



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

Our Back to School Nights were a success! We thank the many parents and families that joined us on September 9th and 10th. Teachers worked hard to create meaningful presentations on grade level topics and routines. We would also like to thank the PTA for providing valuable information and support to our families. If you were unable to attend Back to School Night, please contact your child's teacher for relevant grade level information and to schedule a Fall conference. Teacher-parent conferences will be held on November 11 and November 12. It is important to schedule a time to share and learn more about your child's academic and social progress.

In addition, don't forget that Stonegate's annual open house for parents will be held this year on Columbus Day. On Monday, October 12th parents are encouraged to visit their children's classes anytime between 9:00 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. This is a wonderful opportunity to see your child engaged in learning and interacting with other students and teachers and to observe classroom routines and procedures. Teachers and students will work hard to make this day as "normal" as possible. We ask that younger siblings not attend in order to limit distractions to the teaching and learning taking place and to make the day special for the child(ren) you are visiting.

Peace Day Goal: REACHED!

Our students are off to a GREAT start! We have reached our first Peace Day goal of 10 peace days! Students have demonstrated their core values, modeled expectations, and treated one another respectfully. As a result, we celebrated with a spirit day. Students wore their pajamas to school and enjoyed a 10 minute "peace break" to talk and catch up with friends. We are now working toward reaching 25 days of peace. Once attained, students will earn FREE SEATING at lunch AND a special, yummy treat!

Friday, September 18, 2009

Audra Fladung, Principal

Keena Howell,
Assistant Principal

Special points of interest:

- *Our Volunteer Orientation will be held on September 22 at 9:15 in the Media Center. Come to learn about volunteer duties at school, equipment, and confidentiality policies.*
- *Join us on September 24th from 5:30-7:30 for the PTA sponsored Back to School Picnic.*
- *Monday, September 28th is Yom Kippur. There is NOSCHOOL for staff and students.*



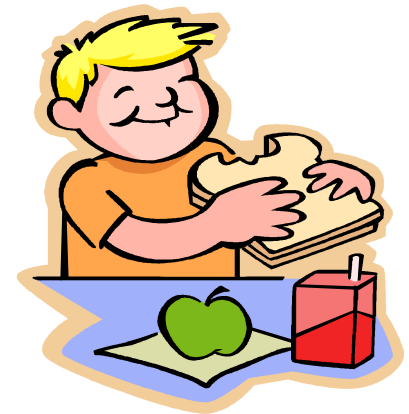


myLunchMoney.com

myLunchMoney is a service to make prepayments to your child’s cafeteria account using your credit card. The service is easy to use, convenient, private, and secure. Simply go to www.myLunchMoney.com to enroll and start using the site to deposit funds into your child’s cafeteria account. Once your account is established, you can check balances and fund the account anytime from your com-

puter. Your child’s information is safe and your personal and payment card information is protected by the most advanced Internet security. There is a \$1.95 convenience fee per transaction. Using myLunchMoney.com is optional for families interested in this service. You can still send checks or cash to school, but online payments save time and are convenient. For more information about how

to use this exciting new service, visit www.myLunchMoney.com.



Homework for the Parents: Have you completed yours????

Over the last 3 weeks, you were sent VERY important information and “homework” for parents. Please be sure you have read, completed and returned these important forms to help ensure the safety and well-being of your child(ren). You should have received the following:

Yellow Emergency Information Sheets and Yellow Parent Reunification Forms

It is very important that these forms are filled out thoroughly. Please check the names, addresses, and phone numbers very carefully for accuracy and update the information as needed. In addition, emergency contact names and numbers are required. These information sheets will be used regularly by the main office staff, teachers, and the health room technician. They

should be returned **IMMEDIATELY and updated of any changes throughout the year.**

Application for Free/Reduced Lunch

Complete and return immediately. See the eligibility chart on the back page and if your family does not qualify, please discard the form. There is one form per family and will be sent home via backpack with the youngest or only in family. Students who received free/reduced meals last year are eligible to continue in the program until the end of September. However, **new applications must be filled out yearly to continue eligibility.**

Request to Withhold Directory Information

The MCPS Request to Withhold Directory Information was due to

the school office on September 11.

Stonegate Homework Policy

This document should be reviewed carefully with your child. If you have questions about homework, please discuss them with your child’s teacher. Grade level homework expectations were also discussed at Back to School Night.

Stonegate Discipline Policy

Review with your child VERY carefully. Please discuss the expectations and consequences as defined in the policy. Signed copies were due on September 11.





Mentoring Program Making a Change

Parent and community volunteers have provided support for students through Stonegate’s mentoring program. In conjunction with our School Improvement Plan, we are seeking to change this program to better support the emotional and social needs of our students. If you have even an hour a week, you can make a big difference in a child’s life. If your work offers a work release program to support our program, we could use you! In analyz-

ing our data from last year, we determined that students truly benefited, academically and socially, from meeting consistently with mentors.

This year, mentors will meet with students in an informal setting to support positive esteem, to build relationships, to encourage positive peer interactions, and to encourage academic effort and growth. Mentors will eat lunch with students,

visit students on the playground, organize before school opportunities to get the day started on a good note, attend special events, and assist with academic questions.

If interested, please call our School Counselor, Jaelyn Berning, at 301.989.5668.



NAACP Parents’ Council Group

The NAACP Parents’ Council is comprised of elected officers, cluster and school representatives. The Council is a part of the Montgomery County NAACP Education Committee and therefore accountable to the Committee of the MC-NAACP. The Parent Council meets monthly throughout the school year to discuss issues that impact the educa-

tional success of our children and to plan and implement interventions to address the issues. Parent Council members are also provided training to assist them in becoming strong advocates and effectively carry out the goals and objectives of the Council. As an organization, the Council plans to continue their efforts, but is most excited about helping parents

become more involved in their child’s school experience. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Council or would like to become more involved, please feel free to contact Mr. Clarence Snuggs, our Parent Council Representative. He can be reached at: jfs719@msn.com.

Going for the Gold! Medal System in Grades 3-5

As we continue to encourage positive behavior and positive rewards, students in grades 3-5 begin each day “on gold”. They are asked to “flip a card” only when classroom or school expectations are not followed. Once flipped to silver, students lose 10 minutes of recess and must reflect on their behavior using a reflection form. If a student is required to flip to bronze, they lose their entire recess and once again

must reflect. When students are required to flip a card, parents are notified and informed of the behavior through the completed reflection sheet. We encourage you to reflect on the behavior and the school based consequence with your child. In the event that a student loses all of his or her medals, and are required to flip to a white card, they are sent to the office. An office referral will generate an im-

mediate parent contact and an additional consequence. Students who have flipped from gold to silver 3 times or less in a month, will be honored with the wearing of a gold medal and a small celebration. We are so proud of our students and their collaborative focus on learning and getting along!





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.

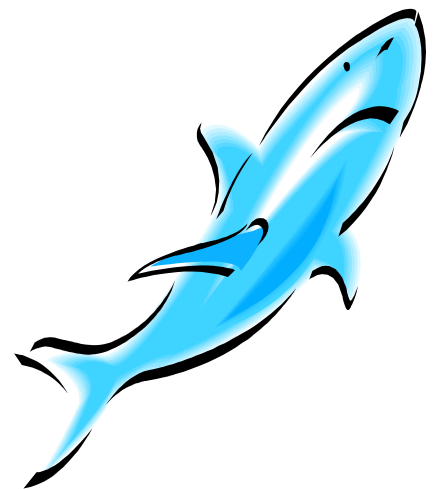
Teach Respect for Others

Here's an easy way to teach your child to respect others: expose him/her to different cultures. The more s/he knows about other peoples' lives and habits, the more open-minded s/he'll be. Here's how to start: select foods from different countries to nibble together, attend community events that celebrate other cultures, spin a globe to identify and discuss faraway places, and visit the library to explore stories from around the world.

Procedures for Classroom Visitation

We welcome parents into our building and our classrooms! Visits to classrooms should be arranged through the principal's office with at least 24 hours notice given. When visiting, it is important to respect the learning environment and the confidentiality of student performance within the classroom. Classroom visits are not a time to conference with the teacher. If a parent-teacher conference is desired,

please contact the teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time. We appreciate your cooperation and support.





Reading Models and Programs at Stonegate

A balanced literacy block includes a whole class focus lesson as well as guided reading instruction and meaningful follow up work. Guided reading is small group instruction in which the teacher supports each reader's development of effective strategies for processing texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. The teacher works with a small group of children who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group, works briefly with individuals in the group as they read it, may select one or two teaching points to present to the group following the reading, and then ask the children to take part in an extension or follow up to the reading. The ultimate goal of guided reading is to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully. It is provided to all students in grades K-5.

The goal of the Junior Great Books program is to provide all children the opportunity to interact with thought-provoking stories as they develop their reading, writing, oral communication, and critical thinking skills. The JGB curriculum develops students' reading comprehension in the context of thinking about genuine problems of meaning. Through the curriculum, students practice many reading and thinking skills; recalling and organizing details from the story, drawing inferences, analyzing characters' motives and finding the main idea of a passage or the text as a whole. The teacher's role is that of the shared inquiry leader, facilitating active questioning as students work together to discover the meaning in a story. All students in grades K-5 work with Junior Great Books each quarter.

Jacobs Ladder is a learning journey for students that begins with targeted short readings and moves through an inquiry process from basic understanding to critical analyses of the texts read. There are three levels available that are targeted to students in 3rd grade, 4th grade, and 5th grade. Each unit of Jacobs Ladder is focused on five goals:

- To develop prediction and forecasting skills, judging probable outcomes based on data provided
- To develop deductive reasoning skills, moving from the concrete elements in a story to abstract ideas
- To develop literary analysis skills, based on understanding literary elements
- To develop synthesis skills, moving from restating to creative synthesis
- To promote learning through interaction and discussion of reading material in the classroom

The units are designed to enhance reading comprehension and abstract thinking. Tasks are organized by skill ladders, each containing questions and activities for students to complete independently. In addition, ladder rungs are organized to increase complexity in intellectual demand promoting critical and creative thinking. Jacob's Ladder is currently being used in 3rd grade.

The William and Mary Language Arts Program was developed to challenge students with complex literary texts. Through the program's specific teaching models, students strengthen competence in reading, writing and critical thinking. Students are challenged to think through complex concepts, issues and themes. Implementation is in Grades 2 through 5 for students with the potential or motivation to accept more challenging instruction. Teachers integrate William and Mary instruction with lessons from the MCPS instructional guides. Writing instruction follows the MCPS and 6 traits guidelines.

Finally, the Highly Gifted Center Reading Curriculum supports qualifying learners in 4th and 5th grade. The program, like Junior Great Books, provides the children the opportunity to interact with thought-provoking stories as they develop their reading, writing, oral communication, and critical thinking skills. Students enrolled read texts that are 2 years above their grade level, and must have received an advanced score on the MSA, an "A" on their previous year's report card, AND an advanced score on the MAP-R.



H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

Public health officials are concerned that in the fall the H1N1 flu virus might cause more serious illness than it did this spring. All schools are developing plans in case they have to close for some period of time and, if they do, for ways to continue teaching and learning. The school system will use a variety of communication methods to keep families informed. To be sure that

families receive messages about possible changes in school operations, it is very important that you provide us with the most up-to-date contact information, including telephone number(s) and email addresses, and let the school know right away if any of that information changes. MCPS will be guided by health officials in decisions related to H1N1 flu. Schools will distribute new

information about the flu and school operations to families as it becomes available. Up-to-date information will be posted to the following website:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/h1n1/index.aspx>

Supporting our Numbers in Third Grade

As you may be aware, our class numbers in third grade are higher than the typical class size. Currently, class numbers stand at 29, 29, and 30. However, our staff has collaborated their efforts to ensure a quality program, where learning will continue to occur at high levels. We have maximized our support so that reading, writing, and math instructional blocks are reduced in student numbers. For example:

- Ms. Cohen will instruct a complete reading and language arts block of approximately 21 students. As a result of this support, similar numbers will exist in each of the third grade reading and

language art blocks.

- Mrs. Summers will instruct a mathematics block. She will teach the above/compacted class, where students will learn both 3rd and 4th grade math content.
- Paraeducator support has been assigned to the third grade writing class. Therefore, there will be two adults supporting weekly writing instruction.

We are confident that our students will enjoy great success in all of their studies. Our teachers are looking forward to working with you throughout the year!

