

Ritchie Park Elementary School
“One School, Many Cultures, One Community”

Principal's Newsletter

Wanda Coates, Acting Principal
Bill Baranick, Acting Assistant Principal

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November 6, 2009

Dear Parents and Families,

In this issue...

- ✓ *Grade level indicators for reading*
- ✓ *Feasibility study update*
- ✓ *School Walk for Heroes information*
- ✓ *Student monthly award winners*
- ✓ *News from the Media Center*

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Bill Baranick to the Ritchie Park family. Dr. Baranick is a retired MCPS principal who has been in many schools prior to coming to Ritchie Park. Please take time to stop by and introduce yourselves to him when you get a chance.

Instructional Program

Grade Level Indicators for Reading

On MCPS report cards, students are marked ABOVE, ON, or BELOW grade level according to the **reading targets text level chart K-5** shown below. The target changes each marking period. Therefore, it is possible for a student to change reading levels each quarter depending on where his/her reading level is on this chart. For example, if at the end of the second quarter, a 1st grade student is reading between a level 8-11, then he/she will be marked ON grade level. If the student is reading at a level below 8, he/she will be marked BELOW grade level. If the student is reading above a level 11, then he/she will be marked ABOVE grade level. As a point of clarification, a fourth grade student who is reading at a Level P at the beginning of fourth grade will be considered on grade level. However, the student will be considered below grade level if he/she is still reading at that level by the beginning of the second quarter of fourth grade.

READING TARGETS/TEXT LEVEL CHART: K-5 for 2009-2010

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>End of 1st Quarter</i>	<i>End of 2nd Quarter</i>	<i>End of 3rd Quarter</i>	<i>End of 4th Quarter</i>
Kindergarten	(Not Applicable)	Level 1 (A)	Level 2-3 (B-C)	Level 4 (C)
First Grade	Level 5-7 (D-E)	Level 8-11 (E-G)	Level 12-15 (H-I)	Level 16-17 (I)
Second Grade	Level J	Level K	Level L	Level M
Third Grade	Level M	Level N	Level O	Level P
Fourth Grade	Level Q-R		Level S-T	
Fifth Grade	Level T-U		Level V-W	

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are coming up next week on Wednesday, November 11th and Thursday, November 12th. Please contact your child’s teacher if you have not had the chance to sign up for a conference time. Typically, a conference will last 15 to 20 minutes and may include a discussion of classroom work, assessments and any extra support your child may need. Please find below some tips to help you prepare for the upcoming conferences.

Be sure to keep these tips in mind as you prepare for the conference:

- Ask to see examples of your child’s work. Discuss whether your child is on track for advanced coursework. Are there enrichment opportunities or other extra support that may benefit him/her?
- Ask how you can support learning at home, especially with homework.
- Aside from report cards, ask about the best ways to keep up to date on your child’s progress.
- Be sure to bring up your child’s special interests and abilities, along with any special health or family concerns.
- Contact the school in advance if you need an interpreter, or bring someone who can interpret for you.
- Write down the questions you would like to discuss. Some pointers on what to ask: How much time should I expect my child to spend on homework each night (each week)?
- What are my child’s strengths? What does my child need to continue to work on? How does my child get along with classmates? What can I do at home to support what my child is learning at school? Please see attached sheet for planning your conference and for follow up notes.
- Remind your child about the upcoming meeting and ask if he or she has any concerns or questions for you to discuss at school.

- Remember that what goes on at home affects your child's performance at school. If there is a major event happening in your family life, consider informing the teacher, as it may affect your child's academic performance.
- Arrive on time for the meeting.
- Feel free to take notes and ask the teacher to repeat anything that is unclear.
- If you have more to talk about than your assigned time will allow, ask to schedule a follow-up meeting with the teacher.
- When you get home, share the discussion with your child. Follow up with any strategies you agreed to try at home.

Feasibility Study at Ritchie Park

We continue to move along in the feasibility study. Mrs. Karamihas came out for one last meeting last month to discuss space usage and her final plan regarding the number of rooms and other features in the proposed addition for Ritchie Park.. Last week Mrs. Baum, Mr. Wynne, and I met with Joyce Jessell from the Division of Construction to discuss the next step in the process of the feasibility study, which is selection of the architect. We had an opportunity to look at 5 different architectural firms and narrowed our choices to 3 local firms. In early December, the three of us will hear presentations from the three selected architectural firms and then make a final selection.

School Walk for Heroes

Please join us for our first community service project of the year. RPES will be sponsoring a School Walk for Heroes next Wednesday, November 11, in honor of Veteran's Day. We hope you will join us on this very special day.

Student Corner

Proud Panther/Excellent Effort/Awesome Achievement Awards

Proud Panther Awards are awarded to students (K-5) who demonstrate outstanding character by modeling the six PAVE values (responsibility, respect, cooperation, caring, honesty, and moral courage). The following students were **October** winners: **Keely DeGasperis, Matthew Berggren, Spencer Freundlich, Megan Hilliard, Carly Gershoni, Gavin Rosenblatt, Anzu Koide, Sarasi Gunasekara, Teresa Davis, Megan Harrington, Nehal Pandey, Aaron Ge, Abby Wiersma, Justin Chow, Alexa Vallecillo, Dominic Escobar, Rachel Herman, Zach Meringoff, Marjorie Long, and Rossana Romero.**

Excellent Effort Awards are given to students (K-5) who have positive attitudes toward school work, use feedback to improve their work, and complete work thoughtfully and on time. **October** winners were: **Shakair Donaldson, Mason Berlin, Randy Frejoles, Johnathan Sun, Mitchell Bobys, Emily Romero, Abdoulaye Traore, Victoria Chazin, Randy Frejoles, Haley Dowdell, Catherine Le, Isaac Van Essen, James Doyle, Nicole Veras-Mena, Virgilio Borja, Anjali Finn, Amani Mangoaela, Darian Irannejad, Mark Tsuma, and Tim Agboola.**

Awesome Achievement Awards are given to students who meet all or most of the grade level indicators in all major subjects each month. The following students were *October* winners: **Leo Peele, Nakshat Pandey, Elle Rothfeld, Talia Frey, Lily Lerner, Nyomi Fox, Annika Meng, Trevor Gutmann, Joshua Cooper, Dylan Lee, Kian Afkhami, Allie Dixson, Nicole Eisner, Esofi Nunyi, Sophia Kaidi, Jacob Stavrianos, Lily Jin, Stephanie Zhang, Prama Rahman, and Santiago Mata.**

Proud Panther Pennies Program Earns Money for the World Wildlife Fund

As you know, we are working hard at RPES to be respectful. This year, our respectful behavior will not only allow us to do a better job in school, but it will help us to earn money for a great organization called the World Wildlife Fund! In order to monitor how respectful we are being, students receive letters when they are not demonstrating certain behaviors. Each month, students who get 0 letters or just one letter earn \$0.30 to give to the WWF. Students who get 2-3 letters earn \$0.20, and students who get 4-5 letters earn \$0.10. Students who get 6 or more letters don't earn any money for the WWF. What does that mean? It means the more respectful we are, the more money we will earn for the WWF. On Wednesday, November 4th, we had a school wide pep rally to celebrate how much money we have earned. In September, we earned \$140.60. In October, we earned \$143.50. This comes to a total of \$ 284.10! We hope that our respectful behavior will allow us to earn more money each month for this great organization. Great job, Panthers!

News from the Media Center

From the Media Center:

The 2009-2010 Login and Password sheets for Online Resources purchased by MCPS for all students are being sent home this week as an attachment to this newsletter. We ask that you save these sheets for future reference and utilize them whenever possible. Students frequently use these sites when researching for class projects. Sites are highlighted for students throughout the year. If you haven't looked to see what is available to the students, you may view all of them at <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/students/homework.aspx> or from the **MCPS home page**, click on **For Students** then **Homework Resources** under Homework Help.

The Reading Incentive Program "**READ...And The Force is With You**" is well underway. We have new Younglings turning in star sheets every day! Students are doing a great job of tracking every wonderful minute they spend reading and we hope you are enjoying their success. We'll have some program data to share in the next newsletter.

Please keep those used computer printer ink cartridges coming! We've earned about \$100 from those already sent in. What a great way to help the Earth and Ritchie Park at the same time! Cartridges should be put in a zip lock bag and can be dropped off in the Media Center.

Finally, the countdown to BOOK FAIR excitement has begun! It all gets underway just over two weeks. We're looking forward to seeing you.

For Parents

Time to Register for Parent Academy Workshops

The Parent Academy is bringing parents an exciting lineup of free workshops this school year. Brush up on algebra with the Math Dude, go behind the scenes at the MCPS food services facility and the transportation depot, take a tour of local college campuses, strengthen your advocacy skills, and much more. Workshops are held in schools and other locations throughout the county. Free child care and interpreters are provided. Register online at <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy/> or call 301-517-5940.

Get Answers to Food and Nutrition Questions

Where can you find out how many calories are in a grilled cheese sandwich, a chef salad or a plain English muffin? What are the menu options for a student who is vegetarian, lactose intolerant or diabetic? How can you find out whether your child qualifies for Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARMS) and where can you get help filling out the FARMS form?

The [Food and Nutrition Services website](#) has the answers to these questions. It also includes a list of nutritional requirements for snacks and beverages in vending machines, the MCPS wellness policy, Web links to sites on nutrition and food safety and information on using the cafeteria meal debit system. You can also call them at 301-840-8170.

Homework Hotline Live!

In its 24th year, Homework Hotline Live! Kicked off its season this month to help MCPS students solve the daily dilemmas of homework. Teachers will walk students through those difficult math problems and answer questions about any other subject live on the air on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 5 to 6 p.m. on Comcast Channel 33, Verizon FIOS channel 35, RCN channel 88. Students can call, 301-279-3234 or e-mail HHL@mcpsmd.org to have their questions answered.

Reminders

- Applications for the Center Program for the Highly Gifted (HGC) were mailed directly to all parents of Grade 3 students. If you are interested in having your child considered for the Center Program, you must complete the application and **return it by November 9, 2009** to: HGC Application, Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services, 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Students who submit their applications by the deadline will be tested at Ritchie Park. We will inform you of the testing date as soon as we receive it.
- Our Lost and Found is filling up quickly! Please stop by to look through the items we have collected since August or ask your children to look in the Lost and Found for items they cannot locate. Thanks for your help!

Attachments

- *Online resources from the Media Center*
- *Parent-Teacher conference worksheet*
(<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/conferences/documents/Conferenceplanningsheet.pdf>)

Upcoming Events

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| November 11-12 | - | Early Release Days, 12:35 pm dismissal |
| November 17 | - | PTA International Night |
| November 21 | - | PTA Skate Night |
| November 25 | - | Early Release Day, 12:35 pm dismissal |
| November 26-27 | - | Thanksgiving Holidays – NO SCHOOL |

Sincerely,

Wanda Coates
Acting Principal