



# THE GREENCASTLE Gazette



Volume 1 Issue #5

The bi-weekly newsletter from Greencastle Elementary School

November 11, 2011

R. Kevin Payne, Principal

Tamar Ruth, Assistant Principal

Visit our website! <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/greencastles/>

**Our Mission: The students, staff and families of Greencastle Elementary School will work together as a community of learners to provide high expectations and successful learning experiences for ALL!**

## Important

### Upcoming Events



- 11/1 Second Marking Period begins
- 11/1 PTA Mtg 7:00 pm Media Ctr
- 11/15 Bus Evacuation Drill
- 11/16 Fieldtrip 2nd grade—Strathmore Music Center
- 11/17 Thanksgiving Dinner (Cafeteria)
- 11/21 First Quarter Awards Assembly (Prek-2nd—9:15; 3rd – 5th—10:15)
- 11/23 Early Release for Thanksgiving Holiday, Dismissal at 12:35
- 11/24-25 No School (Thanksgiving Holiday)
- 11/28-12/2 GES Bookfair sponsored by our PTA
- 11/29 Make Up Picture Day
- 11/30 Math and Reading Night



- 12/6 PTA Meeting
- 12/16 KAH Kids' Night Out

Dear Parents:

We hope that everyone really enjoyed our annual Fall Into Books Festival parade and parties! It was nice to see the creative customs that our students, parents and staff created. I know that I had an excellent time. We would also like to thank all of our parents who contributed to this special event.

Winter is just around the corner! Please make sure your children dress for the weather each day. We strongly encourage students to dress in layers. Many children come to school without coats, hats and gloves because they are getting into a car or onto a bus without having to wait outdoors. When the weather permits, our children will go outside for recess. Please make sure they are prepared.

Speaking of clothing, our lost and found is overflowing. We have shirts, coats, sweaters, shoes, etc. Please stop by our cafeteria to claim your child's missing items. At the end of the semester, all unclaimed items are donated to local charities. Have a great end of November!!!

*R. Kevin Payne*

### TESTING SCHEDULE

The 2011-2012 testing schedule has been finalized and is as follows:

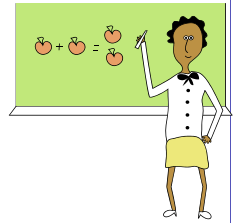
Maryland School Assessment (MSA)	Reading	March 12-13 (Grade 3, 4) March 15-15 (Grade 5)
	Math	March 16-19 (Grade 3, 4) March 20-21 (Grade 5)
Maryland School Assessment (MSA)	Science	April 30– May 4 Window (Grade 5)
Terra Nova 2 (TN/2)		April 16-20 (Grade 2)



Please put these dates on your calendar to avoid scheduling doctor's appointments during the testing window.

For more information on the Maryland School Assessments, go to the Maryland State Department of Education website at: [www.mdk12.org](http://www.mdk12.org). At this website, you can look at the data and compare us to other schools in county and in the state.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES** – Often, one parent will hear from another that if a child is struggling, the parent should have the child evaluated for special education services or ask the school about a 504 plan to ensure assistance. Special Education services and 504 plans are for children who have diagnosed disabilities and cannot access the curriculum without this high level of support. They are not for children who do not have a disability. Most children will find one subject tougher than another, or will be learning a concept he/she finds unusually difficult. Everyone has different strengths and needs. That is natural and normal. School is not easy! When children have difficulties with their assignments and/or with concepts there are many things that the school can do to help them prior to any discussion about the presence of a disability. To prevent children from unnecessarily being identified as having a disability for an issue that could be addressed by the teacher and school support staff, we employ many strategies to bolster students’ areas of need. Our staff is amazing at giving children the extras they may need to really soar!



**Lunch Loan Program** - When students run out of money in their accounts, Mrs. Kash, our Cafeteria Manager, will still provide students hot lunches and charge their accounts. However, MCPS will only allow a negative balance of \$10.00. After this threshold is passed, students will only be given a cheese sandwich (no extra food items or milk). Please monitor the balance in your child’s SNAP account. Mrs. Kash sends home a letter when a SNAP account balance gets low or goes into the negative. MyLunchMoney.com is a service being offered which allows parents to make prepayments to their child’s cafeteria account with a credit/debit card using the Internet. Once the account is established, you can check balances, view student purchases, set up recurring payments, and receive low balance e-mail notifications. Prepayments will generally be available at the school the next day. Go to [www.myLunchMoney.com](http://www.myLunchMoney.com) for more information.



**Homework Help Available on MCPS Web:** MCPS has a variety of available homework resources to help students. Many of these resources are subscription-based and accessible with a user name and password. Students can get this information from the media specialist. The public libraries also have a wealth of useful resources, such as homework help websites for students in kindergarten through Grade 5 and for students in Grades 6–12. Students can get a free library card on the public libraries website: [www.montgomerycountymd.org/library](http://www.montgomerycountymd.org/library).



**George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy**

**Saturday School**

Saturday School offers tutoring and mentoring in reading/language arts, mathematics, and test-taking skills for students in grades 1-12. It takes place Saturday mornings from 8:30 to 11 a.m. at 12 high school centers.

Enrollment starts September 10. Orientation is September 24. For more information, please call the office of the director at 301-320-6545 or visit [www.GBTLearningAcademy.org](http://www.GBTLearningAcademy.org).



**IMPROVED GES WEBSITE**

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/greencastles/>

Please visit our improved website. Information includes:

- ◆ Links to instructional curriculum
- ◆ Emergency preparedness information
- ◆ Cafeteria information (lunch/breakfast)
- ◆ Greencastle staff email addresses



**NEW PARENT WEB SITE**

Montgomery County Public Schools has a new parent-focused website developed for parents of students who require special education services or parents who are in the beginning stages of the special education process. The website has information and answers to questions often asked by parents. The link to the site is <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/specialed/p/arents/>



**Traffic Safety: Cell Phone**

We are pleased to report that the traffic flow during drop-off and pick-up hours has been smooth. However, problems of drivers using cell phones, has been noted on numerous occasions during these times. Remember that “Safety is no Accident” at Greencastle. Please refrain from using cell phones in pick-up/drop off areas.



**Castle Connection Meetings**

Castle Connection Meetings will occur on the first day of the school week. These meetings last approximately 10 minutes and help build a sense of community and family for our school. At the meetings we conduct the school pledge, make important announcements, recognize good student choices and share the message of the week. Parents are welcome to attend.

**PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Just a reminder, for elementary school children, the MCPS policy on cell phones, BlackBerrys, etc., requires prior permission from the principal. If your child will be carrying a cell phone, please make sure you send a letter to the office. All cell phones must be turned off (not on vibrate) at all times and are not allowed to be used on school grounds. Should a student violate the rules, he/she will no longer be allowed to carry a cell phone.