NOVEMBER 2026

Dear Diamond Parents,

It is hard to believe we are beginning our second marking period. As we kickoff the second quarter, we will be having first quarter parent/teacher conferences which are scheduled for November 23rd & 24th, or sooner. Many parents have already scheduled their conference date and time with their child's teacher. If you have not received a parent conference date and time, please contact your child's teacher. During your scheduled parent/teacher conference, you will hear specific information on your child's academic and social progress during the first marking period.

We would like to thank all parent volunteers who were able to attend the Halloween/Harvest festivities. We would also like to thank all parents who attended to cheer on our students during the Halloween costume parade. We have many things going on at Diamond Elementary this month. We will have Teacher Professional Day on Monday, November 2 for the end of the marking period, followed by our Open House for Parents/Guardians on Wednesday, November 11th from 9:05-11:25AM for PEP-grades 5. Also, we have Parent/Teacher Conferences on Monday, November 23 and Tuesday, November 24, which are Early Release Days. Early Dismissal begins at 1:20 p.m.

As we get closer to the Thanksgiving holiday, we would like to wish you and your children a safe and healthy month and a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday with friends and family! During this holiday, as families and individuals share their thanks, We would like to…

- Thank all the parents who have already scheduled their parent-teacher conferences! We are hoping to achieve our goal of 100% participation, so if you have not yet scheduled a meeting, please contact your child's teacher.
- Thank you to the Diamond families who have already joined our Parent-Teacher Association, please consider doing so. Our PTA supports our students, staff and school-wide programs in endless ways, big and small.
- Thank you to all of our parent volunteers who share their time with students and staff to support our instructional program.
- Thank you to all families who donated winter coats during the Mrs. Andrea Virga Annual Coat Drive. We collected many winter coats that will be donated to local charity. Thank you to our parent volunteers who helped organized, collect, and wash the donated coats.
- Thank you to each and every one of you for entrusting your child to us every day. It is our privilege to teach your children and we are thankful for the support from this wonderful community.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Monday, November 2- No School for Students– Professional Day for Teachers– Grading/Reporting

Tuesday, November 3- No School for Students and Staff– Election Day

Friday, November 6- 5th Grade Parent/Guardian Picnic Lunch from 12:25-12:55 PM; 1st Grade Parent/Guardian Picnic Lunch from 1:20-1:50 PM

Wednesday, November 11- Open House for Grades PEP/preK-5– 9:05-11:35 AM

Thursday, November 12- First Marking Period Report Cards Sent Home in Student Backpacks & Finngo Bingo Night at 6:00 PM

Monday-Friday, November 16-20
PTA Book Fair

Wednesday, November 18- Book Fair Family Night from 5:00-7:30 PM

Monday, November 23- Early Release Day– students dismissed at 1:20 p.m. Parent/Teacher Conferences. No School for PEP classes

Tuesday, November 24- Early Release Day– students dismissed at 1:20 p.m. Parent/Teacher Conferences. No School for PEP Classes

Wednesday, November 25-Early Release Day– students dismissed at 1:20 p.m.

November 26-27- Thanksgiving

We wish you and your children a safe and healthy month! If you have any questions, please contact the school's main office team at 240-740-2120.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal

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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS:

Personal Mobile/Electronic Devices: based on Diamond Elementary School and MCPS policies, elementary students are not permitted to possess or use a personal mobile devices (including cell phones, e-readers, i-watches, ipads, etc.) on school grounds during the instructional day or at MCPS sponsored elementary school activities, including school building, field-trips, etc. If a child has an electronic device/cell phone, the device may be confiscated by the school staff and parents will be notified to come to school to pick up the phone. Students may get permission to use the main office telephones during the school day, before, and after school whenever they need to communicate with a parent or guardian with emergency issues. Calls about dismissal changes are made through the main office. Calls about medical concerns are made through the Health Room. Social calls or playdate arrangement calls are not allowed during the school day. Students are provided with student chromebook laptop computers to use at Diamond ES during the instructional day. While on MCPS property at Diamond ES, students must use the MCPS network (not private cellular networks) for Internet access, where MCPS uses filtering and other technological measures to limit students' ability to access harmful Internet sites. Diamond ES and MCPS will assume no responsibility or liability for loss, theft, or damage to any child's personal mobile device or for the unauthorized use and possession of any such device. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the school administration. Personal mobile devices include Mobile phones, e-readers, tablets, personal computers, or other devices equipped with microphones, speakers, and/or cameras, and other similar non-MCPS issued devices are all considered personal mobile devices (PMDs) and are sub-ject to MCPS Regulation COG-RA, *Personal Mobile Devices*, and MCPS Regulation -IGT-RA, *Responsibilities for Computer Systems, Electronic Information, and Network Security*.

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 and display their driver's license. 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.

• 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, visit the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org, the Montgomery County government website at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/resident/flu.html. In addition, you can visit the DES Health page at https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/schools/elementary-schools/d-g/diamondes/uploadedfiles/health-room-welcome-letter.pdf or contact the DES health room staff at 240-740-2122.

How to Contact Diamond Elementary Staff Members: You can contact your child's teacher or any Diamond Elementary staff member by email or phone call. Parents/Guardians can leave phone messages for staff at 240-740-2120. Staff email addresses can be found on the Diamond Elementary School website, http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/ under the Staff Directory section, which is available at the following web link: https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org//directory/directory_Boxschool.aspx?processlevel=02570

In order to maximize instructional time, teachers will only be available to speak by telephone before or after the student day. Calls for teachers should be made between 8:45 a.m.- 9:10 a.m. and 4:10 p.m.- 4:25 p.m. Otherwise, the main office staff will leave a message with the teacher/staff member. In addition, teacher email addresses may be found on the Diamond website. We will do our best to return all phone or email messages within 24 hours.

Planning for Parent/Teacher Conferences: The parent-teacher conference is your opportunity to discuss how your child is doing in school. The conference also is an opportunity to strengthen the partnership with your child's teacher. Be sure to keep these tips in mind as you prepare for the conference:

- For interpretation services to be provided, please contact the school at least one week before the conference.
- How much time should I expect my child to spend on homework each night (each week)?
- What does my child need to continue to work on?
- What are my child's strengths?
- How does my child get along with classmates?
- What can I do at home to support what my child is learning at school?
- 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.

If you will need a translator or interpreter for the conference, please let your child's teacher know as soon as possible. The following link includes a planning form that can be used for the conference.
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/parents/Parent-Teacher-Conference-Planner.pdf

another way to distribute birthday cards such as using the PTA directory to look up student contact information.

Safety Update: One of our commitments to the school community is to provide a safe and secure environment for all students, staff members, and families. As we have many students who walk to and from school each day, we encourage students to walk in groups. In addition, our bus drivers want to make sure our kindergarten students have someone who will meet them at the bus stop or that they have an older student to walk them home. In addition, develop and discuss an emergency plan with your children for what they should do on early dismissal days (whether it is scheduled or due to inclement weather, no heat, no power) or if they arrive home and no adult is there.

End of Day Plan Policy: With changes to Dismissal Plans: Students will be sent home using the daily routine communicated with the school and your child's teacher 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 who is going with another student on a different bus, cannot ride the bus unless he/she has a written note from his/her parent. If you forgot to send a note in the morning, you can call the office prior to 3:00 p.m. ***Play Dates:*** If your child has a "play date" after school and will be accompanying another student home by bus transportation, car-rider, or walker, your child **MUST** have written authorization from their parent/guardian for this to occur. If a child does not have written permission from their parent for a play date, school staff will have the child report home by following their normal routine.

Late Arrivals: Students should be in their classrooms by 9:25 a.m. each morning. We know that you make every effort to ensure that your child arrives on time. In the event that you do run late, a parent or guardian must accompany the child to the main office to sign in ad receive a late slip. Children may not sign themselves in. To ensure the safety of our students, please do not drop them at the curb when arriving late.

Request for Language Assistance Translation: If parents need oral interpretation services or sign language interpretation for school meetings, parent-teacher conferences, school events, etc., please notify your child's teacher or contact the main office. Oral interpretation requests need to be made at least two weeks in advance of the school meeting or event to ensure interpreter availability.

Diamond ES & MCPS Volunteer Training: All Diamond Elementary parents, guardians, and community members who wish to volunteer at Diamond Elementary School by helping in the classroom, media center, chaperoning on grade-level field trips, lunch and/or recess, must complete the three-step volunteer training process which includes the Diamond Elementary Volunteering Training and the MCPS Child Abuse and Neglect Training before volunteering can begin at the school. Volunteers who completed both the Diamond ES and MCPS Child Abuse and Neglect training will be required to repeat the training every three years. We will notify you when you need to do the training again.

All new Volunteers will need to complete both trainings before you begin volunteering at the school (classroom, chaperone on field trips, etc). Both trainings are completed online (the links to the trainings are below) by reviewing the power point presentation, reading the volunteer statement of commitment, completing the MCPS volunteer training on recognizing and reporting child abuse, and then verifying that you have reviewed the training information. You can complete it online at home or at school. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this training. It should take about no more than 40 minutes which includes the Diamond Volunteer Training and the MCPS volunteer training on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. The MCPS Child Abuse and Neglect Volunteer Training can be found on the MCPS website at Volunteer Training Information. While we encourage all community members to engage in this important, informative training, currently we only require individuals who **regularly** support schools to complete the child abuse and neglect training. The online training is available in Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Parents/guardians will not be barred from participation in their schools due to the need for training accommodations. Answers to frequently asked

Step 2. Complete the mandatory online Volunteer Training Information is required for any volunteer who regularly supports schools, chaperones a field trip, etc. and is available in multiple languages. When the course is completed, a report is created to serve as proof of satisfying the training requirement. On the right hand side of the Volunteer page, click on the red section that says Online Training for Parents/Guardians or Online Training for Non-Parents (Contractors, Volunteer Coaches, and Community Members). **Parent/Guardians/Caretakers** with a ParentVUE account can access the training through their account using this set of directions (page 2). **Community members** can use the same set of directions beginning on page 4. The directions include pictures that support the step-by-step directions.

Step 3: After completing the training, you will receive an email confirmation from MCPS regarding completion of the MCPS training for child abuse and neglect. Please forward the email confirmation or print a copy and submit to the main office to Mrs. Christine Chimera, school secretary at Christine_M_Chimera@mcpsmd.org or print a copy and send to the school's main office.

Volunteer Training on how to use school equipment including the copier machine and cutting equipment will be provided to parents and volunteers who volunteer at school and are interested in learning proper ways to use equipment.

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MCPS UPDATES:

MCPS Is on the Rise! More Schools Earn Top STAR Ratings: Big news worth celebrating! 134 MCPS schools, nearly 69%, earned 4 or 5 STAR ratings on the 2026 Maryland School Report Card. Fifty-six schools improved their STAR ratings, including 50 that reached four or five STARs. Even better, ZERO MCPS schools received a 1-STAR rating! These results reflect the hard work of our students, educators and school communities, with important gains in reading and math across the district. Read the Press Release | Read the Information One-Pager | Watch the Event Video

School Closure and Consolidation Study: Last Round One Virtual Session; Nov. 2: MCPS is wrapping up the first phase of community engagement sessions on the elementary and middle school closure and consolidation study. The final opportunity to provide feedback in a virtual meeting is: Join on Zoom — **Mon, Nov. 2, 6-7 p.m.** If you've already attended one of our sessions, please take the time to share your perspective on our feedback form. Your valuable input will be reflected in our updated FAQs, which will be available in the coming weeks. **The form is open through Wednesday, Nov. 4**. A second round of engagement sessions will be held in late November and early December. Visit mcpsstudy.org to review study information, explore frequently asked questions, learn about the process and find opportunities to share your feedback. Learn more.

Inside MCPS: The Realities of Our Aging Facilities: Leaking roofs. Failing heating and cooling systems. Aging buildings. Rising construction costs. The hard truth is that MCPS has significant facility needs, and waiting to address them only makes the problems more expensive. In a new video series, "The Hard Truth," MCPS takes you inside schools and support facilities to show the real facilities challenges facing our district. The Hard Truth: Doing nothing is not an option. Watch the Video Series

Be Sure to Weigh In on the 2027-2028 School Calendar: As MCPS continues to develop the 2027-2028 school calendar, the district is seeking more input from you! Complete this second survey to share input on the proposed draft calendar for the 2027-2028 school year. The survey will close on Friday, Nov. 6. Take the survey.

What is going on in Art class during the month of November?

Kindergarten- Students will be creating a fall leaf collage after exploring a variety of painting materials on paper.

1st grade – Students will be creating an abstract collage.

2nd grade – Students will be completing a glue resist pumpkin still life.

3rd grade – Students will be creating foil relief artwork.

4th grade – Students will be creating a clay coil bowl.

5th grade—Students will be using sewing techniques to create their version of an "Ugly Doll".

What is going on in Physical Education class during the month of November?

Kindergarten *will be working on self-throwing and catching.*

1st grade *will be working on underhand throwing and catching.*

2nd grade *will be working on overhand throwing to stationary objects and catching a pass from a partner.*

3rd grade *will be working on overhand throwing and catching at different levels.*

4th grade *will be working on overhand throwing to a moving partner and catching on the move.*

5th grade *will be working on overhand throwing to lead a partner and catching over the shoulder.*

What is going on in Music class during the month of November?

In **Kindergarten,** students will create and respond to music by keeping and maintaining the steady beat, read iconic notation that shows long/short and high/low sounds, show same/different in music selections through movement, singing and/or the use of unpitched percussion and use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisation.

In **1st grade**, students will respond, create and perform by identifying high/low, and long/short sounds in music, imitate rhythmic and tonal patterns, maintain the steady beat through movement and on instruments, identify the number of sounds on a beat, use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisation, and identify classroom instruments and percussion instrument families

In **2nd grade**, students will respond, create and perform by playing a bordun with proper technique on barred instruments, maintaining the steady beat through movement and singing games, identify strong vs. weak beats and simple vs. compound meters, read standard notation to perform rhythms of half notes and half rests, use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisation, sing and read the pentatonic scale, identify appropriate criteria for classroom performances and audience behaviors, and continue classifying classroom and orchestral instruments.

In **3rd grade**, students will respond, create and perform by singing within an octave range, in two-part rounds and with correct posture and breath support, sing songs of varied repertoire and read music using simple rhythms including 16th notes, read music using the extended pentatonic scale with pitches of low so and low la, use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisation, and read and identify music symbols for pitches B, A, G and E, on the staff of the treble clef while playing the recorder.

In **4th grade**, students will respond, create and perform by Singing in three- and four-part rounds, with expressive qualities of tempo and dynamics, sight read rhythms and pitches using solfege and rhythm syllables, identify repeating and contrasting phrases, music in major and minor modes, perform singing games, songs, and dances from various cultures and use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisation.

In **5th grade**, students will respond, create and perform by reading syncopated rhythms and pitches in the diatonic scale, identify major and minor modes and music in triple meter, perform music including songs and dances from various periods and world cultures, sing partner songs and descants with clear diction and expression and use ideas from a song, book or poem to inspire musical improvisation.

What is going on in the Media Center during the month of November?

In November, the **Media Center** is celebrating National Picture Book Month, an international literacy celebration that highlights how words and illustrations work together to build empathy, imagination, and reading skills. This month's reading challenge will be to gobble up a good picture book! Students will be given a feather to write the name and author of a picture book they read this month. They can color and decorate the paper feather and turn it in for a prize. Feathers will be added to their grade-level turkeys on our Gobble up a good book bulletin board outside of the Media Center. Feathers are due by Friday, November 20th.

our school counselors: Christie Meuer at christie_m_meuer@mcpsmd.org or Daina Kuzmickas at daina_kuzmickas@mcpsmd.org.

What's going on in Counseling during November?

Students in grades K-2 in guidance counseling lessons, begin Unit 2 called **Valuing Each Other.** Our goal is to discover what makes each of them special and unique, while learning how our differences help us learn from one another.

Key Learning Goals:

- Identify and name the benefits of diversity.
- Foster openness to learn about and from classmates.
- Celebrate individual experiences, interests, and talents.

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will receive the annual Personal Body Safety Lesson during the first 2 weeks in November. A letter will be coming home after your student receives the lesson in their class that discusses the objectives of the lesson.

Personal Body Safety Lessons:

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is taking an active role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect through early prevention and intervention education. MCPS implements Personal Body Safety Lessons (PBSLs) with grade-level, age appropriate content for students in every grade from Pre-K to 12. These lessons were developed with input from national stakeholders and County partners, and are designed to empower students to recognize and report suspected cases of abuse without fear of reprisal. The Chief of the State's Attorney's Office—Special Victims Division has commended MCPS on the PBSLs and shared publicly that these lessons are making a difference in children reporting incidents of abuse and neglect. In addition, embedded in the MCPS elementary and secondary health curriculum are age-appropriate lessons on safety and injury prevention, family life and human sexuality, cyberbullying and social media, healthy relationships, harassment and intimidation.

During the months of November and December, our school counselors and classroom teachers will be presenting lessons on the topic of child abuse and neglect with all grade levels Kindergarten through Grade 5. The lessons are known as Personal Body Safety Lessons and their purpose is to help students to:

- Develop knowledge, decision making skills, and behaviors which promote safe living in the home, school, and community;
- Learn skills for self-protection and identifying child abuse and neglect;
- Learn skills for asking for help for self and others and practice reporting to a trusted adult; and
- Engage in positive and appropriate interactions with peers and adults.

Parent Resources:

Ensuring Student Safety- Personal Body Safety Lessons Website: https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/childabuseandneglect/personal-body-safety-lessons

This webpage provides an overview of the lesson objectives for each grade level.

Elementary Personal Body Safety Lessons Overview and Resources for Parents: https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/district/childabuseandneglect/Parent-Elementary-Personal-Body-Safety-Lessons-Overview-and-Resources.pdf

well as how to respond when dealing with the students who do *engage in such behavior*, that is, behavior that is disrespectful and possibly even unsafe.



1) Stop Students were taught our hand motion for the Stop signal, which is to hold their left hand palm up and have their right hand move in a perpendicular position and stop on their left hand. The student should then say "Stop (and the behavior that is causing concern)" in a firm, strong voice**.**

Likewise, students were also taught how to respond ***if they are given the Stop signal.*** The student receiving the Stop signal should immediately stop what he or she is doing, take a deep breath, and then go on with their day following our school rules. Students were taught that they should stop what they are doing, regardless of whether or not they *agree* that they deserved the stop signal, or even if they think they were "just joking", etc. In other words, students were told that "when someone at Diamond tells you to stop, *you need to stop".* By following these guidelines, students are thereby showing respect for themselves and others.



2) *Walk* If a student gives another student the stop signal, but the problem behavior still continues, students should then ***Walk*** away. Students brainstormed where they could walk to such as a different location on the playground to continue playing or a different square on the carpet.



3*) Talk* Finally, if students have tried to solve the problem by doing the ***Stop*** and ***Walk*** steps, but the peer problem continues, then the student should ***Talk*** to an adult. All of our staff members have been trained on how to respond to a student's request to talk. First, the staff member will ask the student about the problem. Then, they will ask the student if they used the stop signal and tried walking away. Students will be praised for trying these steps or reminded about using these steps first before talking to an adult. Finally, the staff member will discuss the problem behavior with the student who is engaging in the problem or disrespectful behavior. They will remind students what they are to do when they are given the stop signal by another student (i.e., to immediately stop what they are doing, take a deep breath, and continue with their day following our school rules). In addition, staff will enforce the appropriate consequence for breaking one of our school rules. If the student continues to engage in disrespectful or unsafe behaviors, parents will receive notification from a staff member.

One important exception to the **Stop Walk Talk** sequence would be if a student has been hurt or is in some type of danger. In such cases, students were told to *immediately* tell an adult, without even using the **Stop** and **Walk** steps.

Our goal in teaching and encouraging the use of the Stop Walk Talk steps is to provide students with some problem-solving tools that can help them deal with situations they may encounter.

Please support our students' use of Stop Walk Talk at home, at school, and in the community by modeling and encouraging respectful behavior toward others and problem solving when there are conflicts. By working together as partners, we can best

- A, B, C, D in Grades 2–5.
- Kindergarten students will get a report card four times (instead of twice) per year.
- Includes overall subject grade (in addition to the end-of-year average and measurement topics per marking period).
- Includes reporting of key learning skills.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade Grading Scale

Grade	Descriptor
P	Evidence shows complete understanding and use of grade-level concepts. Errors do not impact understanding.
I	Evidence shows incomplete understanding and use of grade-level concepts. Errors impact understanding
N	Evidence shows minimal understanding and use of grade level concepts. Critical errors impact understanding.

Grades 2-5 Grading Scale

Grade	Descriptor
A	Evidence demonstrates a full understanding of content, concepts, or skill. Errors or omissions are absent or do not impact understanding.
B	Evidence demonstrates general understanding of content, concept, or skill with minimal support. Errors or omissions may impact understanding.
C	Evidence demonstrates some understanding of content, concept or skill with some support. Errors or omissions impact understanding
D	Evidence demonstrates limited or minimal understanding of content, concept and skill with significant support Errors or omissions are critical and impact understanding.

Learning skills will also be updated to include personal and social development skills and thinking and academic success skills. Personal and Social Development Skills are the effort and behaviors that affect learning. The chart below explains the meaning of the codes for Personal and Social Development Skills and Thinking and Academic Success Skills.

Measurement topics are a group of related content, skills or processes in a subject. For example, foundational skills are a measurement topic in the category of reading and geometry is a measurement topic in math.

Code	Description
DEM	Demonstrating
PRG	Progressing
N	Not yet evident

For more on report cards and the grading and reporting process and to view the MCPS video on the report card, visit https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading/report-cards.

All report cards are being posted in ParentVUE. If parents have an active ParentVUE account, they will not receive a