

Stonegate Elementary School



Sharks...Riding the Waves of Success

14811 Notley Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20905
(301) 989-5668

Office of the Principal

August, 2009

Dear Stonegate Students and Families:

We are very excited about the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year! Throughout the summer, the staff has been working and planning for the upcoming school year. To ensure a great start for each child, we've spent time learning about our students, analyzing student performance data, and meeting with parents. As a result of our discussions, we will focus this year on continuing our acceleration efforts in reading and math, planning and teaching for mastery, and developing cultural competence and differentiation strategies as ways to better meet the needs of our diverse learning community. We will also be working to strengthen our existing writing program as we teach students the skills and processes used in drafting a variety of written pieces. In addition, we have met together to develop schedules, to review and update school policies and procedures, to plan for after-school programming, and to build professional relationships among the staff.

We have experienced a few staff changes this summer. It is with sadness that we say *goodbye* to Jenaya Milfort, 1st grade teacher. Mrs. Milfort leaves to further explore her love for math as a Math Focus Teacher at Roscoe Nix Elementary. She will be greatly missed by students, staff, and community members. We wish her the best as she pursues this next challenge in her career!

We also say *farewell* to our friend and colleague, Garrett Oswald. Mr. Oswald and his wife will be moving back to their hometown in Pennsylvania. As they welcome their newest addition to their family, they will be surrounded by family and friends. His departure is a great loss for all of us. We wish him all the best. Our interview team is working to find a great match for our program and our school.

Finally, we send our best wishes to Janice Miller, Speech and Language Pathologist. Mrs. Miller will be extending her long term leave. She has been a valuable member of our school community, providing service to our students and families for over 9 years. She will be greatly missed by all. Our team is currently interviewing permanent MCPS Speech and Language Pathologists for the vacancy.

We would like to *welcome* the following new staff members to our school:

- As previously shared, Elizabeth Summers will be serving as a .5 Math Teacher in grades 3, 4 and 5. Mrs. Summers comes to us from Farquhar Middle School, where she taught Math 6 and Math 7. Mr. Murphy, Farquhar principal, and his team are saddened to see her leave. Their loss is our gain!
- As noted earlier, Stephanie Terry joins our LFI teaching team as the Primary LFI teacher. She joins us from Sherwood Elementary where she served as a teacher in the School Based Community program. Her prior experience with special needs students makes her a great match for our LFI program. We welcome Ms. Terry to our Stonegate family!
- Christina Cheung is the newest member of our first grade team! She recently graduated from the University of Virginia and taught in a second grade classroom. Ms. Cheung comes with creative ideas, a love of technology, and a commitment to student success. She will be a great asset to the first grade team and to our school!

- June Sawah joins the staff as a part-time building service worker. He will assist during our evening hours and comes to us from North Bethesda Middle School. We welcome him!
- In addition, we have received an additional allocation to our special education program! We are currently looking for strong candidates to fill a half-time position. This new hire will work closely with Mr. Schneider and with our special education paraeducator to provide service support to our identified students.

As these tight budget times continue, we appreciate the funding and support the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has received from the County Council. We recognize that it is imperative to use our resources in the most efficient and effective manner. MCPS staffing allocations are based on projected enrollment. We certainly hope that at the beginning of the school year our actual enrollment matches the projected enrollment. Unfortunately, as a result of this current fiscal situation, it may become necessary for staffing changes to occur in some schools if enrollment comes in below projection and doesn't justify the staffing that was allocated. If there is a need to make an adjustment in staffing based on actual enrollment, I will do my best to minimize the impact of these necessary adjustments. I will keep you informed and alert you of any changes that may occur at our school.

Included with this letter you will find several important documents. A parent information sheet is attached to provide you with a variety of important school information. Please read through it carefully and know that we are here to make a positive difference for every child through the cooperative efforts of home and school. Keep this informational sheet for reference throughout the 2009-2010 school year, and don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or me for more information. This information sheet does note one new change. *All students will line up inside the building during morning arrival. K-2 and LFI students will report to the All Purpose Room, as in past years. Students in grades 3-5 will line up in designated hallways outside of the third and fourth grade clusters and the media center.* A current recommended supply list and calendar are also included. You will also find the updated bus list for arrival and dismissal. Finally, information on the computerized school lunch account system, SNAP, and the county's medication policy are attached as well.

Continued and consistent communication will occur through the Principal's Newsletters which are printed on yellow paper, produced every other week, and sent home typically on Fridays. If you do not receive a newsletter on a regular basis, please remind your child to bring one home. Extra copies are available in the school office. I also encourage you to become a member in our PTA. Your attendance at PTA meetings is an important part of learning about our school. PTA newsletters also come home once a month and detail important information regarding programming and events.

Parents and students are invited to attend our **Open House on Friday, August 28. Grades K-5** will visit from 2:00-3:00 pm. This will be an advance opportunity for your child to meet his/her teacher, other Stonegate staff members and students, and tour our facility. Our Open House is designed to reduce beginning of the year anxiety and to help your child prepare emotionally for the start of school and enjoy the excitement of a new start! *Our Open House is not like Back-To-School Night.* Teachers are still busy preparing and planning for the opening of school. It is not a time to conduct a conference with teachers. Instead, enjoy a walk through the school, a brief visit to your child's classrooms and casual conversation with staff about the coming year. Class lists will be posted on the front windows of the school on Thursday, August 27, at 4:00. I am happy that many of the children will want to see their teachers that day, but as there is little time for teachers to prepare classrooms, I am asking that there be no visitors in the building until the scheduled Open House on Friday.

Our Back-to-School Nights will be held in September. Back-to-School Night for parents of students in **kindergarten, first and second grade, and both LFI classes, is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2009.** Back-to-School Night for parents of students in **third, fourth, and fifth grade is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2009.** Parents will have an opportunity to visit both the homeroom classrooms and the specialists. On both evenings, parents are encouraged to attend the general session from approximately 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the All-Purpose Room. During this time, staff members will be introduced and a variety of school-based initiatives and data will be shared. After the general session meeting, parents will be invited to visit classrooms.

The first day of school for students is **Monday, August 31, from 8:50-3:05.** The bell rings at 8:45, the time at which all students should be present. On the first day of school, students will proceed to their morning line-up locations. Our staff will be on duty to help children locate their line-up positions and answer questions. We want to ensure that students, parents, guardians, grandparents and all well-wishers get off to a terrific start. Parents of incoming Kindergarten students are invited to walk students to their classrooms and then to join us at the 'Kinder Café' in the Staff Lounge for doughnuts and juice from 8:45-9:15. This time will allow you to meet and greet other kindergarten families and to share this special day with others.

On behalf of the Stonegate Elementary School staff, I want to welcome you and your child to a brand new school year. Please know that we are committed to the education and success of each child and to establishing a strong partnership between home and school.

Respectfully,

Audra M. Fladung
Principal

Attachments