Good evening John Poole Middle School families,

This is Mr. Green with your weekly updates for February 5 - February 9, 2024.

Thank you to our wonderful PTSA for hosting the social last Friday evening.  The students seemed to have a really great time with the event!  Thank you to all of the parents, guardians, caregivers and staff members who helped make this a memorable evening.

Report cards will be distributed at the end of the school day on Monday, February 5.  Our schedule will be slightly adjusted with little overall impact to our school day.  Report cards are also available in ParentVUE/StudentVUE in the Documents tab or the Report Card tab in the left-hand side menu bar.

This week is also School Counselors Appreciation Week.  Thank you to Mr. Maruskin and Ms. Murphy for everything you do for our students each and every day.  We appreciate you!

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MCPS Signs of Suicide (SOS) Presentations begin this week

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) remains committed to sharing information and resources about mental health topics that could potentially impact students.  During the 2017-2018 school year MCPS reviewed programs and activities that support the physical, social, and psychological well-being of students.  A variety of initiatives (e.g. mindfulness, individual and group counseling, wellness initiatives, etc.) are available for students to participate in at each school.

We know that the teenage years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions—challenging for teens, their parents/guardians, and educators.  It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression (which is one of the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age than before.  The prevalence of depression in adolescents and young adults increased from 8.7 percent in 2006 to 11.3 percent in 2014 (Mojtabai, et. al, 2016).  Suicide also is the second leading cause of death among 11–18-year-old youth in the United States (Centers for Disease Control, 2015).

To proactively address this issue, MCPS is enhancing its suicide prevention curriculum using the Signs of Suicide® (SOS®) Prevention Program.  Currently, MCPS uses the Red Flags suicide prevention curriculum to discuss this topic in Health courses.  The SOS® Program is a youth suicide prevention program that has demonstrated an improvement in students’ knowledge and adaptive attitudes towards suicide risk and depression, as well as a reduction in actual suicide attempts.  Listed on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, the SOS® Program showed a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts by 40 to 64 percent in randomized control studies (Aseltine, et al., 2007; Schilling, et al., 2016).

Our goals for participating in this program are straightforward:

* To help students understand that depression is a treatable illness,
* To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression,
* To provide students with the education and skills to recognize the signs of serious depression and potential suicidality in a friend, and
* To impress upon teens that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns.

All students in Grades 6 through 8 will participate in a class lesson, including video clips and discussion, during Social Studies classes.  After the lesson, students will fill out a form to let the school’s student well-being team know if they would like to talk to someone to get help for themselves or a friend.  SOS will be implemented between February 6, 2024, and February 20, 2024.  Students also will receive handouts that include a student newsletter and a list of school, local, and national resources that are available to support mental health needs. [Here](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1H5X8e6LTVkHow5aggvfzajMBDb4HKtwY%2Fview&data=05%7C01%7Calison_m_d%27aiutolo%40mcpsmd.org%7C682bd3f78195431e403208da2888ea76%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C1%7C0%7C637866865812898301%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=x4E9lI6NqMo6llHb450UwwSHoKt0ot0IMh1BML2a2zk%3D&reserved=0) is a resource for talking with your child about suicide.

[Here](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1Dy5m7sqo1Ek0jEYoswJjy1eh-w2Bz-JG%2Fview%3Fusp%3Dsharing&data=05%7C02%7CJon_Green%40mcpsmd.org%7C6c05611be86840db076308dc12b9ee0d%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C0%7C0%7C638405836967078836%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=H2hNO%2FtBMQWYPGiQEc0KZQmO7IO8Uq%2B6F%2FqecHbtLdM%3D&reserved=0) is information about the Montgomery County Crisis Center. [Here](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1HZaqdXB2C77JXuExfpnph53hejumegpo%2Fview%3Fusp%3Dsharing&data=05%7C02%7CJon_Green%40mcpsmd.org%7C6c05611be86840db076308dc12b9ee0d%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C0%7C0%7C638405836967089290%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wrxLtdTTFuDfNFnkoy1AbH3w1oGGxG2%2B3ch%2BLhaReY8%3D&reserved=0) are guidelines for reporting suicidal content on social media.  For your information, [here](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.google.com%2Fpresentation%2Fd%2F1MeZJ8aQr4qLV8qP6aCwZ7rspgJyvWVzj2ze_u4jqiqk%2Fedit%3Fusp%3Dsharing&data=05%7C02%7CJon_Green%40mcpsmd.org%7C6c05611be86840db076308dc12b9ee0d%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C0%7C0%7C638405836967098222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=EKDULZZplk2NgsYtMdGgSNdXesQTxHdSR5I6P%2FVcyCs%3D&reserved=0) is the PPT slide parent training presentation.

If you have any questions or concerns about this program, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Maruskin, counselor, at Kevin\_T\_Maruskin@mcpsmd.org.

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Course Registration for the 2024-2025 School Year

This week, our counseling team will be going to English classes to discuss course registration for next year.  As in the past, the registration process will be completed online using StudentVUE/ParentVUE.  Please contact the counseling office with any questions or concerns.

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**Drama Production - Friday, February 9 and Friday, February 16**

It’s showtime!!!!  After an almost a 5 year hiatus, our drama program returns to the stage.  The first Friday cast will be performing on Friday, February 9, 2024 at 6:30 pm.  The second Friday cast will be performing on Friday, February 16, 2024 at 6:30 pm.  We hope to see you there!

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Please continue to check the [myMCPS Classroom](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclassroom.mcpsmd.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7Calison_m_d%27aiutolo%40mcpsmd.org%7C3824b187b7c24695c17208dc25d96a2c%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C0%7C0%7C638426862918370188%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=GW8h4%2FMbS39gEp1BIn2XMKgkHT%2FCjTShOcyD7i05XcU%3D&reserved=0) calendar or our [JPMS school webpage](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org%2Fschools%2Fpoolems%2F&data=05%7C02%7Calison_m_d%27aiutolo%40mcpsmd.org%7C3824b187b7c24695c17208dc25d96a2c%7Cddf755e9bcd64a5ea4727c378a78c6c7%7C0%7C0%7C638426862918380134%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=I4DZqbcUEt%2FMi1hAc0LKP%2FND4EG24cex3QcUwPkshPw%3D&reserved=0) for the most updated information, including upcoming events, bus routes, and other happenings occurring at school.

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Please mark your calendars for these important upcoming events:

Monday, February 5 - Report Card distribution

Tuesday, February 6 - Basketball vs. Lakelands Park MS.  Boys are home, Girls are at LPMS

Thursday, February 8 - Basketball vs. Ridgeview MS.  Boys are home, Girls are at Ridgeview MS

Friday, February 9 - Drama Production, Parents Just Don’t Understand

Wednesday, February 14 - Basketball vs. Clemente MS.  Boys are home, Girls are at RCMS MS

Friday, February 16 - Drama Production, Parents Just Don’t Understand

Monday, February 19 - NO SCHOOL.  Schools and Offices are closed

Thursday, February 22 - Basketball vs. Neelsville MS.  Girls are home, Boys are at Neelsville MS

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Have a great night and a wonderful week!

Mr. Green