

College Gardens Elementary School

Principal's Updates from School: 9-23-11

This is one in a series of updates from College Gardens ES. Our "Principal's Updates from School" are scheduled for distribution weekly on Friday afternoons.

Thank You for a Great Beginning to the School Year!

We have had a very successful opening for the new school year. It has been wonderful to see so many smiling faces as the students returned from their summer break ready to be risk-takers in their learning. We look forward to another exciting school year with your children.

Superintendent's Listen & Learn Event Rescheduled

On Wednesday, October 19, Montgomery County's new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Joshua Starr, will be holding a "Listen and Learn" event from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Thomas S. Wootton High School, 2100 Wootton Parkway, Rockville. This event, rescheduled from September 8, is an opportunity for parents and community members to meet Dr. Starr and to offer their views and perspective on what is working well in MCPS and what the school system can do to improve.

Dr. Starr has a keen interest in hearing directly from parents as he sets his priorities for the school system. This is also an opportunity for parents to learn more about his educational philosophy and leadership style.

I encourage all of you to attend the upcoming "Listen and Learn" event. Childcare and interpretation services will be provided. If you are not able to attend the event on October 19, Dr. Starr will be holding additional meetings throughout the fall. Times and locations are available on the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org.

Welcome to our new Staff Members

We are fortunate to have been able to hire the best and brightest to teach your children during this school year.

Please join me as we say hello to our new staff members:

- . Katie Rim - Kindergarten
- . Yantang Xia - Kindergarten - 1st Grade Chinese Immersion
- . Christine Skroback – 1st Grade
- . Kristen Chen – 2nd & 3rd Grade Chinese Immersion
- . Rebecca Mitchell - 4th Grade
- . Maria Nocente - 4th Grade
- . Emily Floyd – 4th & 5th Grade Chinese Immersion
- . Shauntae Fitchard – 5th Grade
- . Nazia Asjid – 5th Grade
- . Lauren Rinker – Physical Education
- . Tom Karpf – Art
- . Molly Murray – Chinese Immersion Program Coordinator

Please take a minute to welcome these staff members.

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IB PYP Connection

Internationalism in the PYP

Through the curriculum lens we promote opportunities for learning about issues that have local, national, and global significance, leading to an understanding of human commonalities. Through looking at the Learner Profile and the Attitudes, as well we focus how they help to define what it means to be internationally minded and how it is expressed throughout the school.

When seeking evidence for international-mindedness in PYP, teachers look at what students are learning, how they are demonstrating that learning and how to nurture students within the school community. Teachers consider whether students are making connections between life in school, life at home, and life in the world. By helping students make these connections and see that learning is connected to life, a strong foundation for future learning is established.

During this school year we will work to make those links between home, school, and life in the world. Please let us know how and where your children are making those connections.

Superintendent Starr Releases Transition Report

The transition team organized by Montgomery County Public Schools Superintendent Joshua P. Starr has delivered its report, highlighting strengths it found in the system and areas where additional focus is needed. Dr. Starr plans to use the report, along with the information he obtains from his “Listen and Learn” sessions, to shape his strategy in the coming months to help MCPS reach the next level of success.

“I am grateful for the tremendous work the transition team did over the last three months to provide me with some expert analysis of what we do well in MCPS and, most importantly, what we can do better,” Dr. Starr said. “It is always helpful to have a fresh, outside take on an organization to better understand what makes it work. MCPS is a system that believes in continuous improvement so it is no surprise to anyone that we know that we have a lot of room for growth. This report confirms that and provides us with some key areas where we need to focus greater attention.”

The [45-page report](#) from the team, led by Dr. Robert Peterkin, Professor Emeritus at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, focuses on four areas: teaching and learning, professional learning, culture and context, and operations. The team included a mix of outside experts and current and former MCPS staff members. Over the last three months, the team reviewed system data, documents and plans; conducted focus groups with a variety of stakeholders and interviewed numerous community and elected leaders. As the team prepared its recommendations, both near-term and long-term, five broad themes emerged:

- Differentiation within and among schools, classrooms, and students
- Communications and relationships with stakeholders
- Implementation of vision, mission, and policies in practice
- Design and delivery of professional development initiatives
- Issues of race and equity

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“MCPS is one of the highest performing school systems in the nation and is poised to achieve even greater success for its students under Dr. Starr’s leadership,” said Dr. Peterkin. “Our goal in this report is to provide Dr. Starr with a candid assessment of where the organization needs attention and to offer some recommendations that we believe will help him shape his strategy going forward.”

You can access the transition plan at;

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/superintendent/transitionplan/>

MCPS Parent Academy Nights for Curriculum 2.0

The MCPS Parent Academy is holding 9 information nights to answer parents questions about the new and exciting Curriculum 2.0 that is being implemented in all kindergarten and first grade classes and in some second grade classes.

Curriculum 2.0 has been developed to create a more exciting learning experience for our students in Grades K-5. Built upon the existing Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) curriculum, Curriculum 2.0 blends reading/language arts and mathematics instruction with lessons in science, social studies, music, art, and physical education in a way that spurs creativity and critical thinking skills. Come learn about the new curriculum at one of the following sessions:

Thursday, September 15—7:00-8:30pm

Spark M. Matsunaga ES, 13902 Bromfield Rd., Germantown 20874

Thursday, September 22—7:00-8:30pm

Gaithersburg ES, 35 North Summit Ave., Gaithersburg 20877

Thursday, October 6—7:00-8:30pm

Bells Mill ES, 8225 Bells Mill Rd., Potomac 20854

Thursday, October 20—7:00-8:30pm

Sherwood ES, 1401 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd., Sandy Spring 20860

Thursday, October 27—7:00-8:30pm

College Gardens ES, 1700 Yale Pl., Rockville 20850

Thursday, November 17—7:00-8:30pm

Arcola ES, 1820 Franwall Ave., Silver Spring 20902

Thursday, December 1—7:00-8:30pm

Sligo Creek ES, 500 Schuyler Rd., Silver Spring 20910

Thursday, December 15—7:00-8:30pm

Roscoe R. Nix ES, 1100 Corliss St., Silver Spring 20903

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Important Dates to Remember

- September 14 NAACP Parents' Council Meeting; Conference Room, 4:00 p.m.
- September 28 Early Release Day; Report Card Preparation & Planning, Dismissal at 12:55 p.m.
- September 29 Rosh Hashanah; Schools Closed
- October 3 Individual Student Portraits; All Purpose Room Stage, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- October 4 PTA Meeting; All Purpose Room, 7:00 p.m.
- October 5 Walk to School Day
- October 5 NAACP Parents' Council Dinner; All Purpose Room, 7:00 p.m.
- October 7 Grandparents Day
- October 10 Columbus Day Open House for Parents; 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

John D. Ewald

Principal

College Gardens ES

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