



DIAMOND MINE

Diamond Elementary School

January 2026

Dear Diamond Families,

Happy New Year to all of our Diamond families and welcome back! We hope you had an enjoyable winter break filled with rest, relaxation, and plenty of memorable experiences with your family and friends. We have made many great accomplishments during 2025 at Diamond Elementary. Diamond ES was recognized as a 2025 Maryland Blue Ribbon School. As we begin a new year, we look forward to adding new accomplishments and achievements as we strive to make Diamond ES the best school we can be to ensure we provide each and every child with a wonderful and rigorous learning experience! I know that with your continued support, we can achieve this goal.

Please help your child to make good clothing choices for the cold weather. Layers are an excellent choice as the heat in our building is frequently varied from room to room. When the outside temperature is in the high 20s or above, we will have outdoor play at recess. Wind-chill is always taken into account when determining outdoor recess. Exercise and fresh air are important to engage learning. Children must be wearing a jacket or heavy sweatshirt when outside in cold temperatures. Also, please have your child arrive at school before 9:25 a.m. so they will not be marked tardy. To be present in the classroom by 9:25 is important to beginning the day smoothly and establishing community in the classroom.

We have been experiencing a higher number of tardy arrivals and we appreciate your support with making sure your child arrives to school between 9:05-9:25 a.m.

On behalf of the Diamond ES staff, we would like to wish you and your family a very happy and healthy 2026! If you have any questions, please contact the school office at 240-740-2120.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal

JANUARY CALENDAR

Monday, January 5: Students return from Winter Break

Tuesday, January 6: Food Recovery Program Presentation during K-5 lunches

Monday, January 19th: Holiday—Schools Closed, Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Tuesday, January 20: Third Grade Assembly—Capoeira

Thursday, January 22: 4th/5th Grade Chorus and Instrumental Music Concert, 7:00 pm @ Quince Orchard HS Auditorium.

Friday, January 23: End of Second Marking Period

Monday, January 26: No school for Students—Professional Day for Teachers

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS:

Reminder- End of Day Plan Policy- Changes to Dismissal Plans: Students will be sent home using the daily routine communicated with the school at the beginning of the school year. Play dates should be prearranged in advance of the school day. If there will be a variation in your child's dismissal routine (e.g. change in after-school care/activity or play-date with another child), your child must have a note addressed to the teacher explaining this particular change. A student is not permitted to ride a different bus with a friend for a playdate at this time. If you forgot to send a note in the morning, you can call the main office to (240) 740-2120 prior to 3:15 p.m.

Visitors: All visitors must enter the building through the main entrance, stop at the main office to sign in, and wear a visitor's badge while in the school. For the safety and security of all individuals, we need to be aware of the presence and location of all visitors in the building. Any individuals without a visitor's badge will be asked to report to the main office. Please help us keep all students in our school safe by following this important procedure! We ask for your support in maximizing the instructional time for students.

Cold Weather Reminder: Please be sure to send your child to school dressed for the weather. An idea to consider is having your children layer clothing, so that the child can take off a sweater or sweatshirt depending on the varying temperatures. In addition, students should have a warm jacket, gloves and a winter hat for arrival/dismissal and outdoor recess. We have noticed many children wearing shorts and no jackets when it is in the 30's and 40's. We strive for the students to have outdoor recess everyday, weather permitting. In order for the students to go outside for recess, the temperature needs to be above the mid twenties in degrees (including wind-chill) and reasonably dry/damp conditions on the recess blacktop and wood-chip area. We believe that the time outdoors each day is important for the children as a way to release energy and build concentration for afternoon instruction. With the current chilly temperatures students will need a winter jacket, winter hat, and gloves for outdoor recess.

Health Office Update: We want to keep the students and the school operating on a normal schedule and minimize any disruption to teaching and learning. You can help us in our efforts to prevent the spread of flu by:

- Knowing the symptoms of the flu. These include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired.
- Keeping children home from school if they are sick. Individuals who have been sick with the flu should stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours. Any children or staff who are sick at school will be sent home.
- Reminding your children to wash their hands often with soap and water.
- Encouraging your children not to share personal items like drinks, food, or utensils.
- Telling your children to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve, not their hands.

For more information, on when to keep your child home, visit the Montgomery County government website at <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/schools/elementary-schools/d-g/diamondes/uploadedfiles/about/when20to20keep20your20child20home20from20school.pdf> . In addition, you can visit the DES Health page at [Health Room Information](#) or contact Mrs. Selamawit Yeneneh , school nurse or Ms. Sandy Honour-Holloway, school health technician at 240-740-2122

MCPS Updates:

Winter Weather: Stay in Touch with MCPS: Winter weather is here. MCPS offers numerous ways for parents to learn about school closures, delayed openings, and early dismissals due to inclement weather.

- **AlertMCPS:** Receive text messages or emails from MCPS during weather-related emergencies and other major events that impact school system operations. Parents can also sign up to receive alerts specific to their child's school. Subscribe to AlertMCPS at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/alertmcps.aspx>
- **MCPS homepage:** www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org
- **MCPS cable channel:** Comcast 34, Verizon 36 or RCN 89
- **Recorded information (English and Spanish):** 301-279-3673
- **Ask MCPS:** 301-309-6277. Staff take calls from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, in English and Spanish.
- **Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/mcps>
- **Local radio and TV stations:** Visit <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/> for more information.
- **TV and Radio: Local Stations.** Tune in to local TV and radio stations for information. **Email: Quick Notes:** Weather-related messages are sent in 6 languages (English, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese).

Closure of schools

When schools are closed, all school and community activities are canceled, including athletic practices and events. Private day care providers in schools may elect to stay open if the administrative offices are open. In extreme conditions, the administrative offices may be closed.

Delayed opening

If schools are closed or delayed, the announcement is made no later than 5:00 a.m. (or the night before if possible). Schools may open two hours late, and all operations, including bus transportation, are delayed by two hours from the regular schedule. Full-day kindergarten will follow the regular education school schedule. Morning Head Start and morning prekindergarten are canceled. Field trips and other activities and programs that begin at 10:30 or earlier are canceled. Students can begin to arrive at Diamond ES on delayed openings at 11:00 a.m. Buses will arrive for pick-up two hours later than usual pickup.

Early dismissal

If schools are closing early, the announcements are made by 11:00 a.m. Schools may be closed 2.5 hours early, and all operations affecting dismissal of students, including bus transportation, will be activated 2.5 hours earlier than the regular school closing time. Early dismissal at Diamond Elementary School is 1:20 p.m. Students in morning Head Start and morning prekindergarten will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m. Midday Head Start and afternoon pre-kindergarten are canceled. School and community activities for the afternoon and evening are canceled.

After-school and weekend activities

Go to Montgomery County web site for information about cancellation of after-school or weekend activities

Montgomery County Winter Safety Tips: Stay safe sledding this winter with these tips. Please discuss these tips with your children:

- Don't go sledding alone. Use the buddy system or go with an adult.
- Never sled down a hill headfirst. Sit upright and face forward to avoid a head injury.
- Make sure the hill is safe and does not include a street, pond, trees or other dangerous obstacles.

For more information on emergency preparedness visit [MC OEMHS](#) or if you do not have access to a computer, contact 311 or 240-777-0311.



Diamond Elementary Arts Program

January Newsletter

What is going on in **Art** class during January?

Kindergarten: students will be creating clay pinch pots.

1st grade Students will be creating stamp printed winter tree branches.

2nd grade will be creating a clay fish.

3rd grade will be creating an illustrated collage.

4th grade will be creating an illustrated collage.

5th grade will be creating a stained glass inspired drawing using oil pastels.

What is going on in **Music** class during January?

Kindergarten students will use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisations. They will identify musical elements and read iconic notation to perform rhythms. Students will sing within a limited vocal range and explore steady beat through playing classroom instruments. Students will respond to beat through locomotor and non-locomotor movement.

1st grade students will use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisations and present them. Students will compare musical sounds: fast/slow, loud/soft, long/short, high/low. Students will perform steady beat on classroom instruments. Students will read simple rhythm and pitch patterns.

2nd grade students will use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire, develop and present musical improvisations. Students will demonstrate proper playing technique for classroom instruments and perform a bourdun to accompany a given melody. Students will read and perform simple rhythms and melodies.

3rd grade students will identify meter in a written musical example. Students will sing songs of varied repertoire including 2 part rounds and read music using the pentatonic scale with pitches of low so and low la.

4th grade students will be working on singing with expressive qualities using various dynamics and tempi. Students will sight read music using solfege, and perform singing games, songs and dances from various cultures.

5th grade students will be working on identifying musical form, identifying major and minor modes, and perform music of world cultures. Students will sing partner songs and descants with clear diction and expression.

Diamond Elementary Arts Program

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What is going on in **Physical Education** class during January?

Kindergarten students will be able to demonstrate bouncing a catching a ball.

1st grade students will be able to demonstrate dribbling a ball with their hands.

2nd grade students will be able to demonstrate dribbling a ball with one hand.

3rd grade students will be able to demonstrate dribbling a basketball with proper technique.

4th grade students will be able to demonstrate passing a basketball with proper technique.

5th grade students will be able to demonstrate shooting a basketball with proper technique.

What is going on in the **Media Center** during January?

In January, the **Media Center** is hosting the very first Diamond Elementary Book Cover Challenge. Let's get creative! Re-create the cover of a children's book. Bring or send the picture to the Media Center and put it in the bin. We will print the picture and hang it on our bulletin boards. Please remember kindness and respect when you make your book cover. The last day to submit a picture is Wednesday, January 28, 2025. Email to marcie.l.gross@mcpssmd.net

Examples

