



The week ahead

- Mon., Dec. 19** Music, 3:50 pm, rm. 129
MSA Indoor Soccer, 3:50 pm, gym
Brownies, 3:50 pm, rm. 150
Daisies, 3:50 pm, rm. 209
- Tue., Dec. 20** MSA Basketball, 3:50 pm, gym
- Wed., Dec. 21** Spirit Day—dress in gear/colors of your favorite college
Model UN, 8:10 am, rm. 149
- Thur., Dec. 22** Spirit Day—dress up in clothing from your favorite holiday
Clay Creations, 3:50 pm, rm. 163 (last session)
- Fri., Dec. 23** Spirit Day—wear your pajamas to school
Odyssey of the Mind, 3:50 pm

A Look Ahead

- Dec. 26-Jan. 2** School Closed
Jan. 3 PTA Meeting, 7:15 pm, APR
Jan. 10 Testing for students who applied to the Centers for the Highly Gifted, 9:30 am

- We wish all of our families a happy winter break. Thank you for being a caring and supportive community. We hope that each of our families has a fun and safe holiday break. We will see you on January 3, 2017!
- The SGA will sponsor Spirit Days on Wednesday through Friday of this week. On Wednesday wear the gear/colors of your favorite college. On Thursday wear clothing from your favorite holiday. On Friday wear your pajamas.
- If you are considering holiday gifts for teachers, an alternative way to honor a teacher is a tax deductible donation to the Bells Mill Bear Hug fund which helps families right in our community. You can send in a check made payable to *Bells Mill Bear Hug Fund* and specify the name of the teacher you wish to honor. Teachers receive a special card notifying them of your donation, and you receive a receipt for tax purposes.
- Congratulations to Mr. Sheets and the Gr. 4/5 chorus for the wonderful winter concert they performed last week.

- **Thank you to all who donated to the New Toy Drive. The SGA appreciates your support in making their project a huge success.**
- **Our lost and found pile of coats, jackets, gloves and hats grows larger every day.** Please feel free to check the lost and found area on the stage for your student's missing garments. Small items like glasses, keys, jewelry are kept in the office.
- **This is a reminder that last spring the school phone number was changed to 240-740-0480. Phone calls to the old number are no longer being forwarded. It is necessary to dial the new number to reach the school.**
- **Attention parents of Gr. 3 students who applied to the Centers for the Highly Gifted,** all Gr. 3 students who applied to the Centers for the Highly Gifted are scheduled to be tested at Bells Mill on Tuesday, January 10, 2017. Please make every effort to ensure that your child is in school that day and arrives on time. Testing will begin promptly at 9:30 am. If your child is sick on the day of the test, it is the parent's responsibility to contact Mrs. Betty Shevitz, Instructional Specialist, DCCAPS, at 301-592-2040 for information on the make-up date.
- **Winter is here!** In the event of weather-related school closings and delayed openings, all announcements are made as early as possible, generally in time for news broadcasts that begin at 5:00 AM. Early closing announcements are made by 11:00 AM. Please tune in to radio and television news stations or MCPS Channel 34 for information regarding school closings, delays and early releases. You may also obtain information at the Schools Out website (www.schools-out.com), the MCPS information line (301-279-3673), or the MCPS Call Center (301-309-6277).
- **MCPS students at all grade levels are encouraged to participate in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Literary Contest and Visual Arts Show.** The 2017 theme is "Injustice Anywhere is a Threat to Justice Everywhere." The essays and artwork should reflect an understanding and appreciation of the ideals of Dr. King's life, achievements, and aspirations. Literary entries should be 150 words or less and are due by **Friday, December 23**. Submit them to the MLK Essay Contest, c/o Montgomery County Office of Human Rights, 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850 or [here](#). For visual arts entries, the contest is open to prints, posters, collages, murals, photographs, and all other two-dimensional visual art forms. Group projects are welcome. Send entries to Linda S. Adams, supervisor, Pre-K-12 Fine Arts, Carver Educational Services Center, Room 256, 850 Hungerford Dr., Rockville, MD 20850. The deadline is **Friday, December 23**.
- **Registration is now open for the Flex Academy winter enrichment session.** Go to flexyourafterschool.com/BellsMill to view the winter schedule and sign up. You can also go to flexacademies.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/BMES-F16.pdf for more information about each class being offered. Classes fill up quickly so register soon. Questions, contact info@flexacademies.com or call 240-654-0877.
- **Attention Montgomery County Public School Students, submit an entry to the Don't Be Distracted Creative Contest.** Create a 30-60 second public service announcement (PSA) video or piece of artwork about why you shouldn't walk or drive distracted and you could win an iPad Air or \$100 gift card! The first 20 entries will get a FREE movie ticket! **Deadline is**

February 23, 2017. Enter today on the Montgomery County Safe Routes to School website: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-PedSafety/SRTS/Creative-contest.html>

- **Register now for Montgomery College Kids' College spring enrichment courses for students in grades K-9.** Courses are offered after school and on Saturdays at the Germantown and Rockville Campuses. For general information and registration call 240-567-7917 or visit www.montgomerycollege.edu/youth .
- **Superintendent Jack Smith released his \$2.52 billion operating budget recommendation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 during a presentation to the Board of Education on December 13.** The budget calls for a 2.5 percent increase in spending that will allow the district to manage significant enrollment growth and build the foundation and structure that is needed to ensure that all MCPS students are able to achieve at higher levels. The budget recommendation includes funding for strategic priority accelerators that are focused on improving student performance while narrowing achievement gaps. The strategic accelerators are grouped in the following five key areas: improve teaching and learning; focus on learning, accountability, and results; focus on human capital; focus on community partnerships and engagement; and focus on operational excellence.

The Board of Education will hold public hearings and work sessions on the budget in January before approving a final budget request on February 14. The Board will submit the final FY 2018 operating budget request to the Montgomery County Executive and the Montgomery County Council in February.

There are a variety of ways that our school community can learn more about the MCPS budget and become involved in the budget process this year, including the [Budget 101 website](#); [Parent Academy workshops](#); [Board of Education public hearings](#); and Fast Facts about the budget that will be translated in multiple languages on the [MCPS budget webpage](#).

- **Plan ahead for next school year.** The Montgomery County Board of Education has approved the calendar for the 2017–2018 school year. School will begin on Tuesday, September 5, 2017, and the last day of school is scheduled for Thursday, June 14, 2018. The Board also adopted a contingency plan that includes a total of seven identified dates that could be used as instructional days if necessary to make up school due to emergency and weather-related closings. Two of these days are the first two days of the scheduled spring break, March 26 and 27, 2018. The remaining five days would require the district to extend the school year until June 21, 2018. [The calendar can be found on the MCPS website](#) .

Thank you for being partners in your child's education.