

Ritchie Park Elementary School  
*Principal's Newsletter*

*Bonnie Dougherty, Principal*  
*Wanda Coates, Assistant Principal*

*Volume XV, No. 4*



*October 9, 2009*

Dear Parents and Families,

*In this issue...*

- ✓ *Everything You Wanted to know about MCPS Math Curriculum*
- ✓ *School Improvement Team process*
- ✓ *Important HALLOWEEN information*
- ✓ *Feasibility Study at Ritchie Park*

***Principal's Newsletter Going Paperless...***

***Based on feedback we have received from PTA, we will be continuing to use paper copies of the Principal's Newsletter. The newsletter will also be available electronically on the Ritchie Park website.***

**Instructional Program**

***The Content of Mathematics in MCPS***

Mathematics is a tool we use to understand and interpret our world. In our increasingly technology oriented world, those who understand and apply mathematics have significantly enhanced opportunities to achieve success in continuing education and in life. The key to opening the door to these opportunities is a deep understanding of important mathematical concepts and processes.

The integration of both mathematical concepts and processes is essential for meaningful understanding of mathematics. In the frameworks for MCPS mathematics courses, the concepts of mathematics are organized into six strands: Algebra/Patterns/Functions, Geometry, Measurement, Statistics, Probability, and Number Relationships and Computation. These concepts are developed through the four mathematical processes: Problem Solving, Communication (including representation), Reasoning, and Connections.

The mathematical content must be coherent and vertically articulated across the grades. For students who progress through Montgomery County Public Schools, the following is an overview of the development of mathematical understanding at the elementary level.

In the elementary school years, students develop proficiency with number concepts and operations. For this to occur, students' experiences with the concepts of number must be connected to mathematical concepts in geometry, algebraic reasoning, and data analysis. At the same time, proficiency with mathematical facts and skills must be developed so that students are able to use the application of mathematics to solve problems.

In an effort to collect input from diverse stakeholder communities, Montgomery County established a K-12 Mathematics work group. The work group was charged with exploring the complex issues associated with improving teaching and learning and student achievement in mathematics district wide. Input from community members, staff, and students is essential to ensure that the work group's recommendations appropriately address questions and concerns. Our PTA will be sending home a letter on Friday as a vehicle to collect your input. Please see the letter for a detailed explanation of how to submit your responses.

### ***School Improvement Team (SIT) and Process***

In the Fall of 2002, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) began using the Baldrige Criteria framework to *define, design, and deploy* processes to support the development, implementation, and monitoring of a comprehensive school improvement plan (SIP). In striving toward continuous improvement, each MCPS school monitors their SIP by collecting and analyzing data and utilizing this information to determine if processes and procedures need to be refined. At Ritchie Park, our SIT will be meeting 4 times a year (coinciding with each marking period) to formally monitor and implement this process. The SIT is comprised of teachers, support staff, and parents. We welcome additional parent representatives to attend these meetings which will be held on **October 27, 2009, January 26, 2010, and March 23, 2010**. The meetings will take place from 3:20-4:30 in our conference room. If you would like to attend any or all of these meetings, please call the office and inform Mrs. Baum or Ms. Zegarra. Our SIP will be posted on the Ritchie Park website in the near future.

### ***Feasibility Study at Ritchie Park***

Based on enrollment projections, Ritchie Park ES will be approximately 140 seats short in the 2014-2015 school year. Therefore, the Board of Education approved a feasibility study in the 2009-2010 school year to determine the scope and cost of adding an addition to Ritchie Park. The first phase of the feasibility study process is to meet with administration, PTA representatives, and staff to discuss the program space needs at the school. This first phase is known as the Educational Specification phase. The Capital Budget team leader will be coming to Ritchie Park to meet with staff and PTA on two dates during the month. All meetings will take place at 3:30. The meeting dates are **October 14, 2009** and **October 28, 2009**.

Your input is important during these meetings because they are your opportunity to express any areas of concern you may have regarding space usage and needs in the school. Please consider joining us at one or both of the meetings.

## **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 *September* winners: **Ariana Kavoossi, Nicolas Nunez-Benavides, Cori Freundlich, Skylar Yentis, Heather Sargent, Kurumi Koide, Julianna Olano, Jordan Maged, Sydney Weiss, Eric Hall, Federico Hurtado, Mia Triandafilou, Gonzalo Hurtado, Calvin Ha, Sophia Karasik, Julia Blitz, Zach Radin, Evan Scheinberg, Jennifer Fei, and Non Nonceeya.**

**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. *September* winners were: **Melissa Herman, Anastasia Korotcova, Madison Adcock, Bailey Silverman, Reese Feldman, Ian Schiltz, Caleb Hart, Sarah Moghaddam, Xavier Porter, Nicholas Olano, T.J. Dickerson, Adam Shi, Peter Lukish, Beamlak Kuma, Grace Hatcher, Gibran Akber, Kate Schuck, Andrew Spencer, Tiffany Jackson, and Matthew Lavelle.**

**Awesome Achievement Awards** are given to students (3-5) who meet all or most of the grade level indicators in all major subjects each month. The following students were *September* winners: **Jack Bodner, Samantha Jayasundera, Ryan Sprague, Aidan Lincke, Ethan Le, Jared Scheinberg, Max Bosse, Dylan Bortnick, Sara Logsdon, Jonah Chuang, Ryon Sarkarzadeh, Etay Gvirtzman, Lucy Cole, Mohammed Fall, Yerim Choi, Clarissa Halpern, Cindy Chen, Ashley Weaver, Grace Song, and Shylee Yachin.**

Congratulations students! Keep up the hard work. We are proud of you.

### ***News From the Media Center***

Excitement is building as we approach the kickoff of our annual reading incentive program. Stay tuned next week for the announcement of this year's theme - we know it will be EPIC! Information regarding the reading incentive program will be sent home next week. As always, students will keep track of the minutes they spend reading outside of class and earn incentives along the way. Parents are asked to monitor student progress and make sure the recording sheets are returned in a timely manner. New this year, students will not be permitted to turn in sheets more than one month old. Many thanks to our art teacher, Maureen McKay-Stultz for designing another wonderful bookmark. So - get ready to READ, READ, READ! The program begins Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup>.

## *Halloween Young Run*

This year's date for the **Halloween Young Run is Sunday, October 18, 2009**. This non-competitive run is for kids 12 and under. The students may sign up to run a ¼ mile, ½ mile, or 1 mile. Registration forms are being passed out during physical education class. Online registration is available at [www.halloweenyoungrun.com](http://www.halloweenyoungrun.com). Due to an oversight, a parental signature line was left off the bottom of the form. Parents please make sure that you sign the form before you mail it in. The deadline to register is Monday, October 12, 2009. Ritchie Park will have a banner for students to sign and their pictures will be taken and displayed in the gymnasium along with the banner. School participation awards are given to schools that have 20% or more finishers. Hope to see you all there!

### **For Parents**

## *Enrichment Opportunities*

### **The "NEW" Saturday Discoveries program**

Montgomery College Youth programs is offering a one-day enrichment program for gifted and talented students in grades 4 and 5. It will take place at Montgomery College, on the Takoma Park Campus on Saturday, November 14, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. - 2:50 p.m. Students will have an opportunity to select four workshops to participate in during the day. Workshops cover a variety of topics including science, problem solving, creative writing, computer gaming, and much more. For further information, please call 301-251-7264 or 301-251-7917 or access the website at [www.montgomerycollege.edu/youth](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/youth).

### **Kids College**

Montgomery College Youth Programs is accepting registrations for Kids College. They are offering after school and Saturday courses for students in grades K-12. Courses are taught on the Rockville and Germantown campuses. These courses provide enrichment and advancement and cover a wide range of topics including science, math, art, drama, game design, music, study skills, and keyboarding. **Courses fill quickly so register right away!** For further information, access their website at [www.montgomerycollege.edu/youth](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/youth). For additional information, contact YOUTH PROGRAMS office at 240-567-7264 or 240-567-7917.

## *The George B. Thomas, Sr. Saturday School Program*

Saturday School expands hours and helps parents understand **The Seven Keys to College Readiness**. Extra help for children with math, language arts, or reading is available through Saturday School. Classes start October 10 and centers are located in twelve high schools throughout the County. Students can enroll at any of the twelve centers; however, students typically enroll at the center that is in their home school cluster – in this case, the Rockville High School Center. Once enrolled, students must meet high academic and behavioral expectations, including regular attendance. They are required to share quarterly report cards with tutors, who use the information to plan tutoring activities and monitor student progress. Parents **must**

complete a registration form (including student ID number), pay a \$30 registration fee, and provide a copy of their child(ren)'s most recent report card. Registration forms are available in the main office of all cluster schools and online at [www.gbtlearningacademy.org](http://www.gbtlearningacademy.org). If you have questions about the program, please call the GBTLA's main office at 301-320-6545.

GBTLA will hold a Parent Training October 24 from 9:00-10:30 a.m. that will focus on the Seven Keys to College Readiness.

### *Speak Up at a Community Forum this Fall*

Parents, staff, students, and community members are encouraged to help identify school system priorities by testifying at community forums sponsored by the Board of Education. Each person will have three minutes to speak on the following question: "During difficult economic times, what priorities in the Montgomery County Public Schools Strategic Plan should we focus on for the 2010-2011 school year to improve achievement for all students?" The final forum will be held Thursday, October 15, 7:00 p.m. at John F. Kennedy High School.

### Coming Attractions

#### *Parent Visitation Day-October 12, 2009*

As a reminder, parent visitation day is coming up on Monday, October 12. You are invited to visit the school between **9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and 1:15 through 2:15 p.m.** We look forward to seeing many parents since this is a good opportunity to observe our instructional program in action. Visitors are asked to enter the building through the front door, sign in, and obtain a name tag before proceeding to the classroom. **Unfortunately, we do not have the space or supervision for younger brothers and sisters on this day. Therefore, we are respectfully requesting that you not bring siblings to school during this time.** We will be following our normal schedule so this will be a time for quiet observation in the classrooms. Thank you for your cooperation.

#### *Halloween*

We will be celebrating Halloween with our annual parade and parties on **FRIDAY** afternoon, **October 30. We will begin our annual parade at 2:00 p.m. with parties starting about 2:20 p.m.** Students who do not celebrate Halloween will spend the afternoon participating in alternate activities. **Parents who prefer that their children not participate in the costume parade and/or party, should contact their classroom teacher. We welcome all parents to come and enjoy the festivities with their children. Please do not plan on arriving prior to 1:40 to help children change into costumes as classes will be continuing until then.**

As we prepare for Halloween, here are some suggestions which might be helpful. We are encouraging families to select Halloween costumes that depict positive characters and/or those reflecting career choices, occupations, heroes, and literary characters. As you and your children

select costumes, we encourage you to avoid characters which reflect violence or horror. Any costume accessories with pointy or sharp edges or simulated dangerous weapons will not be allowed in school. I am requesting that items which may cause harm be left at home. These include such items as toy swords, pitch forks, guns, knives, wands, etc. Any that are brought to school will need to be picked up by parents at the end of the day. Thank you in advance for helping to make this a fun and safe activity for all.

### **Attachments**

- *Parent Visitation Day Information flyer*
- *Richard Montgomery "Cluster" football game flyer*

### **Upcoming Events**

- |            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| October 12 | - | Columbus Day-Parent Visitation Day               |
| October 16 | - | NO SCHOOL – Teacher Convention                   |
| October 23 | - | Pizza Bingo                                      |
| October 27 | - | School Improvement Team (SIT) Meeting, 3:20 p.m. |
| October 30 | - | Halloween Parade and Parties, 2:00 p.m.          |

Sincerely,

Bonnie Dougherty  
Principal

Wanda Coates  
Assistant Principal