
PAW PRINTS

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From the Principal's Desk Catherine Long

At times it seemed like Mother Nature did not want to see schools open on time, but an earthquake, hurricane and power outages could not stop the Ritchie Park staff from preparing for a fabulous opening of school. How exciting it was to see our students return on Monday! We were also very happy to welcome our enthusiastic, if somewhat apprehensive, kindergarten students to the Ritchie Park community. Even our youngest students are already learning our routines and earning panther stickers.



Since I wrote to you in August, I have a few new staff members to introduce. Jasprit Saini will be working with lunch/recess and working as a paraeducator. You may have seen her photo in Sunday's Washington Post! Melissa Colavito is our fourth kindergarten teacher. The addition of her experience and expertise means that our kindergarten class size was greatly reduced. On September 12th, Effat Moradi will begin working as our Media Assistant. Lisa Stylos found a position in her neighborhood and wanted to work closer to home. Each of these women bring great talents as educators and a welcoming smile to our school. I'm sure everyone will make them feel welcome.

Back to School Night

Back to School Night was a tremendous success! Thank you to everyone who came out to meet our teachers and to learn a little more about what happens in our classrooms on a daily basis. If you did not sign up for a Parent Conference on November 11th or 12th, please contact your child's teacher to schedule a meeting time.

Volunteer Orientation

We love our volunteers! It is important that every volunteer participate in an orientation each year. At this time we review safety procedures and issues concerning confidentiality. **Community members must attend training before volunteering.** A short term exception needed to be made for the lunch and recess volunteers. **The first two orientation sessions are on September 7th at 2:30 and September 8th at 9:00.** Additional sessions will be held in October. We'd be thrilled if there was a parent who was able to take on the task of being the volunteer coordinator. Please speak with a member of the PTA Leadership if you are able to take on this responsibility.

Upgrades to Our Curriculum

As I mentioned during Back to School Night, MCPS has improved our curriculum based on national and international standards. For the past two years, MCPS has been testing some significant enhancements to the elementary school curriculum. You may have heard about this upgraded curriculum—the Elementary Integrated Curriculum or EIC. There are so many improvements to the EIC, it is now being called MCPS Curriculum 2.0—the way upgrades in technology changes often are described.

Although the existing MCPS curriculum has been strong and effective, Curriculum 2.0 will be even better at engaging students and teachers. Here are the three major elements of MCPS Curriculum 2.0:

➤ **New internationally driven standards in math, reading and writing**

Math, reading and writing are based on new, strengthened standards, also called the Common Core State Standards. These strengthened standards, adopted by

Maryland last year, describe the content that students must learn at each grade level and are designed to help U.S. students compete favorably with students around the world.

➤ **Renewed focus on teaching the whole child**

The curriculum provides more instructional focus on subjects such as the arts, information literacy, science, social studies and physical education by blending them with math, reading, and writing. Students will receive instruction across all subjects in the early grades.

➤ **Integrated thinking, reasoning, and creativity**

The curriculum is designed to do an even better job of teaching MCPS students the academic, creative and critical thinking skills that build confidence and success and prepare children for a lifetime of learning.

Curriculum 2.0 is now ready for roll-out in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 with the other elementary grades to follow.

You probably have many questions about Curriculum 2.0. . I will also be discussing it at the September PTA meeting next week and throughout the year. For now, you can find out more on the MCPS website at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/2.0/>. Change can be very difficult for all of us, but our students are worth the extra effort. I have no doubt that we will do an even better job preparing our students to be college and career ready.

Homework Policy

Last year a team of teachers and parents met to create a schoolwide homework policy. Previously the school did not have its own policy. Teachers developed grade level or individual classroom level policies in alignment with Montgomery County Public School's Homework Policy. The committee

believed that a schoolwide policy would help improve consistency of expectations between grade levels. You can access a copy of our policy at: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/richtieparkes/templates/default.aspx?id=191039>

The MCPS homework policy can be found at:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/ikb.pdf>

Future Editions of Paw Prints

In an effort to be good stewards of our very limited resources (time, personnel and paper), and protect our environment, this is the only edition of the Principal's Newsletter to be sent home in a hard copy. All other newsletters will be posted on our website every other Friday. If you cannot access it online and would like a hard copy sent home with your child, please call the office and we will make arrangements for you to receive a paper copy.

Opportunities to get to Know our New Superintendent

Listen and Learn

Dr. Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools, has announced dates and locations for 10 "Listen and Learn" events he is hosting this fall to meet with school system stakeholders.

These events will provide Dr. Starr an opportunity to meet with a variety of parents, students, staff and community members to hear their observations and perspectives on MCPS. The first two "Listen and Learn" community events will be held from 7–8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 6, at Northwest High School in Germantown, and on Thursday, Sept. 8, at Wootton High School in Rockville. A full schedule is available at:

<http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/press/index.aspx?page=showrelease&id=3009>

Book Club

Three Superintendent's Book Club events also have been announced. The first event, set for November 29, will be held at the Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive in Rockville, and will

be available via webinar. Dr. Starr has selected *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol Dweck for the first book club.

HISPANIC HOTLINE

Línea Telefónica de Información (301) 230-3073
Lunes–Viernes 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Después de horas de oficina incluyendo sábados y domingos usted puede dejar un mensaje y su número de teléfono en la grabación y su llamada será retornada tan pronto como sea posible. La línea telefónica de información puede ayudarlo a lo siguiente: comunicarse con la escuela de su hijo/a y interpretar información que ha sido enviada a su casa de la escuela.

HISPANIC HOTLINE (301) 230-3073

Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. After office hours and on weekends, you may leave a message and telephone number on the **answering machine and your call will be returned as soon as possible.**)

Upcoming Events

Sept. 6	PTA Meeting
Sept. 7 & 8	Volunteer Orientation
Sept. 22	Mamma Lucia Restaurant Night
Sept. 28	Early Release for Students
Sept. 29	No school for students and teachers



School Vision:

Students, staff, parents and community members will work together respectfully and cooperatively to create a safe, positive, inclusive, and academically-rich environment.

Meet the Ritchie Park Staff- Lifelong Learners

Each edition of Paw Prints will include a short article by a member of the Ritchie Park staff. They will describe something new they have learned to do over the summer, or since the school year started. The Ritchie Park staff is committed to continuous growth!

Meet Jill Kanowith

I have never been a very good cook. When our friends ask my husband and I who does the cooking, my usual reply is that my husband is an excellent cook, and I am an excellent dishwasher. This division of household duties has always served us well, but something changed this summer. On July 1st, my mother was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma. I was visiting my parents in Michigan at the time of her diagnosis, and decided the best way I could help her would be to make her as many nutritious meals as I could to get her body healthy and ready to face chemotherapy later this summer. I went to our local bookstore and found a few healthy cookbooks and got to work. The more delicious meals I made, the more my confidence grew. I have been cooking up a storm all summer, making everything from homemade Chicken Noodle Soup, Sweet Potato Hummus, Salmon with Ginger and Parsnips, and Roasted Red Pepper and Walnut Dip. Since I have started cooking, I have been eating better and exercising more, and generally taking better care of myself. I feel fantastic, and not just physically. Through this process I've learned that you can change your perceptions about what your strengths are. All it takes is a positive attitude, a little confidence, and a shopping bag full of fresh produce.