

Arcola Elementary School

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August 11, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year! It continues to be an honor to serve the community of Arcola Elementary School. Arcola Elementary School is as an exciting and welcoming learning environment committed to preparing all of our students for success in the 21st Century by offering each student a high quality educational experience that promotes academic excellence, creative problem solving and social emotional learning.

As we prepare for a new school year, our collaboration will ensure the success of all students. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions about the upcoming school year. In this letter, you will find important information, such as, general school updates, school supply list, bus route information and cafeteria news. It is important to review this information. We will continue to keep you informed and updated of all events and activities occurring at Arcola Elementary through a variety of ways. You can expect a bimonthly newsletter called the Gator Gazette, with general information and reminders and a monthly calendar at a glance with important dates. You will also receive fliers, information posted on our website, Connect-Ed phone and email messages, updates on our school sign and friendly office staff who are ready to answer questions. If we may be of any assistance, you may always email the administration at [Emmanuel J JeanPhilippe1@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Emmanuel.J.JeanPhilippe1@mcpsmd.org) or [Jessica M Blasic@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jessica.M.Blastic@mcpsmd.org).

Important Upcoming Dates and Events

- On **Thursday, August 31, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., we will hold a “Welcome to Kindergarten Night” for all Kindergarten families.** Kindergarten students are welcome to attend with their parents. This evening will be a parent orientation for Kindergarten. There will be activities for the Kindergarten students who attend only. It is important for all of our Kindergarten parents to attend this evening. This will serve as the Back to School Night for our incoming Kindergarten Parents. As a result, parents who only have students in Kindergarten do not need to attend the Friday Open House or Back to School night.
- Our annual **Open House will be on Friday, September 1, 2017, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Arcola.** This is an opportunity for students and parents to meet their new teachers. There will be an information and resource fair taking place in our All Purpose Room. Families interested in applying for Free and Reduced Meals may do so during Open House.
- The **Gator Club** is back for the 2017 – 2018 school year. The Gator Club is a free after school program offered by the Montgomery Housing Partnership. The students participate in literacy instruction and an array of hands on enrichment activities and recreational programs. There is limited space available in the Gator Club. Registration for this worthwhile opportunity is first come

first serve. **Gator Club registration will take place on Wednesday, September 6th, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Arcola Gym.** The Gator Club operates after school daily from Monday, September 18, 2017 through May 31, 2018.

- We look forward to seeing you all on **Tuesday, September 5th, 2017, the first day of school. Our school hours are from 9:25 a.m. - 3:50 p.m. The doors will now open at 9:05 a.m. Students should not be dropped off prior to 9:00 a.m.**
- **Back-to-School Night for students in Grades 1 through 5 will be held Thursday, September 14th from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.** This is an important night of introductions and explanations of academic opportunities.

STUDENT-TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

At Arcola, we take great pride to ensure heterogeneous class groupings enhance students' abilities to learn, offer intellectual challenge, and facilitate lesson planning for teachers. As a result, a lot of collaboration and attention to the needs of students influence creating and monitoring classroom assignments. During the first two weeks of school, we take a great deal of time to get to know our students and assess our classroom assignments. As a result, there are changes that may be made to the class groupings to ensure a successful experience for all students. We have had positive success with this practice for students at the beginning of the year. Initial classroom assignments will be posted on the front windows of the school by 4:00 p.m. Thursday, August 31st. All Arcola teachers will be available for Open House on Friday, September 1st from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Prior to this time, teachers will engage in mandatory professional day activities.

SUPPLY LIST and FREE BACKPACKS

Attached to this letter is a comprehensive list of suggested school supplies. As we have done in the past, while supplies last, all Arcola students are eligible to receive a free backpack. The backpacks are stronger than last year and will come in a variety of colors. The basic set of school supplies included with each backpack are: Pencils, Pencil Box, Crayons, Glue Stick and Composition Book. Backpacks are scheduled to be delivered in time for distribution at Open House on Friday, September 1st.

BREAKFAST/ LUNCH

Beginning the first day of school, breakfast and lunch will be served. All students receive free breakfast. **The cost of school lunch remains \$2.55**, with milk costing .60 cents. Reduced meal prices will remain .40 cents. We will continue to implement the SNAP (Student Nutrition Accountability Program) lunch program. It is recommended that each family pay a minimum of \$10.00 into his/her child's account. It is important to do this because the school does not make lunch loans.

Checks should be made payable to Arcola School Cafeteria. A prepayment form can be found in this mailing. Menus will be sent home monthly.

All families must reapply each year for free/reduced lunch. The application process for the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) is a **household** application. Parents and guardians will need to submit just **one** application that lists all the children in their household who attend Montgomery County Public Schools. Because all students from a household will apply on one application, only the youngest child in the household will receive an application the first week of school.

Please complete the Free and Reduced Meal Forms as soon as they are made available to you during our Kindergarten Welcome Night on Thursday, August 31st, and Open House on Friday, September 1st. During Open House and Back to School Night there will be assistance available to complete applications. Attached to this letter is a “Cafeteria News Flier” with more information regarding the lunch program.

Arcola Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

At Arcola, we encourage high levels of parental engagement and believe it can positively influence academic and social emotional success for our students. One way that we encourage all parents to be involved in our school is by Parent Teacher Association (PTA) membership. We are fortunate to have an active PTA here at Arcola. Our PTA is planning a variety of great events to support parent engagement and involvement. As a school, we ask all parents make every effort to support PTA events and activities. Please strongly consider being an active member of our PTA this year! Information regarding PTA-sponsored activities are on the school’s master calendar and will come home regularly in your child’s backpack. PTA representatives will be available during our Open House on September 1st. For more information regarding our PTA, please visit the website (arcolapta.org). Our first PTA meeting of the year will be on Monday, September 11th at 7:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Jean-Philippe
Principal

Jessica M. Blasic
Assistant Principal

Enclosures