

DRAGON NEWS

A newsletter from Principal Collins and the DES PTA

March 2017

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

DAMASCUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ADDRESS:
10201 Bethesda Church Road
Damascus, MD 20872

PHONE:
301-253-7080

FAX:
301-253-8717

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

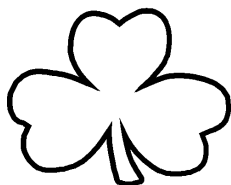
PRINCIPAL:
Bill Collins

EMAIL:
[William_J_Collins
@mcpsmd.org](mailto:William_J_Collins@mcpsmd.org)

TWITTER:
[@collinswj](https://twitter.com/collinswj)

PTA WEBSITE:
www.damascuspta.com

PTA EMAIL:
desptamail@gmail.com



Greetings DES families! I would like to thank all of our parents and students who participated in our science fair last week. The projects were wonderful and our students did a great job presenting.

I would like to share a wonderful opportunity that is available to our DES families once again at the Damascus Library. Join me on Wednesday, March 1 from 4:30 to 5:15 p.m. at the library to have your children practice their read aloud skills while reading to a certified read-a-loud dog named Luna! This is a wonderful program available every Wednesday at the library. I will be there this Wednesday so please bring your child out to join us! I have included a flier in this newsletter with more details.

Message from MCPS on Safe and Welcoming Schools

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is committed to providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students. As part of our ongoing efforts to fulfill this commitment, we want to provide all parents and guardians with resources that help us prevent bullying and harassment in

schools. The resources can be accessed on the MCPS website at:

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/bullying/

Additionally, we have included a copy of our Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form with your child's report card. MCPS is committed to providing a safe learning environment in every school so that we can focus on and provide students with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and opportunities to reach their potential and be successful in college and in their careers.

Grading and Reporting Reminder

This Friday, March 3 is an early dismissal day for students and set aside as a grading and planning day for teachers. With the exception of the kindergarten team, which will do this in April at the end of the third marking period, parents will receive a two-column report with your students at the end of the day on Monday, March 6. Teachers are sending interim reports for all students at this time. I have included the English and Spanish versions of

(Continued on page 2)

how to interpret these reports to parents in this newsletter. The related key dates are listed below.

- March 3: Early Release to work on interims
- March 6: Interims should go home at the end of the day (grades 1-5)
- April 6: Third Marking Period Ends
- April 19: Report Card Distribution
- June 16: Fourth Marking Period Ends
- June 27: Report Card Distribution

Nominations Open for Annual Distinguished Service Awards

The Montgomery County Board of Education is seeking nominations from the public for its Annual Awards for Distinguished Service to Public Education. The awards are sponsored by the Board to recognize and show appreciation to individuals, including students, groups, and organizations that

have made exemplary contributions to public education in Montgomery County.

Up to three awards will be given in each of the following categories: Community Individual, Community Group, Business, MCPS Staff, School Service Volunteer, and Individual Pioneer.

Nomination forms are available at:
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/boe/community/awards/DSA%20Nomination%20Form%202017.pdf

Completed nomination forms are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 3. Winners will be honored in a ceremony on May 4 in the Carver Educational Services Center auditorium.

*~ Bill Collins
Principal*

Applications Now Available for Elementary Immersion Programs

Elementary school language immersion programs begin in kindergarten and are offered in Chinese, French, and Spanish. Applications for students entering kindergarten through grade 5 in the 2017–2018 school year are now available. For more information about elementary immersion programs and to download the Immersion Interest Form, visit www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/. Forms are also available at elementary schools. The application deadline for the 2017–2018 school year is **Friday, May 5**. Notification letters will be mailed to parents in May. For more information, contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services, at 301-592-2040.

Ya Están Disponibles las Solicitudes para los Programas de Inmersión en Idiomas Extranjeros en las Escuelas Elementales

Los programas de inmersión de las escuelas elementales comienzan en kindergarten y se ofrecen en español, chino, y francés. Las solicitudes ya están disponibles para estudiantes que cursarán desde kindergarten hasta el grado 5 durante el ciclo escolar 2017–2018. Para más información sobre los programas de inmersión en las escuelas elementales y para descargar el Formulario de Interés en los Programas de Inmersión (Immersion Interest Form), visite www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/. Los formularios también están a disposición en las escuelas elementales. El plazo límite para presentar solicitudes para el ciclo escolar 2017–2018 es el viernes, **5 de mayo**. Las cartas de notificación serán enviadas a los padres en el mes de mayo. Para más información, llame al 301-592-2040.

Stay Informed About the MCPS FY 2018 Operating Budget

The Montgomery County Board of Education has recommended a \$2.52 billion operating budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018. The budget includes a \$64 million increase from FY 2017, which will allow the district to manage significant enrollment growth and build the foundation and structure needed to ensure that all MCPS students are able to achieve at higher levels. The Board's budget request will be submitted to the Montgomery County Executive and the County Council. The County Executive is expected to release his FY 2018 operating budget recommendation by March 15. Public hearings on the county budget will be held in April before a final budget is passed in May. Stay informed and engaged by visiting the MCPS Operating Budget website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/.

Find out how budget decisions are made, what the county is doing to get ready for FY 2018 and beyond, and the opportunities residents have to influence budget decisions at upcoming budget meetings with County Councilmember Craig Rice, Superintendent of Schools Jack R. Smith, and Montgomery College president DeRionne Pollard. The meetings will take place from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the following locations:

March 8, Montgomery Blair High School, 51 University Boulevard East, Silver Spring

March 15, Montgomery College (Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus), Catherine F. Scott Bldg. Room 211, 7600 Takoma Avenue, Takoma Park

March 22, Walter Johnson High School, 6400 Rock Spring Drive, Bethesda

March 29, Richard Montgomery High School, 250 Richard Montgomery Drive, Rockville

Manténgase Informado sobre el Presupuesto Operativo de MCPS del Año Fiscal 2018

El Consejo de Educación del Condado de Montgomery ha recomendado un Presupuesto Operativo de \$2.52 mil millones para el Año Fiscal 2018. El presupuesto solicita un aumento de \$64 millones sobre el presupuesto del Año Fiscal 2017, que permitirá al distrito escolar manejar el crecimiento significativo de la matrícula y construir la base y la estructura necesarias para asegurar que todos los estudiantes de MCPS puedan rendir a altos niveles. El pedido presupuestario del Consejo será enviado al Ejecutivo del Condado y al Concejo del Condado (County Council). Se espera que el 15 de marzo el Ejecutivo del Condado haga pública su recomendación para el presupuesto operativo del Año Fiscal 2018. El Concejo del Condado de Montgomery tendrá audiencias públicas sobre el presupuesto del condado en abril, antes de aprobar un presupuesto final en mayo. Manténgase involucrado e informado sobre el presupuesto solicitado por el Consejo de Educación ingresando a la página virtual del Presupuesto Operativo de MCPS.

Infórmese sobre cómo se toman las decisiones presupuestarias, lo que el condado está haciendo hoy para prepararse para el Año Fiscal 2018 y más adelante, y las oportunidades que los residentes tienen para influenciar las decisiones presupuestarias durante las próximas reuniones sobre el presupuesto con el Concejal del Condado Craig Rice, el Superintendente Jack Smith, y la presidenta de Montgomery College DeRionne Pollard. Las reuniones tendrán lugar de 6:30 a 8:30 p.m., en los siguientes lugares:

8 de marzo, Montgomery Blair High School, 51 University Boulevard East, Silver Spring

15 de marzo, Montgomery College (Campus de Takoma Park/Silver Spring), Catherine F. Scott Building, Sala 211, 7600 Takoma Avenue, Takoma Park

22 de marzo, Walter Johnson High School, 6400 Rock Spring Drive, Bethesda

29 de marzo, Richard Montgomery High School, 250 Richard Montgomery Drive, Rockville

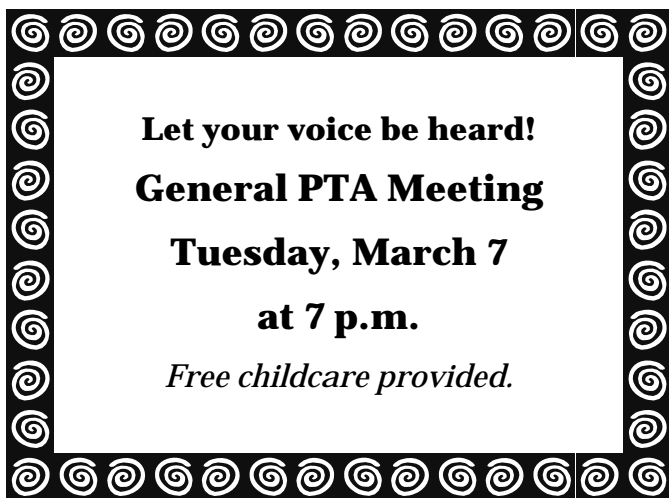
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We sure stayed busy in February! Kristin Peake and her many helpers really did “score a touch-down for reading” by organizing our most successful book fair to date. It was a challenge, but more than 40 students participated in our first Screen-Free Week during the book fair week. Mollada Sweet and Suzie Thompson did a great job organizing Family Night at the book fair which included lots of fun games and crafts. Mr. Collins also kept our students engaged with a story time that evening. I hope I was not the only person sore for days after Tara Owens helped us move our muscles at Family Fitness Night. Mrs. Howard, Mrs. Blakely, Mrs. Moxley, and Mrs. Jordan even stopped by to work out with our students! I also want to thank the Damascus Library, Weis, and The Music Café for partnering with DES to provide other specials and activities during our Screen-Free Week. We are so fortunate to live in such a close knit community that values working with our schools.

While we did not get any snow days to give us a break this winter, I will take this early spring any day! These 60+ degree days are getting me excited for the great activities your PTA has planned for the spring. As the weather gets warmer, I get particularly excited to find ways to get our bodies moving. Even if your student is involved in sports, we have made our Dancing Dragons country dance class, school dance, and Dashing Dragons running program easy to fit into most schedules. We are so fortunate to have so many talented parents who are willing to share their gifts with our children.

As always, if you have any suggestions or questions, email or call me anytime at northlandscaping@msn.com or 301-642-1507.

*~Melissa North
DES PTA President*



Let your voice be heard!
General PTA Meeting
Tuesday, March 7
at 7 p.m.
Free childcare provided.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

- March 1: Mix-It Up Lunch - students will be mixed up by Dr. Seuss pictures
Read Across America Spirit Day - Wacky Wednesday - wear a wacky outfit!
- March 2: Read Across America Spirit Day - wear red and white
Country Dance Class, 3:50-4:50 p.m. in gym
- March 3: DES Fan Friday
Read Across America Spirit Day - Fox in Socks - wear crazy socks
Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Early Release at 1:20 p.m.
- March 6: Interim Reports (grades 1-5)
Mad Science, 8:10-9:10 a.m. in Art Room
- March 7: Group Piano classes after school
PTA Meeting, 7 p.m. in Media Center
- March 9: Country Dance Class, 3:50-4:50 p.m. in Gym
Fifth Grade Family Life Meeting with parents, 6-7 p.m.
- March 10: DES Fan Friday
- March 13: Mad Science, 8:10-9:10 a.m. in Art Room
Fifth Grade MISA Testing, 9:45-11:15 a.m.
- March 14: Group Piano classes after school
- March 15: Fifth Grade MISA Testing, 9:45-11:15 a.m.
- March 16: Country Dance Class, 3:50-4:50 p.m. in Gym
- March 17: DES Fan Friday
Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- March 20: Mad Science, 8:10-9:10 a.m. in Art Room
Fifth Grade MISA Testing, 9:45-11:15 a.m.
- March 21: Group Piano classes after school
- March 22: Fifth Grade MISA Testing, 9:45-11:15 a.m.
DES Family Night at McDonalds in Damascus, 5-8 p.m.
- March 23: Country Dance Class, 3:50-4:50 p.m. in Gym
- March 27: Mad Science, 8:10-9:10 a.m. in Art Room
- March 28: Group Piano classes after school
- March 31: DES Fan Friday
Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- March 31: School Dance and Silent Auction, 6:30-9:00 p.m.



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

February was an amazing month packed with volunteering! We appreciate all of your time and effort. Remember that DES is required to submit volunteer hours to Montgomery County's central office each month. If you volunteer in the classroom, on a committee, at an event, or in any other way that benefits our school, please let me know (Christine at derbyjc@bellatlantic.net), so it can be included in our total hours that are submitted to the county each month.

I want to recognize some of the people who have given time and resources during the months of January and February.

Thank you to Kristin and the scores of people who helped make the book fair an incredible success. We had so many helpers! Thank you to Kristin, Adam, Melissa, Carla, Christine, Veronique, Stephanie, Karen R., Dawn, Laurie, Erin, Jen, Jody, Kim, Gerry, Roberta, and Karen S. who helped during the day. Our student set up helpers: Henry, Hayden, Katherine, Megan, William, Jake, Lily, Ben, Victor, Eva, and Noa. Thank you to our evening helpers: Mollada, Suzie, Melissa, Kristin, Tara, Jamie, Tamara, Karen R., Christine, and Karolina. And finally a special thank you to our evening SSL helpers: Tommy, Faith, Ethan, Justin, and Rebeka.

Thank you to all who have helped with the Parents Helping Teachers workgroup. We have accomplished an amazing amount preparing classroom materials for our teachers.

Thank you to Sarah and Christi who made the science fair possible for our students. Thank you to Melissa, Christy, and Christine who helped with set up and clean up. A special thank you to our student judges: David, Henry, Ishan, Josh, Tyler, Joshua, Andrew, Tommy, Faith, and Jake.

Thank you to all of the room parents and helpers who made Valentines parties a lovely event. Thank you to Lisa who organized all of the details, and to Melissa, Tara, Teicher, Diane, Jaime, and Adam who helped everyone get checked in and to their parties.

Thank you to all of the parents who volunteered their time to help with our Jump Rope for Heart event.

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 to DES!

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

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Parents Helping Teachers: Fridays, March 3, 17 and 31 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. This is a drop in opportunity where we help make copies and educational materials to help teachers. We meet in the main office. No experience necessary.

School Dance: Friday, March 31. This is typically an SSL opportunity. More information to follow.

Kindergarten Orientation: Friday, April 28. We will be looking for adults to help the day run more smoothly. More information to follow.

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

New Online Volunteer Training Requirement

If you come to help at school (including field trips), 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 is 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.

Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup

Thanks to Blanca Lovo, Carla VonAgner, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out at the Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup on Friday, February 3, and thanks to Teresa Tenzier, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, February 17. We were able to complete many work requests for the teachers.

Our next workgroups will be meet on the following Fridays:

March 3, 17 and 31, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

If your schedule permits, please come and join us. 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*

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☆☆
☆☆ "You have not lived today until you have
☆☆ done something for someone who can
☆☆ never repay you."
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☆☆ ~ John Bunyan
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PTA Committee Chair Openings

As the year winds down and some of our DES volunteers move on to Baker Middle School, we have several PTA committee chair positions opening. If you want to take a more active role in your child's education, being active in the DES PTA is a great way to start. To learn more, email or call Melissa North at northlandscaping@msn.com or 301-642-1507. Thanks for your help making DES so amazing!

Staff Appreciation

Thank you to all the volunteers who made our Staff Appreciation Taco Bar a huge success! We would personally like to thank Karen Reyes, Erin Luther, Melody Brown, Erica De Shetler, Suzie Thompson, Tanya Bohrer, Cathy Mullaney, Teri Trybus, Lisa Willis, Beth Walter, Christine Derby, Roberta Sherwood, Sheila Roark, and Gerry Choulas. If you would like to volunteer to help with the next staff treat, it will be March 17 in the staff lounge. An email for signups will be sent out next week. Again, thank you, we couldn't do it without your help!



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/

The MORE
that you read,
the MORE things
you will know.
The MORE that you
Learn,
the MORE places you'll go.



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 the book fair, bingo night, 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!





Dashing Dragons Returns this Spring

The PTA will again be sponsoring “The Dashing Dragons” running program this spring. This co-ed program is open to all grades and takes place before school.

Students will learn about healthy choices for the mind and body. Each session will include a small lesson, stretching, and running. Our goal is train to complete a one mile run for grades K-2 and a 5K for grades 3-5.

Please consider having your child participate in this great program! Look for more details to come home in backpacks soon.

If you also have a love of running and are available in the mornings before school, please contact Melissa North at 301-642-1507 to volunteer.

School Dance and Silent Auction

Do you like to Boot Scootin’ Boogie, Cotton Eyed Joe, or maybe Cha-Cha Slide? **Friday, March 31 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.** DES will have our annual school dance and silent auction. This year will be a country western theme. Dance instructor, Dawn Garrish, will be spinning the tunes and teaching us a few moves!

We are asking the DES community for donations and would appreciate anything that you or your small business can donate to support the silent auction. You can also make a tax deductible monetary contribution and we will use the funds to purchase items. Please contact Beth Walter at 410-353-6137 or bwalter425@comcast.net if you would like to donate or have any questions.



A few of our favorite things...

Heidi Hillman

Physical Therapist

Sports Team: Pittsburgh Steelers

Drink: Peppermint tea

Hobby: Reading and the beach

Lunch Food: Pizza

Ice Cream: Vanilla PB swirl

Scent: Hydrangea

Marci Urie

Occupation Therapist

Sports Team: Univ. MD

Drink: Decaf

Hobby: Reading and exercise

Lunch Food: Salad

Ice Cream: Chocolate

Dessert: Chocolate cake

Kelly Sennwald

Media Assistant

Sports Team: Washington Nationals

Color: purple

Restaurant: The Buzz

Flower: Sunflower

Ice Cream: ALL

Candy: Reese’s and Swedish Fish
