

DIAMOND MINE

Diamond Elementary School
MARCH 2026



Dear Diamond Elementary Families,

March has quickly come upon us and we are half-way through the third marking period. Our students have been working very hard and we are very proud of their efforts.

During the month of February, students and staff enjoyed classroom Valentine's Day parties! Thank you to all of the room parents, party planners, and staff members for helping make this a memorable event for our students. We also enjoyed an evening event celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year!

During the month of March, we have some fun school events planned including grade level workshops/field trips, Family Math/Reading Night, and Read Across America Week!

If your kids are missing any jackets, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, or water bottles, please check the Lost and Found bins in the main hallway in front of the gym. We have lots of lost items. You will need to bring your driver's license or photo ID to check out the lost and found in the main hallway. The lost and found items will be donated to charity over spring break (March 30-April 2).

If you have any questions, please contact the school's main office staff at 240-740-2120.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal

MARCH CALENDAR

March 2nd-6th: Read Across America Week

March 4th-6th: Hearing and Vision Screening

Tuesday, March 3rd: 1st Grade Assembly– Eric Energy

Wednesday, March 4th: 5th Grade Family Life Parent Information Meeting at 4:15 PM (virtually)

Thursday, March 5th: Family Math/Reading Night– 6:30-7:45 PM
Yearbook group and candid pictures.
Flyer distribution day

Friday, March 6th: 3rd Marking Period Interim Report Distribution

Thursday, March 12th: US Navy Band Assembly– Grades preK-5.

Friday, March 13th: Mayor and Council Member Presentation to grade 3.
PTA sponsored Spring Dance from 6:30-8:30 pm.

Tuesday, March 17th: Goldfish Swim School Assembly for 1st Grade
5th Grade students participating in MISA (Science) Testing

Wednesday, March 18th: 5th Grade students participating in MISA (Science) Testing

Thursday, March 19th: Class & Individual Spring Pictures. Also on Thursday, Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee 9:45-11:00 AM

Friday, March 20th: No School for Students– Professional Day for Teachers/Staff

Tuesday, March 24th: 3rd Grade Field Trip - National Museum of African American History and Culture

March 30th-April 6th: No School for students and staff due to Spring Break.

Tuesday, April 7th: Students and staff return to school.

Student Toys Not Permitted at School: We request that students do not bring personal toys, balls, cards (game cards, Pokemon cards, trading cards, etc), or electronics to school from home. Unfortunately, these items tend to cause disruption with other students, become lost or stolen items. The school provides all necessary recess equipment for student use. If students are bringing personal items for after school events such as a play-date or sleep-over, these items must remain in the student's back-pack and not be used or removed from the back-pack during the school day. The only exception would be if a teacher permits students to bring a personal item from home for show and tell purposes. Any items deemed to be disruptive to the learning environment will be confiscated by school personnel and parents will be notified.

Diamond ES Parent Handbook: The [DES Parent Handbook-2025-2026](#) is a resource available on the Diamond ES website for parents to review when they have questions related to school schedules, procedures, etc.

End of Day Plan Policy- Changes to Normal Dismissal Plans: Students will be sent home using the daily routine communicated by the parent with the school. If a student's plans require a change from their normal dismissal, all changes must be made in writing by note or email to the school. Play dates should be prearranged in advance of the school day. If you forgot to send a note in the morning, or in the event of last minute changes to a student's dismissal plans, please call the main office prior to 3:00 p.m. Any adults who come to pick up a child will be asked to show documentation to verify identification and ensure student safety. Students cannot ride home on friend's school buses for playdates.

Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee Scheduled for March 19th: Diamond Elementary will be holding an Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee for parents who will be sending their child(ren) to Diamond Elementary next fall for Kindergarten. The Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffees are scheduled for Thursday, March 19th from 9:45-11:00 a.m. This event is for parents only. To register for the Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee, please complete the online-form to RSVP your attendance at the Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee: [Kindergarten Parent Coffees Google Form](#). Per Maryland State Department of Education regulations, to be eligible to enter kindergarten for the 2026-2027 school year, **children must be five years of age by September 1, 2026. Children who will turn five years old between September 2 and October 15, 2026 are eligible for consideration for the early entrance to kindergarten process.** Contact Mrs. Chimera in the main office for more information on the early entrance to kindergarten process. The Incoming Kindergarten Coffee will provide parents who are unfamiliar with our kindergarten program with a sneak peek into the Kindergarten program at Diamond ES, a tour of the school and kindergarten classes, and a question and answer session at the end. We ask current Diamond families to pass this information onto any neighbors who may have a child that will be turning 5 years old and will be enrolling in Kindergarten next school year. Please call the main office at 240-740-2120 if you have any questions.

Student Safety Reminders: If your child walks to/from school, please review safety rules with them accordingly. Students should only cross a street at a stop sign, designated crossing area, traffic light, or where a crossing guard is posted. Car-riders driving through the Diamond community should adhere to speed limit postings and drive with caution.

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 at least 32 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.

Financial Aid: Financial aid is available for school field trips. Please contact your child's teacher, Mrs. Christie Meuer or Mrs. Daina Kuzmickas school counselors, or the Diamond Elementary School office if such help is needed.

MCAP Assessment for Grades 3-5: The state of Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, which serve as the foundation for all MCPS Curriculum. The MCAP assessments are computer based and are divided into administered during the month of April/May. The students in grades 3-5 will complete four sessions in English/ Language Arts and four sessions in Mathematics. Student results of the MCAP assessment are mailed home to parents in August/September. For our school, the MCAP testing days are listed below.

Parents can assist in the following ways which include:

- Ensure your child is reading independently every night. Reading can vary from fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Ask your child comprehension questions to ensure they understand what they are reading.
- Review basic math facts: multiplication, division, addition and subtraction
- Make sure your child is in attendance each day for the state assessments (please see assessment chart below)
- Make sure your child has plenty of rest the night before and a healthy breakfast.
- Communicate to your child that they should do their best and “stick with it.”
- Please do not schedule doctor appointments or family events during the MCAP testing schedule for your child’s respective grade level.

MCAP Grade Level Testing Dates

Testing	Date/Time
MISA GRADE 5 (Science)	Grade 5 – Mornings (AM) of March 17, 18
MCAP English Language Arts (Literacy)	Grade 3 – Mornings (PM) on May 4, 5, 6, 7 Grade 4 – Afternoons (AM) on April 13, 14, 16, 17 Grade 5– Mornings (AM) on April 27, 28, 30, and May 1
MCAP Math	Grade 3 – Mornings (AM) on April 20, 21, 22, 24 Grade 4 – Mornings (AM) on May 4, 5, 6, 7 Grade 5 – Mornings (AM) on April 9, 10

Morning (AM) testing time usually ranges from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Afternoon (PM) testing time usually ranges from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For more information about the MCAP assessments, visit the MCPS website <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/mcap/>. For more information about the MCAP assessments, please contact the school, your child's teacher, or our school testing coordinators Mr. Neuman-Sunshine and Mrs. Hageman.

Student Plans and Input for the 2026-2027 School Year

School Enrollment Plans for 2026-2027 (For Families currently in grades K-4):As we begin to plan for the 2026-2027 school year, we need identify our actual enrollment which then has an impact on the number of staff allocated to our school. Please complete this form by April 17, 2026 to indicate if your child will be returning to Diamond ES or not returning. Complete one form per child. Only fill this form out for students currently in grades K-4. If your child is in 5th grade and moving to middle school next year, this form should not be completed. **School Enrollment Plans Form for 2026-2027:** <https://forms.gle/MPtitWbgY5GK3Aoe8>

Please complete this survey form by April 17, 2026. Thank you for providing us with this information as we plan for the next school year.

Diamond ES Parent Input on Student Profile Form for 2026-2027 School Year For Families Currently in Grades K-4: With the end of the current school year quickly approaching, thoughts turn to planning for placement of students in classes for the next school year, 2026-2027. Your child's current teacher will advocate all she/he knows about your child's individual needs and capabilities for the placement decision, as we complete a thorough articulation process for each and every student. Parental input is also valued in the decision making process and the online form below can be used to provide the school with such information. In addition, this optional input form will be passed on to your child's new teacher in the fall. This optional input form should not be used to make a specific teacher request. (teacher requests will not be honored).

The process for composing classes for the upcoming year is a task that we take very seriously through careful and thoughtful consideration as we all want the best for all of the children at Diamond. It is important to ensure a productive classroom learning environment for your child as well as for all children at Diamond. The Diamond staff wants you to know that we are committed to providing classrooms in which each child will have the opportunity for learning and personal growth. When making class placements we consider the following variables as we aim towards creating a well-balanced, productive learning environment for all students:

- Relationships among individual children
- Compatibility between the individual child's learning styles/needs and the classroom environment.
- Heterogeneous placements of student's academic achievement levels
- A balance in terms of gender, ethnicity, and race
- The varying degrees of adult assistance needed by children for successful learning

If you are interested in providing this information to be considered as decisions are made for class placement for next year, please complete the electronic profile form as soon as possible and no later than April 17, 2026. If you provide this form to the school after April 17th, there is no guarantee this information will be used in the class placement process.

DES Student Profile Form: <https://forms.gle/n4jqUPmD1QLZDxTo6> - **Due April 17th.**

Please complete an individual form for each child in your family that will be attending Diamond ES for the 2026-2027 school year. It should be noted that this form is not to be used for specific teacher requests. Such requests will not be honored. Diamond Elementary values parental input and precludes specific teacher request in our process for class placement. This optional form is a way of offering opportunity for those of you who wish to provide parental input. Further confidential concerns about student class placement for 2026-2027 may be addressed in writing to the principal, Mr. Daniel Walder via email: Daniel_walder@mcpsmd.org.

We expect that parents will trust and respect the judgment of the Diamond staff in making placement decisions. We appreciate your support in our efforts to best serve the instructional needs of your child. Diamond Elementary staff members work together to draft initial groupings and class lists in May/June, but these are not finalized until late in the summer when we have the most up-to-date enrollment information. You and your child will be notified between August 17th-21st of the class placement decisions. The first day of school for the 2026-2027 school year is Tuesday, August 25, 2026.

Safety Reminders: The safety of students is our top priority. With that in mind, it is important periodically to share reminders with our Diamond Elementary School students who walk to and from school.

When students are traveling to and from school, it is critical to look both ways before crossing the street. While we encourage all motorists to be on the lookout for students in the morning and afternoon, there's always a possibility that a driver could be distracted. It should never be assumed that a driver will stop.

At intersections with crossing guards, it is critical for students and motorists alike to follow their direction. Crossing guards are trained to ensure the safety of students!

Students should avoid speaking to strangers and never get in the car of someone they do not know. Students, if a stranger approaches you, immediately get away and tell a trusted adult and school staff.

The City of Gaithersburg Police Department has provided the following suggestions for students:

- Students should know a direct route to the school and parents should walk the route with their child(ren) before allowing them to walk the route alone.
- Obey all traffic laws and use crosswalks when available.
- Young children should be accompanied by an adult when walking to school, especially when crossing a roadway.
- Students should refrain from using electronic devices or headphones while walking.
- Be aware of your surroundings and walk with a buddy or group.
- Avoid secluded routes or short cuts.
- Know an alternative route home if the primary route is unavailable (road construction, emergency, etc.).
- Wear bright clothing.
- Do not provide a stranger with any information about yourself or the school you attend.
- If a motorist stops to ask for directions or for help finding a lost pet, never approach the vehicle.
- Never accept rides from strangers, or even people you know, without permission from your parents.
- If someone calls out to you, approaches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable, quickly get to the nearest adult you trust and tell them what happened.
- See something, say something! Report suspicious activity to a trusted adult, parent, police or school official.

We encourage all parents and guardians to review these reminders with their child(ren).

Diamond Elementary Yearbooks

Order Your Diamond ES Yearbook Now

Diamond Elementary School is offering yearbooks for the 2025-2026 school year. Pre-orders started in January and will continue through April 25, 2026, with delivery expected on or about early June. Early-bird price of yearbook is \$25.00 from January 1-April 25. Yearbook Orders after April 25th will cost \$28.00. Yearbooks will be distributed to students in June 2026 before the last day of school.

To order a School Yearbook, follow these 2 easy steps:

- Step 1: Please complete this DES Yearbook Order Form. DES Yearbook Order Form: [DES School Yearbook Order Form](#)
- Step 2: Submit your payment for the DES Yearbook. (There are 3 options for payment)



Option 1: Purchase yearbook online through School Cash Online: <https://mcpsmd.schoolcashonline.com/> or use the QR code that is here.

Option 2: Purchase yearbook with check payable to “Diamond Elementary School” and submit to school’s main office.

Option 3: Purchase yearbook with cash payment (exact payment only: \$25.00) and submit in an envelope addressed to Diamond ES Yearbook to the school’s main office.

We prefer online payments through School Cash Online: <https://mcpsmd.schoolcashonline.com/> As mentioned before, we also accept checks made payable to “Diamond E.S.” or cash payment (exact change only). You can use this [SchoolCash Online](#) document for procedures on setting up an online account.

Any questions regarding the yearbook, please contact yearbook sponsors Mr. Desai @ Rahul_G_Desai@mcpsmd.org or Ms. Fleming @ nakeya_1_fleming@mcpsmd.org

Diamond Elementary Yearbook 2026 order

Only return this tear-off form if you are submitting cash or check payment to order a DES yearbook.

Student's Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Quantity: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____ (\$25 per yearbook by

4/25/26)

School Cash Online

Diamond Elementary School offers SchoolCash Online for making online payments for field trips and other school orders and fees like school yearbook, etc. SchoolCash Online is the preferred method of payment for all school-related fees.

SchoolCash Online helps parents/guardians and community members pay school-related fees safely, quickly, and easily. It will help increase efficiency and security at schools by making payments directly into schools' bank accounts and eliminating the need for teachers to handle money. In addition, once registered, you will be immediately informed about school activities!

Powered by KEV Group, SchoolCash Online is the industry leader in the management of school fees. The system puts all the school-related fees online for purchase so users can make purchases online using a credit card or e-check. A processing fee will be included on all items available for purchase, regardless of the type of payment used on SchoolCash Online or at the school.

How to register

- Go to <https://mcpsmd.schoolcashonline.com/> and click **Register**. Then, click the Green button **“Use your MCPS Parent/Guardian Account”**
- Sign in with your MCPS Parent/Guardian Account login. If you haven't registered with it yet, follow follow these steps:
 - Click “Sign Up now”
 - Enter the email address you have on file at your child's school (e.g., ParentVUE email)
 - Click the “Send verification code” button
 - Enter your verification code from your email and click “Verify code”
 - Create your password for the account.
 - Enter First and Last name in the appropriate fields
 - Enter the email address you have on file at your child's school (e.g., ParentVUE email)
 - Click the “Send verification code” button
 - Enter your verification code from your email and click “Verify code”
 - Create your password for the account.
 - Enter First and Last name in the appropriate fields
 - Click the “Create” button
 - Go back to https://mcpsmd.schoolcashonline.com and sign in with the email address on file and the password you created
 - Answer “Yes” to receive email notifications of new school-related fees assigned to your student.

If you have any questions, please contact the school's main office tea

Student Transfer Application Season Scheduled from the First School Day in February 2026 Through the First School Day in April 2026

Montgomery County parents/guardians who wish to request a Change of School Assignment (COSA) for their children from their home school may begin the process during the upcoming transfer season; from February 2 through April 7, 2026. COSA requests will not be accepted after April 1, 2026, unless the family is new to their address or there is an emergency event that could not have been foreseen.

Students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are expected to attend the school within the established attendance area in which they reside (home school) or assigned in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students may apply for Change of School Assignment (COSA) from the home school, or the school of assignment through the IEP process, based on the following criteria:

- When a documented unique hardship is shown: Students may apply for a COSA when extenuating circumstances related to their specific physical, mental or emotional well-being or their family's individual or personal situation could be mitigated by a change of school assignment.
- When a family moved within Montgomery County who wish to continue attending their former home school may request a COSA without demonstrating a unique hardship. Such requests may be considered for a remainder of the current school year only, with the exception that students in Grade 11 or 12 may be granted a COSA to stay through high school graduation.
- When a student seeks to attend the school where a sibling will be enrolled in the regular/general school program, or a special education program, during the year the students wants to enroll.
 - ▶ When a sibling attends a magnet, language immersion or other application program at elementary level, a COSA may be approved to the regular school program for other sibling on a case-by-case basis. Such approval requires consideration of available classroom space, grade-level enrollment, staffing allocations, or other factors that impact the schools involved.

The criteria above regarding siblings do not apply if a boundary change has occurred or if the sibling is in PreK. Consideration will be given to school capacity and other issues that impact the ability of the requested school to admit new students.

The transfer process begins in the home school, where parents/guardians may request the *Change of School Assignment (COSA) Information Booklet* through ParentVue. The booklet describes the process, and provides useful information. Beginning the first week of February 2026, the COSA booklet will be available in both English and Spanish. Exempt countywide programs that do not fall under the transfer guidelines are listed in the booklet.

New for the 2026-2027 school year, parents must submit their request for a change of school assignment (COSA) online through their ParentVue portal. The parent making the request will be copied on an email notification sent to the administrative team of the student's current school shortly after the submission; this will serve as their "receipt" of request and will be sent to the email they entered when completing the online form.

For information about assignments for students residing in the Northeast, Downcounty or Middle School Magnet Consortium areas, please contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services 240-740-7800 or visit the website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice.

For more information about the transfer process, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the principal at their home school. Non-english speaking students and parents/guardians who may require assistance may contact ASK MCPS to get the information they need by telephone at 240-740-3000. Telephone operators who speak English and Spanish are available from 7:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. Parents who speak languages other than English or Spanish who call the ASK MCPS telephone line and identify their language will have their questions answered through a telephone interpreter.

English and translated copies of Form 335-45, Request for Change of School Assignment, is available online at <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/transfers/>.



Diamond Elementary Arts Program

March Newsletter

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

Kindergarten will be creating layered artwork in the style of Basquiat.

First Grade will be creating symmetrical collaged insects on a glue-resist leaf.

Second Grade will be creating a paper weaving.

Third Grade will be sculpting clay cupcakes.

Fourth Grade will be sewing together an ice cream soft sculpture.

Fifth Grade will be generating ideas for a legacy mural artwork.

MCPS Upcounty Art Show from March 11-15 at Montgomery College Germantown Campus, Bioscience Education Center, 20200 Observation Drive, Germantown, MD 20876

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

Kindergarten - Students will produce appropriate sounds in response to picture symbols representing long/short and high/low sounds. Students will maintain the steady beat on found sound instruments and using locomotor and non-locomotor movements. Students will learn simple circle, hand, and partner games.

1st grade - Students will be working on reading simple rhythm and pitch patterns. Students will notate simple rhythm and pitch patterns, placing notes in spaces and on lines. Students will identify musical form that is the same or different (AB or ABA).

2nd grade - Students will be working on reading simple rhythm and pitch patterns and musical symbols. Students will sing with proper breath support and posture. Students will maintain a simple drone or bordun on barred instruments. Students will learn dances from various cultures.

3rd grade - Students will read simple melodies and interpret music symbols to perform songs on the recorder. Students will sing in 2–3-part rounds. Students will listen to, sing and play songs in compound meter. Students will learn dances from various cultures.

4th grade - Students will read, perform, and notate rhythmic phrases from standard notation. Students will listen to, sing, and play songs in compound meter. Students will learn dances from various cultures.

5th grade - Students will read, perform, and notate rhythmic phrases from standard notation. Students will listen to, sing, and play songs in compound meter. Students will continue to sing partner songs and create simple improvisations. Students will learn dances from various cultures.

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

Kindergarten students will be able to identify that the heart beats fast when performing moderate to vigorous physical activity.

1st grade students will be able to identify how the heart, lungs, and skin react during and after moderate to vigorous physical activity (e.g., heart beats fast, deeper breathing, and skin sweats).

2nd grade students will be able to explain why the heart, lungs, and skin are affected during and after moderate to vigorous physical activity (e.g., heart beats faster to pump blood with oxygen to the muscles, lungs breathe deeper to provide more oxygen throughout the body, and the skin sweats to cool the body).

3rd grade students will be working on sequence, rhythm, formation and coordinated movement by creating a solo dance routine.

4th grade students will be working on unison, and other dance relationships by creating a partner dance routine.

5th grade students will be working on creative dance by creating a group dance routine



Diamond Elementary Arts Program

March Newsletter

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

In March, the **Media Center** is celebrating Read Across America Spirit week! Read Across America week is March 2-6, 2026. Let's celebrate our love of reading and learning. Flyers will be coming home with students.

Monday, March 2 is: Hats off to reading - Wear a hat to school.

Tuesday, March 3 is: Team up for reading - Wear a sports-themed shirt or jersey.

Wednesday, March 4 is: Reading colors our world - Wear your favorite color.

Thursday, March 5 is: Reading gives us character - Dress up like a character from a favorite book.

Friday, March 6 is: Cozy up with a good book - Wear pajamas or cozy clothes to school.

During Spring Break, students will have the opportunity to create a book character using recycled materials. Flyers will be distributed during the week of March 23.

Diamond Elementary Counseling Corner

What is going on in **K-2 Counseling Lessons** during March?

In March, we will complete the **Communicating Effectively Unit** through cooperation and teamwork activities. Students in Kindergarten will:

- Communicate and cooperate fairly in a team.
- Foster collaborative teamwork skills.
- Name ways to cooperate.

1st Grade Students will:

- Understand how to communicate and cooperate productively in a team.
- Practice cooperating with peers in a shared activity.

2nd Grade Students will:

- Learn how and why teamwork is important as they work together on a group project, recognizing that they can accomplish more together than they can alone.
- Demonstrate how good teamwork requires listening, cooperating, sharing ideas, and helping others.

What is going on in 3-5 **Counseling Lessons** during March?

Students in 3rd and 4th grade will be learning about strategies they can implement during MCAP testing. We will be discussing, reviewing, and practicing test taking strategies and stress reduction strategies, such as deep breathing, stretching, and positive self-talk. In addition, we continue our series of lessons on conflict resolution and will be talking about brainstorming win-win solutions.

Students In 5th grade will continue our discussion on executive functioning skills. We will be discussing time management, paying attention, and following directions. Students will be learning four strategies for time management including creating a to-do list, positive self-talk, prioritizing, and paying attention to time.