



DRAGON NEWS

A newsletter from Principal Collins and the DES PTA

November 2016

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

DAMASCUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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[http://
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schools/damascuses/](http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/damascuses/)

PRINCIPAL:

Bill Collins

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PTA WEBSITE:

www.damascuspta.com

PTA EMAIL:

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Greetings DES Families! October was a very busy month at DES! We had many wonderful opportunities for families to come together this month.

- Pastries with Parents followed by Parent Open House
- PTA Family Spirit Night at J&P's Pizza
- Fall Fun Fest at Char-lene Farm
- Read-A Thon
- Passport to Reading Night
- Halloween Parade and Classroom Celebrations

All of these events were very well attended and there are many still to come. I would like to thank our PTA for all of their continued support and to all of our volunteers who give freely of their time to ensure that these programs are successful for our families and our school community!

November is a very busy month as well. We begin with another opportunity for parents to complete the Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect volunteer training at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 1 just before our PTA meeting at 7 p.m. Then, Nov. 11 and 12 are early release days for parent/teacher conferences. We will then wrap up the month with grandparents day and Thanksgiving break.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Early dismissal for parent/teacher conferences is scheduled for Nov. 10-11. Many teachers schedule conferences on other days as well. The parent/teacher conference should be positive, productive, and provide parents with important information regarding their child's progress.

Below are some questions you may consider asking your child's teachers to help you better understand how he or she is doing in school.

Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher

- Is my child reading at grade level? Can you show me books that are the right level of difficulty for my child and recommend books that he or she might enjoy outside of school?
- How is my child doing in math? What are my child's strengths? Are there areas that need improvement?
- How much time should my child spend on homework? What should I do if my child is spending significantly more time than is recommended on homework?

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- Aside from report cards, what are the best ways to keep up-to-date on my child's progress?
- What can I do at home to help my child do better in school?

It is our sincere hope that parent/teacher conferences help each parent better understand academic and behavioral expectations and provide valuable

information regarding how your child is progressing. If you have not scheduled a conference or need to reschedule your conference, please contact your child's teacher as soon as possible.

~ *Bill Collins*
Principal

Sign Up for the 2016 Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Clinics

Flu season is upon us. There are simple steps you and your child can take to stay healthy and help prevent the flu. That includes getting a yearly flu vaccine. The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will conduct free, injectable flu vaccine clinics on November 7 for children ages 3 to 18 at three MCPS high schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend the Flu Mist® (nasal spray) vaccine this year; therefore, nasal spray flu vaccine clinics will not be held at elementary schools.

The clinics will be held at John F. Kennedy, Richard Montgomery, and Seneca Valley high schools from 9 a.m. to noon. All clinics are free; however, registration is required due to limited vaccine supplies. For more information about these and other upcoming clinics, please visit the following website:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/flu.

Register your child at **www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcvaccineclinic** or call 311 for assistance. The flu vaccine may also be available from your health care provider.

Inscríbese para las Clínicas de Vacunación 2016 Contra la Gripe

Ya se acerca la temporada de gripe. Hay simples pasos que usted y su hijo/a pueden tomar para mantenerse sanos y ayudar a prevenir la gripe. Eso incluye vacunarse contra la gripe todos los años. El Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services) tendrá clínicas gratuitas para dispensar vacunas inyectables contra la gripe, el 7 de noviembre, para niños entre las edades de 3 a 18 años en tres escuelas secundarias de MCPS. Este año, los Centros para Control y Prevención de Enfermedades (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) no recomiendan la vacuna en atomizador nasal FluMist®; por esa razón, las clínicas para vacunas contra la gripe en atomizador nasal no se llevarán a cabo en las escuelas elementales.

Las clínicas se llevarán a cabo en las escuelas secundarias John F. Kennedy, Richard Montgomery, y Seneca Valley, de 9:00 a 12 del mediodía. Todas las clínicas son gratuitas; no obstante, se requiere inscripción debido al número limitado de vacunas. Para más información sobre estas clínicas y otras clínicas próximas, por favor visite el siguiente sitio de Internet: **www.montgomerycountymd.gov/flu**.

Inscriba a su hijo/a en **www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcvaccineclinic**, o llame al 311 para obtener asistencia. La vacuna contra la gripe también podría estar disponible de su proveedor de cuidados de la salud.

Superintendent Releases Boundary and Facility Recommendations

Superintendent Jack R. Smith released recommendations on October 13 to address school boundaries, capacity, and facility issues throughout the district. The recommendations are supplements to the superintendent's proposed amendments to the current six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for MCPS.

Members of the community will have an opportunity to give feedback on the CIP amendments during the Board of Education's public hearings on November 10 and 14.

All of the recommendations can be viewed on the MCPS website at **www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/cipmaster.aspx**.

The Montgomery County Board of Education will hold public hearings on the CIP at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 10, and on Monday, Nov. 14, in the Carver Educational Services Center auditorium, 850 Hungerford Dr. in Rockville. Individuals who wish to provide input may call the Board Office beginning Friday, Oct. 28 at 9 a.m. More information can be found at **www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx**.

The Board of Education will hold a work session on the CIP at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 3. The adoption of the proposed CIP is tentatively scheduled for Monday, Nov. 21.

Superintendente Publica Recomendaciones para Límites Geográficos e Instalaciones

El Superintendente de Escuelas de Montgomery County Public Schools, Jack R. Smith, publicó recomendaciones el 13 de octubre para abordar los límites geográficos de las escuelas, la capacidad de espacio, y los problemas relacionados con las instalaciones en todo el distrito escolar. Las tres recomendaciones son suplementos a las enmiendas propuestas por el superintendente al Programa de Mejoras de Capital (Capital Improvements Program—CIP) actual de seis años para MCPS. Las enmiendas restantes se enviarán al Consejo de Educación el 27 de octubre.

Los miembros de la comunidad tendrán la oportunidad de hacer comentarios/sugerencias sobre las enmiendas al CIP durante las audiencias públicas del Consejo de Educación los días 10 y 14 de noviembre.

Todas las recomendaciones se pueden encontrar en el sitio de Internet de MCPS, ingresando a: **www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/cipmaster.aspx**.

El Consejo de Educación tendrá audiencias públicas sobre el CIP a las 7:00 p.m., los días jueves, 10 de noviembre, y lunes, 14 de noviembre, en el auditorio de Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive, en Rockville. Las personas que deseen aportar su opinión pueden llamar a la Oficina del Consejo a partir de las 9:00 a.m., del viernes, 28 de octubre. Se puede encontrar más información: **<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx>**

El Consejo de Educación tendrá una sesión de trabajo sobre el CIP, a las 6:00 p.m., del jueves, 3 de noviembre. La adopción del CIP propuesto está programada tentativamente para el lunes, 21 de noviembre.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the Read-A-Thon is finally winding down I am reminded why this is such an awesome program. For the Read-A-Thon team, this is the most exhausting yet emotionally uplifting two weeks of the school year. I cannot thank everyone enough for making this program possible. It truly takes a village! We are not just raising money for all the wonderful programs our PTA provides—our students, parents, and staff have all worked together to make reading fun. I could not pass a student in the halls without being asked “How many minutes does my class have now?” For me, I now have a child who went from reading the required 20 minutes a day to reading more than an hour a day, and excited about reading!

The Passport to Reading night was an even greater success than expected. Our DES Airlines “destinations” will be hard to beat next year. Mr. Collins, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Harrigan, Mrs. Rose, Mr. Wainwright, and Mrs. Blakley (in her prom dress) kept “passengers” on the edge of their seats.

At the time I am writing this, the students have earned their first school incentive, an outdoor lunch! Although this took a little doing to pull off, the kids loved it! As I walked around opening ketchup packets and water bottles, my son, Colton, was confused why his sandwich had melted. In all the confusion of the day, I had packed him an ice cream sandwich for lunch instead of his usual Smuckers Uncrustable. Oops! He did not care, as he was excited to be having a picnic with his friends.

Whew, time to look toward our next PTA events. I have barely made a dent in the kids’ candy score from Halloween (who am I kidding, I have already picked out all the Kit Kats) and it is time to start thinking about Thanksgiving and, dare I say, Christmas! When I think life cannot get more hectic, somehow it does. However, we will get through it, one melted ice cream sandwich at a time!

~Melissa North
DES PTA President

Damascus Elementary School PTA Board

President	Melissa North
VP Finance	Brittany Marshall
VP Communications	Laurie Murtaugh
Treasurer	Lisa Willis
Recording Secretary	Beth Walter
Corresponding Secretary	Tara Owens
PTA Website	www.damascuspta.com
PTA Email	desptamail@gmail.com

*“Act as if what you do makes
a difference. It does.”*

~ William James



UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

- Nov. 1: Group Piano
Parent volunteer training on Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect, 6:30 p.m.
PTA Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 2: 5th Grade In-house Bar-T Field Trip
DES Spirit Day
- Nov. 4: DES Fan Friday
Parents Helping Teachers, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
First Marking Period Ends
- Nov. 7: No School for Students
Teacher Professional Day
- Nov. 8: Schools and Offices Closed
- Nov. 9: DES Spirit Day
- Nov. 10-11: Early Release at 1:20 p.m.
Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Nov. 11: Veterans Day Flag Ceremony, 10 a.m.
in front bus circle (parking on rear blacktop)
- Nov. 14: MAD Science After-school
- Nov. 15: DES Spirit Night at McDonalds, 5-8 p.m.
- Nov. 16: DES Spirit Day
- Nov. 17: 2nd Grade Trip to Strathmore
- Nov. 18: DES Fan Friday
Parents Helping Teachers, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- Nov. 21: MAD Science After-school
- Nov. 23: Grandparents Day
DES Spirit Day
Early Release at 1:20 p.m.
- Nov. 24-25: Schools and Offices Closed
(Thanksgiving Break)
- Nov. 28: MAD Science After-school

DES SPIRIT NIGHT

Thank you to everyone that attended our October DES SPIRIT Night at J&P Pizza! Our next Spirit Night will be at the Damascus McDonalds on **Tuesday, November 15 from 5-8 p.m.** Let them know that you are with DES Spirit Night and a percentage of your bill will be donated to our school. This includes orders placed via the drive -thru!



STAY CONNECTED

Are you receiving emails from the PTA? If not, email Laurie Murtaugh at **laurie.murtaugh@verizon.net** to be added to the list to stay up-to-date about upcoming events and activities. Did you know your Damascus Elementary School PTA has a Facebook page? "Like" us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on PTA news and activities.



<https://www.facebook.com/damascusPTA>

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Fall is in full swing, and the school year is off to an awesome start! September started strong with 47 volunteers giving 449 recorded hours. October already has 175 hours and that is just a start with all of the helpers with read-a-thon and Halloween parties still hard at work. We appreciate all of your time and effort! DES is required to submit volunteer hours to the Montgomery County's central office each month. So if you do volunteer in the classroom, on a committee, at an event, or in any other way that benefits our school, please let me know (derbyjc@bellatlantic.net), so it can be included in our total hours that are submitted to Montgomery County each month.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to recognize some of the people who have given time and resources during the months of September and October.

Thank you to Roberta for all of her work organizing Group Piano and helping provide that opportunity for our students.

Thank you to Jen and everyone else who supported our emergency food drive for Damascus Help at a much needed time.

Thank you to all who have been able to help with the Parents Helping Teachers workgroup. We have

prepared an amazing amount of classroom materials for our teachers.

Thank you to Karen and her team who hosted Pastries with Parents prior to the Parent Open House. It was a wonderful way to start the morning!

Thank you to Laurie, Melissa, Roberta, Christine, and Tara for making Passport to Reading Night a success. From passports, to stories, to concessions, it was a trip full of excitement!

Thank you also to the fifth grade parents who donated to our concession stand that night as well!

Thank you to our SSL students who helped the Passport to Reading Night run smoothly: Kaitlyn, Mark, Charlie, David, Faith, Tommy, Lucy, and Isabelle. We couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you to Laurie, Melissa, Tara, and all of their helpers who have put in countless hours to make our Read-A-Thon a fun competition where everyone wins.

Thank you to Tania, Nicole, Beth, and Christine who helped capture the picture day smiles!

Thank you also to Lisa and all of the classroom organizers and helpers who make our Halloween parties into childhood memories!

Finally, thank you to all who help

in the classroom with individual teachers, represent our school, and contribute their time in ways that may not have been mentioned. We appreciate you and all that you contribute!

Thank you so much for all that you do to make our school a special place. It makes a huge difference!

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Parents Helping Teachers: Fridays, November 4 & 18 and December 2 & 16 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. This is a drop in opportunity where we help make copies and educational materials to help teachers. Please meet us in the main office if you can. No experience necessary.

Grandparents Day: Wednesday, November 23. We will be looking for adult volunteers to be helpers and guides. Information will be sent home soon.

Holiday Shop: Tuesday, December 6 and Wednesday, December 7. We will be looking for adult volunteers to help our students shop and wrap. More information to follow.

*~Christine Derby, Chair
derbyjc@bellatlantic.net*

New Online Volunteer Training Requirement

If you come to help at school, you will need to bring a photo ID to enter the building. Additionally, Montgomery County has a new volunteer requirement that they feel will help to keep our children safe. The new online training on Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect is designed to help volunteers be aware of signs of potential abuse and neglect and how to handle situations where you might suspect abuse and neglect. This training will be required for adults who would like to volunteer within the school building or attend field trips. The same training is required for any Montgomery County school including Baker MS and Damascus HS.

The training is available online at:

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/childabuseandneglect/

The training takes about 25 minutes. At the end you will be provided with a confirmation number and you will receive an email verification as well. You will need to show this email to the office when you come to volunteer. If you have any questions or concerns, including the need for computer access, please contact Christine Derby at derbyjc@bellatlantic.net.

PTA Student Directory

The PTA student directory is currently being compiled. It will be printed and distributed with PTA cards soon. The directory is only available to PTA members, so if you haven't yet joined the PTA and would like a copy, please print out a membership form from our website at

www.damascuspta.com

to send in with your child. We only print a limited number of extra directories so hurry to make sure to get your copy.

Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup

Thanks to Roberta Sherwood, Teresa Tenzier, Jody Chapin, Nora Hernandez, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out at the Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup on Friday, October 7.

Thanks to Roberta Sherwood, Jody Chapin, Carla VonAgner, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, October 21.

We were able to complete many work requests for the teachers, and we thank you for sharing your time to help out the teachers and staff. Our next two workgroups will be meet on:

Friday, November 4, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Friday, November 18, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

If your schedule permits, please come. We meet in the front office. Feel free to bring your little ones and we will teach you anything you need to know.

*~ Gerry McBrinn-Choulas
Co-chair*

What are you thankful for?

Every month we will ask our students to share something to be included in our newsletter. With Thanksgiving coming this month we want to hear

“I am thankful for _____!”

You can send your completed thoughts directly to Diane Loomis at diane@loomisdesign.com. Remember to include your name and grade.



Send your box tops and labels into your child's classroom. At the end of each month the class in each grade that collects the most will receive a treat!

PAINLESS FUNDRAISING

Many companies and stores offer money and credits for supplies and equipment to schools based on the purchases of customers. THAT'S RIGHT, you can help OUR SCHOOL support OUR KIDS just by doing your regular household shopping – at no additional cost to you!

Box Tops for Education

Labels for Education

Coke Rewards Points

Amazon Smile

Giant

Safeway

Harris Teeter

Find more information on the PTA website at:

www.damascuspta.com/fundraising/

Grandparents Day Wednesday, Nov. 23

Information will be sent home soon detailing the events of the day. We have learned from past events that many grandparents wish to take the children to lunch as soon as the celebration is over (remember this is an early release day). We will ask the parents/guardians to complete and sign paperwork giving permission for the grandparents to take the students for the day. Please keep in mind that if the paperwork isn't completed within the requested timeframe, we cannot let the students leave.

Coming soon...the DES Holiday Shop!

The PTA will once again provide an opportunity for students to purchase holiday gifts for their family and friends. The holiday shop is planned for the first week of December. Stay tuned for more information about the event, volunteer opportunities, and more.

WANTED: PICTURES!

We know you are taking some great pictures of your child during DES and PTA sponsored events. We are looking for candid pictures to possibly be used in our DES Yearbook. Did you take any pictures at Char-Lene Farm, Pastries with Parents, Passport to Reading Night, Movie Night, Parent Observation Day, Mad Science, or any other school event? Please send your pictures to Stephanie Desmond at

helpinghands331@gmail.com.

You can continue to send your pictures to Stephanie throughout the school year. If you really love taking pictures and attending our fun DES events, consider being a school photographer to help us capture the entire event!



Open Committee and Chair Positions

Thank you to all of the DES parents who stepped up to chair a committee for the upcoming school year. There are still a few PTA committee chair positions available. This is a great way to get to know other DES families and be involved in your child's school. Don't be intimidated—most of the positions require only a small time commitment and members of the PTA board will be available to answer questions and provide support every step of the way.

The list of open committee chair positions is below. Please feel free to contact PTA President Melissa North at northlandscaping@msn.com if you have any questions about the responsibilities and time commitment. You can also share the chair position with a friend—the more the merrier!

Staff Raffle - Work with the staff to come up with fun activities and organize a raffle to raise funds for our school.

School Photographer – Attend fun DES events and take pictures to be used for the yearbook. We would like to have several people share this position in order to get pictures of every event.

PTA Audit Committee – Meet with the committee in August to review the PTA books.

Directory Advertising – Contact businesses in community to offer ad spots in our PTA directory. A list of current advertisers is available.



Get Involved!



"Your Outdoor Project Experts"

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Ponds and Waterfalls

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Landscape Design* & Installation

Paver Patios & Walkways

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Yard Clean Up, Spring & Fall

Lawn Fertilization & Weed Control

Aeration & Seeding

Edging & Mulching

Tree & Shrub Pruning

Tree Removal & Stump Grinding

Mowing & Trimming & Weeding

Leaf Removal

K-9 Clean Up

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Handyman Services

Call us today for a FREE estimate

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301-253-0475

www.damascusenterprises.com

