

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after *Body*

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.



## Presentation Plan—Discussion/Action

### Board of Education Presentation: Date of Board Meeting

Prefix and last name only in order of presentation, tabs set at 2.0 (left) and 6.5 (right)

Dr./Mr./Ms. Last Name (Sample) Opening Comments 3 minutes

Dr./Mr./Ms. Last Name (Sample) Context

Dr./Mr./Ms. Last Name (Sample) Presentation

Members of the Board of Education Discussion

Full name with middle initial, if available, in order of presenter (regardless of office)  
Present at the Board Table:

Dr./Mr./Ms. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, title, Department or Division, Office continued  
Dr./Mr./Ms. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, title, Department or Division, Office continued  
Dr./Mr./Ms. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, title, Department or Division, Office continued  
Office continued

Full name with middle initial, if available, in alphabetical order by last name  
Present in the Audience:

Dr./Mr./Ms. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, title, Department or Division, Office continued  
Dr./Mr./Ms. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, title, Department or Division, Office continued  
Dr./Mr./Ms. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, title, Department or Division, Office continued  
✓ Office continued

Please check one:

- Board members' questions are welcome during this presentation.
- Board members should hold questions until the discussion period.

#### PRESENTATION PLAN

**Margins:** Top–1"; Sides–1"; Bottom–1"

**Heading:** Times New Roman, 14 pt. bold; 2 returns after first line of heading; 3 returns after second line of heading.

**Date and Time:** 3 returns after heading

**Presentation Items:** 3 returns after Date and time and 3 returns between items.

**Body:** Times New Roman, 12 pt. normal; 3 returns after *Presentation Items*; 2 returns after each paragraph

#### NOTE:

**Present at the Board table:**

Names should be listed in order of speakers

**Present in the audience:** Names should be listed in alphabetical order.

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.





**League of Educators for Asian American P  
(LEAAP) Lunar New Year Banquet**

**Talking Points for Dr. McKnight**

**Wednesday, January 18, 2023**

**Talking Points**

**Margins:** Top-1"; Sides-1";  
Bottom-1"

**Heading:** Arial, 16 pt. bold:

**Body:** Arial, 14 pt. normal; bulleted  
list; 2 returns after each bullet

**Note:** Use of contractions is  
allowed (e.g., "I'll turn it over  
to Dr. Lacey...")

- I am honored to be joining you here today and so thrilled this event has come back live. We have missed it.
- What the League of Educators for Asian American Progress (LEAAP) is doing for our school system is very important. Not only are they providing an environment for our Asian/Pacific American staff to learn and grow together, but we gather here today also to enjoy great food and company, while raising scholarship funds which will be awarded to our very own high school students who want to come back and teach for us.
- This is the Year of the Rabbit. In the Chinese culture, the rabbit is known to be the luckiest out of all the twelve animals and symbolizes mercy, elegance, and beauty. People who are born in the year of the rabbit are calm and peaceful. They pay close attention to small details and make sure everything is done correctly. We need to be hiring a bunch of rabbits.
- The diversity of our student population is what makes Montgomery County Public Schools great. Our diversity is our strength.
- I appreciate all of the efforts by staff and supporters in this very room who do their small part to help us reach a point where our educators reflect the student body we serve. This is important work and I thank LEAAP for their role in helping us to diversify our staff.
- I wish everyone in this room a wonderful new year, good fortune and good health.
- As an educator, you will communicate high standards academically and socially, which will live within our students.
- On behalf of the MCPS community, I welcome you, new educators, to our ranks as we build our future together!

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.



# Letters

Letters are used as formal correspondence to MCPS employees and individuals outside of MCPS.

## Time limits for replying to incoming correspondence

Replies to incoming correspondence from members of the Board of Education, the County Council, other county officials, the Maryland State Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Education are made within *seven working days* of receipt, unless another due date is specified in the incoming correspondence.

Other correspondence requiring a reply is answered within *10 working days* of receipt.

If a substantive reply cannot be made within the above time limits, a letter acknowledging receipt and indicating when a reply can be expected should be sent immediately.

Incoming from elected officials:	Reply within seven working days
Incoming from all others:	Reply within 10 working days

## Preparing MCPS letters for signature

Administrative and supervisory personnel are authorized to sign correspondence within their areas of responsibility, except as stated below:

- Correspondence to Members of the Board of Education, the County Council (or other elected local, state, or national officials) and the state superintendent of schools is signed by the superintendent of schools or (in his/her absence) his/her representative.
- Correspondence initiated by staff members to the above officials is reviewed by the appropriate associate superintendent(s) and approved by the deputy superintendent, the chief of district operations, chief operating officer, or the chief academic officer before submission to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Remember to submit the original correspondence prepared for the signature of another individual with envelopes for distribution of the correspondence.

## Board of Education's/superintendent's correspondence

A Board staff member assigns responsibility for preparation of replies to correspondence.

The Office of the Superintendent of Schools is responsible for reviewing all correspondence prepared for the signature of the president of the Board of Education or a member of the Board.

The correspondence is prepared in final form by the appropriate associate superintendent or department director, for review by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools after review by the Office of the Deputy Superintendent, the Office of the Chief of District Operations, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, or the Office of the Chief Academic Officer, Office of the Chief of School Support and Well-being.

## Letter preparation for Board president's signature

To prepare a letter for the Board president's signature, print an original on Board stationery. Also prepare envelope(s) to addressee(s). After preparing the body of the letter and the closing, type—

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education

Superintendent of schools (use name)

Deputy superintendent/chief operating officer/  
chief of district operations/chief academic officer/  
chief of staff/ chief of school support and well-  
being/associate superintendents (use names)

Name of appropriate associate superintendent  
preparing the letter (not always copied)

Name of anyone mentioned in the letter

## Letter preparation for superintendent's signature

Prepare envelope(s) to addressee(s). After preparing the body of the letter and the closing, type the following so that these items will appear on the original:

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education (if appropriate)

Executive Staff (if appropriate)



## How to Prepare a Letter

(See samples, pages 39–43.)

**Typeface**—Times New Roman, 11.5 or 12 pt.

**Letterhead**—Use appropriate letterhead for your office.

**Date**—Position the date six tab stops from the left margin.

Do not abbreviate the month. Use figures for the date and year. Do not use suffixes such as *st*, *rd*, and *th* with dates.

**Margins**—The margin is 1½ inches on the top (first page only) and 1 inch on sides and bottom, depending on the design of the letterhead. Use modified block style in the body (i.e., paragraphs not indented).

*Note:* The bottom margin may be adjusted by one or two lines to accommodate the length of the letter—if it will fit with stationery.

**Inside Address**—Place the inside address at the left margin two to four returns below the date. It should occupy a minimum of three lines.

- The inside address should be in block form.
- The first line includes the addressee's title (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.) and full name.
- The person's position, when appropriate, may follow the name on the same line or may be placed on the second line. If the name of the person's position requires two lines, indent the second line three spaces.
- Street, Avenue, Boulevard, Road, and the name of the state are spelled out.
- Type the ZIP Code two spaces after the name of the state (spelled out). There is no comma between the state and the ZIP Code.
- When there is no street address, type the name of the city on the second line and the name of the state (spelled out) and ZIP Code on the third line.
- When the abbreviations NW, NE, SW, and SE are used, add a comma and a space before NW, etc.; there are no spaces nor periods between the letters of the abbreviation.

**Attention Line**—Letters addressed to business firms or other types of organizations may be directed to the attention of a certain individual or department.

- Place the attention line at the left margin between the inside address and the salutation, with two returns above and below it.
- The name of the person or the department is considered sufficient here.

**Salutation**—Place the salutation at the left margin, two returns below the inside address.

- The salutation is followed by a colon.

- Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, and Ms., are abbreviated but such titles as Senator or President are not.

**Reference Line (RE:)**—The reference line should be aligned with the date, above the salutation.

**Body of the Letter**—The body of the letter is in block format and begins two returns below the salutation.

**Complimentary Close**—Align the complimentary close with the date of the letter (six tab stops) and place it two returns below the last sentence in the body of the letter.

- For Dear Madam, Ladies, and Ladies and Gentlemen, use the complimentary close that best suits how formal or personal you need to be.
- Capitalize only the first word of the complimentary close. Follow the closing with a comma.

Sincerely,  
Respectfully,  
Cordially,  
Sincerely yours,  
Best regards,

**Signature**—Position the signature block six tab stops from the left margin so that it will align with the date.

- Align the full name and position of the sender four returns below the complimentary close. No signature line should extend beyond the right margin.
- When the name of the person's position occupies two lines, indent the second line three spaces under the complimentary close.
- **When signing a letter or routine document for another person**, sign the person's name and your initials slightly below and to the right of the signature.
- *Note:* The superintendent of schools, deputy superintendent, chief operating officer, chief academic officer, chief of school support and well-being, and chief of district operations do not delegate their signatures and, generally, it is not considered good office practice to do so. Signing a document for another person could cause legal problems if there is a court challenge, unless a power of attorney has been granted. But when it is done on routine documents, make sure that the absentee signer is aware of what has been signed for in the person's absence. If material is dictated over the phone, type at the bottom of the document, "dictated by [the name of person] and forwarded without signature, in the person's absence."

**Letters with outside signatures**—When preparing a letter that includes an outside signature, use a joint letterhead. For example, if you are preparing a letter that has the signatures of the superintendent of schools and the president of Montgomery College, make sure

# Letters (CONTINUED)

both the MCPS and Montgomery College logos are present on the letterhead.

**More than one sender**—At times, two people may be sending the letter, in which case, place the full name and position of the second sender four returns below the position information of the first sender. List two or more letter senders according to rank, that is, Board president, superintendent of schools, deputy superintendent, chief operating officer, etc.

**Identifying Initials**—The initials of the signer (in caps) and the typist (in lowercase) are separated by a colon and are placed at the left margin two returns below the signer’s position.

**Enclosure**—If appropriate, the word “Enclosure” is indicated two returns below the identifying initials at the left margin. If more than one document is enclosed, use “Enclosures.”

*Note:* “Attachment” is used with memoranda and email. If you have two attachments, label them Attachment A and Attachment B.

“Enclosure” is used with letters. If you have two enclosures, label them Enclosure 1 and Enclosure 2.

**Copy to Notation**—When sending a copy of a letter to another individual, place the *Copy to* notation at the left margin two lines below the Enclosure line, if used, or the identifying initials. The name is indented three spaces under the *Copy to* line. After listing the Board of Education, superintendent of schools, deputy superintendent, and chief operating officer, alphabetize individuals’ names. Include Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. with the surname. When sending copies to all individuals holding the same type of position, show only the name of the position.

For example:

Copy to:

- Members of the Board of Education
- Deputy superintendent (use name)
- Chief academic officer (use name)
- Chief operating officer (use name)
- Chief of district operations (use name)
- Chief of school support and well-being (use name)
- Chief of staff (use name)
- Associate superintendent(s) (use names)

## Second and Subsequent Pages:

- Plain bond paper is used for the second and subsequent pages of a letter.
- The name of the addressee is placed at the left margin, 1 inch from the top of the paper.
- The page number is centered.

- The date of the letter is typed at the right margin.
- If the letter is addressed to more than three people, on the second page, type each addressee’s name.
- Type the page number and date on the same line as the last person listed.
  - Continue the body of the letter three returns below the heading of the second and succeeding pages.
  - Stapling—Do not staple pages of letters together; do not staple enclosure to the letter. However, staple pages of the copy together.

## Special Mailing Instructions

Type **AIRMAIL (with foreign mail only), CERTIFIED, etc., at the left margin of the letter in capitals, a double space below the dateline.**

## Salutations

Abbreviate only the titles Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Dr. Spell out all other titles, such as Professor and Father.

Capitalize the first word as well as any nouns and titles in the salutation (e.g., Dear Mrs. Brand, Dear Sir).

To one person (name, gender, and courtesy title preference known)	Dear Mr. Smith:	Dear Ms. Simpson:
	Dear Mrs. Gray:	Dear Miss Wells:
To one person (name known, gender unknown)	Dear Robin Smith:	Dear A. J. Moore:
To one person (name unknown, gender known)	Dear Madam:	Dear Sir:
To one person (name and gender unknown)	Dear Sir or Madam:	Dear Madam or Sir:
To one woman (courtesy title preference unknown)	Dear Ms. McCoy:	Dear Shelly McCoy:
To two or more men	Dear Mr. Nguyen and Mr. Walters:	
To two or more women	Dear Mrs. Chao, Miss Perez, and Ms. Smith: Dear Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Ortiz:	
When writing to an attorney, use either	Mr. Jorge Cruz/Ms. Matilda Wright or Jorge Cruz, Esquire/Matilda Wright, Esquire. (You may use the abbreviation <i>Esq.</i> )	
It is correct to use both the social title (Mr./Ms.) and the professional title (Esquire) in the address of your correspondence.	Salutation: Dear Mr. Cruz/Dear Ms. Wright	
(See <i>Gregg Reference Manual</i> , 11th edition, page 378, sections 1320 to 1325, for more examples.)		



**Guidelines on Addressing Mail to Parents in a Same-Sex Marriage, Civil Union, and Domestic Partnership**

- If unmarried or married with **different last names**, each person’s name should be on separate lines:
  - Mr. Frank Doe and  
Mr. John Smith  
Dear Mr. Doe and Mr. Smith
  - Ms. Anne Black and  
Ms. Hannah Davis  
Dear Ms. Black and Ms. Davis
- If married with the same last name:
  - Mr. Frank and Mr. John Doe  
Dear Mr. Frank and Mr. John Doe
  - Ms. Anne and Ms. Mary Black  
Dear Ms. Anne and Ms. Mary Black

If possible, it is good practice to ask the couple how they would like to be addressed.

Also, **please arrange the names in alphabetical order**. The only exceptions to this rule are—

- if one has an academic title, or
- if you are addressing an invitation in which you are specifically inviting one, and the other is his/her guest.
  - Dr. Mary and Mrs. Jane Doe
  - Ms. Alice and Ms. Jane Doe
  - Dr. John and Mr. Frank Doe
  - Mr. John and Mr. Frank Doe (when you are inviting Mr. John Doe)

**Forms of address and salutations to federal and state officials:**

- All elected officials should be addressed as The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, except the President of the United States, who is addressed as The President. Proper salutation is Dear Mr. President.
- For members of the U.S. Congress, the salutation for senators (also Maryland state senators) is Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_; for members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Maryland House of Delegates the salutation is Dear Representative (or Delegate) \_\_\_\_\_, or Dear Mr., Mrs., Ms. \_\_\_\_\_.
- For members of the County Council or the county executive, the salutation should be Dear Mr., Mrs., Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, or Dear Councilmember.

Here are some examples:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Place:      | <i>Montgomery County Executive</i>   |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable Marc Elrich<br>Montgomery County Executive<br>Executive Office Building<br>101 Monroe Street<br>Rockville, Maryland 20850                          |
| Salutation: | Dear Mr. Elrich:   |
| Place:      | <i>Montgomery County Council</i>   |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable Evan Glass<br>President, Montgomery County Council<br>Stella B. Werner Council Office Building<br>100 Maryland Avenue<br>Rockville, Maryland 20850 |
| Salutation: | Dear Mr. Glass:  |
| Place:      | <i>Maryland State Government</i>   |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable Wes Moore<br>Governor, The State of Maryland<br>The State House<br>Annapolis, Maryland 21404   |
| Salutation: | Dear Governor Moore:   |
| Place:      | <i>Maryland General Assembly, State Senate</i>   |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable William C. Ferguson<br>Maryland State Senate<br>223 James Senate Office Building<br>Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991                                 |
| Salutation: | Dear Senator Ferguson:   |
| Place:      | <i>Maryland General Assembly, House of Delegates</i>   |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable Craig J. Zucker<br>Maryland House of Delegates<br>House Office Building, Room 361<br>6 Bladen Street<br>Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991             |
| Salutation: | Dear Delegate Zucker:  |
| Place:      | <i>District Office, U.S. House of Representatives</i>  |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable Jamie Raskin<br>51 Monroe Street, Suite 507<br>Rockville, Maryland 20850   |
| Salutation: | Dear Representative Raskin:  |
| Place:      | <i>District Office, United States Senate</i>   |
| Addressee:  | The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin<br>60 West Street, Suite 202<br>Annapolis, Maryland 21401   |
| Salutation: | Dear Senator Cardin:   |
| Place:      | <i>Maryland State Department of Education</i>  |
| Addressee:  | Mohammed Choudhury<br>State Superintendent of Schools<br>Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building<br>200 West Baltimore Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21201    |
| Salutation: | Dear Mr. Choudhury   |

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

August 31, 2022

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Gregory A. Hook, CPA  
Legislative Auditor  
State of Maryland  
Office of Legislative Audits  
The Warehouse at Camden Yards  
351 West Camden Street, Suite 400  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Mr. Hook:

The response to recommendations made in the Financial Management Practices Report dated August 16, 2022, for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is enclosed. In a previous copy was forwarded to you on August 31, 2022.

As was noted in the report, MCPS ranks first in student enrollment among the 24 public schools in the State of Maryland. The report points out that MCPS engages a certified public accountant to independently audit its annual financial statements. The annual external audit evaluates the accuracy of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates. Your report stated that the firm indicated that the financial reports were prepared in all material respects, for Fiscal Years 2015 through 2020. The accounting firm also conducted an audit of our federal grant programs that is intended to provide assurance that adequate controls are in place that we are in compliance with programmatic requirements. Your report indicated that the accounting firm did not disclose any material deficiencies. In addition, it should be noted that the audit was conducted by or on behalf of nearly a dozen other agencies.

We would like to thank the legislative auditors for helping us identify several areas where we can improve our system's performance and efficiency. MCPS staff appreciated the level of detail demonstrated by the legislative auditors throughout this audit process.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Robert Reilly, associate superintendent of financial services, if you have any questions or need additional information regarding this submission.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXX

Monifa B. McKnight, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

MBM:MBH:RR:tk:sr

Enclosure

Copy to:  
Members of the Board of Education  
Mr. Hull  
Mr. Reilly  
Mr. Klausing

<b>LETTER: General</b>
<b>Letterhead:</b> Official MCPS letterhead
<b>Margins:</b> Top-1.5"; Sides-1"; Bottom-1" (depending on design of letterhead)
<b>Date:</b> 6 tab stops from left margin
<b>Address:</b> 2 to 4 returns after <i>Date</i>
<b>Salutation:</b> 2 returns after <i>Address</i>
<b>Body:</b> 2 returns after <i>Salutation</i> ; 2 returns after each paragraph
<b>Complimentary Closing:</b> 2 returns after <i>Body</i>
<b>Writer's Name:</b> 4 returns after <i>Complimentary Closing</i> ; 6 tab stops from left margin
<b>Writer's Position:</b> 1 return after <i>Writer's Name</i> ; 6 tab stops from left margin
<b>Identifying Initials:</b> 2 returns after <i>Writer's position</i>
<b>Copy to Notation:</b> 2 returns after <i>Identifying Initials</i> , indent 3 spaces on a new line for each entry

This sample is presented as an example of correct formatting only. This is not a template. Content may not reflect current information. The number of returns is based on the length of the document to allow for a balanced page.







# CLARKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

22500 Wims Road • Clarksburg, Maryland 20871  
Telephone 301.444.3000 • Fax 301.444.3595

Edward Owusu  
*Principal*

October 14, 2019

Dear Clarksburg High School Families:

I want to share with you information about an event that has affected our school. In this letter, I want to give you the facts and to assure you that we are addressing this issue.

On Monday, October 14, 2019, a gas line was ruptured during construction on Shawnee Lane is approximately one mile from Clarksburg High School but the rupture were detected throughout our building. An Outside Hazardous Material was announced immediately and all ventilation systems at Clarksburg High School were shut down. We ended the Shelter Alert once the fire department let us know that the gas had been capped and it was safe.

There was no interruption to our school day as a result of this event. If you have any questions or concerns, you may reach me by phone at 240-740-6000 or by email at [edward\\_k\\_owusu@mcpsmd.org](mailto:edward_k_owusu@mcpsmd.org).

Sincerely,

Edward Owusu  
Principal

EO/lrr

## LETTER:

### Notice to Community

**Letterhead:** Official MCPS letterhead

**Margins:** Top-1.5"; Sides-1"; Bottom-1"  
(depending on design of letterhead)

**Date:** 6 tab stops from left margin

**Salutation:** 2 returns after date

**Body:** 2 returns after *Salutation*;  
2 returns after each paragraph

**Complimentary Closing:**

2 returns after *Body*

**Writer's Name:** 4 returns after

*Complimentary Closing*;

6 tab stops from left margin

**Writer's Position:** 1 return after *Writer's*

*Name*; 6 tab stops from left margin

**Identifying Initials:** 2 returns after

*Writer's Position*

**Copy to Notation:** 2 returns after

*Identifying Initials*; Recipient(s), indent

3 spaces on a new line for each entry



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

August 31, 2022

Ms. Marcella E. Franczkowski  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Division of Early Intervention  
and Special Education Services

Ms. Mary L. Gable  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Division of Student Support, Academic  
Enrichment, and Educational Policy  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Ms. Franczkowski and Ms. Gable,

Thank you for your correspondence dated August 12, 2022, regarding the Maryland State Department of Education Intellectual Disabilities Workgroup. Montgomery County Public Schools is pleased to be included in this workgroup, as it is important to be a part of the work of identifying and addressing intellectual disabilities and, in particular, the broader concerns of disproportionate practices both locally and nationally.

Dr. Christina N. Conolly-Chester, director of psychological services, Office of Workforce and Achievement has spoken with Dr. April Turner, School Psychological Services, Maryland State Department of Education, and confirmed that Mr. Gregory T. Turner, School Psychologist, is excited to participate in this workgroup and ready to begin on September 1, 2022.

It is a pleasure for Montgomery County Public Schools to participate in the workgroup as a resource tool.

Sincerely,



Monifa B. McKnight, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

MBM:PKM:RR:DM:ccc

Copy to:

Dr. Murphy	Dr. Connolly-Chester
Ms. Reuben	Dr. Turner
Mr. Monteleone	Mr. Kurth-Ford

**LETTER:**

**Letter to two people**

**Letterhead:** Official MCPS letterhead

**Margins:** Top-1.5"; Sides-1"; Bottom-1"  
(depending on design of letterhead)

**Date:** 6 tab stops from left margin

**Salutation:** 2 returns after date

**Body:** 2 returns after *Salutation*;  
2 returns after each paragraph

**Complimentary Closing:**

2 returns after *Body*

**Writer's Name:** 4 returns after

*Complimentary Closing*;

6 tab stops from left margin

**Writer's Position:** 1 return after *Writer's*

*Name*; 6 tab stops from left margin

**Identifying Initials:** 2 returns after

*Writer's Position*

**Copy to Notation:** 2 returns after

*Identifying Initials*; Recipient(s), indent

3 spaces on a new line for each entry



Microsoft Outlook® is MCPS's electronic mail (email), conference, calendar, address book, task organizer, and online communications system. Users can exchange email with other users; exchange email with users on other systems; transfer several files quickly, using file attachments; engage in electronic conferences with other users; and communicate with other users online.

## Best Practices for Business Email

Email is as integral to the workplace as is regular paper mail. All MCPS memoranda are sent by email. How you use email reflects not only on your level of professionalism, but also on the reputation of MCPS. Do not assume you have privacy when you use MCPS computers. Here are some practical tips to make your email experience more effective.

**Include a meaningful subject line.** Use the subject line to announce what the message is about. Readers who receive many emails will often check the subject line first to decide whether to read your message promptly, later, next week, or never.

- A message with a blank subject line or a very general subject (e.g., "Question") will have a low priority to recipients.
- Use an accurate and descriptive subject line. However, do not include MCPS students' personal information, including names and identification numbers, in the subject line.

**Keep it short.** Email helps us to communicate quickly and concisely. However, be cautious with your use of abbreviations, such as LOL.

- For business communications, it is important to be as clear as possible; if readers do not understand something, there's a possibility of miscommunication.
- Take the time to write complete sentences, using proper grammar and punctuation.
- Remember, you need only one space after a period at the end of a sentence.
- If you are delivering personal news, bad news, or any news you would rather not receive in a group setting, consider using another vehicle other than email. More and more people are checking email on their phones, so try to stick to one topic and include a link for further reference, if possible.

**Do not shout.** Avoid using all caps when composing your email. It's like SHOUTING at your reader(s). It also makes your message difficult to read and may well overwhelm your reader(s).

## Creating and using an address book in Microsoft Outlook® is a convenient way of sending email to groups of people with Microsoft Outlook® accounts.

The address book contains personal mailing lists, but you can create a list with a single identifying name.

- For example, you could create a personal mailing list with the names of science teachers. Use a simple title, such as "Science Teachers."
- When you want to send a message to those people in that group, simply address it to "Science Teachers."

**Use your address book.** When sending an email to a long list of recipients, consider using the address book function in Microsoft Outlook®. It does not list all recipients in the "To" header. Listing recipients in the BCC section is another option.

- Having to scroll past a long list of addresses to get to the message itself can be disconcerting to recipients.
- Also, many people may not like having their email address displayed to others.

**Use common courtesy.** Always begin with a salutation—Dear Mr. Smith—and end with a closing—sincerely, best regards.

- In between, use full sentences and standard grammar.
- It's business correspondence. Courtesy is always best practice.

**Reply to the appropriate people.** Regarding Reply All: Only the most relevant work-related messages should be sent to all recipients. Private messages, or messages that only apply to a few people, should never be sent this way.

- Be careful when sending. People often press the Reply All icon inadvertently.
- You may select Reply All (to the sender and all other names in the original message), or Reply Sender (to the sender whose name is on the To line of the original message).

Keep the following in mind to avoid misinterpretation in your email correspondence:

- Always reread your emails, especially if you prefer to use a conversational tone. The recipient may not be familiar with your style.
- If you are sending a message with specific instructions, due dates, or other crucial information, test it by sending it to yourself first. This will give you a chance to see how it looks before you actually send it.
- Avoid trying to resolve or discuss a sensitive or complex topic that would be best dealt with by speaking with someone over the phone or in person. A good rule to follow is if you can't write a letter about it, then don't write an email either.



### Email attachments in MCPS memoranda.

- If there is a specific website that readers are required to refer to, include this web address as a link in the body of the memorandum. The web address or URL should be in italics.
- If there is a form that readers are required to download, complete, and remit, include as a Microsoft Word file or PDF and attached to the memorandum.
- If there is a document that is required for reference or general information for readers, include this as a PDF file and attach to the memorandum.

**The signature block.** The signature block in an email does the work of the letterhead of a business letter—it contains the sender’s contact information. It is found at the end of the email right under the sender’s name.

It is not appropriate to include stationery, quotations, or sayings as part of your email signature. MCPS email messages should be considered a business letter and be presented in a professional manner. The more formatting or embedded images, the higher the chance that your message may be blocked as spam.

Include only your name, your title, your office name and address, and your telephone number. No need to include your email address, since it is already at the top of your email. But, you may include a link to your office website.

An appropriate email signature would be as follows:

John Smith  
Teacher  
Montgomery County Middle School

An appropriate expanded email signature would be as follows:

John Smith  
Teacher  
Montgomery County Middle School  
2000 Main Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Phone: 301-555-1212  
Fax: 301-555-2121  
[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/mcms/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/mcms/)

**Check before you send.** Always reread your messages before sending to make sure there are no grammatical or spelling errors.

- Use the spell check feature.
- Be smart about what you put in writing. An email is a permanent record.
- Whenever you can, park important emails in the Outbox for a while, and review before sending.

**Always reply.** Be polite; always respond to your messages.

- Try to stick to a 24-hour response time, depending on your availability.

- But, keep in mind that some situations are urgent and require a shorter response time.
- If someone sends you a long email, acknowledge the effort, even if you do not have time to return the favor word for word right away.

**Use automatic replies (Out of Office).** This is a great way to communicate a vacation or other away-from-the-office event. You can inform everyone of the dates you will be gone and provide alternate contact information for those issues that cannot wait.

**Monitor your email.** Check your in-box three to four times a day instead of every 10 minutes, depending on the nature of your work. Going through your email in bunches gives you a chance to concentrate on specific tasks with minimum distraction throughout your day.

If you receive a suspicious email, do not open any attachments. Simply forward the email to [abuse@mcpsmd.org](mailto:abuse@mcpsmd.org). The email may contain viruses, Trojans, malware, or other destructive contents.

See more on *Best Practices for Email* and read the *Maryland Public Information Act* at [montgomeryschoolsmd.org/employee-digital-communications/index.aspx](http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/employee-digital-communications/index.aspx).

### Keep it Professional

Email is official, professional correspondence.

The content of your email can be used as evidence in a legal court case. Make sure you are as accurate as possible in your message.

Show courtesy and acknowledge receipt of someone’s email, even if you can’t respond immediately.

Check periodically that your contact/ mailing lists are current.

Report phishing emails and spam to [abuse@mcpsmd.org](mailto:abuse@mcpsmd.org).

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR Employee Email and Other Digital Communications**

Digital communication such as email and text messages are convenient and effective ways of sharing information with colleagues. However, it is important to remember that digital communication—including email and text messages—may be public records and subject to disclosure under state and federal laws. For instance, the *Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA)*, which is similar to the federal *Freedom of Information Act*, grants a broad right of access to public records, while protecting legitimate governmental interests and the privacy rights of individual citizens. Therefore, it is particularly important that our digital communications reflect the same high standards of professionalism that we expect in our in-person communication.

These best practices have been developed to help you engage effectively and responsibly when using email, text messages, and other digital communication tools. They build on the foundation set in the *MCPS Employee Code of Conduct*; *MCPS Regulation IGT-RA, User Responsibility for Computer Systems, Electronic Information, and Network Security*; as well as other Board of Education policies, MCPS regulations, and all applicable federal and state laws. These requirements are referenced collectively as MCPS rules. Please see the *Social Media Best Practices for Employees* for other digital communication strategies. For guidance regarding general written correspondence, please see the *MCPS Correspondence Manual*.

**CHOOSE THE MOST APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION METHOD.** For instance, confidential or sensitive information warrants a phone call or in-person discussion. Email is for memorializing information, defining action steps, providing confirmation, summarizing meeting outcomes, or making an inquiry, among other things. Text messaging is for quick, more immediate communication.

**USE YOUR MCPS EMAIL ADDRESS FOR OFFICIAL MCPS EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.** MCPS provides all employees with two dedicated email addresses (ending in *mcpsmd.org* and *mcpsmd.net*) to conduct business on behalf of the district. Employees should use only these addresses for educational purposes. These include actions directly promoting the educational, instructional, administrative, business, and support services missions of MCPS, and they are related to any instruction, project, job, work assignment, task, or function for which the user is responsible. Do not use a personal email address when communicating on behalf of MCPS. If employees receive a message in their personal email account that is related to MCPS business, that email should be forwarded to their MCPS email address and deleted from their personal email. Remember that email exchanges with parents/guardians should be copied into the contact log.

**PLEASE BE AWARE** that if an email, text message, or other communication is made or received in connection with the transaction of business involving MCPS, it may be considered a public record, regardless of whether it was sent from a personal or MCPS account. Additionally, there are federal and state laws that may require MCPS to review and disclose digital communications or other data from phones or other mobile devices used to conduct business on behalf of the district.

Examples of appropriate use of MCPS email:

- Responding to a parent about their child's grade
- Sending an email to a colleague about a project
- Summarizing action items after a meeting

**TAKE CARE** to keep your MCPS network password confidential. Do not let someone else use your MCPS email address, account, or password. Be sure to change your password as required. You may be held accountable for any action taken by or with your account.

**REMEMBER** that email, text messages, and other communications sent from MCPS accounts are not private. These communications are considered property of the district and, therefore, may be subject to public disclosure. All actions are subject to review and may be logged and archived and monitored to ensure they are used solely for educational purposes. MCPS employees are prohibited from using MCPS accounts for personal gain or any illegal activities. Keep in mind that messages also can be forwarded or distributed to other individuals in whole or in part.

**REMEMBER** MCPS staff email is retained for 365 days. This applies to MCPS-provisioned email accounts in both Microsoft Office 365 (.org) and Google Suite (.net).

Be aware that, in some instances, the MCPS Office of the General Counsel may instruct employees not to delete electronically stored information or discard paper documents that must be preserved because they are relevant to a new or imminent legal case. In some cases, the MCPS Office of the General Counsel may ask you to provide records of communications that are related to a legal case, or a court may issue a subpoena for records of communications related to a case.

**LIMIT EMAIL, TEXT MESSAGES, AND OTHER DIGITAL**

**COMMUNICATION** with students to appropriate educational issues directly related to instruction or your MCPS work responsibilities. Adhere to the requirements in the MCPS *Employee Code of Conduct*. For example, do not have one-on-one interactions with MCPS students through social media, email, text messages, messaging apps, or other electronic communication methods about subjects not directly related to instruction or your MCPS work responsibilities. Communication with students via temporary or anonymous messaging apps is prohibited. Do not use personal email accounts, social media networking sites, text messages, messaging apps, or other electronic communications to socialize or to “friend” students.

**BE MINDFUL OF CONFIDENTIALITY.** Think about the content that you are sharing, and with whom you are sharing it. Remember that some matters are complex and sensitive and may warrant a phone call or in-person discussion instead. MCPS employees are prohibited from knowingly participating in the unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of any confidential information obtained in their work duties, including any personally identifiable information about students or their families as well as personnel records.

**BE PROFESSIONAL.** Avoid mixing personal and professional topics. Additionally, do not gossip or engage in conduct that is rude or disrespectful; uses vulgar language or racial slurs; or includes materials that are inflammatory, libelous, slanderous, or constitute cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation of others. MCPS is committed to fostering a culture of respect throughout the district. Think about how you would feel, and how others might feel, if something you wrote in an email became public.

**BE AWARE OF YOUR TONE.** Remember that your recipient cannot hear or see you. Think about how your words may be perceived. Avoid using all capital letters, as this can be perceived as shouting. Avoid responding to an email immediately if you’re angry or frustrated; take the time to reflect. Remember, a benefit of in-person communication is the ability to see and respond to people’s reactions as well as the ability to build better relationships.

**RESPOND TO MESSAGES IN A TIMELY FASHION.** However, remember that email is not an urgent means of communication. If you need to speak with someone immediately due to an emergency or other time-sensitive situation, consider making a phone call.

**SAVE IMPORTANT EMAILS** in an MCPS electronic or paper file. Do not use your inbox to archive messages.

**MAKE YOUR MESSAGE EASY TO READ.** Be mindful of font sizes, types, and colors. Emphasize parts of your content with different fonts or colors when necessary, but it is important to keep it simple.

**USE THE SUBJECT FIELD.** Make your subject line clear and specific. This helps your recipient know quickly what your email is about. Extend the same courtesy when issuing calendar invitations.

**KEEP YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURE PROFESSIONAL.** MCPS prohibits special stationery, quotations or sayings as part of or following an employee’s signature block. Only the motto or vision statement of an employee’s specific school or of MCPS is acceptable.

**MCPS EMAIL SIGNATURE BLOCKS SHOULD INCLUDE**, at a minimum, the name of the sender and their position. For school-based personnel, the name of the school should be included. It is recommended that employees also add their work phone number.

**PROOFREAD YOUR MESSAGE BEFORE SENDING.** Messages should have proper capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. Ensure that links work and that you have included any relevant attachments. If possible, after writing your message, save it and revisit it after a period of time. You may find it best to make some well-needed revisions before pressing send.

**KNOW THE RECIPIENTS WITH WHOM YOU ARE COMMUNICATING.** MCPS has many people with similar and even identical names. Confirm you have listed the appropriate recipients, as it is possible to unintentionally send your message to the wrong recipient.

**USE CARE REGARDING AUTO-FILL AND REPLY ALL.** Only the most relevant work-related messages should be sent to all recipients. Private messages, or responses that apply to only a few people, should not be sent this way. Additionally, avoid cc-ing more recipients than necessary.

**LIMIT LONG EMAIL THREADS.** Email conversations should be short and remain on topic. Avoid using an old thread to start a new conversation. When someone makes an MPIA request, MCPS must conduct a reasonably calculated search to uncover all relevant documents. If multiple topics are discussed in an email thread, those emails can be pulled as part of an MPIA request, even if the request is regarding only one of the topics.

**BE AWARE OF “PHISHING” EMAILS.** Phishing, the process of requesting confidential information over the Internet under false pretenses, is very common. These email messages may look legitimate and ask you to click a link or send a reply with the requested information, which often includes credit card information, login IDs, passwords, or other personal data. MCPS has multiple tools, including a robust spam filter, that block many potentially harmful emails. MCPS also labels emails from outside sources with a yellow banner that reads “*CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.*” However, you should always be mindful of sharing confidential information.

**REPORT SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY.** MCPS employees should report suspected phishing, as well as other suspicious or inappropriate use of data, computer-system abuse, or possible breaches of security. School-based employees should alert the principal or the principal’s designee responsible for information technology. Non-school-based employees should alert their immediate supervisors. Serious infractions should be reported to the Office of Strategic Initiatives. If you receive a suspicious or inappropriate email, simply forward the message to [abuse@mcpsmd.org](mailto:abuse@mcpsmd.org). Remember, digital communication is one of the ways in which we can make a positive impression on our colleagues and the greater MCPS community every day.



## Checklist for Creating Correspondence

### ❑ Bullets—formatting

Large dot (•), indented five spaces from the left margin. (See also *Display lists* on page 51)

### ❑ Business letters—formatting

- Place date six tab stops from the left margin.
- Tab six times for closing block to align with date.

### ❑ Capitalization

- Capitalize names of schools, offices, departments, divisions, and units.
- Capitalize position title only when it precedes the name.
- Do not capitalize “Program” and “Initiative” when they follow a title/name, unless those words are a part of the official name.

Examples:

Fleet Street Middle School program but  
Individualized Education Program  
(official title of the program)

The Neighbor to Neighbor initiative but Baldrige  
in Education Initiative (BiE IN) (official title)

- Only the first word in a permanently hyphenated compound—one found in the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed.* ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com))—is capitalized in headings or titles.

Jobs for Part-time Students

Cost-effective Training Methods

Soft-boiled Eggs Found to Contain Salmonella

Law-abiding Citizens Form Neighborhood  
Watch Group

Labor-intensive Products

Long-range Planning

### ❑ Copy to hierarchy

1. County executive
2. County Council
3. Members of the Board of Education
4. Superintendent of schools
5. Deputy superintendent
6. Chief operating officer and/or chief of district operations and/or chief of school support and well-being and/or chief academic officer
7. Chief of staff
8. Associate superintendent(s)
9. Other MCPS staff members (in alpha order)
10. Individuals outside MCPS (in alpha order)

### ❑ Font

Use Times New Roman 12 point for correspondence. Use 11.5 point type to save space.

### ❑ Heads and subheads

Use boldface for heads and italics (or boldface) for subheads. Do not underline.

### ❑ Memoranda

- Center the date.
- When using multiple addresses, follow the same rules as the *Copy to hierarchy* listing.
- Do not use abbreviations in the subject line.
- Put three returns between the subject line and the first line of text.
- For emphasis, use bold or italics as appropriate.
- Spell out acronyms at first mention, with the acronym in parentheses (except in the subject line). Use the acronym at any further mention of the name.
- Make sure email memoranda have an approval message at the top and approval line at the end before you send it out.

Examples:

This email message has been approved for distribution by Mr. M. Brian Hull, chief operating officer, Ms. Ruschelle Reuben, chief of school support and well-being, and Dr. Peggy Pugh, chief academic officer. No hard copy will be provided.

This email message has been approved for distribution by Mr. M. Brian Hull, chief operating officer. No hard copy will be provided.

This email message has been approved for distribution by Ms. Ruschelle Reuben, chief of school support and well-being. No hard copy will be provided.

This email message has been approved for distribution by Mr. M. Brian Hull, chief operating officer. No hard copy will be provided.

### ❑ Page numbering (page 2 and subsequent pages)

- **For memoranda:** Center at top of the page
- **For letters:** Center at top of the page
- **For reports:** Center at bottom of the page

### ❑ Salutations

Only the first word of the salutation and the name of the person addressed or the noun used in place of the name are capitalized.

Dear Sir:

Most Honorable Sir:



## Signature Block

- Avoid fancy designs. The more formatting or embedded images, the higher the chance that your message may be blocked as spam
- When signing for someone who is not available, use your name, followed by “for Xxx Zzzz (person’s name).”

## ❑ Spelling

- MCPS uses the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed.* ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)) to check and confirm spelling.
- As a general rule, when alternate spellings exist, use the *first* spelling in *Merriam-Webster’s*.
- The dictionary also is useful to learn the roots and history of a word and to get information on such issues as forms of address, foreign phrases, and ???.

## ❑ Titles

- Italicize titles of books, brochures, and published reports.
- Use quotation marks for minor titles (e.g., for newspaper and newsletter articles).
- Italicize web addresses.

## Writing Style Tips

Search the Editorial Help Desk website for more tips.

### Dashes—A Short History

The distinction between hyphens and dashes was once important mainly to typesetters. There was no em-dash key on a typewriter, so writers who worked on typewriters had to improvise by typing two hyphens to make an em dash and typing one hyphen to make an en dash. Now, there is a full range of special characters at our disposal when we use word processing software.

Em dashes and en dashes were given names that indicate their length. The em dash is as long as the width of the letter *m*, and the en dash is as long as the width of the letter *n*. The actual length varies from typeface to typeface. The hyphen is shorter than both types of dashes and should not be used in their places.

Using real em dashes (—) and en dashes (–) instead of hyphens (-) gives a document a more professional look.

**Period**—Use only one space after a period at the end of a sentence.

**Em dash**—An em dash is used to separate an interrupting clause from the rest of the sentence:

He came to my office—without calling in advance—and demanded to see me immediately.

It also is used to separate a word or words from a phrase that summarizes or explains those words:

Paid holidays, subsidized health insurance, and free parking—these are the only benefits I require.

**En dash**—An en dash is the equivalent of the word “to”. It is used to separate letters and numbers, especially when a range or time span is given:

The gift shop in the lobby is open Monday–Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

The test will cover chapter 12, sections A–F, so read pages 212–275.

*Note:* Information on dashes taken from Cormier, Robin. 1995. *Error-free writing: A lifetime guide to flawless business writing*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

## Display lists

The following guidelines relate to display lists in MCPS documents.

- A display list is best introduced by a complete sentence, followed by a colon.
- Items carry no closing punctuation, unless they consist of complete sentences.
- A display list may be numbered or bulleted.
- Ideally, a display list should have a minimum of two items, each displayed on a separate line. There is no firm rule about the maximum number of items in a list, but be aware that readers can lose track in a long list.
- Indent bullets or numbers five spaces from the margin.
- The text in each item must be grammatically parallel to the other items in the list (i.e., if one item is a complete sentence, they all should be complete sentences. If one item is written in the second person, the others should match).

An incorrect list (i.e., not parallel):

- The rules should be changed so that players are not so vulnerable.
- Ejection of a player for spearing or blindsiding.
- Write a letter warning of these suspect practices to the pertinent officials.

A correct list (parallel):

- The rules should be changed so that players are not so vulnerable.
- Players should be ejected for spearing or blindsiding.
- A letter of warning of these suspect practices should be sent to the pertinent officials.

Two basic list styles are used in MCPS documents. Some lists are introduced by a complete sentence. You should end the introductory sentence with a colon and capitalize the first word in each item.

## Writing Tips (CONTINUED)

The foreign office reviews the following:

1. Legal problems
2. Financial problems
3. Medical issues
4. Search and rescue operations

In a list introduced by an incomplete sentence (a “broken sentence” list), the list reads as a sentence that has been “broken” into a list. The introductory phrase ends with either no punctuation or an em dash (—). The items (sentence fragments) begin with a lowercase letter. The items end with a comma (or semicolon). The next-to-last item ends with a comma (or semicolon), and the word “and.” The last item ends with a period.

The main responsibilities of the foreign office are assisting with—

- legal issues;
- financial, medical, and cultural problems; and
- search and rescue operations.

### Hyphens

- The hyphen is used at the end of a line to show that part of the word has carried over to the next line.
- The hyphen is used to join words to form a compound word. Compound adjectives that modify nouns are hyphenated.  
*Ahmed learned decision-making skills in his management class.*
- Noun phrases used as adjectives are hyphenated.  
*Mary decided to take a work-from-home job.*
- Always hyphenate fractions when they are used as modifiers.  
*She owned a two-thirds share.*
- Do not hyphenate fractions when they are used as nouns.  
*His share was three fifths.*

Summary of hyphenation rules.

- Proper names should not be divided, and a person’s initials or an abbreviated title or part of a name (such as *Mr. Dr., III, or Jr.*) should not be separated from the name.
  - Short words—those of five letters or fewer—should not be broken.
- One-syllable words (*fenced, jogged, pray*) should not be broken.
- Hyphenated compound words should be broken only at the hyphen.
- Always check the dictionary to verify if a compound word should be hyphenated.
- Words ending in “-ing” are divided on the base word (*sing-ing, writ-ing*) except when the final consonant is doubled to form a participle (*refer-ring, admit-ting*).

Automatic hyphenation is a feature of word processing programs. When the automatic hyphenation feature is turned on, the program consults its own dictionary to select word breaks.

### Proofreading the final draft

When looking at the final draft, proofreaders should be aware of the following:

- A hyphen may appear at the end of no more than two consecutive lines.
- The last word in a paragraph should not be divided; if the break is unavoidable, then the whole word should carry to the last line.

### When to spell out numbers

Spell out numbers in the following instances:

- One through nine
- Larger numbers when used as approximates: *About a hundred soldiers were killed.*

### Special usage:

- Age: *18 years old; a 3-year-old student; in his twenties*
- Dates: *Ninth century, 20th century; 2000–2002; 1990s; January 18, 2010; April 2010 (no comma); May 18 (not May 18th)*
- Units of measure: *5 inches, 6 centimeters, 8°F, 4 MB RAM, 5-mg dose.*
- Quantities:
  - Use numerals for numbers above nine: one, two, three... nine; 10, 11, 12
  - If a sentence includes numbers both above and below nine (that refer to the same thing), use numerals for all the numbers: *There were 5 participants from Georgia and 12 from Florida.*
  - Express round numbers above 1 million in numerals and words: *13 million.*
  - Spell out percent: *80 percent*—unless the document is mathematical or statistical in nature.
  - Use commas in four-digit numbers: *1,409*
  - Do not use commas with page numbers: *p. 1409*

Adapted from *The New York Public Library Writer’s Guide To Style and Usage*, © 1987.

### Style for formal invitations

Monday, the fifteenth of June  
Two thousand fifteen  
At six o’clock in the evening

### Style for referring to policies

Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ABC,  
*Name of Policy*, states that...

Further reference to the policy should be written as  
Board Policy ABC.



### Style for referring to regulations

Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation ABC-DE, *Name of Regulation*, was revised...

Further reference to the regulation should be written as MCPS Regulation ABC-DE.

### Style for referring to forms

Montgomery County Public Schools Form 123-45, *Name of Form*.

### Serial commas

MCPS style preference is for a comma before the conjunction *and* in a series, because it contributes to clarity and ease of reading.

*The principal held a meeting for teachers, parents, and staff.*

## Five Steps to Professional Correspondence

Many of you are called on to help your principal or supervisor craft correspondence (memoranda and letters). You may find that the principal or supervisor has his or her signature style of writing, which may differ slightly from the guidance given in the correspondence manual.

Remember that the manual is a guide, not the law. You should add to your manual any specific correspondence policies or procedures that are relevant to your office.

*Note:* All memoranda to be distributed throughout the school system must be approved and signed by the chief of school support and well-being, chief academic officer, chief operating officer, deputy superintendent, and/or superintendent of schools.

Following are five key points to keep in mind as you work on correspondence:

1. **Practice consistency** in how you spell and how you use words and phrases. For example, stick with either “Grade 9 students” (preferred usage) or “ninth grade students” throughout the document.
2. **Do your research.** If you have any doubt about usage or spelling, check it out. Use your dictionary. Even

if you are almost sure, check your reference for accuracy.

3. **Be clear and concise**—use plain language. Write so that your information will be understood easily.
  - a. Be concise. Use the least amount of words necessary to make your point.
  - b. **Double check** to make sure all the facts and your contact information are stated accurately.
4. Remember that your email signature should include, at a minimum, your name and your position.
  - School-based staff should include the name of the school
  - Include your phone number. Other appropriate elements are work mailing address, fax number, and work web address.

#### Example of appropriate email signature:

John Smith  
Biology Teacher  
Montgomery County Middle School

#### Example of appropriate expanded email signature:

John Smith  
Teacher  
Montgomery County Middle School  
2000 Main Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Phone: 301-555-1212  
Fax: 301-555-1213  
[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/mcms](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/mcms)

5. Get someone else to review a printed copy of your work before your principal or supervisor reviews and signs off on it. Even seasoned writers do this.

### More writing tips online

You can find more writing tips on the Editorial Help Desk website at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/services/edit\\_helpdesk.shtm](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/services/edit_helpdesk.shtm).

# Proofreading

## Proofreading and Proofreader Marks

Standard proofreader's marks are used to communicate with authors and printers. They are as useful to anyone who proofreads or makes edits to a document. They help reduce the number of rounds of changes to a document; and they help make corrections more legible to the person who will make the changes.

- Use a RED pencil; the color is easiest to read.
- Make sure your marks are legible for the person making the changes.
- Contact the Editorial Help Desk for a list of common proofreader's marks, or use the list on the next page.

Make sure your document has no typos and is grammatically correct before it is sent out. Once published, it represents the school system and should always reflect our best effort.

Using spell check is always your first line of defense. Also, have another set of eyes review your work.

### Here are some key things to check for as you proofread:

- Numbers that are transposed.
- Errors in names, addresses, titles, phone numbers, and web addresses.
- Incorrect choice of similar words  
For example: *there* instead of *their*, *then* instead of *than*, *compliment* instead of *complement*, and *principle* instead of *principal*.
- Missing words or lines of text.
- Incorrect days and dates.
- Use of contractions

## Are Proofreader Marks Still Useful?

In this era of digital editing—in Microsoft Word and PDF—proofreader marks are being used less. However, proofreading remains a vital part of producing a document, and is preferred and best done on hard copy versions of the document. The eyes still tend to see more on paper. These marks are needed when you want to indicate changes to the typist.

## Traditional Proofreader Marks

These are used on hard copy. Below is a list of the most used proofreader marks.

## Digital Proofreader Marks

There are no set ways to mark up a PDF. It is common to use the drawing tool, and sticky notes to indicate your changes. This method can be a bit unwieldy and awkward to get used to. So, it may be easier to print the document and mark the changes on paper.

All-in-all, it's more efficient to proofread on paper than using digital tools.



# Proofreader Marks

## *Proofreaders' Marks*

### EGPS Editorial Help Desk

○	Insert period	All students will receive a grade for completing this project○
∟	Insert comma	As part of any disciplinary response,students should receive counseling.
=	Hyphenate	You can print a copy of your w̄2 form from the website.
∨	Apostrophe	The student's budget should include money for meals.
∟	Semicolon	Please arrive on time;you must be in your seats by 4 p.m.
—	en dash	The Civil War lasted from 1861—1865.
—	em dash	After months of deliberation, the jury delivered its verdict—guilty.
^	Insert word	The best way out is,through.
↶	Replace	This is the curriculum <sup>that</sup> <del>which</del> we will use this semester. created them.
~	Transpose	Those who make <u>impossible peaceful revolution</u> will make violent revolution inevitable.
○	Close space	The fif <sup>th</sup> graders held their end-of-year concert in the gym.
∟	Delete and close space	Ninety percent of the <del>the</del> game is half right.—Yogi Berra
#	Insert space	The Farm Aid concert helped many <sup>#</sup> struggling farmers.
∟	Delete	Whoever arrives first must open the office <del>g</del> .
∟	Remove line break	More than half the questions <u>on the list were related to algebra.</u>
—	Italicize	<u>The trick is to stop thinking of it as your money.</u>
///	Remove italics	<del><i>Introduction</i></del> <sup>(no ital)</sup>
~	Boldface	<b>Acknowledgments</b>
/	Lower case	R <sup>o</sup> ckville, Montgomery <u>C</u> OUNTY
=	All caps	<u>Appendix a</u>
Ⓢ	Spell out	apt. <sup>sp</sup> 9 <sup>sp</sup>
stet	Ignore editor's marks	Let it stand. or Let it stand. <sup>(stet)</sup>





## Writing Tips (CONTINUED)

### Answers to Some of Your Grammar Questions

#### Special word usage

- Do not use *the* Montgomery County Public Schools.
- We use *coursework*, instead of *course work*.
- When referring to numbers, use the words “more than” instead of “over.” For example: The supplies cost more than \$20,000.

#### Can you send out a memorandum from a department and an employee association?

A joint memorandum from the MCPS Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations and the SEIU Local 500, MCEA, or MCAAP/MCBOA is appropriate if it goes to unit employees. In the *To* section, put the MCPS department/office first and then the name of the employee organization. In the *From* section, put the MCPS staff first in alphabetical order (as we do in the *Copy to* section), then put the employee association representatives in alphabetical order.

#### The *That/Which* dilemma: Which one to use when

Both *which* and *that* are relative pronouns used to refer to places, animals, objects, ideas, and qualities. *Which* is used to introduce a clause containing informative but nonessential information. Because the information in this clause is additional and therefore unnecessary to the meaning of the sentence, commas are placed before the word *which* and at the end of the clause.

**For example:** Note that in the following sentence, the *which* clause could be deleted and the meaning of the sentence would remain the same.

This speech, which would have softened poor Mrs. Lynde’s heart in a twinkling, had no effect on Mrs. Barry except to irritate her still more.

(*Anne of Green Gables*, Lucy Maud Montgomery)

*That* is used to introduce a clause containing essential information. Because the information in the clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence, no commas are used with it. Without the information in the clause, the following sentences would have a completely different meaning.

Beware all enterprises that require new clothes.  
(Henry Thoreau)

She solved the problem that I had been working on for three hours.

#### *Its* or *it’s*?

The most common pronoun error is using *it’s* for the possessive pronoun *its*. *It’s* is a contraction of *it is*. The error is seen frequently in signs, advertisements, and texts, but *it’s* not uncommon to see *it’s* used incorrectly in newspapers and magazines.

Here is how to make sure to use the correct form. Substitute the phrase *it is* to determine the correct pronoun; if the sentence makes sense, *it’s* is the correct form.

Virtue is (*its/it’s*) own reward.

Virtue is *it is* own reward. (This does not make sense, *its* is correct.)

(*Its/It’s*) a grand night for singing.

*It is* a grand night for singing. (This makes sense, so *it’s* is correct.)

#### *Who* or *that*

The pronoun *who* is used when referring to persons. The pronoun *that* is used when referring to objects or groups.

A politician is a man *who* understands government, and it takes a politician to run a government. A statesman is a politician *who’s* been dead 10 or 15 years. (Harry Truman)

The exact number of trees *that* were cut down is still unknown.

Students are the kind of people *that* like to attend rallies.

#### *Affect* or *effect*

To *affect* is to have influence or impact on something.

For example: “Audience reaction *affects* a speaker’s confidence.”

To *effect* is “to cause something to happen.”

For example: “*Effect* a solution to the problem by making the *effort*.”

*Effect* is also a noun that means “result.”

For example: Proper watering has a good *effect* on your plants.

*Affect*, a noun used in psychology, means “emotion.”



### **Who or whom**

To decide whether to use *who* or *whom* in a sentence, follow these steps:

1. Isolate the *who/whom* clause from the rest of the sentence.
2. Delete the word *who* or *whom*. There will now be a gap in thought, usually at the beginning or end but sometimes in the middle of the phrase. The words may need to be rearranged to make sense.
3. Fill the gap with *he* or *him*. If *he* completes the thought, then *who* is correct. If *him* completes the thought, then *whom* is correct. The fact that *him* and *whom* both end in *m* makes this easy to remember. If you can use *he* or *she* to complete the thought, then *who* is correct. If *him* or *her* completes the thought, then *whom* is correct.

### **Subject-verb agreement and collective nouns**

Is it “all staff is expected...” or “all staff are expected ...”?

Both can be correct usage. However, MCPS style is to use staff as singular.

On the other hand, when you have “Staff is expected to” or “Staff is required to,” (without “all”), this implies a unit... everyone in the unit is expected or required to do the same thing. This would be correct usage.

Ideally, it should be—All members of staff are expected...

Go to [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/services/edit\\_helpdesk.shtml](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/services/edit_helpdesk.shtml) for more information; or email your questions to Donna M. Marks Pleasant on Outlook.



# Design and Printing

Editorial, Graphics & Publishing Services (EGPS) offers graphic communication design, printing and duplicating, and copier services to all MCPS schools and central office. Get more information at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/egps/) and browse our project portfolio.

Our services and products include—

- Diplomas and certificates
- Banners and posters
- Business cards, envelopes, and notepads
- Student daily planners and agenda books
- School handbooks and student publishing
- Administrative forms
- Pocket folders, flyers, and brochures

The EGPS Customer Service Desk responds to inquiries from schools and offices, provides product samples and suggestions, and quotes job costs and schedules. Contact [egps@mcpsmd.org](mailto:egps@mcpsmd.org) or call 240-740-6530 or 240-740-6529.

## The Project Cycle

### Publishing Support Process

EGPS supports our central office colleagues in their efforts to author and publish systemwide graphics and publications.

#### Standard three-stage process:

- 1A: For new publications, the customer submits to EGPS an *outline* of the content to be included in the publication, along with the anticipated *distribution schedule* (who/where/when/how many).
- 1B: EGPS prepares and presents the customer with a *project plan*, which describes the proposed finished product, the timeframe anticipated, and the cost.
- 2A: The customer submits Word file(s), Excel, JPG, and other digital content to be included in the graphic composition. For annually recurring publications, the customer submits a digital file with marked-up copy indicating the required text and graphic changes, via edited PDF, Kami, or another *digital content sharing application*.
- 2B: EGPS submits an Initial Layout via PDF, which includes the proposed composition of the new graphic product or publication.
- 3A: The customer provides feedback and required content changes to the Initial Layout, and EGPS responds with the Comprehensive Layout for final review and approval for publishing.
- 3B: EGPS submits a Final Proof to the customer for final approval. After receiving final approval, EGPS finalizes and images the application files as needed for Translation Team, MCPS Web, and print production.

## Copy-Plus

### an exclusive, free service for MCPS teachers

[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/copyplus/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/copyplus/)

Teachers may submit all documents needed for classroom instruction, homework, and student assessments to be photocopied. There will be no charge-back to your school.

#### How to submit your job to Copy-Plus

1. Gather your documents.
- 2a. **SUBMIT ELECTRONICALLY.**  
Use the Copy-Plus Google order form (go to the Copy-Plus website ([www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/copyplus/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/copyplus/))) to get to the form.
  - Follow instructions.
  - Turnaround time is five school days after you submit the job.
- 2b. **SUBMIT IN THE PONY MAIL.**  
Complete Copy-Plus envelope form and place originals in the envelope.
  - Place in the Pony mail at your school for pickup.
  - Wait for delivery one week from the date submitted.

Our photocopy machines feature everything commonly available on the photocopy machine used in your school, including—

- 1- and 2-sided copies in black ink only
- 8 ½ x 11 page size
- 3-hole drilled, collated, and stapled in sets

Call Mr. Felix P. Ubiera, Copy-Plus supervisor, at 240-740-6525, for more information.

#### How to submit a job for reproduction

Submit documents by email in PDF format. For large-run jobs (more than 30,000 copies), also submit a hard copy of the document (for quality-control purposes). For jobs under 30,000 copies, a customer service representative will take your information and create a job form. Call 240-740-6529 or 240-740-6530.

If the document is not available electronically, submit a hard copy (single-sided) with the pages numbered on the back, in pencil.

#### Documents to be translated

- For documents to be translated, the content in English must be approved for publication first.
- Complete MCPS Form 311-1, *Request for Written Translations*, and forward to EGPS. EGPS will then upload the files to the Translation Management System, and they will be retrieved by the Language Assistance Services Unit, where they will be translated, based on your instructions in Form 311-1.
- Normal turnaround time for translations is 10 working days.
- Translated documents are sent back to EGPS for printing or to be prepared as a PDF and sent to the customer to post on the MCPS website.



## The Nondiscrimination Notice

The nondiscrimination notice is required on all publications prepared by MCPS for distribution to staff, parents/guardians, students, and the community. EGPS inserts this notice on the back of all such publications. Questions concerning this notice may be referred to General Counsel at 240-740-5600.

The notice reads as follows:

### MCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. The Board prohibits the use of language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. For more information, please review Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. This Policy affirms the Board's belief that each and every student matters, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Policy also recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases, practices that have an unjustified disparate impact, and structural and institutional barriers that impede equality of educational or employment opportunities. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.\*\*

- A. It is the policy of the state of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:
- (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
  - (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not
    - (a) discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
    - (b) refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
    - (c) discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.\*\*

<b>For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students***</b> Director of Student Welfare and Compliance Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 800 Hungerford Drive, Room 504, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2215   <a href="mailto:SWC@mcpsmd.org">SWC@mcpsmd.org</a>	<b>For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff***</b> Human Resource Compliance Officer Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gate Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888   <a href="mailto:DLI@mcpsmd.org">DLI@mcpsmd.org</a>
<b>For student requests for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</b> Section 504 Coordinator Office of School Support and Well-being 800 Hungerford Drive, Room 504, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-5630   <a href="mailto:504@mcpsmd.org">504@mcpsmd.org</a>	<b>For staff requests for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act</b> ADA Compliance Coordinator Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gate Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888   <a href="mailto:DLI@mcpsmd.org">DLI@mcpsmd.org</a>
<b>For inquiries or complaints about sex discrimination under Title IX, including sexual harassment, against students or staff***</b> Title IX Coordinator Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 800 Hungerford Drive, Room 504, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215   <a href="mailto:TitleIX@mcpsmd.org">TitleIX@mcpsmd.org</a>	

\*\*This notification complies with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended.  
\*\*\*This notification complies with the Code of Maryland Regulations Section 23A-02.01.  
\*\*\*\*Discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as the following: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Baltimore Field Office, 601 Fallon Federal Building, 31 Hopkins Plaza, Suite 1432, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-668-4200, 1-800-669-4820 (TTY); Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR), William Joseph Scheper Tower, 4 Sontag Park Street, Suite 300, Baltimore, MD 21202, 410-769-8600, 1-800-671-6242, [mccr@maryland.gov](mailto:mccr@maryland.gov); Agency Equity Office, Office of Equity Assurance and Compliance, Office of the Deputy State Superintendent of Operations, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-2900, [oea.mde@maryland.gov](mailto:oea.mde@maryland.gov); or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), The Womanaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov), or [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html).

This document is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the MCPS Office of Communications at 240-740-2817, 1-800-776-2758 (Maryland Relay), or [FO@mcpsmd.org](mailto:FO@mcpsmd.org). Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transcription may contact the MCPS Office of Interpreting Services at 240-740-1800, 301-637-2958 (VP) [mcpsinterpreting@mcpsmd.org](mailto:mcpsinterpreting@mcpsmd.org), or [MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org](mailto:MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org).

Fair use is codified into the *Copyright Act*, in section 107. The law provides for us to consider four factors:

1. The nature of the original work
2. The nature of the new work
3. The amount and nature of the material taken
4. The effect of the new work on the market.

However, the law does not give an instruction on how much weight to give these four factors.

The general consensus is, if a use is transformative (i.e., if the ways the material is used is for a different purpose than the original) and the amount or kind is appropriate to that new use, then chances are it is fair use. "Transformative" means that you change the context of the information.

The creator of the original work does not have control over what will be considered fair use. Your repurposed use of the original material will be supported in a court of law. Just remember that it is always a smart and polite gesture to attribute the work of the one who created it. Creators really care about receiving credit for what they did. Also, giving attribution shows your respect for and understanding of the hard work of others.

*Information taken from interview with Patricia Aufderheide, professor in the School of Communication at American University, posted on CMOS Shop Talk, June 1, 2015.*

Resource: *Copyright Act of 1976, Section 107, Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use.*

## What You Should Know About Copyright and Fair Use Under the Law

When people borrow copyrighted material without permission for casual, nonprofit, or educational use, it is generally not illegal. U.S. copyright law actually permits and even encourages reuse of material that is still under copyright. The law encourages cultural expression by

- a. giving limited monopoly on use, and
- b. permitting people to reuse another person's work to build on it and make something new.

Everyone is familiar with monopoly copyright use. However, new-user rights (fair use) are also part of the law.

Since 1976, copyright in the United States is automatic once an original work has been created. Most work is copyrightable and copyright terms are very long. So, the small policy of "fair use," which is largely ignored, has grown in importance as a way for people to access copyrighted material and use it to create new work.

## The MCPS Pony Service— Mail and Parcel Delivery

MCPS provides a postage-free interschool and interoffice mail service (the Pony) to expedite communications within the school system. Place qualified pieces of mail in your school's Pony mailbag.

### Pony Schedule

- Monday:** No regular service. Delivery of boxed items only
- Tuesday:** Full Pony service
- Wednesday:** No regular service. Delivery of boxed items only
- Thursday:** Full Pony service
- Friday:** Full Pony service

# Mail and Parcel Delivery

The following locations have daily pickup and delivery of Pony mail:

- 45 W. Gude Drive
- Carver Educational Services Center
- Central Records
- Food and Nutrition Services
- Lynnbrook Center
- Rocking Horse Road Center
- Shady Grove Maintenance
- Spring Mill Offices
- Upcounty Regional Services Center

In addition to scheduled deliveries to schools, the Pony delivers mail addressed to the following:

- All MCPS facilities
- Board of Education Office

Include address. No postage necessary.

- County agencies
- County Council Office Building  
(Stella B. Werner Council Office Building)
- County Courthouse
- County Executive Office Building
- County Service Park—Maintenance, Transportation, Food Services
- Court Evaluation Team
- Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Montgomery College—Germantown, Rockville, and Takoma Park (mail is delivered to the Rockville Campus for distribution)
- Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals (MCAAP) and MCAAP/Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators (MCAAP/MCBOA)
- Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education (MCBRE)
- Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Inc. (MCCPTA)
- Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA)
- Educational Systems Federal Credit Union (ESFCU)
- Montgomery County public libraries
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Local 500

## Steps for preparing mail for processing in the mail room

1. Cross out the address showing on the interdepartmental mail envelope.
2. Use the address blocks in sequence.
3. Fill all blocks on one side of the envelope before using the reverse side.
4. Use the full name or position title and address.

5. Include school, office (e.g., department, or division and location of the office, for example, CESC). Note: Use the school name, not the school number.
6. When there is a mailing to all schools, it is sufficient to indicate Principal and name of school on the envelope.
7. Make only one copy of a confidential memorandum and file it in a separate, special place. To mail this type of memorandum, type CONFIDENTIAL in all caps, underlined, in the lower left area of the envelope or use a red stamp. Always seal the white envelope and place it inside a properly addressed Pony envelope.

## Special Mailing Instructions

Type AIRMAIL (with foreign mail only), CERTIFIED, etc., at the left margin of the letter in capitals, a double space below the dateline.

Take advantage of free bulk rate postage for mailings of 200 pieces or more. Delivery is just as prompt as first-class mail.

Get more information on the Pony (the MCPS post office) and services such as bulk mail at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/materials/move-deliver/delivery-schedules/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/materials/move-deliver/delivery-schedules/).

## Appropriate Mail

The Pony service is for MCPS mail only. Personal mail will be returned to your school.

Contact the Department of Materials Management at 301-279-3348 for—

- Pony route lists
- Special envelopes (free) and boxes
- Information about large mailings (bulk mailing)



# Abbreviations

Whenever an abbreviation is needed, spell out the name or term when it first occurs, with the abbreviation immediately following in parentheses. Example: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). If you are working on a long document, such as a report, consider spelling out the acronym again at the beginning of each section.

Too many abbreviations in a document can be distracting to readers, who may have to decipher and keep track of the “alphabet soup.”

The two-letter abbreviations (for example, MD for Maryland) were created by the U.S. Postal Service and should be used only with ZIP Codes in addresses. To search for ZIP Codes to match addresses, go to <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>.

Keep in mind that MCPS does not use state abbreviations in correspondence.

## Is it an abbreviation, an acronym, or an initialism?

Bryan Garner (*Garner’s Modern American Usage*, 2003) gives a comprehensive definition of abbreviations and what to know about using them.

1. There are two types of abbreviated names:
  - a. Acronym—made up of the first letters of a term. It is read and spoken as a single word (not letter by letter). For example, STEM = science, technology, engineering, and math and AWOL = away without leave.
  - b. Initialism—also made up of the first letters of a term, but sounded letter by letter (not as one word). For example, rpm = revolutions per minute and MCPS.
2. Because an acronym is spoken as a single word, periods often are meaningless.
3. Best practice is to spell out the term on first mention, followed by the acronym. Then, you can continue to use the acronym throughout your document. If the acronym is not well known, it is best to spell out the term followed by the acronym at first mention in each chapter.
4. When an indefinite article is needed before an abbreviation, the choice between a and an depends simply on how the first syllable is sounded. A vowel sound takes an (an MCPS teacher); a consonant sound takes a (a UFO).
5. In general, do not use an article before an acronym (i.e., pronounced as a word). For example: *MADD held a special meeting in the community.* *BUT, The NAACP meets once per month.*

Email to Donna M. Marks Pleasant to request a copy of *MCPS Acronyms* or see the current list of MCPS acronyms and initialisms at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/egps/MCPS\\_Acronyms.pdf](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/egps/MCPS_Acronyms.pdf).

## Miscellaneous abbreviations

Use the abbreviations a.m. and p.m. (include periods) in expressions of time. These should be lowercase.

Abbreviate units of measure when they occur frequently. Units of measure are now commonly abbreviated without periods. The abbreviations are the same for the singular and the plural.

yd	yard, yards
ft	foot, feet
mi	mile, miles
oz	ounce, ounces
gal	gallon, gallons
lb	pound, pounds
rpm	revolutions per minute
cpi	characters per inch
mph	miles per hour

*Note:* the abbreviation “in” (for inch or inches) may be written without a period if it is not likely to be confused with the preposition *in*.

In nontechnical writing, spell out units of measure.

- An 8½-by-11-inch book
- a 150-acre estate
- a 20-gallon container

Stumped on an abbreviation? Check this resource <https://www.abbreviations.com/>



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