



The Stonegate SplashRiding the Waves of Success

THE PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER FOR STONEGATE FAMILIES

STONEGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
14811 NOTLEY ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20905
301.989.5668



A Message from Ms. Fladung



Winter weather is here! Information about the weather is gathered from many sources, including The National Weather Service, Accu-Weather, the news media and by actual inspection of roads, school driveways, and sidewalks throughout the county. Information from these various sources is factored into the decision making for school closures. Weather, unlike a power outage or water main break, is not confined to a single area and can spread to different parts of the county. Therefore, the most severe weather conditions within the county are used as the basis for the decision-making criteria. A uniform procedure to close all schools is maintained so that the school system can respond quickly to emergency weather conditions and protect the safety and well being of students and staff.

School closing announcements are made on:

The MCPS Web site: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org>

The weather line, **301-279-3673**

Cable channel 34

Students and parents can also access information on local TV and radio stations. For early morning decisions, road inspection begins at 3 a.m. so that a decision can be forwarded to media in time for the 5 a.m. broadcasts. The decision will also be available online by 5 a.m. In case of an early dismissal, all announcements will be made by 11 a.m.

Please be sure, too, that students are properly dressed for the winter weather. Students will go outside for outdoor recess on days where the temperature is 32 degrees or above!

Friday, December 4, 2009

Audra Fladung, Principal
Keena Howell, Assistant Principal

Lucille Ellis, Acting AP

Special Points of Interest:

- **LFI Snack Sale continues through the month of December on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Support our LFI program!**
- **The After School Academy ends on Thursday, December 17th.**
- **Winter Break begins for students on Thursday, December 24th. Students return to school on Monday, January 4th, 2010.**





Tardiness and Absences



Regular attendance at school is necessary for a student to achieve his/her potential. This

starts by arriving at school on time every day. Stonegate’s first morning bell rings at 8:45 AM. **Students arriving after 8:50 AM are considered tardy.** Students that arrive late to school miss out

on the important time needed to get themselves organized and mentally prepared for the school day. In addition, many students with consistent tardiness face difficulties in being successful academically, as they often miss instruction in the same subject area.

Furthermore, regular , on-time attendance is required by state law. State of Maryland Article 7-

301 imposes a duty on any person who has legal custody or care of a child to see that the child regularly attends school. Violation of this law is a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not to exceed \$50 per day of unlawful absence or imprisonment not to exceed 10 days, or both. Please help our children to learn as much as possible by ensuring their regular, on-time attendance!

Interim Reports

Interim reports are required for students who are in danger of failing, or are dropping two letter grades in a particular subject area. Interim reports are NOT automatically sent home for a “C” grade, as it is considered passing and reflects average performance. Interim reports will be sent home with students meeting this criteria beginning Friday, December 11th. These reports are used to inform parents of their children’s progress so far this second marking period, and to allow for improvement interventions to be put into place, both at school and at home. Please review them with your children carefully. Should you have any questions regarding the provided feedback, please contact your child’s teacher.

Principal’s Coffee Update

Our Fall Principal’s Coffee was held on Friday, November 20th from 8:30-9:30 am in the Media Center. I’d like to thank the parents who came to discuss important issues, to provide feedback, and to problem solve. Together, we discussed various topics, including: honor roll, the card management system, confer-

ences, bullying, parking, text-book use, and safety. More detailed information has been posted on the Stonegate website. Another coffee is scheduled for the Spring. At that time, families will once again be invited to submit agenda items for discussion.





Cultural Competency Training Continues

Staff members at Stonegate continue to work closely with advisors from the Montgomery County Public Schools Equity and Diversity Training team. Our work together is aimed at increasing our capacity to address the needs and strengths of a variety of learners. Meeting each month, staff members have the opportunity to explore research and best practices as we focus on

the following questions:

1. How do awareness, knowledge, and understanding of one's own racial and cultural identity promote effective teaching and learning?
2. How do awareness, knowledge, and understanding the racial and cultural identity of students promote effective teaching and learning?

3. How can educators establish learning environments that are conscious of race and culture to ensure implementation of culturally responsive instruction?

We look forward to continuing this important work throughout the school year.

Discipline Data and Positive Behavioral Interventions

In the 2007-2008 school year, we began collecting baseline data on the number of students referred to the main office for behavior infractions. In analyzing the referrals received, our school team sought to reduce the number of student referrals by at least 33% the following school year. In order to support those efforts, we implemented the Silver Spork cafeteria rewards program, the Peace Day program, and our Core Value character education program. We

also revived our Shark Tank incentive and included a consistent classroom management system in grades 3-5 that mirrored the existing system in K-2. As a result, we very successfully reduced the number of students office referrals by 31% during the 2008-2009 school year! We continue those efforts this year as we strive to reduce the number of referrals by an additional 25%. Our first quarter data shows that we are on the right track. Last year we had 42

office referrals by the end of the first quarter. This year, we received 27 office referrals during the first quarter, thus reducing our first quarter office referrals by 36%!! We are so proud of our students as they demonstrate respect, responsibility, collaboration and commitment. Likewise, we are proud of our staff for modeling high expectations and maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment!

The Importance of Reflection and Goal Setting

As we grow and learn, we are bound to make mistakes. Research supports reflecting as a positive way to think critically about those mistakes and to problem solve in order to avoid such mistakes in the future. Our children have the opportunity to reflect on their academic successes as well as their areas of weakness. In

addition, they are regularly encouraged to reflect on their behavioral choices throughout the day. By reflecting, students look at the problem or mistake from a range of different perspectives. They explore different possibilities for avoiding such errors in the future, and they commit to improve and to do better the next time. By do-

ing so, they soon learn how to withstand the bumps and knocks of life. They learn to fail and to pick themselves up again. They learn how to make mistakes and to move on...to persevere. Through reflection and goal setting, we can help our children mature into resilient, self-reliant citizens and adults.





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SCHOOL HOURS: 8:50 A.M - 3:05 P.M

Core Values

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Collaboration
- Commitment

Mission Statement

Stonegate's mission as a caring community is to foster the growth of life-long learners by communicating high expectations and standards through respect, flexibility, and collaboration.

Vision Statement

The Stonegate Community will be committed to a multicultural learning environment that motivates and supports all learners to achieve their greatest potential. We will collaborate respectfully to develop a standard of excellence that promotes high expectations for all learners.

Wishing a Speedy Recovery

Mrs. Thebaud, 4th grade teacher, is currently out on emergency medical leave. We are anticipating her return during the week of December 7. Until then, students are in the capable hands of Mrs. McNab, who is working closely with the fourth grade team and Ms. Elaraj, our SDT.

PTA Curricular Workshop: Reading Programs at Stonegate

We held our third PTA Curricular Workshop on Tuesday, December 1st. The purpose of this new, joint effort between the PTA and our school is to share information regarding programs and policies in place at Stonegate and within our system. Most recently, information on the reading programs and practices were shared. We reviewed the balanced literacy program as well as Junior Great Books, William and Mary, Jacob's Ladder, and the Highly Gifted Center reading cur-

riculum. In addition, sample texts were available for parents to review. Specific information regarding the presentation has been posted on our school website and notes are located in the front hallway rounders. The next PTA Curricular Workshop, scheduled for Tuesday, January 5th, will focus on math programming at Stonegate and the pathways to success.





How to Effectively Communicate with Teachers

At the beginning of each school year, parents, students, teachers, and administrators share a common goal: to have a successful learning experience. Somewhere between that first day, a poor grade, and/or an undesirable behavior report, progress takes a U-turn. Effective communication is key to understanding the issues and getting things back on track.

When communicating with your child's teacher:

- **Seek to understand.** Most communication problems come about as a result of feeling misunderstood. The best way to effectively communicate is to seek first for understanding rather than to be understood. There are two sides to every story. Parents are naturally sensitive about what happens to their children, and it is easy to assume that someone else is at fault. Prepare yourself to hear the entire story before drawing a conclusion. When we are able to understand why someone thinks the way they do, then we are much more likely to solve a problem. This requires much more listening than talking.
- **Speak with dignity and respect.** Your tone should never be accusatory. It should convey that you are concerned about your child's school experience and that you want to work with teachers and administrators to achieve a positive outcome. Facts, not feelings, are most important. Resolving conflict in this manner serves as a great model for your child.
- **Develop a strategy for the future.** Discuss how similar situations should be handled going forward. Open a line of communication so that you and the teacher can have regular dialogue and possible issues can be defused or eliminated. This approach ensures that all parties are on the same page.
- **Be proactive.** If your child needs to be out of school for any foreseeable reason, let the teacher know in advance.
- **Share information.** Knowledge is powerful. Spend time getting to know your child's teacher and share information with them about your child. Determine what expectations the teacher has and express how your child best learns. This approach may seem a bit formal initially but keep in mind that your child and this teacher will spend a great deal of time together for the year. By developing a positive and effective rapport with teachers, your child can have a successful learning experience.
- **Define roles and expectations.** When people don't define well what it is they expect of each other, it becomes too easy to play the blame game. Actually, students need both teachers and parents playing their separate roles in the teaching process. Meet with your child's teacher and find out how you can tutor and encourage. It is not the job of a parent to run the classroom, any more than it is the teacher's job to run the child's household. If the child feels unsafe at school, tell the teacher. If the child expresses that he feels unsafe at home, the teacher will tell you. Your child has a right to a safe, friendly and responsible environment at both home and school.

Together, we can ensure great things for and from all of our children!