August 7, 2017

Dear Sligo Stallion Families,

I hope you are having a safe and relaxing summer. I am very excited to be writing you again as we approach the beginning of a new school year at Sligo Middle School. For the second consecutive year, we had a lot to celebrate last year, having the best academic year since 2004, and yet another year of wonderful school events. We had an amazing 2nd annual S’TEAM Community day, our choral and music groups had incredible showings at all levels, and our drama program had awesome performances. Some other notable items are:

✓ All-time record for lowest percentage of students “ineligible” (below a 2.0 GPA) in many student groups,
✓ Averaged over 60% of Sligo students making the Honor Roll for each marking period,
✓ ALL of our student groups increased anywhere from 17% to 36% on “meeting or exceeding” the MCPS benchmarks on MAP-R (reading) score (from the fall of 2016 to spring of 2017),
✓ ALL of our student groups increased anywhere from 10% to 35% on “meeting or exceeding” the MCPS benchmarks on MAP-M (math) score (from the fall of 2016 to spring of 2017),
✓ Ms. Samaroo and our Cafeteria staff were recognized as the 2016-2017 District Winner for the Maryland Public Schools Breakfast Challenge, and
✓ Mr. Chris Rutledge was named the 2016-2017 MCCPTA PTSA President of the Year for his work with the Sligo MS community.

I want to again thank everyone for your continued support of our progress at Sligo Middle School. No matter what your role, we appreciate all you do to make our school a better place for everyone.

Supporting Sligo Middle School and Sligo Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA)

As a staff, we know that we cannot be successful without consistent and positive family involvement. Your presence and participation enrich our learning environment and promote community spirit. We ask that you please join and remain active in our PTSA; your input is invaluable. We have new leadership and a new focus this year, led by President Rachel Cornwell. We want to thank past-President Mr. Chris Rutledge (the 2016-17 MCCPTA President of the Year), who worked endlessly over the past year to sustain a welcoming climate for all families. He was a consummate advocate for Silver Spring students and families. Family participation in support of school efforts for continuous improvement is always appreciated.
We are planning many events for this school year to help support our instructional program and to improve our building and facilities. To help us continue our efforts to support our students, staff and community, please consider joining the PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) this year. Also, please sign up for our PTSA List-Serve to receive important updates from our active PTSA. You can also access the PTSA link on our school website for significant PTSA information. Please welcome the PTSA officers for this school year:

President: Rachel Cornwell  
VP of Administration: Pat Coleman  
VP of Communications: Leticia Barr  
VP of Fundraising: Kim Engstrom  
VP for Membership: Michael Colladay  
Treasurer: Bethany Hase  
Secretary: Lila Faulkner  
NAACP School Rep.: Tamara Overby

Please see the attached community letter from the PTSA President, Ms. Rachel Cornwell.

**Instructional Focus**

The Instructional Leadership Team has another busy summer preparing for our 2017-18 instructional program, as we build upon all the amazing progress we made last school year. While we again have had to say farewell to a number of staff, we have made some wonderful additions, and are excited to welcome our new Stallions. Sligo MS will maintain our dedication to offering a wide variety of demanding courses to challenge the needs of our highly able students, including a number of accelerated high school courses. As with last year, we will focus on increasing the rigor in all of our courses, continue to integrate culturally-proficient classroom instruction, and differentiate our approach to student learning. Our goal is to meet the individual student needs for rigor or support. We will continue to utilize collaborative planning in every subject area to implement common tasks and assessments, as well as use performance data to analyze and modify teaching and learning. As the Common Core Curriculum is now firmly established in the middle schools, we will continue to integrate critical thinking and academic skills across all disciplines, ensuring that Sligo students have a sound foundation to effectively apply these skills in an authentic, problem-solving approach demanded by the new curriculum, as well as the new PARCC assessments. My goal is for all of our students to leave Sligo Middle School armed with skills to be inquisitive, to think critically, to be able to communicate effectively and to take ownership in one’s education. We want all of our students to be in a position when they get to high school to continue down a successful path to be prepared to attend college or begin a career.

This school year, MCPS will also be focusing our instruction on “Evidence of Learning.” While we will be sharing more detailed information with you throughout this school year, we as a professional staff will be focusing on the K-12 Milestones – which for middle school is (a) a successful transition to grade 6, (b) applying breadth and depth in literacy and mathematics, as well as extending these skills to other content areas, and then (c) a successful transition to grade 9. We will be looking at a wide array of performance data to answer the following questions: What are our students learning? Are they learning enough? How do we know? If not, then why? and What are we doing about it?

For more information from MCPS, please visit: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/learning-journey/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/learning-journey/)
**Staff Changes**

As mentioned previously, there have been a number of changes to our staff for this coming school year:

* A fond farewell to...

- Ms. Aisha Artis
- Ms. Heather Brand
- Ms. Kerri Davis
- Ms. Shauna Jorandby
- Ms. Beatel Kassahun
- Ms. Carla McEachern
- Ms. Carmen Romero
- Ms. Catherine Sobieszczyk
- Ms. Cheleta Tutt
- Mr. Bradley Warner
- Mr. Jian Williams

Special Education Teacher
Science Teacher
Para-Educator
Assistant Principal
Science Teacher
English Teacher
Para-Educator
Science Teacher
Social Studies Teacher
ESOL Focus Teacher
Para-Educator

And a special “thank you” to our 2016-2017 long-term substitutes Mr. Arnold, Mr. S. Davis, Mr. Hummel and Mr. Kamara.

And...after 43 years of dedicated service to Sligo MS – and Montgomery County Public Schools – Building Services Manager Mr. Kevin Dove retired! His last day was Thursday, July 13, 2017.

* A huge Sligo welcome to...

- Mr. Phillip Alexander
- Ms. Rose Alvarez
- Ms. Amy Cassagnol
- Mr. Christopher Duplisea
- Ms. Sophia Eckard
- Mr. Daniel Herschler
- Ms. Rosa Isela Pozos Gálvez
- Ms. Saunora James
- Ms. Crissa Lourcy
- Ms. Janelle Peoples-Shaw
- Mr. Jeffrey Rickard
- Ms. Alina Scheppke
- Ms. Nicole Schmidt
- Ms. Mary Slotkowski
- Ms. Terri Stith
- Mr. Benito Vazquez
- Ms. Mackenzie White
- Ms. Vanessa Zarou

Technology
Principal Intern
Science 8
Science 6
Art
Social Studies 7/TL
Spanish
Science 7
English 7
Special Education
Building Services Manager
ESOL
English 7
Counseling (.5)
Resource Counselor
Pupil Personnel Worker
IM Math
ESOL Focus
Farmland Elementary ES
Roberto Clemente MS
Garrett Park ES
Sherwood ES
New to MCPS
Wooton HS
New to MCPS
Briggs Chaney MS
New to MCPS
Georgian Forest ES
Garrett Park ES
New to MCPS
New to MCPS
Westland MS
Sligo MS
MCPS
New to MCPS
Blair HS

We are also fortunate to receive a Principal Intern for this school year – Ms. Rose Alvarez. As MCPS selects opportunities for future principals, the system makes a very concerted effort to place interns into schools who demonstrate a collaborative community effort to maintain an excellent teaching and learning environment. The placement of an intern at Sligo MS is a huge complement to our students, staff and community. Please see the attached letter from Ms. Alvarez to our school community.
School Home Communication

I look forward to getting to know all Sligo families as the year progresses. We recognize the importance of consistent and varied school-home communications and are making a concerted effort to enhance our methods this school year. I will be encouraging students and parents to keep the lines of communication open in regards to both celebrations and concerns. While email continues to remain the easiest and most efficient means of communication, the administration will employ an “open-door policy,” so should you need to meet in person, please feel free to contact the Sligo MS main office to set an appointment.

The administration will also utilize our Connect-Ed phone calling system as a tool to disseminate information to all stakeholders quickly and effectively. As part of our efforts to support our Maryland Green School Award status, we intend to utilize electronic communication, social media, and our school website as our central resources for school-wide and system information; we will also continue to offer hardcopies of all correspondence in the mail office. As in previous years, Sligo MS will be working to get as much correspondence translated into multiple languages, especially Spanish, as possible. Also, please follow me on Twitter @SligoMSPride.

To help students stay organized, as well as help parents stay informed, we will be providing all students with Student Assignment Books (or SAB) at the onset of the school year. Teachers will often utilize the SAB as a means of communicating to parents regarding students’ academic and social progress. Please check your child’s SAB on a regular basis. While the school will provide the initial SAB to all students, if your child loses his/her SAB, he/she will be expected to replace it at a cost of $5.00/SAB.

Lastly, Edline will continue to be utilized more consistently and abundantly by teachers to keep parents and students informed about assignments, curricular updates and other important instructional updates.

Important Dates and Items

In preparation for the start of this school year, please make note of the following dates:

- August 31, 2017  6th Grade/New Student Orientation  8:15 a.m.
- August 31, 2017  6th Grade/New Parent Orientation  7:00 p.m.
- September 5, 2017  School Begins for Students  8:15 a.m.
- September 14, 2017  Health Education Preview Night  6:00 p.m.
- September 14, 2017  Back-to-School Night  6:30 p.m.
- September 19, 2017  Outdoor Education Parent Mtg. (gr. 6)  6:30 p.m.
- October 7, 2017  3rd Annual S’TEAM Community Day  12:00 p.m.

Bus Route Schedules

Bus Route schedules are attached, but can also be accessed on our school website. You may pick up an additional bus route schedule in the schools’ main office. Busses will drop all students at the front of the building. Teachers will be on hand each day to direct students to the classrooms.
Suggested School Supplies

For those of you planning to purchase school supplies before school starts, please consider purchasing the following items:

- 3 inch, three-ring binder (heavy-duty material)
- Zippered pouch for pens, etc.
- One pocket folder for homework
- Subject Dividers (minimum of 7)
- White, wide-ruled lined notebook paper with subject dividers
- Paper reinforcements
- Blue or black-colored ball-point pens. Also, some red-colored ball-point pens
- Rulers
- Glue stick
- Highlighters

Please review important inserts regarding school lunch*, New Student Orientation, After School Extracurricular Activities, Bus Transportation Schedule, Schools at a Glance calendar, etc.

Lunches

Please note that lunch accounts (and PIN numbers) are NOT transferred from the elementary schools or other MCPS middle schools. Students will need to establish a new account at Sligo MS.

Students who received free or reduced lunch last school year will continue to receive meals through September 29, 2017. All students must submit a new application each year to be considered for free or reduced lunch.

** Beginning October 2, 2017, students who have not submitted an application and been approved, will not be eligible to receive free or reduced meals.**

In closing, I look forward to continuing our work together. A school is only as strong as the commitment of its staff and community members. We have the finest teachers, striving to provide an exceptional learning experience for your child, as we continue to build upon all of our successes. But, the success of our community requires your commitment, and support. Your involvement makes a difference.

Thank you for taking the time to review the enclosed materials. Please continue to have a safe and relaxing summer.

Sincerely,

Mr. Cary Dimmick, Principal
August 7, 2017

Greetings Sligo Middle School Community!

I am so honored to introduce myself to you as the principal intern for the 2017-2018 school year. This summer, I am working closely with Mr. Dimnick and Mr. Lear to learn about the staff, students and community. I would like to take this opportunity to share the story of how I decided to become an educator and why Sligo holds a special place in my heart.

I grew up in Silver Spring and attended Montgomery County Public Schools. As a child, I was happy and excited to go to school each day and was deeply inspired by my teachers. I graduated from the University of New Mexico with a Bachelors in Economics and a minor in Latin American Studies. Upon graduation, I returned to the Washington, DC area to work as a government consultant serving federal agencies including the US Agency for International Development (USAID). I visited countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia to support local staff with their economic and political development work. I was deeply inspired by the efforts of local staff working to improve the educational systems in their countries, as education is a key driver of both economic and political development. On September 11th, 2001, I landed in Bamako, Mali and learned of the attacks in the United States. Our work in Mali went forward, and over the next two weeks, I reflected on my life and gained a sense of clarity which helped me make two big decisions. I decided that I wanted to start a family and that educating youth in my own community was my life's purpose. Four months later, I walked into a seventh grade classroom at Sligo Middle School and taught my first class as a mathematics long-term substitute. Sligo has changed in many ways, but it is still the exceptionally caring learning community that I remember.

Since that time, I earned a Masters of Arts in Secondary Mathematics education and a certification in School Supervision and Administration from Johns Hopkins University. As an educator, I taught both middle and high school mathematics and lead both middle and high school mathematics departments. For the past four years, I served as an administrator at Roberto Clemente Middle School in Germantown. My work as a school leader is a source of great pride for me and my entire family. My husband, Mario, our two children (Gabriela, 15, and Pierre, 12), my parents, my sisters, my in-laws and my many nieces and nephews all play a role in inspiring and supporting me to do my best work on behalf of Montgomery County's children. There is no greater, more important work than the education of our children.

I am proud to once again serve the Sligo community and be a part of the great work happening here. Please know that my top priority is that students, families and staff have the supports they need in order to allow an engaging, challenging and fun learning experience. I firmly believe that every child deserves to feel happy and excited to come to school each day, just as I did as a child. Through a strong home-school partnership, we will team together to support our children's learning and their social-emotional development. I am here for you and look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Rose S. Alvarez
Principal Intern
Dear Sligo Students and Families,

On behalf of the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) at Sligo, we are really looking forward to the coming school year! I am your new PTSA President, and I am honored to serve you in this capacity.

The PTSA serves as a vital link in our schools, connecting the school staff with the students and parents, so that we are all working together toward common goals. We raise funds, organize events that bring the community together, support the staff, and advocate for our students within and beyond the school. We have a great school and we want to help make it even better!

PTSA is stronger when all our families are engaged and participating in the efforts. First of all, we encourage every student and family member to become a member of the PTSA. Membership information can be found at http://sligoptsa.com, and we will also have representatives at 6th grade orientation (August 31) and back to school night. We are also looking for volunteers to help in big and small ways. Please contact me directly if you would like to get involved and I'll be happy to talk with you about your interests. In addition, we want your feedback and ideas, so please feel free to contact me or any of our other board members if you have thoughts to share.

We hope this will be a safe and successful academic year for all of our students and we seek to support our school in whatever ways we can to help that happen.

Sincerely,

Rachel Cornwell

2017-2018 PTSA President

rachelacornwell02@gmail.com or 301-802-8234 (cell)

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Estimados Estudiantes y Familias de Sligo,

En nombre de la Asociación de Estudiantes, Padres y Maestros (PTSA) de Sligo Middle School, estamos muy entusiastas sobre el nuevo año escolar. Soy la nueva Presidenta de la PTSA y es mi honor de servir a la comunidad en esta capacidad.

El PTSA sirve como un vínculo importante en nuestras escuelas, conectando el personal de la escuela con los estudiantes y sus padres, para que todos estamos trabajando juntos hacia objetivos comunes. Recaudamos fondos, organizamos eventos que reúnen a la comunidad, apoyamos al personal de la escuela y abogamos por nuestros estudiantes dentro de y más allá de la escuela. ¡Tenemos una maravilla de escuela y queremos mejorarlo hasta más!

El PTSA es más fuerte cuando todas nuestras familias están comprometidas y participan en nuestros esfuerzos. Primeramente, invitamos a cada estudiante y su familia ser un miembro de PTSA. Para más información, visite a: http://sligoptsa.com. Habrá representantes del PTSA en la orientación de sexto grado (agosto 31) y en el evento de “Back to School Night.” Buscamos voluntarios para ayudar en maneras grandes y pequeñas. Por favor contáctame si desea estar involucrado y estaría encantada hablar con Usted acerca de sus intereses. Además, invitamos a sus comentarios e ideas, así que por favor póngase en contacto conmigo o a cualquiera de los otros miembros del comité de PTSA.

Esperamos que este año escolar sea seguro y exitoso para todos nuestros estudiantes y vamos a apoyar a nuestra escuela en cualquier manera que podamos.

Atentamente,

Rachel Cornwell

2017-2018 Presidenta del PTSA de Sligo

rachelacornwell02@gmail.com or 301-802-8234 (celular)
#SligoOnTheRise 2017-2018
2016 National Green Ribbon School

School Vision: Sligo Middle School is a professional learning community who believes in academic excellence for all students. Through a collaborative, rigorous instructional program, we provide a positive, safe, supportive learning environment where students become skilled, productive members of a global society.

School Mission: Sligo Middle School will increase the rigor of its educational programs, increase student achievement, and eliminate the achievement gap through collaborative, data-driven, differentiated academic programs and varied social opportunities.

Core Values: Sligo Middle School staff values...

- Every child can learn.
- Every teacher cares about his or her students’ well-being and educational success.
- Every individual in the building is respected.
- SMS is a safe place for learning to occur.

2017-18 Instructional Focus: As a result of the root-cause analysis, it was determined that students need all teachers to check for understanding of students’ progress towards mastering the objective (or learning goal), in multiple, varied and equitable ways throughout each lesson.

2017-18 Social-Emotional Learning Focus: As a result of the root-cause analysis, it was determined that students need all teachers to build and facilitate a warm, safe, supportive and engaging environment where students are able to grow independently and collaboratively.

Principal’s Vision: My vision is that our unremitting work will enable all students to leave Sligo Middle School armed with skills to be inquisitive, to think critically, to be able to communicate effectively and to take ownership in one’s education. We want all of our students to be in a position when they get to high school to continue down a successful path to be prepared to attend college or begin a career.

#SligoOnTheRise
New commitment to the Instructional Program -

- Collaborative planning; implementation of common tasks/assessments
- Data analysis of student performance
- Focus on multiple and varied assessments
- Planning for differentiation
- High expectations for rigor
- Equitable classroom practices
- **Dramatic gains in reducing student ineligibility** – reduced **all** of our student groups by double-digits this past school year, most of which now below 10%. **2016-2017 was the best academic year since before 2004.**

Implementation of Supporting Programs -

- **S’TEAM Sligo Program** – 3rd Year (Trawick Team-Up STEM Grant)
- States’ Attorney’s Office Truancy Program
- States’ Attorney’s Office Anti-Bullying Program
- Partnership with Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County
- Partnership with Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships
- School-Based Translator system
- Morning Breakfast Program
- Academic Enrichment Committee (PTSA & School Administration)
- **Sligo Rs Program (teaching respect, responsibility, relationships and safety)**
- Dialogue Circles Program
- Restorative Practices school
- **History Alive Cultural Arts Program**
- Shakespeare Alive Cultural Arts Program
- **Sharpening Study Skills Program (PTSA / Sligo MS Teachers)**
- RecExtra After-School Programs
- **2016 National Green Ribbon School**

Facilities Upgrades -

- Installation of Solar Panels **(fall 2015)**
- Installation of new LED lights in gym **(summer 2016)**
- Restoration and Repainting of gym floor **(summer 2016)**
- Promethean Boards & Chromebooks in all subject areas **(fall 2016)**