



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

We are looking forward to our upcoming Halloween and Harvest Day celebrations. Both will be held on October 30th, beginning at 1:45. Students participating in Halloween festivities will be provided an opportunity to change prior to the school-wide parade. The Harvest Festival is being offered as an alternative event for children who do not celebrate Halloween due to religious or cultural beliefs. At this time, however, we do not have a chairperson to sponsor this event. If we are unable to secure a parent volunteer, students will be invited to enjoy a movie and a snack. We are looking forward to two great events!

On another note, parents are reminded that students should be dropped off and picked up outside of the main entrance of the school building. We respectfully request that parents do NOT walk students to class and that they do not congregate in the All Purpose Room before and/or after school. As we attempt to foster independence in our students and establish consistent routines, our staff seeks to begin instruction on time, while maintaining established morning and afternoon practices.

Please note that students arriving after 8:50 are considered tardy and will require a late slip to enter class. Please plan to accompany late students into the office in order to receive a tardy slip and to provide the reason for tardiness. Students are dismissed following afternoon announcements, at approximately 3:05.

Friday, October 15, 2009

Audra Fladung, Principal
Keena Howell, Assistant Principal

Lucille Ellis, Acting AP

Special Points of Interest:

- **There is NO SCHOOL for students on Friday, October 16th.**
- **Our After-School Program begins on October 20th for registered participants.**
- **Mark your calendars...Math Night will be held on Thursday, October 22 from 6:00-7:30.**
- **The School Improvement Team will meet on Monday, October 26th at 3:15.**
- **Students will participate in the Halloween parade and party (or Harvest Festival) on Friday, October 30 at 1:45.**





Highly Gifted Center: Grade 3 Students

Applications for the Elementary Centers for the Highly Gifted (HGC) were recently mailed directly to all parents of Grade 3 students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). This is a reminder that if you are interested in having your child considered for the HGC, you must complete the application and return it by November 9, 2009, to: HGC Application, Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services, 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902.

If for some reason you did not receive an application in the mail, and are inter-

ested in the program, contact the school or access it from the website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/. The packet also is available in Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

There will be two parent information meetings about the HGC on the following dates beginning at 7:00 p.m. The same information will be presented at each meeting. Feel free to go to the one most convenient for you.

10/12/2009

Parent Information Meeting at John F.

Kennedy High School, 1901 Randolph Rd., Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

10/27/2009

Parent Information Meeting at Quince Orchard High School, 15800 Quince Orchard Rd., Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878.

Students who submitted their applications by the deadline will be tested in their current school during January 2010. Notification of the testing date and time for Stonegate will be mailed to the homes of those applying.

Continuing Our Conversation About Race and Culture

Team leaders and staff members will continue their exploration of equity in education and the impact of race and culture on academic achievement. As we dialogue about issues of race in American schools, we will continue our use of Glenn Singleton's work, author of *Courageous Conversations About Race*, and Beverly Daniel Tatum's work, author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* Both texts are designed to help educators construct language and processes for opening the conversation about race and culture. As we read and discuss, we hope to gain a better understanding of our own culture to better promote culturally competent teaching and learning. We will also address how understanding the cultures of our students will promote more effective teaching and learning. Our goal is to establish more culturally sensitive learning environments and to modify instruction to be culturally responsive. This year, we will specifically focus on the culture of our Latino students and their families.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled for Wednesday, November 11, and Thursday, November 12. Parent conferences will provide an opportunity for you to learn more about your child's successes and areas of need, both academically and behaviorally. Therefore, it is important that you attend. If you have not scheduled an appointment, please contact your child's teacher in order

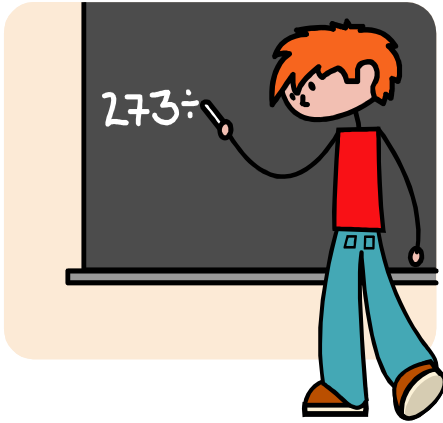
to find a mutually convenient time to meet. Conferences are scheduled for approximately 15-20 minutes; therefore, please plan to arrive on time and to be considerate of the parent following your appointment time. As the conference date draws near, remember the meeting is an opportunity for you and the teacher to **collaborate**. Remember that you're the expert about your child,

while the teacher is the expert on teaching and supporting children at his/her grade level. You'll both come to the table with ideas and opinions. Remember, too, that collaboration sometimes requires compromise; striking a balance of ideas is often in the best interest of your child.





Don't Miss Math Night!



We will host our school-sponsored **Math Night on Thursday, October 23rd from 6:00-7:30pm**. Our Math Committee has been planning for a night of exciting math games and hands-on activities! In addition, children will have the opportunity to participate in online games in the Computer Lab. Parents will leave with valuable resources to support and enhance student

math skills and concepts. Light snacks will be provided. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there!!

Information Sources for Weather Related Emergencies

Information about school operations is announced publicly as soon as possible on local radio and television stations and other media including the Internet. If schools are closed or delayed, the announcement is made no later than 6:00 a.m. (or the night before if possible). If schools are closing early, the announcements are made by 11:00 a.m. You can also find information through the follow-

ing sources:

- The MCPS home page immediately displays emergency announcements (in bold red letters at the top of the page) when appropriate.
- Call **301-279-3673** for recorded information.

- Cable Channel 34 is available to all county residents with cable television access through converter box mechanisms or cable-ready television sets.
- Sign up for MCPS e-mail news service, QuickNotes. To subscribe, enter your name and e-mail address under "Get MCPS QuickNotes."

Operation Warm Up

We are working in conjunction with Brownie Troop 2691 and Linkages to Learning to warm the hearts of deserving kids by donating new and gently used children's coats. Linkages to Learning provides school-based mental health, health, and social services for children and families in 27 elementary and middle

schools.

Just drop off CLEAN coats in our collection box in the main entrance of the school from now until November 25th. Children's and teens sizes needed!

Questions? Want to help? Call Haifa Krakaur at 301.924.0149 or email her at

Haifa.Peter@montgomerycountymd.gov





STONEGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

14811 NOTLEY ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20905
301.989.5668

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.

Baked Goods

We are looking forward to the upcoming Halloween and Festival parties. Please remember homemade baked goods are NOT allowed at these festivities, or at similar celebrations. To support the many students who suffer from allergies, all baked goods MUST be store bought and arrive in sealed containers with ingredients listed. We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to this MCPS policy.

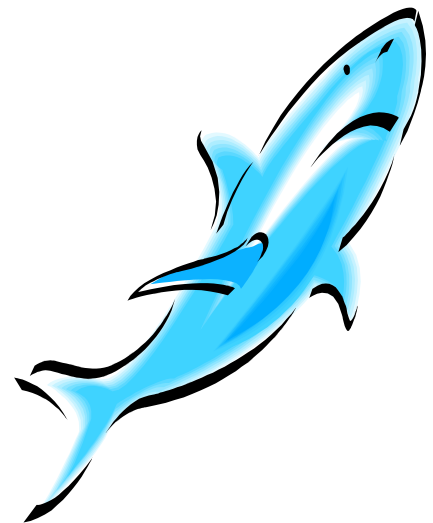
What a Busy Week!

Many thanks to all who joined us for Breakfast with Dads on Monday and Tuesday of this week. It was great to see so many dads, grandfathers, uncles, cousins, and family friends in attendance. Our children were excited and proud to have you there!

We also appreciated seeing so many of you at our annual Open House. We hope you enjoyed the opportunity to see your children

in action as they participated in a variety of learning activities.

We can't forget International Night and the Book Fair! Families enjoyed exploring the many cultures of our school that make us so special! And, as always, the Book Fair was a huge success! Thank you for supporting positive reading habits and a love for learning.





PTA Curricular Workshop: Homework and Data Notebooks

We had a wonderful turn-out at our first PTA Curricular Workshop, hosted on Tuesday, October 6th! 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. While we are not entertaining questions during the information session due to time and format, questions will be collected at the end for follow up responses. Information on our homework policy and school-wide data notebooks was shared at the most recent meeting. The following questions were posed at the end of the session. A few additional questions will be answered in the October 30th issue of the Splash.

- **I have never heard of the basic math facts practice mentioned before or seen it written in the planner. What are they suppose to do and why hasn't that been discussed?**

Stonegate's Homework Policy was updated for the 2009-2010 school year. It was sent home at the beginning of the school year for review and is available online. The policy added basic math fact practice as a part of the normal homework routine. Previously, teachers encouraged such practice and hoped that it was occurring on a regular basis. However, it was not consistently being practiced and students struggled to master facts with automaticity. Such practice can include the use of flash cards, random calling of facts in the car or at the dinner table, website programs, or independently-created practice sheets. Check out the following websites for additional ideas:

<http://www.mathfactcafe.com/#>

<http://www.math-drills.com/#>

<http://www.lizardpoint.com/math/mathsheet.html>

<http://www.kidzone.ws/Math/index.htm>

- **When a student is absent for 3-5 days for illness, may a parent or sibling get the assignments the day it is assigned?**

Yes. However, please note that the instruction that accompanies such homework would have been missed by the student. Therefore, the assignments sent home may be more "maintenance-type" materials, rather than newly taught concepts or skills.

- **Homework that counts for a grade, does this include projects, monthly reading responses, etc.?**

It could include projects and monthly reading responses. The policy states "when stated in advance, homework can be used to assess students' learning after they have had ample practice and feedback on identified skills or concepts. In these cases, homework may be used in determining both learning skills and academic grades." Projects could certainly qualify as they usually are an extension or enrichment to in-class learning. They are also often accompanied by a rubric or scoring checklist. Therefore, students are informed in advance and are provided with grading criteria.

- **What can be done when my child's teacher says that math homework is having the skill taught that day to the parent? I would like to have an actual assignment that allows my child to practice the skill.**

Some homework assignments are given to preview upcoming skills, some to practice skill development, and some to apply learning. Not every homework assignment will be in the form of a worksheet. By teaching a concept or skill to another, children have the opportunity to apply their learning, review procedures, use math language, and create problems of their own. Should you desire additional activities, contact your child's teacher requesting extra practice. He/she can provide worksheets and/or direct you to various websites to support your child's learning needs.



PTA Curricular Workshop: Homework and Data Notebooks (con't)

- **Is there a way to handle kids not doing their homework other than having them flip their cards?**

The card system is a tool to reinforce Stonegate's four core values: respect, responsibility, collaboration, and commitment. When a child flips his/her card for not turning in homework, it is a responsibility reminder. Some teams send home a "missing assignment sheet", which is another way to remind students and inform parents. If there is a particular reason why homework could not be completed, we encourage parents to write a note to the teacher.

- **Is it recommended to check your child's homework for correct spelling and grammar?**

It is certainly appropriate to have those conversations and to identify areas for improvement. However, if it is a spelling or grammar assignment, it may give the teacher more information to see the errors. The information can be used for re-teaching and for instructional programming.

- **Does the Data Notebook follow your child through the different grades?**

You may see similar documents in Data Notebooks from year to year. However, students receive new inserts to put into their Data Notebook as they go from grade to grade.

- **How often are the Data Notebooks updated?**

Data Notebooks are updated at different times depending on the grade level. You should see new data inputted each month that you receive the Data Notebook.

- **Does the Data Notebook affect placement in reading and math?**

*The Data Notebook does not directly affect the placement of students in reading and math. Rather, it is a resource tool filled with information about various reading and math data points, among other things. While it is a reflection of how your child is performing in class, it is **not** a comprehensive collection of their performance as a whole. It is a **sampling** of data.*

- **As a parent of a kindergartner, this is new to me. How do I best organize what I need to work on for the Data Notebook? It feels a bit overwhelming, or is it just me?**

Your kindergarten teacher is your best resource to help you understand the Data Notebook. Take special note of the goal sheets that are included and make a note of the goals that you decide to work on for the month. In addition, take note of the Letter ID section and of the math goals; this will give you a snapshot of how your child is performing.

- **If I have written a question in my child's Data Notebook, how soon can I expect to get a response?**

This depends on the individual teacher. You may get a quicker response if you use a post-it note to tag the page on which a response is needed or somehow identify on the front of the binder that a response is needed. Our teachers make every effort to respond to all communication from the parents.

- **Do students complete T1s or T2s before they are taught a concept, or after they are taught a concept?**

T1s and T2s are sometimes included as evidence of mastery in the Data Notebooks. The 'T' stands for 'Try.' They are given once a concept has been taught; the T1 is given as a formative assessment to help the teacher determine if a student needs more teaching. The T2 is usually given as a summary assessment to see if mastery was attained.



PTA Curricular Workshop: Homework and Data Notebooks (con't)

- **There is no method or recording mechanism for parents to retain goals at home. Out of sight, out of mind.**

We encourage you to jot down the goal(s) that you and your child decide to work upon for the upcoming month. That way, you can touch base with your child as the month progresses.

- **What happens if the parents ignore the Data Notebooks?**

It is our hope that parents do not ignore the Data Notebook as it is a valuable resource filled with grade level information and data specific to your child. Our teachers use this resource as a communication tool between home and school. The more you know about how your child is performing, the better informed you will be.

- **Are Data Notebooks mandated for every elementary school throughout Montgomery County and, if not, is Stonegate open to discussion on their value to parents? What is the process to open this discussion?**

*Data Notebooks are required at Stonegate Elementary School. Most schools in Montgomery County Public Schools use Data Notebooks as a communication tool and resource between the home and the school. Keeping a Data Notebook is a component and recommendation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, a framework that was implemented in MCPS within the past 10 years for understanding and improving school performance. More information about the Baldrige System for parents can be found at:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/baldrige/parents/yourchild.shtm>*

- **In your presentation, you talked about the Data Notebook components. But, it still doesn't help us interpret those components. How can we decipher the information provided in language we can understand?**

*If anything is unclear in the Data Notebook, we hope that you will contact the classroom teacher for further clarification. We also encourage you to see if your child can explain something in the Data Notebook. Our Staff Development Teacher, Anita Elaraj, is also available to answer any questions or give further clarification:
Anita_M_Elaraj@mcpsmd.org*

- **There is rarely a due date telling us when the Data Notebooks are expected back at school. Is one week a typical amount of time we can assume so we can at least have the weekend to review?**

This varies according to the teacher and/or grade level, so please contact your child's teacher. We do need the Data Notebooks back as soon as possible so that new data can be inputted in a timely manner.

- **Is there a measure that you use over the years to show how Data Notebooks have increased achievement or other life skills for students?**

While there is no specific data kept revolving around Data Notebooks, as the years go by, students have become more comfortable with using the Baldrige Quality Tools for improvement and with using the goal setting process. Since these processes are implemented across curricular and content areas and in art, music, and PE, students are hearing a consistent message and internalizing these processes. We have contacted the coordinator of the Baldrige Academy in MCPS with this question and will post a response as we get it.

- **How do Data Notebooks differ from a Student Portfolio?**

A Student Portfolio typically contains writing rough drafts and final drafts of work. They are similar in that both the Data Notebook and the Student Portfolio contain on-going information about your child's progress. Not all teachers keep Student Portfolios, but all teachers do keep Data Notebooks for each student.