



*November 12, 2023  
North Bethesda Middle School  
News and Notes*



**North Bethesda Middle School Upcoming Events**

**This Week**

November 13 Regular Schedule Period 2 Phoenix Time

November 14 Regular Schedule Period 3 Phoenix Time

PTSA MEETING 7:00 pm Hybrid – NBMS Media Center or Zoom

November 15 Regular Schedule Period 4 Phoenix Time

November 16 Regular Schedule Period 5 Phoenix Time

Walter Johnson High School Meeting on Advanced Placement courses (more details below)

November 17 Regular Schedule Period 6 Phoenix Time

Coffee with the Counselors 9–10 on Zoom

**2023–2024 SCHOOL HOURS: 8:15 – 3:00 p.m.**

Parents, please drop off students in the drop off loop.

*(Entrance on Bradmoor Drive – note: Johnson Drive is for buses only)*

[Administrators](#)

Grade 6 [Katherine\\_B\\_Rudd@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Katherine_B_Rudd@mcpsmd.org)

Grade 7 [tirza\\_carmichaelcollins@mcpsmd.org](mailto:tirza_carmichaelcollins@mcpsmd.org)

Grade 8 [Daniel\\_E\\_Werbeck@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Daniel_E_Werbeck@mcpsmd.org)

Principal [Annemarie\\_e\\_smith@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Annemarie_e_smith@mcpsmd.org)

[GRADE LEVEL UPDATES/QUARTERLY VOCABULARY](#)

Please click on this [link](#) to go to the NBMS webpage where you can find the weekly grade level updates and quarterly vocabulary lists. The grade level updates can be found under the Academics tab on our school webpage.

[MCPS Calendar](#)

To report Bullying and Harassment, please use this [Bullying and Harassment Form](#)

Dear North Bethesda Families:

This week students completed their Culture of Respect modules and earned 2 SSL Hours. Mr. McFeaters arranged for our 8<sup>th</sup> grade choral students to attend a field trip to Walter Johnson to sing with the high school chorus and Tilden Middle School's chorus.

Friday night, the PTSA hosted a fun-filled seventh grade social. Students danced, socialized, played games, and enjoyed snacks together. Thank you to the parent volunteers who made this event a success!

## FEDERAL IMPACT SURVEY

Last Thursday students received their first quarter report cards through homeroom at the end of the day. They also received a blue Federal Aid Survey form. Please complete this form and submit it by December 8th. Directions for returning the form can be found at the bottom of the form. The form can be returned to the school, emailed to [impactaid@mcpsmd.org](mailto:impactaid@mcpsmd.org) or mailed to the address on the form.

Each year, principals are asked to assist in surveying students in connection with Title VII of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (Impact Aid). The United States Department of Education funds school districts that have many students with parents or guardians connected to the federal government and live on certain federal housing properties. The purpose of the funds is to reimburse school districts for the loss of property taxes from tax-exempt federal properties. The amount of funds received is based on the number of completed surveys received from parents or guardians who are on active duty with the uniformed services, employed on federal property, reside in federal or public housing, and/or are a foreign government military officer.

The forms were distributed on November 9<sup>th</sup>, when first quarter report cards were distributed. Instructions on the form direct parents/guardians to return the completed form to your school no later than **Friday, December 8, 2023**, to be forwarded to the Division of Controller. Please return all forms to the Division of Controller, 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 3200, regardless of response.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Montgomery County receives federal funds based on the number of families who work for the government or military.

In this news and notes, you'll find information about the upcoming PTSA meeting on Tuesday, Coffee with the counselors on Friday, a system message an issue with SSL hours and report cards, information for 8<sup>th</sup> grade families about Walter Johnson's information meeting about advanced placement courses, the NBMS PTO Ski Club, basketball tryouts for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and information about conferences at the secondary level. As always, you will find an informative counseling update from Ms. Rice. This week's topic is empathy. As always, we include helpful information for parents regarding Student Service Learnings, Attendance, and yearbook purchasing.

## WJHS MEETING REGARDING ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

The Walter Johnson Counseling Advisory Committee will be hosting a meeting over Zoom on Thursday, Nov 16th from 7–8:30pm on Understanding AP classes at Walter Johnson. This meeting will be especially helpful for students who are currently in 8th grade as well as their families to help them in planning for course registration at WJ in January. The meeting will focus on what AP classes are offered at WJ, the rigors of an AP class, why a student might choose to take an AP class and the AP exam. Our Counseling department resource, WJ Teachers who teach AP classes, current WJ students who are taking AP classes and an admissions representative from the University of Maryland will be presenting.

The APEX Reach Informational Meeting will be Thursday, December 7, 2023, in the Walter Johnson Auditorium, at 7 pm.

### Understanding AP Classes

Thursday, November 16, 2023

7–8:30pm

Via Zoom

ZOOM LINK– <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82164591533>

Meeting ID: 821 6459 1533

This meeting will help students and parents get answers to their questions about taking AP classes at WJ.

Topics to be addressed include:

- Why take an AP class?
- Differences between AP and Honors classes
- APs and colleges – what you need to know
- The AP Exam

You will hear from and be able to ask questions of:

- Imani Ladson– WJ Counseling Dept Resource
- Susan Bergeris and Ty Healy– WJ AP Teachers
- Current WJ students enrolled in AP classes
- Taylor Duvall, College Admissions from University of Maryland, College Park

\*\*\*Please Note– If translation services are needed– Zoom translated captions are available to have the speech in the meeting automatically translated in real–time to captions in another language.

For more information on the WJ PTSA Counseling Advisory Committee and other CAC events, visit [www.walterjohnson.com/parents/guidance\\_events.aspx](http://www.walterjohnson.com/parents/guidance_events.aspx)

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## Comprensión de las clases AP

Jueves, 16 de noviembre de 2023

7–8:30pm

Vía Zoom

ZOOM LINK– <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82164591533>

Meeting ID: 821 6459 1533

Esta reunión ayudará a los estudiantes y padres a obtener respuestas a sus preguntas sobre cómo tomar clases AP en WJ.

Los temas que se abordarán incluyen:

- ¿Por qué tomar una clase AP?
- Diferencias entre las clases AP y Honores
- AP y universidades: lo que necesita saber
- El examen AP

Escuchará y podrá hacer preguntas sobre:

- Imani Ladson– Recurso del Departamento de Consejería de WJ
- Susan Bergeris y Ty Healy– Maestros de WJ AP
- Taylor Duvall, Representante de Admisiones Universitarias de la Universidad de Maryland, College Park

\*\*\*Los subtítulos traducidos de Zoom están disponibles para que el discurso de la reunión se traduzca automáticamente en tiempo real a subtítulos en otro idioma.

Para obtener más información sobre el Comité Asesor de Consejería de la PTSA de WJ y otros eventos del CAC, visite [www.walterjohnson.com/parents/guidance\\_events.aspx](http://www.walterjohnson.com/parents/guidance_events.aspx)

## STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING UPDATE

Message from the MCPS SSL Office:

Greetings!

We have been informed that some of the student report cards contain inaccurate student service learning (SSL) information. MCPS can confirm that the students' SSL records in Student/ParentVUE remain intact and continue to report the correct information.

If you would like to know the current number of SSL hours on your student SSL record, you can view the full details of the student's SSL record on Student/ParentVUE by following the directions provided at this link –

<https://bit.ly/SSLonVUE>

Once the report card issue is fixed, we can repost an updated report card in Student/ParentVUE.

We apologize for any concern this may have caused and appreciate your understanding.

## PTSA MEETING

The PTSA will be meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. The meeting is in the media center but is hybrid, so you are welcome to join on Zoom (see below).

Emily Beckman, NBMS parent and MCPS Cluster Rep, will share an update on our cluster including updates from MCPS on Woodward High School.

## ZOOM Information

Topic: NBMS PTSA Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mcpsmd.zoom.us/j/83480369881?pwd=cWRPY3NyMENqTGZ0Y2x6Z05WQzBFdz09>

Meeting ID: 834 8036 9881

Passcode: 289810

Dial by your location

• +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 834 8036 9881

Find your local number: <https://mcpsmd.zoom.us/j/83480369881>

## COFFEE WITH THE COUNSELORS

Jennifer Sadara is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Coffee with the Counselors | 1.17 – Signs of Suicide Training for Caregivers

Time: Nov 17, 2023, 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mcpsmd.zoom.us/j/88384083187?pwd=TIMxM2U0OVA1cnBQSGM3SERNSm56UT09>

Meeting ID: 883 8408 3187

Passcode: 632228

Find your local number: <https://mcpsmd.zoom.us/u/kj8lyuZvp>

## MS. RICE'S COUNSELING UPDATE

In 2011, Scientific American reported that youth were less empathetic than they were in the early 80's. Sara Konrath of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (Go Blue!) used the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index* and a cross-temporal meta-analysis of 14,000 students and found that almost 75% of youth rated themselves as less empathetic than in 1979 when the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index* debuted.

Although it's been a dozen years since this study was published, this is not just a fun fact. Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, is key to the development of moral character, the reduction of bullying and racism, the building of resilience and the ability to problem-solve and survive. In other words, empathy is essential to a kids' future happiness, success and well-being. The good news is that empathy can be nurtured at any age.

The adolescent years are a time when kids are trying to figure out who they are. Figuring out who they are comes with a lot of me, me, me thinking. Some teens tend to feel their feelings and thoughts are most important, always right, the only ones that matter. Have you had an experience recently where your child couldn't understand how you were feeling? Or perhaps someone else's point of view. These years are also a time when teens test things out, do and say things they might not otherwise have done in the past. Sometimes, this is due to the anonymity of online platforms, but often it's without thinking through how it might impact someone else.

If you pause to think about the world today, the news is full of stories of racism, hatred, and questionable moral character. Bullying reports, anti-gay slurs, cheating on tests, fist fights; we see these things at North Bethesda Middle School. They are not exclusive to other parts of the county, to inner city youth, to so-called "tough schools, or to "the news." We are living in it and while we try to educate our students about empathy and a culture of respect, most often the lessons need to come from home. Empathy is one way we can begin to make a difference in the world.

Adolescents have an easier time seeing someone else's point of view than understanding how someone might feel, but it never hurts to continue nurturing both skills of empathy. Let's help empathy grow together. Here are a few of my favorite ways to encourage and build the skills of empathy.

- Perspective taking – next time there is a tiff with a friend or a spat with a sibling, encourage your child to step into the other person's shoes and explain what happened from the other person's side. This pushes your teen to reflect on the other side of the story.
- Encourage emotional literacy – you can read a book, but can you read a person's body language? Choose different situations, even while bingeing on Netflix, to ask your teen to pay attention to someone's tone of voice, words spoken and body language and try to figure out how that person might be feeling.
- Discuss moral identity – ask your child about the person they want to become, the way they want to make others feel, what they want to stand for. It's important that our words and actions align with who we want to be. A positive phrase or mantra can serve as a good reminder.
- Learn to self-regulate. The ability to manage your own feelings is crucial for being empathetic. If you cannot control your own anger or anxiety, it's hard to take someone else's perspective and see how they might be feeling.
- Practice kindness – by comforting, helping, caring, sharing, and cooperating we increase our concern for others' well-being. If this is face-to-face and comes from the heart, it is most genuine and most supportive of cultivating empathy.
- Get involved in community service. Doing things to make change in the world and subsequently feeling a sense of altruism promote empathy too.

If you want to talk more about empathy, please feel free to reach out to your child's counselor. If you're interested in reading more about the study showing how empathy has declined, check out the article, [What, Me Care? Young Are Less Empathetic](#) from *Scientific American*, Jamil Zaki, 2011. If you want to read more about how to help your teen develop empathy, consider the book *Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World* by Dr. Michele Borba. I haven't read it yet, but I've seen excerpts, and it looks really promising. Whatever you do, remember that empathy is something we can always build on, something that can be fostered throughout the lifespan, and a key to happiness, success, and well-being.

Be well,  
Ashley

Webinars, Seminars, Announcements, and things...

- Attention 8th Grade Families! The [Walter Johnson Counseling Advisory Committee](#) will be hosting a [Zoom meeting](#) on Thursday, November 16th from 7:00–8:30pm to help students in planning for course registration at the end of January. The meeting will focus on what **AP classes** are offered at WJ, the rigors of an AP class, why a student might choose to take an AP class and the AP exam. There will be a panel of teachers, students, and admissions representatives presenting.
- Coffee With the Counselors – Preview the Signs of Suicide program before your child receive the lesson– **Friday, November 17th** at 9:00am; [Zoom Link](#)
- **NBMS Career Day** is scheduled for Friday, March 8, 2024. If you'd like to join us to share about your career, please complete the [Career Speaker Information Form](#).
- [Parent Child Journey](#) with Dr. Shapiro & colleagues
  - **Free Parent Support Group EVERY Monday at 1:00pm: November 13th – It's Not Too Early to Start Planning For Summer**; [register in advance for zoom link](#)
- Get a jump start on summer with **Summer Discovery Programs** pre-college, travel-education summer programs. Programs are offered for [gifted students](#) starting in 1st grade and for [all students](#) starting in 6th grade.

## CONFERENCES

November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> are half days for conferences. At the secondary level, the large number of students prohibits us from having a parent teacher conference with all families. This year, we are holding conferences on Monday, November 21st, and Tuesday, November 22nd from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. *Conferences with all teachers are by invitation only* with options for Zoom or in person conferencing. Currently, we are prioritizing students with the most academic need.

Beginning next week, you may receive a phone call from a North Bethesda Middle School staff member inviting you to participate in a parent-teacher conference. Please confirm your availability to meet with the teachers as soon as possible.

If you are not contacted, and would like to schedule a parent conference, this is an option throughout the school year. You may reach out to your child's counselor to coordinate a time with your child's team of teachers. North Bethesda staff appreciates all you are doing to support your student's learning and school community.

## NBMS BASKETBALL TRYOUTS

Tryouts are for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders for our Boys and Girls teams. In order to tryout, students must have a 2.0 GPA or higher, completed a doctor's physical within the last two years. Registration will open in ParentVue on October 30<sup>th</sup> and the final registration date for tryouts will be Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> – No Exceptions! Tryout dates are December 5, 6, and 7<sup>th</sup> from 3:30–



4:15. Everyone must register their child through ParentVue, however, if your child tried out for a Fall sport this year, you would not need to upload the physical again.

Pre-Participation form:

<https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/contentassets/80ee165412504289898564aff64ac79a/physical-evaluation-for-athletics-sr-8-rev-0619.pdf>

Please reach out to Mr. Gibbons for further questions: [Barry\\_Gibbons@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Barry_Gibbons@mcpsmd.org)

## YEARBOOK INFORMATION

**SUBMIT PHOTOS FOR YEARBOOK!!** Does your child have photos they would like to submit for the yearbook? Have you or your child taken pictures of events this year? We hope your answer is YES! The Yearbook Club is looking for students and families to contribute pictures for the '23-'24 yearbook. They can be classes, clubs, student life, community events, SSL, concerts, sporting events, etc. You can submit photos via the Yearbook Snap app (the app icon is orange!), or the Community Upload website (<https://snap.yearbookforever.com/snap/index.html#/upload/1-23J-32823>). The access code is **phoenix** (no caps or spaces). If you have any questions or run into any problems with submissions, please contact Ms. Lui at [Jemi\\_J\\_Lui@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jemi_J_Lui@mcpsmd.org).

**YEARBOOKS FOR SALE!** NMBS yearbook sales have begun! If you would like to order a yearbook this year, please use this link to place your order (<https://yearbookforever.com/>). Enter "North Bethesda Middle School" in the search bar and it will take you to the order page. The pricing for a yearbook is as follows: Special Discount: \$30 (now until 12/31); Early Bird Discount: \$35 (1/1 until 2/28); Regular Price: \$40 (3/1 onwards). Yearbook orders will only be done online this year. There are a LIMITED NUMBER of yearbooks. Please get your order in ASAP to reserve your copy! If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Lui at [Jemi\\_J\\_Lui@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jemi_J_Lui@mcpsmd.org).

## SKI CLUB

This message is sent on behalf of the NBMS SKI CLUB PTO.

Dear NBMS Parents and Caregivers,

The NB Ski Club is excited to announce the Ski Club is back for another great winter season! Registration begins Thursday November 9th.

**What is NB Ski Club?** We are a non-profit 100% volunteer parent organization, and we run 5 Friday night chaperoned bus trips from the NBMS campus to Liberty Mountain in Pennsylvania for our NBMS 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

We require all parents to carefully read and review all of the important details and logistics about Ski Club in our 2023-24 Ski Club Info Packet, available here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fshfMqUtea1JauB\\_nm53ExybXLU1ZgwX/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fshfMqUtea1JauB_nm53ExybXLU1ZgwX/view?usp=sharing)

This winter NB Ski Club is scheduled to depart at approximately 3:30pm from NBMS and return from Liberty Mountain at approximately 11pm on Friday Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 and Feb. 2 (make-up date Feb. 9). This year's fee to register for the club is \$200. Financial assistance is available – please email us at [nbskiclub@gmail.com](mailto:nbskiclub@gmail.com) for a confidential inquiry.

The club is using Google Forms as a new enrollment process. You must follow the instructions and accurately complete the form to register a student. We highly recommend that you complete all tasks on a laptop/desktop, not a mobile phone/tablet.

On Thursday November 9th at approximately 8pm the registration link will be posted at the NBMS PTA Google Group Listserv (<https://groups.google.com/u/1/g/north-bethesda-middle-school-pta-listserve>).

The link will also be emailed to parents who previously completed the NB Ski Club pre-season survey. Payment this year will be made after registration closes via PayPal, Venmo or if needed personal check. Note that club memberships are first-come first-served, and in the event, we reach capacity a waiting list will be established for 6th graders. More details will be available in the registration form.

Parents – we know you have questions! But PLEASE – before you email us with your questions – please carefully read the 2023–24 Info Packet, because there is a 98% chance your question is addressed in the Info Packet!

Many thanks and Think Snow,

NB Ski Club

[nbskiclub@gmail.com](mailto:nbskiclub@gmail.com)

## SIXTH GRADE OUTDOOR EDUCATION

In the spring NBMS 6<sup>th</sup> graders will attend Outdoor Education. Click [here](#) for an overview of MCPS's outdoor education program. Please consider volunteering to help support our sixth graders! Complete the form linked below to indicate your interest in being an awesome chaperone for Outdoor Education! NBMS will be attending ODE in three sessions (May 20–22, May 22–24, and May 29–31).

<https://tinyurl.com/nbmsodechaperones>

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Click [here](#) to review extracurricular activities and start dates offered by the school.

Click [here](#) for activity bus routes.

- Buses begin on Tuesday, September 12

- Buses end of Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>
- No buses are scheduled for Halloween, 10/31

## MCPS PARENT RESOURCES

[Parent Academy](#)

[Pathway to College, Career, and Community Readiness](#)

[MCPS News Center](#)

Webpage featuring the latest MCPS news and press releases updated regularly.

**Ask MCPS / Spanish Hotline**

General information about MCPS

Call: 240-740-3000 | Spanish Hotline: 240-740-2845

E-mail: [ASKMCPS@mcpsmd.org](mailto:ASKMCPS@mcpsmd.org)

## PARENTVUE ACCESS

Instructions for getting started with Parent Vue can be found at <http://bit.ly/synergyparent>. If you need an activation code, please contact our registrar, [marybeth\\_turska@mcpsmd.org](mailto:marybeth_turska@mcpsmd.org)

In the counseling office or ask our main office staff.

## YOUTH CRUISER SMARTRIP CARDS

Did you know that kids under 18 ride free on MCDOT Ride On buses and most Metrobuses in the County? Get your Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card now and Get Going! Learn more at <http://ow.ly/sag150JOBsh>.

## NBMS HELPFUL INFORMATION

### ATTENDANCE

Our attendance secretary is Maria Stefanias. The best way to reach her for questions or updates about attendance is to send her an email at [Maria\\_Stefanias@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Maria_Stefanias@mcpsmd.org)

### TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

Call the Attendance Line at 240-740-2101 by 9 a.m. Upon return to school, send a note to the main office: include student's full name, grade, dates, and reason for absence. You can use this [Attendance Note](#) template for Absences, Tardies, or Early Dismissals. **MCPS requires a *doctor's note* for absences of 5 days or more.** For an absence of 3 days or longer, homework may be requested by calling the Counseling Office at 240-740-2110.

Teachers enter attendance for each period into Synergy, the attendance system. **All class absences generate an automated call/email to parents. If you believe there is an error, *please contact the teacher* and the attendance office.**

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Transportation Bethesda Bus Depot at 240-740-6580.

## STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING (SSL)

[NBMS Student Service Learning \(SSL\) Website](#)

Resources:

[SSL Information and FAQ flyer](#); hard copies are available in the Counseling Office


For SSL forms, guidelines, resources, and much more click on the MCPS SSL Hub

=\ <https://bit.ly/SSLHubMCPS>

All students should check their SSL hours quarterly, step-by-step directions for checking SSL hours

=\ <https://bit.ly/SSLonVUE>

Students, please check your [StudentID@mcpsmd.net](mailto:StudentID@mcpsmd.net) Gmail account daily for SSL emails (and of course other important emails)

	<p>Make sure to join the NBMS SSL MyMCPS Classroom.</p> <p>To join, click on the NBMS SSL MyMCPS Classroom link =\ <a href="https://mcpsmd.instructure.com/enroll/FC6DGZ">https://mcpsmd.instructure.com/enroll/FC6DGZ</a>. Please share this link with students, family, and friends.</p>
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If you have any questions, after reviewing the SSL information above, please send an email to [Carla.A.Jurewicz@mcpsmd.net](mailto:Carla.A.Jurewicz@mcpsmd.net). Thank you!

Warmly,

AnneMarie Kestner Smith, Ed.D. (She, Her, Hers)

Principal

North Bethesda Middle School

[North Bethesda Middle School Website](#)