

Stedwick Elementary School

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August 12, 2026

Dear Stedwick Parents, Caregivers, and Families:

It is with overwhelming joy that I welcome you to Stedwick Elementary School (SES) for the 2026-2027 school year!

As I reflect on my second year as the proud principal of SES, I am full of gratitude for the hard work of our staff and students, and pride for all that we accomplished. During this past school year, I continued to invest significant time and attention to developing genuine relationships with students, staff and families. We laughed together, we cried together, we mourned together, and we GREW together as a community. We had great times, but we also experienced growing pains, which our end of year climate data reflected. The data told us that Stedwick is a school where our staff look forward to coming to work each day - that they feel seen, valued and respected, but that there are areas where we can do and be better. The data told us that parents and caregivers trust us with the education, safety and well-being of their most precious assets, their children AND that there is still room for improvement with regard to student achievement and communication. Our student achievement data provided us with tangible proof of our commitment to student learning, with significant growth in foundational reading skills, reading and math proficiency in the primary grades, and the acquisition of English Language Proficiency for 25 of our students' whose home language is not English. With all of that being said, the data told us clearly that we still have significant work to do. While I am so very proud of our growth and gains, my vision is for EVERY Stedwick Star to demonstrate proficiency in both reading and math at the grade level standard or to be meeting the goals of their alternative learning outcomes. And so we must get to work so that we can get there.

As I embark upon year three as the proud principal of Stedwick, I remain committed to cultivating meaningful relationships with students, staff and families, because it is these relationships that fuel our resolve to do the hard work of teaching and learning. As a community of lifelong learners, we will continue to grow the capacity of our staff, so that we can all do our part in growing our babies into the best readers, thinkers, mathematicians, classmates, friends, and citizens that they can possibly be.

As we get closer to the start of the new school year, you can expect to receive communication directly from your child's teacher. During the week of August 17th, as teachers prepare to welcome your children, they will send each child a postcard via mail, welcoming them to the class. The postcard will contain pertinent information, including the teacher's name, classroom number, and information about Open House.

To that end, we invite you and your children to attend Open House from 2:30-3:30 p.m. on Friday, August 21, 2026. Open House is a wonderful opportunity for you and your children to meet their teachers, explore the building, practice walking to the classroom, and prepare mentally for the start of school. There will be a **special meeting for parents of kindergarten students from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.** During this meeting, parents of all kindergarten students will be given a general overview of the kindergarten program, visit their child's classroom and have an opportunity to ask questions.

TRANSITION DAY

This year, all MCPS schools will host a Student Transition Day on Monday, August 24, 2026. This is a non-instructional day designed to welcome and foster a sense of belonging and preparedness for students who are new to our school. At Stedwick ES, this includes ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS and any students in grades 1-5 who are NEW TO STEDWICK ES THIS YEAR. The day will begin at 9:25 a.m. and end at 3:50 p.m. Students should arrive no earlier than 9:10 a.m. Students who will be bus riders should ride the bus as they normally would in the morning and in the afternoon. On Transition Day, our new students will have an exclusive opportunity to learn about our school and get to know their teachers. They will have a day to acclimate to the demands associated with new surroundings and new expectations, without having any academic demands. **Students who are not in kindergarten, or new to Stedwick ES WILL NOT report to Stedwick ES on Student Transition Day. The first instructional day for all returning students will be Tuesday, August 25, 2025.** Grade 5 Safety Patrols will also attend on Transition Day, as they will provide peer support to our new students.

STAFFING CHANGES

As is often the case, a number of staff members made the decision to retire or to pursue new opportunities at other schools and offices in MCPS. We were sad to say farewell to the following members of the Stedwick community:

Mrs Veneth Waters	Principal Intern
Ms. Chloe Banks	PreK Teacher
Ms. Virginia Thackston	Kindergarten Teacher/Team Leader
Mrs. Haley Webb	Grade 2 Teacher
Ms. Faith Antizzo	Special Education (Learning for Independence)
Ms. Reeshemah Robinson	Special Education (Home School Model)
Mr. James Carmichael	Part Time Physical Education Teacher
Ms. Galy Jackmakjian	Part-Time Art Teacher
Mrs. Madeline Wodaski-Reyes	Community School Liaison
Mrs. Moira LeVeck	Paraeducator
Mrs. Yelena Thorne-Keziah	Paraeducator
Ms. Yvonne Riggs	Paraeducator
Mr. Alan Harsh	Paraeducator

I would also like to welcome our new staff members:

Ms. Medha Balsaraf	Special Education (Autism)
Ms. Kelly Soderstrum	Part-Time Physical Education Teacher
Ms. Jill Hobbs	Part-Time Art Teacher
Mrs. Michelle Thomas	Community School Liaison
Ms. Giuseppina Alving	Paraeducator
Mr. Yury Delgado	Paraeducator
Ms. Heather Harman	Paraeducator
Ms. Jayla James	Paraeducator

Additionally, the following staff will be taking on different roles this year:

Ms. Barbra Lewis Green	Grade 1 Teacher
Mrs. Donna Blakely	Grade 2 Teacher

Mr. Tim Racosky
Mrs. Rochelle Frenche
Mrs. Heather Cotton
Mr. Ajay Branch

Grade 3 Teacher
Grade 3 Teacher
Grade 4 Teacher
Grade 5 Teacher

FIRST INSTRUCTIONAL DAY LOGISTICS: TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2025

Again, Stedwick staff members are excited to receive our students on the **first instructional day of school, Tuesday, August 25, 2025**. As a reminder, the Stedwick Elementary School day begins at 9:25 a.m. and ends at 3:50 p.m. **Students should arrive no earlier than 9:10 a.m.**

When students arrive on the first day of school, they should enter through the main entrance. Once in the building, students from grades K-3 will be met by their teachers and escorted to their classrooms. Students in grades 4 and 5 will walk directly to their classrooms, where their teachers will be waiting to greet them. There will be plenty of staff members in the hallways to assist them in finding their way on the first day. When students arrive on the second day of school, they will come directly into the building and report to their classrooms. This will be the morning routine for the remainder of the school year, so we ask that you say your good-byes at the exterior door and allow your child to enter the building on their own. Once again, there will be staff members available to direct children to their classrooms, as needed.

Please note, students who will ordinarily ride the bus to and from school should ride the bus to school on the first day. Students will be greeted by a staff member at the bus and identified as a rider of that bus. The teacher will use this information to dismiss children.

Here is the link to our [Stedwick Elementary School website](#), where you can find the links to our bus schedules, school supply lists, and attendance reporting. Please discuss appropriate bus behavior with your children before the beginning of the school year. I encourage you to review [What You Should Know About Riding the Bus](#), a helpful guide provided by our colleagues in the transportation department. If you have any questions regarding the transportation schedule, please call our Department of Transportation at 240-740-6220.

If you will transport your child to school, please use the left lane, which is the car lane and follow the instructions of the staff members who will be directing traffic. **Do not drive in the right bus lane, do not drive beyond the cones, and do not leave your vehicles unattended at any time, for any reason.** In addition, there is a **sign which prohibits left turns from Stedwick Road, into the school parking lot.** You should plan an arrival route that will allow you to adhere to that signage and to avoid incurring traffic citations. For more detailed information, please review the [Stedwick ES Arrival and Dismissal Procedures](#) prior to the first day of school so that you know what to expect and can govern yourself accordingly. We know that pick-up and drop-off can be stressful, as we are all focused on making it to our next destinations; however, **abusive language, lewd gestures, and aggressive driving will NOT be tolerated on our school grounds.** Please remember that our first priority is to keep our students and staff safe. We are all carrying precious cargo, so **DRIVE SAFELY and BE COURTEOUS.**

BACK TO SCHOOL

Back to School Night will take place here at Stedwick ES, on Wednesday, September 16th, from 6:00-8:00. Come out to hear about what your children will be learning this year and how we plan to support their growth and achievement. You will also have the opportunity to learn about the ways that you can support our PTA this year. We strongly encourage all families to join our PTA. Feel free to preview the [PTA webpage](#) where you can join today!

I am so excited and optimistic for what is to come. As we embark on this new school year, our theme will be, *One Band, One Sound, One Purpose, One Stedwick*. As a cohesive community, we will continue to celebrate the joy of learning, the power of growth, and the boundless potential that lies within each child.

Once again, welcome to the new year! We look forward to partnering with you and supporting you.

Sincerely,

Natasha Davis Bolden

Principal